

Town of Farmington
Board of Selectmen Public Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, December 19, 2023
356 Main Street-Farmington, NH 03835

Board Members Present:

Gerry Vachon, Chairman (6:35 p.m.)
Charlie King, Vice Chairman
Ann Titus
Doug Staples
Penny Morin

Others Present:

Ken Dickie, Town Administrator
Kelly Heon, Finance Administrator
Ed Brannan, Highway Dept. Supervisor
Joyce White, Goodwin Library Director
Amy Cornwell, Asst. Library Director
Martha Horgan, Library Trustees Treas.

1). Call to Order:

Vice Chairman King called the meeting to order at 6 p.m.

2). Pledge of Allegiance:

All present stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. King said the Chair is running a few minutes late so he will run the meeting until he gets here.

3).Public Input: None

4). Review of Minutes:

December 4, 2023-Public Session –No errors or omissions

Motion: (Morin, second Titus) to accept the minutes as written passed 3-0-1 (Staples abstained).

December 11, 2023-Non-Public Sessions A, B & C- No errors or omissions

Motion: (Titus, second Morin) to accept the minutes as written passed 4-0

5). Old Business:

Cartwright Property Update- Mr. Dickie said it is progressing through but there are 2 spots on the property where they located some trash and he had the paperwork they wanted him to bring forth to the board to see how they want that handled.

Mr. King asked if that was trash from people just dumping trash on the site.

Mr. Dickie said it appears that way and that people are dumping it on 2 different spots on the property.

Mr. King asked if he had any idea how extensive that is.

Mr. Dickie said he didn't know and that he hasn't been out there to look at it. He said they identified it when they did the assessment on the property for the Phase I assessment and then that came through and Planning Director Kyle Pimental sent it to him and he brought it before the board.

Mr. King asked what he was expecting them to do and if he wanted them to wait to see how big it is.

Mr. Dickie said he wondered if they were looking to have her pick it up or have us go pick it up.

Mr. Staples said if we're taking the land we should just go pick it up as long as it's not a landfill out there.

Mr. King said if it's a few things that have been discarded then he is agreeable to say let's clean it up and post it and if we see any other things then we'll have to put some cameras up and police it.

Consensus of the board was to have the Town clean up the trash on the Cartwright property.

6). New Business:

Current Elderly Exemptions After Town Reassessment- Mr. Dickie said the elderly exemptions with assessments coming up and for example if their property values doubled and the elderly exemption is around \$115,000...

Finance Administrator Kelly Heon came forward and said in 2019 the town had a reevaluation and property values increased. She said she didn't know that they increased to the level that they're probably going to increase to in 2024 but they increased. She said what they failed to do prior to 2024 because it has to be done at Town Meeting is to take into account the fact that people's property values are going to increase and they didn't increase the elderly exemption until the following year. She said for example we could have a property right now assessed at \$130,000 and an elderly person lives there getting an exemption of \$125,000 because that's the highest level exemption for people 80+. We have many elderly exemption recipients that are not paying any taxes at all because the exemption is higher than or pretty close to their assessed value she said.

Mr. King said so the exemption is on the assessed value not a fixed amount off of their taxes.

Mrs. Heon said that's correct and that the veteran's credit is a fixed amount and the exemption is off of the value. She said that \$130,000 assessed value could very likely become \$250,000 because that is where things are going and for some areas of town values will rise higher than average and an example would be what they are seeing for mobile homes because they tend to be more affordable but people are paying well over \$200,000 for mobile homes in parks.

She said if that if that happens and we do not address the elderly exemption at Town Meeting in 2024 then the first half bill no problem because it's based on the previous year then in July or August when the new value gets set all of a sudden their value is \$250,000, their exemption remains at \$125,000 and they're going to get a pretty significant bill at the end of the year. She said the purpose of tonight is to bring it to the board's attention and she would like to do some research to see how other towns have addressed this issue and bring Chad (the assessor) back to talk to them on Monday, Jan. 22 because he can give them a much better idea of where he expects things to land based on the analysis that they've been doing over the last several years and what he sees in the market and he could also give them an idea of how this is handled in other towns. If we don't handle it there's going to be a lot of people that get bills that haven't gotten bills in several years she said.

Mr. King said say if they were paying \$1,000 in taxes because they got a certain amount of exemption and all of a sudden the value went up they could see no change in the first bill and the second bill could be \$3,000 because it's all going to be on the second bill.

Mrs. Heon said that's correct it's all going to be on the second bill.

Mr. King said she mentioned \$125,000 of assessed value at 80 years old plus and asked if that was the highest level.

Mrs. Heon said yes.

Mr. King asked what other tiers we have.

Mrs. Heon said she didn't do this job anymore and she thinks its \$75,000, \$95,000 and \$125,000 but she will confirm that.

Mr. King asked for the other age numbers that would go with that.

Mrs. Heon said its 65-74, 75-79 and 80 plus is the highest tier.

Mr. Dickie said he was wondering if they should do a percentage and then no matter what that does,

they'd always get that percentage.

Mr. King said based upon the last information they were given on the pick-ups the rate is 60.08.

Mrs. Heon said our equalization for 2022 is 60.6.

Mr. King said say it was going to come close to that and someone was at a \$100,000 assessment it's going to go to 40% more so that would be like \$140,000 or \$150,000.

Mrs. Heon said possibly and that she would rather have Chad speak to it with more details and data so they can make a good decision. She said they made their decision in 2019 in 2020 so they had the data they needed to make a really good decision. The problem with doing that is that it was a year too late and for that 2020 year there were a lot of people that ended up with a bill she said.

Mr. King said he would ask this question now so they could be prepared and asked what other towns are doing and if there are any recommended guidelines from the state on the min. and the max.

Mrs. Heon said there are not recommended guidelines there are mandatory minimums but not for max and it's very low at \$13,000 or \$15,000 or something like that.

Mr. King said so there's no maximum that the state sets.

Mrs. Heon said she didn't think there was any maximum and the town can decide because if you're going to base it on your assessed values which are tied to market values every town is going to have different levels so Rye, NH's assessed values are going to be much more than Middleton's for example. She said she didn't think the town puts a cap on what your exemption can be but they do put a minimum requirement. She said this conversation was to open the door to start thinking about it because if they are going to recommend making a change it has to be a warrant article at Town Meeting.

Mr. King asked if they were going to say take that \$125,000 and go to \$175,000 if that has to be approved by the legislative body.

Mrs. Heon said yes and this is trying to avoid what she knows is going to happen if they don't make a change to the exemptions in the reevaluation year.

Mr. Staples asked if they risk losing the elderly exemption if they try to change it and it goes to the floor and gets voted down at Town Meeting.

Mrs. Heon said they can't because it's mandated by law.

Mr. King asked if its \$125,000 now and they vote to change it to \$175,000 and the town votes it down what happens. He asked if the \$125,000 would stay in force.

Mrs. Heon said she would confer with the Town Attorney on that but she thought the legislative body can do what they want with the elderly exemptions and they could say they want it at \$100,000. I can't see that happening and I can't imagine that people would want to do that. No matter what you have to bring it to the Town Meeting we can't change it up or down without doing that she said.

Mr. King asked for the current total that they give in elderly exemption tax relief.

Mrs. Heon said she could step into her office and get him that and that would have been on the MS-1 but she didn't know it off the top of her head. She said it's probably several million dollars. She said on the 22nd she would want to give them more detailed data, like the number of people at each level.

Mr. King asked if this was regardless of their household income.

