

**Town of Auburn  
Board of Selectmen  
November 25, 2019  
Minutes**

**Selectmen Present:** Richard Eaton, Keith Leclair and Todd Bedard

**Others Present** Shawn Stepp, David Rogers, Russell Sullivan, Susan Goodhue, Paula Marzloff, Marion Miller, Christine McLaughlin, Michael Rolfe, Michael DiPietro, Fire Chief Michael Williams, Police Chief Ray Pelton, Finance Assistant Patricia Rousseau, Parks & Recreation Coordinator Amy Lachance, Town Administrator William Herman and Nancy Hoijer, Recording Secretary

**Call to Order – Pledge of Allegiance**

Mr. Eaton called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Approval of Payroll Manifest for the Week of November 25, 2019 - \$56,871.50**

***Mr. Leclair motioned to approve the Payroll Manifest for the week of November 25, 2019 in the amount of \$56,871.50. Mr. Bedard seconded the motion, with all in favor, the motion passed unanimously.***

**Approval of Consent Agenda for the Week of November 25, 2019**

Mr. Eaton read out loud and offered for inspection a copy of the Consent Agenda for the Week of November 25, 2019 some of which included: Correspondence from Executive Council Theodore Gatsas, an Affirmation Letter/Grant Application to Walmart Foundation, NHDES Application for Renewal of Groundwater Management Permit for the old landfill, one (1) Void Check Manifest in the amount of \$11.09, one (1) Tax Collector's Warrant/Land Use Change Tax and one (1) pistol/revolver license.

***Mr. Leclair motioned to approve the Consent Agenda for the Week of November 25, 2019. Mr. Bedard seconded the motion, with all in favor, the motion passed unanimously.***

**Appointments with the Board**

**David Rogers – Marion Heald Scholarship Fund**

Mr. Herman provided the Board with a Memorandum dated November 18, 2019 concerning the proposal of David Rogers to discuss the future of the Marion Heald Scholarship Fund and the potential of the Town of Auburn accepting the fund through the Trustee of Trust Funds. Mr. Herman noted the approximate balance of the fund is \$22,000 with \$1,000 awarded annually to recipients. Mr. Herman has followed up with Terry Knowles at the NH Attorney General's Office Charitable Trusts Unit to understand what the Town needs to do and provided a copy of RSA 31:19-a. Mr. Herman provided wording for the proposed Warrant Article the Town would be required to place before the voters to authorize acceptance of the funds for the purposes of a trust fund. The purpose of Mr. Roger's visit with the Selectman was for the Selectmen to determine if they would be willing to place the proposed warrant article on the warrant or whether Mr. Rogers would need to submit the article by petition.

Mr. Herman outlined the steps the Foundation would need to take which include defining in writing the intent, purpose and authorization information; a representative of the Foundation should attend the February 1st Deliberative Session to answer voters questions; the Foundation should provide the information by February 5th for inclusion in the Voter Guide; and not transfer any funds until after the March 10th, 2020 Town Meeting.

Mr. Eaton noted Marion Heald, born Seavey, was an important Auburn resident and the family was in Town for years. Marion was a school nurse and taught a kindergarten class with Eileen Harris across the street. Mr. Eaton indicated he would like to see the scholarship fund stay in Auburn and benefit Auburn students.

Mr. Rogers indicated he was investigating other options such as having Dollars for Scholars take over the fund. Mr. Herman indicated if Mr. Rogers wanted to pursue having the Trustees manage the fund, then the Board would need to know by January 10<sup>th</sup>.

### **Patricia Rousseau – Community Room Usage Policy**

Mrs. Rousseau provided the Board with a copy of the Policy Concerning Use of the Community Room at the Auburn Safety Complex with proposed edits to the Scheduling section, Rental Fees, and Non-Profit Organizations.

Mrs. Rousseau appeared before the Selectman before to discuss how busy the Community Center has become. The Community Center is used by Town departments and other organizations who reserve time. Mrs. Rousseau would like to see everyone have a fair chance rather than one organization monopolizing the room. She suggested various solutions including limiting use of the room to three days per month per organization or troop, and charging five dollars per day after that to help offset maintenance and repairs. Mrs. Rousseau also noted some users are not cleaning up after using it, before the next group comes in. She would have to monitor that twice a day or more, and is unable to. Mrs. Rousseau would continue to give preference to the town departments and boards, specifically Police & Fire Departments and Parks & Recreation as originally intended. She reported one evening when the Center was triple booked and a fourth group showed up unscheduled due to not being aware of their scheduled times. Additional concerns are the Safety Complex is where the police station conducts its regular business and users of the center supervising children's activities often need to be reminded while it is a public place, it is not the best place for kids to hang out when people are being released, waiting for a ride or registering.

