

**Town of Franconia
Board of Selectmen's Regular Meeting
Monday, October 16, 2023 at 6:00PM
at Franconia Town Hall**

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

Others Present: Libby Staples, Jenny Monahan, Andy & Chrissy Smith, Ann Foss, Monica Laflamme, Steve Schwartz, John Dunbar, Mary Grote, Dawn Steele, Lynn Terres, Virginia Mike, Mike & Tina Betley, Jan Cole

The meeting was called to order at 6:02PM

Appointments/Work Sessions

Andy & Chrissy Smith – Badger, Peabody & Smith Realty – Community Sign Policy: In response to recent discussion surrounding the sign at the realty office at 383 Main Street, Andy wanted to clarify the policy that is used to regulate the messages posted on the sign and distributed a handout detailing the sign policy. He said the sign was put up about ten years ago in part because the agency was receiving requests to put signs on their fence and their yard. He said Badger, Peabody & Smith worked with the town since then to advertise community events and other messages of interest to the community. Andy said that when it was requested that a message honoring the passing of a local police officer was posted in response to a distasteful message posted on another local sign, they felt that using the sign for that purpose would give the distasteful message more voice. However, when it was written in the Caledonian Record that Badger, Peabody & Smith had declined to put up the requested message on the sign, they received negative publicity that affected the reputation of their business and negative feedback from some community members. Andy said this was particularly upsetting as they have supported the town in many ways over the years and felt that the information regarding the sign should not have been shared with the newspaper.

Selectman Walker said that the board was hopeful that the sign could be used to support the local officer and local departments but did not intend to cause any negative repercussions for Badger, Peabody & Smith. Chairman Brewer said she was surprised that there was any push back about posting the requested message as the sign has been used for advertising other events in the past that could be construed as politically divisive and she had received feedback from community members about that. Selectman Meth said he was sorry that things went in the direction they did and the board thanked Andy for Badger, Peabody & Smith's support of the community over the years.

John Dunbar – Dow Academy Clock: John said he moved to town about a month ago and was awakened by the clock chiming at 9pm his first night in town and it continues to be disruptive of sleep as it chimes on the hour throughout the night. He requested that the clock be restricted from chiming between the hours of 9pm and 6am.

Selectman Meth said he lives at the academy and Selectman Walker said he lives just across the way. Both said the bell took a little getting used to at first but now they mostly notice the lack of the bell when it is not operational. Chairman Brewer said she too hears it at her home and feels that the majority of residents that are in hearing range enjoy hearing it. The board was in agreement that the chiming of the bell is part of the history of the community and they would not want to restrict it.

Public Comment

Tina Betley commented that Pathways for Pregnancy offers assistance with no judgment and thanked Badger, Peabody & Smith for advertising their annual event on their sign. Mike Betley asked if the Dow Academy clock is in violation of the town's noise ordinance. Mike also asked that the board consider the request from the public to get its own sign for town purposes. Dawn Steele commented that the chiming of the clock is part of the community and the town's history. Dawn also commented that there is an exposed electrical box in the ground that is cracked and open and should be looked into. Monica Laflamme commented that she agreed with Andy that the sign issue shouldn't have been in the newspaper. Virginia Mike commented that the board doesn't control what goes in the newspaper. Ann Foss commented that the sign should not have any opinions. Dawn Steele commented on the recent ZBA hearing and that a Notice of Decision is required to be sent to the applicant within five business days.

To Sign/Approve

The board approved the minutes of October 2, 2023 as written.

The board approved the October 13 – October 19, 2023 transaction report.

To Discuss/Review

Bike Friendly Community Signs – Chairman Brewer said she was contacted by Selectman Bruce Caplain of Bethlehem and he offered to give Franconia two “Bike Friendly Community” signs that are approximately the size of a regular speed limit sign. The board agreed to accept and post the signs.

Town Administrator Staples said Sugar Hill contacted her about holding a tri-town meeting and proposed November 6th for the date. It was discussed that CIP may still be putting their recommendation for the board together at that point and it would be helpful to have that information ready for the tri-town meeting but ultimately decided that they feel they will be ready by that date. Jenny asked if the tri-town meeting could be held in Franconia as we have more parking now and usually more Franconia residents attend. Town Administrator Staples will suggest this.

Selectman Meth gave an update on the Energy Commission: he said the Franconia Energy Commission has been invited to a meeting of the Community Power Coalition of NH that is gaining traction in the state with more towns joining. He said this could help the town in the future with better electricity pricing. He will provide an update on this when he learns more.

Chairman Brewer said Chief Cashin did an ALICE (active shooter) training at Profile and he did an incredible job.

With no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 6:48PM.

Respectfully,

Jenny Monahan
Executive Assistant