

**Town of *New Salem* Selectboard**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**April 18, 2023**  
**Held Virtually via Zoom**

**Convened:** 7:02 pm

**Present:** Susan Cloutier, Zara Dowling, Selectboard; Kathy Neal, Town Coordinator; John Bonafini, Police Chief; Sarah Kohler, Planning Board, Calvin Leyton, Tree Committee, Laura Barletta

**Selectboard Reviewed & Signed the Following:**

- Payroll & Vendor Warrants
- Town Election warrant

**Discussion Items**

**Minutes of 4-3-23**

Zara had some edits for the minutes.

A discussion was had on who issues permits for events and whether it was something Planning Board would address. Sarah Kohler commented that there is nothing in the zoning bylaws addressing special events so it would be up to the Selectboard. Need to have some input from police as well for parking and safety, especially on the common. Planning Board is going to review the zoning bylaw for changes and set up sub-committees for solar and cannabis.

VOTE: Zara made a motion to approve the minutes as amended. Sue: Second. Vote: All in favor.

**Follow-Up Items based on Minutes:**

Kathy needs to finish and send out the Selectboard annual report.

Kathy stated she had briefly looked into OWL for hybrid meetings and will report back.

Sue will come into sign paperwork and Zara will also come in to sign the election warrant.

**Opioid Funds**

Kathy said we should be getting approximately \$9,200 from the various settlements. It can be used for prevention education, awareness, and purchasing Narcan. We could also join with other towns so that more programs can be shared.

Chief Bonafini said we will need to buy Narcan for both Police and Fire Departments. Zara asked about the cost of Narcan and the Chief said it was fairly inexpensive and they typically carry two doses in the cruiser. The fire department also carries it.

VOTE: Sue moved to enable the Police and Fire chiefs to use money from the opioid fund for the purchase of Narcan. Zara seconded. All in favor.

***ACTION ITEMS:*** Obtain information from BOH on how they would like to see the money spent. Kathy to find out how much money we have received to date. Kathy to set up a spread sheet to track expenditures.

### **Update on Fire Chief MOU**

Sue reported there is a meeting on Wednesday. There are still a number of questions and she needs to meet with Fincom. There are issues on time-table – i.e. the timeline if one of the towns wants to withdraw from the MOU. She thinks withdrawal would be mostly due to financial considerations and since he's a strong chief, we would have to go through a process to fire him. One town has to be the lead town in the Chief's employment so it would be the lead town to fire. There was a question on which town has less expensive benefits. We need more info from Fincom on cost of benefits. The group has more information from Wendell.

Kathy said Jake Voelker contacted her with comments that it should not be a MOU but an intergovernmental agreement under the MA statutes. The committee understands that it would have to be a more formal document between the two towns, not just an MOU.

### **Agenda for All Boards Meeting**

The Selectboard and Kathy agreed on the following items for the All Boards meeting agenda:

Round table: remarks from each committee of one or two items.

Town website: Ask committee to check their posted forms to make sure they are current and add new ones if needed.

Posting agenda and minutes: Kathy will have a sheet on how to post an agenda so that when you click the calendar, the agenda appears.

Website: Discussion on issues with the website.

Emails for town employees: Discussion of how to deal with emails for boards/committees and establish guidance. Randy and Hugh shut down their emails but they still exist. Emails should not be issue oriented, just for scheduling. Will need some basic guidance for e-mail issues and Kathy will provide a link to the Attorney General's website for the Open Meeting guidance.

Building and grounds issues: Zara found some documents in the office from 2009 and 2012 about building needs, which are still fairly relevant. We need to figure out priorities. Ask everyone what they see in their buildings that need attention.

***ACTION ITEMS:*** Kathy to get agenda out to attendees and put time limits on each topic.

### **Annual Report Cover**

Person or town pictures? Kathy wants to get the report to the printer in mid-May. The Selectboard preferred pictures of the town.

***ACTION ITEM:*** Kathy will ask the New Salem News to request pictures be sent to her of New Salem with a deadline of May 1.

### **Town Meeting Date**

We had previously discussed June 6. Kathy reported that both Cam and Stacy are available that night.

VOTE: Sue moved that the Town Meeting be scheduled for June 6 at 7 pm in the Town Hall. Zara second. All in Favor.

### **Open Space and Recreation Plan Committee**

The last time a plan was done was in 2010. We were awarded funding from FRCOG to update the plan. We are looking for people to serve on the Committee. FRCOG does the heavy lifting and we give input and perhaps do site visits.

The Selectboard asked TaMara Conde if she wanted to be Recreation Committee representative on the Open Space & Recreation Committee and she agreed.

Zara will represent the Selectboard, TaMara will be on for the Recreation Committee, Josh Rapp will be on for the Conservation Commission. Sarah volunteered for Planning Board and thought one other person from Planning might be interested. Calvin will ask Bill Lafley from Tree Committee if he wants to be on it. There was a question on whether the town meeting has to establish the committee? Kathy said it's a short term committee that will disband and the Selectboard can approve the committee.

VOTE: Zara moved to have an ad hoc committee for the Open Space and Recreation Plan. Sue second. Vote: All in favor.

