



TOWN OF FRANCONIA

INCORPORATED 1764

BOARD OF SELECTMEN'S REGULAR MEETING

JUNE 19, 2017 AT 3 O'CLOCK PM AT TOWN OFFICES

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**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Mr. Eric Meth, Chairman, Ms. Bernadette Costa, Ms. Jill Brewer.

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Ms. Holly Burbank-Town Administrator, Christopher Gautreau- Admin Asst.

**INVITED GUESTS:** Greg Weiskerger

**GENERAL PUBLIC** Chris Hodge, Michael Ransmeier, Bob Montagno, Peter Grote, Mary Grote, Chris Nicodemus, Rebecca Brown, Justin Roshak, Kim Cowles.

The regular meeting was called to order at 3:06 PM by MR. ERIC METH- BOS CHAIRMAN

**ITEMS FOR REVIEW/APPROVAL/DENIAL/DISPOSITION**

1) MEETING MINUTES OF JUNE 12, 2017 REGULAR MEETING

Mr. Meth made a motion to accept the minutes as amended. Ms Costa seconded the motion with all in favor.

2) TRANSACTION LIST: JUNE 22, 2017

The June 22<sup>nd</sup> transaction list was reviewed and approved.

3) ABATEMENT APPLICATIONS – MAP 14/ LOT 110, MAP 14/LOT 125, AND MAP14/ LOT 31

The Board reviewed and signed the above requests for abatement.

4) TAX ABATEMENTS: MAP 17/LOT 4, MAP 20/ LOT 1, MAP 14/LOT 43-34, MAP 15 / LOT 23, MAP 23/ LOT 19.

The Board reviewed and approved the above abatements.

5) FRANCONIA HERITAGE COUNCIL LEASE AGREEMENT

The Franconia Heritage Council Lease Agreement was presented for signatures. The Board unanimously signed The Lease Agreement.

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## SCHEDULED APPOINTMENTS

3:00 PM-GREG WEISKERGER

RE: - FRANSTEAD CAMPGROUND

ACTION(S) A lengthy discussion pertaining to the beaver issue and more specifically, as it relates to safety at the Franstead Campground was addressed. Mr. Weiskerger inquired as to whether a release of some water from the dam could be undertaken, as he considers it a threat to public safety and more specifically, to his guests and minor children that frequent the waters in that area. He noted two dams along the riverbanks, and the newest dam has grown exponentially. He has sent out a note to the Conservation Commission and has met with them twice, but with no response back. He addressed the patching and layering that has been undertaken which has only made things worse. He stated that on any given day, there are upwards of 50 to 100 children and youngsters congregating in the river and adjacent areas. Greg also noted the flooding in 2014, and the impact it had on his campground. Greg also spoke of the Merrimack, NH plan. Gage Perry is the contact person there.

Chris Hodge, a certified NH Animal Control Officer- Level II, stated that he was there on Saturday June 16, 2017 and took readings to reflect that the dam is approximately 300 feet long with a depth of 6-9 feet. He stated that relocating the beavers i.e., live trapping, is the most inhumane way to address the situation. He stated that a relocated beaver will move 5-10 times. Chris suggested three ways of resolving the issue:

- 1) Beaver Baffles, which is a method that deadens the sound of running water.
- 2) A Drain System to reduce water levels by installing a pipe under the dam for water to flow continuously.
- 3) Terminal Trapping- Which is typically euthanizing the beaver.

Chris introduced three documents to The Board pertaining to beaver habitat and management. Mr. Meth questioned whether there was a storm drain present in one of the other dams on Saturday's visit, and Chris said that there was not. Ms Brewer spoke of differing opinions and that Fish and Game advised that the beavers are right where they need to be, and that the water levels were not problematic, in his opinion. It was noted that the campground exists in a 100 yr flood plain, and no one is willing to give a 100% guarantee that a lightning strike, or similar flooding as from the 2014 flooding will not reoccur. Ms. Costa questioned Mr. Hodge as to his method of measuring water height.

Mr. Chris Nicodemus stated that he was at the dam today, June 19, 2017, and that after contacting Beaver Solutions, trying to trap and remove the beavers is an endless circle. Chris also commented on the pond height and it's relation to dam construction. Chris has reached out to hydrologists at different levels. Chris stated that the pond has less than 70,000 cu.ft of water in this area, and that going forward; the goal should be to limit the height of the dam as it is one of many around the state. Chris advised that the beavers have been there for a very long time and they will not go away. He concluded by stating that flexible pond levelers could be installed, **IF**, The Conservation Commission deemed appropriate, and if the water height presented a direct threat to the downstream area. Chris noted that he does not believe any action is appropriate at this time.

Mr. Ransmeier presented copies of The Conservation Easement to The Board. He also gave some examples of what one or two feet of water can do to an automobile or to a human being. Mr.

Ransmeier went on to read some details to the board in regards to accountability should something tragic occur.

Ms Brown spoke to an item in the easement and how the landowner should be consulting with The Conservation Committee. She stated that the easement does not have a “yay” or “nay” clause.

Mr. Ransmeier spoke of ways to address the problem working together. Mr. Ransmeier has consulted with Mr. Stats from Fish and Game who is opposed to trapping and referred to Mr. Chris Bernier of The Vermont Dept. of Fish and Wildlife. Mr. Ransmeier stated that Mr. Bernier has had good success with beaver baffles.

