



Town of Milton
BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING
August 28, 2023

ATTENDANCE:

Members: Humphrey Williams (Chair), Claudine Burnham, Andy Rawson

Staff: Chris Jacobs -Town Administrator, Chief Richard Krauss- Police Department, Pat Smith- Public Works, Chief Nick Marique- Fire Department, Brian Leclerc- Town Clerk/Tax Collector, Karen Brown- Recreation Department, Stephen Duchesneau- Sexton, +4

Public: Renata Gamache, Laura Turgeon, Bruce Woodruff, Eric Knapp, Matt Morrill

Humphrey Williams, Chair, opened the public session at 6:00PM.

1.) Pledge of Allegiance: Humphrey Williams, Chair, led the meeting in the Pledge of Allegiance.

2.) Public Comment: Mr. Williams announced guidance for public comment and public comment pertaining to topics previously discussed: during the allowed time for public comments, those wanting to speak should be at the podium to talk into the mic. This will give those unable to attend the meeting in-person with improved listening.

There were no public comments.

3.) Announcements and Community Calendar:

1. Milton Community Blood Drive, 10-2:00PM, September 1st at the Restoration Church, 370 White Mountain Highway.
2. Ham & Bean Supper Saturday, September 2nd, 5-6:30PM at the American Legion, 8 Steeple Street, Milton.
3. Town Hall will be closed Monday, September 4th for Labor Day.
4. Transfer Station will be closed Monday, September 4th for Labor Day.
5. Next Planning Board meeting is September 5th.
6. Next Conservation Commission meeting is September 6th.
7. NH Farm Museum will be holding 'The Great NH Pie Festival' on September 23rd. More details are available on their website.

4.) NEW Business – Discussion and Possible Actions:

a.) Department Head Reports:

Recreation- Karen Brown:

Fall soccer starting – 68 players. First practice starts early September. Senior bingo starting up soon. Kid's Night for September will be at the Town Beach. Zumba is currently on sabbatical. Camp3Ponds – 133 kids participated with 20 staff. It was a lot of work, but everyone had a lot of fun.

Spooktacular planning will start soon. Anyone who wants to help with planning should contact Recreation Department.

Land & Water Conservation Fund – originally submitted for the ramp; because there is already a grant for the ramp, suggestion is to change this grant to take care of the bathrooms and other projects. Ms. Brown said this would be discussed at an upcoming commission meeting.

Planning – Bruce Woodruff:

The CIP is ahead by at least one month. He is working on a draft report for the committee to review on September 6th; a public hearing will be held after review.

Planning – they are probably going to have at least one, perhaps two, zoning articles; these are mostly concerned with wetlands conservation.

Zoning Board – he will provide training for new zoning board members. The ZBA has had a case every month for at least the past three months.

Public Works- Pat Smith:

Mr. Smith provided an update to the road repair list. State inspections of vehicles are ongoing. Government Buildings – they are working on the parking lot and landscaping at the new town hall.

Mr. Williams passed along kudos and thanks from town residents: there was a recent accident at Town House Road that took out several signs – the very next day all of the signs were back in place. Thanks for the quick turnaround.

Fire Department – Chief Nick Marique:

There have been 559 calls; 73% medically related – this is a slight increase. The Strafford County Radio Communications upgrade project is nearly complete. Once the project is finished, the Fire Department will switch to a new frequency and should resolve any ongoing radio issues. As this was a county project, there was no needed funding from the town.

FT Firefighter/EMT position remains open – there have been no applicants. They hired two new per diem employees – welcome to both.

Currently getting apparatus inspections. There have been a couple of costly repairs needed including repairs to Engine 6 (head gasket and new rear brakes) – cost \$8,200. He projects the Vehicle Maintenance Plan will be over budget.

They recently had a crew helping at the Woods & Wildlife Festival. The organizers had good things to say about their participation.

Town Clerk/Tax Collection – Brian Leclerc:

Lien notices have been prepared to go out. Notice recipients will have until September 29th to take care of them.

He asked the BOS for an approval to change office hours to mirror the current town hall hours. The new hours would be M,T,W,F 8-4:00PM and Th 8-5:00PM. This would create consistency and help minimize any potential confusion about the hours. Mr. Williams said it is up to the Town Clerk's office to decide their hours. Mr. Leclerc said because he was not elected it would probably be best to have BOS approval.