Mrs. Heon said if they qualify under the income then it's their age that puts them in the different tiers.

Mr. King asked if somebody was at the median income for this area they would not qualify.

Mrs. Heon said 2 or 3 years ago at Town Meeting we raised the income levels and someone from the floor made a motion to amend it past what she had recommended so the income limits right now are

\$40,000 (single person) and \$80,000 (married couple).

Mr. King said so they have to be below that to even qualify.

Mrs. Heon said yes and they can't have more than \$75,000 in assets.

Mr. Staples said so if their house is worth more than that...

Mrs. Heon said their house does not count in their assets they are things like investments, savings accounts and vehicles.

Mr. King asked how they verify that.

Mrs. Heon said they have to provide documentation and they go through the exercise with them. She said 95% of the people with elderly exemptions don't even come close to those limits. She said most of the elderly exemptions are people with Social Security as their only source of income and it's maybe \$1,500 a month or so that they're receiving so they don't have too much trouble with people skirting right on that edge. I'll make sure we have more data for you on the 22nd and information from other towns on what they're doing so you can make a decision because I'm not sure what the deadline is for putting something on the warrant maybe Feb. she said.

Mr. King said it's after the budget is set.

Mrs. Heon said so we would have enough time and returned to her seat in the audience.

Notice of Project Selection-Town Drainage Study- Mr. Dickie said Mr. Brannan worked with Mr.

Pimental to see if there was anything out there to help us with a drainage study in town especially after the Dec. storm we had and last year in the spring with the flooding that seems to happen and more water is coming down and they wanted to make sure the infrastructure underneath the roads for drainage is right.

He said the last study we had was back in 2010 and some of those changes were made but not exactly to what was proposed back in 2010. He said sometimes you have a smaller drainage pipe downstream and you have a large one upstream so it's not going to drain the water properly it's going to flood over that's just the nature of the beast.

He said they put in an application, they worked with the Tighe & Bond engineering firm and they did weekly meetings to see how things were progressing and make sure they got everything they needed. He said he believes they sent e-mails to the board to make sure they're going to support it and they were notified by Mr. Pimental that this town was selected and is in line to receive a \$90,000 grant for this drainage study which is good because they need to make sure the infrastructure below the ground is solid before they start paving.

He said next summer he will be working with Water/Sewer Dept. Supervisor Chuck Tiffany to select some streets in the water and sewer systems and get this drainage study done so they can make these improvements where it makes sense and make sure the water and sewer pipes are solid and then start doing some of the streets in town because as far as he could remember 1978 was the last time we paved these streets.

Mr. King asked if they would still have to select an engineering firm because they didn't do that prior to the application.

Mr. Dickie said he didn't think they did and then turned to Mr. Brannan who said Tighe & Bond was working with them.

Mr. King said as part of this they would have to formalize it if they want them to continue and the last time the drainage study was done it was by a different firm. We work now with a few firms so we

probably should make that designation sooner than later if we want to go with them he said.

Mr. Dickie said Tighe & Bond worked with us to get the grant so he would entertain a motion to have them continue to work it because they've been helping us in various ways.

Mrs. Morin said she would like to see a Request for Proposals for it.

Mr. King said they should pick this back up when Mr. Vachon is here later in the meeting. He said they may have to get more of a time line for when they'd have to have that selected if they have time for an RFP and there are 2 firms that were selected as Town engineers and they also have the engineering firm they used for the bridges and the culvert crossing so there are actually 3 firms we currently work with so we could ask them but we have to come up with a time line.

Cartwright Property Tax Abatement- Mrs. Heon said the transfer of this property has been going on for a long time and when she first came to the Town at this point it's been at least 3 years. She said she couldn't remember when the meeting was when they talked about abating the property taxes and there was a vote taken that when we were definitely going to own the property they could revisit that. She said Cheryl has requested an abatement again and all she is looking for is the abatement of the billing she got in the mail for Dec. She said they technically haven't transferred the property yet and they have never abated anything for her she has been paying the taxes right along.

Mr. Staples said the last conversation was we'll take them off as soon as we transfer it because we were expecting to have it already transferred and here we are half a year later.

Mr. King said if that is what they said...

Mrs. Heon said she would have to go back and look at the minutes to see exactly what it was.

Mr. Dickie said he was positive they said they were going to abate it.

Mrs. Heon said yes but they were going to abate it when we were clear that it was going to be our property we didn't want to abate and then have something happen.

Mr. King said he thought they implied from that date forward.

Mrs. Heon said she didn't think they implied from that date forward and she thought it was when if they're going to own the property they'll abate that year or that period because this was probably 2 years ago and she didn't think Cheryl really understood how long this process was going to take. She said her impression was there could have been something at any point along the way that came up and the Town said no we're going to step back and we're not going to take it.

She said at this point the only thing they can abate is the 2023 second half and she has paid all the rest and she hasn't let them go unpaid. She said that would be more like refunding her not abating.

Mrs. Morin asked if they could hold her tax bill in lieu.

Mr. King asked when the transfer was going to happen.

Mrs. Heon said she didn't know as she is not part of that. She said she knows it's an on-going thing and it has been and this assessment was probably part of it that has to be done before the transfer. She said she thought the transfer was happening soon but she honestly doesn't know.

Mr. Dickie said he sent all of the paperwork on behalf of the board to Drummond Woodsum. He said he would reach out to Att. Christine Johnston and see where they stand.

Mr. King said he was not opposed to abating the taxes but going back to that meeting they said something, they implied something and they meant something and he wanted to go back to that point. He said his memory says that he may have made the motion which was from that point going forward we were going to abate.

Mrs. Heon said that is not her recollection at all and she would have to go back and look at the minutes. She said she felt like it was when we know that we're definitely going to own this property at that point we could abate. She said Mrs. Harper continued to pay the taxes and sometimes people just let taxes go but then interest accrues and they go to lien.

Mr. King said there are also legal costs we're picking up and asked if they know where that cost is at.

Mrs. Heon said they've been paying it. She said there are a lot of moving parts to this because we have legal fees but then Mr. Pimental secured a grant that might pay for some of those legal fees so once this is all said and done there's a little bit more housekeeping/bookkeeping to take care of.

She said the number Mrs. Harper is asking for the 2023 second half for all of the properties involved is abating \$5,342. She said that's not us writing a check that's just us forgiving it if you will.

Mr. King said because the property is set to transfer any day now they should abate it contingent upon that transfer and then they can review and look back to see what the total cost is they picked up with the grant and non-grant and see what they said the last time and if we feel obligated to refund some money we can depending on what the total of the costs were.

Motion: (King, second Morin) to abate the taxes for all parcels owned by the Bruce Cartwright Revocable Trust in the amount of \$5,342 contingent upon the transfer of the property to the Town within the next 3 months;

Discussion: Mrs. Heon asked if we are not going to proceed with processing the abatement until we own the property.

Mr. King said he thought that's the only way to do it.

Mr. Staples said where its contingent upon us getting the land they could abate it and if it doesn't go through then she is on the hook for the taxes.

Mrs. Heon said she didn't think they could reverse an abatement and she didn't want to go down that road.

Amendment: by Mr. King: to include any interest and penalties that may be accrued

Mrs. Morin accepted the amendment.

Mr. Staples asked if he wanted to push it out to the next tax billing because in the next 3 months a lot is going to happen-we going to have the holidays and the odds they're going to sign it is...

Friendly Amendment: by Mr. Staples: upon the transfer of the property to the Town within the next 6 months

Mr. King and Mrs. Morin accepted the amendment.

