

**Town of Franconia
Board of Selectmen's Regular Meeting
Monday, July 10th at 6:00PM
at Town Hall**

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

Others Present: Libby Staples, Jenny Monahan, Katie Raymond, Larry Plate, Adam Boyer, Judith & Jeff Lavin, Nate Hamilton, Jan Cole, Carol Walker, Virginia Mike, Dawn Steele, Sharon Penney, Peter & Mary Grote, Peter Gaudette, Chief Mac Cashin, Stephen O'Connor, other unknown persons

The meeting was called to order at 6:00PM. Chairman Brewer introduced new Town Administrator Libby Staples.

Appointments/Work Sessions

Marcus Hamilton – Pole Vault on Dow: As a member of the Profile School track team, Marcus, his team members and coach discussed that having a pole vault pit would be beneficial to the team but a suitable location would need to be found. Marcus proposed the Dow as a potential location and provided drawings to the board showing the size and layout of the pit and explained it would involve a dirt track, a hard pad of concrete, the poles and rail to vault over and a pit with foam padding to land in. He said the only component left out when not in use would be the foam landing pad. Marcus said he thinks the school may pay for the project and there are grants available as well. The board was not opposed to the idea and asked for more information about funding the project. There is a question of liability to the town. Marcus will check with the school's Athletic Director for more information about the funding.

Jeff Lavin – Pickleball Courts: Jeff spoke on behalf of a group of pickleball players that donated to the town towards pickleball courts on the rink. Jeff emphasized that the sport is very popular and fast growing and can be played eight months of the year in the area and he thinks many people would come to use the pickle ball courts which would be good for the town as they may patronize town businesses. He said he sent a letter on behalf of the interested parties to the board expressing their concerns about what was planned for pickleball on the rink. He said they want to know what's going on with the completion of the pickleball courts.

Executive Assistant Jenny Monahan said the town is working with Vermont Recreational Surfacing on getting the court painted but the consistently rainy weather has prevented any work from being done this summer as the court needs not just to be completely dry prior to painting it but there needs to be a window of time for the paint to dry after the paint is applied.

Concerns regarding the pooling water on the rink were also discussed. Jeff asked for clarity regarding whether the rink was supposed to have another coat of asphalt applied to level it out and referenced TOTF minutes where he thought that may have been discussed. Trustee Jan Cole said no, that was not what was discussed in those minutes. Sharon Penney commented that when she was interim town administrator she looked into the funding and there were disconnects in planning and communications and a plan was not clear. Recreation Director Katie Raymond said the solicitation of donations was not from the town and her understanding of the donations were that they were to be for nets and poles, not resurfacing.

Selectman Walker said that in 1975 the town entered into the Franconia Skating Rink Agreement with the state through the Landwater Conservation Fund. The agreement includes that the facility be maintained as an ice rink. He thinks Pickleball would be a great thing to have but the rink needs to be a rink first and foremost in accordance with the agreement.

Adam Boyer said the drainage issue is the main problem and if that were improved the rink should dry quicker and have more opportunity for use. Some suggestions followed such as removing and re-setting the drain pipes in the curbing or getting a sump pump to remove the water.

Jeff Lavin said the grade of the rink and curbing seem to be the main issue. It was discussed that the grading of the rink was changed to make it easier to flood. Chairman Brewer said it is important that the town needs to honor the agreement with the state and the primary purpose of the rink being a skating rink and should not do anything to prevent the rink from effectively fulfilling that purpose. Jeff Lavin asked if there could be a plan to have the rink suitable for both skating and pickleball and what that might entail? Selectman Walker said there needs to be compromise on what the expectation was and what the town can do as the town does not have funds available to redo the surface of the rink at this time. Trustee Jan Cole said the town funds the rink surface CRF on a ten-year plan and those funds were used. Carol Walker suggested checking with GMI (the paving company) to see if anything can be done as part of their one-year guarantee. Jenny Monahan will check with Road Agent Jeremy Hall about this. This topic will be discussed again at a future meeting.

