

Town of Canterbury, NH
Board of Selectmen
Date: 2024 September 9
Location: Meeting House

Selectmen: Scott Doherty (Chair), Kent Ruesswick, Beth Blair

Town Administrator: Ken Folsom

Budget Committee: Art Hudson, Calvin Todd, Cheryl Gordon, Jan Stout (via Zoom), Robert Steenson, Tyson Miller

School District: Michael Tursi (Superintendent), Debbie Thompson (Business Administrator)

School Board: Michelle Lewis (Chair), Randi Johnson, Alice Todd

Others Present: Edgar Rivera, Sam Papps, Jim Miller, Justin Crotty, Jordan Westgate, Rick Crockford, Silvia Styles, Jan Cote, Erin Meagher, Stephanie Jackson, Mark Stevens, Bill Adams, Ron Routhier

1. Call to Order

- a. The meeting was called to order at 5:00 p.m.

2. Administration

- a. The Selectboard signed:

- i. Kent made a motion to sign the Accounts Payable Manifest in the amount of \$572,391.50. Beth seconded. All in favor by roll call, motion carried.
- ii. Kent made a motion to sign the Payroll Manifest in the amount of \$43,792.36. Beth seconded. All in favor by roll call, motion carried.
- iii. The Selectboard signed the Welfare Manifest in the amount of \$1,549.25.
- iv. The Selectboard signed the Veterans' Tax Credit Application for Map 102 Lot 2.
- v. The Selectboard signed the Yield Tax Warrant for Map 263 Lot 53/54 in the amount of \$3,661.11.
- vi. The Selectboard signed an interfund transfer from TDBank Operating A/C to Conservation Commission Fund in the amount of \$962.50 and another in the amount of \$14,200. These are both Land Use Change Tax payments.
- vii. The Selectboard signed the Security Alarm Pass Code Policy.
 1. See Selectboard minutes 8/19/24 Section 4.a.vi. for previous discussion.

- b. Previous Minutes Approval

- i. Kent made a motion to approve the public minutes for the Selectboard meeting on August 19, 2024. Beth seconded. All in favor by roll call, motion carried.
- ii. Kent made a motion to approve the non-public minutes for the Selectboard meeting on August 19, 2024. Beth seconded. All in favor by roll call, motion carried.

3. Sam Papps and Jim Miller

- a. Accept \$3,500 CTCL grant for election administration

- i. Sam applied for and received a grant from the Center for Tech and Civic Life to pay for election supplies.
- ii. Specifically he would like to buy a lockable cage for ballot storage in the basement of the Sam Lake House. There was one made of chicken wire before the renovation, but it was not very secure and not replaced. The basement is currently sufficiently dry to store these files. The cage would cost \$1,200 to \$1,500 and would be bolted to the wall.
- iii. Kent moved to accept the \$3,500 grant from CTCL to pay for election supplies. Beth seconded. All in favor by roll call, motion carried.
- iv. Scott signed the Center for Tech and Civic Life Election Infrastructure Grant Agreement.

- b. Sam and Jim confirmed that everything is ready for the election tomorrow. It is being held at the elementary school and voting will be from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.

4. Police Department Candidate
 - a. Chief Crotty introduced Jordan Westgate, the candidate for the vacant officer position in the Police Department. Jordan introduced himself and discussed his military and law enforcement career.
 - b. This position is the vacancy that was created when Chief Crotty was promoted earlier this year. The position is already in the Police Department budget.
 - c. Lt. Crockwell is retiring next month. His position is not being backfilled.
 - d. Chief Crotty confirmed that Jordan has cleared all checks and can start on Monday.
 - e. The Selectboard welcomed Jordan. They will swear him in at the September 23rd meeting.
5. Tricentennial Committee
 - a. Jan Cote, Erin Meagher, Stephanie Jackson, Mark Stevens, Bill Adams, Ron Routhier attended to learn more about and potentially join the Tricentennial Committee.
 - b. There were questions about what exactly the committee duties would be and what kind of time commitment was expected. The Committee would need to decide what the Town should do for the celebration and plan those events. So time commitment isn't known yet.
 - c. Erin Meagher, Bill Adams, and Ron Routhier signed their appointment slips.
6. Shaker Regional School District
 - a. Debbie Thompson explained the FY 24/25 School Budget.
 - b. In March, the budget was not yet firmed up, so the estimated increase in how much more money needs to be raised was \$1.4M. Now that the budget has been finalized and FY 23/24 has been closed, the estimated increase is \$1.1M.
 - c. For FY 23/24 Canterbury paid \$4,043,915. The estimate for FY 24/25 is currently \$5,140,568.
 - d. There are several reasons for the increase. Revenue is going down by \$2M and the budget is going up by \$1M.
 - i. Revenue is going down due to filling vacant positions and loss of COVID federal funds.
 - ii. For several years there were positions that were needed and budgeted for, but no one was hired, so those funds were able to go back into the Unreserved Fund Balance.
 - e. Since the books closed for FY 23/24, there is \$982,362 in the school's unreserved fund balance that could be used to offset taxes. There were unanticipated revenues from earnings on investment in the amount of \$55K and other sources in the amount of \$146K.
 - f. The State's Adequate Education funding was recalculated and both Belmont and Canterbury will be receiving more money.