Vote: the motion passed 4-0.

Mrs. Heon said she would not have them sign this abatement tonight and she would tell her don't pay your bill and don't worry about it.

Mr. King said the decision has been made and she could send her the draft minutes or something in writing that says this is what was said and when. He said then they can circle back after the transfer to see how they put that together.

Mr. Staples said when they had that discussion he was under the assumption that she was going to stop paying taxes then and they were going to take care of it on the transfer.

Mr. King said the board can at least look at total cost of the expenditures and have some feedback from Mr. Pimental on what we got from the grant and if the Town feels obligated to do something in the future they can.

Mr. Dickie said he just received a text message from Mr. Vachon saying he is on his way to the meeting.

Budget/Warrant Articles Deadlines- Mrs. Morin said the last day to submit petitioned warrant articles is Feb. 6 and the last day for the budget hearing is Feb. 9. She said the last day to post the warrant is Feb. 26.

Grant Questions-Mr. Staples asked if the \$90,000 grant is a matching grant and if there is anything they have to do.

Mr. Dickie said it's not a matching grant.

Mr. King asked who the grant is through.

Mr. Brannan said he couldn't think of the name off the top of his head but it's a privately funded grant so their application goes directly to the organization, they make the decision and there is no Governor or Council or any of that involved in this process. He said it's a very quick process once you get your application in and 2 weeks ago they did the application and finalized it.

Road Update- Mr. Dickie said they had to shut down Cross St. because the water cut between the box culvert and the pavement and it left a gap of a foot or more so the only thing that was holding up the vehicles going over it this morning was literally 3 inches of pavement. He said when he and Mr. Brannan went up there this morning they called for the Highway Dept. to come up there with barricades and cones and shut that down and it's shut down until they can get it replaced.

He said on Charles St. north of Webster the state is responsible for it and on Face book you heard about a culvert being washed out and sticking up in the air and that all resides with the state.

Mr. Vachon arrived at the meeting.

Mr. Dickie said Elm St. was opened back up as that water has receded back. He said the Cocheco River when he and Mr. Brannan rode by looked like it was about 8 ft. from the top of the levee so if that drops down about 2 ft. to meet the bridge and from the top of the bridge down to the bottom is about 2 -3 ft. so literally that water was about 3 ft. from the bottom of that bridge.

Mr. King asked when he looked at it yesterday if it was lower than that or about the same.

Mr. Dickie said today it was lower it had receded. He said he thought it would take a while to crest but it looked like it had crested and started receding before they rode by this morning.

He said then they moved out into the country and ventured up to Poor Farm Road and the road crew was up there fixing that and getting patched over good enough for traffic to go over and eventually they are going to have to grade it and do what they can to smooth it out. It's now open and passable he said. He said they went across Poor Farm and came out onto Reservoir Road and there are 2 culverts on Reservoir Rd. that need to be replaced. He said one culvert is completely shut down and nothing is going through it and the other one is trying to handle everything but they both need to be replaced. We have one lane open so vehicles can get through there not the heavy trucks he said.

Mrs. Morin asked if they should post that road for a weight limit if they are saying no heavy trucks.

Mr. Brannan said it would probably be a good idea. He said that particular stretch of road is a dead end road and if the rest of that road lets go there's going to be people trapped in their homes or out of their homes and we're not going to have access. I think that's one set of culverts that we need to do he said.

Mr. King said they have signs that post for local traffic only also and they could post those and no heavy trucks or whatever the other sign is to keep it down.

Mr. Brannan said there are 3 or 4 homes there.

Mrs. Morin said maybe reach out to the residents to notify their oil or gas companies to leave them on

the end of their deliveries so their trucks aren't as heavy.

Mr. Brannan said he wouldn't even take a truck over it.

Mr. Staples said they have to have heat so that truck is going.

Mr. Brannan said they need to be fixed ASAP.

Mr. Staples asked if they have everything at the shop to do it.

Mr. Brannan said they have the culvert pipe, the materials to do it and ideally he would like to see a contractor just go do it and then they can keep concentrating on their work patching up the roads and shoulders.

Mr. Staples asked how long he thought it would take to do it.

Mr. Brannan said it's probably a 2 day project.

Mr. Staples asked how these people are going to get home if they rip that culvert out.

Mr. Brannan said they have to leave access that's why it's going to be a difficult project. He said you can't just take the whole road right out completely so you have to do one half and then the other half.

Mrs. Morin said doesn't the culvert go straight across the road.

Mr. Dickie said they come in sections.

Mr. Brannan said it should be 20 to 50 ft. of culvert so they'll do 20 or 30 ft. on one side and the traffic can stay on the opposite side while you're doing that section, then you let the traffic on the new section and open up the other half.

Mr. King said Mr. Brannan said he would prefer to have a subcontractor do that and asked if he has a subcontractor lined up.

Mr. Brannan said they have a contractor that can do it.

Mr. King said they could take that up for discussion after the library budget. He said they would have to vote on that because he was sure it would be more than \$5,000.

Mr. Brannan said he didn't think they have time to wait for an RFP.

Mr. King said he didn't say he just said they would take it up again after the library budget.

Mr. Vachon apologized for being late and asked everyone to move to the library budget presentation.

Goodwin Library Budget Presentation: Library Director Joyce White and Mrs. Heon came forward. Mrs. Heon said the board received copies of the budget on their computers and had a copy in front of them. She said their total budget for 2024 at the bottom at the bottom of page 2 is \$372,908 but the contribution they are looking for from the town is \$340,563 and that is slightly higher than last year. She said last year's town contribution was \$324,891 so they're looking for a \$15,672 increase from the town. Mr. King said that's an approx. 5% increase.

Mrs. Morin asked if there was anything they wanted to highlight or talk about.

Mrs. Heon said some of the increases she sees are out of their control. She said it looks now they have entered into an agreement with the owner of the former TD Bank building that was plowing for them and now he's looking for the library to cover the cost of plowing the parking lot.

Mr. King asked who the current owner is.

Mrs. Heon said Alton Rollinsford is the current owner. She said he bought it from the bank and he hasn't done anything with it yet but he has been doing the plowing.

Mrs. White said over the winter of 2022-2023 they had the plowing donated to them but the people that bought it from the bank haven't done anything.

Mrs. Heon said that's one of their biggest increases and they had some increases in insurance and in the

custodial services but they are not looking to transfer all of their increases to the town. They are going to increase withdrawing some money from their investments to offset some of their increases she said. Mr. King asked that is the FPLA.

Mrs. Heon said yes. She said the library is a private organization owned by the Farmington Public Library Assoc. and that assoc. does have some funds in trust some that they can use and some that have been donated and they have restricted uses so they do have access to a little bit of income that they can use for their operating expenses.

Mr. King asked for their current hours of operation.

Mrs. White said the quantity of the hours hasn't changed and they are open on Monday and Friday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.; on Tuesday from 1 p.m. to 7 p.m.; on Thursday from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. and from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Saturday.

Mr. King asked what they have seen for changes in people coming in to use the library.

Mrs. White said there was a huge drop during the pandemic and at the last event they did was their big Polar Express event and they saw 60 people. She said that's like back the way it was in 2019 so they are really happy about that.

She said Story Times are regularly full and Family Place which is a designation that about 8 or 9 libraries in the state have is robust program that is done in the spring and fall. She said they had to stop during the pandemic and the ensuing years and they are back up to full speed to that. I'm smiling because it feels like the way it used to be and we have 3 public access computers and we need to add another one because we're seeing more people using the computers she said.

