

FRANCONIA BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING

Monday, December 14, 2015

A meeting of the Franconia Board of Selectmen was held at 3:05 pm on Monday, December 14, 2015 at the Franconia Town Hall. Regular members in attendance were Bob Montagno, Eric Meth, Bernie Costa, Sally Small and Herbie Bartlett.

Also attending – Karen Foss, Dawn Steele, Mary Grote, Peter Grote.

SELECTMEN'S TIME:

BOS Minutes 12/14/15: Formal readings of the December 7, 2015 BOS meeting minutes were waived. The minutes for December 7, 2015 were approved with the following corrections:

Page 1 - BOS minutes change from November 23 to **November 30th**.

Kim Cowles – Town of Franconia should determine Kim's wages are for the Parks Dept. Recreation wage recommendations should come from the Recreation Committee. The Recreation Committee is responsible for what Kim does in Recreation.

Page 2 – Peter Grote – The SEC voted on to unanimously. Went to the Site Evaluation Committee (SEC).

Put the Paragraph from Page 3 here....The Assistant Attorney General.....

If we have a specific goals – It has to go thru Kinsman Notch then thru the intersection and then down route 3.

Page 2 - At this point **the lawyer cost** should be \$100K.

Page 3 – Delete SEC does not get involved with the tax issue. Where is that money for the legal battle coming from? We would have to have a special meeting with the town in regards to this or do it at town meeting.

Page 3 – We have the estimate of the **tax income** proposal.

Page 3 – Delete Intervener will kill it. **The Northern Pass Project** filing fee....

Bernie made a motion to accept the minutes as amended, Eric seconded the motion and all voted in favor.

APPOINTMENTS:

3:00 Allan Clark – Per a phone conversation with Allan Clark the revised Building Permit Application will be changed to read that Multi-family & Commercial applications will increase to \$100. We will add Solar Permit for \$100. Allan will forward the document to Sally by the end of the day.

Bob makes a motion to approve the document and Bernie seconded the motion with all voting in favor. Then it will be put on the website.

3:30 – Peter Grote – reported that on the Site Evaluation Committee (SEC) website you can see the index of the material that Northern Pass (NP) has presented. There are 37 volumes which is a legal stonewall that they have surrounded themselves with. They have an expert witness for

each complaint. There is an appendix for the concerns of the Board. It isn't a public document. The nitty gritty stuff is not available to the public. What about the Freedom of Information Act?

Our concerns are the disruption of our town and property tax values, the economics and the public safety issues that have come up. Who will be responsible for the maintenance and the infrastructure under the roads?

There will be huge economic and environmental impact on our town that has long term implications. The benefits that they offer are meager.

Peter advised the board that the committee working diligently and is prepared to submit a draft filing of the documents well before the dead line. They would like to recommend inviting a knowledgeable consultant who is an engineer and appraiser of the utilities to a meeting. Many municipalities have already decided to hire him.

We need to prepare to be active with the whole process after and during the intervention period of about a year. We need to negotiate for the best possible terms that we can if it is going to go thru no matter what. Time tables will be set and everyone will be scrambling.

Other Boards are interested in what we are doing. We have a common interest and it would be to everyone's advantage to work together. There is power in numbers and it divides up the legal bills. This consultant is available the week before Christmas. We can meet with him privately and then have an open discussion with Planning Board, Franconia Conservation Committee and neighboring town officials. It will start out as a Closed Session. This process will involve litigation.

To become an Intervener is not a complex process and doesn't cost a lot. If you are accepted to be an Intervener you can sit at the table and be heard. The Select Board reviews what the Planning Board, Franconia Conservation Committee will be filing. In case only one from the town is accepted as an Intervener all parties should touch on all subjects.

Sharing of Information Agreement. The one in June was signed. Sally will look for our copy that is signed.

The Northern Pass Committee will have the meeting on December 22, 2015 at 530pm here at the town hall. The first portion will be a closed session. We should have all the towns that are having the lines buried with common interests. Then we can move to the main hall.

The residents of Franconia who live along the sections of Route 18 and Route 116 can be an Intervener. We have a sample letter that we could share with the abutter's. We could post an example abutter letter on our website with an explanation of what abutters should do to be an Intervener and be heard.

The Board received letters from residents who live on Route 18. They have gotten letters from Northern Pass to do core samples on their properties. Please read the letters and process this information. The woman who shared this seemed shocked that we did not know about it. Only a few people got them.

The Northern Pass Committee has permission to invite the officials of the towns that are having the lines buried to this meeting.

FOR CONSIDERATION OF APPROVAL:

Transaction List 12/17/15 – Sign and approved by the Board

Solar Permit - Gale River Motel – Called and confirmed with Kevin Johnson that the solar panels will be on the roof of the motel.