Chief Pelton noted the Center is also often used for staging in an emergency with other safety personnel who may come in and recommended a disclaimer so users understand in the event of an emergency they may get bumped.

Chief Pelton, Fire Chief Williams and Parks & Recreation Coordinator Amy Lachance agreed with the issues described by Mrs. Rousseau, and felt this was a workable proposal.

The Selectmen were in agreement with the changes Mrs. Rousseau proposed and Mr. Herman will bring in a clean copy of the policy for the Board's final review and approval at their next meeting.

## **Shawn Stapp – Solar Energy Systems Property Tax Exemption**

Mr. Herman provided the Board with a Memorandum dated November 20, 2019 concerning the Solar Energy Systems Property Tax Exemption proposed by some residents advancing a petition warrant article per RSA 72:61-64 for consideration by the legislative body. According to NH Office of Strategic Initiatives there are 135 municipalities offering some form of solar exemption. Mr. Herman noted the value of the exemption would need to be defined as a specific dollar amount or a percentage of assessed value of the solar energy systems. A sliding depreciation scale or some other formula would not be allowed to set an exemption. Currently there are 44 residential and commercial properties in Auburn that are assessed for solar energy systems. These assessments have added \$945,000 to the Town's net assessed valuation. The Building Inspector had an additional eight permits for additional installations since April 1<sup>st</sup> which could add \$171,818 to the Town's assessed valuation in 2020, bringing the total to \$1,116,818. As a result of adoption of a solar energy systems property tax exemption some or all of this assessed value would be removed from the Town's current tax base resulting in a tax rate increase of up to approximately 1.5 cents per thousand.

Mr. Stapp indicated his purpose is to encourage more renewable energy and wanted feedback from the Board of Selectmen to see if they would support the petition warrant article or have any recommendations or compromise to improve the article before it goes before the voters at Town Meeting. Mr. Stapp noted he did not want to be taxed for going green on energy and sought to remove the barriers for other people.

Mr. Leclair noted the Town offered exemptions for veterans, disabilities and elderly, but did not offer exemptions for what would be considered home improvements. The solar panels are taxed as an improvement and improve the value of your home. A realtor would point out that two identical homes side by side would have differing values if the solar panels are lowering their energy costs, the one with the panels would sell at a higher value. There are energy rebates and incentives offered at the federal and state levels. The burden would be pushed onto the taxpayers who do not have the benefit of the reduced energy savings, year after year. Mrs. Marzloff agreed and compared it to putting a sunroom on your home and being taxed on the full value of the improvement. The other taxpayers shouldn't be burdened with another taxpayer's interest in solar. Mr. Eaton added they have the benefit of selling the excess energy back to Eversource.

Mr. Bedard agreed he supports the concept as a private citizen, but not as benefit that would be shared equally by the Town.

## **Fire Chief Michael Williams – Monthly Meeting**

Chief Williams presented his monthly report for October 2019. There were 53 incidents in October. The new rescue is here, and training is ongoing. Manchester should be sending over their old engine/pumper this week after their two new engines come in. Police and Fire attended a WEB EOC class held by NH Homeland Security at the Safety Complex. AFD crews removed the old mezzanine at Station 2. Chief Williams attended the NH fire code update class at the NH Fire Academy.

Chief Williams reported an issue with the ladder jack which wouldn't retract and is probably a flaw that can be fixed with a retrofit repair. The boat has been removed from the lake. Mutual Aid with Chester is working well.

### **2020 Volunteer Fire Assistance Funds**

Chief Williams provided a copy of the notification letter from the NH Department of Natural and Cultural Resources Division of Forests and Lands dated October 25, 2019 notifying the Town has been awarded 2020 Volunteer Fire Assistance funds. This is a 50% matching grant for floating pumps, suction hose, and accessories in the amount of \$1,950.

### **FY2020 Budget – Per Diem Firefighters Wages**

Chief Williams provided the Board with a copy of the Calendar Year 2020 Operating Budget Proposal for Fire Personnel Stipend/Wages which reflected stipends and call firefighter wages and the proposed Per Diem firefighter's wages to fill shifts in times of need over the weekend and after normal business hours. Chief Williams is requesting \$19,968 for per diem firefighter wages, in addition to the \$51,853 stipend and call firefighter's wages and fire chief's part time wages of \$28,005. As proposed, the new budget request item would be for 24 hours per week @ \$16/hr. x 52 weeks.

Chief Williams noted weekend calls have increased and volunteerism response is down. Auburn is currently working with the Chester Fire Department on automatic responses which assists both communities with personnel and apparatus response.