Mr. King asked if they keep a tally on the daily foot traffic.

Mrs. White said they do and they keep a tally on the staff-public interactions and there are a lot of questions at the center.

Mr. King asked Mrs. White to send them those numbers later on the daily traffic and whatever their metrics are that they track.

Mrs. Heon said typically they put that all in the Town Report so they are probably starting to compile that anyway.

Mrs. White said yes.

Mrs. Morin said the Story Trail is a really popular attraction at the library and there are a lot of people that visit that and she liked the way they are joining with other libraries to offer a lot of new things for Farmington and other libraries.

Mr. King asked if they are having any issues as far as how people use the facility correctly or incorrectly.

Mrs. White said they are seeing more of the homeless population and she is not afraid to work with the Police on that and if she has any questions she will call their regular line and ask for an opinion on what they should do about this. She said they lock the bathrooms so they track that so they're not super concerned but they're aware. We were proactive and I think that made a difference she said.

Mr. Staples asked if she said they were open from 1 p.m. to 7 p.m. on Tuesdays.

Mrs. White said yes and once the days are lighter in the spring they'll be open 1-7 p.m. on Thurs. too.

Mrs. Titus said she was concerned about the plowing but they are taking responsibility for it so if somebody falls that's going to be on their liability instead of the owner of the property.

Mrs. White said at this point that's what they have and they have it in writing giving them permission.

Mr. Staples asked if they are plowing the whole parking lot or just what they require.

Mrs. White said if they don't plow the whole thing the cars that park there that they don't know where they're from will take up the spots that the public and the staff need. She said when she worked with MBG they said it wasn't going to be that much of a difference cost-wise so they'll be doing the whole thing and they'll be sanding.

She said it's not the best scenario but if you're going to have a program and you've got 5 or 6 cars that are there a lot that aren't coming to the library they're pushing out other people. She said earlier this year she typed up a note and asked them to move to the back so they could have the front spaces for patrons.

Mrs. Heon said historically the library had a great relationship with the bank from the time when it was Farmington National Bank and it was owned by the Thayer's. She said Mrs. Thayer was a big benefactor of the library so they've enjoyed that relationship all these years and they haven't had to worry about the fact that the library doesn't have a parking lot of its own and they never really anticipated that that relationship would come to an end so they find themselves in this situation.

Mr. King asked if there is language in the deed that gives them a parking easement on the property.

Mrs. Heon said she didn't think there was and she would have to investigate that a little further. She said she thinks that was more of the kind of relationships and deals that were had back in those days in Farmington.

She said the property is for sale so they don't know what would happen in the future and it would be her hope that whoever would come into that building would want to maintain a relationship with the library and maybe they could work something out. I don't know that you're going to be able to necessarily do that with the current owner because he doesn't have any stake in it right now. A lot of people use that parking lot unfortunately even though it really is private property. People from the apartment building across the street park there she said.

Mr. King said he didn't see plowing listed as a line item in the budget and asked where that is located.

Mrs. Heon said it is embedded into the increased figure in the Building and Grounds Maintenance line which is increased due to the plowing. She said MBG gave them a quote of \$4,000.

Mr. King said in this climate that's a pretty good price for the season.

Mrs. Heon asked if there was any more details they want or questions they want answered.

Mr. King asked that the data on the foot traffic go back a few years past COVID, before and after so they can see that trend on what the daily foot traffic is. He said they've been taking in budgets and they haven't really started seeing what they have to do for impacts and they want to go through the revenue estimates before they go back to see where they need to trim.

2024 Town Encumbrances: Mrs. Heon said only 1 encumbrance has been submitted to her.

Mr. Dickie said they have one for paving and if they need anything for painting lines and for the pathways at the park for the Rec. Dept.

Mrs. Heon said they haven't spent anything out of the Repair and Rebuild Roads line.

Mr. King asked if that contract is for a total amount so it's not per unit pricing or is it.

Mrs. Heon said the total dollar amount is \$339,718.35.

Mr. King asked if that was quoted at so much per ton of asphalt.

Mrs. Heon said it looks like there are several streets on here-Cross Street, Dick Dame Lane and Dodge Cross Road.

Mr. King asked if the contractor was going to honor that quote going forward.

Mr. Brannan said yes and the only thing that may change is the cost of liquid asphalt may affect the price.

Mr. Vachon said the price of liquid asphalt changes daily.

Mr. Dickie said the quote he gave for asphalt right now is \$82.76, for the binder and the ½ inch top coat was \$85.21. He said it looks like we need 2,150 tons for the binder and for the top we need 1,295 tons.

Motion: (King, second Titus) that we encumber the Rebuild/Repave/Repair line based on the contract for a total of \$339,718.35;

Discussion: Mr. Vachon asked for the actual amount in that line right now.

Mrs. Heon said there is \$350,000 in that line.

Mr. Vachon asked for a repeat of the tonnage needed.

Mr. Dickie said 2,150 for the binder and 1,295 for the top.

Mr. Vachon asked if they would be able to cover an additional cost out of next year's paving if the price of liquid asphalt increases.

Mr. King said they will have to and seeing they haven't set that budget or set any projects in that budget they'll have to worry about that when it happens.

Mr. Vachon said if it goes up \$2 a ton for liquid asphalt you're looking at a \$7,000 increase.

Vote: the motion passed 5-0.

Mr. Vachon asked if they received anything from the Rec. Dept. about encumbering that money from the grant.

Mrs. Heon said they talked about that today.

Mr. Dickie said they have requests out for quotes for the pathways at Fernald Park for ADA compliance to complete the playground project but nothing has been received back.

Mr. King said that is still going to fall under the grant and asked if it was a 50/50 match.

Mr. Dickie nodded yes.

Mr. Vachon said the money they have budgeted from the taxpayers for that grant is going to expire on Dec. 31 so it will have to be built into the budget for next year so they will be taxing them twice for the same project.

Mr. King said they already taxed them so it's going to sit in the undesignated fund balance and they did not put anything back to the tax rate so in essence they are taxing them twice for it.

Mrs. Heon said they budgeted at \$125,000 on the expense side and they budgeted \$62,500 on the revenue side and they didn't receive any revenues because they are not going to get that until the project is done so it's going to happen next year if we finish the project and all goes well they'll get the \$62,500 revenue for 2024 revenue. It won't offset this year's she said.

Mrs. Morin asked if they could offset it with an encumbrance from that line.

Mrs. Heon said we don't have a contract to know what they would even be asking for and there's only \$29,000 left in that line.

Mr. King asked what they have expended.

Mr. Vachon read they spent \$95,958.63.

Mr. Dickie said \$82,000 was for the playground (structure).

Mr. King said if their estimate was right and they were at that estimate there would be another \$30,000 that potentially would be spent but that wasn't all for walkways. He said it didn't seem like there was anything they could do about it.

Mr. Vachon said not if they don't have a contract and don't know what it's going to cost us.

Mrs. Morin asked what the deadline is for encumbering.

Mr. Vachon said the end of the year when they close the books because on Jan. 1 they start running off of the budget.

Mr. King said he didn't want to hurry and take a high quote just to encumber the money because that's not fiscally responsible. He said when they get to that point they should get the best person for the job at the right price and deal with it. But it's unfortunate that we didn't get the reimbursement this year. We spent most of the money and we didn't finish the project so we don't get paid so instead of \$62,000 on the taxpayers its \$90,000 right now he said.

Mr. Vachon said the full burden is on the taxpayers at this point and we should get roughly \$47,500 back once they finish it from the expenditures so far.

