

**Board of Selectmen  
Regular Meeting Minutes  
September 28, 2021**

**Present:** First Selectman Dan Jerram, Selectman Alesia Kennerson, Selectman Laura Garay; Member of the Press Kathryn Boughton (Republican-American), Member of the Public Bud Butler, Administrative Assistant Christine Hayward.

First Selectman Jerram called the meeting to order at 7:05 PM.

Mr. Jerram stated that it was “nice to be back on track with a regular meeting” noting that the agenda wasn’t a long one as there had been a special meeting held just a couple of weeks ago to deal with pressing matters.

**Operations Updates:**

*Demolition Costs – 526 Main/2 Bridge:*

First Selectman Jerram told the Board that the owner of 526 Main/2 Bridge Street has paid for the costs of the environmental services incurred at the fire site. Jerram stated that this included the fees incurred for the tank removal and the site restoration. This means that the additional appropriation granted at the recent Special Town Meeting to cover these expenses will not be needed.

*Survey Costs:*

Mr. Jerram stated that he recently had a good meeting with property owner Dhuval. It is the owner’s intent to rebuild a structure on the site, but he needs to have a survey done in order to know what can and cannot be done. Redevelopment of that sight might be limited due to working in close quarters with the proximity of the neighboring buildings. Jerram stated that the survey needs to show the foundations of the neighboring buildings and location of the utilities. He noted that there is some of this information available on previous surveys of the area but it all needs to be put together in order to have the best information possible for this site. Jerram suggested that there be some assistance provided to the property owner for the cost of this survey as this survey would be beneficial to have recorded in the land records. Mr. Jerram thought that it might be prudent for the property owner to seek funding from Neighbors to Neighbors. Jerram stated that the property owner is also a victim of the fire and donations were made to benefit those who suffered loss. Selectman Kennerson agreed that the survey would be a valuable piece of information and supported asking for funding from Neighbors to Neighbors.

Newspaper reporter Boughton asked if the setbacks will remain the same as for the prior structure. Jerram replied that question is for zoning to answer. The First Selectman informed the Board that there is currently no need to place any liens on the property. A recent invoice for utility billing was sent to the property owner; but there is no need to take any lien action at this time.

*Sale of water and wastewater assets:*

The asset sale is progressing; Jerram stated that there is good work being done by Attorney Roraback and Aquarion. The Title Searcher has tracked down many of the easements; however, there are a few missing easements. The Pine Meadow Farms Easements are still being tracked down – this may be complicated. This subdivision occurred during prior administrations and with prior employees; not a lot of first- hand information to fall back on. A hydrophone scan of the area where this a suspected pipe going from Wickett Street to Main Street will be performed on Tuesday. Mapping of the area is inconclusive and location of the pipe needs to be confirmed. There are also a few questions regarding a

possible easement in the area of 21 and 45 Steele Road – not sure if there should be one or not.

*Fire District Consolidation:*

The issue of how to move forward the district(s) approved consolidation between the Village Fire District and the Pine Meadow Fire District is still being investigated. Attorney Roraback recommends pursuing a Legislative Act to approve the Consolidation. It may be the best way to proceed. Jerram will contact Senator Witkos to see what needs to be done on his end in order to move it forward. Mr. Roraback is available to draft the appropriate language for consideration by the Legislators.

*Paving:*

High Street paving is 75% complete. Contractors are scheduled to come back next week. Driveway aprons and curbing comes after that.

*Crack Sealing:*

First Selectman Jerram commented that there was an unintentional oversight in communication with some of the downtown businesses earlier this week. A contractor was hired to do some crack sealing in the business district during the early morning before shops were open to the public. Unfortunately, consideration was not given to the fact that there are early deliveries for some of the merchants and this created some inconveniences. Jerram extended apologies for this oversight and noted that this will be something to keep in mind.

