

**Board of Selectmen
Special Meeting
September 29, 2022
MINUTES**

Present: First Selectman Dan Jerram, Selectman Laura Garay, Selectman Alesia Kennerson;
Administrative Assistant Christine Hayward.

Present Virtually: Kathryn Boughton (Republican-American newspaper), Noel Gauthier, Chris Sayer.

First Selectman Jerram called the meeting to order at 6:35 PM and noted for the record that this was a “hybrid meeting” – the Board members were all present in person at Town Hall, but the meeting was available to the public to attend via ZOOM. Jerram stated that this was the first attempt at a hybrid meeting – the Selectmen wanted to try it out and see how it worked.

Operations Updates:

First Selectmen Jerram informed the Selectmen that the legal counsel for both the Town and Aquarion have performed a final review of the PURA application and have approved it. It will be submitted within the next few days.

Selectman Garay asked if the document is available for the public. Mr. Jerram replied that once it is filed, it will be a public document – there are some exhibits that are confidential, but the majority of the document is public. Jerram added that the ‘supplemental testimony’ is also a public document and can be released upon request.

Jerram also told the Selectmen that the consolidation of the Pine Meadow and New Hartford Village Fire Districts is on track. Both fire districts have held the required meetings to authorize the consolidation and had the required votes. All of the corresponding documents will be put together and submitted to Attorney Roraback who will then review them and then forward them to the Legislature for placement on the agenda of the next session.

Resident Noel Gauthier congratulated the Board on assisting the fire departments in moving this consolidation forward. He stated that this will be a good thing for both departments.

Mr. Jerram notified the Board that the next phase of the Cedar Lane Bridge Project is scheduled to begin on October 6. The contractor will strip off the current membrane and replace with a new one and then will re-pave the bridge. Jerram explained that, unfortunately, the area from the bridge on Cedar Lane to the intersection of Route 202 will not be paved at this time. This will need to wait until the spring of next year. The fee quote from the contractor doing the bridge work to complete this as an-add on was too expensive and could not be included in the budget for this project. Jerram stated that this paving will be done, but just not with this project as originally thought.

A separate paving project currently being scheduled is the paving of Farnsworth Drive. The road will be graded this next week and paving will follow.

The First Selectman commented that a resident had verbally reached out and asked for a more pedestrian friendly West Hill Road. This resident stated that the road is used by many for walking and was hoping that the town could do something to make it safer for pedestrian use. Mr. Jerram explained that the road is a long, windy road that handles a lot of beach traffic during the summer. West Hill Lake is popular due to the boat launch and the beach areas. The challenges of being able to make safety improvements to the road are many. There isn’t enough room to widen the road. He stated that he

would remind the police to do some speed enforcement on West Hill when they are able to do so.

The search for a replacement Superintendent of Schools continues. The search committee continues to meet and is working with a consulting firm to assist them with screening candidates.

First Selectman Jerram was pleased to announce that the town's 2022 STEAP (Small Town Economic Assistance Program) Grant Application has been approved. The grant request sought funding for downtown fire access improvements. The New Hartford Village Fire Department had requested that the town investigate improving access to the river for fire apparatus. This access would afford them the opportunity of using water from the river to be available for firefighting purposes. A side benefit of this project will be repaving of the town hall parking lot.

The First Selectman informed the Board members that settlement talks for Carpenter Road bridge matter are ongoing. A trial date has been set for November 3, but hopefully a settlement will be reached prior to that and the cost of litigation will not occur.

A Memorial tree has been planted in Chapin Park in Pine Meadow in recognition of the life of Charles (Chuck) Calder. A dedication ceremony will be in the spring. The tree was purchased by the family in his honor.

Mr. Jerram announced that New Hartford Day was another success; there was a lighter crowd than last year, but still very well attended. It was his opinion that the crowd size was more manageable this year. Resident Noel Gauthier chimed in that he enjoyed the event and offered the suggestion that there be some kind of lighting in the parking lot next year. He found it difficult to traverse the uneven ground in the area that was used for parking.

Mr. Jerram mentioned that the town crew is currently working on adding additional parking in the area next to the present Berkshire Hall area at Brodie. The parking area has been expanded into the area where the house used to stand. The trees have been removed and the area needs to be leveled.

Jerram updated the Selectmen that the bathroom design for Brodie bathrooms came in high due to the cost of materials. The septic system still needs to be calculated for a total cost of the project.

Lenard Engineering is now Haley Ward, Lenard has been bought out and Dave Battista and Todd Parsons remain on staff.

The First Selectman informed the Board members that there has been an extremely high demand for services from staff. There has been a prolonged period of residents reaching out with questions regarding various things. Emails and Phone calls are keeping staff very busy. Foot traffic has remained relatively stable, but phone and email inquiries have increased. Jerram pointed out that many offices are single staffed and therefore sometimes questions cannot be answered immediately, especially if there is research involved. Sometimes research needs to be done to get correct answers. It may take some time to be able to get back with an answer.