Mrs. Heon said we'll get \$62,500 back because you don't have to spend \$125,000 in dollars you can use in-kind to meet that threshold. She said she anticipates we will get the full \$62,500 back she just hasn't read all of the documents and she doesn't know much this grant. She said she talked with Rec. Dept. Director Erica Rogers today about them sitting with Planning Director Kyle Pimental because he is very good with grant administration and they plan to do that the first or second week in Jan.

Mr. Staples asked if there is a deadline on this grant that it has to done by.

Mrs. Heon said the deadline is 3 years so they have time.

Mr. Vachon said hopefully they'll get some numbers so they know what they're looking at in the spring and then they'll have to figure out where the money is going to come from.

Mrs. Heon said without any quotes they'll have to budget something in 2024 just some kind of reasonable number and she didn't know what that is.

Mr. King said its simple its \$30,000. He said it's whatever they spent so far subtracted from \$125,000 that's the number they should put forward.

Mrs. Heon said she didn't know if the quotes came back to do whatever has to be done to finish this project if it's more than \$30,000 where the money would come from.

Mr. King said if it costs more than they budget they still have to pick it up.

Mrs. Heon said that's why she is saying if they budget more than the \$30,000 in anticipation.

Mrs. Morin asked if it would come out of the Rec. Revolving Account if it's more.

Mr. King said it should come out of somewhere besides taxation.

Town Clerk/Tax Collector Position Posting-Mrs. Morin said they were going to talk about revisiting the posting for the TC/TC for one year. She said they were going to hire someone for a one year position but they didn't limit it to one year (in the posting) so they were going to talk about it again this week.

Mr. Dickie said he asked the Town Clerk to change it to 1 year in the posting which she said she did. He said the posting said "a" year and he asked her to change it to "one" year.

Building Inspector's Fund Elimination- Mrs. Morin said they talked about eliminating this fund but they don't have anything yet on how the warrant article would be...

Mr. Dickie said they would have to do 2 warrant articles in case it didn't pass so they'd have something to fall back on

Reservoir Road- Mr. Vachon said he mentioned the ditching on Reservoir Road and Mr. Brannan reached out to the resident and thanked him for doing that.

7). New Business from the Board:

Old Fire Station Update- Mr. King said in their folder they have a report on the old fire station lot and it talked about engineering stuff and other things and they're looking to send a final report in the future. Mr. Dickie said he hasn't received that report yet.

Mr. King asked if they gave any indication if this report was going to require any mitigation or monitoring and if that is something they would recommend or be a requirement at the state level.

Mr. Dickie said he asked that question to the engineer from the company that's working with the EPA and he skirted around it and said they have to wait until they get the final from the EPA before they make a determination on that.

Mr. Staples asked if they found something.

Mr. Dickie said they found some chemicals that hinted of the foam issue near the fire station building.

Mr. King said which they knew because they were using PFAS a fire retardant in the foam like everybody else.

Mr. Dickie said he mentioned that they were doing a 1 mile radius around the old fire station to make sure there are no drinking water wells other than Town water that could be affected.

Mr. King asked how that is our responsibility on a Level II site assessment. He said you could say we should do this it's a Level II site assessment on this site and then asked how they need to start capturing other sites. He said they could do a desk audit to see if the Town has any record of any of those properties that are not on Town water.

Mr. Dickie said he didn't think they were talking about doing a water test they just want to make sure that within a 1 mile radius everybody is on Town water and if they're all on Town water then they probably don't need to do anything.

Mr. King said a 1 mile radius is a big amount of area. He said that is out of the scope of the Level II site assessment and he says that because when they get that Level II site assessment and assess whatever they have to do then they can put that on that property and put up a for sale sign and if they add in they have to do this 1 mile radius around then all of a sudden we can't do that.

He said in a mile radius he was sure somebody has a private well but it could be totally upstream or not in the watershed area of that. We need to close this box on the Level II site assessment so we can move to the next level with this property to put it back on the tax rolls he said.

He said when he saw that he was looking for what the end summary is going to be so they can at least contemplate how that impacts the salability value of the property. He said if they say we have to put test wells on it he would ask who they would get to do that and get to the end of moving that property. Let's make sure we're clear on what we have to do not what they recommend and quantify that.

Recommendations we could consider we just have to know which ones are requirements and which ones are recommendations he said.

Culverts and Roads Damage-Mr. Vachon said they need to go back to the discussion on the culverts and roads that are in dire need after yesterday's events.

Mr. Brannan said with this last storm we got somewhere in the neighborhood of 5.5 inches of rain but one good thing was most of the repairs they did this summer all held up and worked just fine. He said they didn't seem to have any issues where they did the ditching and the culvert on Poor Farm Rd. was pretty much full but there were no issues there with the culvert- the headwalls and everything are still where they are supposed to be.

He said the roads with the major damage- Cross St. culverts they were talking about replacing were washed out and the pavement is still there but the gravel under the pavement is gone so you can look right down through some cracks and actually see the culverts themselves so that road is pretty bad.

Mr. Vachon asked if it was just the one culvert and wasn't there a couple up there.

Mr. Brannan said there are a few of them on there but the 2 they were talking about permitting are the ones that washed out. He said they would see where this event goes and there may be some FEMA funding so they'll have to track it. He asked Mr. Vachon how they fared in Somersworth.

Mr. Vachon said fine.

Mr. Brannan said the problem with Strafford County is a lot of the towns south of us have good drainage and a lot of pavement so it's tough for this town or this county to qualify.

Mr. King said some of the towns south of us have better soil types than some of our areas here plus slopes.

Mr. Brannan said they have gentler slopes so they don't have as much severe run-off. It makes it hard for the northern tier of the county to get qualified but there are times when FEMA has bent the rules a little and put in towns instead of just counties. We'll have to see where this all goes he said.

He said at the far end of Reservoir Road a headwall collapsed onto a pipe and plugged it up and the culvert washed out. He said the culverts are in rough shape to begin with.

Mr. King asked if this was past Sheepboro Road.

Mr. Brannan said yes and that it's probably about 250 yards from the end of the road.

Mr. King asked how many houses were left on that end.

Mr. Brannan said there are 3 or 4 but he was not sure. He said he believes the 4th one accesses their house from Farmington but he is pretty sure they're in Strafford and that is the Class VI section. He said if it came down to it if you had the proper vehicle you could probably get out that way but you're going to have fun trying. Those 2 culverts we really need to think about getting replaced ASAP because if they completely fail there is no way out for these people he said.

Mr. King asked if he was referring to the ones he said should be done by a subcontractor.

Mr. Brannan said yes and that would be the easiest way to get them done quickly.

Mr. King asked who they have for a subcontractor that he would be comfortable using.

Mr. Brannan said MBG is available and they helped us last night and today. He said they got some of the roads passable last night and they did upper Ten Rod Road and got that all taken care of today.

Mr. Dickie said Mr. Brannan called him last night and based on the circumstances we had and what we had down he told him to go ahead and have MBG help him.

Mr. King asked if they are approving them to go forward based on the rate or if they are just giving open send us the bill. He asked how they are qualifying the subcontractors, by the hour at a fixed price, what costs they have approved and if they submitted an estimate saying this is the cost per man with an excavator or a truck. He asked what they are using as a guideline based upon his costs.

Mr. Brannan said he didn't think the Town has ever done anything like that to qualify contractors that they can hire in a position like this and maybe it's something they should think about moving forward.

