

TOWN OF ACTON SELECT BOARD MEETING

December 6, 2023

6:00pm

MINUTES

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER / PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Winchell, Jr. called the meeting to order.

2. WARRANTS/BILLS

Signed

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Walsh made a motion to approve the agenda; seconded by McGurty. All in favor. Motion carried.

4. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

Norwood made a motion to approve the minutes of November 29, 2023; seconded by Walsh. All in favor. Motion carried.

5. TOWN ADMINISTRATOR WEEKLY UPDATE

Roux reviewed the November Sheriffs Log:

November 1 – Shapleigh, a 61-year-old female was found deceased, not suspicious.

November 2 – Hopper Road, Acton – a welfare check for a 40-year-old male, making threats to harm himself. He was taken into protective custody.

November 3 – Foxes Ridge Road, Acton – Deputy's responded to a report of a suicidal 39-year-old female who was damaging property. She was taken into protective custody.

November 4 – Ridge Road, Shapleigh – Deputy's responded to report of suspicious activity: camera footage showed vehicles driving past residence, slowing to a stop and getting out of vehicles then getting in and leaving. Upon arrival, Deputies were unable to locate the vehicle.

November 4 – a Deputy was flagged down by a citizen, who notified the Deputy of a structure fire on 7th Street, Acton. The house was fully engulfed. There were two occupants and one dog escaped unharmed, one dog was unaccounted for. The house, which is an Airbnb, is a total loss.

November 5 – Gore Road, Shapleigh – Deputy's responded to a roll-over crash. The driver fled the scene, leaving behind his company vehicle and tools.

November 8 – Foxes Ridge Road, Acton – Deputies are investigating the theft of a camper trailer. The camper was last seen over a month ago. It is a 1992 Skyline travel trailer.

November 30 – River View Drive, Acton – Two Deputy's responded to report of a missing person. The caller reported her 74-year-old husband has dementia and went missing. He was found approximately 200 yards from the property, down an embankment by the river. He was transported and looks like he will be okay.

Roux announced that on Tuesday, the office staff participated in a Motor Vehicle Fall Workshop training. A few highlights to note:

Effective January 1, 2024, Maine is going back to the 25 year and newer title law: any vehicle older than 25 years, no longer needs to be titled.

Limits have been removed from Veteran plates.

Excise Exemption has been updated for the State of Maine.

A State-Wide plate change will occur with the passenger plate (chickadee) starting at the end of 2024. Everyone with a standard passenger plate will be getting the new state plate. The plate has not been shared with the public yet.

Tree Lighting is on Saturday.

A workshop will be hosted for the Select Board and School Committee on December 13 from 4-5pm., to work out the Town Meeting date.

Effective January 1, 2024, Maine is transitioning from a closed primary system to a semi-open primary for the elections. There will be a major primary election in March 2024. Names have been released for the Republican and Democratic candidates for the Fall Election. This year, policy is changing for unenrolled parties to show up on the day of the primary and vote without changing their designated party 90-days prior to the election.

6. DEPARTMENT HEAD / COMMITTEE CHAIR UPDATES

n/a

7. LIAISON UPDATES

McGurty: Municipal Management / Warrant & Finance, APAT, Cemetery

Municipal Management – McGurty reviewed the brokerage reports for the investment accounts: things are moving as expected and we are on track with the budget.

Warrant & Finance met on Monday night – a new chair was elected, Leslie Berlin. The upcoming budget cycle was discussed. We are on track to get the municipal budget done quickly.

APAT – Discussion is in progress with the Director regarding potential operational changes. We will have more to discuss at the next meeting regarding APAT.

Walsh: Fire Department, Transfer Station

Walsh will be meeting with W. Ham and R. Ham to discuss the budget process for the upcoming fiscal year.

Norwood: School Department, Conservation / Forest, Mary Grant

n/a

Winchell: Roads & Road Committee, Recreation Committee

Roads & Road Committee – Winchell, Jr. will inspect the work regarding Article 43 on Abbott Road this upcoming weekend.

Recreation Committee – Winchell, Jr. attended the recent meeting and is addressing some concerns.

8. OLD BUSINESS

A. 2023-2024 Salt Bids

Langley is still pending contact from the State and requested this be tabled. Roux will reach out to Langley to confirm we will have numbers for next week.

B. Old Fire Station

Roux confirmed the public hearing last week regarding the old fire station. McGurty indicated that the decision seems clear to demolish the building. Norwood, Walsh and Winchell, Jr. agreed.

Winchell, Jr. made a motion to demolish the old Fire Station; seconded by Norwood. All in favor. Motion carried.

Winchell, Jr. made a motion to move forward to prepare an RFP for the demolition and removal of the building and prepare the site for asphalt; seconded by Walsh. All in favor. Motion carried.

