

**Town of Franconia
Board of Selectmen's Regular Meeting
Monday, April 1st, 2024
at 4PM at Town Hall**

Board Members Present: Jill Brewer, Eric Meth, Dan Walker

Others Present: Libby Staples, Jenny Monahan, Jennifer & John Opalinski, Peter & Mary Grote, Dawn Steele, Jan Cole, Chris Collman

The meeting was called to order at 4:02PM

Appointments/Work Sessions

Jennifer & John Opalinski – Refrigerated Rink Update: Jennifer said that funding for the rink project is currently at \$107,000 from private donors. Part of that donation is a roofing materials donation. They are currently investigating the roof, water table and the library with Horizons Engineering. They have submitted a preapplication for a \$500,000 grant under the Franconia Notch Chamber of Commerce as they are still waiting for approval of their 501c3 application. Jennifer discussed drainage which may include increasing the size of the culvert that drains into the Gale River. Jennifer suggested that the town consider how it would like to utilize and manage the refrigerated rink if it comes to fruition. Alternative parking areas were also discussed, such as the church and the Rivagale offices after 5PM. Siting the rink at the Dow was briefly discussed but Jennifer thinks that the current rink site is the best place for the refrigerated rink. Jennifer also believes that the town would benefit from the increased tourism the refrigerated rink could generate.

Public Comment

Dawn Steele asked about the utility operating cost of the rink being \$66,000 without solar and the tax burden associated with those costs.

Peter Grote commented about the impact on social services and property values the refrigerated rink may have and hopes there will be a town hearing on the project with analytical data available.

Mary Grote commented that the town should instead spend money on other things such as restoring town hall so it can be used for more people and purposes.

Chris Collman talked to the board about the wind damage sustained at Willow Cemetery with downed trees damaging many monuments and about addressing the trees surrounding both cemeteries that are not on town property but posing a risk. He would like the town to approach those property owners. Chris has put together estimates and data to make a property claim with Primex.

Dawn Steele commented about how insurance may work for trees that may fall on town property from other property owners land.

To Sign/Approve

The minutes of March 18th, 2024 were not reviewed.

Transaction List – March 29th to April 4th, 2024 – reviewed and signed by the selectmen.

The board approved and signed property tax abatements for George Douglas Rev. Trust (Map 31 Lost 15) and John & Barbara Williams (Map 31 Lot 17).

The board signed Records of Appointments for Mark Hessler and Monica Laflamme to the Planning Board, David Strange to the Energy Commission, Ginny Jeffries and Chris Nicodemus to the Conservation Commission and Kristin Wadsworth and Adam Boyer (1-year appointment) to the Lafayette Recreation Committee.

To Discuss/Review

Refrigerated Ice Rink Study: Chairman Brewer suggested a resident group be formed to review the rink project and gather information for the town. The board agreed this would be beneficial and will seek interested parties to participate.

Correspondence

Town Administrator Staples said she received a request from Cannon to provide an extension of service to their liquor serving area for the solar eclipse event. Chief Cashin reviewed and did not see any issues with it.

Selectman Walker made a motion to authorize the extension of service for the solar eclipse event at Cannon Mountain. Chairman Brewer seconds, **motion passes**.

The board authorized Town Administrator Staples to provide Cannon with a letter of approval on behalf of the board.

Town Administrator Staples shared a request for a forgiveness of interest in the amount of \$56.97 on property taxes for Jonathan Starr at 22 Ridgecut Road that accrued after the original property owner passed away. The board approved the forgiveness of interest.

The board signed Tara Bamford's contract with the town that was already signed by the planning board.

Chairman Brewer is drafting a letter to local and state legislators about the tax burden of EMS services on the town in hopes of getting relief for calls associated with Cannon Mountain. The letter will be reviewed by the board when finalized.

Committee Reports

Broadband Committee: Selectman Meth said that Franconia and Sugar Hill are last on the build-out plan for Fidium to install broadband infrastructure, but the committee hopes to change that. They are meeting with a Fidium representative on April 18th. They are still trying to get people to sign-up for

service to show that there is interest within the town.

Chamber of Commerce: Selectman Walker said he was not able to attend the last meeting but there was a presentation on the refrigerated rink at that meeting.

Conservation Commission: Chairman Brewer said the CC next meets tomorrow at town hall at 3:30PM.

Energy Commission: Selectman Meth said the EC is working on the rebate for the solar array.

Planning Board: Selectman Meth said the PB is working on finalizing the Master Plan and it should be complete in a couple months.

Chairman Brewer made a motion to enter non-public session for reasons of reputation at 5:10PM seconded by Selectman Walker. The board resumed the public session at 5:24PM. With no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 5:24PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Jenny Monahan
Executive Assistant