

New Salem Select Board

Meeting Minutes

November 13, 2023

Select Board members present: Zara Dowling (ZD, acting chair), Rick Taupier (RT)

Select Board members absent: Sue Cloutier (SC, chair)

ZD called the meeting to order at 7:00.

There were no public comments.

Town Coordinator Kathy Neal (KN) presented her report.

- She updated the Board about the ongoing assessment of town buildings. Engineer John Wallen, who previously assessed the town hall and other buildings, is going to look at the library. Building Inspector Phil Delory agreed to look at the two fire stations.
- She noted Ryan Clary of FRCOG will consult with the highway department about Cooleyville Road. The Board questioned whether there was another road to be looked at, which was unclear from previous minutes.
ACTION: Kathy will also discuss with Clary or another FRCOG staff member what general services FRCOG offers that could be useful to the town.
- RT inquired whether the town has the funds to hire an administrative person for the highway department, and that the previous person worked 10 hours/week.
ACTION: KN will report back about available funds.
- She reported she will be away next week, so she hopes to get agenda items for the next meeting together early.
- She stated the Assessors hope to attend the next Select Board meeting to hold the annual tax classification hearing.
- She noted that the DEP approved the PFAS system at Swift River School.

Carla Halpern spoke about the upcoming 2024 Rabbit Run. She stated she would like to start the race again in 2024 for the first time since COVID. She discussed the following:

- She wants to hold the event on the town common on a Saturday in the middle of May.
- She will get permission from DCR to run into the Quabbin watershed.
- She is also seeking approval to give any money raised to Backpack Buddies and Nature's Classroom, two programs available to Swift River School students.
- In the past the race has raised about \$1000-\$2000. This year's Village Ultra event raised about \$2500.

Kate Koonz, a teacher at Swift River School, spoke about the Backpack Buddies program, a program by which the school sends home food for families in need. She noted she is currently fundraising for this new program and stated she would be grateful for extra funding from the Rabbit Run.

VOTE: ZD moved to grant permission for Carla Halpern to hold the Rabbit Run on May 18, 2024, to use the town common for the race, and to use the town hall for bathrooms and registration, with the funds raised from the event to go to the two above-mentioned programs at Swift River School. RT seconded. No further discussion. Passed.

KN noted that the paperwork for the General Store's annual package store liquor license is in order.

VOTE: RT moved to approve the renewal of the New Salem General Store's liquor license. ZD seconded. No further discussion. Passed.

The board discussed KN's letter to state legislators in support of H4385 regarding federal funds for broadband. ZD and RT signed the letters.

The board discussed the Highway Department job descriptions written by RT. ZD feels it is important to clarify what "winter overtime" means, and feels it is important to note that operator licenses must be maintained during the duration of employment.

ACTION: ZD will make these and some other minor edits before the next Select Board meeting.

VOTE: ZD motioned to transfer the John Deere tractor and trailer from the Board of Health to the town, to be moved to the garage behind the town hall to be used for town grounds maintenance. RT seconded. No further discussion. Passed.

VOTE: ZD moved to declare some Board of Health computer equipment as surplus property. RT seconded. No further discussion. Passed.

VOTE: RT motioned to approve the minutes of 10/23. ZD abstained. Passed.

The board discussed the minutes of 10/30. ZD requested adding an action item stating that KN will reach out to another person to look at the slate roof.

VOTE: ZD to approve the minutes as amended. RT seconded. No further discussion. Passed.

VOTE: ZD moved to adjourn at 7:56pm. RT seconded. No further discussion. Passed.

Respectfully submitted,
Andrew Maurer
Select Board Clerk