

**TOWN OF FRANCONIA**  
**BOARD OF SELECTMEN'S REGULAR MEETING**  
**Monday February 12, 2018 AT TOWN OFFICES**

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**TOWN OFFICIALS PRESENT:** Bernadette Costa, Jill Brewer, Eric Meth.

**TOWN OFFICIALS ABSENT:** None

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Holly Burbank, Jenny Monahan, Peter Grote, Mary Grote, Karen Foss, Walter Palmer, Cort Roussel, Jeffrey Blodgett.

**The meeting was called to order at 3:07pm**

**APPOINTMENTS:**

Walter Palmer  
Cort Roussel of Franconia Notch Regional Chamber of Commerce

**SIGN/APPROVE:**

The Board reviewed and approved the February 5, 2018 meeting minutes as amended. The January 29, 2018 non-public session minutes were also reviewed and approved.

The February 15, 2018 Transaction List was reviewed and signed.

An Intent to Cut permit for Delage Farm Road, Map 30 Lot 6-1 & 14 was reviewed and approved.

Chairman Meth dictated a letter to the CDFA advising them that the streetlight conversion to LED lighting was complete. The letter was approved by the other selectmen and will be sent.

The Board reviewed a septic permit for Map 22 Lot 4-4. Selectman Costa had questions regarding the building code. Holly Burbank said she would check with Building Inspector Allan Clark and update the Board.

**TO DISCUSS/REVIEW:**

Walter Palmer addressed the Board to request that he be allowed to speak on behalf of the town in front of the State Legislature regarding SB530 (Relative to high voltage electric transmission lines in highway rights-of-ways.) The Board unanimously agreed to allow Walter to be a town spokesperson in this instance.

Cort Roussel and Kevin Johnson of Franconia Notch Regional Chamber of Commerce met with the Board regarding Barbara Ashley stepping down as Executive Director of the Chamber. Cort said the Chamber will be regrouping and reorganizing after the change in leadership and focusing on redefining its mission and priorities. Kevin Johnson said the Chamber would like to forge a more cohesive relationship with the Town of Franconia and explore options such as collaborating with Recreation in the future for better town promotion. Cort said the Chamber's recent endeavor to lease the Franconia Sports Shop location as a new visitor's center will be abandoned as it doesn't make sense financially and there are no on-site restrooms. The Town Hall Visitor's Center will continue to be used by the Chamber.

Chairman Meth corrected the statement he made last week about the streetlight in front of Garnet Hill that was not updated to LED lighting. He has since learned that the light belongs to Garnet Hill and not the town.

Holly Burbank let the Board know that the state no longer requires notification of failed septic systems to towns. Such notification is now sent directly to the state.

Chairman Meth stated that there was a scheduling conflict with the Town's Budget Hearing and the Schools—they were scheduled to take place simultaneously on 02/15 at 7pm. As a result, the Town changed the time of the Supplemental Budget Hearing to 2/16 at 7pm so people could attend both hearings if they wished.

The contents of the Town Report were briefly discussed. The Board allowed Holly to omit the Valuation of Town Property report for this year because there is no equipment inventory spreadsheet for the different departments. Developing one is a goal for 2018.

Due to Monday the 19<sup>th</sup> being President's Day, the Board scheduled the next meeting for Tuesday, February 20<sup>th</sup>. There will be no meeting on February 26<sup>th</sup> due to members being out of town.

**Town Administrator Update:** Holly said she spoke with Bill Melekas regarding the Memorandum of Understanding from Abbie Greenleaf Library. Bill thought the best way to collaborate would be for the Select Board to attend the Library Trustees meeting on March 15<sup>th</sup> to discuss the MOU. Eric Meth and Jill Brewer said they would attend.

Holly asked the Board if the Valuation of Town Equipment report was necessary for the Town Report this year. Holly said she would like to have an updated inventory done by departments before looking at the valuation of items.

**Correspondence:** Jill said she received a forwarded email from Vicky Cole, originally from Nick DeMaio of Sugar Hill who suggested that a Winter Carnival, similar to one done in Steamboat Springs would be a great way to get people to the N. Country and help boost local economies.

#### **COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

**Conservation Commission:** None

**CIP Committee:** None

**Energy Commission:** The letter has been sent to CDFA so the town can get a rebate for the LED lights.

**Planning Board:** None

**Northern Pass:** Eric said Eversource is encouraging people to call Governor Sununu about the SEC decision against Northern Pass. Peter Grote said people he has spoken with are comfortable with much stronger land use ordinances being put in place for future protection.

**PUBLIC INPUT:** Mary Grote said the budget hearing information should be on the sign at Peabody and Smith. Holly said the meeting information is on the sign. Mary said she thinks it should be on both sides of the sign. Holly said there are other announcements on the sign currently as well.

Mary Grote said that the 1/29 Select Board minutes say that both the Northern Pass Legal Defense Fund and Legal Fund were completely expended, and then the following weeks meeting minutes say that the town received \$22,900 in donations for the Northern Pass Legal Defense Fund. Mary asked when those funds were spent. Holly Burbank explained that the \$22,900 can only be put into the Northern Pass Legal Defense Fund by town vote, which will take place at Town Meeting, and the funds are currently kept in the General Fund.

There were more comments from Mary and Peter saying that towns need to continue to prepare to fight Northern Pass again. Eric agreed.

Jeff Blodgett said he thinks a regional chamber makes a lot of sense and asked if collaborating with other towns has been considered. Mr. Blodgett also mentioned that he had learned that Franconia has a median age of 59 years and how does the town plan to attract younger families? There was some discussion about ways to attract younger families in the future.

Karen Foss said one of the key things to attract younger people is job opportunity, which is hard in Franconia, and having good wifi service would be helpful as well.

Peter Grote said that affordable housing is a missing component that would be helpful to attracting people to move to the area. He thinks Mittersill holds possible opportunity for affordable housing.

Jeff Blodgett asked regarding North Country Council and what the Town gets for paying dues to them. Eric said they are very helpful and provide expertise on a variety of topics. Bernie said they assist with planning and obtaining grants too.

Peter Grote asked if the Audit Committee should be included in the Town Report. Holly said the audit committee was active in 2016. Peter said they dissolved in March of 2017 though. Peter asked if he could send something about the Audit Committee for the Town report. The Board said they could include it in the Notes from the Selectmen section.

With no further discussion, the Board adjourned at 4:45pm on a unanimous voice vote.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jenny Monahan  
Administrative Secretary