

**Town of Auburn
Board of Selectmen
December 14, 2020
Minutes
7:00 PM**

Selectmen Present: Keith Leclair, Todd Bedard and Michael Rolfe

Others Present: Conservation Commission Chair Jeff Porter, Jeremy Lougee of the Southeast Land Trust of NH, Library Director Kathryn Gowney, Library Trustees Nancy Mayland and Elizabeth Michaud, Michael DiPietro, Sergeant James Huard, Finance Director Adele Frisella, Town Administrator William Herman and Nancy Hoijer, Recording Secretary

Call to Order – Pledge of Allegiance

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

Approval of Accounts Payable Manifest for the Week of December 14, 2020 - \$270,402.90

Mr. Bedard motioned to approve the Accounts Payable Manifest for the Week of December 14, 2020 in the amount of \$270,402.90. Mr. Rolfe seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed unanimously.

Approval of Accounts Payable Manifest for the Week of December 14, 2020 - \$2,430.00

Mr. Bedard motioned to approve the Accounts Payable Manifest for the Week of December 14, 2020 in the amount of \$2,430. Mr. Leclair seconded the motion. A vote was taken, Mr. Rolfe abstained, Mr. Leclair voted – aye and Mr. Bedard voted – aye. The motion passed 2-0-1.

Approval of Consent Agenda – Week of December 14, 2020

Mr. Leclair read out loud the Consent Agenda for the Week of December 14, 2020 some of which included: four (4) Abatement/Refund Requests (3 overpayments and 1 duplicate payment), one (1) Tax Collector's Warrant, one (1) Application for Property Tax Credit/Veteran Exemption, correspondence to Non-First Responder Town & Library Employees and one (1) Pistol/Revolver License.

Mr. Bedard motioned to approve the Consent Agenda for the Week of December 14, 2020. Mr. Rolfe seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed unanimously.

Appointments with the Board

Jeremy Lougee of SELT & Conservation Commission Chair Jeff Porter – Sanborn Conservation Easement

Mr. Herman provided a Memorandum dated December 11, 2020, due diligence information package prepared by the SELT and a copy of the Conservation Commission's meeting minutes of March 6, 2020 which contain a vote for withdrawal of funds in the amount of \$160,000 for the acquisition of the Conservation Easement for the Sanborn property located on Dearborn Road

and Chester Turnpike, Tax Map 11, Lot 19. \$160,000 is the cost to the Town of the approximate \$1.3 million project cost for the 211-acre easement. The Commission held the public hearing on the withdrawal of funds on April 7, 2020. The balance of funding will come from other sources. The Commission has been working with SELT and property owners Brenda and Robert Sanborn to secure the easement for several years. The Commission and SELT are seeking the Board's agreement to accept executory interests provided in the easement on behalf of the Town of Auburn in order to complete the project.

Mr. Bedard moved to accept the proposed executory interests of the conservation easement on approximately 211.324-acres of land located on Dearborn Road and Chester Turnpike (Tax Map #11, Lot #19) and further to authorize the Board of Selectmen Chairman and the Chairman of the Auburn Conservation Commission to sign all appropriate documents to complete the transaction. Mr. Rolfe seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed unanimously.

Town Response to Covid-19 and State of Emergency Declaration

General Update on Town Issues

Sergeant Huard reported there were 15 active cases in the Town of Auburn. Mr. Herman reported the Fire Department is being given an electrostatic sprayer by the State and will be picking it up tomorrow. Chief Williams has offered to spray the Town Hall once per week.

Town Budget Presentations

Storage Garage Building

Mr. Leclair summarized the history of funding approved by the Town for the proposed 20'x40' storage building and the reduction in funding by the State to \$38,000. Mr. Leclair reviewed the proposals that were received from Belletetes and Pidcor. The 20'x40' wooden building will cost approximately \$60,000. A 20'x60' wooden building would cost approximately \$72,290 with a placeholder for labor in the estimate. Pidcor proposed \$81,800 for the 20'x60' steel garage with three doors on a concrete slab. Mr. Leclair noted he has asked Pidcor if they can hold the price going into another year. Mr. Leclair noted \$10,000 for electrical and \$8,000 for the partitions is conservative.

Mr. Leclair recommended going with a storage building that was maintenance free such as the metal building. Mr. Bedard recommended that it not appear too industrial looking.

The Board determined based on the estimates provided thus far that the larger building would cost between \$70,000 and \$81,800 and agreed they wanted the larger building but needed to fund the difference of approximately \$43,000. Mr. Leclair noted it was important to let the taxpayers know the building was underfunded and that is why it did not happen last year.

The Board discussed funding options. Mr. Rolfe felt it was better to have the people vote on it. Mr. Bedard agreed the Town should vote even if the tax impact is zero to state where the funding is coming from. Mr. Herman will draw up the proposed Warrant Article for the next Board meeting for the estimated \$81,800 project total offset by revenue. Ms. Frisella noted it would state that the Town is using \$38,000 from FY 2020 toward the cost.

Electronic Records Storage

Mr. Herman described the process for the Town's proposed electronic records storage and presented the proposed FY 21 budget for the \$25,000 cost. Mr. Herman recommended the project be withdrawn this year. It is a multi-year project that will take approximately a minimum of two to three years. Mr. Leclair asked about monthly storage costs and whether it had to be offsite or if it could be stored in place with the cost of a hard drive being less expensive. Mr. Herman will check on that.

