

Town of Farmington
Board of Selectmen Public Meeting Minutes
Monday, February 27, 2023
Selectmen's Chambers
356 Main Street-Farmington, NH 03835

Board Members Present:

Gerry Vachon, Chairman
Charlie King, Vice Chairman
Ann Titus
Doug Staples

Board Members Absent:

Penny Morin

Others Present:

Ken Dickie, Town Administrator
Ed Brannon, Highway Dept. Supervisor

Call to Order:

Chairman Vachon called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

Non-Public Session A:

Motion: (Staples, second Titus) to enter non-public session under RSA 91-A: 3 II (L) Consideration of Legal Advice passed 4-0 by a roll call vote (Vachon, King, Titus, Staples-aye) at 5:31 p.m.

Motion: (Vachon, second King) to come out of non-public session passed 4-0 at 5:42 p.m.

Non-Public Session B:

Motion: (King, second Titus) to enter non-public session under RSA 91-A: 3 II (L) Consideration of Legal Advice passed 4-0 by a roll call vote (Vachon, King, Titus, Staples-aye) at 5:42 p.m.

Motion: (King, second Titus) to come out of non-public session passed 4-0 at 5:49 p.m.

Non-Public Session C:

Motion: (King, second Staples) to enter non-public session under RSA 91-A: 3 II (c) Reputation passed 4-0 by a roll call vote (Vachon, King, Titus, Staples-aye) at 5:49 p.m.

Motion: (Titus, second Staples) to come out of non-public session passed 4-0 at 5:53 p.m.

Reconvene Public Session:

Chairman Vachon reconvened the public session at 6 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance:

All present stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Public Input: None

Review of Minutes:

February 13, 2023-Public Session- No errors or omissions

Motion: (Titus, second Staples) to accept the Feb. 13 public minutes as written passed 4-0

February 20, 2023-Non-Public Sessions A, B & C- No errors or omissions

Motion: (Titus, second Staples) to accept the A, B and C Non-Public Sessions minutes from Feb. 20, 2023 as written passed 4-0.

Old Business:

Posted Dirt Roads- Mr. Vachon asked Mr. Brannon if the dirt roads had stiffened up yet with the cold temperatures.

Mr. Brannon said they have stiffened up a little bit and looks like the temperatures are going to stay in the 30's with some days in the high 30's and some in the low 30's.

Mr. Vachon said on Wed. and Thurs. it supposed to get warmer.

Mr. King asked Mr. Brannon what he would suggest.

Mr. Brannon said he would leave the signs up and if people need to they can call and there have been a few people that have called and they are picking their days and trying to do what they can in the morning if possible and there hasn't been a whole lot of activity. He said if they take them down its 6 hours and to put them back up it's another 6 hours with 2 guys and a vehicle.

Mr. King said he was not opposed to leaving them up for another week but if it stays continual he might be inclined at the next meeting to take them down unless the weather (changes).

Mr. Brannon said they're usually up pretty much everywhere in this area by mid-March at the latest.

Mr. King said if they take them down next week we may only get a couple of weeks of reprieve.

Mr. Brannon said usually we get into these weather patterns for 2-3 weeks and then they change. It's tough on the budget he said.

Mr. Vachon asked how the salt supply was looking.

Mr. Brannon said right now it's terrible but tomorrow afternoon should be much, much better.

Mr. Vachon said then they are on the short runs (for deliveries) they are doing and he got a similar phone call this afternoon for his job in Somersworth.

Motion: (King, second Staples) to keep the roads posted for another week passed 4-0.

Vehicle Repairs- Mr. King asked how they were holding up on repairs to the vehicles and that the first storm brought some vehicle issues to their attention and asked if those were rectified. Mr. Brannon said truck #13 which is a 10-wheeler is still down because a section of the exhaust pipe is cracked and broken. He said they should have the part for it tomorrow.

Mr. King asked about the new (used) sidewalk tractor.

Mr. Brannon said that's been working really good and they have been quite happy with it.

Mr. King asked if the other one was available as a backup or if they've been scavenging parts off of it.

Mr. Brannon said they took the counter weights off of it but other than that they haven't taken anything off of it and it should run. We haven't even had a chance to think about it he said. He said it has been a battle keeping everything going and during the storm on Thurs. and Fri. they had 5 trucks break down.