*Storm Damage:*

Storm Ida created havoc with several of the dirt roads in town. The excessive rainfall that occurred in a short period of time caused some massive washouts on both paved and unpaved roads. Stub Hollow, Carpenter Road, East Cotton Hill and Ramstein Road, to name a few, all required repairs. Due to the quantity and severity of the washouts, contractors were used to assist the highway department in getting the roads back in shape as quickly as possible.

*Aquatic Road:*

First Selectman Jerram informed the Board that the status of Aquatic Road has been resolved. For years, the ownership of this road has been questioned. It has been unclear as to whether or not this road is town owned/maintained. Recently, a resident of the area came upon a copy of a deed that was conveyed in 1994; The confusion occurred because a town meeting accepted this road in 1958 as Laurel Lane and the deed filed in 1994 refers to it as Aquatic Road. There is a portion of this road that lies within Barkhamsted. This road will be added to the town's listing of town maintained roads and will be added to the report that is filed with the state.

*New Hartford Night:*

Mr. Jerram reported that New Hartford Night was a great event. Attendance was vastly improved over past years. There was good food, great music and the Corn hole Tournament added to the event. Jerram stated that there will be a wrap up meeting with the committee members to discuss "what went right, what can be improved." Selectman Laura Garay asked if the "mission statement" of New Hartford Day should be reviewed since the event has changed. She noted that there could be an opportunity for other people to join this committee and share ideas.

*EMS Tribute – Parrot Delaney:*

The First Selectman thanked local restaurant Parrot Delaney for the nice tribute they held on Sunday afternoon September 19 for EMS personnel. He noted that both he and Selectman Garay were in attendance.

*Project Playground:*

Project Playground held a dedication ceremony earlier this evening. Mr. Jerram stated that Jessica Chicoski did a fantastic job of fundraising and chairing this project to completion. The First Selectman stated that several members of the highway crew were terrific on this job. The Bakerville playground site was full of boulders and it was a real challenge.

*Cedar Lane Bridge:*

Dan said that he and Tim Traub of Hemlock Construction met with Department of Energy and Environmental Protection representatives on site at Cedar Lane to discuss what they wished to accomplish with the bridge. DEEP has given the ok to proceed with work on the bridge on Tuesday and Wednesday. This will cause some traffic re-routing.

**Discussion of American Rescue Act funding:**

First Selectman Jerram informed the Board that there have been a few requests received for use of the American Rescue Funds. He stated that this is just the very beginning of the conversation that needs to happen with respect to this topic.

*Local Schools Request:*

Mr. Jerram stated that Superintendent of Schools Murphy has submitted a request for funding to be used to improve the air quality at Antolini School. He is requesting \$12,000 for Clean Air and an additional \$175,400 for roof repairs. The roof is leaking and this has led to some issues with mold which then translates to problems with clean air.

*Regional 7 Request:*

Superintendent Palmer has sent a request for consideration of funding for improvements to Air Circulation and Air Exchange; specifically to be used in areas where equipment is nearing the end of its life. Her request is for \$43,250.

*New Hartford Ambulance:*

President Maltby of the Ambulance Association would like to have funding for AEDs and an Ambulance/Sprinter Van. Jerram noted that Barkhamsted would also be required to provide funding as they share the services with New Hartford.

*Pleasant Valley Children's Center:*

First Selectman stated that the Pleasant Valley Children's Center has been providing daycare/nursery school services to local children for many years. They have rented space and are now seeking funding in the amount of \$10,000 to secure a mortgage to buy the building they are currently in. They are also seeking \$10,000 from Barkhamsted as well.

*Water Line Extension:*

Resident Bill Dedominicis submitted a letter stating that he would like to see the water line extended down Route 44 to supply fire protection to the existing and future businesses of the area. He noted that this could take the place of a required fire cistern (a condition of approval for one of the business sites) and he further stated that he has spoken with the developer required to put in the cistern and this developer would add the cistern funds to this expansion.

