

**Board of Selectmen
Meeting Minutes
December 27, 2023**

Present: James Bailey – Chairman, Iris Campbell – Selectwoman and Laura Buono, Town Administrator.

Absent: Richard Pelletier - Selectman

In Attendance: John Kilgo, Tammy McClure, Melinda Gehris, Riche' Colcombe, Keith Cobbett

Meeting opened at 6:00 pm
Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

1. OPEN SESSION

Hillsborough Community Thrift Shop: Tammy McClure and Melinda Gehris of the Community Thrift Shop spoke to the Board and said they are aware that the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) needs to be updated for 2024, but they will need more time to gather the end of year figures. They asked the Board to consider the same MOU for another year. Chairman Bailey was in favor of keeping the same MOU in place. Ms. McClure said they will also submit a narrative for the 2023 Town Report to let the residents know how the thrift shop started and why, as well as where the money is going and/or being donated. She said there is also a donation applications available to the public to fill out and submit for consideration case by case.

Jones Road: Riche' Colcombe is concerned about Jones Road with the way the water runs down the road and the ditching. She said over the last couple of years there has been a lot of sand added to the road and when the road is being plowed or when they use the grader the sand is pushed along the side of the road which has filled in the area road run-off and now a new ditch was made and it's changing the dynamics of the road. Ms. Colcombe has tried to get the Road Agent to see how the water use to run down the road and has had no success. Ms. Colcombe said she put in a new culvert this past September and it's loaded with dirt. She also understands that this past summer was very rainy, but she is talking outside of that and would like to see some attention from the Road Agent. Other neighbors have voiced their concerns to Ms. Colcombe who has encouraged them to talk to the Selectmen. Chairman Bailey said he will talk to the Road Agent and ask him to look at it. Ms. Buono said she spoke to the Road Agent as well after taking a ride out to Jones Road and there seems to be a difference of opinion regarding what is going on with the road. Ms. Colcombe said you can clearly see where the runoff is coming from the road. Ms. Colcombe also noticed the area where Tim McCormish fixed and filled in, it was washing away into the brook and the culvert is exposed.

Dispatch/Budget: Ms. Colcombe said she went to the Antrim Selectmen's meeting on November 27th and during that meeting it was said that Hillsborough is not increasing the dispatching line, she was curious why, if Hillsborough costs are going up. Ms. Buono said she will talk to the Police Chief to find out if the new contract amounts have been sent out but said she also does not know much dispatch service Antrim uses so that factors into it as well.

2. JOHN KILGO – BARDEN HILL ROAD

Mr. Kilgo is requesting a streetlight installed at the top of Barden Hill Road, it's a very dark area of the road. A pole was recently hit by a car which knocked the lines down, since then a new pole has been installed. Chairman Bailey said the town will need to find out the cost for a streetlight as well as speaking to the police and fire on their thoughts.

3. MUNICIPAL ENERGY

John Kilgo commented favorably to the Board about the Community Power program. He also feels the Energy Committee could help and be involved in the future decisions/play the market regarding Community Power. The Board will take the comments under advisement.

4. PUBLIC HEARING – UNANTICIPATED FUNDS

Chairman Bailey opened the public hearing at 6:30 pm. Selectwoman Campbell seconded the motion.

Ms. Buono explained the \$840,000 is for \$10,000 per unit for the 84-unit affordable housing. The \$58,529.35 is part of the State budget for bridge aid, the \$258,285 is for continued reclamation of the Woods Woolen Mill Site from the Department of Environmental Services.

Chairman Bailey called for questions.

Riche' Colcombe wanted to confirm that the \$258,285 is for clean-up of the Woods Woolen Mill grounds. Ms. Buono said it's for reclamation of what is currently on the site.

Ms. Colcombe asked which bridge. Chairman Bailey said at upper Stowe Mountain Road. Ms. Buono said the money can be used for any project, but it will be applied to the bridge that Chairman Bailey noted since that will be done in 2024.