Mr. King asked what the breakdowns were.

Mr. Brannon said some of them were hoses and some were other minor stuff they were able to get back up and running.

Mr. King asked for the cause of broken hoses.

Mr. Brannon said it's due to abrasion and even so much as a nick in the outer rubber casing allows salt to get in there and corrode the wiring and now its compromised and could easily pop. He said there are some companies that do a better job than others and there is company that runs all stainless steel tubes now and most of the hoses on those trucks are less than 3' and that's a lot easier than a 10' or 12' hose.

He said the biggest thing was the head radiator hose went on one truck and the exhaust on one and there were a couple of minor electrical issues they managed to get through and the next biggest thing would be salt and corrosion.

Kudos to the Staff-Mr. Vachon asked how the guys are holding up with all these storms.

Mr. Brannon said not bad and they are doing pretty good. He said once in while they're tired but he can't complain about any of them. He said they don't hesitate to do what he asks and he has been pleasantly surprised.

Salt/Sand Use-Mr. King asked if they are using straight salt downtown or salt and sand.

Mr. Brannon said they use straight salt everywhere except on the other side of Rt. 11. He said Chestnut Hill Rd., Governor's Rd., Bay Rd., Silver St. and up that way all get straight salt and they get mixed sand and salt on the pavement and straight sand on the dirt up on the ridge. He said they don't use salt on the dirt roads because that will come back to haunt them in the spring time and the middle of the winter when it thaws out. Once the temperature comes up even a little bit the salt kicks in and makes a mess of the dirt roads he said.

No New Hire-Mr. Brannon then informed the board that the new hire for his dept. turned down the job because he is working and he didn't want to take a cut in pay.

Mr. King asked what the difference was in what he is making and we offered.

Mr. Brannon said \$5 an hour and he has a couple of other applications he could look at.

Mr. Vachon asked him to keep the position posted because they were also looking for another one anyways.

Waiver for Lot Transfer-Mr. King asked Mr. Dickie if he contacted SAU Superintendent Ruth Ellen Vaughn regarding the waiver they need from the attorney for the School St. lot (to transfer ownership from the Town to the school district).

Mr. Dickie said he contacted her and she responded that she is waiting for the School Board to give her their approval to move forward with it.

Mr. King said they have a School Board meeting next week and that would be on the agenda.

Mrs. Titus asked if the Town was supposed to be plowing that lot.

Mr. Vachon said that is a Town owned lot that is unmaintained and there is documentation that we are not supposed to be plowing it. He said the only time it gets cleared out is when they are using it for snow removal so we can stack snow in there.

Mrs. Titus asked if they're going to make some kind of deal with them for after they take it over.

Mr. King said the Town would reserve the right to put snow in it on a temporary basis if we're moving snow and after that they can do whatever they want.

Mrs. Titus asked who is going to plow the lot if they are going to use it.

Mr. King said it will be their lot so they can plow or not to if they choose to use it. He said reserving the right for the Town to put snow on it temporarily will be included in the deed.

Mr. Vachon explained they will collect snow from the Orange St., School St. and Church St. block and dump it there and then haul it out another day. Obviously if we need it we would have to plow it to get access to dump the snow but that would be on the school if they want to maintain it he said.

New Business:

Highway Equipment Capital Reserve Fund- Mr. Dickie said as he was reviewing the warrant with the NH Dept. of Revenue Administration one of the articles where they chose to add money to was the Highway Motorized Equipment CRF and the DRA rep asked him to take the word "motorized" off of it. He said he went back to 1993 and provided the board with documents from when this was established in their meeting packets. He said it does not mention motorized and then read the following from Article #8 from the 1993 Town Meeting Warrant: "To see if the Town will vote to establish a Capital Reserve Fund under the provisions of RSA 35:1 for the purpose of purchasing heavy highway equipment..." He said somewhere along the line it became "Highway Dept. Motorized Equipment" so the DRA asked him to take out "Dept. Motorized" and make it "Highway Equipment".

He said his concern was they have a warrant article to put a certain amount of money into this CRF and if they take that out of there is that now misaligned where they don't know where they want to put it.

