



**Town of Milton**  
**BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING**  
**December 19, 2022**

**ATTENDANCE:**

**Members:** Claudine Burnham (Chair), Humphrey Williams, Matt Morrill

**Staff:** Chris Jacobs -Town Administrator, John Gagner –Town Clerk, Chief Richard Krauss- Police Department, Chief Nick Marique- Fire Department, Jason Behrens-Fire Department, Tyler Taatjes – Fire Dept., Pat Smith-Public Works,

**Public:** Kym Libby, Doug Soares – Lions Club

Claudine Burnham, Chair, opened the public session at 6:02PM.

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

**2.) Public Comment:**

There was no public comment.

**3.) Announcements and Community Calendar:**

1. The town recently received a resolution from the NH Senate congratulating the town on being a recipient of the 2022 LCHIP Grant which was awarded by the NH Land and Community Heritage Investment Program. The award will be used toward the repairs to the Milton Free Public Library built in 1875.
2. The Town Transfer Station will be closed Sunday, December 25<sup>th</sup>. They will be open Monday, December 26<sup>th</sup>.
3. The Town Transfer Station will be closed Sunday, January 1<sup>st</sup>. They will be open Monday, January 2<sup>nd</sup>.
4. Town offices will be closed Monday, December 26<sup>th</sup>.
5. Town offices will be open as normal on Monday, January 2<sup>nd</sup>.

Mr. Smith, Public Works, asked if all town departments would be open on Monday, January 2<sup>nd</sup>. Since January 1<sup>st</sup> falls on a Sunday this year, typically the following Monday would be a paid holiday. Mr. Jacobs – according to the town’s personnel policy manual, Christmas is the only holiday mentioned, by which if Christmas would fall on a Sunday, the Monday would be the holiday. He recommended the next time the personnel policies are discussed to review this specific policy. Mr. Smith said this is not the way it has been handled in the past. Mr. Williams said he also thought January 2<sup>nd</sup> would be recognized as a day off as the Federal Government does. Mr. Smith – this is the way it has been practiced since he started – everyone is currently under the impression January 2<sup>nd</sup> will be a holiday.

Mr. Morrill motioned to recognize January 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2023, as a paid holiday. Mr. Williams seconded the motion. All were in favor; the motion was approved.

**4.) NEW Business – Discussion and Possible Actions:**

**a.) Department Head Report:**

**Town Clerk – John Gagner:**

November- collected \$68,921 in motor revenue vehicle to state; collected \$16 in new dog license revenue and paid \$10 to NH for new dog license revenue; collected \$25 in dog civil forfeiture fines; collected \$148 in certified copy fees; paid \$172 in certified copy revenue to NH; received \$457.50 in misc. revenue (example UCC fees); received \$65 notary service revenue; received \$376 transfer station decal revenue.

**Tax Collector:**

January motor vehicle notices were mailed last week (emailed to residents requesting electric notification) and already seeing customers come in to register cars – residents with January birthday are asked to watch for the notification.

Anticipated the online tax kiosk service will be off line for the New Year’s holiday weekend so 2022 books can be closed for year-end reporting. Will be working with Avatar since this is first year working through the process. Kathy and Ginny will be assisting. Spoken with Finance – hours they work over the holiday weekend will be reflected in 2023 expenditures.

The Tax Collector/Town Clerk budget will be over by >10% this year. Have discussed with Finance, TA, Budget Committee and BOS – this is due to a variety of factors – we originally identified and reported the issue when it was discovered prior to the budget hitting 100%.

Working with Finance and Mr. Williams, have outlined use of part-time employees to March. The Recreation Department put on an awesome Breakfast with Santa event with an amazing turnout. Have enjoyed being involved with the events and would like to partner with the Rec Dept on future events. Milton is fortunate to have such a great Rec Dept.

Have identified the Department/Committee Head positions that will be on the upcoming March ballot.

2023 dog tags will be a classic, round red tag (no cats). Would like to have some kind of dog-of-the-year contest for registered dogs.

