

TOWN OF FRANCONIA
BOARD OF SELECTMEN'S REGULAR MEETING
MONDAY, JULY 11, 2022 AT 6:00PM AT TOWN HALL

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

OTHERS PRESENT: Kim Cowles, Jenny Monahan, Dawn Steele, Virginia Mike, Janice Cole, Larry Plate, Pat Garvin, Mary Grote, Peter Grote, and Ann Foss

The meeting was called to order at 6:07pm

APPOINTMENTS/WORK SESSIONS:

Water Department Request for ARPA Funds: Chairman Brewer stated the Water Department originally requested \$95,000.00 of the ARPA funds for infrastructure improvements at Mittersill (cost of that project has increased to \$135,000.00 due to rising costs). The amount of \$30,000.00 was previously discussed as the amount of money the Water Department spent on the water line project taking place at the back of town hall, which is the request the Selectmen are considering.

Selectmen Meth stated that Kevin Johnson made a very good case and a very specific case at the public hearing and he believes the request for the funds is specific, it's needed, it's infrastructure, and it definitely falls under the guidelines for the ARPA funds.

Chairman Brewer agreed that Kevin did a good job and that some of the \$95,000.00 the Water Department had budgeted for the Mittersill project was spent moving the water lines at the project at town hall and the \$30,000.00 roughly makes up for the difference in the cost of the Mittersill project.

Selectmen Walker discussed his experience as a Water Commissioner as it related to budgeting and the ability to raise revenue for projects. He stated the only way the Water Department generates revenue is through water rents. If repairs and expenses are low during a year then that becomes the savings account for future projects. The reason the Water Department is spending more is that they are trying to stay ahead of the town in some paving projects at Mittersill so they don't have to spend paving dollars twice. This project at town hall was an opportunity for them to piggyback off of what we were doing to fix a known problem that was identified years ago.

Selectman Walker agreed with the \$30,000.00 to offset this project. He stated it is a little under one-third and it is one of the criteria that we can use it for and it does benefit the downtown area. It creates a loop for the water, which is important in the water world. The water is always circulating even when no one is using it, so it is not stagnant water.

Selectman Walker stated there would be approximately \$76,000.00 left if we give \$30,000.00 to the Water Department and \$3,750.00 for the broadband initiative. Town Administrator Cowles stated the town also has another two years to use the funds.

Selectmen Meth made a motion to use \$30,000.00 from the American Rescue Plan Act for infrastructure for the Water Department as presented by the Water Commissioners. Chairman Brewer seconded the motion with all voting in favor. **Motion passes.**

PUBLIC COMMENT

Public comment was taken from Dawn Steele, Mary Grote, Virginia Mike, Ann Foss, and Larry Plate.

TO SIGN/APPROVE:

The minutes of June 7, 2022, were approved as written.

The minutes of June 14, 2022, were approved as amended.

The minutes of May 16, 2022, public hearing will be reviewed at the next meeting.

The July 11, 2022, transaction report was reviewed and signed by the selectmen.

A driveway permit for Daggett/Bates on Windago Lane was approved by the selectmen.

A septic installation application for Map 29, Lot 40-2 was approved by the selectmen.

A septic installation application for Map 28, Lot 11 was approved by the selectmen.

A 3-party agreement between the Franconia ArtWalk Association, an artist, and Franconia was approved by the selectmen and signed by Chairman Brewer.

TO DISCUSS/REVIEW;

Letter of Support for New Hampshire Electric Cooperative: Selectmen Meth stated in connection with the broadband initiative it has been requested for the Board to send letters of support for two of the internet service providers that are looking to come into the area-- New Hampshire Electric Cooperative (NHEC) and Consolidated Communications Inc. (CCI). There is no guarantee either of them will become our internet service provider, but they're looking for support from the local towns in Grafton County and there is no financial commitment.

