

**Town of *New Salem* Selectboard
Meeting Minutes
November 14, 2022
Held Virtually via Zoom**

Convened: 7:00 pm

Present: Carl Seppala, Susan Cloutier, Zara Dowling, Selectboard; Kathy Neal, Town Coordinator; Joe Cuneo, Fire Chief; MaryEllen Kennedy, MLP Director; Marny Ashbourne; Jen Potee, Board of Health; Nancy Slator, *New Salem News*; Laura Barletta; Martha Hanks-Nicoll; Hugh Mackay

Selectboard Reviewed & Signed the Following:

- Payroll & Vendor Warrants
- Liquor License for NSGS

Discussion Items

Public Forum

Susan began by briefly explaining the purpose of the Public Forum which is to allow for public comment. Still the public should be advised that nothing substantive may be discussed if it does not appear on the agenda.

Pole Hearing for 27 Lovers Lane – National Grid & Verizon

Susan began by noting that this hearing is for a pole that would extend the power lines further down Lovers Lane. Kathy stated she notified the abutters. Hugh interjected to note he's an abutter and to his reading the map from the utilities has errors (incorrect placement of pole P8 on the wrong side of the street). He also questioned the necessity of more poles and asked a further question about the appearance of the placement of some underground wires asking if this would require excavation of the public way. Susan expressed the understanding that this was just for the placement of one pole. She suggested that the town contact National Grid. There should have been a representative from them at this hearing. Kathy noted that the paperwork says that it's for a residential service upgrade. Hugh acknowledged that, but again submitted it's unclear if it's just a pole or digging. Carl echoed that. He saw no issue with another pole, but felt it a fair question to ask based on the paperwork's language. Susan suggested it might be boilerplate language, but in the absence of a representative, it makes sense to ask. It was agreed to continue the hearing and to request a new clarified map with an answer as to the language question.

A motion was made by Zara to continue the hearing until the next meeting on November 28, 2022, with the request that a utility representative be present and the Selectboard's questions be posed and answered. The motion was seconded by Carl and passed without objection.

ACTION ITEM: Kathy agreed to contact the project proponent to see if a representative can attend the next meeting.

Approve Liquor License Renewal for New Salem General Store

Kathy briefly reported on this matter. All items are in order and the Police Chief has reported no known incidents with this store. So there should be no reason to oppose the issuance of a license. Zara asked how many licenses the town issues. Kathy noted there is a limit under the statute, but the town is not near that maximum having not been requested to issue more than the one. We do issue a seasonal one to New Salem Cider, but otherwise it's never more than one day licenses.

A motion was made by Carl to approve the license. The motions as seconded by Zara and passed without objection.

ACTION ITEM: Two members of the Select Board need to come in to sign the renewal.

Update on Fire Station Heating System, Police Cruiser, & Building Issues

Fire Station Heating. Kathy reported that work will commence on November 15 to replace the Fire Stations boiler. She expected the project to last a week.

ACTION ITEM: Kathy will send Zara contact information for the police chief, since she will be acting as liaison.

Police Cruisers. Kathy then reported on the police cruiser which was in an accident. The Chief is working to get a replacement that is a hybrid like the one we have on order, but there haven't been many bid options. Thankfully, the cruiser we already had on order should be here before the end of the calendar year. Zara asked about the issues. Kathy responded it is again the supply chain. Carl noted part of the problem is that there are only two contractors approved by the Commonwealth.

Town Hall Winterization. Kathy then asked the Selectboard about winterization. Susan submitted this should be done now that the weather is turning colder. Zara asked if the Town Hall in particular has been closed every winter or if that's varied. Kathy responded it's usually every year unless there's something that requires a large space like a Special Town Meeting. Carl noted that Swift River has offered to host in winter as well if need be. So winterizing the space is still a good idea.

ACTION ITEM: Kathy will contact a plumber to drain the pipes and shut the building for the winter.

ADA Compliance. Kathy reported a FRCOG expert is coming to look at ADA compliance at the Stowell Building (front door/ramp) and Old Library/Town Hall Annex. Plus the Annex still has some lingering smell issues from the skunks.

Fire Station Heating. Joe then reported briefly on the Fire Station noting that the project is moving forward. Carl asked if there is any potential for the project to exceed budget. Joe responded it was done by bid, so no. Thursday and Friday is the main install and electrical hookup by Monday with hopefully a firing up. Zara asked about fire equipment and the cold overnight temperature. Joe responded that this evening is really the only cold night to worry about.

Grant Award for Police Body Cameras

Kathy reported that the Police Dept. received a grant through our insurer, MIIA, for buying six body cameras as well as related software and storage. Eventually these will be mandated by the Commonwealth. We have a quote already so we can proceed with ordering them now that we have the grant funds. In addition, the Police Chief needs to write a policy for their implementation. Zara asked about the means of data storage. Kathy responded she wasn't sure about the details but it will provide for backup to the cameras and also includes maintenance and support for a period of several years.