Ms. Colcombe asked if there will be another public hearing for the \$840,000 on how the money will be expended. Ms. Buono said the Board hasn't talked about how they would like to spend the money but there isn't a requirement to hold a public hearing. She also said that since the money is in the undesignated fund balance now, in order to spend it, it would end up being part of a warrant article at future Town Meetings. Ms. Colcombe asked if the community or committees have suggestions for that money, when would be the appropriate time for those suggestions to be presented to the Board for consideration. Chairman Bailey said the Board has not yet had a discussion on how best to utilize the money. Ms. Buono said the Board did discuss off-setting some police officers with the money over 5 years. Ms. Colcombe thought that was a good idea for the money and she would like to see the money used for that. Ms. Buono said moving forward when the Board is talking about that funding, they can put a call out for suggestions. Chairman Bailey said there are water & sewer projects coming up where the money could be used as well. Ms. Colcombe said if the project on 2 & 8 Bridge St. is accepted, she would like to see some of that money utilized towards parking for those buildings. Ms. Buono said the Board cannot just pull the money out of the undesignated fund balance without a vote from the town.

Chairman Bailey closed the public hearing at 6:39 pm.

Chairman Bailey made a motion to accept unanticipated revenues in the amount of \$840,000.00 from Invest NH; \$58,529.35 from the State of NH for Bridge Maintenance and \$258,285.00 from NH Dept. of Environmental Services for Wood Woolen Mill Site. Selectwoman Campbell seconded the motion, the motion passed.

5. MINUTES

Chairman Bailey made a motion to accept the meeting minutes dated December 19, 2023. Selectwoman Campbell seconded the motion, the motion passed.

Chairman Bailey made a motion to accept the meeting minutes dated November 8, 2023. Selectwoman Campbell seconded the motion, the motion passed.

Chairman Bailey made a motion to accept the meeting minutes dated December 13, 2023. Selectwoman Campbell seconded the motion, the motion passed.

6. CONSENT AGENDA

Chairman Bailey made a motion to accept the consent agenda for December 27, 2023. Selectwoman Campbell seconded the motion, the motion passed.

- 2nd tax bill interest abatement - Map 6 Lot 33 - \$109.03
- All Veterans Tax Credit – Map 17 Lot 216

7. MANIFEST

Chairman Bailey made a motion to authorize the Selectmen to sign manifests of December 27, 2023, and order the Treasurer to sign Payroll Check numbers 19030 – 19059 a/k/a Vouchers 51 & 52 in the amount of \$198,264.90 (includes 241 direct deposit stubs) and Accounts Payable Check numbers 030777 – 030837 a/k/a Voucher 40 in the amount of \$1,382,572.42. Selectwoman Campbell seconded the motion, the motion passed.

8. PUBLIC HEARING – FIRE AND BUILDING SAFETY CODE

Chairman Bailey made a motion to open the hearing at 6:45 pm to adopt the Fire and Building Safety Code procedure, along with a \$75.00 fee, for the inspection of rental properties. Selectwoman Campbell seconded the motion, the motion passed.

Ms. Buono said a certificate of compliance is part of the procedure with the policy in place, the inspection of rental properties is being added. Bi-annual notices are sent out to the rental property owners to call and set up an inspection. A certificate of compliance is issued upon an accepted inspection of the rental property, which can be provided to the potential renters. The inspection fee is \$75.00. Other communities use this process as well and both the Fire Chief and the Building Code Enforcer feel it's important that this information is in the property file.

Chairman Bailey called for questions.

Keith Cobbett asked if this is required for only new properties. Ms. Buono said all rental properties. Mr. Cobbett, who has a rental property asked what he is getting from this policy, it sounds like a money grab. Chairman Bailey said to make sure the rental properties comply with safety codes. Mr. Cobbett said if he does not have the proper insurance on the rental property then he is the one that loses out. Ms. Buono said not all landlords comply, it's not about liability, it's

about tenant safety. Mr. Cobbett still feels this is a money grab because he said the insurance company has him over a barrel. Ms. Colcombe asked him if the insurance company inspects his properties when he renews. He said no.

Ms. Colcombe asked if there is a current fee for this service. Ms. Buono said there is no fee yet associated with this, that is why it is before the Board. Ms. Colcombe said that could be a lot of money for landlords to come up with for bi-annual inspections.

Chairman Bailey said the inspections cover life safety and is part of the Boards obligation to maintain that for the renters. The fee is part of doing business.

Ms. Colcombe asked if the \$75 is worth a 1-hour inspection, if so, a landlord with 20 apartments would cost \$1,500. She feels this cost will be absorbed by the tenants.

