

FRANCONIA BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING

Monday, December 7, 2015

A meeting of the Franconia Board of Selectmen was held at 3:00 pm on Monday, December 7, 2015 at the Franconia Town Hall. Regular members in attendance were Bob Montagno, Eric Meth, Bernie Costa, and Herbie Bartlett.

Also attending – Peter Grote, Kim Cowles, Karen Foss, Mary Grote

SELECTMEN'S TIME:

BOS Minutes 12/7/15: Formal readings of the November 30, 2015 BOS meeting minutes were waived. The minutes for November 30, 2015 were approved with the following corrections:

November 30, 2015 corrections –

Page 2 – Under Public Restrooms at Town Hall - The Planning Board will present sign options to the Selectmen for approval and then the **Select Board** will have Jeff install them.

Bernie made a motion to accept the minutes of November 30, 2015 and Bob seconded the motion and all voted to accept the minutes as amended.

FOR CONSIDERATION OF APPROVAL:

Transaction List for 12/10/15 – Approved and signed by the Board.

APPOINTMENTS:

3:00 – Kim Cowles – Kim provided a tri-town recreational agreement draft for the Select Board to review. Town of Franconia should determine what Kim's Park Department wages are. Kim has asked for a raise from the Park portion of her job. Her wages are a 60/40 split between Recreation and Parks. She asked for a raise last year from both departments and was denied. She is coming back with a self evaluation form and a monthly breakdown of what she does for each department. She is looking for just compensation for the work that she does. Bob has done some research of other towns and Kim is getting paid less than other towns. The Recreation Committee is responsible for what Kim does in Recreation. The Town shouldn't be assessing this. It should be up to the Recreation Committee to evaluate Kim. Bob will share his information with them. The Recreation Committee should come to the Select Board in regards to this. That will happen in January. Bob will forward his information in regards to this to Sally and she will forward to Parks and Recreation.

The Town of Franconia pays Kim her Park wages. Recreation wages are paid by all three towns. Kim does the maintenance to the town website and she does not get compensated for this at all. She will also be helping with snow removal of sidewalks that will be paid out of the budget for Building & Grounds.

3:30 – Mittersill Winter Policy – Marcia Graham, Pete Stevens, John Monaghan, & Scott Leslie – There are serious problems navigating around Mittersill when guests are there in the winter months. They park all over the place. Marcia would like to speak to Mr. Granoff who owns the property at the top of Deer Pass Road. This is Scott's biggest problem with plowing at Mittersill. Scott has to back all the way out which is very dangerous due to road conditions. This is also a hazard for emergency vehicles if they had to get in there.

Chief John Monaghan will speak with the, rental agent, Cort Roussel and the home owners. John can have winter parking ban signs made and put in. Vehicles that do not comply will have to be towed. If there are too many vehicles they could park in the overflow parking at the Ski Area to keep this area free for the snow plow and emergency vehicles.

Bob Montagno wants this to be followed up on in January. The Home Owners Association will be meeting on January 17, 2016. We can meet with the association before that happens.

4:00 – Peter Grote - Went to the meeting of the Site Evaluation Committee (SEC) today along with Bernie Costa. All NH Agencies has voted for completion of the application. We filed a petition that we consider it incomplete. It is administratively incomplete. The Select Board wrote a letter and The Grote's also wrote a letter. The SEC voted on unanimously to accept the application for the Northern Pass.

The Assistant Attorney General made a petition to hire another lawyer and Northern Pass objected. Chairman of SEC had to determine and allowed him to do so. Eversource is going to fight.

We have to decide if we want to be an intervener. What do we hope to achieve by being an intervener? We don't have to reinvent the wheel. We may want to focus on the RSA 162-A:6.

What is our goal? The town does not want the Northern Pass Project on Route 18 and 116. There are major concerns in regards to public safety and health issues.

How will it affect our property values? How will it affect the town while the construction is going on? Everyone has the perception that it is not safe. There is a burden upon them to show us that it is safe. Is there going to be an issue with magnetism and temperature? There would need to be a specific agreement as to what and how they will reimburse the town before there is damage to roads, sidewalks, foundations, etc.

If we have a specific goal we can go alone or join other municipalities and be more affective as a group and it would be less expensive. It goes thru the major intersection of routes 116 to 112 in North Woodstock and then goes up and over Kinsman Notch and then will go south down route 3 in Lincoln and North Woodstock.

At this point the lawyer would be \$100K. We could have an attorney represent the group so the cost would be split up. Our issues are not necessarily their issues in other towns. We could coordinate with other towns where the project is being buried or join with other towns with other goals. Sugar Hill did not send a petition in regards to the application. Woodstock and Easton are really involved with it. Sugar Hill was not in Concord today.

What are other towns in Northern New Hampshire doing?

Where is that money for the legal battle coming from? Sugar Hill voted in \$10K and an account to accept donations. We would have to have a special meeting with the town in regards to this or do it at town meeting. There is \$29K in our legal fund.

There is a good risk/reward ratio if we do nothing. We have the estimate of the tax income proposal. We need a contingency plan. How do we deal with both issues? If we are going to hire lawyers we need to get something substantial.

At what point do we go in that direction? If we will be an intervener we have to decide if we will. It will get killed or it will happen. The Northern Pass Project filing fee for this application is \$626,000. \$1.6 billion is the total for this project. We have to be ready for Stage II. John Monaghan's department will be strained. We have to have good representation.

We need to make a decision. Easton's only issue is the tax values on the road, health issues and the safety items like explosions and magnetic fields. We have a commonality with Easton. Peter recommends getting a lawyer. If we don't prepare now they will shoot us if we wing it. They will rip us apart. We should get an attorney involved now. If we pool our interest with Easton or North Woodstock or Sugar Hill it will lower our bill as Intervener. We will have the committee look into it.

Bernie made a motion to direct the Northern Pass Committee to make a recommendation as to how to proceed as an Intervener with the Northern Pass Project, Bob seconded the motion with all voting in favor.

This will have to be very confidential. Our lawyers will request this. Northern Pass attorneys are very nosy. We want to protect the information we gather. We do not want to be forced to share it. We have a confidentiality agreement between the tri-towns. The Committee will report to the Select Board on Mondays. We will have to do a close session for this. Sally has to communicate with the Committee in regards to anything coming in from Northern Pass.

Closed Session minutes will be postponed until next Monday.

TO DISCUSS/REVIEW:

Used Copier – Discussed the purchase of used copiers from Reinhold. Sally will look at them.
Tabled until Sally comes back.

Town Office Organization Chart - Sally will adjust the chart and resubmit to the Board via email. **Franconia Conservation Commission and Recreation Commission should be changed. This should be separate.**

Retirement (Non-Police) – An increase in the retirement paid by the town from \$17 to \$20 per week for the fulltime employees was discussed and Sally shared minutes of the meeting back in 2008 when the amount was raised from \$15 to \$17. The Board would like to see what the budget implications would be and Sally will provide this at the next Board meeting. **Tabled until next week.**

Employee Portion of Health Insurance – Tabled until Sally comes back.

Building Permit Application – Tabled until next week.

Employee Evaluations – We need to get onto this soon. **Police Department is not required to have yearly evaluations. Johns wants to do it. It is important. It can be a useful tool. Herbie will email the form to the Board Members.**

Jim Cyr - is not coming back until March per Scott Leslie. Chucky can stay but wants an increase in pay. We will discuss.

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 5:10 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Herbie Bartlett
Executive Secretary