*Sewer Expansion:*

Jerram mentioned that sewer expansions are also an allowable use of the funds. He suggested that some of the funds be held aside in case the bids for expansion in the Pine Meadow area come in higher than anticipated. WPCA Chairman Bud Butler commented that, due to escalating costs and the industry

knowing that funds are available for sewer expansion, the original cost estimate should be increased to reflect a 25% increase over the original \$3.5 million estimate. Butler stated that there has been a lot of turnover in the State Department of Energy and Environmental Protection and it is very difficult to get approvals on projects at this time.

Kennerson asked when it might be possible to go out to bid and questioned when the sale might be formalized. Jerram replied that the original timeframe for approval of the sale was estimated to be 6 months to a year; we are at the six month mark and almost ready to seek PURA approval. He stated that things are moving forward as predicted.

*Counseling Services:*

First Selectman Jerram informed the Board that the Northwest Hills Council of Governments is asking each of the member towns to set aside 1% of their funding allocation to go to Greenwoods Counseling Services to be used for residents who need these services.

*Local Needs:*

Jerram suggested that some of the funding should be used to assist local individuals and local businesses impacted by COVID. Mr. Butler interjected that it would be helpful if there could be assistance provided to those individuals who are in arrears with water/sewer outstanding fees.

Selectman Kennerson suggested that there be a committee formed that could set the parameters for assistance. Jerram noted that the first step needs to be to decide how much money is going to go into each "bucket."

Garay asked "how do we disseminate this information to those who might want to be considered for funding?" There may be other areas/needs that are being overlooked. Garay would like to have a workshop meeting on this issue alone. She stated that this needs to be something that the Board can focus on and not be rushed to move on to other agenda items. The Board needs to be diligent about this. Jerram agreed that they should meet to discuss this. He will develop a list of the requests thus far and have his administrative assistant forward it to the Board for review prior to the meeting. All Selectmen agreed that they "need to get an idea of where we are going with this."

**Requests For Tax Refunds:**

22 requests as recommended

MOTION: by Kennerson to approve the requests as submitted by the Tax Collector, seconded by Garay.

*Unanimous.*

**Opportunity for Public Comment:**

Selectman Kennerson announced that a joining night for scouts will be held on Sunday October 3 at Brodie park from 3:00 pm – 6:00 pm.

**Correspondence:**

First Selectman Jerram stated that he had received a lengthy email from Justin Meyers of the South End Fire Department regarding dissention among the ranks and problems at the fire department. Jerram noted that the Selectmen have no jurisdiction over fire districts. He state that this kind of turmoil is unfortunate, especially coming on the heels of a terrific combined effort fighting the fire downtown. He

hoped that it works itself out for the betterment of the Town of New Hartford. Selectman Kennerson added that she is glad that Chief Worsman and the Village Fire District is aware of the situation in case there is mutual aid needed.

Jerram informed the Selectmen that he had overlooked a couple of Operations Updates and asked to go back to the topic of operations. The Selectmen had no issue with a few more updates being included under that agenda item.

*Status of Town Clerk:*

Jerram stated that the formal resignation of Town Clerk Debbie Ventre will need to be addressed by appointing a resident to serve in this capacity. The position is currently still an elected position until January when the local Ordinance comes into play. The resignation date is still not formalized, but it is a certainty as Mrs. Ventre is relocating to Florida. Applications for the position are being accepted and interviews will be conducted.

*Blue Ribbon School:*

The First Selectmen extended “Hats off” to Judy Palmer and her administration for obtaining the distinction of being a ‘Blue Ribbon School.’ Jerram noted that this is “A wonderful achievement” and stated that “we all know what a terrific job Judy and her staff have done, but it’s especially nice to have recognition outside of the town.” Selectman Garay agreed and stated that Ms. Palmer is “a great administrator and a great people person.” She offered her public congratulations. Selectman Kennerson added her congrats, as well.

**MOTION:** by Kennerson to adjourn at 8:50 PM; seconded by Garay.

*Unanimous*

*Respectfully Submitted,*

*Christine Hayward, Administrative Assistant*

*Attachments (available from the Town Clerk upon request)*

*List of approved tax refunds*