Mr. King said we need to and it may not be a good time to do it now but we want to make sure that we know what we're in for so when we receive the bill someone can say that's what we agreed to and that's okay to pay. A handshake agreement is okay in an emergency but we need to migrate to approved rates by the board or an approved contract by the board based on some metric that somebody can

judge it by he said.

Mr. King then asked if they have given him an estimate on the cost for the culverts.

Mr. Brannan said not yet and he will try to get an estimate on this first and he can look at and try to come up with an idea of if it's reasonable and discuss it with Mr. Dickie.

Mr. King suggested he put a time estimate he thinks is okay for man and equipment and use that to judge what he gives him and then they can decide if it seems appropriate. He said if they can quantify the time they can quantify the cost.

Mrs. Morin asked if he said they have all the materials.

Mr. Brannan said they have all the materials and they have plenty of gravel so it will be the equipment and labor on his part. He said they still have \$20,000 in the Gravel Road line and it is a gravel road so they have it in the budget to be able to do this.

Motion: (King, second Morin) to authorize Ken to proceed with the repairs on Reservoir Road using a subcontractor with the price to be determined and approved later;

Discussion: Mr. Staples asked if they were going to approve the job or if Mr. Dickie was going to.

Mr. King said Mr. Dickie is going to approve it because he has to get it going so they will be informed of it later and this is what the bill is.

Mrs. Morin asked if they wanted a "not to exceed" number without coming before the board.

Mr. Staples said then you're telling them what you're willing to pay and if it's more than they were going to charge they're going to charge you that anyway.

Mr. King said he didn't want to make that part of his motion because it needs to be fixed and they're the one that are going to qualify the bid and go on faith that they are going to do their jobs and a meeting of the minds can happen and in the future we're going to have to have something they've agreed upon so they can estimate it.

Vote: the motion passed 5-0.

Mr. Vachon said they may want to look at a model from other communities that are not that far away. He said they put out an equipment bid list for emergencies like this and all of the contractors submit.

Mr. King said if they can set a rate that's reasonable for man and machine and get people signed up that they could potentially go to multiple people that may be available because some may not be available and say this is our rate for these repairs we need you to do and is that okay.

Mr. Vachon said the way they do it is they submit a bid for every piece of equipment they own and they use the low bidder if they're available. He said for example they give us a bid for a 12,000 lbs. mini-excavator of \$100 an hour with an operator and the equipment and they can tell roughly what the job is going to cost by hourly and say it should cost this much for the mini to do this job.

Mr. Dickie asked if that is what they use during a state of emergency going through those bids and see who is reasonable and that's who they call.

Mr. Vachon said and whoever is available. He said if they have a water break that needs a mini-excavator they call the lowest and if he doesn't answer they just keep working up until somebody answers that can get there in a timely fashion. He said there are a couple of contractors in this community that will drop everything and help us out as some of them have proven in the past and they'll pull their machine off a job site to help the community get back up and running.

Mr. Brannan said he thinks this should go beyond contractors for roads, water and sewer to building maintenance and repairs, electricians and plumbers so you have someone that you can call for all of this.

Mr. Dickie said that's why he likes the move so if they have a situation where they need someone in here quickly they have a list that they can call from.

Mr. Vachon said he could get them some ideas on leads for the spring and they usually put theirs out in April at the beginning of the season and it's good for a year from when they receive them.

Town Office Building Heating System-Mr. Dickie said they need to find someone qualified to service these heating systems because they are heating this room with 2 space heaters and the rest of the building isn't getting any heat.

Mr. King said the main system is the large heat pumps.

Mr. Dickie said there are 3 units and the unit for the upstairs is working, there is a furnace downstairs that is hooked up and keeping the cellar warm and they have it set at 60 degrees hoping the heat will rise and keep the floors warm where they have no heat on the main floor. He said for some reason they put the panel outside and it may have gotten contaminated or wet and that shorted that out so it's not getting to the units. He described the error codes shown on the panel and the steps taken to try resolve the issues as instructed by the manufacturer which did not resolve the problem so an electrician is coming at 8 a.m. tomorrow morning to tell them if they have power at the panel and at the 2 units that are not working and then go from there.

Mr. Vachon asked Mr. Brannan what else he had for road conditions.

Mr. Brannan said overall with the exception of Cross St. and Reservoir Rd. they fared better than they did in Dec. of last year. He said all the repairs that they did seemed to hold up quite well and if they can continue moving forward with that it will definitely make a big difference.

Mrs. Morin said upper Ten Rod Road on their end was about the same as it was last Dec.

Mr. Brannan said they didn't lose nearly as much road.

Mr. Dickie said with a little less than 6 loads of gravel they filled it back in but he wasn't sure what they took last year.

Mr. Brannan said it was considerably more but they still have to address that problem. He said last year they did some ditching along upper Ten Rod Rd. and that managed to keep the section between where the Morin's live and Russell Lane and that didn't get beat up nearly as bad. He said they had a little bit of washing along the edge of the ditch but they easily had 1 ½ lanes and if you were careful you could get 2 cars in most places. He said right at Russell Lane there's a culvert that crosses the road there that one doesn't seem like it's quite enough and it is prone to getting plugged up because of the debris coming down Russell Lane and tends to collect a lot of debris right there.

Mrs. Morin said it comes down Russell Lane and then down Ten Rod Rd. and meets at one culvert.

Mr. Dickie said when the culvert gets overwhelmed a lot flows down to the other culvert at that corner.

Mr. Brannan said no water crossed the road between the culvert at Mrs. Morin's house and Russell Lane so that definitely made a difference there. He said if they replace that culvert they can do it in-kind.

Mr. King said he said he was concerned about it carrying enough or getting plugged up.

Mr. Brannan said they could go up a size on it but they have to be careful.

Mrs. Morin said it's broken in the middle too.

Mr. Brannan said that culvert is at least 2 different types of pipe and it has its issues. Just putting smooth bore plastic in there you're going to increase the flow and if the go up one size it will increase it considerably. We have to be careful because if we put too much across we're probably going to be flooding somebody's yard. I think we can work with that area and make it work he said.

He said there are a couple of spots on Poor Farm Rd. that washed out but everything is repaired there. He said on lower Ten Rod Rd. they had one issue as far as the road. He said a couple of the driveway culverts are still a nuisance to them but not as bad.

Mr. Brannan said Meaderboro Rd. had very little but there was one place where there were some pretty good ruts across the road and they got that all taken care of. He said there was some scouring in a few areas along the pavement edge that they will have to repair.

He said the typical spots in town-Spring St., Union St. both flood out considerably mostly due to the fact that there are no culverts where it's flooding or are improperly located so he didn't think it would be a big issue to try to get some of that addressed.

He said Charles St. he would assume after this one the state was going to be looking very seriously at getting their part of that fixed. He said the majority of the damage there is on their end and we have a little bit of damage where the water went across the driveways off the pavement but as far as the repairs they did last year that all held up quite well and there was very little scarring along the edge of the pavement but nothing like it was the first time around. We have a catch basin opened up there unfortunately leaves plug them up and you have to constantly maintain them but once we get them opened up they took all the water quite well he said.

Mr. Staples said the one that comes to mind is the one on Hornetown Rd. by Jason's house that's a problem culvert and asked if anyone checked that before the storm knowing they would have another problem right there.

Mr. Brannan asked where that was located.

Mr. Staples said its closer to Meaderboro Rd. where they worked to try to pull that out of that culvert.

Mr. Brannan said that culvert is an issue and he and Mr. Dickie were there this morning talking to the gentleman who has lived there for a long, long time.