Building Permit – Diana Coldren – 108 Alpine Drive, Map 28, Lot 29

TO DISCUSS/REVIEW:

Solar Panels – Ask the Planning Board in regards to this moving forward. We should have a minimum of standards in regards to noticing abutters. Bob will talk to Allan about this.

Meadow Crest Drive Deed – Sally will tell Kenny Mosedale to go thru with recording the deed.

Town Office Organization Chart – Sally is a liaison between all departments. Recreation and Franconia Conservation Commission the Board has no say. We appoint but we have no say. Top tier all elected but she has to communicate with them. Sally will include elected, not elected, or appointed notations for each.

Retirement (Non-Police) – The Selectmen discussed Sally’s request that the board increase the town’s portion of the weekly employee retirement for all fulltime non-police from \$17 to \$20. Retirement was last changed in January 2008 when it went from \$12 to \$17. The impact to the overall budget would be a change from \$8,400 to \$9,980. The retirement was supposed to be revisited in two years or 2010 but never was and it is now 2015. Eight years later and we would be increasing it to \$3 more. The employees will match the increase. If we say yes Sally will work up the figures for each department. Department Heads will be doing their general expenses. The Board determines the wages and health insurance. We just want to plug the numbers in it is not cast in stone. Our budget hearing is the 8th of February. We can fine tune everything in January. The Board agreed to the \$20 increase for budget purposes at this time.

Employee Portion of Health Insurance – In 2002 it was voted every year there is an increase the employees will pay half. Currently the employees are paying 30% of their insurance. The 2016 health insurance has a 3% increase or 1.5 % increase for the employee. The 2015 employee cost for a family per week is \$180 that would increase to about \$183/ week or a little more than 30%. Sally floated the idea of capping the employee share at 30% explaining that the employees have asked about it and the fact that the Teachers do not pay 30%. So the board increasing employees portion by 1.5% or CAP it at 30%. The Police are more concerned because of their families. Other towns and teachers don’t pay this much. The Employees like their plans but wish their percentage would be capped. The board decided not to make any changes in the formula for the health insurance this year.

Plantation Road Potholes – Bernie has driven over it yesterday. These holes left behind by the water department. It is also the wash board. The Road Department is in charge of maintaining the roads. Ask Scott to fix it.

Scragg Mountain Road - Scott Knowlton put up a class six sign at the beginning of Scragg Mountain Road that reads “Subject to Bars and Gates.” When Arthur Chase subdivided his land

the Planning Board had him upgrade a portion of the road to Town standards so the second lot would have 200 feet of frontage on a town standards road. He wants to sell his lot so he would like the sign taken down and relocated past the where the road is upgraded. A Class VI road has no work done to it. Class V road is a private or a town road and the upgraded section of this road is private. The sign will be taken down.

Dead Trees – Plantation Road has a tree that will come down over the wires. Sally will talk to Laura Duddy at Eversource. The tree is between Garfields and Borans. Sally will get the pole numbers and report it.

Events Sign - A suggestion that has not been considered is to move the whole sign down in front of the town hall. The sign could be also moved upward in the frame. That may not solve the site issue. The sign was paid for by Peabody & Smith Realty. We should try to raise it up and see what happens. The tree in front of the Catholic Church is more of a vision issue. Ask Kim to see if they can raise the interior of the sign.

Hillwind's Bridge – Top rail is rotting away. We will let Scott know about it. It is on the walking section of the bridge.

December 21st Meeting – Bring Dept Heads in with their 4Q budgets up to the 17th of the month and come up with preliminary 2016 at least for general budgets. General Expenses only

Jim Cyr – Not coming back until March. Are we doing anything with Chucky? He is a temporary employee. Give him \$1 and then make it affective Jan 1st.

Performance Evaluation – We will do as a group in Closed Session in regards to their salary. Usually the Department Heads will evaluate their departments and the Board will evaluate the Department Heads. We haven't done anything since 2010 for evaluations. The Police evaluate every year. We can have the Department Heads bring them bring them in for Monday. Department Heads will hand in their Budget 2016 General Expenses only and performance reviews. We will hand out gift cards and have holiday goodies. We can then do budget reviews without Department Heads.

CIP - We can do CIP Budget the first and second week in January.

Select Board Members are open to meeting twice a week as opposed to have long meeting. Our Budget hearing is on Monday, Feb 8th. We can have two meetings. We can have an open meeting and then have an official meeting according to law. We can have a preliminary at the Select Board meeting on Monday or Thursday the first week at 3pm.

The whole select board should be involved in preparing the budget. We will schedule individual meetings with the department heads.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION:

There may be a possibility of a closed session meeting.

Bernie made a motion to adjourn the meeting, Eric seconded the motion and all voted in favor. Meeting adjourned at 5:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Herbie Bartlett
Executive Secretary