

**Town of Auburn
Board of Selectmen
February 22, 2021
Minutes
7:00 PM**

Selectmen Present: Keith Leclair, Todd Bedard and Michael Rolfe

Others Present: Rob Koester, Consolidated Communications; Police Chief Ray Pelton, Michael DiPietro, Finance Director Adele Frisella, and Nancy Hoijer, Recording Secretary

Call to Order – Pledge of Allegiance

Mr. Leclair called the meeting to order at 6:59 PM and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of Accounts Payable Manifest for the week of February 22, 2021 - \$169,012.84

Mr. Bedard motioned to approve the Accounts Payable Manifest for the week of February 22, 2021 in the amount of \$169,012.84. 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 February 22, 2021 - \$16,572.50

Mr. Bedard motioned to approve the Accounts Payable Manifest for the week of February 22, 2021 in the amount of \$16,572.50. 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 Payroll Manifest for the week of February 15, 2021 - \$48,242.63

Mr. Bedard motioned to approve the Payroll Manifest for the week of February 15, 2021 in the amount of \$48,242.63. Mr. Rolfe seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed unanimously.

Approval of Consent Agenda for the week of February 22, 2021

Mr. Leclair read out loud and offered for inspection the Consent Agenda for the week of February 22, 2021 which included: three (3) pistol permits, one (1) All Veteran's

Deduction, one (1) Elderly Exemption Credit, one (1) Abatement Application and a manifest for two (2) voided checks.

Mr. Bedard motioned to approve the Consent Agenda for the week of February 22, 2021. Mr. Rolfe seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed unanimously.

Appointments with the Board

Consolidated Communications

Rob Koester presented a proposal to the Board for bringing broadband service for telephone and internet to Auburn. Mr. Koester explained that RSA 33:3-g regulates municipal bond legislation. Mr. Koester explained the process which he recommended begin with establishing a committee. A Request for Information (RFI) would go out to all providers. A map of the Town would be generated, then the Town would generate a Request for Proposals (RFP) to bidders for the Town to ultimately select a provider. The Committee would begin the Request for Information template in the spring to providers, and are required to provide potential vendors two months to respond to it. He felt the Town would then go out with a Request for Proposal in August or September and the issue could ultimately move to a public vote at the March Town voting. The governing board is required to hold two public hearings in which the provider would present, in addition to formally meeting with the Budget Committee. Bonds are issued twice a year by the NH Municipal Bond Bank, usually in the spring and the fall. He indicated for broadband, the bonds are typically issue between June and July. Construction would begin after the bond is issued in late 2022 or early 2023.

RSA 33:3-g allows Towns to bond and the public would vote on that bond at Town voting in March. Mr. Koester indicated there would with no property tax increase to taxpayers for the costs of this type of bond. He reported five NH communities have begun changing over to the fiber optic network and 15 are expected to later this year.

Mr. Koester indicated he would supply the Board with the Southwest Regional Planning Resource Guide and blueprint and references from other towns. The Town would own the network one built and set up an operating agreement which would pay the Town annually to offset the principal and interest of the bond. Mr. Koester estimated a bond of \$1.3 to \$1.8 million issued for a 20 year period would likely be the best option for a project in Auburn. Mr. Koester indicated subscribers would see a small surcharge each month of between \$6-8.

Mr. DiPietro asked how the fiber optic lines compared with traditional lines such as offered by Comcast which degrade over time. Mr. Koester noted fiber optic is glass, flexible, resilient and uses light impulses with easy troubleshooting. However, once the

service is off it is off, the service goes down until repaired rather than suffering a degraded service.

Mr. DiPietro asked if there would be multiple providers or one, and Mr. Koester noted RSA 33:3-g is designed to have the Town pick one provider for the length of the bond. Mr. Leclair noted the Town is free to select the provider after the bond is paid in approximately 20 years. Mr. Koester noted at that time the Town could become its own provider or enter into an agreement with another provider, and the end user fee goes away.

Mr. Bedard asked how big the Committee should be and Mr. Koester noted it can be one person or several with persons. He recommended the Board consider individuals with experience in IT, infrastructure, finance and municipalities.

Mr. Koester noted there are four tiers of pricing beginning with 50 mgb at \$35/mo., which would increase to \$50/mo. in the following two years with three other tiers of speed available with packages ranging from \$55/mo., \$65/mo. and \$120/mo. for the first year. Ten dollars would be subtracted each month if not using their equipment.

Mr. Rolfe asked if power went out would the service still be usable and Mr. Koester stated no, it would not and recommended having a generator or battery backup.

Mr. Leclair recommended putting an article in the Town Crier in April offering for residents to join the Committee.

