

Town of Milton
BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING
January 24, 2022

ATTENDANCE:

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

Staff: Chris Jacobs, Town Administrator

Public: Chief Marique, Pat Smith, Rep Glenn Bailey, Jarad Vartanian, Thomas Cue

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 no public comments.

3.) Announcements and Community Calendar: Bucky's is now open for breakfast and lunch. They are located in the former Ray's Marina building. Ample parking is available on site. Congratulations and welcome to Milton!

4.) NEW Business – Discussion and Possible Actions:

a.) Resignation of Ryan Thibeault from the Heritage Commission – received Jan 6, 2022:

Mr. Jacobs received Mr. Thibeault's resignation via email, due primarily to other commitments.

Mr. Rawson made a motion to accept the resignation of Mr. Ryan Thibeault from the Heritage Commission. Mr. Morrill seconded the motion. All were in favor; the motion was approved.

b.) Appointment of Sharon Buttrick as an alternate to the Conservation Commission:

Mr. Jacobs received an email from Ms. Buttrick with her notice of intention to join the Conservation Commission as an alternate. Mr. Jacobs discussed this with the Commission chairs who support Ms. Buttrick's intention.

Mr. Rawson made a motion to accept Ms. Sharon Buttrick as an alternate to the Conservation Commission. Mr. Morrill seconded the motion. All were in favor; the motion was approved.

c.) Jarad Vartanian from Vachon and Culkay – annual audit contract: Mr. Vartanian explained Vachon and Culkay is a local CPA firm specializing in towns and communities. The firm had previously provided audits until a few years ago. They provided information and submitted a standard contract letter to Mr. Jacobs on January 9, 2022. Mr. Jacobs explained he had received a notice from the current auditing firm they would no longer be providing this service to Milton. In talking with employees in the town office, Vachon and Culkay were overwhelmingly recommended. It's anticipated this will be a smooth transition. Ms. Burnham thanked Mr. Vartanian for agreeing to come back and work with the town. Mr. Vartanian – their goal is to provide audits to the BOS to help them make good and accurate

decisions for the town. Mr. Jacobs asked if the BOS felt comfortable to grant him the authority to sign the contract for the year 2021.

Mr. Rawson made a motion to hire Vachon and Culkay for the annual audit contract for year 2021. Mr. Morrill seconded the motion. All were in favor; the motion was approved.

d.) **Mr. Thomas Cue – State of Refuse Disposal in NH:** Mr. Cue provided an update on the current state of refuse disposal and landfills in New Hampshire. When the landfill in Bethlehem closes towns in NH will not be able to get rid of their waste within the state. By leaving the state to get rid of refuse, this increases the overall costs to tax-payers. They are looking to construct a new landfill in Dalton. This effort is currently going through the state legislature. Mr. Cue is asking for BOS support by contacting their state senators. The BOS thanked him for coming to the meeting and providing them with the information.

e.) **Department Head Reports:**

Public Works – Pat Smith:

They have responded to 7 events – plowing and sanding.

Truck 1 and Truck 2 have been down one time; Truck 3 has been out 3 times.

Dawson Street – they are preparing to add the last catch basin on Silver Street. The final culvert should be completed by the upcoming weekend. They will do a site walk-through and make a checklist of items to be done now and in the spring. Final paving will be completed in the spring.

Recreation – submitted by Karen Brown:

2021 Holiday program was very successful – many thanks to all the donors that helped to make this happen.

Senior Thanksgiving and Christmas luncheons were successful.

Toys for Kids program had over 40 children – support through Marine Toys for Tots, Snowden Realty, Shipyard and many donations from residents.

Senior Drop-Off – 38 seniors received dinners.

2021 Basketball program is off to a good start. They will keep this inhouse and not do any traveling.

Winter Carnival Family Fishing Derby will be February 13th.

Mr. Rawson thanked both the Recreation Director and Assistant Director – they do a lot to make sure all events happen.

Police Department – submitted by Chief Krauss:

Starting off 2022 only down by one full-time position.

Sgt Herbert has completed his field training and now on patrol.

Officer Bachert is going through field training.

Once all 7 positions are able to patrol, the department will once again be proactive.

The department received the hybrid vehicle – it has been out on patrol. Currently they are evaluating the vehicle and it's overall cost effectiveness.

They have seen an increase in both cases of fraud and negligent driving. Remind – Jessica's Law will be strictly enforced – residents should make sure all ice and snow is removed from their vehicles prior to driving. The fine is \$310.

They will participate in the upcoming Special Olympics Winnie Dip (in March). Chief Krauss is asking the BOS to waive enforcement of the current daily closing ordinance to the town park and recreation areas.