Tax bills were sent – thanks to everyone who helped. Especially large thanks to Sue in Assessing.

I’d like to thank everyone who I have met over the past nine months since the election; it’s been very humbling. I am fortunate to have an excellent support team and also recognize the

ungiven credit that is due to each of my peers at town hall for supporting each other professionally and personally.

The Town Clerk & Tax Collector's office wishes entire town a safe and festive holiday season. Look forward to productive 2023, excited to meet more folks and be involved with more events.

**Public Works – Pat Smith:**

November & December have been cutting overhanging limbs and brush, cold patching, some washouts due to heavy rain, sign inventory and maintenance, new Town Hall parking lot. Did a culvert on NE Pond Road, continued fall cleanup (leaf pickup, etc.) in Milton & Milton Mills – get ahead on spring cleanup, patched spots on Church Street and NE Pond Road. On 11/17 treated roads and sidewalks for ice and snow; 12/16 & 12/17, plowed and treated roads and 12/19 sidewalk snow removal.

Truck maintenance ongoing – Dump truck #2 currently is in shop. Truck 1 & 3 – there are issues but can still be run however will need addressed. Potential to be very large costs.

General grounds – election setup in November. Historical building in Milton Mills – winter secure. MFLP – front steps repair work; winterized town buildings and parks; lights/ballast replacement; repaired Town Hall sign; removed dock at the beach.

**Police Department – Chief Richard Krauss:**

Reminder about Jessica's Law – drivers must make sure all ice and snow is removed from their cars (including the roof). The police are issuing tickets, not warnings.

Winter Parking Ban – most residents are abiding by this and are cooperating. No Charles Street resident has asked to use the Town Hall parking lot yet. They do need to talk with Chris Jacobs about this.

They have seen an increase in Cadillac converter thefts – this is happening during the day so residents should be aware.

There has been an increase in suspicious activity calls – unfortunately people have been reporting the activity days or weeks later (not as soon as it is seen). Reminder to call when it's occurring so the Police Department can check it out.

They did another PT test – sent out 15 letters with only one person showing. The hiring process is still ongoing, but very slow.

**b.) Sign Tax Deed for 57 Silver Street:**

Mr. Jacobs – the town attorney put together the deed; the Town Clerk witnessed the BOS signing the document.

**c.) Eyeglasses Drop off Box from Wakefield Lions Club:**

Mr. Doug Soares from the Wakefield Lions Club attended the meeting to discuss their request to have eyeglasses drop off box. They have served Wakefield and surrounding towns since 1954. The Lions Club objective is the preservation of eyesight. He asked to locate a collection box at the Town Hall. He said a member of their club also serves a clinic in Honduras. Because of that connection, collected glasses go directly to that clinic. The lens is the most critical component. They have collected from Milton for a while with a box already located at the post office. Their other objective is to become more active within Milton. The Lions Club appreciates

the BOS consideration. Mr. Williams – the only question is if the box is waterproof to be placed outside? According to Mr. Soares the box is waterproof.

Mr. Williams motioned to allow the Wakefield Lions Club to place an eyeglass drop off box outside the Town Hall. Seconded by Mr. Morrill. All were in favor; the motion was approved.

**d.) Sexton Job Description:**

Mr. Jacobs – Bruce Woodruff drew up the job description including the scope of work for the position. Ms. Burnham – question about wording around received work orders going directly to DPW? Currently the orders go to Jenny who is handling the administrative portion of the position. They should continue to go to Jenny and not the BOS. The suggestion is to first open up the position to someone within the department if they would like additional work hours. Mr. Smith – we have talked about providing cross training in case of any future needs (act as a back-up). Mr. Williams said the pay range will need to be determined – this will not be a regular position with set hours; more of an on-call position. Ms. Burnham will help and bring back to the BOS.