Ms. Burnham motioned to change the Town Clerk/Tax Collector office hours to M,T,W,F 8-4:00PM and Th from 8-5:00PM effective September 1st, 2023. Seconded by Mr. Rawson. All were in favor; the motion was approved.

Police Department- Chief Richard Krauss:

They have seen an increase in motor vehicle issues, mostly involving younger drivers, souped-

up cars and motorcycles. He noted they will issue citations of reckless motor operations. The 2022-2023 grants are winding down; the Highway Safety Grants for 2023-2024 will start up October 1st. They have had high numbers of violators including an increase in DUIs. The department has seen an increase in domestic incidents. They have also seen an uptick in the number of uninspected motor vehicles; some people are just deciding not to inspect their vehicles, while others are finding it difficult to afford to either have the vehicle inspected or fix any issues caught during inspections. The department is trying to educate people to keep all documentation in the vehicle to show they are trying to have their vehicles fixed. Hiring – Sgt Ebert will return on September 1st to the department as a Lieutenant. Background investigation on another individual should be completed with their starting on October 1st. They also had an interview with another person who is already certified in Maine; if background checks are OK, the plan is to hire that person mid-October. These hires will bring the department back up to 7.

Cemetery – Stephen Duchesneau:

The past several weeks have been busy. There has been one full burial and three cremation burials. Beginning in September he plans to inspect all cemeteries. He has received two quotes for the needed tree removals.

- b.) **Allen Hastings Way – street renaming:** Chief Marique reported all residents on the street have received certified letters; because not everyone has responded and agreed to the name change, a public hearing will need to be scheduled. Chief Marique said the request to rename the street came from the grandson of Mr. Hastings. The grandson expressed his issues with the name and requested the town change the street name. Mr. Eric Knapp currently lives on Allen Hastings Way and did some research on the area. As the street had previously been called Old Union Road, his suggestion would be to change it to Old Union Road. Mr. Knapp would prefer a decision to not rename the road. Chief Marique said it is now a BOS decision. At the request of the Hasting's family, due diligence has been done.

Mr. Williams opened the public hearing for discussion on Allen Hastings Way. Ms. Burnham recommended giving this an additional two weeks to allow others to provide their opinion.

Ms. Burnham motioned to hold the public hearing for Allen Hastings Way at the next BOS meeting. Seconded by Mr. Rawson. All were in favor; the motion was approved.

Mr. Jacobs said as a previous land surveyor, it is a pain to change the name. This causes difficulty to chains of property titles and research. The larger concern has to do with the why of doing this? He acknowledged the concerns of the family member; however, what precedent might this set in proceeding with the street name change? What is a valid reason to change or not change a street name? Mr. Williams said the public hearing will be held at the September 11th meeting.

- c.) **Verdantas contract for 2023 through 2024:** Mr. Jacobs reported this contract is for 2024 budget. Mr. Williams said it is more reasonable than the previous one. It does include \$4,500 for GIS assistance.

- d.) **Lockhart Field – designate authority:** Mr. Jacobs said the lawyer recommended have one person be the designated signer to all letters, notifications and documents.

Ms. Burnham motioned to designate the authority to sign any and all letters, notifications and activity use and restriction deed to the Town Administrator for the Lockhart Field landfill project. Seconded by Mr. Rawson. All were in favor; the motion was approved.

- e.) **AAA Fence quote – for approval and to use ARPA funds:** Mr. Jacobs reported there are a number of fencing units that should be removed to allow walkways installation to allow for safe evacuations from the building if necessary. Some fencing will be reutilized on other areas of the property and no new fencing will need to be purchased.

Ms. Burnham motioned to approve the contract with AAA Fence in the amount of \$3,300 and to further pay for the work from the ARPA Fund account. Seconded by Mr. Rawson. All were in favor; the motion was approved.

- f.) **PWD – Tracked Excavator options and possible appropriation:** According to Pat Smith, the machine currently being rented has been sold. The other machines were quoted at \$128,000 (new), \$111,000 (new) and \$88,000 (used). The used machine would have a limited warranty (\$6,000 additional). Warranties for new machines are included in the quoted price. This would be a one-time payment. Mr. Rawson said it's important to have a machine to take care of the infrastructure. Mr. Smith believes it would be in the town's best interest to invest in purchasing a machine that is covered for five years. Ms. Burnham asked how much has been spent on the rental machine? Mr. Smith said ~\$25,000 for the past five months. The machines are available to purchase right away. Mr. Rawson said the Warrant Article would allow the purchasing of such equipment. Mr. Smith said they have been using the 2022 road construction monies; there is some left over from that fund. With other accounts, there should be more than enough to help cover the purchase costs.