Mr. Rawson made a motion to amend the ordinance date to April 3rd. Mr. Morrill seconded the motion. All were in favor; the motion was approved.

Milton Free Public Library – submitted by Betsy Baker: They have allowed patrons upstairs since August. They have over 800 active patrons; 79 are new patrons. There were 16 entries in the recent gingerbread contest with 3 winners.

Ms. Burnham said it was the residents who expressed their interest in hearing more from department heads and she hopes this information will continue to be provided in the future.

- f.) **Appointment of Assistant Fire Chief Tyler Taatjes as an E911 Liaison:** Mr. Jacobs asked the BOS to grant him the authority to add Mr. Taatjes as the E911 Liaison to the state.

Mr. Rawson made a motion to appoint Assistant Fire Chief Tyler Taatjes to fill the E911 Liaison position. Mr. Morrill seconded the motion. All were in favor; the motion was approved.

The BOS thanks him for his services and offered their congratulations.

- g.) **Ambulance Revolving Fund – request to transfer funding:** Chief Marique explained the overall goal is to have enough money to purchase a new ambulance. Currently yearly revenues are decreasing, and expenses continue to increase. Last year, during the 4th quarter \$40,000 was transferred to the account. This year's budget there is nothing left to do that. More was spent from the revolving account to help keep the budget in line which now means the revolving fund is depleted. As an example, with increasing supply prices led to huge increase over previous years in the line-item. Mr. Rawson agreed with Mr. Morrill the importance of the need to have an accurate reflection of where the money is expended. Mr. Jacobs – budget accuracy is important to know where money is going – accurately track where the monies are going and stop removing from other line-items to pay expenses, mainly labor and salaries). Mr. Rawson questioned what it would take to fix this issue. Chief Marique suggested not spending more than \$200,000 from the revolving account, keeping at least \$25,000 and add \$100,000 to the budget's part-time line-item. Mr. Jacobs said year-end budget will reflect 106% (6% over the budget). It is hard to predict at the start of the year – they do try to get it as close as possible. Mr. Rawson agreed with moving monies from the part-time line. Mr. Jacobs said it's also important to remember the town as a whole will only expend ~88% of this year's budget (including 106% from the Fire Department). Mr. Rawson – although it would have been better to have this conversation on December 24th, rather than January 24th, if Finance says it's legal and OK to do so, he would approve moving \$40,000 from the part-time line. Chief Marique said he would follow-up with Finance.

Mr. Rawson made a motion, based on Finance approval to move \$39,129.23 to the part-time line. Mr. Morrill seconded the motion. All were in favor; the motion was approved.

- h.) **Dawson Street Drainage Project** – ARPA funding opportunity: Mr. Jacobs explained he received a letter, dated December 20, 2021, from the state indicating \$280,000 will be available to use toward the Dawson Street project. Because there is a stormwater component to the project, it rated #3 on the state's overall project list.

The BOS are being asked to:

- 1.) Waive the selection process and not change engineers.
- 2.) Warrant Article – need to amend the WA on the floor at the upcoming Deliberative Session (Town Council is working on the exact wording – will not change the intent of the WA but will change the overall tax impact).

Underwood Engineers estimate Phase 2 at \$611,000. This now includes Silver Street drainage issue which will be addressed and would help eliminate some of the run-off. Mr. Smith recommended changing the amount to \$500,000 and then go after some of the monies later. Mr. Jacobs cautioned this change because to raise and appropriate monies means you can only spend that amount and it's best kept at \$611,000. Mr. Rawson questioned if there had been any information for the ARPA funds and perhaps getting another \$200,000 from available COVID funds. He suggested using \$140,000 from ARPA and apply that to the Warrant Article which would help to lessen the tax burden. Mr. Jacobs said he would be more comfortable with using the unassigned fund balance and keep the ARPA monies to offset taxes in November. Mr. Rawson expressed his concern that the fund balance had never been used like this previously.

Ms. Burnham suggested the following:

Starting price of \$611,000: use \$280,000 (ARPA), \$150,000 (COVID relief funds) which would bring the overall amount down to \$181,000.

Mr. Rawson again expressed his concern that the fund balance is better used for catastrophic situations. Mr. Jacobs indicated the fund balance can only be used two times during a year and waiting for a catastrophic event might not be the best way. Mr. Rawson said having the WA for \$181,000 would bring the tax impact down to \$.36/\$1,000 vs. the original \$1.56. Mr. Jacobs said the monies would not come out of the tax fund until the last week of 2022. Mr. Rawson – it all boils down to where to take the monies from; it will still bring the tax rate down with either option. He also stressed the importance of this project which needs to continue moving forward.

Mr. Rawson made a motion to approve \$200,000 from the unassigned fund balance towards Dawson Street Drainage project. Mr. Morrill seconded the motion. All were in favor; the motion was approved.

