

**TOWN OF FRANCONIA  
BOARD OF SELECTMEN'S REGULAR MEETING  
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 2023 AT 6:00PM AT TOWN HALL**

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**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:** Dan Walker, Jill Brewer

**BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:** Eric Meth

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Sharon Penney, Jenny Monahan, Corey Rush, Sam Johnk, Carol Walker, Steve Schwartz, Karen Foss, Larry Plate, Paul Hayes, Mike Betley, Lynn Terres, Janice Cole, Jayne O'Connor, Gene Young, Pat Garvin, Chief Rick Gaudette, Nate Hanson.

**The meeting was called to order at 6:02pm**

**APPOINTMENTS/WORK SESSIONS**

None

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

Public comment was taken from Larry Plate regarding meeting minutes. Carol Walker commented regarding meeting minutes.

**TO SIGN/APPROVE**

The February 6th, 2023, transaction report was reviewed and signed by the selectmen.

The minutes of January 23rd and January 30th, 2023 were approved as amended by the selectmen on a motion from Chairman Brewer and a second from Selectman Walker.

A septic application for map 24 lot 66 was approved by the selectmen.

**TO DISCUSS/REVIEW**

**Disbandment of Life Squad:** Selectman Walker said dysfunction in the life squad has caused confusion and a communication breakdown with other agencies (such as Littleton Regional Hospital) in regard to the status of Franconia Life Squad, and those agencies do not know who to contact for certain EMS issues. He said that any agency coming to help us wants to know that Franconia can provide assistance to the responding agency. He said he met with Chief Rick Gaudette and the Franconia Fire Department has agreed to respond to calls to assist other town's departments that are responding to Franconia calls.

Selectman Walker continued that Lin-Wood's Chief Tauber has stated they are not willing to assist Franconia due to the dysfunction in Franconia Life Squad.

For these reasons, the board thinks it is best that the Franconia Life Squad is officially disbanded to clarify the situation with other agencies that can assist with calls, and because the Franconia Life Squad has not been responding to any calls for months.

Selectman Walker said Littleton will respond to Franconia calls until March 31<sup>st</sup>, and if no agreement is made to extend the current agreement, their assistance will end after that date and there will be no EMS agency to respond.

There followed a lengthy discussion with the public and the board, Life Squad member Nate Hanson and Fire Chief Rick Gaudette. Residents expressed concerns and inquired about:

- Are Franconia wages appropriate to attract EMS personnel to work for Franconia? (*Wages could be adjusted to be more competitive but multiple departments in the region are competing for their same employees*)
- The procedure if emergency calls are received for Franconia to Grafton County Dispatch (*Until 3/31 Littleton will be dispatched. Littleton until 3/31 will call Franconia FD for assistance*)
- What residents should do if emergency assistance is needed after 3/31 if the agreement is not extended? (*Self-transport unless an agreement is made with another town*)
- How many members remain of the Franconia Life Squad (*Perhaps 7-8 but they work for other departments as well/or work FT jobs*)
- What causes may have led to losing Franconia EMS personnel (*decline in volunteerism, attrition, working for another department PT or FT*)
- Other solutions for coverage if Littleton will not contract with Franconia (*regionalization of multiple town's departments which could take years, hiring FT EMS personnel for Franconia but associated logistics are challenging*)
- If Franconia Firefighters have medical training and what level of care they can provide (*most have training, but many have not kept their certifications up to date*)
- How other towns are handling declining volunteerism and employee attrition (*many are also struggling with the same issues*)
- The possibility of regionalization of departments in the future (*a possibility but not going to happen immediately and would take time to organize*)
- Should a warrant article be drafted to earmark money to fund EMS services (*the issue isn't funding alone, its also attracting and retaining personnel*)
- A resident said a petition is in circulation to fund the Life Squad (*the board is aware of the possibility of a petition being presented, but that still would not solve the lack of personnel*)

The board said it is hopeful that an agreement can be made with Littleton to extend coverage for the town. Littleton's board has agreed to conduct a joint work session with Franconia's selectmen on Wednesday, February 22<sup>nd</sup> at 5pm at the Community Center in Littleton.

Chairman Brewer made a motion that the Town of Franconia formally disband its Life Squad effective immediately. Selectman Walker seconded the motion. **Motion passes.**

**Public Hearing – Police Dept. Grants:** Town Administrator Penney said that since the Dept. of Safety amended grants awarded to Franconia Police Department to add more funds, a public hearing must be scheduled to accept the unanticipated revenue. The board scheduled the public hearing for Monday, February 27<sup>th</sup> at 6:00pm at town hall, to be held during their regular meeting.

**Bookkeeping Supplement:** Town Administrator Penney recommended that the town employ a part-time bookkeeper to provide additional oversight to the town's financials. She thinks 10 hours a month would be adequate. After a brief discussion, the board decided to budget \$7,200 for this service.

**Medicare Report Update:** Town Administrator Penney said she received more information on the extensive Medicare reporting that the town was randomly selected for, and the penalty assessed on the town's life squad transporting revenue would only be assessed for one year. The board discussed that since the town currently has no functioning life squad and does not anticipate transport revenue, the reporting could be disregarded.

Chairman Brewer made a motion to disregard the request for Medicare reporting from the town. Selectman Walker seconded the motion. **Motion passes.**

**CORRESPONDENCE:** Town Administrator Penney said Spectrum sent a letter to the town advising that additional channels will be added to their basic service.

Town Administrator Penney received an inquiry from an employee about whether or not the town will seek to add dental to employees benefits this year, as was previously discussed.

The board reviewed the non-public minutes from January 23, 2023 and January 30<sup>th</sup> 2023. Chairman Brewer made a motion to seal the minutes of January 23, 2023. Selectman Walker seconded the motion. **Motion passes.** Chairman Brewer made a motion to approve the minutes of January 30, 2023. Selectman Walker seconded the motion. **Motion passes.**

With no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 7:30pm on a motion from Chairman Brewer and a second from Selectman Walker.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Jenny Monahan  
Administrative Secretary