

A regular meeting of the Franconia Board of Selectmen was held at 3:00 p.m. on Monday, December 4, 2017, at the Franconia Town Hall

Board Members Present: Eric Meth, Bernardette Costa, and Jill Brewer

Also Present: Holly Burbank, Town Administrator; Sugar Hill Selectmen Richard Bielefield and John Strasser; Easton Selectmen Bob Thibault, Ned Cutler, and Zak Mei (via phone); Kim Cowles, Greg Wells, Trevor Presby, Karen Foss, Peter Grote, and Justin Roshak

The meeting was called to order at 3:00PM by Eric Meth

TRI-TOWN RECREATION AGREEMENT – The Boards of Selectmen from Easton, Franconia, and Sugar Hill reviewed the Tri-Town Intergovernmental Agreement for the Management of the Lafayette Recreation Program and agreed to the following changes:

- ❖ Page 1, Paragraph 2, add **“in accordance with Paragraph 5b”**.
- ❖ Boards agreed to take out the last sentence in the Tri-Town Intergovernmental Agreement for the Management of Solid Waste Agreement of #10 on page 4 which reads, **“...unless it is determined that one Town, or its employees, agents, or contractors, was primarily responsible for the liability.”**
- ❖ Page 2, Paragraph 5, at the end of the first sentence add, **“and runs from January 1st through December 31st”**.
- ❖ Page 2, Paragraph 5b and 5f, add the word **“annual”** operating budget, to be consistent.
- ❖ Page 2, Paragraph 5f, add, **“An accounting of the trust fund shall be provided to each of the towns on an annual basis”**.
- ❖ Page 3, Paragraph 5f, add to sentence in parenthesis, **“these programs, events and activities”** are to be determined...
- ❖ Page 3, Paragraph 6 – There was discussion and concerns raised regarding whether this is an agreement versus a contract and whether binding arbitration applies. Holly will contact NHMA counsel to get answers to those questions.
- ❖ Page 3, Paragraph 7 – first sentence, change “one year’s written notice” to **“nine month’s written notice”**, so that it does not involve two budget years.
- ❖ Page 3, Paragraph 7 – delete last two sentences of paragraph beginning with **“Within sixty (60) days of receipt...”**
- ❖ Page 4, Paragraph 8b – Add the following: This agreement may be amended by a simple majority vote of **“each”** of the Boards of Selectmen.
- ❖ Page 4, Paragraph 10 – new paragraph – **“If any provision, or portion thereof, of this Agreement is, or becomes, invalid under any applicable statute or rule of law, it is to**

be deemed stricken and the rest of this Agreement shall remain in full force and effect.” This paragraph should be added to the Transfer Station Agreement as well.

Zak stated he spoke with NHMA about this agreement and they referred him to RSA 35-b, Public Recreation and Parks, and he is wondering if this should be added to the paragraph one page one that references RSA 53-A. After a brief discussion, it was decided that Holly should ask the NHMA attorney about this as well.

Chairman Meth stated the Boards have reached a conditional agreement. Holly will contact NHMA and notify the Boards of its answers.

TRI-TOWN TRANSFER STATION: Holly suggested the Boards focus on a more general discussion and if time allows then they can go through the agreement.

Greg Wells stated that he is retiring at the end of the month. Chairman Meth stated the Board discussed having Erik Rasmussen act as interim manager while they advertise the position and he would also be able to apply for the position. Greg suggested the Board look for a part-time person before they look for a new manager. The current staffing at the transfer station is two full-time employees and one part-time employee.

There was lengthy discussion regarding the cost of the various materials that are being recycled at the Transfer Station and what, if anything, could be eliminated. It was suggested that the town charge residents who bring material to the brush pile and perhaps discontinue accepting construction debris since there is no room in the plant to put scales for the trucks.

There was discussion regarding Zero Sort. Greg stated he could get the start up cost for Zero Sort if the Board is interested; however it costs to get rid of the materials. You pay for the transportation and rental of the equipment and then pay per ton to get rid of it. He also stated the fees for Zero Sort go up every year because they get their COLA raise.

