

Town of *New Salem* Selectboard
Meeting Minutes
May 16, 2022
Held Virtually via Zoom

Convened: 7:00 pm

Present: Hugh Mackay, Randy Gordon, Carl Seppala, Selectboard; Kathy Neal, Town Coordinator; Joe Cuneo, Fire Chief; Wayne Hachey, Zoning Board of Appeals; Tamara Conde, Cemetery Commission; David Cramer, Planning Board; Jen Potee, Cam Dunbar, Board of Health; Bruce Spenser, Lisa Finestone, Tree Committee; Nancy Slator, *New Salem News*; Brad Foster, 1794 Meetinghouse; Marney Ashburne; Sue Arnold; Peter Fisher

Selectboard Reviewed & Signed the Following:

- Payroll & Vendor Warrants
- Signing of Contract with Atlas Technical

Discussion Items

Request for use of Town Common for June 11 Celebration of Life for Dorothy Johnson

Sue started off by noting that Brad is helping her with this. She then briefly went over the various sites considered and why the Town Common was settled upon. They are anticipating a significant number of attendees. They will have tents and chairs. There was a question about parking and how to prevent folks from parking inappropriately. She also stressed there will be no alcohol, just a tea party in the afternoon. Dorothy was very fond of tea parties. The time would be 2:30 pm to about 3:30 pm or 4 pm. Very few people will speak formally. The 1794 Meetinghouse will serve for that purpose. The Town Common more for refreshments and the tea. She then asked if the chairs could be those at the Town Hall noting she would organize the movement of them from the Town Hall to the Town Common and back. Hugh asked if Sue had a rough idea of the number of participants. Sue responded her headcount is roughly around 100 if they all come. Still, there will be some restrictions which might deter some. They also hope to have some kind of Zoom hybrid. Only so many people can be allowed in the 1794 Meetinghouse itself. There might be some overflow. Hugh asked if the 1794 Meetinghouse would provide any equipment for sound. Brad responded by noting that it is hard to forecast how many people will come. He's planning for more than capacity just to be safe.

He stressed that for parking it'll need to be properly coordinated with the town. Hugh noted the various areas around the Town Common which should not be utilized for parking. He also noted several handicap places such as near the Old Academy Building and the Library. He also did not want to see access blocked for the Fire Station. Brad asked for clarification on that point to ensure that it's taken into consideration. Hugh elaborated that fire trucks must be able to exit near the intersections with Academy Drive and South Main Street. He also suggested that some be directed to park behind the Town Hall and Stowell Buildings. Some could also park on the recreation fields if necessary. Brad suggested that spaces closer to the Town Common and 1794 Meetinghouse have more handicapped designated spaces for the day and that a drop off area could be included. Sue submitted the Fire Dept. could advise on the fire truck piece of things. She felt confident that organizers could work things out with the various authorities such as Fire Dept. and Police Dept. Brad interjected to note that a Police presence would be a good idea. Hugh responded that for a detail coordination would need to be scheduled with the Chief of Police. There will be an officer on duty that day otherwise. Hugh then offered he could provide a map to assist with the planning. Sue thanked Hugh for that. Wayne reminded that he and his wife Amy would be willing to assist with directing traffic if need be. Both of them plan to be in attendance. Carl had no concerns so long as the Town Common is available. He also agreed with Hugh on the fire truck piece.

A motion was made by Carl to approve the requested use of the Town Common on June 11 for the Dorothy Johnson Celebration. Motion was seconded by Hugh and passed by majority vote.

Fire Station Boiler Replacement

Joe began by reporting on the boiler at the Fire Station. It's officially dead. Orange Oil called time of death on it. He understood that there was an article on the town meeting warrant to pay for replacement. Around \$21,000.

Joe suggested we could combine this with the generator project and do it all at once under ARPA. He submitted that the town could take no action on the article. So we can make a decision between now and the Annual Town Meeting and simply take no action on that article should it be deciding to go with ARPA. Hugh's thought it was a good suggestion, but wanted to see ARPA used more broadly. The Selectboard has already agreed to the generator project. Still, we don't have to spend that article. We can pass it and have it, and if no other major projects come up and we want to use the ARPA funding for the boiler, we can still do so. There was then a question of whether the town would have to go out to bid since this would constitute an emergency repair. Hugh noted that generally with an emergency you can get a waiver and it eases the bidding process required. Joe reminded the quote he has is from February. But assuming all the numbers hold the article could be used. There's a little wiggle room on that article sum. But not a lot.