**e.) Hopper Road Bridge Update:**

Mr. Jacobs talked with the Town Administrator from Acton, Jennifer Roux, asking about our plans. She asked to setup a meeting with the BOS to discuss Hopper Road Bridge. He sent her the NH 2019 Bridge Inspection report. He also spoke with CR Willeke (NH DOT) – summarizing - they do not know about adding a 4<sup>th</sup> bridge at this time; however, they would evaluate a request. The bridge is owned by Acton and Milton. Under Maine Law, MDOT facilitates the bridge projects and repairs. In NH, DOT assists municipalities in bridge repair work. This can be put onto the ten-year plan – it would probably take ~10 years. The weight limit has been adjusted several times. As an aside, the town received a letter from the state asking if the town would agree to the Church Street Bridge program and commit to raising \$370,000. Water Street Bridge is fairly new. As a small community, how can we do all these things at the same time. He recommended having a meeting with Highway, PD & FD to help decide the order of bridges to do. After that the BOS can meet with Acton reps to get their thoughts. Mr. Williams agreed about the need to first have the discussion. Mr. Jacobs questioned how much police and fire depend on the bridges to provide services on the other side of the bridge. Mr. Williams said fire would be the key part on the bridge. Mr. Morrill recommends scheduling a meeting with Acton BOS and see what they have planned. Last time there was repair work, Acton handled all that.

**f.) NH Solar Garden Update:**

Mr. Jacobs – Richard Lebreque from Agilitas contacted him. Pursuant to the agreement, they believe the town owes them money. The signed power purchase agreement was set at \$.095/kw hour. The agreement also says each year the amount would increase by 3.5% which would put the rate at \$0.11/kw hour. In 2021, the town was paying Eversource ~\$.10/kw hour. Based on overall usage, Mr. Lebreque feels the town owes Agilitas \$7,735. Mr. Jacobs looked at invoices and documentation and found that some of the accounts the town no longer owns. While this is a surprise, the good news is this should revert back to paying Milton – projection is \$20,000 at year-end of 2023; 2024 is predicted to be ~\$10,000. Mr. Williams asked about the

lease payment? Mr. Jacobs said Mr. Lebreque was not sure about this and they may owe us \$4,000 on one of the lease payments. Did receive two checks earlier in the year from them. Mr. Williams would like to see documentation outlining the breakdowns; they are leasing land from the town and we owe them money? Ms. Burnham requested additional information.

**5.) EVENT PERMITS**

a.) No event permits received.

**6.) OLD BUSINESS**

**a.) 2021.11.01 Request to Encumber \$33,000 for re-evaluation:**

Mr. Jacobs – the town signed a contract for a property wide re-evaluation in 2024. This was previously discussed at the November 1, 2021, BOS meeting. The multi-year contract was set at \$106,000. Because it is a standing contract, this gives the BOS the ability to encumber money for the re-evaluation portion of the contract. Mr. Jacobs suggests encumbering \$33,000 this year and for next year either raising through taxes, unassigned fund balance or however the board would decide, and for 2024 determine how to fund the rest of the contract.

Mr. Williams motioned to encumber \$33,000 toward the town re-evaluation project. Mr. Morrill seconded the motion. All were in favor; the motion was approved.

**b.) 2022.04.18.1 Review of Ambulance Revolving Account:**

Chief Marique asked how the BOS would like to proceed. He explained the decision was to charge all of the labor to the PT labor line which has historically been charged to the revolving account. Based on the information, now a decision should be made to either continue this way or to transfer some or all of it back to the revolving account. Mr. Jacobs said this was first discussed in April when Chief Marique came to the BOS to ask the board to remove money from the ambulance revolving account to fund labor; not knowing what the budget would be like at the end of the year, it was agreed to let the money ride, possibly to fund an ambulance. There is a Warrant Article for an ambulance for \$405,000. Mr. Williams – as of 12/19/2022, it is \$196,000 over the budget – due to part-time line and FICA/Medicare. Chief Marique said the current balance in the revolving account is ~\$208,000. This year collected on the fund ~\$169,000. Current net is around \$146,000.

