

Town of Swanzey, New Hampshire
Board of Selectmen
Meeting – October 8, 2013
Swanzey Town Hall, 620 Old Homestead Highway, Swanzey, NH

CALL TO ORDER

Present were Selectmen Nancy L. Carlson, Deborah J. Davis and Kenneth P. Colby, Jr. The meeting was called to order by Chair Nancy L. Carlson at 6:02 p.m. at Swanzey Town Hall. Also present was Town Administrator Shane O’Keefe.

OTHERS PRESENT

Resident John Blood. Resident Bruce Bohannon and Police Chief Tom DeAngelis appeared later in the meeting.

It was noted that the Conservation Commission would not be attending the meeting as scheduled.

MINUTES

- Regular meeting of September 30, 2013 – Colby **moved** to accept the regular Minutes of September 24, 2013. The motion was seconded by Davis and all were in favor. **Motion passed.**
- Regular meeting of October 1, 2013 – Davis **moved** to accept the regular Minutes of October 1, 2013 amended to reflect a corrected spelling of an attendee’s name. The motion was seconded by Colby and all were in favor. **Motion passed.**
- Non-public meeting #1 of October 1, 2013 – Davis **moved** to accept the non-public Minutes of October 1, 2013, second by Colby, all were in favor. **Motion passed.**

OLD BUSINESS

Mill Lane Parking

Mill Lane resident John Blood met with the Board and inquired about the status of efforts to post the west side of Mill Lane as “No Parking”. He had appeared before the Board on July 9, 2013 and expressed concern about the ability of emergency vehicles to use the road when cars are parked on either side during baseball games.

Bruce Bohannon entered the meeting at 6:06 p.m.

It was decided to hold off on further discussion on this matter until the Police Chief arrived as he could opine on parking regulations.

Authorize expenditure(s) over \$1,000 – Public Works Department

At the October 1, 2013 meeting Public Works Department Director Lee Dunham reported that one of the Highway Department’s trucks needs a new clutch, and the Board asked for quotes for the repairs. Dunham provided the following quotes: Porter’s Diesel: \$2,027.33; Ronnie’s Truck Service: \$1,994.42

Colby **moved** to accept the proposal from Ronnie’s Truck Service for clutch repair services and authorize the expenditure of up to \$2,000 from the Highway Department Vehicle Repairs budget line (#01-4312-1-660), and to authorize the Public Works Director to sign any documents necessary to obtain the approved services. The motion was seconded by Davis. All were in favor. **Motion passed.**

Concerns for Riley Conservation area

Bruce Bohannon, as a resident of the town of Swanzey, once again addressed the Board regarding the Riley Conservation area. He stated he had wanted to discuss this property with the Conservation Commission. He also stated that he felt that Public Works Director Lee Dunham should be the one who decides on improvements and control of this property. There was discussion about which entity is charged with the control over this property: the Board of Selectmen, or the Conservation Commission.

Police Chief Tom DeAngelis entered the meeting at 6:13 p.m.

There was discussion about vehicles illegally tearing up the property. DeAngelis was asked whether there is any consistent police patrol of the Riley Conservation area, to which he answered no. He suggested that the property could be posted for no trespassing. It was noted that the conservation area itself was posted as conservation lands. It was generally agreed that a sign stating that there should be no vehicles at night and/or beyond a certain point should be erected. It was also agreed by all that the property should be patrolled by the Police Department from time to time.

Mill Lane Parking

The Board once again took up this issue of parking problems on Mill Lane. Blood stated that the parking can be out of control during tournaments and he reiterated that the west side of the road should be posted for no parking. He mentioned that the Cal Ripken baseball representatives had cut some trees and brush on the east side to better accommodate parking on that side. DeAngelis stated that he and Public Works Director Lee Dunham would meet with Mr. Blood the following day and that DeAngelis would report back to the Town Administrator. Colby stated that it is time that the Board took action on this matter.

Blood left the meeting at 6:25 p.m.

Replacement of damaged police cruiser

As requested by the Board at the previous meeting, DeAngelis provided additional information to the Board regarding the need to replace a police cruiser damaged in a motor vehicle accident on September 12, 2013. He provided a claim coverage comparison from NH Property-Liability Trust (NHPLT) and the Hartford Insurance Company. The Hartford Insurance Company will not require a deductible but will not replace emergency lights and power supplies, valued at \$840, as the lights can only be replaced with newer LED lights which are more expensive. NHPLT will pay for all items but requires a deductible and will not assist the Town should it wish to work with the other insurance company. The net difference in claim return between the two insurers comes to \$405 in favor of the Hartford Insurance Company.

Colby suggested that DeAngelis should contact the Town Attorney or the NH Insurance Department as the Hartford Insurance Company should rightfully pay for all damage incurred and the Town should be made whole. It was agreed that the Town should accept the claim settlement from the Hartford Insurance Company and that DeAngelis would go back to the company and negotiate on the lights and power supplies and get a final firm figure on the claim settlement.

Bohannon left the meeting at 6:49 p.m.

Regarding a replacement vehicle, DeAngelis proposes to purchase a 2014 Ford Explorer SUV from Rountree Ford for \$27,400 plus approximately \$6,700 to be fully equipped, for a total cost of \$34,200. He proposed paying for it as follows:

Insurance Claim return	\$16,300
Overtime budget line	\$10,000
Police Cruiser Capital Reserve	\$10,000

Colby **moved** to authorize the expenditure of up to \$34,200 for a fully-equipped 2014 Ford Explorer police vehicle, to be paid from the insurance claim return of approximately \$16,300, \$10,000 from the Police Overtime budget line, with the balance (up to \$12,000) to come from the Police Cruiser Capital Reserve Fund, and to authorize the Police Chief to execute any documents necessary to dispose of the damaged cruiser and to acquire and register the new vehicle. The motion was seconded by Davis. All were in favor. **Motion passed.**

Other Police matters

There was a brief discussion on issues with dogs on the loose in the community, and some Police patrol issues were discussed.

