



BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
MEETING MINUTES  
July 19, 2023

**Present:** Marybeth Quill, Chairman, Karl Pruter, Vice Chairman, Bob Hamilton, Selectman, Lori Rautiola, Town Administrator, Betsy Lambert, Executive Secretary. Members of the public.

The meeting was called to order at the Town Office on July 19<sup>th</sup>, 2023 at 6:05 p.m.

**Selectmen's Announcements:** There were no Selectmen's announcements.

**Consent Agenda:** Marybeth stated the Board made some small edits to the minutes. Marybeth made a motion to accept the 7.05.2023 meeting minutes. Karl seconded the motion and it passed 3-0. Karl made a motion to accept the 7.13.2023 & 7.20.2023 Accounts Payable & Payroll Bob seconded the motion it passed 2-0-1 (Marybeth abstained from the 7.13.2023 from the 7.13.2023 Accounts Payable & Payroll).

**Old Business:**

ARPA: Lori mentioned the new DPW truck had arrived. Bob made a motion to allow Mike to sign the title for the old truck. Karl seconded the motion and it passed 3-0. Bob mentioned talking to Mike about scheduling the Septic System for the Meetinghouse. Marybeth asked Lori to check on the deadline for the ARPA funds.

Land Use Position Update: Bob stated Kirk Stenersen has resigned as Planning Director. Bob thanked Kirk for his nine years of service, adding he was not happy with the comments made at Planning Board Meeting last Planning Board meeting. Bob voiced his opinion stating people at the Planning Board meeting had stated the Town needs a professional to do the job, adding the Planning Board meeting turned into a "Free for all". Bob also commented that Kirk is a professional engineer and did his job well. The discussion continued. Lori asked if the Board would reconsider her recommendation which the Board had approved last November, as this is the position the voters approved. The Board was still not in agreement, Karl stated he was in favor of full-time, but Bob disagreed, adding the "stats" do not show the need for full-time. Lori explained it was not just planning needs, and that she had several conversations with Kirk regarding the need for a full-time land use position. Karl mentioned adding a part-time position for now to help sustain us as it may help Susan. Bob added he would be happy with two people putting in 24 hours a week, plus Susan.

Marybeth stated she was not ready to make a decision and asked to see the budget numbers on how to fund the position. She added the folks working on the job description had not finished it yet. Lori stated it would be best to determine what the position will be before a job description is finalized. Marybeth stated the Board would meet next week and make a decision. She would like to have it written out one last time and then it could be determined. Bob stated the description was tailored to the land use boards. Marybeth reiterated she was not ready to make a decision at that point, and to get all the information together one more time and a decision can be made at the next meeting. Karl stated at the next meeting he would make a motion if no one else does.

After a lengthy discussion and more public input from Jim Qualey who asked for an analysis of the position to show data; Sharon Rasku suggested researching what comparable towns have for a position, part-time or full-time. Kim McCummings suggested looking at the functionality and not just planning needs, and Roni Hamilton stated she agreed with Marybeth to sit down one last time, adding it was with heartfelt thanks that she was glad it was over for Kirk because since this started he had taken much abuse, adding the Planning Board meeting the night prior was her last straw. She added Kirk had taken abuse from the people that were invited to the meeting, directing her comment to the Town Administrator. After Roni's comment, Marybeth closed the discussion and stated that was unfair of Roni to say that about the Town Administrator as she cannot control who attends any public meeting. Roni apologized.

Marybeth requested the documents on the position and stated the Board will make a decision at the next Selectmen's meeting. She closed the discussion once again. Bob made a motion to post for a part-time planning director position. Karl seconded the motion and it passed 2-1.

**Citizen's Forum:** Ron Osimo stated as a resident and part of the Rindge Crime Watch Team, he had reached out to Senator Hassen's office to research grant money for infrastructure on a public safety building. He was told there may be funds available and is planning on meeting with a representative from Senator Hassen's Office to explore the option for funding. Kim McCummings mentioned the Farmers Market was doing well, there are well-liked vendors, and the "bookmobile" would be coming around soon. Jim Qualey stated a NH house email was sent out as an invite to review potential ballot counter devices and the public is encouraged to attend. The presentation of devices will be given at two sessions on August 2 at 9 and the second one at 1 pm. They will be demonstrating four ballot-counting devices. Lori asked Jim to forward the email to her to pass on. Jim stated for anyone interested to contact the Town Administrator and she can send them the link to register. Debbie Qualey stated there is a new law that allows a town to withdraw from an SAU and perhaps the Town can look into this.

#### **New Business:**

Winter Oil and Propane contracts: Marybeth stated Mike has done his research and received four quotes for oil, Red's, Fratechelli, Allen & Mathewson, and Peterson. Director Mike Cloutier has recommended Red's in Jaffrey for oil at \$2.81 per gallon. For propane, the Town received

quotes from L&G, Allen & Mathewson and Fratechelli Mike recommends Allen & Mathewson for propane at \$1.49. Karl made a motion to accept the quote for winter heating oil from Reds of Jaffrey. Marybeth seconded the motion and it passed 3-0. Karl made a motion to accept the propane quote for Allen Mathewson of Rindge. Bob seconded the motion and it passed 3-0.

Selectmen's Goals: Marybeth stated Lori had asked the Board to consider what each of their goals are as Selectmen. Marybeth mentioned Bob had given a goal at the last meeting to "fix" the school district budget to lower the taxes. Marybeth added everyone complains about the taxes in Town but the town's budget is minuscule compared to the school budget and she would like to address this issue as well and perhaps the possibility of breaking away from the District would be a benefit. Debbie Qualey stated the Town "might be able to spend more on the Town services if we did not have to spend so much on the school."

Karl stated he would like to see the Town finalize a Wage Scale for the employees that is sustainable for the Town so that we can treat employees fairly and retain the good employees.

Bob mentioned a few more goals he had in mind were to expend the remaining ARPA funds. He would like to retain and appreciate the employees Rindge has by compensating them competitively, not lavishly, adding they are getting compensated more lavishly than we are." He also would like to continue the road maintenance that Mike Cloutier has done, watching the asphalt prices. Bob would also like to convince the public that the school system is the main driver of high property taxes. He continued stating since the Town has to keep up with increasing wages, the Town needs to find other areas of the budget to make cuts. Bob stated another goal was to prepare an equal amount of cuts to the equal amount of raises in the budget. He would also like to survey the residents on town services and taxes within the school district.

As a goal for 2024, Bob stated he would like to revisit the portion of the school taxes and address the unfair town portion given to the school, adding Rindge pays more in school taxes than Jaffrey and has fewer students in the District. Marybeth agreed. Bob also asked the question "Should the Town conform to the free for all building and zoning requirements or should the town remain a smaller town?" Karl stated having an equal amount of taxes should be addressed.

#### **Informational Items/Communications & Updates:**

**Any Other official Business to come before the Board:** Lori mentioned she, Mike, and Karla met with the folks from LCHIP at the Meetinghouse on the 18<sup>th</sup> to tour the building. She stated they appeared pleased with the upkeep of the building and the grant will be very competitive with other historic properties throughout. The meeting adjourned at 7:27 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Betsy Lambert  
Executive Secretary