Mr. Rawson motioned to approve the purchase of DXR89-R7US20 at a cost of \$111,890. Seconded by Ms. Burnham. All were in favor; the motion was approved.

- g.) **Request to waive electrical permit fee:** This has been requested by the NH Farm Museum. Mr. Jacobs said this waiver has been approved in the past to other organizations. This is to help prevent fire hazards at the Farm Museum.

Mr. Rawson motioned to waive the \$100 electrical permit fee for the NH Farm Museum. Seconded by Ms. Burnham. All were in favor; the motion was approved.

5.) EVENT PERMITS

- a.) No permits.

6.) OLD BUSINESS

- a.) 2022.02.04.00- 549 White Mountain Highway – status of building: Mr. Jacobs reported the legal notice was sent to the owners; they now have till the end of the BOS meeting on

September 25th. After that time, if the owners do not follow-through with the letter, Mr. Jacobs will ask the BOS to rule it a dilapidated and derelict building which would allow the Fire Department to impose a daily fine. Mr. Jacobs said the lawyer had recommended a reasonable amount of time which has happened.

- b.) 2023.05.22 Townhouse Road Bridge Update: Mr. Williams reported the DOT is behind schedule; they are still waiting to hear from NHDOT before scheduling the public hearing.
- c.) 2022.03.20.7 – Community Power Action Committee – seeks committee members: Mr. Jacobs heard from the representative who would like Milton to sign an MOU to work with them. He is uncomfortable with doing that without any residents expressing any interest in this first. Ms. Burnham asked if this could be put into a Warrant Article for town vote? Mr. Jacobs – the purpose of the committee is to help draft the Warrant Article.
- d.) Long-Term Goal – website functionality improvements: postponed until after the move to the new Town Hall.
- e.) 2023.06.5.03 Fire Chief – to review budget and expenses: Mr. Williams said that as the elected Fire Chief, Nick Marique is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the department. Last year, it was decided to not use monies from the ambulance revolving account during the year to help pay for additional coverage salaries (this had previously been done since COVID in March 2020). This was done to provide accurate reporting of the costs; everyone knew the budgets were going to be over. Now it's time to discuss how best to move forward and decide if 24/7 service is needed and wanted by the town voters.

The total net budget for 2023 is \$544,306. As of July 31st, the department has spent \$431,186.64 which is 79.22% expended at the 58% mark of the year. Projecting out, based on percentage expended to date, the amount would be ~\$740,000. Most of this is due to salary and benefits.

FT Salary: Budget is \$163,353; projected expenditure is ~\$178,000.

PT Salary: Based on current expenditure, this line is projected at ~\$281,000.

Mr. Williams - \$389,000 (salary & benefits) – how many man-days of service would that amount pay for? Without overtime, would give five-man days of coverage (24 hour days with two person coverage). If another full-time firefighter was hired, would give ~5.8-man day. Going forward, is this scenario OK which would not exceed the budget and if not, would we put forward a Warrant Article to see what the town wants to pay for? To get to 24/7 (with two men) would cost ~\$270,000 (salary, benefits, retirement, etc.). Chief Marique said so far there has been 24/7 coverage already. Average pay period is 372 hours. Money being spent is money which is actually needed. Mr. Williams is proposing in order to make the ambulance revolving fund work into the future, it cannot include salary. Chief Marique agreed with that.

Chief Marique proposed a 2-3 year transitional plan which would add incremental amounts each into the PT salary line. Mr. Williams said OT coverage does need to be factored in. The 2024 budget is coming up. We know it's currently over. It's also important to understand maintenance as that is over as well. He asked Chief Marique what is currently being paid for out of the ambulance revolving fund.

Chief Marique agreed with the \$739,000 projection figure - using averages to project out for the rest of the year and added in the Warrant Article into the bottom line budget, he projected ~\$140,000 over (holding back uniform purchase, training and no equipment for the rest of the year). This would help to ensure properly staffing the station. Balance of the revolving account (8/28/23) was \$211,000. Income projections are \$60,000. Year-end balance projection in revolving account of \$252,000. He does not want to go below \$170,000 with \$30,000 in capital reserve. That leaves ~\$82,000 for use to offset the \$140,000 overage. Last year offset was \$100,000. He does believe income should spike over the next few months.

