

Town of Milton
BOARD OF SELECTMAN MEETING
July 19, 2021

ATTENDANCE:

Members: Claudine Burnham (Chair), Matt Morrill, Andrew Rawson

Staff: Chris Jacobs -Town Administrator, Julius Peel

Public: Chief Richard Krauss, Chief Nick Marique, Kim Dawson Boulanger, Victoria Finlayson, Christopher Love, Diane Cataldo, Richard Fernald, Chelsea Miller, Lynette McDougall, Glenn Bailey, Mike Sullivan, Jene Sullivan

Claudine Burnham, Chair, opened the public session at 6:00PM.

1.) Pledge of Allegiance: Claudine Burnham, Chair, led the meeting in the Pledge of Allegiance.

2.) Public Comment:

There were none.

3.) Announcements and Community Calendar:

Mr. Morrill informed the group of an upcoming COVID vaccination clinic on August 14 and August 25 from 9:30-1:00PM at the Wakefield Food Pantry.

4.) NEW Business – Discussion and Possible Actions:

a.) Department Head Updates:

Police Department, Chief Richard Krauss –

The police assisted with the July 4th parade. The traffic signs were very helpful; there were no issues.

They have experienced an increase in the number of complaints received regarding aggressive and dangerous driving. They continue to utilize the speed trailer on various roads. Reports indicate ~10% of drivers are driving at 10+MPH above the speed limits and of these drivers, ~1% of them are traveling at excessive and reckless speeds (some at double the posted speed limit). They anticipate receiving highway safety grants to target aggressive driving coming by the end of the month, along with DUI patrols happening in August. Ms. Burnham questioned if there are specific locations associated with the increased calls? Chief Krauss indicated these situations are occurring on just about every road in the town (including Western Ave, St. James, Appleby, Jug Hill, Nute, Hare).

Fire Department, Chief Nick Marique -

In May, Fire-Rescue responded to 88 service calls. YTD calls are 504 (66% medically related). This is an 8% increase over last year during same time period.

They submitted their FY2022 FD budget to the Town Administrator for review. This includes two specific increases:

1.) Vehicle Maintenance – increase from \$14,000 to \$20,000. This is primarily due based on previous years where this line-item has been over-expended by average of 40% each year. We are half-way through the 2021 budget and already 30% over budget. The fleet continues to age and service costs and parts continue to increase in price.

2.) Request for additional full-time firefighter/EMT – since 2007 all staffing increases have

been as part-time hires. As the workforce continues to change it is increasing the difficulty of finding part-time employees with the needed skills and ability to cover all shifts. This is a serious problem for Milton and surrounding communities (some communities have been unable to cover all shifts). While Milton has been able to cover all shifts using overtime for the two full-time employees, this is a short-term fix and is not sustainable in the long-term. In addition, three part-time employees have been offered full-time jobs at other agencies which will limit or eliminate entirely their availability to offer their time in Milton. The Fire Department would like to be proactive and is proposing hiring a 3rd full-time firefighter/EMT halfway through the 2022 budget cycle. He is aware the budget is tight but believes this to be an absolutely priority and is hopeful this hire can be achieved and avert any potential situation where the Fire Department is unable to have all shifts covered.

Town Clerk Report (Chris Jacobs gave the update for Michelle Beauchamp) – As of June 30th, the town revenue for motor vehicles is \$60,000 higher than 2019 & 2020 for same time periods. Dog licenses were due April 30th. On June 21st, the BOS signed the 2021 Dog Warrant which was then presented to the Police Department. As of July 15th, there are still 491 unlicensed dogs.

Tax Collector Report (Chris Jacobs gave the update for Michelle Beauchamp) – The first installment of 2021 Property & Sewer Taxes were due Friday July 2nd. As of July 15th, the outstanding 2021 balance was \$429,437 and \$12,675. The 2020 Tax Lien was executed on May 24th. All lien holders were notified by certified mail on July 8th. As of July 15th, the outstanding 2021 lien balance was \$221,555. Impending Tax Deed notices for unpaid 2018 taxes were mailed to property and lien holders on July 14th via certified mail; the deed to occur on Friday, September 17, 2021, at 9:30AM. As of July 15, 2021, the outstanding 2018 lien balance was \$69,594.

Land Use, Julius Peel – The office is very busy. They are trying to track and monitor all workload and activities. The Planning Board meets the first and third Tuesday and are anticipating a very high turnout at the upcoming July 20th meeting.

Building, Julius Peel – July was very busy with an increase over June, and they continue to receive a large volume of permits. They have also experienced an increase in calls regarding property owners and their neighbors (i.e., excessive junk on neighbor's property, etc.) – responding to these concerns take up a lot of Brian's time.