Mr. King said if we're calling the fund motorized equipment that's not what was approved so changing the name back to Highway Equipment as recommended by DRA is an internal naming convention and he didn't think it needs to be revisited. He said if that is what it was started as and they've always put that money in there and we renamed it somewhere incorrectly he didn't think they needed to bring it back to the voters to put it back to what was approved they just need to make that decision.

Mr. Dickie said the DRA said if we want to add the words Dept. Motorized we could do it in this session.

Mr. King said he didn't think they need to and if she is okay with not having Heavy Equipment, because it says "heavy highway equipment" and she just said highway equipment because that changes the intent because heavy equipment is not a chain saw.

Mr. Dickie said it could be highway equipment that doesn't have a motor.

Mr. King asked what he was looking for the board to do.

Mr. Dickie said he wanted to bring it before the board as it was brought up to him by the DRA and he could have the Town Attorney review it, see what she says and bring it back to the board.

Mr. King said the warrant has already been set and asked if it will go forward as motorized or if they can change at this point.

Mr. Dickie said he would review it with Att. Roman and bring back an answer next week.

Mr. King said if the Att. says we can change it then change it and if we don't have time to change it we can discuss it at Town Meeting and say this was not how it was originally established and it will revert back to the name that was approved in 1993.

Mr. Vachon said the name is the Highway Equipment CRF. He said according to the DRA's Farmington Permanent File Report the CRF is called Highway Equipment CRF and the purpose is for highway equipment and it doesn't say anything about having to be heavy highway equipment. He said the article from 2018 says to expend from the Highway Equipment CRF and somewhere between 2018 and now it became Highway Dept. Motorized Equipment.

Mr. Dickie said he would call Att. Roman and see what they have to do-if anything.

E-mail Attachments- Mr. King asked Mr. Dickie to forward the attachments regarding a draft agreement that were attached to Att. Roman's e-mail to the board so they could review it and be prepared for the meeting on March 6.

Rec. Center Update- Mrs. Titus asked if there was any update on the Rec. Center.

Mr. Dickie clarified that over the weekend it was miss-posted and incorrectly alluded to there was a fire in the furnace room of the Town Hall building. He said they did not have a fire the furnace misfired and the draft is not working on the burner.

Mr. King asked if it's a power draft or a power damper.

Mr. Dickie said it's a power damper and it wasn't opening. He said Mike Vachon came in and looked at it and he tried to find an old motor he could "steal" parts from just to get it going over the weekend until they could find a new burner but he wasn't able to locate one. He said the furnace back fired and caused the smoke and the CO2 to escape from the furnace which set off the fire alarm. He said the Fire Dept. arrived and tested the air and found high levels of CO2 so they shut down the building.

He said on Wed. he had a Joint Loss Committee safety meeting and they are touring the different facilities each month, doing an audit and writing down any safety concerns they may have, categorizing them as high or low priority and then take care of the high priority safety concerns. He said during the audit of the Rec. Center they saw some soot on top of the furnace

and when they took the covers off they saw that some of the gaskets around the casting were blown open so they looked at the inspection stickers and the only one they saw was Bailey so they called them and they came down the next morning and started sealing everything up. He said it's going to take about 24 hours of steady running to get that building back up to the correct temperature and they put in space heaters because it wasn't functioning and he didn't want somebody to come in and try to do the bypass method because if they got hurt or something happened the Town is liable.

Mr. King asked if they were putting in a new burner and a new power damper.

Mr. Dickie said the new burner will have a power damper in it.

Mr. King asked for the cost for that.

Mr. Dickie said the new burner cost \$4,200.

Mr. King asked how many BTU's that furnace has.

Mr. Dickie said it's a big motor but he couldn't tell the exact BTU number. He said the nozzles on it are 5-6 gallons a minute nozzles and they're big.

Mrs. Titus asked for the age of the old burner.

Mr. Dickie said he didn't know but it's an old burner that they don't make parts for anymore.

Mrs. Titus estimated that it was over 20 years old.

Mr. King asked if in the past 10 years it was refurbished with some new sections and then said he recalled hearing that it had some major work done to it. He said if they can find out when it was rebuilt it may be time to do it again or consider how much life it's really got left.