	FY 23/24	FY 24/25 Estimate
Amount Canterbury contributes to the School District	\$4,043,915	\$5,140,568
School Tax Rate per \$1000	\$10.91	\$13.67
Total Tax Rate per \$1000	\$21.00	> \$23.76*
Taxes owed on \$400K home	\$8,400	> \$9,504*

*The County, State, and Town have not yet set their budgets for 2025.

- g. The "Equalized Valuation" is what the state considers the Town of Canterbury property to be worth currently. That is opposed to the "Assessed Value", which is based on the last time the time was revalued. The Equalized Valuation is \$502,952,655 and the 2024 Estimated Assessed Value is \$375,979,513.
- h. The Assessed Value is what is used to calculate the tax rate.
 - i. $\text{Cost per } \$1000 = \text{Amount to Raise} / \text{Assessed Value} * 1000$
- i. If the Equalized Value equaled the Assessed Value, the tax rate would be 25% lower.
- j. The Town of Canterbury last revalued in 2021 and the next is scheduled for 2026.

- k. The Selectboard could choose to move that up, but it is a very large project to do, which is why it is only done every 5 years.
 - l. Robert Steenson discussed how valuation affects the tax rate.
 - m. Canterbury pays 24% of the amount that needs to be raised for SAU80, excluding funds from the state. Belmont gets a little more from the state, so Canterbury pays slightly more than 24%.
 - n. The final bill for the school district cannot be determined until the DRA sets the tax bill. The only number left to calculate is the Special Education funds. Debbie does not expect this number to significantly affect the estimate.
 - o. There was discussion about how to explain this issue to residents. Mike Tursi and Debbie said they would be happy to get on the phone with anyone who had questions and walk them through it. The office number is 603-267-9223.
 - p. Debbie and Mike do not anticipate any large hike in next year's budget. 80% of the school budget is wages and the collective bargaining hasn't happened yet.
 - q. Special education funds are a reimbursement to the district based on how much they spent in the previous year. They cannot anticipate how many students may need additional assistance, so this has the potential to significantly and unexpectedly increase costs.
 - r. Michelle Lewis explained that even if the School Board had known about the revenue loss at the very beginning of the budget process, to prevent this increase, they would have had to slash the budget by firing people that were just hired. That would lead to personnel burnout, increased class sizes, cutting programs, and limiting program offerings. The School Board likely would not have voted to do that.
 - s. A teaching assistant can augment teaching, but someone cannot give instruction without being certified by the state.
 - t. Very few people attend School Board meetings. They are encouraging people to attend and join the Budget Advisory Committee.
 - u. There was more discussion about how to notify people of this change so they can budget for the increase ahead of time. Many people already know because it was discussed at Town Meeting. It was suggested to publicize this information on the website, Facebook, Town email, through flyers.
 - v. There was discussion about how the Equalized Valuation can affect some more than others if property values go up unequally. The Selectboard could ask Assessor Mandy Irving if that is an issue in this town.
 - w. The School District would like to have a joint meeting in October with the School Board, Belmont Selectboard, and Canterbury Selectboard.
7. Budget Committee
- a. Scott reviewed the Budget Highlights YTD September 9, 2023 document.
 - b. There were several updates since the document was created.
 - c. Salisbury has withdrawn from the Penacook Rescue Squad talks. They are still paying and the talks are still ongoing with the towns that remain and Merrimack County. It has been suggested that Merrimack County should contribute since PRS is covering the nursing home and jail.
 - d. The Selectboard met the new Patrol Officer today and he will start next week.
 - e. For the snow plow drivers, the Town is hiring individual contractors who have their own equipment. The State pays theirs 10 hours a week of standby pay. Canterbury is advertising at 5 hours a week of standby pay at \$125 per hour. That will be \$20K minimum for a 16 week plowing season.
 - f. We have one contract employee. In general, if a person is using the Town's equipment for plowing, we need assurance of their skill level or it is a liability. Primex (our insurance provider) and other towns recommended that we hire drivers who use their own equipment.

