

**Town of Auburn  
Board of Selectmen  
October 4, 2021  
Town Hall  
Minutes**

**6:00 PM**

**Site Walk – Highway Department Property – 273 Chester Turnpike**

**Selectmen Present:** Keith Leclair and Michael Rolfe

**Others Present:** Road Agent Michael Dross

The Town official tours the highway property at 273 Chester Turnpike including the salt and sand storage facilities and the former incinerator building converted to a garage facility approximately 15 years ago.

During the course of the tour, a number of physical building improvements were noted as needed at the sand storage shed and the Highway garage. Among the items noted were:

- Metal roof is deteriorating
- Storage section/garage door
- Couple of doors in the maintenance building
- Insulation deteriorating
- Undersized heating units

Mr. Leclair indicated the Board would discuss the potential repairs further at their meeting at 7:00 PM.

The site walk concluded at 6:35 PM.

**7:00 PM**

**Selectmen Present:** Keith Leclair, Todd Bedard and Michael Rolfe

**Others Present:** Conservation Commission Chairman Jeff Porter, Building Inspector Carrie Rouleau-Cote, Mike DiPietro, Steve Kimball, Animal Control Officer Jarlene Cornett, Planning Board Chairman Ronald Poltak, Finance Assistant Mimi Friolet, Finance Director Patricia Rousseau 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 October 4, 2021 - \$1,187,201.50**

***Mr. Bedard motioned to approve the Accounts Payable Manifest for the week of October 4, 2021 in the amount of \$1,187,201.50. 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 October 4, 2021**

Mr. Leclair read out loud and provided for inspection a copy of the Consent Agenda for the week of October 4, 2021 some of which included: one cemetery deed for Longmeadow Cemetery.

***Mr. Bedard motioned to approve the Consent Agenda for the week of October 4, 2021. Mr. Rolfe seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed unanimously.***

## **FY 2022 Town Budget**

### **Building Inspector – Carrie Rouleau-Cote**

Building Inspector Carrie Rouleau-Cote presented the proposed FY 2022 Budget for the Building Inspector of \$12,150 which is a 4% increase over last year.

Mrs. Rouleau-Cote noted the dues and seminar line was cut last year due to Covid but training is picking up; some hybrid, some in-person. She recently attended the ICC Annual Meeting in Pennsylvania. There was another in Amherst, but she usually chooses one or the other.

Mrs. Rouleau-Cote noted the legal fees line was underspent this year. There were some reimbursements with only \$920 spent of \$5,000 budgeted. Courts were not in session. She reported having new legal representation this year.

Mrs. Rouleau-Cote noted the online permitting software provider abruptly ended service in August. The new software provider is a bit more expensive than previous but is a more streamlined service which will allow her to schedule inspections, and create reports with Avitar in addition to the permitting contractors the convenience of using an online program to apply and make payments. The start-up would be \$7,500 and annually cost about half of that but some other software could be replaced with it. This would come out of the administrative line, not her budget. She hopes to have it in place at the beginning of the year and has spoken with the Town's IT provider about it.

Mrs. Rouleau-Cote reported approximately 600 permits issued this year for electric, plumbing and mechanical; 25 new homes with the big 55+ coming soon. The 55+ subdivision recently got approval at the Zoning Board of Adjustment to exceed more permits than typically allowed per year under the growth management ordinance which fits into the Master Plan for elderly, workforce and disabled who can be exempt from the 3% rule.

***Mr. Bedard motioned to approve the FY 2022 Building Inspector budget in the amount of \$12,150. Mr. Rolfe seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed unanimously.***

#### **Animal Control – Jarlene Cornett**

Jarlene Cornett presented the proposed Animal Control Budget for FY 2022 in the amount of \$2,390 which is level funded from last year with no changes.

Ms. Cornett noted a lot of people adopted rescue animals this year, some of which are prone to run off and need for her to bring back.