Assessing (Julius Peel gave the update for Kathy Wallingford) – July has continued to be very busy for the department responding to customer service calls and requests. They are finalizing abatements from previous years – 2019-2020.

- b.) **Request to purchase old vehicles deemed to be junk:** As Mr. Jacobs explained, through the TA office, they received a letter expressing interest in the old vehicles currently at the public works department. These includes old cruisers and older FD vehicles, currently being used primarily for spare parts. Mr. Jacobs asked for direction from the BOS on the process and how best to proceed. One option is to see if town departments have additional property to add and sell via auction. Chief Krauss indicated they sold previous cruisers through a silent bid process. Another option is to go through the state auction process. To limit amount of time involved, Mr. Rawson recommended sending everything to Lamberts and selling for scrap. Mr. Morrill suggested each department submit a list of potential vehicles that could be available to go through bidding process. Mr. Jacobs will bring this list to the next BOS for

board review.

5.) OLD Business:

- a.) **79 Charles Street Update:** Mr. Jacobs has received notification from the attorney this has gone through; the Stanley's did respond to deadline for paperwork. Once this has been finalized by legal, this will be submitted to the registry for recording. After that, the next step would be to secure a demolition / building permit in order to move forward with their project, according to an already established timeline.
- b.) **Junkyard Permit Renewal for Libby Junkyard:** Continue to August 2, 2021. Although this item had been continued to the next BOS mtg, Ms. Libby asked to make a comment which was allowed by the BOS. Prior to the meeting, Mr. Jacobs asked Ms. Libby to continue this to the next BOS meeting on August 2nd to allow a photo comparison report to be compiled. Ms. Libby agreed to this extension request.
- c.) **Update on 39 Ripley Street:** Continue to August 2, 2021. Mr. Jacobs indicated he received a detailed letter from Mrs. Lover outlining many issues including zoning and health code and pointed out that Mr. Lover's submissions centered only on zoning. Mr. Jacobs recommends a legal review to provide some clarification before any final decisions are reached by the BOS.

6.) Other Business that May Come Before the Board:

There was no other business.

7.) Approval of Minutes:

Non-Public Minutes:

June 21, 2021 – Mr. Rawson made a **motion to accept the 6/21/2021 Non-Public meeting minutes** as written. Ms. Burnham seconded the motion. Mr. Morrill abstained. The motion passed.

July 12, 2021 - Mr. Morrill made a **motion to accept the 7/12/2021 Non-Public meeting minutes** as written. Ms. Burnham seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Public Minutes:

June 21, 2021 - Mr. Rawson made a **motion to accept the 6/21/2021 Public meeting minutes** as written. Ms. Burnham seconded the motion. Mr. Morrill abstained. The motion passed.

July 12, 2021 - Mr. Morrill made a **motion to accept the 7/12/2021 Public meeting minutes** as written. Ms. Burnham seconded the motion. The motion passed.

8.) Public Comments Relative to Current Meeting Topics:

Mr. Rick Fernald: In respond to the topic of old vehicles, Mr. Fernald explained as he works for UNH Transportation department he has a lot of familiarity with this issue. He recommended a potential resource through publicsplus.com. Mr. Jacobs thanked Mr. Fernald for this resource and indicated he would explore this resource.

Mr. Fernald also questioned if the BOS had received the letter from Bolan Road residents and asked if this letter would be submitted as part of the meeting minutes so all residents of the town would be able to read the letter. As the letter was specifically addressed to the BOS, there was agreement that the letter would be part of this meeting's record. Mr. Fernald also questioned the BOS' official opinion of the masterplan. Mr. Jacobs expressed his concern about this line of questioning and discussion, as a Planning Board meeting is scheduled for the next day and his concerns and that of others on Bolan Road would best be served by attending that

meeting. He stressed the official process must be followed. He did explain the masterplan is a guidance document to be followed, developed following state and local laws, carried out through planning, zoning, conservation, and other land-use boards. Because he has heard the masterplan be referenced to on previous occasions, Mr. Fernald indicated he wants to know how it's interpreted, i.e., is it just a guideline? Since considerable money and time was spent to develop the masterplan, is this in fact something that the town does take seriously? Mr. Jacobs said he does take the masterplan seriously; however, he cautioned the BOS from commenting as this could show prejudice for any applicants, current and future. Mr. Jacobs suggested Mr. Fernald contact the planning, conservation commission and the zoning board. Mr. Julius Peel, Land-Use Clerk acknowledged there might be some confusion between references to documents being questioned including the masterplan which is used to guide zoning and planning on decision making process, and specific zoning regulations. Mr. Jacobs indicated he agreed with much of what Mr. Fernald was bringing forth but again cautioned the BOS, as sitting members of aforementioned committees, to limit expressing their personal opinion. Mr. Rawson, addressing Mr. Fernald, explained that he is in agreement with Mr. Jacob's statement.