Mr. Jacobs – proposed Article #10 is a long-term lease/purchase which gives the BOS future either/or options. The BOS had told the Chief to go ahead and bid. Chief – the question is do we want a Warrant Article or if get the staffing funded, could purchase in two years. Mr. Williams is concerned especially in light of the recent tax increase; it's hard to absorb \$196,000. Currently the year-end projection is \$100,000 leftover (if absorbing all of FD). We do not want to zero out the revolving fund – at this point can only do about ½.

Mr. Williams motioned to use \$100,000 from the revolving fund back to the budget. Mr. Morrill seconded the motion. All were in favor; the motion was approved.

Mr. Williams also asked what was the average net gain for the past three years? Chief

Marique said it's been almost nothing. Mr. Williams would like to know what has not been collected? Chief Marique can setup a meeting with the billing company – there are many variables; it is important to understand what we are billing and what we are collecting.

**c.) 2022.12.05 Review of Proposed Town Warrant Articles:**

Mr. Jacobs – since the last meeting, he added WA #6 – readopt all veterans property tax credits with expanded coverage; if not, coverage would drop from \$500 to \$50.

Proposed WA #1, 2 & 3 for BOS consideration: #1 – Bridge Aid to the Bridge CRF; #2 – Road Aid to Road Reconstruction CRF; #3 – possibly rescind 1993 Industrial Park CRF. Staff discussion – why not use CRF for things like road construction? Based on past history was difficult to get all the required paperwork for the Trustees of the Trust Fund to move monies. It is just easier to leave it in. Mr. Williams asked about the highway block grant? Mr. Jacobs said yes, we should be getting again this year.

Article #5 – no changes. Mr. Jacobs is looking for ways to soften what had happened due to results of tax increasing. Mr. Williams – still need to determine what to do truck-wise. The road money can be used for trucks used to maintain the road. Recommends keeping the \$350,000.

Mr. Williams – in general we should not put anything that would come from the unassigned fund balance. This year explain what the actual tax impact is; give voters the actual cost and let them decide.

Article #9 – pulled at last meeting

Article #10 – authority to enter into lease-purchase? Mr. Williams – it's important to move forward; find out where the town stands on this. Chief Marique – lease payment over 5 years works out to ~\$65,000 per year. He will reach out to the company and get a hard quote.

Library – Mr. Williams said they have a good balance (~\$44,000) plus they received the LCHIP Grant; need to determine how much they really need in reserve. Mr. Jacobs – CIP recommendations work was ~\$150,000.

Invasive Species – Mr. Williams – don't think this should be \$10,000 (based on what was paid this year); could reduce down to \$7,500. Wording should be clear to indicate specifically for water bodies, is non-lapsing and is to come from taxation.

Article #16 – Mr. Williams recommended removing this article; all agreed.

Article #17 – Conservation Commission Legal Defense – should still be through taxation.

Three proposed articles – asking for both to go into CRF

\$130,000 for Bridge aid

\$109,000 for Road aid

Mr. Williams – concern every year the number increases; if it's not needed, don't add. Mr. Jacobs will cleanup the Warrant Articles and forward to the Budget Committee. Mr. Williams work with the Budget Committee about their recommendations.

Full-time staffing Warrant Article – Chief Marique said this would be just for six months and would take effect in July. He used Step 1 from the Employee Pay Plan. Mr. Williams asked if Chief Marique really expected to get someone at that level? Chief Marique – No. He explained the difference at bringing someone in at Step 2 (increase of \$5,000). He also

provided information comparing one full-time to two per-diem at the same rate which amounts to a difference ~\$30,000. The reason to hire full-time vs. per-diem position is a full-time employee's loyalty is to the town. Typically a part-time individual has a full-time job with another community; this can lead to shifts not being filled. Mr. Williams – we will need to increase the budget by \$100,000, it's not just a \$30,000 impact. Chief Marique agreed – need to move away from the revolving account. Mr. Williams said it's also important to show OT pay, how much extra OT and the subsequent cost to the town. Have to ensure the Warrant Article is clear to the voters – include as much detail as needed. Mr. Jacobs said it's important to not focus on the cost but what are the actual savings due to OT, safety, health impact, etc. He asked if he should leave the \$22.00 since it's a more realistic amount? Yes. He said he will still require OT to help fill shifts when needed.

