

TOWN OF ACWORTH, NEW HAMPSHIRE
Selectmen
Approved Minutes for Business Meeting of July 31, 2023 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; Collin Crosby, Road Agent; Jennifer Bland, Hwy Admin. Assist. /EMD

OTHERS PRESENT: Michael & Judy Aron; Greg Bascom; David Clark; Rep. Hope Damon; Rob DeValk; Glenn Elsesser; Mark Girard; Torrey Greene; David & Lorna Kelin; Melinda Loiselle; Steve & Lori Murray; Jim Neidert; Rep. Jonathan Stone; Gregg Thibodeau

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 (a) at 6:00 p.m. Motion passed.***

On a motion by Jim, seconded by Ray; ***the Board voted to exit NPS and reconvened public meeting at 6:15 p.m. Motion passed.***

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 (b) at 6:15 p.m. Motion passed.***

On a motion by Jim, seconded by Ray; ***the Board voted to exit NPS and reconvened public meeting at 6:35 p.m. Motion passed.***

2023 FLOOD RESPONSE:

- Jennifer stated she met with FEMA and HSEM last Tuesday who saw Crane Brook, Forest Rd and Thayer Brook and the rest of the roads on Wednesday. She said the town needs to hire an engineering firm. We can't move forward without one and can't get any FEMA funding for this storm without a declaration from the Governor.
- Glenn asked if an RFP should be written for an Engineer. Kathi said because Jennifer is talking with engineers, perhaps her and Charlotte could work on this to have ready for September. Whether we get a declaration or not, we would need a cost estimate for next year's budget.
- Kathi mentioned we have \$300k in the budget we can use and we could use \$200k out of the \$500k from fund balance. This could be applied to as much as we can on the small projects through this construction season. Forest Rd and Crane Brook will not be brought back before the winter.
- Hope Damon said she had heard the Governor has until August 31 to make a declaration.
- Kathi stated that the town meeting vote this year to borrow money is specific to the 2021 flood and we will not be able to use it for this flood. In addition, organizing a special town meeting is very costly and time consuming and is not going to buy us a lot of time for this construction season. She feels we should use what funds we have to get through year, pay off the first loan and look at a second loan at town meeting in March 2024.
- Collin hasn't heard anything regarding a temporary bridge for Forest Rd.
- Jennifer said we can get mutual aid assistance, the problem is we don't have the manpower or equipment. We can't have them haul in the material if we don't have the equipment to keep up with it. We don't want to line worker's up if the town doesn't have the money to pay. Kathi stated Charlotte is keeping close tabs on the budget and will keep highway informed on where we are at. Collin said he didn't want it to be a problem and have people complain if, for an example, they got trucks from Keene to bring material to a specific road, then rather than Brian driving the town 10-wheeler, he would be operating the grader and the town truck will be in the yard. Consensus was he should do what he thinks is best to be done.
- David Clark asked about putting a road closed sign by the covered bridge as it is non-stop traffic coming up Crane Brook Rd thinking it is open. Collin will take care of this.

2021 FLOOD RESPONSE:

- We have been notified of an approval for payment for some small roads of \$24,470.78. Charlestown Rd has been submitted. The next road to be submitted is Crane Brook Rd. With reimbursement of these three projects we will be able to pay our loan.
- Jennifer says we are having a better response now with a new Director of Emergency Services who calls her almost every day. There is now a sense of urgency.

MINUTES: Meeting and NPS of July 18: 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 Jim; ***the Board voted to approve and sign. Motion passed.***

HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT:

- Collin said progress is going very slow. Has Cobb Hill opened up.
- Been getting a lot of complaints from property owners about their road so they take they guys off the projects they're working on to check it out and it's usually small little wash outs.
- Brought the dozer back and got a bigger excavator. It's on Charlestown Rd. Plan is to finish the wash outs there, then reset the headwall.
- Going down Lynn Hill to fill in by the culvert.
- Going to Thayer Brook after that, talking with Alstead to get this open to one lane with jersey barriers.
- Kathi asked about whether they are planning to keep up the Friday hours. Collin thinks they can cut back now in order to save on overtime. Collin will discuss with the crew tomorrow. Kathi pointed out this could change from week to week and consensus was its Collin's decision.
- Mark G mentioned that it seems there is some movement on getting more support. He wanted to know if he had all the tools to get the roads winter ready. Collin said there are things to do even if it rains and leasing the bigger excavator will be helpful.
- Judy thanked the road crew and Jennifer and folks they've been working with for all their hard work. She stated they have been doing incredible work. She hopes we can get them the support they need to get the work done. The operation director of DOT told Judy whatever they can give us within their purview, they are more than happy to provide. She asked if there was any plan by the Selectmen to hire another person. Kathi said they just voted to add a man to the highway dept.
- David Kelin asked if he could help by putting gravel down on Gove Rd. Collin said they could get material out there. The Board said to get in touch with Charlotte to fill out a volunteer form.

PUBLIC: David Kelin spoke on the driveway permits they submitted and asked if they could be expedited as they can't wait until the next planning board meeting. They need to get in there this week. Kathi stated that driveway permits go through the planning board and will be on the next agenda. The regulations allow the planning board 60 days to respond to a driveway permit.

ACTION ITEMS:

Building Permits: McShane/Hackman M229 L5. Need more info on septic. Table until next meeting.

- Intent to Cut: S Krivoshik M218 L10. On a motion by Kathi, seconded by Jim; ***the Board voted to approve and sign. Motion passed.***
- Letter to Engineer: After some discussion on a motion by Kathi, seconded by Ray; ***the Board voted to approve and sign the letter to the engineer terminating the contract. Motion passed.***
- Letter to Mulhern: M201 L130: On a motion by Kathi, seconded by Jim; ***the Board voted to approve and sign the letter advising property owner of their responsibility for the maintenance of cisterns beneath their driveway. Motion passed.***
- Class VI Road Improvement-J Burdick: Discussion on burying wires. Jim said Jeremy talked with the power company and wants to bury wires instead of installing a pole. Glen said if the power company is doing this they usually need an easement. Consensus was to contact him to get some more information.
- PA-28 Form: On a motion by Kathi, seconded by Jim; ***the Board voted to approve and sign. Motion passed.***
- PA-16 Form: On a motion by Kathi, seconded by Jim; ***the Board voted to approve and sign. Motion passed.***

DISCUSSION:

- Liquor permit permission for His and Her Farm: Consensus was this was out of the board's jurisdiction. Charlotte will email back the catering company to let them know.
- Draft MS-535: Kathi said this is a big undertaking and something Melinda did this year. The report balances which mean our books balance in the eyes of the state. Kathi went through and explained some of the pages.

On a motion by Kathi, seconded Jim; ***the Board voted to adjourn at 7:55 p.m. Motion passed.***

Respectfully submitted,
Charlotte Comeau, Town Administrator