Winchell, Jr. reviewed the next steps: Once the RFP for the demolition is complete, we will need to decide what the town will want the finish to be – the lot should be graveled to incorporate the parking lot into the next steps. McGurty suggested the engineer can get involved effective immediately to start developing options, including retaining walls and/or beautification.

Winchell, Jr. continued with the prior suggestions for upgrading the Town Hall building/offices: expressing a desire to redo the interior of the Town Hall/Offices. The kitchen needs to be addressed, as there were issues during Thanksgiving Diner. There have been complaints about the bathrooms, which should also be addressed.

McGurty made a motion to engage an Engineer and/or Landscape Engineering Firm to come in and assess the parking lot and recommendations: focusing on maximizing our space, ADA compliance and beautification; seconded by Walsh. All in favor. Motion carried.

9. NEW BUSINESS

A. Resignation

Roux read a letter of resignation for Ken White stepping down from his full-time position at the Acton Fire Department. White will remain as a per diem employee for the Fire Department.

Walsh made a motion to accept the resignation with regret; seconded by Winchell, Jr. All in favor. Motion carried.

B. Budget Timeline

Roux sent an email on Monday, notifying department heads to start thinking about the budget process. A question that has been addressed by department heads is what they are putting in for their salary lines. Department heads are looking for a percentage to complete calculations. Roux advised the fire department can't calculate their per diems without knowing the rate and how many shifts there are. McGurty advised salary increases should have two components: 1) economic inflation; and 2) programmatic change (employment changes – adding a position, removing a position, etc.). Winchell, Jr. suggested that the department heads put in their budget based on what they need; including what they think their employees should be receiving for wages. The Board will review and make changes if necessary. Further discussion occurred regarding wage increases. Roux will send out a memo indicating that unless there are additional hours or staffing needs department heads should leave the salary line on the budget alone.

The other concern with regards to budgets include if work that needs to be done or purchases that have to be made in the future, if bids happen now to put figures in the budget and prices change when the purchase is

completed in July, how should this be addressed. Winchell, Jr. agreed prices fluctuate, in this case you will need to add a percentage on everything to cover yourself. Add 10 percent to the budget price and if it isn't used it comes back to the department.

Timeline for the budget:

Roux advised December 29, 2023, is the deadline for the budget to be submitted by the department heads for review to begin.

The Treasurer will send out a letter with a timeline to social services, giving them through January 12, 2024. Roux discussed some potentially new Planning Board/Zoning Ordinances: questioning, what are the potential consequences of the new ordinances.

February 2, 2024, Zoning / Planning Board articles.

March 1, 2024, Warrant & Finance for final recommendations.

March 15, 2024, for final Board recommendations/reviews.

As a review of the process:

Department heads complete the budget,

Department heads then reach out to the Board Liaison,

The Select Board Liaison will reach out to the Warrant & Finance Liaison,

The three will then meet to go over the budget, and get on the same page,

Once there is agreement, department heads will come to appear in public meetings with the two liaisons.

This was the proposed suggestion of Mark Roy.

Discussion occurred between McGurty and Joyce Bakshi regarding the Warrant & Finance Committee's involvement in the budget process.

Roux continued to address the budget and to look at consolidating articles. McGurty suggested setting up a meeting with Roy to discuss consolidation. If Warrant & Finance comes to the Select Board meetings, this should aid in the budget process. Bakshi agrees and indicates the Warrant & Finance Committee will be able to meet twice weekly as needed. McGurty advised if the Annual meeting is a Saturday in April, Warrant & Finance should have the Articles prepared by March 1. Bakshi confirmed that these deadlines will be appropriate.

10. PUBLIC COMMENT

Bakshi asked if the Recreation Department received the new shed. Winchell, Jr. confirmed that the shed was delivered.

Bakshi also questioned the status of the recreation field parking lot. Winchell, Jr. spoke with the Engineer this morning regarding the parking lot. Winchell, Jr. requested a wet land delineation and a survey for the recreation field parking lot.

Bakshi requested the status of funds for the demolition of the old gym/fire station. Winchell, Jr. advised the money was set aside for the complex, to be used for multiple things.

Norwood wanted to share a friendly reminder to check in on loved ones and friends this time of year, as it can be difficult for many.

11. PENDING

A. Speed Trailer

B. Mooring Ordinance

12. ANNOUNCEMENTS

On Website

Norwood made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:54pm; seconded by Walsh. All in favor. Motion carried.

13. MEMBERS PRESENT: Select Board Members David Winchell, Jr., Thomas McGurty, Ed Walsh, Daniel Norwood, Town Administrator, Jennifer Roux

14. ATTENDANCE: Joe Ruma, Joyce Bakshi, Lee Robator, Mary Ann Robator