



**TOWN OF FRANCONIA**

**INCORPORATED 1764**

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN'S REGULAR MEETING**

**MONDAY SEPTEMBER 18, 2017 AT 3:00 PM AT TOWN OFFICES**

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**TOWN OFFICIALS PRESENT:** Mr. Eric Meth- Chairman, Ms. Jill Brewer, Ms. Bernie Costa.

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Holly Burbank Town Administrator, Chris Gautreau Admin Asst.

**INVITED GUESTS:** Scott Leslie, Kim Cowles, John Monaghan, Red McCarthy.

**GENERAL PUBLIC:** Ms. Mary Grote, Mr. Peter Grote, Justin Roshak.

The regular meeting was called to order at 3:02 pm.

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**ITEMS FOR BOS REVIEW/APPROVAL/DENIAL/DISPOSITION:**

- 1) Minutes of September 11, 2017- The meeting minutes of September 11, 2017 were reviewed and Selectman Costa made a motion to accept the amended minutes with Chairman Meth seconded with all in favor.
- 2) Transaction List- September 21, 2017- The Board reviewed and signed the transaction list for September 21, 2017.
- 3) Planning Board Record of Appointment for signatories- A new member appointment notice to The Planning Board was reviewed and signed by The Select Board.

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**SCHEDULED APPOINTMENTS:**

**RE: 3:00pm- Scott Leslie, Kim Cowles, John Monaghan, Red McCarthy- DOT TEN YEAR PLAN.**

**ACTION(S):** Selectman Costa initiated the conversation by detailing the DOT Ten Year Plan for everyone. We are on the current 10 year plan, (2019-2028) which includes the bridge on Rte.18 which is scheduled for replacement in 2023. Some of the programs that qualify for funding are cited on the DOT website includes: Bridges, Recreation Trails Fund, Highway Safety Plan, and Congestion Mitigation Air Quality- (CMAQ). Selectman Brewer has already applied for CMAQ and will be attending the workshop on Wednesday, September 20, 2017. Selectman Costa summed up with two questions: What does the town need in regards to safety issues, and what would we like the state to do? Some of the suggestions were: Sidewalks, curbing and buffers, drainage in town, post office and village store parking, and anything safety-oriented to get the local school kids safely to and from school which was given by Mr. Johnk of Lafayette Regional School. Selectman Brewer suggested a crosswalk from The Iron Furnace extending across the street to the school would be ideal for the school kids coming and going, as well as for The Recreation Department's Summer Programs which frequent that crossing location.

Chief Monaghan suggested speed tables, which are similar to diamond plate metal slabs which tend to slow motorists down when approaching an intersection. Chief Monaghan stated that speed tables are very prevalent in Maine and everyone thought this was a smart idea for Franconia. Also, sidewalks and crosswalks particularly in the village store area were discussed at length and everyone signaled the dangers of backing out into the street from this area. The possibility of a combined walking/ bike trail in the Garnet Hill area and coming out near Bickford Hill was also touched upon. Holly also mentioned that she just received notice of some new funding for Safe Routes to School which may help with new bike paths.

Red McCarthy detailed some of the pros and cons of locating a sidewalk along Rte 18 and the challenges on the Post office side of the street.

Mr. Peter Grote suggested a crosswalk near The Franconia Inn area.

Kim Cowles suggested a footbridge going across the Gale River by Garnet Hill and then having a path on the other side of The Ham Branch River to come out onto Bickford Hill Road. This would alleviate a lot of bike traffic from Main Street where people are parking and backing out. Kim asked us to ask The Department of Transportation to repair the bridge on Rte. 18 during the autumn months.

The meeting went on with a roundtable discussion with some great ideas and suggestions to improve the quality and safety of all who live in or travel through our town. The overall consensus was to have the business owners in town come to the next meeting with their ideas and concerns. Selectman Costa wrapped up the workshop by offering anyone who may have another idea or suggestion to please let the Board know as their Oct 5<sup>th</sup> meeting is quickly approaching and they would like to be well prepared.

**RE: 4:00PM- Greg Russell- Swift Property at Mittersill- Letter to approve Lot Loading – Map28/ Lot 10.**

**ACTION(S)** In response to a request from the Subsurface Systems Bureau of New Hampshire, Mr. Russell drafted a letter that states that Map 28/ Lot10 has not been expanded to include additional bedrooms since construction in 1975. This pertains to a new septic system that Presby Environmental is constructing. After a thorough discussion of the facts, Selectman Costa made a motion to have Holly sign the letter with Selectman Brewer seconded with all voting in favor.

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## **TOPICS FOR REVIEW/UPDATE/ DISCUSSION**

Northern Pass- Eric Meth on signage update. Chairman Meth is continuing to receive complaints from resident of Franconia and Easton in regards to the removal of yard signs and Northern Pass. Eric reported that The Department of Transportation continues to remove signs even though they not within the right of way which precludes signage of any type. A letter was also written to Commissioner Sheehan of the Department of Transportation and to Ms. Melody Esterberg from concerned residents about the removal of signage along Route 116 in Franconia.

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## **COMMITTEE REPORTING:**

**CONSERVATION COMMISSION:** Selectman Brewer reported no new business from The Committee but that they will be meeting next Tuesday, September 26, 2017.

**CIP COMMITTEE:** Selectman Costa gave a brief update on last week's CIP Meeting. The assets of the Highway Department were reviewed and appropriate changes made to the worksheets and the useful life of some of these assets. Also of interest were extended warranty purchases during the next round of asset replacements, as well as the cost factor if we were to purchase extended warranties.

Trevor Presby of the CIP Committee informed Scott Leslie that the Highway Department was welcome to use the new diagnostic tool that he has recently purchased.