Trevor Presby stated he is on the CIP and pulled together some information on the transfer stations of three neighboring towns in addition to Franconia for 2016: Franconia has 1,956 residents with 3-1/2 employees who each service 558 people. Income was \$124,000.00 and the cost to run was \$275,000.00 for a loss of \$124,000.00. Littleton has 6,000 residents with 5-1/2 employees who each service 1,000 people. Income was \$290,000.00 and the cost to run was \$370,000.00 for a loss of \$80,000.00. Whitefield has 2,360 residents with 1-1/2 employees who service 1300 people; and Lisbon has 2,500 residents with 1-1/2 employees who each service 1,700 people. Trevor suggested with Greg leaving that we look to run with 1-1/2 or 2 employees. Greg stated that Littleton is automated.

There was discussion regarding whether the facility is efficient as it exists today. Bernardette stated that Regan Pride of North Country Council has done a survey of the facility and said it is fine. It was suggested that perhaps after seeing other transfer stations he might have some concrete solutions.

There was discussion regarding closing the facility one extra day per week. After a brief discussion it was suggested perhaps the facility could be open on Sunday, Wednesday and Friday. Greg stated you would need to have three people on those days because it is very busy especially because of the extra day it will be closed.

Chairman Meth suggested having Regan Pride give an assessment and some recommendations. Holly stated she has spoken with Regan and he is getting her the information. The Boards agreed to keep recycling as it now exists.

The Boards discussed the Special Revenue Fund for the Transfer Station. Dick Bielefield gave a brief history of how these funds were put into a Special Revenue Fund instead of a Capital Reserve Fund. Holly stated that the Special Revenue Fund was established in 1998 and is reflected in the Franconia Town Report and it does require a vote of all three towns at town meeting to take money out for capital expenses. Holly stated in order to allow the selectmen to be agents to expend, DRA suggested we dissolve this fund (making sure to check with our town attorney to see that we can do that) and create a revolving fund under RSA 31:95-h. A revolving fund allows all monies put in the fund to accumulate year to year and not be considered part of the town's general surplus. Each town will need to put the two warrant articles (one to dissolve the SRF and one to establish the revolving fund) in their town reports.

Holly inquired if all three towns are putting money aside for capital purchases at the Transfer Station. Bernardette Costa stated the CIP set one up this year. Trevor Presby stated that it is based on our percentage to replace equipment. Trevor also volunteered to visit other transfer stations to see their processes or suggestions. Holly stated she has reached out to Regan Pride from North Country Council and is awaiting his report. Chairman Meth suggested waiting until we receive his report before doing anything else.

Holly stated the Tri-Town Budget Meeting is scheduled for January 8th, in Sugar Hill.

SIGN/APPROVE:

November 27, 2017, meeting minutes put off until next week.

December 7, 2017, Transaction List was reviewed and signed.

Building Permit for Nutter was approved.

TO DISCUSS/REVIEW:

Town Administrator Burbank gave the following update:

Holly stated she has received the budgets from the department heads but has not had a chance to put them together; however she has given the Board the department budgets through the end of November. Holly noted under Town Hall Buildings Maintenance, it looks like that line was overspent; however that includes the flood in the basement that was reimbursed by the insurance company but that is not yet reflected in the budget. Holly also noted that Medicare and Social Security is broken out on each budget but next year that will be pulled out of the individual budgets and put under the administrative budget.

Holly noted that last week Chief Monaghan requested raising the part-time rate from \$17.50 to \$20.00 and the Board had questions about the cost to the town. Chief Monaghan thinks the coverage would be 40 hours a week for the remainder of the year, which equals 160 hours. At \$17.50 it would be \$2,800.00 and at \$20.00 it would be \$3,200.00, so it is a \$400.00 difference and there is room in their budget to cover that cost. Chairman Meth made a motion to increase the part-time rate to \$20.00. Selectman Costa seconded the motion. All were in favor. **Motion passes.**

Holly noted the contract for the auditors, Plodzick and Sanderson, in the amount of \$15,825.00 is the same amount as last year's contract without the additional amount of \$5,000.00 that we paid for the extra work they needed to do. Chairman Meth signed the contract. Holly also noted the auditors will be here Thursday and Friday to do their preliminary work.

