

**FRANCONIA BOARD OF SELECTMEN
MEETING MINUTES
Monday, March 13, 2017**

A meeting of the Franconia Board of Selectmen was held at 4:00 pm on Monday, March 13, 2017, at the Franconia Town Hall. Regular members in attendance were Bernie Costa, Eric Meth, John Lachapelle, Holly Burbank and Herbie Bartlett.

Other Guests: Mary & Peter Grote, Karen Foss, Dawn Steele (4:02)

BOS Minutes for 3/8/17: A formal reading of the minutes was waived and the minutes were approved as amended.

FOR CONSIDERATION OF APPROVAL:

BOS Minutes 3/8/17 - approved by the Board with amendments.
BOS Minutes 2/13/17 - approved by the Board with amendments.
Transaction List - 3/23/2017 - approved and signed by the Board.

FOR DISCUSSION:

Solar Energy System Exemption Application - reviewed and signed by the board. Eric Meth will amend the Solar Warrant Article 18 to exclude those making a profit.

Motion to not reconsider - we have the verbiage regarding warrant articles at the Town Meeting. Holly will email it to the Board members.

Line item budget amendment for the legal fund - The Town has \$27,479.64 owed and payable. The Town has a bill that totals \$16,188. We have not received a reduction to \$10K as Peter Grote said we would get. Peter Grote wants to know if the Town needs something in writing. Holly stated that we did. He doesn't know if he can get it in time. Hydro Quebec has a shaky stance

At what point does the Town say suspend all billable activity until we find out what is going on? The Board needs to get direction from the town. Holly stated in general legal matters we spent almost \$9K this year. \$12K is a safe buffer. The Town has capital reserve for the general defense fund. The Board agreed to keep the line item at \$12K.

Town Administrator Update - In regards to Northern Pass the Town needs to find out from the businesses how they are going to be impacted by the construction of this project if it goes through. Letters for residents and business owners were discussed. The Selectmen would need the data returned by Friday because the attorneys need this information. It doesn't give us a lot of time. There are a lot of different perspectives on what is going to happen with Northern Pass. Supposedly there is the Clean Link going through Vermont that Northern Pass is looking at. The Selectmen

need to keep our strategy in place. A neighboring Board member feels the same way. Our town has more at stake than that town does. The neighboring town is reaffirming their commitment to fighting Northern Pass. Holly stated that the letter and mailing labels are ready to go and we can hit the ground running to hand out to the businesses.

Do we know when Northern Pass would be starting the construction? No one knows at this point. The Selectmen can assume that construction will occur during the warmer months if it goes through. The Northern Pass Gale River crossing plans are faulty. The vaults that are designed are a big problem. There is a proposal for constructing two ramps that would have to be stretched past the library to get equipment down into the trenches. There is a weight limit on the bridge over by Lovett's Inn that is only 9,000 pounds.

Airbnb - meeting on Wednesday at 4:00pm.

Warrant Articles - discussed which Board members as to who is addressing the non-profit articles at the town meeting.

Northern Pass - The Site Evaluation Committee (SEC) will meet here in town in regards to the Gale River crossings either April 6th or 7th. Walter Palmer advised Eric of this.

Meeting Call - Holly was one of the conference calls with the Governor in regards to the weather and tomorrow's meeting. The Governor recommended not cancelling. If we do cancel he suggested that the Town Clerk stay and provide absentee ballots for anyone who comes in. The Select Board has to keep in mind that if another town is voting on the same budget it should all be doing it at the same time. Franconia would know the outcome of the other town's votes.

Voting Day - Polls are open from 1-7 pm. The Town can continue the meetings if we run too late without noticing them. The Select Board members scheduled their times to attend during voting times. John will do 1-3pm, Bernie 3-5pm and Eric will do 5-7pm. Holly will have everything prepared and ready for the meeting. Bill Mead is all set and ready for the meeting. Holly will shoot him an email when she is done with this meeting.

PUBLIC INPUT

Mary Grote - She is requesting to see the letters from the charities. She believes it should be public. When is the meeting on a Thursday or Friday at the Bridge with the SEC? We will advise when we know. We will probably want to have the police present for this. Holly will share the letters with Mary and anyone who had interest in viewing.

Dawn Steele - made comments about the 2017 Budget being 25% higher than last years. That will impact our tax rate. Estimated is less but we have a situation of our surplus. If we don't collect it in revenues and credits we are in a worse position. How confident are we that we are going to collect in 2017? Do we need to look at this again? It is not fair to tax residents to add to revenue if we don't raise more money. How do we build the fund balance? If we under spend it goes to our unassigned fund balance.

Holly will work on having a Fund Balance Policy and have discussions and work towards that. We are working on overdue taxes. This will go to the general fund.

Karen Foss- define overlay. This is money that is put into the budget for abatements. We set aside money for abatements. It is a reduction to what you are to receive for taxes.

Karen Foss - had questions in regards to the Fire Truck Articles which affect Capital Reserve Funds. Article 13 to discontinue the fire trucks funds. Article14 is to reconstitute the fund. What was your guidance? The DRA helped Holly with the wording on that one. You are changing the use of the funds which require a 2/3rd vote. DRA suggested the wording to Holly. We are discontinuing and making the Fire Heavy Equipment Fund.

Karen stated that it contradicts what her trust fund manual says. Article 3 appropriating more money to put into the fire trucks and is not factored into the Article 14. Article 14 may not pass it will go into the new fund. That money is voted on first to go into the separate capital reserve funds and then discontinued and then it all goes in the Fire Heavy Equipment Fund. The process is how the DRA recommended on how to write these articles. The numbers will not be exact.

Peter Grote - Warrant article in regards to the Northern Pass. He states that he had been at three meetings and he does not recall the Northern Pass did not recommend and that \$15K is recommended. He recalls at \$12K but not a \$30K. The Northern Pass Committee did not recommend that. Bernie stated that it is moot at this point. There has been a lot of discussion to come to that number.

5:05pm - Eric made a motion to go into a closed session pursuant to NH RSA 91:a 3, II (e) and (c); John seconded it and all voted in favor. The Select Board returned to public session at 5:45 pm.

The meeting adjourned at 5:45 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Herbie Bartlett
Executive Secretary