Mr. Leclair noted with the budget not being approved until March, the first three months wouldn't be used. He suggested the Town look at this from as a pilot program from June to December is 30 weeks or 7 months. He thought if Auburn's Call firefighters were part of the per diem force, then Call firefighter wages should decrease by some amount off-setting part of the cost. Mr. Eaton suggested they begin the program as of May 1<sup>st</sup>, which Mr. Leclair calculated would be 35 weeks @ \$13,440.

***Mr. Leclair motioned to approve the FY2020 budget for Per Diem Firefighter Wages in the amount of \$13,440 for 24 hours @ \$16/hr. for 35 weeks beginning May 1, 2020. Mr. Bedard seconded the motion. With all in favor, the motion passed unanimously.***

### **FY 2020 Town Budget Presentations & Warrant Articles**

Mr. Herman provided a Memorandum to the Board dated November 19, 2019 concerning Final Items for FY2020 Operating Budget and Warrant Articles for the Auburn Police Union, the Town Rehabilitation Capital Reserve Fund, Appropriation to Town Properties CRF, Apparatus and Vehicles, Storage Garage Building, Conservation Easements.

### **Town Buildings Rehabilitation Capital Reserve Fund**

Mr. Herman noted a recommendation to appropriate up to \$70,000 to restore this fund to \$100,000.

Mr. Leclair indicated he felt the amount should be \$90,000 as the Board was planning on doing the insulation at the Safety Complex next year, which would cost approximately \$18,500 and bring the fund total under \$100,000. Mr. Eaton and Mr. Bedard said they were both more

comfortable with \$70,000, and Mr. Leclair indicated he was not opposed to that, as long as the Board recognized they have one project already planned for next year.

***Mr. Leclair motioned to approve appropriating \$70,000 to the Town Buildings Rehabilitation Capital Reserve Fund from the undesignated fund balance. Mr. Bedard seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion carried unanimously.***

#### **Town Properties Rehabilitation Expendable Trust Fund**

Mr. Herman noted this fund established with \$50,000 in 2019 has had no expenditures. The CIP calls for an appropriation of an additional \$50,000, however the Board may want to consider a smaller amount.

Mr. Leclair recommended lowering this to \$25,000 and noted this could be used for Wayne Eddows project, LED street lights or mosquito spraying next year.

***Mr. Leclair motioned to approve appropriating \$25,000 to the Town Properties Rehabilitation Expendable Trust Fund, previously established, from the undesignated fund balance. Mr. Bedard seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed unanimously.***

#### **Apparatus and Vehicles Expendable Trust Fund**

Mr. Herman noted this is a new fund to be considered for establishment in 2020 to be used as a reserve for unanticipated expenses for maintenance and/or replacement of the fleet of vehicles and equipment utilized by Town departments. The Capital Improvements Plan calls for an initial allocation of \$10,000.

Mr. Leclair felt this amount was low and recommended increasing it to \$25,000. Mr. Bedard and Mr. Eaton agreed.

***Mr. Leclair motioned to establish an Expendable Trust Fund pursuant to RSA 31:19-a to enable the Town to address large unanticipated expenses in the operation, maintenance and/or replacement of the fleet of vehicles and equipment utilized by Town departments; to raise and appropriate \$25,000 to put in the fund, with this amount to come from the undesignated fund balance. Mr. Bedard seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed unanimously.***

#### **Storage Garage Building**

Mr. Herman noted the Board has been discussing the potential building of a 20'x40' storage building on the Safety Complex property at 55 Eaton Hill Road with an estimated cost of \$40,000. The 2020 allocation of Municipal Aid from the State could be used for this project in a warrant article.

Mr. Bedard noted he was previously not in favor of this until he went around with Parks & Recreation to see how much of the Town's equipment and tools are being stored in people's garages all over Town. Mr. Bedard would like to see this become a community involvement project. Mr. Herman noted if money were saved it would be returned to reduce the taxes.

Mr. DiPietro asked if the previous committee had discussed this – no. Mr. Eaton noted the building could have one garage door and one walkout door beside it. Mr. Leclair noted it could be shared storage with the police and fire departments and be segmented inside or perhaps have an additional garage door/access door.

***Mr. Leclair motioned to raise and appropriate \$43,000 for the purpose of building a 20'x40' storage building on Town property at 55 Eaton Hill Road to come from the Municipal Aid revenue from the State of New Hampshire with no additional amount to be raised by taxation in 2020. Mr. Bedard seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed unanimously.***

### **Insulation of Safety Complex**

Mr. Herman noted the Board agreed insulating the attic area of the Safety Complex is a priority item and secured an estimate for \$18,315. Funding could come from either the FY2020 budget, warrant article or from the Town Building Rehabilitation Fund.

Mr. Eaton noted this could be addressed next year through the Town Building Rehabilitation Fund. He wanted to investigate how a similar insulation project in Salem turned out.