9.) Expenditure Reports & Financial Reports:

There were no expenditure reports for this meeting.

10.) Town Administrator:

a.) **Update from the Town Attorney regarding the 90-day Notice Process** – Regarding the tax parcels the BOS has elected to move forward with, there has been a change in the process. Previously if a resident lost a property due to taxes, the property owner had up to three years to buy back the property. The law has now changed and is now considered a rule for lifetime. As an example, Mr. Jacobs is working with Chief Krause on a particular property and because the certified letter was returned to the town, Mr. Jacobs will have to do a chain of title search to find a "reasonable" person to receive the letter. This will be the process used in all situations such as this. There are two properties which are in process.

b.) **Update regarding the former HeadStart Program building at the industrial park** –Strafford County indicated they no longer have any need for this building. They have replaced the boiler and repaired the water damage to the sheetrock. Mr. Jacobs explained the land had been donated from the town. The Community Block Development Grant Process and Federal grants were used to build the structure and development the property and to begin the HeadStart program. Mr. Jacobs has talked with the Strafford County Headstart Program Coordinator, Betsy Parker, who indicated they would like to disassociate themselves from the property and asked if the town would have any interest in acquiring the building. The coordinator indicated they still have to satisfy the \$190,000 federal grant but felt the town would be in a good position if there was interest in obtaining another Community Block Grant. Mr. Jacobs is bringing this to the BOS attention and said he is aware of potential groups who would be interested in the building. He let them know they would need to submit an in-depth proposal outlining how exactly the building would be used, for what purposes, the finances and expenses involved, etc. Ms. Burnham agreed that it would be vital for the BOS to know exactly what the expenses would be and any potential funding sources. If this would turn out to be something the taxpayers would have to help fund, this would definitely be on a warrant article. She agreed that proposals would need submitted and include feedback on who would

be using the services and are these services the town residents are interested in and willing to pay for. Mr. Rawson and Mr. Morrill agreed.

c.) **IWork software application** – Mr. Jacobs explained he has received requests from the community for increased communications. There has been a good response to the use of the signs / message board. IWork is a text messaging service that would connect with the website through a cell phone (not through a web service). Could be used to find building permits, beach pass, meeting agendas serving as a gateway to accessing town services. The cost for this software is \$2,500 per year (He will also be meeting with another vendor to review their product.). Mr. Jacobs asked if this would be something the BOS / town would find helpful. While Mr. Rawson thinks something like this could be helpful as he has heard comments about residents experiencing difficulty finding information on the website, Ms. Burnham questioned if there would be enough actual use. She also wondered what other communities were utilizing, if anything. Mr. Jacobs said he is not aware of any other community in NH that was currently using this particular software application. Ms. Burnham voiced a concern and wondered if this would really help resolve issues and lessen the number of calls to the town hall. A comment from the public indicated a recommendation to first get the town website in order, as there continues to be old and outdated information on the website, nor are all meeting minutes and agendas published on a regular and timely basis. The BOS recognized that the website does need updating. This has occurred primarily due to staffing issues with only a skeleton crew at the town hall. Additional comments from the public questioned why the staffing level is at a skeleton crew and what can be done and provided suggestions on improving the website updating process and overall tech issues. Ms. Burnham thanked everyone for their comments and suggestions and appreciated their feedback. She stressed the BOS is working to address these issues. Mr. Rawson said the new town administrator is very aware of the issues and working diligently to address them.

d.) **Update on preparing the FY2022 Budget** – Mr. Jacobs has received 2022 budgets from various departments and is hoping to present the information in early August.

11.) **Selectmen Comments:**

Mr. Rawson recognized that it can be sometimes difficult to recognize things are moving forward and the process can be frustrating. However, processes must be followed – specifically regarding state, local, national statutes, and ordinances.

Ms. Burnham thanked the public for their attendance and comments.

12.) **Adjournment:**

Mr. Morrill made a motion to adjourn the public meeting to enter the Non-Public Meeting. Mr. Rawson seconded the motion. All were in favor; the motion passed. The public meeting adjourned at 7:25PM.

Given under our hands this 26th day of July, 2021.

Claudine Burnham 7/26/2021

Claudine Burnham – Chairman BOS

Matthew Morrill - Board Member

Andy Rawson 7-26-21

Andy Rawson - Board Member