Ken King – Unpermitted Sign Issue: Ken met with the board to discuss the sign at his property at 955 Profile Road that he has been asked to remove by July 15th via a letter from town counsel. Ken disputes the content of the letter and said the sign is just there to advertise that he is looking for help for his business and is not advertising his business. He said that he received direct approval from Thad Presby at a planning board meeting during the pandemic to have the sign after having a permit for a similarly situated sign rescinded in the past. He said he misspoke when agreeing to the special exception and intended to agree not to advertise his business with a sign rather than not have any signage at all. Ken provided some letters from his neighbors who are not opposed to his sign and said only one neighbor that is the complainant about the sign is opposed. Chairman Brewer said she appreciates the feedback from his other neighbors but the board still has to enforce the ordinance and if Ken has an issue with the content of the letter from counsel he should address it with counsel. Selectmen Walker and Meth said the board is tasked with enforcing the ordinances and operating off the existing historical documentation surrounding the property. Sharon Penney said the town's zoning needs to be overhauled and encouraged the board to plan for this at budget time. Selectman Walker read a document signed by Ken acknowledging that there are to be no signs on the building or by the road. Ken said the board should think about the way the ordinances affect people and since he is a resident of Sugar Hill and not Franconia he is powerless to speak to the issue at town meeting. Selectman Walker said as a property owner he could speak about it at town meeting, he just cannot vote.

Granite Outdoor Alliance – Graniteer Event: Tyler Ray was not able to make the appointment but Rec Director Katie Raymond said she met with him at Dow Park to talk about the event and was concerned that part of the plan includes cordoning off the playground portion of the park rendering it inaccessible to the general public. There is also a lack of clarity about where alcohol will be permitted during the event. Chairman Brewer said Tyler Ray is in touch with the liquor commission and will provide an update.

Public Comment

Dawn Steele asked about the status of the short-term rental spreadsheet update. Larry Plate said he could not hear the pole vault portion of the meeting and it is a recurring issue. Larry Plate said the draft minutes were not posted to the website.

Sign/Approve

The minutes of June 26th, 2023 were approved as amended.

The board reviewed and signed the July 8th - 14th, 2023 transaction report.

Cooley-Jericho Community Forest Draft MOU: The board signed the final draft of the Memorandum of Understanding.

PA-28 – Inventory of Taxable Property Form: The board signed the PA-28.

Property Tax Abatement – 974 Profile Road – Registered camper: The board reviewed a request from Tax Collector Wills to abate the first issue 2023 property taxes for a camper at Fransted Campground as it should not have been assessed taxes due to being registered with the DMV.

Selectman Meth made a motion to abate the property taxes for map 13 lot 34-224 in the amount of \$44. Selectman Walker seconded the motion. **Motion passes.**

The board approved a driveway permit application for Timber Lane, map 31 lot 31.

The board signed an agreement with Irving Energy locking in oil pricing at \$2.85 per gallon for the period of September 1st 2023 through August 31st 2024.

Additional Discussion: Selectman Meth said he had heard support from residents for hiring a town forester. Chairman Brewer said the conservation commission is also supportive of the idea and that the town used to have one in the past.

Chairman Brewer thanked everyone involved in the planning of Old Home Day. Selectman Meth recognized Tim Brown's work on Old Home Day and the 250th celebration. Jenny said the fireworks are rescheduled for August 5th with a rain date of August 6th.

The board discussed the upcoming meeting schedule. Chairman Brewer will not be present for the meeting on the 24th or August 7th. It was decided that the board will meet on Tuesday, August 8th instead of the 7th.

The board entered non-public session at 7:55PM pursuant to RSA 91-A:3, II(a) on a motion from Chairman Brewer and second from Selectman Meth. The board left non-public session at 8:23PM. With no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 8:23PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Jenny Monahan
Executive Assistant