Selectman Garay asked if additional staff might be warranted. Jerram replied that adding staff that has no experience or knowledge is not the answer. There are times when people will just have to wait for an answer if it is something that cannot be answered right away. The First Selectman stated that staff does a good job answering the questions and answers them as quickly and as best as they can -- people cannot expect instant gratification with responses.

Selectman Kennerson noted that there was mention in minutes of a prior meeting of the volunteer plaque ceremony meeting as being planned for September 24 and asked what happened with that.

Jerram replied that there were conflicts and it was not a good date. The ceremony will be held, it is just difficult to find a date that is convenient for all.

Discussion of Special Town Meeting:

The First Selectman informed the Board that there is need for a Special Town Meeting to handle a few different items related to the sale of the water and wastewater assets and an ordinance that relates to Open Burning.

There is enabling resolution to give a tax break to Aquarion Water Company but it needs town approval. Jerram explained again for the record that if Aquarion is not given a tax break, the rates for water and sewer services would need to be increased to cover costs of paying the taxes. This is counterproductive to the purpose of the sale.

Additionally, an easement that grants town access to sewer and water pipes within the Pine Meadow Farms development was overlooked many years ago and needs to be formally accepted so that the town can grant those rights to Aquarion once the sale of the assets is completed.

There is also a need to rescind the current ordinance that governs the Water Pollution Control Authority as their role will change once the sale is finalized. Jerram stated that the Post sale transition team has reviewed the draft of the proposed ordinance that was prepared by the town attorney. They would like to negotiate developers agreements but Aquarion has stated that they do not want the WPCA to have this authority. They feel that this is a business matter that they want to have control over. The WPCA would like to be able to make non-binding recommendations regarding where future sewer lines should go.

The Selectmen agreed that a special Board of Selectmen meeting would be held on October 17 to get ready for a special town meeting to be held on November 3.

American Recovery Plan Funding (standing agenda item):

First Selectman Jerram informed the Selectmen that there are four new requests for funding from the ARPA funds. New Hartford Village Fire District has requested funding for HVAC improvements and radios. South End Fire District has asked for \$50,000 for restoration/repairs for one of their fire trucks. Farmington Valley Health District has asked for additional funds for various items; The ambulance has submitted an additional request for a second ambulance. Still waiting to hear what the sports leagues want to use the ARPA funds for. Jerram mentioned that the Beekley Library does not appear to be moving forward with their expansion due to increased costs estimates and lack of funding. The Selectmen agreed that the ARPA funding may be jeopardized if there is no expansion.

Appointments to Boards and Commissions:

MOTION: by Garay to appoint Sabrina Stout as a member of the Economic Development Commission, term to end 2024; seconded by Kennerson.

Unanimous.

MOTION: by Kennerson to appoint Anita Barden to Economic Development Commission, term to end 2024; seconded by Garay.

Unanimous.

Request for Refunds

Jeffrey Eckert	Motor Vehicle	120.08
Jeffrey Eckert	Motor Vehicle	21.73
Jeffrey Eckert	Motor Vehicle	37.71
James A. Buccini	Motor Vehicle	8.14
ACAR Leasing	Motor Vehicle	604.25
Mitchell Jackson	Motor Vehicle	95.38
Maria Toth	Motor Vehicle	269.49
Corelogic Central refunds	Real Estate	11.46
Corelogic Central refunds	Real Estate	11.08
Kevin Kaminski	Motor Vehicle	318.43
Leslie Spagnoli	Motor Vehicle	60.52
Jared or Maria Yorkavich	Motor Vehicle	10.78
Lang Mussen	Motor Vehicle	24.55
Ida Mussen	Motor Vehicle	9.27

MOTION: by Kennerson to approve the tax refunds as recommended by the Tax Collector, seconded by Garay.

Unanimous

Opportunity for Public Comment:

Business owner Chris Sayer commented that he appreciated seeing the minutes that were forwarded to him and looks forward to seeing minutes posted on line.

Minutes:

MOTION: by Kennerson to approve the minutes dated August 23, 2022 as presented; seconded by Garay.

Kennerson questioned where things stand with 51 Dorothy Drive and Jerram replied that he will send a formal note to the interested purchaser that the offer was not accepted by the Board.

Unanimous.

MOTION: by Garay to approve the minutes dated July 26, 2022 as presented; seconded by Kennerson.

Unanimous.

MOTION: by Kennerson to approve the minutes dated June 28, 2022 as presented; seconded by Garay.

Unanimous.

MOTION: by Garay to adjourn at 7:45 PM; seconded by Kennerson.

Unanimous

Respectfully Submitted, Christine Hayward, Administrative Assistant

NO ATTACHMENTS filed with these minutes