The next step decided upon, was to contact a hydrologist to study and make some recommendations centering on solutions to the water height, as well as the beavers in that area. Ms. Brewer offered to make contact with a hydrologist. Ms. Brewer advised that she will communicate to The Board once she has more detailed information.

Mr. Meth summed up that there was quite a bit of testimony so far, and that safety for everyone is paramount above all else. He also seemed to sum up that the differing opinions seemed to be a battle of the experts.

Mr. Meth stated that he appreciated the comments and presentations from the group, and the concern for safety from all in attendance.

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### **TOPICS FOR REVIEW/UPDATE/ DISCUSSION**

#### 1) TOWN ADMINISTRATOR HOLLY BURBANK:

Holly addressed the Building Permit methodology. She would like to streamline the process and standardize the current application process. Mr. Allan Clark, the town building inspector, is also working on this project in tandem with Holly. Holly also addressed signatories from the Board with regards to timely processing of applications. The Board will take that under advisement.

Holly addressed The Board in regards to payroll processing. Payroll is currently processed on Friday's, with the request to move that process to Monday. The payroll schedule request to change to a Sunday-Saturday schedule was also made by Holly, with all requests approved via voice approval.

### **COMMITTEE REPORTING**

#### **CONSERVATION COMMISSION:**

Ms Brewer reported that a majority of the meeting was spent discussing the beaver issue. Ms Brewer stated that an e-mail will be sent to a hydrologist with the hope of securing his services.

The Conservation Commission voted unanimously to send the letter pertaining to climate change to Gov. Chris Sununu's office.

Ms. Grote had a concern in regards to financial considerations from the Conservation Committee regarding the pipe installation at the beaver dam.

**CIP COMMITTEE:**

Ms. Costa introduced The CIP Summary Sheets outlining the methodology and projections for each department, as well as Capital Equipment tracking.

**ENERGY COMMISSION:**

Mr. Meth stated that the next Energy Commission meeting is scheduled for Wednesday June 21, 2017. The LED Street Lighting Project will be discussed at this meeting.

**NORTHERN PASS:**

Mr. Meth gave an update on Northern Pass. Hearings on the issue began in April with 8-10 hearings. The last day for hearings will be on August 03, 2017. The schedule for NON- Intervenors is June 15, June 20, and July 20, 2017. Because of the vast turnout at the hearings, everyone is asked to limit their comments to three minutes.

Mr. Meth mentioned that Eversource will be doing transmission and lightning arrestor testing through the area in the coming weeks.

**PLANNING BOARD:**

The Planning Board will be meeting on June 20, 2017 at 6:30pm, which is a change from their regular 7:00 meeting time. The discussion centered on current board openings, with the hopes of attracting new and alternate candidates. Mr. Meth reported that Mr. Thad Presby may have a new candidate in mind. Ms. Grote stated that The Board has openings for one regular member, and would like to add three alternate members to their roster. Mr. Meth stated he was hoping for a quorum for MTAG.

**MISCELLANEOUS:**

Holly addressed the Sansoucy Contract and had some questions pertaining to it. Mr. Meth tabled the discussion.

Ms. Costa reported that after her due diligence in regards to the sidewalk and crosswalk initiative, she expressed enthusiasm as the town has a good case in moving forward with the plan.

Selectman Costa has reached out to the property owners of The Fire Pond, and is awaiting a reply.

Greg Wells is working on a request to dispose/ transfer of the old oil tank at the Transfer Station.

Ms Brewer reported that a resident spoke with her in regards to recycling, and in particular, addressing the variety of plastic compounds that are being recycled.

Ms. Brewer reflected on the importance of how the topic of climate change is not merely a political issue, but an environmental one. Ms. Brewer noted that taking a stand on climate change is appropriate in regards to the town. Ms. Brewer addressed recent comments made by the townspeople and understands and respects the point of view that everyone may have on this important, but controversial issue.

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**ITEMS TO REVISIT:**

<b>AirBnB's</b>	<b>Cisterns &amp; Fire Ponds (3/28/16)</b>
<b>Buildings Plan</b>	<b>Updating Pole License Agreement</b>
<b>Road Plan</b>	<b>F150 vs F550 (highway)</b>
<b>Sidewalk Plan</b>	<b>Purchasing &amp; Bidding Policy</b>
<b>Tri-Town Recreation Agreement</b>	<b>Purchase of Presby Building</b>
<b>FD Generator in Trailer</b>	<b>Antique Fire Truck Storage</b>

**PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

Justin Roshak inquired as to where the next scheduled Energy Commission meeting was. Mr. Meth responded to the inquiry and that it would be 4:30pm at Woodsville Guaranty Savings Bank.

\* Mr. Meth made a motion to enter non-public session @ 5:10 pm for Legal and personnel Matters as per RSA 91-A3, II (c) (e). Ms. Costa seconded the motion with all in favor.

With a unanimous voice vote, The Board adjourned the meeting.

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Prepared and respectfully submitted by:

Mr. Christopher J. Gautreau

*Mr. Christopher J. Gautreau*

Admin. Assistant