- g. The Highway Department hasn't been paying wages/benefits for two employees since May, so there is plenty of money in the current budget for this.
 - h. The Budget Committee asked the Selectboard to calculate how far under budget the Highway and Police Departments will be so that the tax rate doesn't go up for those departments.
 - i. Since the theft, the Transfer Station is no longer storing cash when it is closed.
 - j. The Transfer Station is using a temp worker service to fill in shifts on Saturdays.
 - k. Bob Steenson suggested reevaluating at the end of the year if the Land Use Administrator position was still needed. Perhaps once things settle down with the Planning Board, there will be less work to do.
 - l. The Town had to reimburse an attorney \$700 because the previous ZBA Chair didn't respond to an Right To Know request properly. To address that incident, the Town's Counsel did two RTK training sessions which were well attended.
 - m. Ken spoke with Eric Baker today about the gazebo repairs (Warrant Article 2024-22). He will begin work in the next few weeks.
 - n. The folder/insert from WA 2024-21 has been purchased and is in use.
 - o. The mini-split from WA 2024-18 has been installed.
 - p. The cemetery work from WA 2024-17 is almost completed. 400 lots were added.
 - q. The website from WA 2024-19 is being constructed and will be finished by the end of the year.
 - r. The steam cleaner from WA 2024-20 has been purchased and delivered.
 - s. Lois Scribner is leaving Canterbury and will no longer be the secretary for the Planning Board, Solid Waste Committee, and Historic District Commission. Michelle Hammond is currently being trained to take over those roles.
 - t. So far the only known big ticket item for 2025 is the Solid Waste Committee's proposal to have another Hazardous Waste Day. The Town hasn't had one for almost 10 years. They will be getting estimates for the Selectboard.
 - u. Calvin Todd asked if there were plans to fix the Sam Lake House Garage. There is currently \$69K in the Capital Reserve Account for SLH Maintenance. There was some discussion about what should be done with that building. A firm decision on the purpose of the building would need to be made before getting estimates for the work. \$69K likely wouldn't cover it.
 - v. The Budget Committee and Selectboard were in agreement to try to keep the budget level this year to compensate for the School District's increase.
 - w. There was discussion about how the Highway Department vacancies will affect the budget and if offering higher wages or pooling resources with another town might help.
8. Energy Committee re Window Dressers
- a. See Selectboard minutes 8/19/24 Section 6 for previous discussion.
 - b. Jeff Beltramo (EC Chair) discussed the measurements he and Beth did for the Town Hall window inserts.
 - c. Kent had pointed out in an email that they missed the 13th window. That will need to be measured before placing the order, but the cost can be estimated based on the other windows.
 - d. The Selectboard agreed that white finish (rather than pine) was preferred.
 - e. The white window inserts were an average of \$70.50. It will cost \$942.51 +/- a few cents for 13 windows.
 - f. Window Dressers says that the inserts save 8 gallons of heating oil per window per year. If we estimate \$4 per gallon, that is \$416 in savings per year.
 - g. October 4th is the deadline to order the inserts. There is another Selectboard meeting before then, so they can sign the accounts payable manifest for it at the next meeting. Jeff will measure the last window and provide the information needed to pay the invoice.
 - h. Some of the windows will need the window shade brackets to be moved. That can be done in a few hours with volunteer work.

