

**Town of *New Salem* Selectboard
Meeting Minutes
February 6, 2023
Held Virtually via Zoom**

Convened: 6:30 pm

Present: Susan Cloutier, Zara Dowling, Selectboard; Kathy Neal, Town Coordinator; Stacy Senflug, Town Clerk; MaryEllen Kennedy, MLP Director; John Bonafini, Chief of Police; David Cramer, Planning Board; Jen Potee, Board of Health; Nancy Slator, *The New Salem News*; Laura Barletta; Marny Ashburne;

Selectboard Reviewed & Signed the Following:

- Payroll & Vendor Warrants
- Appointment Slip for Police Officer

Discussion Items

Public Forum

Susan called the meeting to order and briefly explained the Public Forums purpose. Jen then informed the Selectboard of a resignation.

➤ *Board of Health Clerk Resignation*

Jen reported that the Board of Health Clerk has resigned. The Board of Health may appoint an interim Clerk, but they haven't had time to meet and make a determination. Zara expressed sorrow to see this happen as did Susan. Susan then noted a temporary change last week from Saturday to Sunday was appreciated given how cold it was on Saturday. She couldn't recall it ever being that cold in New Salem.

Electrical Issues at the Town Hall Annex - Update

Susan followed up on the question of funding that should be available for this work and asked Kathy if she had any specifics about funds for maintenance of that building. Kathy responded it likely won't be enough to cover the needed work. We should seek out another source. Susan agreed that we should as we must have this work done. Zara inquired about a quote or several quotes for that matter. Stacy recalled that there were two options presented and she thought there would be two estimates provided. Susan agreed but worried about not getting this done given the Special Town Meeting. We can't put this off. She then asked about meeting with the Planning Board. Kathy responded we are still waiting for some information from Town Counsel as to the Planning Board matter. Zara asked if Stacy and Kathy would be willing to work together to help obtain quotes. Both agreed. Zara asked for a deadline of Friday, February 10, 2023. It was agreed to also schedule a business day meeting.

Action: Kathy and Stacy will obtain quotes from the electricians

Appointment of Meghan Gallo as a Police Officer (part-time)

John reported that there's no training to do more or less as this officer is fully certified by POST and all other requirements. She's currently working in Leverett on their second shift. But she's limited to 19 hours there. So he felt he could get a day or two out of her regularly enough. John reminded that currently he's covering all off the shifts himself. Susan then thanked the Police Chief for finding an officer on short notice. Kathy then reminded the Selectboard that the appointment slip is ready. John then went over scheduling swear-in with Stacy. They agreed to arrange a time for swear in outside of the meeting.

A motion was made by Susan to appoint Meghan Gallo as a police officer. Seconded by Zara and passed by majority vote.

Action: Sign appointment slip(s)

COLA Vote for Retirees – Franklin County Retirement Board

Zara started by noting this is retroactive. Kathy recalled it was for Fiscal Year 2023 and was passed in Fiscal Year 2022. Still it won't really hit our actuarial for another 2 years. Zara noted the documentation indicates that roughly 2027 is when the town would see an impact. Usually this is voted at town meeting though. She wondered if this was some kind of special action. Kathy responded that it is a special action and the Selectboard is empowered in this instance. In light of that Zara was willing to vote.

A motion as made by Susan to approve the COLA as detailed by Franklin County Board of Retirement in their request for the vote. The motion was seconded by Zara and passed by majority vote.

Appointment of FRCOG Representative

Susan began by noting it was Carl who held this position most recently. Zara expressed reservations at taking up the position since she already serves on some FRCOG related bodies. Kathy noted it might not have to be a member of the Selectboard. It was agreed to table the appointment until some research is done regarding the requirements for the appointment.

Action: Kathy follow up

Acceptance of Pickup Truck from Osprey Equipment Corporation, Inc. for the Fire Dept.

Kathy reported on her email with Town Counsel on this matter. Town Counsel saw no conflict of interest. Since the motion at the last meeting was contingent on Town Counsel's ruling, there's no need for further action. Susan expressed appreciation to the Barletta's for the donation.