Selectmen Meth made a motion to sign the two letters of support, one for New Hampshire Electric Cooperative (NHEC) and one for Consolidated Communications Inc. (CCI) and these two letters are addressed to the New Hampshire Office of Broadband Initiative. Selectmen Walker seconded the motion with all voting in favor. **Motion passes.**

CIP Committee Membership Interest: Town Administrator Cowles stated three people have reached out with an interest in joining the committee-- Larry Plate, Janice Cole, and Danielle Dawson. Town Administrator Cowles has also reached out to existing members and has heard back from Steve Plant and Peter Grote who are interested in continuing on the committee. She has not heard back from Trevor Presby, but will reach out to him again. Selectmen Walker will be the Selectmen Representative to the CIP Committee and Monica Laflamme will be the Planning Board Representative.

Town Administrator Cowles stated the Board can now discuss how many people should be on the committee and exactly what the CIP Committee is charged with and then move forward with a meeting time. She stated she believes the CIP is an advisory committee to try and come up with a long-range plan for all capital assets.

The Board had a brief discussion about whether an eight-member committee would be too big. Selectman Walker stated the extra hands for this year will be useful to accomplish what the committee needs to do. This year the committee needs to do some homework and get our numbers more in line with modern day pricing. He believes there will be subgroups that will take pieces of the budgets to work on and then come together and compile the information as a group.

Selectman Walker made the recommendation to accept all three people to the committee. He also stated the CIP is really a function of the Planning Board, so the PB should be represented. Town Administrator Cowles stated she would like to attend some of the meetings, possibly when the department heads are to be there.

There was a brief discussion about setting up a meeting in early August so the committee can move forward with a plan for September or October and be wrapped up by December.

Correspondence:

Town Administrator Cowles stated she received a thank you letter from the Chamber of Commerce sending their heartfelt appreciation to the town for its support donation of \$9,000.00. (The letter was passed around to the Board).

Town Administrator Cowles stated she has the lease for the Chamber of Commerce space which she emailed out to the Board. The proposed lease is for \$400.00 a month, which is what has been talked about all along, and for them to pay 30% of the utilities for the building. The agreement can be terminated at any time with 30 days' notice by either party. They should be able to move in within a couple of weeks. They have to finish up the plumbing, connection for internet and phone, and the fire alarm and cameras are yet to come. The minisplit is in, but it's not connected. All that work is scheduled for this week. The lease was passed to the members for their signature.

Town Administrator Cowles stated she has the contract from HEB Engineering for the Wells Road culvert. The contract is for \$2,500.00 for them to put together the application for the grant to get that project going.

Town Administrator Cowles stated she has a representation letter from the auditors. This is just agreeing to everything that they've done and the financial statements. We need to send this in with my signature and Chairman Brewer's signature and then the audit will be done and they'll file their final report.

The Board had a brief discussion about Old Home Day. Town Administrator Cowles stated the weather was beautiful and there was a big crowd. The parade was awesome and the concert and fireworks were awesome. Lots of fun and no negative comments.

The Board had a brief discussion regarding planning for the town's 250th birthday next year. Town Administrator Cowles stated she would like to see different events at different seasons and have some commemorative stuff going on as well. Selectman Walker stated that he is working on a side project and JD stated that the mountain is willing to work with the town to do something special for the town for next ski season.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Broadband Initiative: Selectmen Meth stated the next meeting is scheduled for July 21st. He also stated that Karina Park, who is the administrative person for the Grafton County Broadband Committee is trying to arrange a presentation on what is happening with what they call the middle mile or backbone and how it will be delivered to the town. He will get more information at the next meeting.

Chamber of Commerce: Selectman Walker stated there was no further business except what has already been discussed.

Conservation Commission: Chairman Brewer stated the next meeting is August 16th at 4:00pm on the Dow.

Energy Commission: Selectman Meth stated the next meeting is July 14th, at 4:30 at the pavilion.

Planning Board: Selectman Meth stated the next meeting is tomorrow evening at 7:00pm at the town hall. The subcommittee on short-term rentals has already met once and the next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, July 13th, at 9:00am at the town hall.

The next meeting is scheduled for Monday, July 25th. at 6:00pm. Chairman Brewer indicated she would be out of town and unable to attend the meeting .

With no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 7:11pm on a motion from Chairman Brewer and a second from Selectman Walker with all voting in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Jenny Monahan
Administrative Secretary