

Town of Canterbury, NH
Board of Selectmen
Date: 2024 January 22
Location: Meeting House

Selectmen:
Cheryl Gordon (Chair), Kent Ruesswick, Scott Doherty

Town Administrator:
Ken Folsom

Department Heads:
Sam Papps (Town Clerk\Tax Collector), Michael Crockwell (Police), John O'Connor (Highway),
Michael Gamache (Fire), Rachel Baker (Library)

Others Present:
Edgar Rivera (Libertad Press NE)
Sandy Steenbergen
Beth Blair
Justin Crotty (Police Department)

1. Call to Order
 - a. The meeting was called to order at 4:58 p.m.
2. Department Heads
 - a. Sam Papps (Town Clerk\Tax Collector)
 - i. Sam distributed the All Unpaid Receivables Listed by Warrant 1/22/2024.
 1. The list is a bit long, but it is a normal length for January. Sam will be sending out reminder notices on the 28th.
 2. There are two property liens that are on the deeding list for this Spring. Sam has notified the residents and not received any feedback.
 3. The outstanding timber tax in the list is not something we normally carry over. The last Sam heard, the owner intended to pay it, but they have yet to do so.
 - ii. Tomorrow is the presidential primary. Sam is setting up for that this evening. The Selectmen are required to attend and should arrive at 6:30 a.m.
 - iii. He has received many responses from the letters sent regarding the Lovering property. The Town's attorneys will be meeting with the attorneys of Mr. Cambrils on the 29th. See Selectmen's Minutes 12/18/23 Section 2.a.iii. for previous discussion.
 - b. Michael Gamache (Fire)
 - i. Chief Gamache distributed Canterbury Fire Department Selectmen's Report 12/18/23 through 1/22/24.
 - ii. 2023 saw 342 calls in total, a 13.2% increase over 2022.
 - iii. There have been two storms so far in January. For one of them, Chief Gamache decided to staff the station overnight due to the severity of the weather report. There were no calls, but it was agreed that it is better safe than sorry.
 - iv. False Alarm Ordinance
 1. See Selectmen's Minutes 12/18/2024 Section 2.b.iv. for previous discussion.
 2. The storage unit on Hall Road has had a total of 16 false alarms over the last two months. The owner has been in contact with Chief Gamache, however the system still has not been fixed. Chief Gamache has warned them about the incoming ordinance.

3. Chief Gamache has been working with Chief Labrecque to craft the ordinance based on similar ordinances in other towns. Most towns do not combine the Fire and Police Department ordinances since there is a specific RSA that grants this power to the Fire Chief, but not an equivalent one for the Police Chief. Town counsel recommended that we do not combine them.
 4. This ordinance would charge a fee per response after 6 false alarms caused by unmaintained equipment. If such an incident occurs, the Selectmen and Fire Chief both have the power to enforce or waive the fee. Being able to waive is important in case there are ever extenuating circumstances. If the property owner wants to appeal, they appeal to the Fire Chief.
 5. This fee is a deterrent, not an income generator.
 6. This ordinance does not need to be in a warrant article or go to Town Meeting. The Selectmen may review it, post notice of it, and pass it in a regular meeting.
 7. Ken will discuss this with Chief Labrecque when he returns to the office to see if the Police Department would like to proceed with a similar ordinance for their department. Michael Crockwell and Justin Crotty who were present, said that the Police Department doesn't have similar issues with false alarms, but they do respond to about half of the ones received by the Fire Department.
 8. If the Selectmen and Chiefs do not have any changes, Ken will post notice of the ordinance so it may be passed in one of the February Selectmen's meetings.
 - v. One active and one inactive member resigned from the department. One new member joined.
 - vi. The Selectmen are invited to the member appreciation ceremony on 3/4/24, as is the rest of the public.
 - vii. The 2023 budget was over expended on a few lines for unexpected maintenance, but they managed to stay under the overall department budget.
- c. Michael Crockwell (Police)
- i. Lieutenant Crockwell distributed the December NHSP – CFS document. The normal statistics are not available because they have been short staffed this month.
 - ii. They have temporarily filled the Police Admin roll, but will be posting the job soon.
 - iii. There are still no viable candidates for the unfilled Officer roll.
 - iv. The 2023 budget was over expended on one line for the new cruiser, but still under the overall department budget.
 - v. The costs for dispatch went up for 2024. This fee is based on the dispatcher's overhead costs and our call volume.
- d. Rachel Baker (Library)
- i. Broken Furnace
 1. See Selectmen's Minutes 12/18/2024 Section 2.d.ii. for previous discussion.
 2. Burner three was successfully repaired, but the whole system will need replacing within the next few years. Rachel is looking for grants.
 3. Rachel is going to work with the Energy Committee on this. They had previously done a conclusive audit of the building and would like to help move the project forward.
 - ii. In 2023 the Library had 14,000 patron visits; a 2000 person increase over 2022.
 - iii. They have not heard back from the person who is meant to fix the back door. Ken will try to contact him again.
 - iv. There were no questions about the 2023 budget for the Library.
- e. John O'Connor (Highway)
- i. The Town has had a few snow storms. Drivers had to relearn their routes.
 - ii. Tomorrow night another 1-3 inches are expected. They have enough sand.