Capital Reserve & Expendable Trust Funds

Mr. Herman provided the Board with a summary of the anticipated year end fund balances of the major capital reserve or expendable trust funds available to the Town:

Town Buildings Rehabilitation Fund:	\$141,399.03
Town Property Rehabilitation Fund:	\$ 58,200.00
Equipment and Fleet Maintenance Fund:	\$ 20,900.50
Accrued Benefits Liability Reserve Fund:	\$ 30,671.14

Mr. Leclair noted the Town's undesignated fund balance value is approximately \$2.6 million dollars. Ms. Frisella explained it is not an actual bank account, but rather the equity the Town has in expected revenues. Mr. Leclair noted the Town is likely to add a couple hundred thousand to it this year.

Mr. Leclair noted the Town Buildings Rehabilitation Fund is scheduled in the CIP for \$25,000 to be added every other year and the Town Property Rehabilitation Fund is scheduled in the CIP for \$10,000 to be added every other year. Mr. Leclair noted the softball field lights project has been pushed back to 2022 with a cost of \$65,000; \$25,000 could be added to the Property Rehabilitation Fund toward that.

Mr. Herman noted \$98,000 was added to the Buildings Rehabilitation Fund last year for renovations to Pingree Hill Fire Station and were not used as they were funded by the CARES Act. The Library is obtaining estimates for replacement of three of its mini split air conditioning units of \$10-\$12,000 each and the Town Hall roof shingles are approximately 15 years old. Mr. Herman noted the Board moved purchase of police cameras, fire radios and computer software up to this year out of FY 2020 funds. Mr. Leclair proposed adding \$25,000 to the Buildings Rehabilitation Fund.

Mr. Leclair noted \$25,000 could be transferred to the Equipment Maintenance Fund toward the Fire Department Tanker scheduled to be replaced within the next two years.

Mr. Herman and Ms. Frisella detailed the purpose and intent of the Accrued Benefits Liability Reserve Fund noting that it has made payments to employees for what they Town owes them when they leave, but funds have not been added to since its initial funding eight or nine years ago. Mr. Bedard asked if the fund was for all Town employees including the Police Department and Ms. Frisella noted yes, it is. Mr. Leclair proposed adding \$10,000 to the fund.

Mr. Leclair noted Fire Chief Williams has asked to create a Cistern and Dry Hydrant Emergency Maintenance Reserve Fund with an initial appropriation of \$5,000 to be like funded annually for six years as reflected in the CIP. Mr. Leclair recommended that it made sense to add this to the Town Property Rehabilitation Fund.

Mr. Herman noted the Equipment and Fleet Maintenance Fund could be used for repair or replacement.

The Board and the Road Agent proposed establishing an Emergency Repair Fund of potentially \$100,000 to assist the Town with repairs following a major disaster incident such as a flood, major winter and ice storms, etc. Mr. Leclair recommended an initial funding to create the fund of \$100,000 and questioned whether it should also be used for reconstruction. The Board agreed it should be for emergencies. Mr. Herman indicated when FEMA reimburses the Town for an event it takes many months to be considered for a qualified event with reimbursement at 75%. Mr. Rolfe noted construction standards for culverts etc. have to be built to FEMA standards to be considered for reimbursement after an event, which adds to the cost of initial construction with no guarantee. Mr. Herman will prepare a Warrant Article to create the fund for emergencies with \$100,000 to come out of the fund balance.

Mr. Leclair recommended a Warrant Article to change the name of the Town Buildings Rehabilitation Fund to include "Construction." Mr. Leclair noted the fund could be used to assist with the cost of the media center/library expansion.

The Board discussed last spring creating a Warrant Article to change the Tax Collector position from elected to appointed and agreed it would be done in a year the Tax Collector is not up for election.

Mr. Herman asked the Board if they would like the Warrant Articles concerning the reserve fund accounts to be combined into one warrant article or individual articles per fund. The Board agreed there should be one for those four funds.

Additional Part-Time Position for Griffin Library

Mr. Herman indicated a year ago a part-time summer position was put into the Library's budget as an anticipated cost of \$1,800 but never filled. Mrs. Growney indicated the position was dropped from this year's proposed budget and she would like to budget the same amount. The position would be part-time, most likely on Saturdays during the summer.

Mrs. Growney also noted the staff had reduced schedules in 2020 due to the pandemic and those changes were carried forward in the 2021 budget, which she felt would actually reduce their pay in 2021. Mr. Herman suggested the request would likely increase the budget by approximately \$7,700. Mr. Leclair requested the proposed hours be provided by the Library to Finance Director Frisella so that a cost estimate could be provided of the hours rather than the dollars as the worksheet provided did not show an increase in hours.

Old Business

Update on Street Lights – LED Conversion Project

Mr. Herman reported the LED Conversion work was completed on Wednesday and look good.

Report/Comments of Ex-officio Board Representatives

Mr. Leclair reported the Budget Committee met last Thursday. Mr. Villeneuve informed him the Auburn School District would like to do Deliberate Session in person with the location to be the school gym or cafeteria. This year the Town goes first.

Mr. Rolfe reported the Police Commission met and there was a motion to support a warrant article to rescind the Commission because they are not sure it is useful anymore. Mr. Leclair noted the Commission can't take the action themselves and Mr. Rolfe noted it would have to be by Special Petition. Mr. Herman noted there are no appropriations associated with a petition so the Board of Selectmen would not have to recommend or not recommend. Mr. Herman noted the petition deadline would be mid-January.

Next Meetings/Events

Monday, December 21, 2020 – Board of Selectmen's Meeting – 7:00 PM

Minutes

December 7, 2020 Public Meeting Minutes

Mr. Bedard motioned to approve the December 7, 2020 Public Meeting Minutes. Mr. Rolfe seconded the motion. With all in favor, the motion passed unanimously.

Adjourn

Mr. Rolfe motioned to adjourn the meeting at 8:18 PM. Mr. Bedard seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy Hoijer,
Recording Secretary