

**TOWN OF FRANCONIA
BOARD OF SELECTMEN'S REGULAR MEETING
MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 20, 2021 AT 6PM AT TOWN HALL**

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

OTHERS PRESENT: Kim Cowles, Jenny Monahan, Mary Grote, Dawn Steele, Peter Grote, Karen Foss, Ann Foss, Lynn Terres, Victoria Stauches

TO SIGN/APPROVE:

The September 20, 2021 transaction list was reviewed and signed by the Selectmen.

The minutes of September 13, 2021 were approved as amended on a motion by Chairman Brewer and a second from Selectman Walker with all voting in favor.

APPOINTMENTS/WORK SESSIONS:

6:00pm – Fox Hill Coop – Victoria Stauches – Tax Abatements: Victoria requested that the board abate the first quarter 2021 taxes for four properties at the Cooperative: #122 (\$56), #106 (\$87) #50 (\$12) and #85. Tax Collector Carol Wills did not provide an abatement form for #85 so this unit will be revisited at a future meeting. Victoria said the Cooperative has received demolition approval for all four of the units and expects them to be removed in the next few weeks, which will allow new rentals to occupy the sites.

After a brief discussion, Selectman Walker made a motion to grant the abatement requests for units #122, #106 and #50, totaling \$184. Selectman Meth seconded the motion with all voting in favor.

Motion passes.

DISCUSS/REVIEW:

Town Wide Mask Policy: The selectmen revisited this topic after receiving correspondence from a resident urging the policy be reinstated last week. There was some discussion about vaccination rates, input from local businesses and schools in the area having issues with spiking cases. The selectmen decided to discuss this weekly.

Unassigned Fund Balance Final Draft Review: The selectmen signed the UFB policy.

CORRESPONDENCE:

Ammonoosuc Conservation Trust (ACT) invited the board members to walk the Lawrence property with them in October when they conduct their annual visit, and asked the town to let them know if there have been any changes to the property. Chairman Brewer and Selectman Meth may attend.

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR UPDATE:

Town Administrator Cowles said she ordered three Driver Feedback Signs from Solar Traffic Systems for \$8,847. There is a six week lead time on receiving the signs. The selectmen approved the purchase.

The four way stop at the intersection was put in place today. Town Administrator Cowles said there's a lot of confusion going on there while people adjust to the change. The police will be spending time there to draw attention to the change. The six foot median that will be painted in on Church Street has been outlined and the NHDOT will paint the crosswalks in and after that it will be the town's responsibility to maintain them.

The sidewalks received their second coat of asphalt and are now complete. NHDOT will hydro-seed the sides of the road and sidewalk that has been disturbed.

The cement walkway in front of town hall was installed Friday. Next, Town Administrator Cowles would like to address the slates that go from the walkway to the sidewalk and tighten them up and make them more flush with the ground.

The town received one bid from TCD Construction from Peterborough for the Welcome Center project and it was approximately \$564,000. Town Administrator Cowles said she reached out to them to let them know that the project would be revisited in the spring and the RFP modified.

The Franconia Soaring Foundation is appealing their tax abatement denial and has opted to take the town to Superior Court rather than have a hearing with the Bureau of Tax and Land Appeals. The summons has been sent to town counsel for review.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Broadband Initiative Committee: Selectman Meth said the committee continues to discuss the broadband spine through Grafton County (which has been renamed the middle mile) and financing for that project. The Northern Grafton Communications District met and discussed financing and are planning to have a workshop in Littleton. He said they met with an attorney today to discuss creating a legal entity for the purpose of accepting funding.

Chamber of Commerce: Selectman Walker said the Chamber's Membership Director stepped down but Kevin Johnson is thinking of taking on that position. Business owners continue to face employee shortages.

Conservation Commission: Chairman Brewer said the CC meets Tuesday the 21st at the Dow Pavilion to talk with Tim Clough about the proposed Pebble Beach Trail reroute and then will walk the area on the Lawrence property.

Energy Commission: Selectman Meth said the EC met Thursday the 16th and finalized the Solar Ordinance. It will now go to the Planning Board.

Planning Board: Selectman Meth said the Planning Board met the 14th and finished their plan for the Master Plan survey.

PUBLIC INPUT:

Karen Foss made a correction to her comments in the September 13th minutes. Selectman Walker made a motion to accept the proposed changes to the minutes and Chairman Brewer seconded with all voting in favor.

Karen Foss asked if rerouting the water line at town hall in preparation for the Welcome Center project would be paid from the Water Dept. budget. Town Administrator Cowles confirmed.

Dawn Steele asked if any estimates have been received for rerouting the water line. Town Administrator Cowles said not yet. Dawn also asked how the Short Term Rental Agreements and registrations are doing. Town Administrator Cowles said we continue to receive them. Virginia Mike asked if we are actively monitoring rental websites to make sure people are registering. Town Administrator Cowles said no, the intention of the regulation was to have rental owners self report.

Virginia Mike asked about the bid for the Welcome Center and whether it would be posted to the website.

With no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 7:01pm on a motion from Chairman Brewer and a second from Selectman Walker.

Respectfully Submitted,
Jenny Monahan
Administrative Secretary