Approval for Energy Committee to Apply for Municipal Energy Technical Assistance

Susan noted that this topic has been lightly discussed and requested Zara provide a reminder. She briefly went over the grant opportunity which is for technical assistance. She's been working with FRCOG to apply for META funds from the state to support ASHRAE II level energy audits at town buildings. This will include weatherization. They can also evaluate Swift River for solar and related storage. Susan expressed support for this topic. Carl noted several capital issues coming up for Swift River and it would be helpful to have an informed opinion on something like solar as that could be potentially rolled into a project for them. Susan noted several buildings we should consider, the Library, the Stowell Building, and the Town Hall Annex as they are high use. The Highway Garage shouldn't be forgotten, but may not be the highest priority for this particular opportunity. MaryEllen recalled that the garage had a wood furnace. Zara responded that heats the old garage, but they want to move into the new one which does not have a heating system at present.

A motion was made by Susan to authorize Zara to sign this application and to express support for this initiative. The motion was seconded by Carl and passed by majority vote with Zara abstaining.

ARPA & PFAS at Swift River School

The Board discussed at length the funds allocated and expended through ARPA funds for PFAS work at Swift River School and for other town projects. They revisited the numbers associated with different items, including:

- \$305,000 is the town's allotment of ARPA funds
- An additional \$40,000 in state ARPA funds was earmarked to New Salem for spending on Swift River School for a PFAS filtration system.
- \$20,000 was voted at town meeting to support PFAS filtration at Swift River.
- Roughly \$30,000 has been expended to date for work by Tighe & Bond to design a PFAS filtration system and work by the town's Health Agent, Tim N, to facilitate coordination amongst the school, MassDEP and Tighe & Bond.
- \$9,200 in ARPA funds has been allocated for a new ramp at the Transfer Station
- \$65,000 in ARPA funds has been allocated for a generator for the Fire Station

- \$20,000 in ARPA funds has been allocated for costs associated with the heating system for the Fire Station (above and beyond the \$20,000 voted at Town Meeting); this full sum may not be required, but roughly 2/3 will

Kathy noted that there is a new grant opportunity available through MassDEP for funding PFAS filtration systems. She is contacting the school to determine if they are the entity that should apply. Carl noted this could change the math on what is currently anticipated to be a very expensive project for the town. Asbestos abatement could no longer be necessary, which would reduce the price tag somewhat.

Sue noted that a new playground would cost roughly \$20,000. Carl suggested this could be a good item for Town Meeting, rather than ARPA funds. The playground is located above the septic system for the library, which means an engineer will need to evaluate what and where can be placed above the system in terms of playground equipment.

Carl reiterated that the PFAS system at Swift River School should be the highest priority for ARPA funds, with the DPW floor and heating system as second priority.

ACTION ITEMS: Kathy agreed to create a spreadsheet to track allocated, spent, and to-be-allocated ARPA funds.

Kathy will contact the school regarding the PFAS grant opportunity.

Agenda & Minutes

Agenda. Susan expressed a desire for mutual consideration for the agenda. Zara asked about the release of a draft on the Monday one week before each meeting. Kathy was amenable to the suggested thereof. She then suggested that Department Heads who report to the Selectboard to meet with the Selectboard on a rotating basis. Officials such as the Fire Chief and the Police Chief. Still, Carl stressed that if we do this, we shouldn't put them at the end of the agenda as was done in the past. Zara asked Carl whether he would like to invite someone from the school. Carl suggested first reaching out to the public bodies that govern those departments, like the School Committee, to see what their interest is. Susan then noted that the Fire Chief has expressed the desire to see this occur and he'd like to come in a bit more frequently. Joe noted he was good with the idea of meeting with the Selectboard routinely and perhaps somewhat frequently.

ACTION ITEMS: Carl will contact the School Committee to ask whether a representative is interested in attending occasional meetings (e.g., roughly once every two months).

Kathy will add a time slot for town employees to future agendas, as well as time slot for her updates.

Minutes. Zara then brought up the timing of minutes wishing to see them produced by a week after the meeting in order to aid in setting the subsequent agenda. Jake responded by noting that MGL merely requires the minutes be provided in a "timely manner," which the Attorney General defines as three public body meetings or 30 days. Although the AG does encourage they be ready by the next meeting, after 10 days as the draft minutes qualify as public record. Jake then noted he has provided the last set of minutes 3 days earlier than normal and will endeavor to produce this set earlier.

Sue and Zara expressed a desire to see action items called out in bold font.

The Selectboard considered the minutes for November 1, 2022. The November 1 draft meeting minutes were amended to reflect:

- Accurate ARPA numbers and funds expended to date on PFAS issues at Swift River School
- Amended language regarding the status of the town's supply of oil and need for future bidding

A vote to accept the November 1, 2022 minutes as amended passed unanimously.

A motion to adjourn at 8:28 pm was made by Zara. The motion was seconded by Carl and passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted

Jakob K. Voelker, Selectboard Clerk