Mr. Dickie said they talked to Robert Leary and he said that has always washed out and he could remember it as a little kid.

Mr. Staples said that's a problem culvert and asked if they are checking problems they know are going to become problem before the rain comes.

Mr. Brannan said they checked it a number of times and that culvert was not plugged up at all. It just can't handle the water he said.

Mr. King asked if this was the Town's culvert or a driveway culvert.

Mr. Brannan said it's the Town's.

Mr. Dickie said it crosses Hornetown Rd.

Mr. Brannan said that's one that they've fixed and he's been here a year and this will be the third time fixing it for him. He said they need to think about addressing that one soon.

Mr. Vachon asked how River Rd. made out and he heard the river was pretty high and if they got any washouts.

Mr. Brannan said there were no issues from the river, one driveway washed out quite well and then corrected that the driveway actually didn't it was the road due to a plugged up culvert. He said he spoke to that gentleman and he understands that the culvert is his responsibility and most likely caused the problem and hopefully he will get that fixed.

He said they had water coming out of a driveway that has been a persistent problem on Reservoir Rd. He said they happened to be going by, he was having some gravel delivered, so they stopped and spoke

with him and he is going to do what he can to remedy it and they explained to him what they would probably do out near the culvert so they don't have to keep going back to fix the washed out road. Mr. Dickie said he spoke to a couple on the corner of Hornetown Rd. and Ten Rod Rd. and they were very thankful for everything these guys had done the day before to mitigate the water and get it out of there. He said he told them we would be up there trying to shoulder around Ten Rod Rd. and they were very thankful for that. He said they said everything they did last year seemed to work well and they didn't have as much water going in towards their house as they did last year so they were very thankful for everything that was done.

Mrs. Morin said she saw a lot of appreciation for everything the crews were doing last night.

Mr. Brannan said that stretch coming down off of Leary hill towards upper Ten Rod Rd. and that intersection there are 2 cross culverts up on the hill and they both ended up plugging up. He said unfortunately it doesn't take much if you get a few twigs in there, some leaves, some dirt they just start building up and the guys went up through and everything was good and they didn't see any water in any of the culverts with the water going through and they came back through about an hour later and it was a mess. I think the guys have learned that when we look at culverts it's not so much just looking at the opening of the culvert you have to look around and make sure that the debris is away because anything that can come in can cause a big headache. I think they realized that it's easier to do a little bit more effort beforehand so I think they learned a lot he said.

He said as far as getting culverts opened up sometimes it's pretty tough you can't really see where you're going, somebody on a backhoe feeling around trying to figure out where the culvert inlet is. He said they learned a lot and they're doing much better.

Mr. Staples asked about the problem they had last year on Meaderboro Rd. and the guy that wanted us to fix the culverts by the dairy farm and how they held up.

Mr. Vachon said that was on Old Range Road

Mr. Brannan said there was a little bit of washing right there and once they get the roads straightened around they'll go back and do the road side of the culverts like they did the last time.

Mrs. Morin asked him to thank the crew for them and that they appreciate their hard work last night.

Mr. Brannan said he would do that.

Highway Dept. Budget Amendments- He said when he was here last the board had some questions about the heating oil and the electricity for the highway garage so he looked at the numbers and they were somewhat high. He said it looks like those numbers got bumped up considerably because last year the price of oil was very high and it seems to have come down a little bit. He said leaving a little bit of cushion they could probably on the oil bring that down to \$10,000 and that's about \$1,340 they can knock off there. That leaves us a little of cushion and we could probably go to \$9,500 but I think that would be pushing it he said.

He said the electricity according to what they used and the rate that they're at now they can probably cut about \$2,300 off of that and bring that down to \$12,000 and still be safe and that one was \$14,300.

Mr. Vachon said every little bit helps.

Mr. Brannan asked if they actually signed a contract with Community Power.

Mr. Dickie said yes for 16.5 cents.

Mr. Brannan said they can look at the rate and figure out what their average usage is and they might be able to trim a little bit more off of it. He asked if that was a fixed rate.

Mr. Dickie said yes.

Mr. Brannan said he mentioned when he was here last that they don't have a line for their on-call pay and Mrs. Heon wants to put that into a separate line. He said if everybody is on-call it would figure out to about \$8,600 for the year. He said mechanic John Radcliffe doesn't want to be on-call and he doesn't care if he himself is on-call as far as being scheduled.

Mr. Vachon said he and Mr. Brannan are on-call 24/7.

Mr. Brannan said it doesn't matter if they take him and John off of the list it drops that by over \$1,000.

Mr. Vachon asked what line would decrease by that if they're paying it already out of a different line.

Mr. Brannan said he wasn't sure what line that is in but he thinks it came out of the Personnel line.

Mr. Dickie said he thinks it's in the overtime line and he would check with Mrs. Heon.

Mr. Vachon said he was fine with adding another line for that so they could track it because it makes it easier. He said he was curious where that was going to decrease something instead of just adding another line for \$8,600 on top of it already being budgeted somewhere.

Mr. Brannan asked for the board's opinion on him and John not being on the on-call list.

Mrs. Morin said Mr. Brannan is on-call anyway and she didn't have a problem taking John off of the on-call.

Mr. Brannan said if any of these guys have something going on and they'd like to have a day off during the week they're on he doesn't have a problem with it.

Mr. Vachon said he understood taking Mr. Brannan off of it and he knows John doesn't want it but...

Mr. King asked if this was pay they were going to give them for potentially working.

Mr. Vachon said this is for carrying the electronic device and being on-call for the week.

Mr. King asked how much that is per week per employee.

Mr. Brannan said it changes to 4 hours of overtime per week.

Mr. King asked if someone is on-call they're automatically getting 4 hours of overtime even if they don't get called in.

Mr. Brannan said yes for the week.

Mr. Dickie said that's per the contract.

Mr. King said that doesn't sound like a good deal for the Town.

Mr. Brannan said if they go to Cabella's and their phone rings and they're an hour away they're probably going to be in trouble.

Mr. Vachon said their response time is within 30 minutes.

Mrs. Morin said but not everyone is on-call every weekend.

Mr. Brannan said they rotate and it's one person a week. He said it very much limits you to what you can do and where you can go. They have to be available he said.

Mr. King said if we didn't do it and we had an emergency we'd just call who's available.

Mr. Brannan said he probably wouldn't be happy. He said it would most likely start at the top and work down.

Mrs. Morin said plus they will have to purchase devices on top of that.

Mr. Vachon asked if they have an on-call phone or they use their personal phones.

Mr. Brannan said they have an on-call phone.

Mr. King said so they are already doing it.

Mr. Dickie said they aren't being paid 4 hours overtime right now.

Mr. Staples asked what they are being paid right now to carry that phone.

Mr. Brannan said 4 hours of straight time.

Mr. King asked if by the new contract it's going to time and a half.

Mr. Brannan and Mr. Dickie nodded yes.

Mr. Brannan said it's actually cheap and when he worked in Middleton they got 1 hour for every shift outside of their normal work schedule and that figured to between 16 and 17 hours a week of overtime.

Mr. King asked if they already have an on-call rate determined by the contract and it went from an hour to time and a half what is the contractual obligation to have people on-call. He asked if we are required to have somebody on-call every week or we just require if they're on-call they get 4 hours of overtime.

Mr. Dickie said it's required that if they are on-call they get paid.

Mr. King said at this point the only thing this board can determine is how many people we have on-call and which weekends we have them on-call. He said they could say we're not going to put anybody on-call any weekends or we can put them on when we know we're going to need people and during where we don't see any activity we can limit those back but that's the only thing we can talk about.