***Mr. Bedard motioned to approve the FY 2022 Animal Control budget in the amount of \$2,390. Mr. Rolfe seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed unanimously.***

#### **Planning & Zoning – Ron Poltak**

Ron Poltak presented the proposed budget for FY 2022 for Planning & Zoning in the amount of \$35,150 which is a decrease from last year.

Mr. Poltak noted no substantial changes to Planning & Zoning but indicated the groundwater study was originally presented as a two year project with Stantec anticipating completing Phases I and II this calendar year. The \$17,000 figured budgeted will be used up this year which will lower the amount proposed under this line item for FY 2022 from \$17,000 to \$8,000, a \$9,000 decrease.

Mr. Poltak indicated there was not a lot of legal expenditure yet this year. Mr. Leclair asked about upcoming zoning amendments and he indicated there would be minor wordsmithing items, nothing major.

Mr. Poltak discussed the groundwater study noting the plan is to use existing state and federal records to establish liability for new developments that draw on resources and have an impact on existing developments. Planning will be working with the Conservation Commission on this. The upcoming 55+ community will have approximately 80 new homes over 3-4 years.

Mr. Leclair thanked Mr. Poltak for his volunteer hours.

***Mr. Bedard motioned to approve the FY 2022 Planning & Zoning budget in the amount of \$35,150. Mr. Rolfe seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed unanimously.***

#### **Conservation Commission – Jeff Porter**

Mr. Porter presented the proposed FY 2022 Conservation Commission budget in the amount of \$5,500 which is level funded from last year.

Mr. Porter noted the 2021 budget will not likely be expended this year.

Mr. Leclair thanked Mr. Porter for his volunteer hours.

***Mr. Bedard motioned to approve the FY 2022 Conservation Commission budget in the amount of \$5,500. Mr. Rolfe seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed unanimously.***

### **Public Assistance – Mimi Friolet**

Finance Assistant Friolet presented the proposed FY 2022 Public Assistance budget in the amount of \$15,500 which is level funded from last year.

Mrs. Friolet explained there were no expenditures in FY 2021 and while the Town is required to make the assistance available even though it is not always used, often times they can direct applicants to other resources such as local fuel assistance programs. One reason for the lack of use this year was the availability of government stimulus and eviction moratoriums. One property that she is aware of has been increasing its rents and not realizing there is a process to evict somebody. She is monitoring the situation for an uptick.

Mrs. Friolet reported in 2017 the budget went over \$15,000 barely to \$17,500 and then was dropped to \$15,500. Mr. Leclair noted he would like to look at a three-year average but prefers ten years. The Board agreed they would pause on decreasing the budget for one more year.

Ms. Rousseau noted other services they can be asked to assist with are burial services which can be pricey.

***Mr. Bedard motioned to approve the FY 2022 Direct Assistance budget in the amount of \$15,500. Mr. Rolfe seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed unanimously.***

### **New Business**

#### **Project Discussions for FY 2021 ARPA Funds**

Mr. Leclair reported a few items were identified on the site walk today for repairs at the Town Salt Shed:

- Metal roof is deteriorating
- Storage section/garage door
- Couple of doors in the maintenance building
- Insulation deteriorating
- Undersized heating units

Mr. Leclair noted the goal is to bring Town Buildings up to respectable levels so that there are only expenditures for regular maintenance. The Board has worked with Police, Fire and Parks & Recreation so this is the logical next site to improve.

Mr. Leclair will reach out to get quotes on garage doors and metal roofing. ARPA funds could be utilized, or the costs put in the budget.

### **Bulk Road Salt Prices**

The Board received a Memorandum from Mr. Herman dated October 1, 2021 concerning road salt pricing for the 2021-2022 season. The Town received notice from their vendor that the cost per ton for the coming season has increased to \$72 per ton from the current year price of \$49.50 per ton, a 46.70% increase, still a slightly better rate than the State bid.

The Board received notice from the Road Agent the Town has a nearly full supply of salt in the Town's storage facility heading into the beginning of the winter season, but the rate increase could result in a \$50,000-\$100,000 overall cost increase.

Mr. Rolfe asked when the effective date was, and Mr. Leclair noted October 31, 2021. The Town does not have the storage room to buy more before the increase. Mr. Rolfe noted the storage area has to be paved and covered.