Town Response to COVID-19 and State of Emergency Declaration

General Update on Town Issues

Chief Pelton reported a big drop in positive cases down to 24 with no EMS personnel currently affected. Some officers are reporting to assist with vaccine centers and are excited to be able to help. PPE supplies are good.

New Business

2020 Encumbered Funds

Finance Director Adele Frisella provided a Memorandum dated February 22, 2021 relative to 2020 Encumbered Amounts for the past year end of December 31, 2020 representing expenditures not made before the end of 2020 with projects agreed to in 2020, or previously. These items include:

Griffin Mill Bridge which is not anticipated to begin until July of 2022/2023 with \$109,465.50 encumbered.

Records Preservation will not be complete until 2021 with \$1,940 encumbered.

Library Building Review for \$11,298 will not be complete until 2021 with two contracts currently in place including a Library Consultant for \$10,000 and Library Engineering with a balance of \$1,298

Mr. Bedard motioned to encumber \$122,703.50 for the FY 2020 year as presented. Mr. Rolfe seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed unanimously.

2019 Audited Financials

Ms. Frisella provided the Board with a copy of the FY 2020 audit report.

Liberty Wood Surety Reduction

Land Use Administrator Denise Royce provided the Board with a letter dated February 18, 2021 regarding the February 17, 2021 Planning Board vote to recommend the reduction of surety for Liberty Woods Subdivision, Freedom Lane (Tax Map 8, Lot 42). The Planning Board recommended to reduce the surety by \$103,510 leaving a balance of \$72,380 as noted in the Estimate Worksheet dated December 15, 2020. Stantec's recommendation letter dated December 15, 2020 was attached. A letter from Fire Chief Michael Williams dated December 2, 2020 reported testing the cistern with flow of 1045 GPM which passed the flow testing requirements.

Mr. Bedard motioned to approve the recommendation of the Planning Board to reduce the surety for Liberty Woods Subdivision (Tax Map 8, Lot 42), from \$103,510 to \$72,380. Mr. Rolfe seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed unanimously.

11 Rockingham Road Surety Reduction

Land Use Administrator Denise Royce provided the Board with a letter dated February 18, 2021 regarding the February 17, 2021 Planning Board vote to recommend the reduction of surety for 11 Rockingham Road (Tax Map 31, Lot 19). The Planning Board recommended to reduce the surety by \$10,089.40 leaving a balance of \$3,500 as noted in Stantec's letter dated February 5, 2021. Stantec's recommendation letter dated February 5, 2021 was attached. A letter dated August 5, 2020 from Wayne E. Kenney Builders LLC was provided concerning landscaping.

Mr. Bedard motioned to approve the recommendation of the Planning Board to reduce the surety for 11 Rockingham Road (Tax Map 31, Lot 19) by \$10,089.40 to \$3,500. Mr. Rolfe seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed unanimously.

Municipal Building LED Upgrade – Information

Mr. Leclair provided a packet from Affinity LED Lighting the Town Administrator received concerning upgrade proposal for LED Lighting at municipal buildings. The Board, after reviewing the packet and its Financial Summary, noted clarification was needed for the estimates provided for retrofit versus new construction prices, a combined project estimate of \$82,400. The projected annual savings is \$7,000. Mr. Bedard will follow up with Mr. Herman. Mr. Leclair asked to leave the matter under old business to follow up at the next meeting.

Landfill Groundwater Monitoring – Stantec Proposal

Mr. Herman provided the Board with a Memorandum dated February 11, 2021 concerning the Landfill Monitoring Annual Report for 2020 and Proposal for Landfill Monitoring Services in FY 2021. Stantec provided the report documenting data from the four original monitoring wells, two designated surface water sampling locations and two new additional monitoring wells installed in 2020 on the Town's closed landfill property. Stantec provided a copy of the summary results and submission to NHDES with no significant change and recommendations for testing in 2021. The estimated cost is \$9,400 for the required work which the Town budgeted for \$10,050.

Mr. Bedard moved to accept the proposal provided by Stantec Consulting Services, Inc. dated February 10, 2021 for 2021 GMP Monitoring Activities at the closed Auburn Landfill site and to authorize the Town Administrator to execute the proposal on behalf of the Town of Auburn. Mr. Rolfe seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed unanimously.

Old Business

Street Light Repairs

Mr. Leclair reported he inspected the light at Rattlesnake Hill Road and Wilson's Crossing Road, and it was in working order.

Safety Complex Insulation

Mr. Rolfe reported there has been no new information received concerning this project.