ABCC Summer Population Estimate

Kathy reported that the ABCC sends this out each year. They don't really seem to make an estimate for New Salem at all. Susan noted the town does have some summer residents. But we're not a summer vacation community. Kathy recalled that we send notices to a few out of town residencies about homes in town, so we certainly have some summer residents or those who have a primary home elsewhere. Zara suggested voting to approve a number, but noted that she researched this and many towns have reported issues on making this determination if they aren't a vacation town that tracks the numbers. Susan suggested Broadband might have an idea, but then again it might not help. MaryEllen interjected to say that they do know a few residents who disconnected and one might have been seasonal. Further Eagleville Rd is mostly seasonal residents. Susan suggested a dozen. Zara countered with ten. It was so agreed.

A motion was made by Susan to designate the summer population increase to be registered at 10. Zara seconded the motion and it passed by majority vote.

Town Coordinator Reports: Update on Highway Dept. Hiring, reports for the Annual Town Report due, Update on PFAS at Swift River Elementary School

Kathy provided her updates by starting with the Annual Town Report. Reports from public bodies and departments are due. This includes the Selectboard. As per tradition she agreed to write the Selectboard's report and provide it for later review and approval. It was so agreed. The due date is February 15. Kathy briefly noted a few public bodies have already submitted their reports and thanked them for getting them in early. Kathy then turned to the Highway Dept. noting that we've had two more interviews. Both candidates were qualified, but one was slightly better than the other. She asked if the Selectboard wanted to interview one or both of them. Zara noted there may have been more applicants. Kathy responded those were included in this latest round of interviews. Susan submitted she'd like to have a vote by the next meeting. Kathy briefly reported on the PFAS matter noting we haven't heard anything new at this stage, but we've asked DEP for a grant to help pay for the work. Zara suggested reaching out to the local state representative to see if they can assist moving the matter along. There was some discussion of prior funding, including the General Court's earmarking of state level ARPA funding. Zara agreed to reach out to Swift River. She asked if there is anyone else beyond the Principal is available. Kathy noted the Superintendent would also be someone to reach out to. Kathy then briefly reported on the generator at the Town Hall. The Fire Chief maintains that the building is technically still designated for shelter purposes and further if we don't run it regularly and test it, it will deteriorate. So if we want it to work less we should manually shut it off early but leave it otherwise in condition to run sometimes. Further work is still being done on the Stowell Building's generator. Zara suggested steps that could be taken to bring it down to perhaps once a month. It shouldn't start running and go and go for hours. Kathy agreed, but noted she's pursuing the opinion of other relevant officials in addition to the Fire Chief.

Action: Kathy to send resume(s) and make formal recommendation. Zara to contact school officials regarding the PFAS matter and the DEP Grant.

Agenda & Minutes

The Selectboard considered the minutes for January 26, 2023. Zara suggested some further tracking of ongoing action items as many may take more than a two week interval to attend to. Susan suggested doing what Broadband did which is keep a running tally at the end of the agenda. Kathy noted she's begun keeping a list of action items noted at the meetings and could compare notes and they could begin to be included at the bottom of agendas. Zara then brought up a listing of action items from prior meetings and proposed edits for January 26. Out of that Susan concluded that there needs to be a meeting for discussion about roads and public ways in town.

Jake then informed the Selectboard that he would not seek re-appointment in June for a 10th term as Selectboard Clerk. He has served 6 iterations of the Selectboard, but has found recent shifts in expectations to be too great to sustain on the long term. Zara asked if action items could be included in the meantime. Jake agreed to do to the best of his ability. He stressed that his providing notice now gives the Selectboard time to make a decision on his replacement. He will of course remain in service to the town in other positions.

Action: Followup Meeting on Road Maintenance

A motion was made by Zara to approve the minutes for January 26, 2023 as amended. The motion was seconded by Susan and passed by majority vote.

A motion to adjourn at 7:46 pm was made by Susan. The motion was seconded by Zara and passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted
Jakob K. Voelker, J.D.
Selectboard Clerk