Mr. Rawson made a motion to change the construction costs on the Warrant Article from \$781,000 to \$611,000 adding specific language. To apply \$200,000 from the unassigned fund balance, no monies raised by taxation and add \$280,000 from ARPA funds (with specific wording recommended by Town Council and presented at the Deliberative Session). Mr. Morrill seconded the motion. All were in favor; the motion was approved.

i.) Warrant Article submitted by Petition: Mr. Jacobs explained he sent to the Town Council for review, the Warrant Article which was submitted by petition to change the way votes are counted at elections. According to the council, the petition is legal, and voters can decide how they want their votes counted. Mr. Rawson said it's important elections be transparent and accountable. According to Michelle Beauchamp, she has tested the machines for the past 10 years which would be ~20 elections. The machines have never been off on sample ballots, always spot on. She indicated there is more human error when counting votes by hand. Recounts have also shown the machine to be 100% accurate compared to hand count. Mr. Jacobs (as moderator) can understand why someone would want a hand count and he is aware there are concerns about the possibility of an election being stolen. Mr. Rawson said this petition will be on the ballot – it's also important for voters to understand this would actually cost more in both needing more people and taking more time. He explained he is not saying this is a bad idea and he wants fair elections as well. The town just does not have the revenues and resources for hand counting. Ms. Burnham explained this is not just being requested in Milton. She is aware of 30 towns in the state that will have this on their ballot. The concern stems from the 2020 election and ultimately the voters will need to make that decision. Mr. Jacobs said it is not required for the BOS to vote on this Warrant Article.

5.) OLD Business:

a.) Final vote on Warrant Articles and signature of warrant: Mr. Jacobs will get all the Warrant Articles finalized for the BOS to sign. He will then upload them to the state website and post them by the required date of January 31st.

6.) Other Business That May Come Before the Board: There was none.

7.) Approval of Minutes:

Non-Public Minutes:

January 3, 2022 – Mr. Rawson made a **motion to accept the 1/3/2022 Non-public meeting minutes** as written. Mr. Morrill seconded the motion. All were in favor; the motion was accepted.

Public Minutes:

January 3, 2022, and January 10, 2022 – Mr. Rawson made a **motion to accept the 1/3/2022 and 1/10/2022 Public meeting minutes** as written. Mr. Morrill seconded the motion. All were in favor; the motion was accepted.

8.) Public Comments Relative to Current Meeting Topics:

There were no public comments.

9.) Expenditure Report:

Mr. Jacobs explained for 2021 88.19% of the budget was expended.

10.) Town Administrator:

Next meeting will be February 5th, 10:30AM for the Deliberative Session.

Next BOS meeting will be February 7th, 6:00PM

They have interviews scheduled for the Assessing position. By early February, he plans to have recommendations to present to the BOS.

Mr. Rawson questioned the status of the property on Charles Street. Mr. Jacobs will start the process for that property along with the former Ding-a-Ling property on White Mountain Highway.

11.) Selectmen Comments:

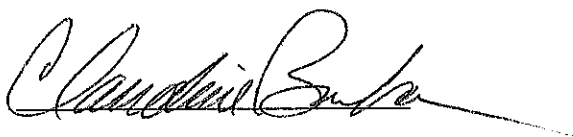
Mr. Rawson said he has received a few complaints about residents unable to get sand after hours (their working hours making it difficult to get there during regularly scheduled hours). Mr. Smith said they are open every day and while he understands some people might have difficulty, he said they had previously looked to other solutions but that does bring other issues. He asked if maybe residents could plan ahead which would allow them to get there during open hours. However, he said he would try to do what is best.

Ms. Burnham requested information for the upcoming Deliberative Session be posted – including signs outside the Town Hall and on the website. She also encouraged residents to try running for positions and get more involved. The last day to submit registrations is Friday, January 28th at 5:00PM.

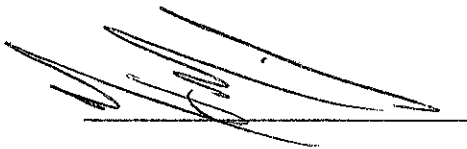
12.) Adjournment:

Mr. Rawson made a motion to adjourn the public meeting. Mr. Morrill seconded the motion. All were in favor; the motion passed. The public meeting adjourned at 8:25PM.

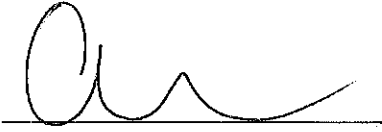
Given under our hands this 7th day of February, 2022.



Claudine Burnham – Chairman BOS



Matthew Morrill - Board Member



Andy Rawson - Board Member

END OF MINUTES January 24, 2022