Ms. Burnham asked proceeding forward with another Warrant Article? Chief Marique said after seeing where things stand at year-end, either incrementally increase the budget over the next few years or can do a Warrant Article to either hire a fourth full-time person or ask to add the difference. Mr. Rawson said he is here to support the Chief; it's important to ensure services continue. Ms. Burnham reminded everyone this began in 2020 with COVID and additional station coverage. Chief Marique said grant money was available to provide additional staffing for 24/7 coverage (in response to COVID). Then the revolving account was used to continue to offset the additional salaries. During that time revenue dropped. COVID was the catalyst; two years ago is when the staffing model started to fall apart. The revolving account was a crutch to help get us through.

Mr. Williams said Milton residents have never really been asked if they want a 24/7 Fire Department and ambulance services. The right thing to do would be to put forward a Warrant Article and give the public the opportunity to give their input. Chief Marique - the town did vote on a Warrant Article to hire a third full-time firefighter - it is a reasonable expectation of a resident who is having an emergency, they can call and get a service response. The only way to provide that service is to have two employees at the station 24/7. Chief Marique said he drafted a motion to continue his staffing for this year using money from the Warrant Article to offset costs. Mr. Williams said the money for the third firefighter will be added to this year's budget; however, he is not prepared to use money from the revolving account since no one knows what might happen between now and the end of the year. A motion is not necessary to tell Chief Marique how to run his station. Ms. Turgeon asked what happens if someone is hired? Chief Marique said it would just be a wash as this would cause a decrease in PT hours. Mr. Rawson asked Chief Marique to watch his spending.

7.) Communications Received:

- a.) No communications.

8.) Other Business That May Come Before the Board:

- a) There was no other business.

9.) Approval of Minutes:

Non-Public Minutes:

None

Public Minutes:

August 14, 2023 – Mr. Rawson motioned to accept **8/14/2023 public minutes**. Ms. Burnham seconded the motion. All were in favor; the motion was accepted.

10.) Public Comments Relative to Topics Previously Discussed:

There were no public comments.

11.) Expenditure Reports:

Reports previously discussed.

12.) Town Administrator:

1. The next public meeting of the Board will be September 11, 2023.
2. The Joint Budget meeting between the BOS and the Budget Committee is scheduled for September 14, 2023.

13.) Selectmen Comments:

1. Ms. Burnham – CIP meeting is scheduled for next week
2. Mr. Rawson – regarding the LED lights for the school district – the high school principal found a C-grant application that would be used to help pay for the project. In order to move forward with the grant, BOS approval is needed. The LED lights are in; this grant would really help pay it off faster.

Mr. Rawson motioned for BOS to move forward with the C-grant application to help pay for the LED lighting project. Seconded by Ms. Burnham for discussion. Ms. Burnham asked if there is an amount indicated from the grant? Mr. Rawson – it's just whatever they get. All were in favor; the motion was approved.

Mr. Rawson thanked the BOS for the support as it will save the District money. School starts Wednesday. They are fully staffed for the year except for bus drivers. Because of the bus driver shortage the high school will start the school day earlier. This is a temporary fix as drivers are working on receiving required certifications.

3. Mr. Williams – As mentioned earlier, the Planning Board has been working on wetlands ordinances with the Conservation Commission.

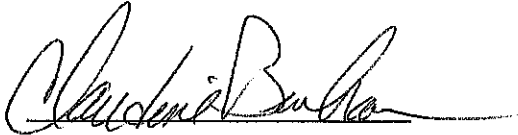
14.) Adjournment:

Mr. Rawson motioned to adjourn the public meeting and enter into the non-public meeting. Ms. Burnham seconded the motion. All were in favor; the motion passed. The public meeting adjourned at 7:40PM.

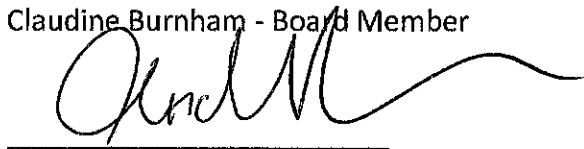
Given under our hands this 11 day of September, 2023.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'H. Williams', written over a horizontal line.

Humphrey Williams – Chairman BOS

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Claudine Burnham', written over a horizontal line.

Claudine Burnham - Board Member

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Andrew Rawson', written over a horizontal line.

Andrew Rawson - Board Member

END OF MINUTES – August 28, 2023