#### **7.) Communications Received:**

**a.) Three Ponds Protective Association Thank-you Letter and Invoice:**

According to the submitted letter, their total expenditures for year 2021 were \$56,200; costs were offset by state grants - \$41,000 (DEP, DES); this resulted in unreimbursed expenses in the amount of \$15,044. TPPA is requesting for funding from Milton – the proportional share is \$4,513. TPPA had previously submitted the letter of request.

**b.) NHDES/DOT – Church Street over Salmon Falls Bridge:**

MDOT has estimated the related construction costs to be \$3.74M, including design and construction. The costs would be split between Maine and New Hampshire at an amount of ~\$1.85M per state. Milton's 20% responsibility is estimated at \$370,000 (10% of the total project cost). The project is not currently in the DOT ten-year plan; the bridge would not be constructed before 2025. This is being moved forward to cooperate with Maine DOT.

**c.) NHDES/DOT Letter of Congratulations:**

This is follow-up to received letter of December 14<sup>th</sup> congratulation Milton on the one-time bridge payment (\$130,000 – already received).

**d.) DrummondWoodsum:**

Letter indicating a 5% rate increase.

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

Mr. Jacobs – earlier in the month, the town received an invoice from the NH Municipal Association. While this had been paid last year, it was not a line-item in last year's budget. Last year the invoice was for ~\$3,900. Mr. Williams said this should go under the TA Contract Services line-item and will be included in the default. Mr. Jacobs said this association does provide beneficial resources to Mr. Jacobs, BOS and to the town.

#### **9.) Approval of Minutes:**

Public Minutes:

**December 5, 2022** - Mr. Williams motioned to accept 12/5/2022 public minutes with corrections. Mr. Morrill seconded the motion. All were in favor; the motion was accepted.

#### **10.) Public Comments Relative to Topics Previously Discussed:**

Kym Libby reported on the new Milton Business Association which is gaining ground in the community. She continues to work on updating the business directory; currently it's about 50%

complete. Contact information is on the website. They have also published a Milton Business Association Facebook page.

**11.) Expenditure Report: 2023 Proposed Operating Budget:**

Mr. Williams emphasized needing to ensure all transfers are completed, especially for the Fire Department, Solid Waste and Wastewater Treatment Plant.

Planning & Zoning – there are current overages; these are supposed to be paid for through fees which should cover the costs. Expenditure wise, Zoning is not bad, however Planning Board is nearly \$8,100 over. Mr. Morrill said reports indicate it's for GIS & Map Sets. Mr. Williams said those items should have already been moved to Planning & Code. This would be part of the adjustment. ZBA is for public notices and postage and should be covered as part of application payments.

Mr. Williams reported the Budget Committee has reviewed all departments except for mileage under Treasurer. They are requesting information and indicated mileage forms should be completed throughout the year instead of waiting until year-end. Use of personal vehicles should be kept to a minimum to help limit liability. Town vehicles are available for usage. The Treasurer's line-item is \$1800 – based on mileage reimbursement that amounts to nearly 2800 travel miles (131 roundtrips to bank in Rochester); the bank sends a courier for deposit pickup. According to Mr. Jacobs no logs have been kept to account for the \$1800. Mr. Williams said without documentation it's difficult to justify payments. Mr. Jacobs said it appears there are several individuals who view this as a stipend. Mr. Williams said there is no stipend associated with this. There is a mileage form that should be completed on a weekly or monthly basis to indicate exactly what the trip is for and mileage. The Budget Committee is not seeing any regular charges to this line-item. Mr. Jacobs said going forward if BOS mandates, he would not sign off on any future mileage or travel unless he receives a mileage form and supporting documentation. Mr. Williams said all that information would help the Budget Committee understand what to base future budget numbers on going forward. He also stressed that town vehicles should be used for town business and if there is not an opportunity to use a town vehicle, a mileage form must be submitted. The Budget Committee recommended reducing the mileage line-item for the Treasurer to \$1,400. Ms. Burnham said it's important even when using the town vehicle, the mileage log still needs to be completed.

