

**Board of Selectmen
Special Meeting
Tuesday, October 8, 2019**

MINUTES

Present: First Selectman Dan Jerram, Selectman Alesia Kennerson, Selectman Eric Claman; Open Space Preservation Commission members Jean Darlington, Madeline McClave; Administrative Assistant Christine Hayward.

First Selectman Dan Jerram called the meeting to order at 5:40 PM.

Discussion and action re: recommendation for engineering services related to Trails Routing Study:

First Selectman Jerram informed the Selectmen that the Trails Committee has completed their review of the submitted proposals and have made a recommendation to engage the services of Anchor Engineering for the Trail Routing Study. The Trails Committee does not have the authority to contract with anyone, therefore the Board of Selectmen must act on this recommendation. They can choose to accept the recommendation or they can choose not to. Jerram stated that the Trails Committee had initially leaned toward hiring the firm of Milone and MacBroom, but their cost proposal for a final design was over budget, at a proposed cost of \$425,000. Anchor has indicated that they can provide a final design for \$150,000. Jerram explained that the committee had posed additional questions to both firms in order to be sure that they were understanding the proposals correctly, especially since the quoted prices were vastly different. In the end, the Committee voted to endorse Anchor Engineering.

MOTION: by Kennerson to authorize the First Selectman to enter into an agreement with Anchor Engineering to develop a routing study and develop engineered plans for a trail in accordance with the CT Trails Grant proposal and not to exceed \$150,000 in total costs; seconded by Claman.

Unanimous

Set time, date, manner of Special Town Meeting:

First Selectman Jerram stated that there are 2 items that are ready to be presented at a Special Town Meeting. The conservation easement needs to be approved and the lease of the land owned by the Beekley Family at 395 Town Hill Road.

MOTION: by Claman to call a Special Town Meeting on Tuesday, October 29, 2019 at 7:00 PM to be held in the Senior Center/Meeting room as noticed on the attached Call of Special Town Meeting; seconded by Kennerson.

Jerram stated that a management plan is referenced in the Conservation Easement and that this Board will need to work with the Open Space Commission to develop a maintenance plan that is agreeable to all. Jerram distributed a draft of a plan that has been created by Open Space Commission member Bill Michaud. He asked that the Selectmen review the plan and be prepared to discuss at the meeting on October 22, 2019. Selectman Kennerson questioned the use of the term "trained volunteers." She asked who would be responsible for the training and what types of training would be involved. Madeline McClave replied that volunteer activities will be organized, as they currently are. She pointed out that there is a method in place where groups do need to complete an authorization form to be able to perform work on town owned properties. There may be training needed regarding how to properly

dispose of invasive plants, when to pull/weed invasives and other topics. This can be discussed in further detail at the next meeting.

Unanimous.

Discussion of policies related to Assessments

First Selectman Jerram notified the Selectmen that he has approached a Certified Assessor and has an agreement with her to be the Certified Assessor for the Town of New Hartford. She will be responsible for training and oversight of the individual currently interested in training in that office. First Selectman Jerram stated that there is an opportunity to consider assessment policies since the Town is currently in transition with assessors. For example, the Board of Assessment Appeals meets each year and grants a change in assessment to a motor vehicle. Some assessors allow the change in assessment to carry over for a few years, providing that there has not been any major improvements done to alter the value of the vehicle. Other assessors allow the computer generated value provided by the State of CT Department of Motor Vehicles to be reissued no matter what the actual value has been determined to be by the Board of Assessment Appeals. This practice results in taxpayers making repeated appearances before the Board of Assessment Appeals. Jerram stated that of the 10 appeals this year, six were repeat appeals that were previously reduced by the Board of Appeals but not carried over by the Assessor. This current practice results in dissatisfied taxpayers. This Board has the authority to create a policy related to recognizing the value established by the Board of Assessment Appeals to be a value that is to be carried over for a certain number of years as the assessed value.

Additionally, Jerram informed the Board that there is currently an extraordinary amount of personal property declarations being mailed to taxpayers. Diminimus Values can be established which sets a threshold of value for personal property declarations to be required. Mr. Jerram will ask the Assessor to create a report that can show personal property values. This report can be used to set guidelines for mandated reporting and taxation. Selectman Kennerson, a tax auditor for the State of Connecticut Department of Revenue Services, commented that even the State of Connecticut recognizes "casual sales" as sales that occur that do not result in revenue to the State and therefore are not subject to taxation. Tag sales, for example are considered casual sales. Selectman Claman agreed that using reports to set a value is a good idea as it will not then be left to interpretation; there will be back up to support a threshold.

The Selectmen agreed that excessive taxation that does not result in increased revenues is not in line with good taxpayer relations.

MOTION: by Claman to establish a policy that Motor Vehicle assessments granted by the Board of Assessment Appeals will carry a three year term; seconded by Kennerson.

The Selectmen agreed to keep this item on the agenda for further investigation of personal property.

Unanimous.

MOTION: by Kennerson to adjourn at 6:40 PM, seconded by Claman.

Unanimous

*Respectfully Submitted,
Christine Hayward, Administrative Assistant*