Budget Discussion & ATM Articles with Finance Committee

Joe made a point of noting that he made several proposals to the Finance Committee for work needed on one of the fire engines. It appears the Finance Committee has taken no action. The costs for just repairs would be \$30,000. It's not in the budget or on the warrant as a special article. Hugh clarified that a letter was sent, but asked if there was any meeting held. Joe responded that there was a letter and a meeting. He presented to them. At the time they made no final decision. He spoke with a member in private and they'd told him that they favored delay. But it was unclear to him if it was delay in repair or delay in replacement. He elaborated that the pumper won't pass its next test. It's not at capacity and leaks. The repair would essentially rebuild the pump. He also noted a need for new tires for this truck as well. Hugh asked if that could be covered within the existing budget. Joe responded it might be, but he definitely cannot swing the \$30,000 repair. Kathy interjected to remind that the Annual Town Meeting Warrant hasn't been signed as of yet. Things remain somewhat fluid. Hugh asked Joe what would happen if there are no funds and we have to wait another year or so. Joe elaborated on how the department would try to keep going. It would basically be hoping for the best. It was noted that the ATM Warrant will be about 42 Articles. Article 2 sets the pay of elected officials. The operating budget is found in Article 4. Several articles cover special articles such as \$3,000 for Auditing, \$3,267 for Franklin County Tech School, and several others. Articles 12 and 13 will encompass COLA's. Article 19 would cover the Fire Dept. boiler. Article 24 would authorize the procurement of a new sander truck for Highway Dept. Article 25 would cover a debt exclusion for a fire truck. Article 39 covers the Revolving Funds. Carl noted an observation, that being we shouldn't muck around with the Finance Committees budget. We should be lining up the bidding process for the Fire Station's boiler. No time should be wasted. We'll have the article to pay for it or ARPA funding whatever the town decides to do. Randy then suggested that Selectboard members really go through the articles to ensure by the time of the ATM that they can answer questions. In the past there has been a plan on who would respond to questions on certain articles and the like. It might be a good idea to implement this again this year. It was also suggested the motions be worked out so we have them prepared ahead of time.

Approval of Contract with Atlas Technical Consultants for Landfill Monitoring

Kathy reported on this matter. We've had this company for the past 6 years. We are required to monitor our closed and capped landfill. DEP requires the monitoring for several decades and we have been following it. This is a 3-year contract and the company is on the official bidding list for the Commonwealth. The price appears to be the same and they do appear to provide timely reports. The cost is \$5,200 a year. It was agreed that Hugh would sign it as chair. Carl noted he had no objections, they've done well by us and the price appears to be the same.

A motion was made by Carl to approve the contract and to authorize the Selectboard chair to sign the contract. The motion was seconded by Randy and passed unanimously.

Memorial Day Activities

Hugh reminded that he would be willing to speak if need be. Otherwise we seem to have a pretty good schedule outlined. He then turned to discussion regarding the Quabbin Reservoir Cemetery. It seems that our current lack of a functioning Historical Commission might preclude us from participation in the parade. Tamara noted she used to serve on that Commission. It has to be Historical Commission members participating. So long as it is true that they are members, then funding is provided. It usually runs between \$200 and \$500. She's done it a number of times. They have a short parade and some services after. Hugh asked if the whole Commission has to participate or not. Tamara responded it doesn't have to be all of them, but certainly some of them. Kathy agreed to discuss the matter further with the appropriate officials.

Maintenance of Town Buildings & Cemetery

Tamara was present for Cemetery Commission. It's the same company as last year. They will make sure that the Cemetery is mowed prior to Memorial Day. Usually a mowing isn't done in the first half of May. They wait until the midpoint. She then noted several cemeteries that have already been mowed. Tamara then outlined previous meetings where this has been discussed and reminded those present that any questions or concerns about cemeteries should be referred to the Commission. Hugh then turned to trash removal at town buildings as well as custodial. He also had questions about where people are paid from, as he didn't see it on the budget. Cam responded that the mowing that doesn't go under Cemetery Commission the funds come from two sources, one for recreation involving fields, and the other from a general Town Common account. There is a person hired to help as a handyman. He's paid a stipend. The towns general Custodian is paid from in relation to general accounts. The Library Custodian is paid under the Library. Hugh then went over a few deferred maintenance items wondering if we should be adjusting the towns budget to pay for more work to be done. Cam felt part of the problem is turnover in town officials. Things just haven't been communicated. He agreed that the town needs to make some serious investments. The athletic fields could really use some work. It's not something that's going to be solved immediately. Tamara asked Cam about the athletic fields specifically.

Cam explained that as far as he knows athletic fields are paid from Rec accounts. Tamara found that unlikely. It was agreed that the Treasurer would probably know. Otherwise Tamara was aware of one account and wanted to ensure that funds aren't being over expended. Wayne interjected to provide some history on the handyman part. He explained that the position has a stipend and the work is on request and as needed. Randy noted that if we don't ask, it won't happen. But the limited amount we pay also limits the work we can expect. He felt that the way it was structured wasn't well done as it is the same amount if a lot is done or little is done. Randy also reminded that the Selectboard will need to be able to answer the Town Moderator when asked if it supports articles or doesn't support them, etc. Carl noted that he has always trusted on financial matters that the Finance Committee has things worked out unless something stands out to him. That said he did have some questions about Articles 40 and 41 which have to do with short term rentals. Hugh suggested those questions could likely be answered by Amy Fagin, one of the Zoning Board of Appeals members. Kathy noted that Article 41 would allow the town to tax at a 6 percent rate such short term rentals. FRCOG has published information on taxing this and it's been substantive. Around \$1 million county wide. Hugh noted his only real concern is the inspection part of this. It's kind of unclear at this stage as to who would do the inspections. Jen responded that Board of Health would do that and already does it through their Agent.