Mr. Brannan said it's one of those things you never know and you can't predict when somebody is going to get called but if you get a very large pine tree that falls down across a road it may take out the wires and sometimes the power company can move it but if it's a 2 or 3 ft. tree they're not going to move it and if you don't have anybody on-call nobody is required to answer that phone.

Mrs. Morin asked what if we incentivized people to come in when they're called vs. having an on-call.

Mr. Vachon said they already are because they get a minimum 3 hours now to respond.

Mr. King said he didn't have a problem with putting this as a separate line item and Mr. Vachon's point is where it is coming from because we're already spending it or it already should be budgeted for.

Mrs. Morin said but if they come in they're still going to be getting overtime. She said if they're on-call they're still going to get overtime so they're not going to save any money there.

Mr. King said Mr. Vachon's point is not to double budget it. He said he agreed with Mr. Vachon that Mr. Brannan should come off the on-call and John still qualifies for it whether he is never put on the schedule is up to them.

Mr. Brannan said he usually gives it away.

Mr. Vachon said he is fine with that and he has guys that never take it either. Someone is always willing to grab it he said.

Mr. Dickie said that is up to how they want to work it in the garage.

Mr. Staples said Mr. King was trying to say why don't we just call and have people come and you said what about the tree and asked if one guy is realistically going to move that tree safely by himself.

Mr. Brannan said they would take a loader and push it out of the road and be done with it. He said if it becomes an issue where they have to run a chain saw or there are possible safety issues they would have to call a second person. He said if they could keep a Police Officer or Firefighter at the scene they can do what they have to without calling somebody. The only thing you have to keep in mind with this is it has to be done safely but at least you have one person that has to answer that phone he said.

He said it's his job but if he is on vacation and not around somebody else will have to be the first one. He said you're not asking or requiring someone to be available and you really do need to have somebody and unfortunately he has seen many times where it had to be somebody coming in to do something.

He gave the example of Bob is on-call and it's very likely that he will get called in for ice on Peavey Hill

before the night is out or in the morning. He said they can't treat it now because the traffic would run it off or it would get washed off and it would be a waste of time to do it before he goes home. You have to somebody that's available and can get there quickly he said.

Mr. Vachon asked the board if they were okay with taking Mr. Brannan off of the on-call list and leaving John on it and he'll have to figure it out with another employee to cover for him. He said he didn't want to take an employee from the garage out of it because then who is the next one that says I don't want to be on-call. He said he would prefer to leave him the rotation because he is in this and he can find someone to cover it and if for some reason it lands on a holiday that nobody will cover it unfortunately he's going to have to cover it

Mr. Staples said if they do it for one they have to do it for all.

Mr. Brannan said if someone else takes it they don't get it at John's rate they get it at their own rate of pay.

Mr. Staples asked who would be there to backup John if he has to cover an on-call and has to come in and he would be limited to what he can do.

Mr. Brannan said at least himself and if he is not going to be available he will at least make sure there is somebody else.

Mr. Staples said there is a lot of stuff that they get called in for that John is going to need help with.

Mr. Brannan said there is a lot of stuff that any of them could need help with but you really need at least one person that is required to come in, assess it and figure out what has to be done and if it's a matter of calling one person for help or call everybody.

Mr. Vachon said he sent an e-mail yesterday because the state was hounding us for a make and model of a truck not necessarily equipment or specific spec sheets and he suggested sticking with the Freightliner which is the newest truck we have to try to standardize the fleet so it's not a hodge-podge up there because the state wanted an answer and they weren't meeting at the time they called.

Mr. Brannan said they need to standardize the equipment in that shop so when they buy parts for one they will fit all. He said the same thing for the plow gear they need to stick to one type of plow gear and one type of spreader if they're not integrated.

Mr. Vachon asked what this price was he was looking at.

Mr. Brannan said that was the price for the Freightliner when we purchased it.

Mr. Vachon asked if that for the complete build.

Mr. Brannan said that was for the cab and chassis.

Mr. Vachon said that is not the price they were given. He said he wasn't on the board when the spec sheet and the price was put out but it was nowhere near that because as a resident he would have stomped his feet and pounded his fists that we were going to pay roughly \$40,000 more than other municipalities were getting for a different brand truck with the exact same specs, motor, brakes, steering, same everything. That truck in the same year was \$95,000 when I bought it he said.

He said there is no way that's a cab and chassis and if it is the wool was pulled over somebody's eyes because it was around \$93,000-\$95,000 for that cab and chassis when we bought it. It sure as hell wasn't \$137,000 for a cab and chassis for a municipal truck he said.

Mr. Brannan said he would check into it.

Mr. Dickie said they took out a total of \$137,867 for the plow truck.

Mr. Vachon said he believes it was in the high \$80,000's for the cab and chassis. He said they spec-ed

out the cab and chassis, had another company spec out the gear to do a complete truck so they made 1 check to 1 company for the cab and chassis and the equipment but they ordered it, it wasn't a pre-built truck and that's why it came from that company not Freightliner in NH. That's why the prices you gave us for \$330,000 and \$280,000 I thought were extremely high when we get municipal prices on cabs and chassis he said. He said he would appreciate it if Mr. Brannan to do some more research on the matter.

8). Next Meeting: Monday, January 8, 2024

Mr. Vachon said their next meeting would be on Monday, Jan. 8, 2024 due to the upcoming holidays (on Monday, Dec. 25, 2023 and Monday, Jan. 1, 2024) so they have a couple of weeks off unless an emergency arises that requires the board to meet to make a decision on something.

9). Non-Public Session A:

Motion: (Vachon, second Staples) to enter non-public session under RSA 91-A: 3 II (a) Compensation passed 5-0 by a roll call vote (Vachon, King, Titus, Staples, Morin-aye) at 8:03 p.m.

Motion: (Morin, second Titus) to come out of non-public session passed 5-0 at 8:37 p.m.

10). Non-Public Session B:

Motion: (King, second Morin) to enter non-public session under RSA 91-A: 3 II (c) Reputation passed 5-0 by a roll call vote (Vachon, King, Titus, Morin, Staples-aye) at 8:37 p.m.

Motion: (Morin, second Titus) to come out of non-public session passed 5-0 at 8:44 p.m.

11). Non-Public Session C:

Motion: (Vachon, second Titus) to enter non-public session under RSA 91-A: 3 II (c) Reputation passed 5-0 by a roll call vote (Vachon, King, Titus, Staples, Morin-aye) at 8:44 p.m.

Motion: (Morin, second Vachon) to come out of non-public passed 5-0 at 8:53 p.m.

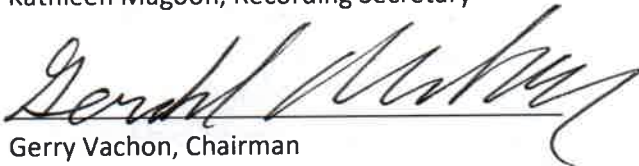
12). 2024 Town Budget:

Selectmen briefly discussed the remaining tasks for completion of the proposed 2024 Town budget and the possible need for another board meeting before the end of the year to complete those tasks.

13). Adjournment:

Motion: (Morin, second Titus) to adjourn the meeting passed 5-0 at 8:59 p.m.

Kathleen Magoon, Recording Secretary


Gerry Vachon, Chairman

Charlie King, Vice Chairman


Ann Titus

Penny Morin


Douglas Staples