Mr. Dickie said he didn't know the history of furnace and he would have them look at and give the board the information next week. He said hopefully that motor would be back up and running again tomorrow and everything is working well and then he can have the Fire Dept. go back on Wed. and test the air again so they can open it back up and get back to business on Thurs. In the mean time he contacted Superintendent Vaughn on Sunday and they moved the senior dance up to the high school so that it still took place and they moved the daycare up thru Wed. of this week to the multi-purpose room to the Memorial Drive school. We were able to keep things going, we had to juggle things around but we were able to make it work he said.

Mr. Vachon asked if that building got down to 45 degrees even with the space heaters running.

Mr. Dickie said it was 45 degrees in there this morning and there were 4 space heaters- 3 electric and 1 kerosene. The electric bill will probably be high, the fuel bill will probably be high but I couldn't have the pipes freezing either he said.

Preparations for Voting- Mr. Vachon said voting is coming up and they all have to be in attendance but 3 of the Selectmen are running for re-election and can't be behind the ropes so they will have appoint designees for the 3 of them because he, Mrs. Titus and Mr. King will be outside at the polls.

Mrs. Titus said she asked Mr. Dickie earlier.

Mr. King asked if they have any volunteers.

Mr. Dickie said he would ask around for volunteers. He said he will be there that day so he can volunteer for one spot (Mrs. Titus).

Mr. King joked that he will be required to wear a scarf and a big flowing hat and an Ann Titus name tag in order to stand in for Mrs. Titus.

Handicapped Entrance- Mr. Vachon said he and Mr. King found that the buttons on the handicapped door at the Rec. Center were not functioning and asked if that ever got rectified. Mr. Dickie said yes and they had to change the batteries in the switch and got it working.

Drinking Water Award Interview- Mr. Vachon said Water Dept. Supervisor Chuck Tiffany sent him a message informing him that Channel 9 News reporter Kelly O'Brien will be interviewing him about the dept.'s third place award for the best tasting drinking water in the nation this Friday at Well #6 and the interview will be broadcast Friday night on the Channel 9 news.

Tappan Street Sidewalk- Mr. Vachon said there appears to be a section of the sidewalk along Tappan St. where the new fence was put in that the Town is not plowing and asked why that is. Mr. Dickie said it is because of the pole he brought up previously and they were told it was all set but the sidewalk plow still wouldn't fit through.

Mr. Vachon said that's the fence they asked if they could squeeze through and they were told yes but they can't squeeze through.

Mr. Dickie said he was told they fixed it but it still won't fit through.

Mr. Vachon said now people have to walk in the street.

Mr. King said that is not acceptable and asked for the length of the section they were missing.

Mr. Vachon said it is about 6 to 8 ft. long and it's because they are ducking around the pole and then coming back onto the sidewalk.

Mr. King said to have them put a shovel on the sidewalk tractor and when they come back on get out and shovel it please it's not that big a deal. He said they can shovel it forward to where they're going with the sidewalk plow and not shovel it into the street. He said it may also need to be sanded or salted so if it gets shoveled off they can put down some salt or sand on that section and not wait for somebody to go back and do it which never gets done.

Mr. Vachon asked if we could get that corrected this spring.

Mr. Dickie said they put a call into Eversource to have them put in a new pole and stand it up straight and then we can get through it.

Strafford County Mail- Mr. Vachon said Mr. Dickie said they already took care of this but the bill to pay the county dispatch fees came in the mail to him. He said Fire and EMS was \$6,380.61 and Police was \$9,751.01. He said Mr. Dickie had assured him these were paid ahead of schedule and were due on March 1.

Mr. King asked if those were what they expected the bills to be.

Mr. Vachon said it says it is the same amount as last year.

He said he also received a public meeting notice for the Strafford County Delegation Executive

Committee who will meet on Friday, March 3 at 9 a.m. and a notice of a public meeting of the
Strafford County Legislative Delegation on Wed., March 15 at 7 p.m.

Next Meeting: Monday, March 6, 2023

Adjournment:

Motion: (Titus, second Staples) to adjourn the meeting passed 4-0 at 6:38 p.m.

Kathleen Magoon
Recording Secretary


Gerry Vachon, Chairman



Charlie King, Vice Chairman



Ann Titus



Douglas Staples