Holly stated Alan Clark was unable to get the building permit prepared for C. Luke Lore. This is a commercial property and the conditions must be carefully drafted. He suggested the Board consider signage to zoning or a variance be granted. He also wanted to discuss with the Board the fee. The application fee is \$100.00 for commercial and the minimum building permit fee is \$500.00. Alan thinks this is excessive for minor renovations. Alan recommends for minor renovations a \$100.00 application fee and a \$100.00 permit fee would be more appropriate. After a brief discussion, the Board agreed to reduce the fees if it would cover the amount Alan charges the town. Holly will follow up with Alan on what he charges.

Holly requested the Board allow her to close the office next week to the public so she can catch up with her work since she does not have a secretary in the office. After a brief discussion the Board agreed to allow the office to be closed December 11th through December 15th. Holly will let the Department Heads know and will post a sign on her door as well as the website.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Conservation Commission: Jill Brewer stated she met with D.B. Simms from Berkeley, CA, who is very excited about the River Walk Project and had a lot of ideas.

CIP Committee: Bernardette stated Kim did a great job in presenting her building plan and they also dealt with the idea of extended warranties on the trucks. The Buildings and Grounds truck is coming up on its third year and hopefully we can get the extended warranty on that and it would need to be budgeted for the coming year. Trevor thinks the extended warranties might apply to all plow trucks so that is something to have the Department Heads keep in mind.

Eric Meth asked about the Heritage Museum. Bernardette stated that the town is talking about maintaining the buildings and we need to prioritize the ones that are essential to town services. The barn of the Heritage Museum has structural issues and rather than building that into the maintenance budget, we thought it should be put in a warrant article to let the town know how much it is costing.

Bernardette stated there were some questions about the Water Department tearing up pavement in Mittersill to put the water line in and the condition of the roads. Holly stated that Scott is working with the Water Department to make sure he is not paving an area that they will be tearing up.

Bernardette stated that the excess money in the Public Safety Building Fund is \$70,000.00 and it was suggested to use that money to pay for the Fire Department's turnout gear, which the town is required to purchase. Holly will research whether those funds can be used for that purpose.

The CIP wants to come to the Planning Board meeting next Tuesday.

Energy Commission: Eric Meth stated there was a meeting today at 2:00pm with Infinity, the contractor and he would need to get an update from Karen Foss.

Northern Pass: Eric Meth stated there is a meeting Thursday, December 7th, at Christine Fillimore's office in Lebanon to prepare for his testimony on Monday, December 18th, down in Concord.

Eric stated the Board has been asked to submit a short note to the Massachusetts Committee for their RFP. Evidently the committee takes comment about how much Northern Pass is supported in New Hampshire. Eric will send off a quick email to them.

Eric also stated the Franconia Inn had a meeting with Northern Pass and they were not very happy about it. Eric will contact Alec Morris to see if there's something from that meeting that we can put into our testimony.

Planning Board: Eric Meth stated at the November 28th, meeting they discussed the Community Revitalization Tax Incentive and the board is certainly interested in being the point people to get the warrant article to bring to town meeting.

Bernardette stated the Board needs to decide how to pay for the crosswalk. Holly inquired about using funds from the Highway Block Grant. Holly will ask Scott to get some pricing estimates and will research that the town can use those funds.

The Board discussed advertising for the Transfer Station position. Holly stated she had reached out to NHMA to see what other towns are paying and their job descriptions and will forward that information to the Board for their review and decision.

The Board discussed the Police Chief position and the idea of combining the positions of Franconia and Sugar Hill. Holly will invite Chief Monaghan to attend next week's meeting so they can discuss why he thinks that is a viable option.

Bernardette had some questions regarding the proposed zoning changes i.e. workforce housing and road frontage requirements. Eric stated he would have to look into it and get back to her.

Bernardette asked if the Board would mind if she called Mac's headquarters in Rutland to keep contact with them. The Board agreed to have her contact them.

Public Input:

Peter Grote raised concern regarding the town's debt. He stated six years ago the debt service was at \$2,000.00 and it is now at \$222,000.00. Peter stated there is stress under our tax anticipation notes in having to borrow interim money every year on average, more than we needed to do five or six years ago. He feels the combination of both short term and long term debt is very troublesome and needs to be addressed. He believes it would be wise to pay down some of the debt.

With no further business, Selectman Brewer made a motion to adjourn. Selectman Costa seconded the motion. All were in favor. Meeting adjourned at 6:00p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Carol Wills
Town Clerk/Tax Collector