Veteran's Memorial Fund

Hugh noted that it was agreed that some funds should be placed into this fund. A transfer should be done from Free Cash for this. Kathy reminded the claimed \$1,000 has not been found. Randy noted that the reason that this hasn't been done yet is because Finance Committee has to do this. The Selectboard cannot do the adjustment themselves. It can setup a donation fund, but this sort of thing has to be done by the Finance Committee as part of the budget process. It appears that follow up is needed on this item. Carl suggested Article 36 on the warrant could cover this. It was noted that is for accepting grant funds. This involves money that appears to have gone into the general fund. Wayne noted his own recollection including a possible end of year transfer. Tamara noted that there was an actual check for some of the funds. There has been some claim that it was spent on a tree for a veteran's memorial. But she wasn't certain on the accuracy of that. Tamara then reported on behalf of the committee for the memorials. They're currently campaigning to raise funds for repair work as well as for new dedications and the like. This also includes applying for grants.

Board of Health Update

Jen reported on the Board of Health's latest meeting. Lynn Latin has returned to the Board of Health. They have reorganized, but she is still the chair as nobody else seemed to want it. She then asked the Selectboard about some software. Kathy noted she's been investigating this. It has to do with antivirus. She's obtained quotes and there is funding for some cyber security on the warrant, it's encompassed in Article 37 and would be about \$10,000. Jen confirmed it was antivirus. Hugh asked if the Board of Health has the funds. Jen couldn't imagine there wouldn't be. Part of the issue is determining the means of paying as it appears there is some hesitancy for the Board of Health's employee to use their own funds and seek reimbursement. Although it is true that doing so is the normal process. Carl noted that antivirus software usually comes with multiple users allowed. We may have software already purchased that we have slots for. Kathy agreed submitting she can research the matter further. It was noted that there is little uniformity between departments as to this sort of thing and what kind of

computers or brands of computers are being used. We really need to address this and have unified decisions as to security software and types of computers, etc. Some processes need to be streamlined. Kathy then asked Jen if anything was obtained from Zara Dowling relating to the mosquito opt out process. Jen had received something but had not had time to review it. Carl then asked Jen about whether she'd seen anything on the well for Swift River Elementary. Jen reported she'll be at the next meeting; she had received an email but again hadn't had time to review.

ARPA Funds Discussion

Hugh asked if there is anything aside from the Fire Dept. suggestion to include the Fire Station's boiler. Jen responded by suggesting we should set aside some for public health nursing. But she didn't have numbers yet. It was agreed we can obtain those a bit later. Cam then briefly reported on the items previously requested by Board of Health, that being the two walkways for the Transfer Station. Those remain in process. Kathy then suggested that if the Commonwealth allows the towns public bodies to continue holding virtual and hybrid meetings, we might want to set aside some funds for purchasing equipment. Hugh stressed that one thing we should keep in mind is that we don't want to expend all the funds on large projects. We should also pick a handful of smaller ones. You need those \$5,000 and \$10,000 projects. Not just the \$75,000 and \$100,000 ones. Carl noted some things about town buildings. He felt the town should compile a master list of competing needs. Not just those who aren't shy about asking. That said he agreed with Hugh on smaller projects being important. It was agreed to work on the idea as potentially something that can be incorporated into a Master Plan. Wayne noted that it was always difficult for him to do work for the town as a member of the Selectboard. As he isn't anymore, he can assist the town with various projects. Carl was pleased to hear that and thanked Wayne.

Old Academy Building

Hugh reported on this topic. The architect requested plans. He's made a request for them on behalf of the architect. This remains in process. Wayne asked if a report will be written up. Hugh responded that one will be done. We just need to provide the necessary documents. Wayne submitted he'd be willing to assist on shoring up the floor. Work that truly needs to be done.

Next Meeting

Kathy reminded the Selectboard that its next meeting would otherwise fall on Memorial Day. It was agreed to move the meeting to Tuesday, May 31.

Minutes

The Selectboard reviewed the minutes for May 3, 2022. Seeing no need for changes, it was agreed to pass the minutes.

A motion was made by Carl to approve the minutes of May 3, 2022 as written. Randy seconded the motion and it passed without objection.

A motion to adjourn at 8:32 pm was made by Carl. The motion was seconded by Randy and passed without objection.

Respectfully Submitted
Jakob K. Voelker, Selectboard Clerk