

**TOWN OF FRANCONIA
BOARD OF SELECTMEN'S REGULAR MEETING
MONDAY, AUGUST 30, 2021 AT TOWN HALL**

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Eric Meth, Jill Brewer, Dan Walker

OTHERS PRESENT: Kim Cowles, Jenny Monahan, Steve Plant, Mary Grote, Dawn Steele, Peter Grote, Karen Foss, Janice Cole, Lynn Terres.

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

TO SIGN/APPROVE:

The August 30, 2021 transaction list was reviewed and signed by the Selectmen.

The minutes of August 16, 2021 were approved as amended on a motion by Chairman Brewer and a second by Selectman Meth with all voting in favor.

Septic Permit Application –Harrison– Wells Road –Map 26 Lot 19 - Approved by the board.

Septic Permit Application – Nicholson – Franconia Mountains Road – Map 22 Lot 11.1-11 – Approved by the board.

Septic Permit Application – King/Zimmerman Trust – Sunset Ridge Road – Map 28 Lot 116 – Approved by the board.

The Selectmen signed Timber Tax Warrants for T&T Mtn Investments LLC, The Moog LLC and Todd Finch.

APPOINTMENTS/WORK SESSIONS:

3:00PM – Steve Plant – Treasurer's Report: Steve said he researched the June reconciliation and found that it was very close to the QuickBooks reconciliation with the exception of two or three items. He said there is an EFT from Visa that he has not yet found. Check #43689, which was a duplicated payment to a vendor is not showing as voided on the internal reconciliation in spite of being voided in QuickBooks. He said that voided checks seem to be causing problems, especially when they are from a different period.

Steve provided a Treasurer's Report for June 30, 2021. He said that while things were close, he had some issues with not being able to balance his manual reconciliation and the QuickBooks reconciliation, and \$8,839.01 has been a reoccurring figure as the difference. He asked Town Administrator Cowles to run another Trial Balance for December 31, 2020, and when compared with the original Trial Balance the difference was the \$8,839.01. He said it is concerning that the Trial Balance from December 31, 2020 changed after it was originally run. He thinks this goes back to prior period changes that may have been done over the first few months of the year. He consulted the auditors and asked if they had seen this happen before and they said they had. Steve says we should set a closing date for each year and one was not selected for 2020. He said we have a QuickBooks specialist coming on September 16th to

work with him, Town Administrator Cowles and Jenny. Steve said that when he considers the \$8,839.01, he is able to balance to the manual reconciliation for the General Fund. Steve also mentioned stale checks being an issue, some of them being paychecks.

Steve said there are a series of uncleared transactions which we have requested a report of from Municipal Resources Inc. Steve thinks these are transactions that have not been cleared in QuickBooks. For the next Treasurer's Report, he would like to add an account that the police use for monies recovered from arrests (drug busts, for example). There is only \$442.44 in the account but he feels it should be added to the report as it falls under the town's Tax ID and he wants to make sure it's on the Trial Balance as well.

Steve said the monthly internal reports and treasurer's reports for 2019 did not match for any month and there were significant discrepancies.

DISCUSS/REVIEW:

Intersection Update: Town Administrator Cowles said an engineer from NHDOT is coming tomorrow to finalize the plans for the intersection improvements. She and Chief Cashin are also meeting him tomorrow morning discuss where to place the Radar Speed Signs on Route 116.

Welcome Center RFP: The RFP has been published and the deadline for proposals is September 10th.

Cyber Security: Due to the recent security issue in Peterborough that caused the town to be defrauded of 2.3 million dollars, Town Administrator Cowles chatted with the board about safeguards the town has in place to prevent something like that from happening to Franconia.

CORRESPONDENCE: The board received a letter from Jeffrey Sabados regarding a property issue between he and his neighbor.

Town Administrator Cowles said the anonymous donor that gave to the Welcome Center project would also like to fund improvements to the library property. She said there is an issue with water leaking through the foundation that is related to the hill that is under the handicap ramp. Town Administrator Cowles said the library trustees said the plan is to remove the ramp and install a lift similar to the one at town hall. Town Administrator Cowles said she has also talked with the donor about putting a foot bridge over the Gale River that would connect the pavilion/gazebo area of the park to the town hall area of Main Street.

Town Administrator Cowles provided the board with a copy of the letter that was sent to the Franconia Soaring Foundation from town assessor Dave Woodward regarding the reasons he recommended their request for tax exemption be denied.

Town Administrator Cowles said Charles Wolcott has stepped down as the town's Health Officer so the town must find another person to serve in that role. She also said we may want to seek a Welfare Officer as well, and perhaps the Health Officer and Welfare Officer positions could be combined and offer increased compensation.

A representative from town is needed to serve on North Country Council and the Scenic Byway Council. The board will consider this.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Broadband Initiative Committee: Selectman Meth drafted a letter of support from the board in support of the Grafton County Broadband Committee (GCBC) to be sent to Carina Park, the Town Administrator of Campton. He said the GCBC is planning to build a “spine” of broadband connection in Grafton County and is currently soliciting grant funds for that project, which they hope to have completed by the end of 2022. The board signed the letter and Jenny will mail it. Selectman Meth also said there was a meeting of the Broadband Initiative Committee on Friday and they discussed how they may be able to access American Rescue Plan funds and are researching that currently.

Chamber of Commerce: Selectman Walker said the Chamber met Wednesday the 18th at Woodsville Guaranty Bank. They have decided to forgo their annual meeting due to uncertainty about Covid.

Conservation Commission: Chairman Brewer said the CC met last week and discussed responding to a Dredge and Fill application to the Dept. of Environmental Services and wrote a letter that outlines their concerns about the applications potential effects on the Ham Branch. They also discussed the rerouting of the Pebble Beach Trail due to a piece of property part of the trail is on that changed hands and is being developed. The next meeting is September 21st on the Dow at 3pm.

Energy Commission: Selectman Meth said the EC met on August 19th at town hall and they are nearly done with the Solar Ordinance.

Planning Board: Selectman Meth said the Planning Board meets tomorrow and they will continue to work on the Master Plan and discuss the Sign Ordinance. They will also hear a lot line adjustment.

PUBLIC INPUT:

Janice Cole asked Treasurer Steve Plant if his report is addressing the \$400,000 discrepancy from 2019. He said yes, and reconciling the treasurer reports and internal reports monthly will help going forward. Janice also talked about security and verification of contacts and changes to vendors and accounts.

Dawn Steele asked about payroll taxes and if the town plans to go to biweekly paychecks as previously discussed.

Kim Cowles commented as a resident that there is an issue with a noise disturbance involving roosters near her home and wonders if the Breach of Peace Ordinance should be revisited. She proposed that the following sentence be added to the ordinance: No person shall permit any animal to cause annoyance or disturbance at any time by repeated barking, whining, crowing, screeching, howling, braying or other sound that is heard beyond the boundary of the owners or keepers property.

Mary Grote commented that she would like the Noise Ordinance to be revisited.

Chairman Brewer made a motion to add “No person shall permit any animal to cause annoyance or disturbance at any time by repeated barking, whining, crowing, screeching, howling, braying or other sound that is heard beyond the boundary of the owners or keepers property” to the Breach of Peace

Ordinance. Selectman Walker seconded the motion. All were in favor. **Motion passes.**

The board entered non-public session for reasons of personnel at 4:31pm. The board left non-public session at 4:45pm.

With no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 4:45pm on a motion from Chairman Brewer and a second from Selectman Walker.

Respectfully Submitted,
Jenny Monahan
Administrative Secretary