- i. Kent spoke with Kevin Bragg (HDC Chair) about the inserts and Kevin did not think that the HDC needed to weigh in officially.
9. New Business
- a. Town of Andover ZBA Public Hearing Notice re wireless service facility
 - i. Scott read the notices aloud. Andover's ZBA will be having public hearings on September 17, 2024 at 7 p.m. for Vertex Towers, LLC's proposal to create a personal wireless service facility (aka cell phone tower).
 - ii. Canterbury was notified because this type of project is considered to have regional impact and we happen to be within the circle they drew around Andover.
 - iii. Beth suggested that someone from Canterbury should attend in case there is any helpful information that could be used to improve cell phone coverage in our area.
 - iv. Kal will notify the CCPC about this meeting.
 - b. HealthTrust Annual Member Meeting and Board Elections
 - i. Scott read aloud the notice from HealthTrust, the Town's health insurance provider. It was just letting the Town know that they will be having the Annual Member Meeting and Board Elections and municipal officials may attend.
 - c. Email from Howard Moffett re Canterbury Community Power Committee (CCPC)
 - i. Scot read aloud the email.
 - ii. Howard, Ellen Scarponi, Kelley Stonebraker, and Ben Stonebraker are all resigning from CCPC for various personal reasons.
 - iii. CCPC voted and asked the Selectboard to confirm Tom Franco as the new Chair and Primary Representative to CPCNH.
 - iv. Scott and Kent have both discussed this with Howard and Tom previously.
 - v. Scott motioned to appoint Tom Franco as the Chair of CCPC and Canterbury's Primary Representative to the CPCNH Board. Kent seconded. All in favor by roll call, motion carried.
 - vi. Their next meeting is on September 11th. They will elect a new secretary then.
 - vii. There was a discussion about who the new secretary could be since no one on the Committee wants to do it.
 - viii. Kal suggested asking Michelle Hammond. Beth said that she could also get the names of who Boscawen uses for their recoding secretaries.
 - ix. The Energy Committee will be discussing at their meeting tonight if they want to combine with the CCPC.
10. Old Business
- a. Lyford Pond Dam Update
 - i. The Friends of Lyford Pond chose to install a culvert to fix the issues with Lyford Pond Dam. The culvert was installed last week.
 - ii. This is a mid-term solution, that will buy about ten years before a long-term solution must be put in place.
 - iii. The Attorney General's Office is still determining legal ownership of the dam. Once that is decided, the Friends of Lyford Pond could start working with the owner.
 - iv. Sherwood Forrest had a meeting recently and changed their leadership. Ken will get the Selectboard the new contact info and board lineup.
 - b. 1 Carter Hill Road Update
 - i. See Selectboard minutes 7/1/24 Section 5.e.ix. for previous discussion.
 - ii. Ken received an email from the property owner. They are going through bankruptcy so any action that the Town takes would need to go through the bankruptcy management team. The

owner provided contact information for his son who is trying to clean up the property, but not for the bankruptcy team.

- iii. The property is still in bad shape and more trucks have been witnessed unloading junk.
 - iv. Scott suggested revisiting this topic at the next meeting and perhaps setting a deadline and sanctions for non-compliance.
 - v. The property owner's daughter also owns a portion of the property, but she has not been in contact.
 - vi. The Town would need to have a public hearing to determine if the property is being used for an obnoxious use. Then a cease and desist could be sent, then it could go to court.
- c. Actuarial Estimate for Unfunded Liability Calculation
- i. See Selectboard minutes 8/19/24 Section 8.d. for previous discussion.
 - ii. Ken sent the Selectboard copies of the proposal from KMS Actuaries. It is a four-year contract for a total of \$9K.
 - iii. Beth thought their rates were reasonable, but we could shop around.
 - iv. The Selectboard agreed that since calculating the unfunded liability is required, we need to do this.
- d. Action Items Review
- i. The Selectboard reviewed the Action Items list from 9/5/24.
 - ii. 20: The Master Plan is in its final review. Once that is complete, the process to create an official road map can continue. (4/1/24 Section 5.b)
 - iii. 67: Ken will draft this letter and invite Joe to a Selectboard meeting.
 - iv. 74: Beth is still drafting the Code of Conduct. (8/5/24 Section 3)
 - v. 140: Ken checked in with legal about the CCPC's grant applications for solar projects. They said that even if the money would be reimbursed right away, the expense would need to be approved by warrant article at the next Town Meeting. (7/15/24 Section 4)
 - vi. 149: Ken sent Bryan at Comcast the proposed franchise agreement changes and is waiting for a callback to get a list of addresses that have been hooked up. (8/5/24 Section 4)
 - vii. 153: The Town's Counsel sent a certified letter to the employee, but it was returned undeliverable. Ken confirmed that it was the correct address, so that means the person refused to sign. So they will be filing this with small claims court. (8/5/24 Section 8.b)
 - viii. 156: Ken spoke with the contractor who is supposed to repair the Library door. He said he would start the work right away. (8/19/24 Section 3.d.ii)
- e. Dirt Road Update
- i. See Selectboard minutes 8/19/24 Section 3.e.vi. for previous discussion.
 - ii. Ken spoke with Mike Rislov twice. He was supposed to call back and set up a date, but he did not. The Selectboard decided to give him another call and a deadline of October 1st.
 - iii. The Selectboard discussed other ways the ARPA funds could be spent if this falls through.
11. Adjournment
- a. Kent made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:44 p.m. Scott seconded. All in favor by roll call, motion carried.

Next Meeting: 2024 September 23, 5:00 p.m. at the Meeting House

Minutes submitted by Kathleen McKay, Administrative Assistant