### **Old Business**

#### **Vacancy on the Zoning Board of Adjustment**

Mr. Leclair reported an application was received from Planning Board member Jill Dross for the vacancy of a full member on the Zoning Board of Adjustment. The cross over knowledge from board to board would be beneficial.

Mr. Leclair congratulated newly elected ZBA Chair, Mike DiPietro and thanked both him and Mr. Kimball for their service.

***Mr. Bedard motioned to appoint Jill Dross to the Zoning Board of Adjustment for a term to expire in March 2022. Mr. Rolfe seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed unanimously.***

Mr. Leclair thanked Ms. Dross for volunteering.

Mr. DiPietro asked about the process of elevating alternates. Mr. Leclair will check with Mr. Herman but noted an alternate member was first offered to be elevated and had declined due to being too busy.

### **Other Business**

#### **Conservation/Current Use Funds**

Mr. Leclair reported discussing with Mr. Porter the 100% contribution to the Conservation Commission from properties coming out of current use to propose reducing this percentage to

50% so that the Town can receive the other 50% as tax revenue. The Commission currently has \$1 million in its account. Mr. Porter will discuss the proposal with the Commission.

Mr. DiPietro noted back when the Town had Town Meetings the initial proposal had been 50%. There were about 37 people present at the meeting when it was changed. The Commission has done good with it Mr. Leclair noted but based on the amount of land left to purchase in Town and the amount of cash on hand it makes sense to make an adjustment at this time. Mr. DiPietro noted some Towns put 10% on the ballot. Mr. Rolfe noted the revenue may become important with the large 55+ community being built.

## **Landscaping**

Mr. Leclair announced the 16' maple tree had been planted in front of Town Hall at a cost of \$850.00 after the evergreen donated by Mr. Rolfe had not succeeded in being transplanted. Plaza Scapes had held their mowing contract pricing for FY 2021 with no increase and will be increasing next year but will offer a multi-year contract at that price. The mowing contract will likely have a 2-3% increase. There have been no complaints. The proposal can be discussed at another meeting as it is lengthy.

Plaza Scapes reported a skunk invasion seeking out a significant number of grubs in the lawn. A proposal was submitted for \$2,000 to treat for the grubs, loam and hydro seed, add a sprinkler zone with five heads where there are none, and to remove a small lilac by the parking lot which can be replaced with a Frazier Fir. Mr. Leclair noted the cost for the tree, irrigation and new front lawn would be \$3,200. Funding can come from the Town Property fund which has a balance of approximately \$100,000 and has not been used much this year.

Mr. Rolfe agreed the proposal was needed as no fertilizer or pest control had been done. Mr. Bedard was in agreement noting the Town Hall was representative of the Town and the lawn should look presentable. Mr. DiPietro recommended asking to use nitrogen-free fertilizer.

***Mr. Bedard motioned to approve the expenditure of up to \$3,200 from the Town Property Expendable Trust Fund for the aforementioned proposal to loam, treat grubs, hydroseed, irrigate and replace the lilac bush with a Frazier Fir. Mr. Rolfe seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed unanimously.***

Mr. Leclair will follow-up with Plaza.

## **Next Meeting/Events**

- Monday, October 18, 2021 – Board of Selectmen's Meeting – 7:00 PM
- Monday, October 25, 2021 – Board of Selectmen's Meeting – 7:00 PM

## **Minutes**

September 27, 2021 Public Meeting

***Mr. Bedard motioned to approve the September 27, 2021 Public Meeting Minutes as amended. Mr. Rolfe seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed unanimously.***

September 27, 2021 Non-Public Sessions (x2)

***Mr. Bedard motioned to approve the September 27, 2021 Non-Public Meeting Minutes (x2). Mr. Rolfe seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed unanimously.***

**Adjourn**

***Mr. Bedard motioned to adjourn at 8:08 PM. Mr. Rolfe seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed unanimously.***

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy Hoijer  
Recording Secretary