- iii. There is a door broken at the Highway Bay. Waiting to hearing back from repair person.
- iv. The F550 is built but the shop is not ready to send it yet. They won't commit to a delivery date.
- v. The backhoe is not ready yet. It was supposed to be ready mid-January, but the shop is backed up.
- vi. There are three warrant articles for the Highway Department: backhoe, grader, and steam cleaner. The printed proposed budget has an error. The steam cleaner will be \$10,000 not \$5,000.
- vii. Dirt Road Repair
 - 1. See Selectmen's Minutes 1/8/2024 Section 5.b.vi. for previous discussion.
 - 2. John distributed a list of dirt roads that need repairs and cost estimates to fix them.
 - 3. The estimates include trucking and tonnage but not machine work. This is just the first draft and he will be breaking the roads down further into problem spots, then prioritizing based on condition and how heavily travelled they are.
 - 4. Clough Pond, Baptist, and Mudget Hill are used as bypasses during events on 106.
 - 5. Old Tilton Road has a dangerous Y shaped intersection that may be better as a T. There have been no accidents, only close calls and complaints.
 - 6. The Center to Borough Road is up to over 200 cars per day. In city planning, if there are over 200 cars, it is recommended to switch to pavement. But there is a lot of dislike for pavement in town, so they are not likely to pursue that option.

3. Administration

a. The Selectmen signed:

- i. Kent made a motion to sign the Accounts Payable Manifest in the amount of \$103,497.70. Scott seconded. All in favor by roll call, motion carried.
- ii. Kent made a motion to sign the Payroll Manifest in the amount of \$49,259.24. Scott seconded. All in favor by roll call, motion carried.
- iii. The Selectmen signed two Tax Credit/Deferral Applications for local veterans.
- iv. The Selectmen reviewed and re-signed the Town of Canterbury Investment Policy.

b. Previous Minutes Approval

- i. Kent made a motion to approve the public minutes for the Selectmen's meeting on January 8th, 2024. Scott seconded. All in favor by roll call, motion carried.

4. New Business

a. Offer to buy Town owned property Map 102 Lot 37

- i. Sandra Steenbergen is an abutter of the property and would like to purchase it from the Town. She distributed copies of several emails between herself and Ken.
- ii. Ken distributed packets of information about the property.
- iii. In summer 2022 Ms. Steenbergen and the Selectboard (which at the time consisted of Cheryl Gordon, Kent Ruesswick, and Robert Steenson) had discussed the purchase of this property. They had agreed to the price of \$2,500. Ms. Steenbergen was not able to pay the full sum, but offered to put \$1,000 down and pay the remainder when she could.
- iv. The distributed emails contain a message on 8/8/2022 from Ken to Ms. Steenbergen. It said that the Selectmen would like for her to hold onto the \$1,000 and when she has the balance, they would sell her the property.
- v. Ms. Steenbergen did not contact the Town again until January 2024. When she did, she said that she had raised the \$2,500 and would like to purchase the property.
- vi. Ms. Steenbergen believes that the email on 8/8/2022 is a formal agreement that the Selectboard should honor.
- vii. The Selectboard believe that the email is not a formal agreement, and that there is no legal or ethical obligation to sell the property at that price 18 months later.

- viii. Ms. Steenbergen argues that the property cannot be used for anything else since it is mostly ledge and it can only be sold to one of two abutters. She believes that because the email did not include an expiration date on the acceptance of her offer, it does not matter that it took her this long to raise the funds for the purchase. She also believes that the price increase should have been communicated to her before now.
 - ix. The Selectboard argue that since the initial discussion, the Town has had a reassessment and all property values have gone up. The value of this property increased from \$12,200 to \$38,700. They believe that without a formal agreement or any contact for 18 months, they have no obligation to Ms. Steenbergen to sell the property for \$2,500. They also believe that they have an obligation to the Town to sell property at reasonable prices. They would like to sell this property for \$10,000.
 - x. Ms. Steenbergen offered \$3,000 for the property.
 - xi. The Selectmen decided not to sell the property.
 - b. Independence Day Fireworks Schedule
 - i. Ken got an email from the fireworks company asking which day the Town wanted to schedule the Independence Day fireworks.
 - ii. The Selectmen decided on Saturday 7/6/24 since that day will likely have the best attendance.
5. Old Business
- a. Fire Truck Bonds
 - i. See Selectmen's Minutes 12/4/2024 Section 3.d. for previous discussion.
 - ii. The Town did not get the grant for the new firetruck (WA-2023-2), so the money will need to be bonded.
 - iii. Ken contacted the attorney who does the Town's bonding. They are going to put a package together so the Selectmen can decide if they rather do a 5 year bond or a 10 year bond. The next bond sale will be in July.
 - iv. Scott wants to look at the health of the whole fleet and do long range planning so the funds for new vehicles can be put away in a timely manner.
 - b. 2024 Budget
 - i. See Selectmen's Minutes 1/8/2024 Section 5.b. for previous discussion.
 - ii. All reports from departments, committees, and boards have been received. Ken is currently reviewing them.
 - iii. The Selectmen need to decide tonight if they are going to approve the budgeted warrant articles. That way the public hearing for the budget and warrant article can be posted and held at the next meeting on 2/5/2024.
 - iv. The Selectmen reviewed the articles and decided to approve them.
 - v. As of today \$3,323,045 is final operating budget. This is a 2.9% increase over 2023. Considering that the consumer price index increased by 3.4%, this is considered pretty good.
 - vi. This budget includes a 4% wage increase for most employees.
 - vii. Ken has sent the zoning articles from the Planning Board and HDC to town counsel for review.
6. Adjournment
- a. Kent made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:41 p.m. Scott seconded. All in favor by roll call, motion carried.

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

Minutes submitted by Kathleen McKay, Administrative Assistant