DeAngelis left the meeting at 7:07 p.m.

Bates property at 127 Homestead Avenue

The condition of this property was briefly discussed.

NH Route 32/Sawyers Crossing Road intersection improvement alternatives

The Board discussed the presentation from the NH Department of Transportation at the previous meeting, where the Board and community residents reviewed the recommended short-, medium- and long-term solutions for the safety and capacity issues facing the intersection of NH Route 32 and Sawyers Crossing Road, as specified in a February 2013 Road Safety Audit (RSA).

Long-term solutions were as follows:

- No-Build option
- 125' Diameter – One Lane Roundabout (Option 1)
- T-Intersection Sawyers Crossing into NH 32 (Option 2)
- Realignment of only the southern part of the intersection (Option 3)

The next step in the RSA process is for the Board of Selectmen to write a letter to the NH Department of Transportation either supporting one of the recommended solutions or to recommend general support of the RSA and request further development of one or more of the solutions presented.

Davis stated that she does not want to see a roundabout at the intersection, and wants to see an access management study done first.

Colby said that he supports the roundabout option and noted that it would slow traffic, can be designed to act as a gateway to the area, and in some ways functions as a roundabout now. He also noted that the projected intersection failure date for the roundabout option was 35 years while under the other options the intersection failed in the near term. He agreed that the driveway access situation needs to be addressed.

It was **agreed** by the Board that the letter to the NHDOT should state that the Board is in general support of the findings of the RSA and that the State needs to look further into how the alignment of driveways, Simeneau Lane and crosswalks can be improved. O’Keefe was asked to draft a letter for the Board to sign next week.

Disposition of tax deeded properties

The Board discussed whether to proceed toward sale of the following seven properties taken by the Town by tax deed on August 16, 2013:

OWNER	ADDRESS	MAP/LOT	STRUCTURE
Davis, William	147 Pine ST	M57/L119	Mobile Home
Earle, Diane	79 S Winchester ST	M72/L63	1-Fam. Home
Ford, Richard & Grace	3 Fords RD	M73/L6	Mobile Home
Hall, Barry & Cindy	120 Pine ST	M57/115	1-Fam. Home
Pratt Estate, Ruth E.	159 Cobble Hill RD	M82/L8	1-Fam. Home
Robinson, Jay	160 Goodell AV	M25/L13-5	1-Fam. Home
Whitten, Randy	Rabbit Hollow RD	M66/L4	Land only

O’Keefe noted that three of the properties are occupied and that the Town Attorney had recommended not establishing leases with occupants of the buildings, and further that it would be wise to vacate the properties in order to better ensure that they will be sold. O’Keefe stated that the buildings at 3 Fords Road were in particularly bad condition and the site appears to be mostly wetlands.

The Board was in **agreement** that the Town should immediately proceed with vacating the occupied properties, that all of the properties should be sold as soon as possible and that the Town Attorney should handle all requirements of these actions. O’Keefe will notify the Town Attorney of this decision.

Finance Office matters

O’Keefe reviewed with the Board recommendations received on October 1, 2013 from Carol Coppola and Associates related to efficiencies in the Finance Office. It was noted that on August 6, 2013 the Board authorized the hiring of this firm to temporarily assist with Finance Office oversight functions once per week, and to review Finance Office operations to see if improvements are suggested. Suggestions included the following:

- Consider bi-weekly payroll in order to create time and material savings.
- Stop using the cash receipts program from BMSI and instead directly enter cash receipts into fund accounting.
- Consider monthly or annual retroactive acceptance of gifts by the Board.
- Eliminate tracking of some expenses.

The consultant noted that the shifting of human resource functions to the new Human Services and Resources Coordinator, Edna Coates, will free up staff time and allow for better segregation of duties. O’Keefe noted that Finance Office staff was in general agreement with the recommendations and their implementation should help relieve the office of some of its pressures and time constraints.

O’Keefe stated that bi-weekly payroll is done in many other communities and could dramatically help with office efficiency, but could pose some challenges during holiday weeks. If implemented he

recommended 90-plus days of notice to employees and possibly a phase-in period where money could be fronted to employees to ease the transition. O'Keefe was asked to float the idea of bi-weekly payroll to Department Heads and report back to the Board.

Regarding the cash receipts program, which costs about \$420 per year, O'Keefe explained that staff has found this software module cumbersome and unnecessary, and the Town's auditor is OK with this as long as there is still an audit trail and the figures balance. He offered to have Finance Office staff attend the next meeting to discuss the details of these suggestions, which the Board agreed was a good idea.

CONSENT AGENDA

Motion by Colby to approve the Consent Agenda, authorizing the chair to sign where necessary. Second by Davis. All were in favor. **Motion passed.**

- Raffle Permit #2013-34. Monadnock Regional High School Band Boosters – Raffle of 4 Broadway performance tickets on 4/8/2013 at the Monadnock Regional High School.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion for Adjournment by Colby, second by Davis. The meeting adjourned at 7:45 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Shane O'Keefe
Town Administrator

Approved on October 15, 2013.