

**Board of Selectmen's
Public Hearing and Regular Meeting
Monday, June 5, 2023
at 5:30PM at Town Hall**

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

Others Present: Sharon Penney, Jenny Monahan, John Brooks, Larry Plate, Karen Foss, Lynn Terres, Mary Grote, Jan Cole, Chief Mac Cashin

Public Hearing for Proposed Use of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Funds: After opening the regular meeting, Chairman Brewer called the public hearing to order at 5:40pm. She said the proposed use of the ARPA funds is to purchase one or more Automated External Defibrillators (AED), one for town hall and possibly one to be placed at Franconia Market & Deli. The units are \$1460.70 each.

Resident Jan Cole asked if there should be additional funding for training. It was discussed that Emergency Management Director Nate Hanson said he could conduct the training and that the devices are very easy to use and provide instructions to the user.

The other proposed use of ARPA funds is retention bonuses for two of the town's full-time officers. Chief Cashin requested \$4,000 bonuses for each officer as he is concerned that they have been approached by other departments offering higher salaries due to the current shortage of officers in the state. Franconia Police Department is currently seeking to hire a replacement fourth officer and has had no response to the ad in several months. Losing another officer would be problematic for the department.

The selectmen expressed their support for the requested retention bonuses. There followed a brief discussion that additional ARPA funds the town applied for through the county may have expanded parameters for use of the funds to include police equipment needs. This may be considered at another time.

Resident Jan Cole asked about using ARPA funds to address infrastructure issues such as town bridges in need of work, with at least one being on the states "red listed bridges" list, or projects such as the Wells Road culvert. It was discussed that the town has applied for a grant for the Wells Road culvert and is waiting to hear back. It is not yet known if the funds can be used for bridge work.

There was also discussion about the possibility of sponsoring a candidate to attend police academy and then hiring after graduation.

There was no further comment from the public. The selectmen discussed that they would like to check with Emergency Management Director Nate Hanson about any potential costs in addition to the units themselves before approving a final dollar amount.

Town Administrator Penney asked about the status of the additional ARPA funds the town has applied for through the county. Selectman Meth said the additional amount if approved would be \$50,000. He suggested earmarking some funds for the broadband project. Selectman Walker and Chairman Brewer agreed that would be a good use of the funds.

After this discussion, Chairman Brewer made a motion that the town accept the additional \$50,000 of American Rescue Plan Act funds from the county if the funds are awarded to the town. Selectman Walker seconded the motion, **motion passes.** |

With no further discussion, the public hearing was closed at 6:04PM. The regular meeting resumed at 6:05PM.

Appointments/Work Sessions

6:00PM – Tyler Ray – Granite Outdoor Alliance (GOA)– Event on Dow Park: Tyler said the GOA has proposed using Dow Park for their annual outdoor recreation lifestyle festival called Graniteer. He said the event would be held September 30th and include vendors, activities and demonstrations, workforce recruitment booths by ski areas and other recreational companies. The event was held last year in Littleton and attracted about 400-500 participants. The GOA would provide security, police detail, parking attendants and bathroom facilities and clean up the grounds after the event, leaving it as they found it. The event would encompass the entire day starting in the morning and end in the evening around 9PM.

Chairman Brewer made a motion that the Granite Outdoor Alliance use the Dow Field for their Graniteer Festival on September 30th. Selectman Meth seconded the motion, **motion passes.**

The fee schedule for the use of the Dow was discussed. The selectmen agreed that the GOA can rent the Dow for the resident rate of \$1,000 as they are providing all amenities and services and Franconia organizations will be featured there.

Q2 2023 Budget Review – The selectmen reviewed departmental budgets. Points of discussion were:

- **Buildings & Grounds:** The Town Hall Maintenance line is overspent due to a project approved last year (backdoor emergency exit stairs for town hall) not being completed until this spring. The Heritage Museum sign that was damaged last year is also showing as a payout this year due to the insurance reimbursement being received last year and the work being done this year)
- **Tax Collector:** The tax collector wages line needs to be adjusted from “Wages – Other to the regular “Wages” line in the operating budget in Quickbooks.
- **The Transfer Station budget** was off which was later determined to be due to Jenny printing the 2022 budget for the selectmen instead of the 2023.
- **Police Department:** The Equipment line is overspent due to reimbursement from the Dept. of Safety Equipment Grant not being received to the town yet.
- **Littleton Fire & Rescue** payments for EMS services are not showing on the Executive budget under contracted services. This may be due to the memorized report in Quickbooks not having the line item selected in the memorization. Jenny will check into this.
- **Executive:** Approximately \$2,500 of overtime hours have been worked that were not budgeted for.
- **Welfare Budget:** This budget is more than half spent for the year due to an uptick in assistance requests.

Public Comment

Karen Foss noted that \$0 have been spent for firemen’s annual wages this year and suggested that it may be better to pay them quarterly so it could be kept better track of. Larry Plate asked about the planning board wages budget. Jan Cole said ARPA funds can be used for welfare.

To Sign/Approve

The selectmen approved the minutes of May 22nd, 2023 as amended.

The selectmen reviewed and approved the June 2nd – June 8th, 2023 transaction report.

A Notice of Intent to Cut for Map 3 Lot 5, Wallace Hill Road was signed by the selectmen.

The selectmen signed an Abatement of Taxes for Map 24 Lot 46, Kenet/Gold that was approved prior to the 2023 first issue tax bill but not entered into Avitar.

Reports of Timber or Wood Cut for Map 24 Lot 66 and Map 29 Lot 1 were brought back to the selectmen to re-sign the warrants after Jenny reviewed them with the Dept. of Revenue Administration and adjustments were made.

Discuss/Review

Jenny suggested the Transfer Station and Buildings & Grounds be issued town email addresses and asked if Corey Rush could purchase a laptop from within his budget for Buildings & Grounds. The selectmen agreed that Corey could move forward and Jenny could request email addresses from Certified Computers for Transfer Station and Buildings & Grounds.

Correspondence

Town Administrator Penney said there have been some complaints that the courts on the rink have not been lined yet. She said Vermont Recreational Surfacing and Fencing contacted the town suddenly wanting to do the rink the following day but this could not be arranged in time as Corey needs time to remove the walls of the rink. She said they are now planning to come in July.

Town Administrator Penney said there is a build up of plastics at the Transfer Station as Casella was hauling and accepting the plastic previously and Mt. Carberry accepts 1 & 2 plastics. She said there may be a brief moratorium on accepting plastics while this is worked out as there is no space to store them at this time.

Town Administrator Penney said she may need a few days beyond her contract end date to finish some things up that are in process. The board approved Sharon working additional days as needed beyond her contract end date.

The selectmen discussed the summer schedule. Meetings will go to biweekly after the June 12th meeting.

Committee Reports

Broadband Initiative: Selectman Meth said the next meeting is June 15th via Zoom at 4:30PM. They recently discussed asking Consolidated Communications if they could host a booth at Old Home Day to answer resident questions.

Chamber of Commerce: Selectman Walker said the chamber discussed putting a forum together to discuss workforce and housing issues.

Conservation Commission: Chairman Brewer said the CC meets tomorrow at 3PM. They continue to discuss the Lang/Sabados property issue. They also plan to discuss easement markers off Middle Earth.

Energy Commission: Selectman Meth said the EC next meets on June 20th at town hall at 4:30PM and plan to have a presentation from Trebel Energy about community choice aggregation.

Planning Board: No update and the next meeting was unconfirmed.

With no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 7:06PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Jenny Monahan
Administrative Secretary