**ENERGY COMMISSION:** The Energy Commission will be meeting this Tuesday, September 20,2017 at Woodsville Guaranty Savings Bank – Franconia Branch at 4:30 pm. Eric reported that the following projects will be discussed from the agenda:

- a) Street Light Project
- b) Solar Panels for Lafayette Elementary School.
- c) Crosswalk lighting at Dow and Church Street.

**PLANNING BOARD:** Lot line Adjustments were at the forefront at last week's Planning Board Meeting. Eric reported that the Board is working on a specific request which will combine parcels. Also, a driveway permit that suggests both Residential and Commercial use was sent back to the Select Board. Eric reported that more information is needed with respect to the intended use of the property of which the driveway will provide access to.

**NORTHERN PASS:** Chairman Meth gave an update on the latest developments regarding Northern Pass. He focused on three things:

- 1) Site Evaluation Committee Chairman Honigberg is trying to "tighten things up" said Chairman Meth by underscoring RSA 541-A: 33 titled – Administrative Procedure Act. More specifically, The Commission is limiting questions and cross-examination of witnesses which are the interveners of applicants of Northern Pass. A formal objection to this order had been filed.
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2) Quote by Laura Saffo- Grafton County Attorney: “so we’re now in September of 2017 and we still don’t know if this project is going on the right side of the scenic by-way, or left side of the scenic by-way.”

3) There are site visits starting in Plymouth, New Hampshire on October 03, 2017 at 8:45am. A press conference is scheduled at that time with Sen. Bob Giuda, Executive Counselor Joe Kenney, and other elected officials to address Northern Pass impacts and the Draft Record of Decision by Mr. Tom Wagner, amongst other concerns.

Chairman Meth had some questions pertaining to the Wells Road culvert scheduled for replacement. Red McCarthy has done quite a bit of work with The Michie Corp, and is under the impression that a 10 foot wide culvert would be needed. A hydrology study has to be completed also, and once done will give us an idea what size bridge would be applicable. Red also mentioned that FEMA Mitigation Funds improve what you have had in the past. With that being said, an exploration initiative should be undertaken to see if there is any evidence i.e., pictures of a prior existing bridge. If a bridge was present at one time then you could proceed with inquiring on a new bridge. Red suggests that if some moderate diking was done, you could train the water in the direction of the culvert as a temporary fix. Red suggests that to train the water, jersey barriers are partially sunk in the ground and angled in towards the culvert. This would allow the water to flow where you intend it to. FEMA traditionally would like to see an estimate and who provided the estimate as a necessary step in the process. FEMA officials will be at Town Hall on Friday, September 29, 2017 at 9:00 am.

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**PUBLIC INITIATIVES/COMMENTS/QUESTIONS:** Mr. Peter Grote gave an update on Northern Pass and introduced some specific articles and documents to the discussion. Peter reported that the Public Purchase Agreement between Northern Pass and Hydro-Quebec fell apart. This agreement supposedly was to give New Hampshire One Billion dollars of free electricity. Peter states that it is inconceivable that The Public Utilities Commission would give up this exorbitant amount of energy dollars.

An article by InDepth.org titled More Competition & Northern Pass Commits \$10M to Help Low-Income Mass. Customers, has consumer advocate D. Maurice Kreis opining that Northern Pass has little to offer New Hampshire and believes that the project offers false promises to Granite Staters in light of the impact the project would have on New Hampshire. He goes on to say that “Any benefits to New Hampshire customers are indirect and very limited at best, absent some kind of agreement like the one Eversource has now abandoned.”

A second article from The Times Colonist talks about the “boondoggle” of Muskrat Falls \$11.7 billion hydro-development in Labrador. The article talks about the costs and failures to manage the project and offers this opinion, “The only way to have solved this was not to have built it in the first place...It was too late to stop. We couldn’t get a refund.” Muskrat Falls is especially painful as supporters gambled that energy values would stay high. “They lost, and this time ratepayers are on the hook.”

Costs for The Muskrat Falls Project have recently been pegged at a one billion dollar increase. The total costs are now at \$12.7 Billion with financing.

Lastly, NALCOR ENERGY, a generator of electrical and transmission solutions, delineates forecasting and power demands in this third article, but is subject to criticism both in their forecasts and logic. Nalcor’s subsidiary company Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro are the operators of Muskrat Falls.

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**OTHER WORK/ COMMUNICATION(S)/ ACTION(S)**

Chairman Meth received a letter of resignation from Mr. Frank Pinter of the Recreation Commission. Mr. Pinter is moving to another town and the Select Board was sad to hear of his departure.

Holly had some concerns and questions as to the generator that may be installed at the Highway Garage. More specifically she asked what was the status of The Presby Building or a purported addition to the Highway Garage. Chairman Meth stated that they were looking at all the options and a decision has not been reached yet but did acknowledge the cost involved in purchasing or constructing either. Past discussions were to have the generator installed at Town Hall. Holly will consult with Mark Taylor as to the order of designation for shelter locations as the conversation continues.

**ITEMS TO REVISIT:**

<b>AirBnB's</b>	<b>Cisterns &amp; Fire Ponds (3/28/16)</b>
<b>Buildings Plan</b>	<b>Updating Pole License Agreement</b>
<b>Road Plan</b>	<b>F150 vs F550 (highway)</b>
<b>Sidewalk Plan</b>	<b>Purchasing &amp; Bidding Policy</b>
<b>Tri-Town Recreation Agreement</b>	<b>Purchase of Presby Building</b>
<b>FD Generator in Trailer</b>	<b>Antique Fire Truck Storage</b>

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\* Chairman Meth made a motion to close the public meeting at 5:04 pm with Selectman Brewer seconded with all voting in favor.

Prepared and respectfully submitted by:

*Mr. Christopher J. Gautreau*

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Administrative Assistant

