

**TOWN OF FRANCONIA  
BOARD OF SELECTMEN'S REGULAR MEETING  
MONDAY, APRIL 2, 2018**

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**TOWN OFFICIALS PRESENT:** Eric Meth, Jill Brewer, Jeffrey Blodgett

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Jenny Monahan, Holly Burbank, Lydia Cumbee, Peter Grote, Karen Foss, Dawn Steele, Mary Grote, Lynn Terres, Claudia LaChappelle, Jim Alden, Kim Cowles.

**The meeting was called to order by Chairman Brewer at 3:02pm.**

**APPOINTMENTS:**

Lydia Cumbee addressed the Board to discuss the motion she made from the floor at Town Meeting to add \$3000 to the Executive Budget intended for contracting a professional website design and host company. Lydia feels the Town should not be paying an employee \$2000 annually to update the site when there are two administrative employees (Holly and Jenny) that could do it instead. Lydia urged the Board to take action and contract a professional company as soon as possible.

Chairman Brewer said the Board is continuing to gather information at this time, and once that happens if the Board wants to move forward with hiring a website designer, she will support that decision. Chairman Brewer said that she has heard from a number of residents that were under the impression that a new website design company was being discussed because Kim Cowles no longer wished to be the webmaster of the current site. Jill also said that she feels it is positive that current money the Town spends on the site is being spent locally rather than being outsourced to an outside entity. Jill also added that the Town website is not for the purpose of promotion of town businesses, as has been mentioned by other residents previously, and that task is rather for the Franconia Notch Regional Chamber of Commerce instead.

Lydia Cumbee responded that although initially more expensive, the financial investment in the site now would save the Town money in the long run. Lydia also would like to see more information on the site, including information about town employees, employee salaries, Town policies, etc.

Chairman Brewer thanked Lydia for her input and suggestions.

In closing, Lydia encouraged the Board not to ignore the vote that was made at Town meeting.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:** Claudia LaChappelle asked the Selectmen about their contact information as she says she can only reach Holly Burbank. Jill Brewer and Eric Meth said they would provide their personal emails, but Holly said it is preferred to contact the Selectmen through her so as not to inadvertently create a meeting. |

Jim Alden asked the Board why they are seeking to gather information after the vote has been made. Jill Brewer said that in her instance, she does not feel that she has enough information yet to feel comfortable contracting the new company.

Claudia LaChappelle said she voted at Town Meeting to change the web service and feels disrespected by the Board not yet acting to contract a new company.

Dawn Steele said she feels the Board has had time to research as the topic of a new website first came up on 01/29. Dawn said the current site host, Weebly, is not very customizable and not supported, and she is disappointed that the Board has had since the end of January to research the issue and nothing has been done yet. Dawn said the voters at the meeting would like a website that is more in line with current technology.

Chairman Brewer reiterated that she is not yet comfortable with contracting a new company and would like to have a public meeting to discuss the questions surrounding the site and obtain feedback from residents regarding what they would like to see on the site.

Claudia LaChappelle said the Board needs to be more transparent - people are wondering about many things that are not being addressed. Claudia asked about Kim Cowles job description. Kim said she has a job description and would share it with Claudia.

Selectman Meth commented he feels the Board has behaved transparently and has been responsive to information requests and inquiries, in spite of a very busy last three months.

Chairman Brewer said that she takes her position on the Board extremely seriously, feels a full responsibility to the taxpayers of the Town and that any decision she makes she wants to put a lot of thought into. Chairman Brewer said she looks forward to getting more information about the site going forward.

**SIGN/APPROVE:**

The Board approved the March 26, 2018 meeting minutes as amended, and the March 26, 2018 Hearing to Amend Pole Licenses minutes as written.

The Board reviewed and signed the April 5, 2018 Transaction List.

The Board approved a tax abatement of \$19 per Town Clerk/Tax Collector Carol Wills request and explanation that the lien notice and payment had crossed in the mail.

**TOWN ADMINISTRATOR UPDATE:**

None

**CORRESPONDENCE:**

Jill Brewer said she was contacted by Jade Monahan, who lives next to the church, and is very excited about the crosswalk installation at Academy Street/Church Parking Lot. Jade said people don't stop at the Harvard St. crosswalk and she is wondering if more signage would be helpful.

**OTHER DISCUSSION:**

On the topic of crosswalks, Holly Burbank added that she had spoken with Scott Leslie and it was discussed that getting crosswalk and sidewalk work done simultaneously may be a good plan. Holly said it would be good to bring Scott into a meeting for discussion and make the sidewalk and crosswalk work a goal for the summer.

Selectman Blodgett said there is a critical need for public bathrooms in the town, or at least more signs directing people to the bathrooms behind Town Hall.

Peter Grote inquired if there has been any thought of putting bathrooms at the Transfer Station. Peter said he had brought this up at the last meeting but it was not included in the minutes. Peter said there should be running water, a bathroom and a wash station at the Transfer Station. Holly said there are some logistics that need to be worked out before the issue could be addressed.

### **COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

**Conservation Commission:** None

**CIP Meeting:** None

**Energy Commission:** Eric Meth said the Ammonoosuc Energy Expo is taking place on April 7<sup>th</sup> from 9:00am to 3:00pm at Profile School.

**Northern Pass:** Eric Meth said that Christine Fillmore had emailed regarding the release of the NH SEC's written decision on the Northern Pass project. Eric said that Christine felt that it was not likely that NP would be granted a rehearing. Eric also dictated the following from the SEC's written decision:

"The Subcommittee further determined that the Applicant did not sufficiently demonstrate the effect the Project would have on the economy. While there would be some positive impacts on the economy, the magnitude of those positive impacts was overstated by the Applicant. As for the potential harms of construction and operation of the Project, the Applicant failed to provide credible evidence regarding the negative impacts on tourism and real estate values. The Applicant also failed to provide a plan for construction of the Project that appropriately considered the Project's effects on municipal roads and businesses in the northern part of the state."

Eric also dictated the following from a newsletter regarding NP and the SEC's denial of the project:

"The committee spotlighted the importance of municipal input to its conclusion, even if the SEC has authority to override towns. 'In considering municipal views, we are not required to give deference. Here, the views expressed by the intervening municipalities, and the comments expressed by local and regional planning agencies, the town meeting warrant articles, and other municipal comments were relevant to the issues, thoughtful, and consistent. The overwhelming majority of those views and comments were vehemently opposed to the Project'."

**Planning Board:** Eric Meth said the Planning Board did meet on March 27 to conduct the Site Plan Review for the Iron Furnace Brewery project. Eric said the meeting went well and those in attendance seemed happy with the plan.

Lydia Cumbee asked if any progress has been made regarding Planning Board minutes. Eric said it's being worked on and Holly said she will reach out to Thad Presby.

### **ADDITIONAL PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Claudia LaChappelle commented that it would be great to have the organizational chart on the site, to let taxpayers know that Town employees were given a 2.5% increase this year, and that she feels that “it creates a toxic atmosphere when people don’t know how their money is being spent.”

Mary Grote asked when the Tri-Town Agreement will be put on the website. Holly Burbank said she has the draft agreement at this time but the final copy is awaiting review and signatures at the Attorney General’s office.

Chairman Brewer made a motion to enter non-public session at 4:13pm pursuant to NH RSA 91-A:3 II(b)

The Board left non-public session at 4:43pm. Chairman Brewer made a motion to seal the minutes. Selectman Blodgett seconded the motion. All were in favor. **Motion passes.**

With no further discussion, the Board adjourned at 4:44pm on a unanimous voice vote.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jenny Monahan  
Administrative Secretary