Zara moved to appoint Josh, Sarah, Bill, Zara, TaMara, possibly another from Planning Board, Sue: second. Vote: All in favor.

### **Mountain View Cemetery Issues**

There are trees growing out of the retaining wall at the cemetery. There have also been trees taken down that affected the stability of the wall. Calvin and the Tree Committee looked at this. There is concern that the trees are undermining the stone wall. If abutters take down the trees, there may also be damages. There was concern about the walls as it could be an expensive fix and some of the trees are re-sprouting. Calvin and the Tree committee can look at it and weigh in. TaMara, from the Cemetery Commission, said the wall is part of cemetery but the property behind it is private. The Cemetery Commission removed or cut back some of the trees as they were part of the cemetery where there were graves and the private owner took down others that abut the back end of cemetery, outside of the wall. There is flooding back there that also impacts the wall.

Dave Briand stated his land was the abutting property owner behind the wall and he hired a forester to decide which trees to cut near the cemetery. He said he talked to TaMara and Garth before cutting down trees. He said his goal was to bring back the actual mountain view, as the cemetery is called. He voluntarily paid for the trees to be taken down. He said the Cemetery Commission can drop other trees on his property as well. Sue asked if there were stakes in ground marking the boundaries? Dave said there were ribbons on some of the stakes, so it is

possible to tell where the boundaries are. He said the felled trees don't hurt the wall, it's the roots that do that. The Cemetery has a special place in his heart as the person who lived in his house previously is buried there. Zara asked Dave if there are wetlands there and if so, he would have to go to Conservation Commission before doing work on the property. He said his is under Chapter 61A and the state forester said he could cut a certain number of trees. Zara suggested he send his plans to Conservation Commission before he opens it up and cuts down trees or does other work in wetlands, since the Agricultural exemption has some limitations. TaMara said Cemetery was aware of issues with wall for years.

***ACTION ITEMS:*** David will be notified of the next Conservation Commission meeting or site visit. Calvin and the Tree Committee will do a site visit to the cemetery to determine next steps.

### **Surplus Property of Fire Dept.**

Kathy said the items would go on munibid for auction and went over the items to be declared surplus.

***ACTION ITEM:*** There was a question on where the money goes, back into the Fire Department or into the general fund? Kathy will check.

VOTE: Zara made a motion to declare the listed items as surplus and be sold by auction. Sue: second. Vote: all in favor.

### **Municipal Aggregation of Electricity**

On April 24<sup>th</sup> the town must choose the supplier and the term of months, along with the other towns in the aggregation group. Two suppliers bid. The town can pick from the four different categories. The terms are from 6-36 months. Zara commented that longer term would give more stability to town residents.

Zara explained the different categories. The first is standard. The second one goes to wind energy in Texas, but it goes there anyway. The things that mean something to us are #3 and 4, which provide additional Class I RECs. Zara suggest supplier 2 for 3 years. Zara said she did a study for work and though the aggregation did not offer a huge savings over the National Grid costs, it offered greater stability in prices and minor savings.

VOTE: Zara made a motion to approve the second supplier for a term of 3 years. Sue: second Vote: All in favor.

### **Town Coordinator's Report**

**Water Heater.** Kathy had someone in for a quote for a water heater for the Town Hall. The prior quote was \$5,800 and this plumber quoted \$4,880 for both the repair and turning the heating system and water back on. Zara asked to get a quote for a tankless system as well.

**Veteran's Memorial.** TaMara had some concerns from the Veteran's Memorial Committee. Wayne had brought a large stone up there that they want removed. In addition, they have a new flag pole they plan to install. Wayne wanted to put a plaque on the stone. Sue asked what was the process for the stone and where would the flag pole would go? TaMara said it was

moved from the town hall a few years ago. The new pole will have a light on it so the flag would not have to be taken down daily. Sue said the light should face down. Zara asked where the memorial is located and will light affect abutters. Sue said it is between the old Library and the Congregational Church. The Committee has bought the flag pole but not the light. There was a question on whether veterans should be contacted for input. The stone was just put there in last year. There are only 3 people on committee, Wayne was on it but dropped off.

TaMara is concerned about the rock as it's very heavy and doesn't think it is installed properly in the ground and has concrete on it so it is not appropriate for the Memorial. Zara asked TaMara to do a write up of their plans for the memorial and put it in the New Salem News for comment, since there is strong interest in town regarding the look of the memorial. Tamara said they are applying for a grant to help fund the Memorial. They want to move the flag pole behind the monument and not in front of it and that there have been private donations. Tamara was concerned about the safety of rock. Sue said the Memorial should be a public process.

***ACTION ITEMS:*** Kathy will have the DPW take a look at the stone to determine its safety. Zara asked TaMara to do a write up of their plans for the memorial and put it in the New Salem News for comment, since there is strong interest in town regarding the look of the memorial.

TaMara also said she had an issue with her emails going to spam. She has two cemetery deeds to be prepared and signed. She will bring in to Kathy.

VOTE: Motion to adjourn by Sue at 9:13 p.m. Second by Zara. Vote: All in favor.