Outside Appropriations: Mr. Jacobs said there are no request for increases; all are being kept at the same amounts. Mr. Williams said the Budget Committee carried the numbers forward. With those numbers and including the \$1800 for Treasurer mileage line-item, the proposed budget comes in \$43,310 under the default.

The Budget Committee expects to finalize the budget by their first meeting in January. The Public Hearing is scheduled for January 17<sup>th</sup> at the School. Public notices should be sent by January 10<sup>th</sup>.

**12.) Town Administrator:**

1. The next meeting of the board will occur on January 2, 2023.



2. There has been a request from Adam Houghton to move the Deliberative Session from February 4<sup>th</sup> to February 11<sup>th</sup>. Based on last year's order, the Town will present first.
3. The election is scheduled for March 14<sup>th</sup> (not March 8<sup>th</sup> as first reported). The BOS could move their meeting back to March 6<sup>th</sup> instead of March 9<sup>th</sup>.

**13.) Selectmen Comments:**

- Mr. Williams – Karen Brown requested BOS approve acceptance of the following checks: \$2,500 from Real Estate Advisors to Parks & Recreation (Walter Cheney); \$250 from Cora & Humphrey Williams to Parks & Recreation; \$300 from Karen Locke, Bennett Street Realty Trust to Recreation Department.

Mr. Williams motioned to accept all checks; Mr. Morrill seconded the motion. All were in favor; the motion was approved.

- Mr. Williams - There have been ongoing issues with the video streaming. Mr. Elder suggested Milton look at what Barrington BOS does. Barrington uses MS Teams which allows for remote participation. Mr. Williams wants to find out what they are using for equipment. He plans on contacting Barrington to get information. He reported the school also experienced issues with their video streaming.
- Mr. Williams – it's important to note, Barrington only posts their draft minutes at the Town Hall, just like Milton is currently doing. They do not post anything on their website until minutes are approved.
- Mr. Morrill – we need to look at the Veteran's Property Tax Credit and should increase it if we can. He recommends increasing to \$1,000. Mr. Williams said this is a good support, but we do need to know what the totals are. Mr. Jacobs said this is tracked through Avatar. Ms. Burnham asked if this credit goes to every veteran? Mr. Morrill said anyone who is in or was in the military and honorably discharged or honorable service. Mr. Jacobs said this discussion also brought up elderly exemptions. Mr. Morrill said this should also be tracked through Avatar. According to Mr. Jacobs, Avatar has suggested this would be part of the town re-evaluation in 2024. If the re-evaluation is completed every 5-7 years this ensures the town stays on top of this. To qualify for an elderly exemption, a person needs to be a resident of Milton for three years and is based on income. Mr. Williams suggested looking into adjusting the elderly exemption income levels. Veteran exemption is not based on income. For the Veteran's Exemption, Mr. Jacobs will work with Sue to determine the impact and report back to BOS.

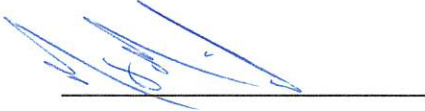
**14.) Adjournment:**

Mr. Williams motioned to adjourn the public meeting and enter into the non-public meeting. Mr. Morrill seconded the motion. All were in favor; the motion passed. The public meeting adjourned at 8:25PM.

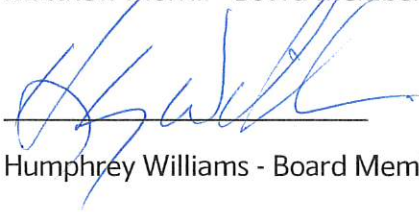
Given under our hands this 2<sup>nd</sup> day of January 2023.



Claudine Burnham - Chairman BOS



Matthew Morrill - Board Member



Humphrey Williams - Board Member

**END OF MINUTES – December 19, 2022**