CAI Agreement

Land Use Administrator Denise Royce provided the Board with an e-mail communication dated February 22, 2021 from Cartographics Associates, Inc. (CAI) indicating they would offer the Town a three-year agreement for the online property tax map and tax card system rather than the auto-renewal previously proposed and which

the Board indicated it was not in favor of at the February 8th Board of Selectmen's meeting. The Board agreed they'd consider the three-year agreement once it was formally received.

Town Hall Parking Lights

Finance Director Adele Frisella reported J&M Electric took down the fixtures at Town Hall's parking lot that were not working and will figure out how to seal the fixtures so that water does not get into them and will report back to the Town on how to fix them.

Report/Comments of Ex-Officio Board Representatives

Mr. Bedard reported Highway Safety met and discussed the parking signs on Morgen Drive that were placed to deal with the overflow of vehicles parking to visit Tower Hill. Chief Pelton noted the signs need to be reworded.

Mr. Bedard reported Parks & Recreation met to discuss use of the town fields by residents from out of town and increasing the rate charged under the current policy. The pickup truck needs repair and may be worth replacing. Chief Pelton noted the Department may have a vehicle aging out that could pull a light trailer.

Mr. Rolfe reported the Planning Board met and discussed the surety reductions and new business use potentially a brewery coming in. A proposed lot line adjustment in the Tanglewood area may trigger the need for a minor subdivision.

Mr. DiPietro asked if the Auburn School District has passed papers yet on the property it is selling and Mr. Leclair indicated the purchase and sales agreement has not been signed yet and he will get an update.

Mr. Leclair reported the Board will be meeting with Manchester Water Works on March 22nd.

Other Business

Mr. Herman provided the Board with a Memorandum dated February 12, 2021 relative to the potential increased State and Federal revenue for municipalities. Rooms and Meals Tax revenue sharing with municipalities were increased by the Governor by up to \$5 million in each year of his proposed two-year State budget. The Highway Block Grant funding is proposed to be reduced by the Governor by \$3.1 million in 2022 and the State Bridge Aid Program is proposed to be reduced by the Governor's budget proposal from its historic \$6.8 million to \$6 million. The Biden Administration and Congress are developing a \$1.9 trillion Covid-19 Relief Package which could send upwards of \$1.6 billion in funding to New Hampshire. Auburn is likely to be included

with other communities that do not meet Community Development Block Grant funding standards splitting approximately \$19.5 million in direct funding. These funds would be allowed to make up revenue lost or delayed due to the pandemic or cover expenses. And FEMA is going to be covering 100% of expenses incurred by local governments as a result of the Covid-19 disaster declaration issued in March 2020. Normally, FEMA covers 75% of the eligible costs, with the municipality responsible for the remaining 25%. Mr. Herman noted the NH Division of Emergency Management is awaiting guidance for allowed expenses and how to claim them.

Next Meeting/Events

Monday, March 8, 2021 Board of Selectmen's Meeting – 7 PM
Tuesday, March 9, 2021 Town Election – 7 AM – 7 PM
Monday, March 22, 2021 Board of Selectmen's Workshop Meeting – 6 PM
Monday, March 22, 2021 Board of Selectmen's Meeting – 7 PM

Minutes

February 8, 2021 – Public Meeting Minutes

Mr. Rolfe motioned to amend and approve the February 8, 2021 Public Meeting Minutes by including a reference to an unauthorized vehicles sign under Other Business. Mr. Bedard seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed unanimously.

February 8, 2021 – Non-Public Meeting Minutes (x3)

Mr. Rolfe motioned to approve the February 8, 2021 Non-Public Meeting Minutes (x3). Mr. Bedard seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor the motion passed unanimously.

Non-Public Session pursuant to RSA 91-A: 3, II (a) & (c) compensation of a public employee and reputation of someone other than a Board member

Mr. Leclair motioned to go into non-public session pursuant to RSA 91-A: 3, II (a) & (c) compensation of a public employee and reputation of someone other than a Board member. Mr. Rolfe seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken Mr. Bedard – aye, Mr. Leclair – aye and Mr. Rolfe – aye. The motion passed unanimously.

The meeting room was closed to the public at 8:10 PM.

Mr. Bedard motioned to come out of non-public session at 8:21 PM. Mr. Rolfe seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Bedard motioned to seal the minutes of the non-public session. Mr. Rolfe seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Rolfe motioned to approve a step increase for the Parks & Recreation Coordinator from a Labor Grade 6, Step 10 to a Labor Grade 6, Step 11 based on a positive performance evaluation. Mr. Bedard seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed unanimously.

Adjourn

Mr. Bedard motioned to adjourn at 8:21 PM. Mr. Rolfe seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy Hoijer
Recording Secretary