### **Streetlights LED Conversion**

Mr. Herman noted the Board has considered the conversion of streetlights to LED units. The Board is gathering information to consider this for FY2021.

Mr. Bedard noted the LED lights were bright but adjustable when installed at five different levels. Abutting property owners should be notified if the Town decides to eliminate any existing lights.

Mr. Leclair noted this project could also be addressed next year.

### **Rescind Bond Authorization for Conservation Easements**

Mr. Leclair discussed the language of the 2003 Warrant Article concerning appropriation of Conservation Commission funds up to the sum of \$2,000,000 for acquisition of conservation easements or open space lands by the Town and to authorize up to \$2,000,000 of bonds and/or notes of up to 15 years. Specific property or easements for purchase must be presented to either an annual or special town meeting by warrant article to ratify a majority vote of the parcel and ownership interest chosen by the Commission. Rescinding this Town Meeting vote from 2003 under Article #3 would require a two-thirds vote. Mr. Eaton noted not rescinding the article could have negative consequences one day. He felt there was already about 6,000 acres of open space land in conservation in perpetuity already including the lands owned by Manchester Water Works.

Mr. Leclair noted it can wait to see how the Budget Committee feels about this.

### **New Business**

#### **Primex Cyber Pilot Program**

Mr. Herman noted Auburn was one of five public entities selected by Primex to be part of the cyber pilot program to test systems, personnel practices and procedures and ultimately provide recommendations to the Town. There are five entities in total which he thought included another municipality, two school districts and a county. He was including the police department,

Finance Director and Town IT vendor in the work group for this effort, although all town systems would be checked. There is no cost to the Town for this effort. Primex is investing \$50,000 into the pilot program with the understanding the general information gained will be of overall benefit to all Primex members.

## **Old Business**

### **2019 Groundwater Monitoring Periodic Summary Report**

Mr. Herman provided the Board with a copy of a letter dated November 20, 2019 from the NH DES concerning 2019 Groundwater Monitoring of the former Auburn Landfill Site at Chester Turnpike Summary Report. NHDES was in agreement with the Stantec recommendations for future actions by the Town.

### **Addition to Police Department**

Mr. Eaton reported the cabinets came in today, the flooring was done last week, Saturday the painter put on the primer and first coat, Sunday the ceiling contractor will put in the grids for the lights next week and AAA will do the diffusers. The range was ordered. The fire alarms and smokes will be in. The electrician will do the new LEDs in the addition and the current police department. The Plumber is coming the week of December 9<sup>th</sup> and the ceiling contractor will be back December 8<sup>th</sup> or 9<sup>th</sup> to put the ceiling tiles in, with the whole project to be finished by December 15<sup>th</sup>.

### **Report/Comments of Ex-Officio Board Representatives**

Mr. Leclair noted the Budget Committee met at the Auburn Village School. There are still three lines open including SPED transport, a Pinkerton tuition increase and lawn mowing. The students graduating from Pinkerton from Auburn are 53 next year with 80 freshmen going in. Tuition would increase by 27 students at \$12-\$13,000 per student, in addition to a projected four percent increase. He noted the Budget Committee added \$5,000 to the budget to provide an incentive to filling vacancies in the custodial staff as a sign-on bonus and retention bonus for the one janitor on staff now. There should be five on staff including the director, and there is currently one and the director. And the school now has an additional 30,000 square feet to maintain.

Mr. Leclair noted Planning Board discussed the merger of three lots on Rattlesnake Hill Road /Tanglewood. Five more building permits were granted on Haven Drive. The first draft of the 55 and older and the lighting ordinances are being worked on. Someone requested a moratorium on building in Auburn and did not know Auburn already had a growth ordinance in place. Someone requested new poles on Priscilla Lane with the last two units being sold.

## **Other Business**

Goal Setting Meeting – January 16<sup>th</sup> - 9:30 AM

Mr. Eaton noted the meeting, which he expected to be similar to last year, was very beneficial.

### **Next Meetings/Events**

Monday, December 2, 2019 – Board of Selectman's Meeting – 7:00 PM

Monday, December 16, 2019 – Board of Selectman's Meeting – 7:00 PM

## Minutes

- November 18, 2019 Public Meeting

***Mr. Bedard motioned to approve the minutes of the November 18, 2019 Public Meeting, as amended. Mr. Leclair seconded the motion, with all in favor, the motion passed unanimously.***

- November 18, 2019 Non-Public Meeting

***Mr. Bedard motioned to approve the non-public minutes of the November 18, 2019 Public Meeting. Mr. Leclair seconded the motion, with all in favor, the motion passed unanimously.***

## Adjourn

***Mr. Eaton motioned to adjourn the meeting at 9:30 PM. Mr. Leclair seconded the motion, with all in favor, the motion passed unanimously.***

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy J. Hoijer,  
Recording Secretary