

TOWN OF ACWORTH, NEW HAMPSHIRE
Selectmen
Approved Minutes for Business Meeting of January 29, 2024 at 6:00 p.m.
Town Hall, 13 Town Hall Rd, Acworth, NH 03601

SELECT BOARD PRESENT: Jim Jennison; Ray Leonard; Kathi Bradt

STAFF PRESENT: Charlotte Comeau, Town Administrator; Jennifer Bland, HWY Admin/EMD

OTHERS PRESENT: Judy and Michael Aron; Greg Bascom; David Clark; Mark Girard; Claudia Istel; Melinda Loiselle; Peter Maynard; Steve & Lori Murray; Steve Murrell; Jim Neidert; Chris Salmon; Ryanne Schoonover; Gregg Thibodeau; Rob Vogel

CALL TO ORDER: Jim called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

On a motion by Jim seconded by Ray; ***the Board voted by roll call vote to enter into NPS pursuant to RSA 91-A:3 II (c) at 6:00 p.m. Motion passed.***

On a motion by Ray, seconded by Kathi; ***the Board voted to exit NPS and reconvened public meeting at 6:24 p.m. Motion passed.***

2021 FLOOD RESPONSE: Discussion about the 5% state share. The Board reviewed the letter sent by the EMD by email on 1/17 to Director Buxton and were in support of this. There was consensus by the Board for Judy to call Director Buxton. Judy said she would call first thing in the morning to follow up. Kathi mentioned the reason this is important is after we receive all the obligated funds from FEMA, this amount would cover the balance on the loan.

2023 FLOOD RESPONSE:

- Crane Brook Rd letter to FEMA: A letter was prepared by Greg B asking FEMA to authorize Acworth to do the necessary repairs to open Crane Brook Rd. On a motion by Kathi, seconded by Ray, the Board voted to sign the letter. Greg will be getting many other signatures in support of this.
- Bowers Brook update: Kathi said there is some chatter about this subject on Facebook. The state recommends the towns do not discuss town policy on Facebook.
 - Gregg said they have put together a plan on how to re-stabilize the bank. They will redo the work that has been done before but with different material which will last longer. They presented the plan, diagrams, and photos and met two weeks ago with DES and DOT Engineers who gave feedback. They are supporting this and believe it's a dire situation as the next flood could be worse. The DOT Engineer created an estimate. The next meeting with DES/DOT is Feb 8. There will be discussion on DES using ARPA funds that have been already allocated. This will not be done with any town resources, it will be contracted out, and funding will come from DES and ARPA funds. The goal is to move the brook back to where it was and stabilize the banks with better material.
 - Mark said this is an emergency authorization to stabilize the bank for life and infrastructure safety and protect 123A which is a highly traveled road. The town will pass the money through. The state is saying they will be getting these funds within the next couple months. The EA will expire in June.
 - Kathi spoke on the town's roll in this stating the project is going to cost about \$300k and the state is paying everything. The Town is partnering with the state as the applicant. The Town is also the applicant on the wetlands permit. We will receive the funds and send payments to the Contractor. It could cost a little admin time but that is it. We could walk away from this and give up \$300k of state money and be left with a compromised village center or partner with the state and be recipients of the money. The reason Kathi made this clear is because, in the chatter she spoke of earlier, there is a misconception of the Town's participation in this program and stated this is all to our benefit and nothing evil is going on.
 - Judy asked to what extent the abutters of the brook are involved. Kathi said we keep the abutters informed of the meetings. Also mentioned was the brook is owned by the state and DES is the one in charge of the brook.
 - Kathi mentioned there is precedent when the town and church cooperated on an infrastructure project in 2006 or 2007 on rebuilding town hall road when we had to add drainage. There was a new underground culvert installed.

- **Forest Rd Bridge Scope and Fee**: This will be ready at the next meeting.

MINUTES: On a motion by Kathi, seconded by Ray; ***the Board voted to approve the minutes. Motion passed.***

BILL MANIFEST: On a motion by Kathi, seconded by Ray; ***the Board voted to approve and sign. Motion passed.***

PAYROLL MANIFEST: On a motion by Kathi, seconded by Ray, ***the Board voted to approve and sign. Motion passed.***

HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT:

- **Work report/work plan**:
 - Still working on plows and trucks. Currently the Ford and Dodge are down again. They can only plow, can't sand. The Dodge blew its gear box. It's been ordered but don't know when arriving. The motor that runs the sander on the Ford has been ordered. Now there are only two trucks that can sand in town, the Western Star and the International.
 - Met with FEMA last Wednesday, walked around town at certain sites.
 - Jim will call highway in the morning with a couple more numbers to call for a quote on containers and come back next week with the information.

PUBLIC: None

ACTION ITEMS:

- **Road Agent Agreement Bassinne**: On a motion Jim, seconded by Kathi; ***the Board voted to approve and sign.***
- **Appointment for Inspector of Elections**: On a motion by Kathi, seconded by Jim; ***the Board voted to approve and sign. Motion passed.***

DISCUSSION:

- **Culvert Assessment Update**: Gregg gave an update on information collected by UVLSRPC on each culvert. They have completed 87 culverts and have another 27 to complete. They've captured about 96 pieces of information for each culvert in 3 categories, structural, aquatic and geomorphic. Hydrology model assessment will begin around June. They want to complete the hydrology assessment of each culvert this year. By July of this year we should have assessments on about 117 culverts and the hydrology model by the end of the summer. Once they create all this information they will have different options on maintenance. There would be an annual cost to maintain the data. On the cheap end it would be about \$400/yr on the expensive end it would be 2,600/yr.
- Kathi mentioned she feels it is important to mention in Article 15 that the deposit into capital reserve is contingent on receiving state bridge aid money. Charlotte will change this.
- Kathi said it has come to the board's attention that there is a discrepancy between DOT lists as town nonmaintained roads and what we maintain. This was noticed on DOT's Nodal Referenced Bookmap posted on our website. Kathi recommended the board send a letter to DOT to let them know that our maintenance practices do not match what is on their map and ask them to fix the discrepancy on their end since we've been involved with the maintenance program for over five years. Statute says that if a road has been maintained for five years it becomes a town maintained road and vice versa if a road has not been maintained for five years it becomes a nonmaintained road. The statute reads both ways (RSA 229:5, VII). The roads are Coffin Hill and Stebbins Rd. One reason to fix the discrepancy is our highway block grant is based on what we agree are our town maintained roads. On a motion by Kathi, seconded by Ray; ***The Board voted to approve and sign with Jim abstaining.***
- Jim asked for an update on loan. Melinda says we just received \$928,116.45 our balance is \$428k. If Derry Hill and the 5% from the state comes through the loan will be paid off.

On a motion by Kathi, seconded by Jim; ***the Board voted to adjourn at 7:08 p.m. Motion passed.***

Respectfully submitted,
Charlotte Comeau, Town Administrator