Ms. Buono said the town has received complaints about the condition of apartments. There are constant landlord/tenant issues because of safety issues. This adoption will make sure the apartments are following fire and safety codes. The goal is to get ahead of these issues instead of case by case. Ms. Buono said they heard from Meg Curtis recently who was looking for apartments for some folks and she said she could not believe the deplorable condition some of the apartments are in.

Ms. Colcombe asked if the complaints that are responded to, are the landlords being fined if they are not up to code? Are fines the way the town should be going instead of bi-annual inspections? Ms. Buono said the only fines a town can collect are usually those that a judge imposes, and orders paid to the Town. If the town gets a call from a tenant about an electrical issue, the Building Inspector has to inspect it, notify the landlord, provide an amount of time to fix it, and if it doesn't get fixed move on to court proceedings. The \$75 per unit every other year may seem like a "money grab" per Mr. Cobbett, but on the town side, the cost to get people into compliance once they are out of compliance, is costly and those are tax payer dollars you may never get back so she disagrees that it's a "money grab". Ms. Colcombe asked how the money collected will be utilized. Chairman Bailey said the money will be placed in the general fund as with other revenues. Revenues off-set the budget.

Ms. Colcombe is concerned from the result of this program will be increased rents and then more people homeless. Ms. Colcombe asked if the town is doing this at the expense of making housing spaces more unaffordable. Chairman Bailey said the town can't control the landlords.

Ms. Colcombe said these inspections have not begun and the salaries for the Fire Chief and the Code Enforcer are still being paid, their costs are covered through their 40 hour a week salary. Ms. Buono said this is the same concept as dispatch 24/7 that Ms. Colcombe was talking about earlier in this meeting, why is the town not increasing the rates to Antrim. Ms. Colcombe said it's not the same concept, dispatch is providing a service to outside towns and Antrim doesn't have to hire a dispatch service because Hillsborough is doing it. Ms. Buono said this is a service to rental properties. Ms. Colcombe said Hillsborough already has a Fire Chief and Building Inspector working full time, she doesn't feel this will add to the labor cost. Ms. Buono asked Ms. Colcombe if she feels that way, why charge for any building permits? Ms. Colcombe said this is a new service. Chairman Bailey said that doesn't mean the town shouldn't be doing the service and the town shouldn't be charging for it.

Ms. Colcombe asked where the \$75 cost came from. Selectwoman Campbell said she has seen on Facebook that people are saying they are paying \$1,200 a month rent for a dump. She feels

spending \$75 every two years to make sure the \$1,200 people are paying in rent is for a safe apartment isn't bad. Ms. Colcombe asked if there is a fee allowed in an RSA? Ms. Buono said the town can develop fees for inspections. Ms. Colcombe feels \$75 is too high.

Chairman Bailey closed the public hearing at 7:03 pm.

Chairman Bailey made a motion to adopt the Fire and Building Safety Code procedure, along with a \$75.00 fee, for the inspection of rental properties. Selectwoman Campbell seconded the motion, the motion passed.

9. ENCUMBRANCES

Ms. Buono explained that a cruiser was ordered in 2023 but the order was not fulfilled. The cruiser will be reordered in 2024.

Chairman Bailey made a motion to encumber \$61,500 for the purchase of a new cruiser for the police department. Selectwoman Campbell seconded the motion, the motion passed.

10. INVEST NH

Ms. Buono presented an updated delegation of authority, which is only good for 3 months. This provides the Town Administrator with the authority to sign documents as they come in.

Chairman Bailey made a motion to authorize the Town Administrator to sign the documents related to the implementation of programs administered through the NH Invest program. Selectwoman Campbell seconded the motion, the motion passed.

11. MOUNTED CAR RADAR UNIT

Chairman Bailey made a motion to enter into a grant agreement for radar dash units with the State of NH Department of Safety. The grant match amount is 2,367.21. A total amount of \$7,348.70 is being spent. Selectman Campbell seconded the motion, the motion passed.

Meeting adjourned at 7:10 pm

A true record
Mary Whalen
Recording Secretary

Date: _____

Approved by:
Hillsborough Selectboard

James C. Bailey, III, Chairman

Iris Campbell, Selectwoman

Richard Pelletier, Selectman