



**TOWN OF NORTHWOOD
BOARD OF SELECTMEN**

**Town of Northwood 818 First NH Turnpike Northwood, NH 03261
(603) 942-5586**

**Board of Selectmen Meeting Minutes
October 25, 2022**

ROLL CALL: Chairman Hal Kreider, Select Board Member Beth Boudreau, Select Board Member Jim Guzofski, and Select Board Member Pamela Sanderson. Vice-Chairman Tim Colby was absent.

STAFF PRESENT: Town Administrator Walter Johnson, Finance Director Cheryl Eastman, and DPW Foreman Chris Brown.

6:00 P.M. Chairman Kreider opened the Northwood Board of Selectmen meeting with a roll call and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Citizen's Forum:

Jim Hadley, Community Power Committee. Jim attended the Clean Energy NH conference and learned that there is not sufficient time to launch a Community Power Coalition in Northwood for 2023. It is a long application and creation process and can't be completed for 2023 unless there is a special town meeting held to approve it. Jim has spent approximately 40 hours as a volunteer so far doing research and feels like he is spinning his wheels. He is going to move forward with other things in Northwood, perhaps solar power at the library or the school may put solar on their roof. Jim said other communities have been very pro-active in joining the coalition and forming committees. Chairman Kreider said after the budget process the Board will have Jim back in and talk about this issue as an agenda item instead of during public forum.

Minutes of October 11, 2022: J. Guzofski asked to have line 281 edited as "They must also fill out form A9 each year in order to remain qualified for the exemption" and remove the reference to it being a financial form.

Motion: "To accept the minutes of October 11, 2022, as amended. "

Motion: B. Boudreau

Second: P. Sanderson

Motion carried by vote of 4-0.

Consent Agenda:

Payroll Manifest dated 10/19/22, Batch # 101922 for \$47,533.50.

42 Accounts Payable Manifest dated 10/19/22, Batch #79 for \$9,800.00. This was a single payment to
43 Cross Country Appraisal.

44 Accounts Payable Manifest dated 10/26/22, Batch #80 for \$98,105.88. This includes payments Bergeron
45 Protective Clothing for \$6,382 for fire gear, \$3,822.50 to Firematic Supply for testing and maintenance
46 of air masks, HealthTrust for employee health insurances for \$22,441.44, the Internal Revenue Service
47 for employee taxes for \$20,194, a rebate payment or \$5,000 to Ronald Locke, and \$3,828.75 to Strafford
48 Regional Planning Commission for their monthly services.

49
50 **Motion: “To approve the consent agenda as presented.”**

51 **Motion: P. Sanderson**

52 **Second: B. Boudreau**

53 **Motion carried by vote of 4/0.**

54
55 **Town Administrator’s Report:**

56 Staffing: Three full-time positions are still open in the police department. A conditional offer of
57 employment has been made for the full-time firefighter position and is pending satisfaction of the
58 conditions. A new part-time candidate for the fire department will be discussed in a non-public meeting
59 tonight.

60 Public Works Facilities: Work continues on the projects. The ledge removal at the recreation field was
61 completed last week. The DPW will do trenching for the underground conduit for power for the new
62 water facility shed and for the message sign at the town hall. Electrical upgrades at the transfer station
63 will be completed prior to the delivery of the new compactor the first week in December. The message
64 sign delivery date is now mid-December. Crack sealing on Jenness Pond Road is complete.

65 Budget Prep: The 2023 budget work is continuing. The Board of Selectmen will work on it tonight and on
66 November 1 and 15 to wrap it up. The budget will go to the Budget Committee on November 18.

67 Library Water System: Additional information has been provided by the Library Trustees on the history
68 of the water system. It is included in the packet as an FYI.

69 Election: The Board will be at the polls on November 8 from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.

70 Transfer Station Inspection: The transfer station was inspected by NH Department of Environmental
71 Services last week. We are awaiting the full report. We were advised to cease immediately using the
72 burn pit and landfilling glass at the facility. Action has already been taken on both these items with
73 temporary alternatives. P. Sanderson asked if we could appeal because she is concerned residents may
74 start burning their own brush and with the fire department short-staffed it could present a safety issue.
75 TA Johnson and PW Foreman Chris Brown said the NH DES was emphatic that we do not use them. The
76 full report will have alternative suggestions. The burn pit cannot be located on the landfill ground. The
77 lagoon is fully permitted and in compliance and functioning properly. Permits for the landfill itself from
78 years back cannot be found to prove it was ever permitted.

79 Meetings: The next Board meetings will be November 1 as a work session on the budget, November 15
80 for a regular meeting and budget work, and possibly on November 29 if needed.

81
82 **Ridge Road Drainage Matter – Frederick Jones request:**

83 Chairman Kreider stated that a request has been made to the Board from a property owner to terminate
84 a culvert entrance, remove a pipe, and restore a retaining wall. The Board wants to get PW Foreman
85 Brown’s opinion. If the landowner disagrees with Chris Brown’s decision, he can appeal to TA Johnson,
86 and further to the Board of Selectmen, but if the Board decides, there is no appeal recourse. PW Foreman
87 Brown said this drainage system has been there long since before this owner purchased the property. The
88 culvert is working efficiently. If it is closed off, the water will run down to Angela Drive instead. Chris
89 Brown added that it is a pre-existing system and should stay as is. TA Johnson stated that Selectboard

90 member Tim Colby had looked at it also and thought the request from the owner was not reasonable,
91 saying the water is flowing through the culvert in its natural direction now. Due to the depth of the culvert
92 and the amount of surface water coming from the road, it would be a major project to change it.

93 **Motion: "To defer the decision to PW Foreman Chris Brown."**

94 **Motion: P. Sanderson**

95 **Discussion ensued around wording the motion that the request will be denied. P. Sanderson withdrew**
96 **her motion.**

97 **Motion: "To deny the request, based on information supplied by the PW Foreman and the Town**
98 **Administrator."**

99 **Motion: B. Boudreau**

100 **Second: P. Sanderson**

101 **Motion carried by vote of 4/0.**

102

103 **Surplus Equipment:**

104 More bids were received for the surplus auction items. The Craig grading bucket received a bid of \$3,750.
105 That had a minimum bid on Municibid of \$5,000.

106 **Motion: "To accept the bid of \$3,750 for the grading bucket."**

107 **Motion: P. Sanderson**

108 **Second: B. Boudreau**

109 **Motion carried by vote of 4/0.**

110 The bidder was Sun Wind LLC out of Brewster, Mass.

111

112 The 1 ½ yard sander received a bid of \$250 from Chris Brown. That item had a minimum bid of \$1,500 on
113 Municibid. B. Boudreau asked if it was worth more as scrap metal. Chairman Kreider said he would be
114 interested in knowing the scrap value as well. The Board asked Chris Brown if he is willing to pay \$250 or
115 the scrap value price, whichever is higher. He agreed.

116 **Motion: "To accept the bid of \$250 for the 1 ½ yard sander OR the amount of the scrap value of the**
117 **sander, whichever is higher."**

118 **Motion: P. Sanderson**

119 **Second: B. Boudreau**

120 **Motion carried by vote of 4/0.**

121

122 A bid was also received for the utility trailer, but it was not offered up for sale yet. It will have to be
123 offered for sale first.

124

125 **Board Task Manager:**

126 Chairman Kreider said it is rewarding to see the long list of completed items on the task manager. P.
127 Sanderson asked about the progress of the wage scale. TA Johnson said it will incorporate the 2% COLA
128 approved by the voters this year and then that will be the official wage scale.

129

130 **Board Committee Reports:**

131 Chairman Kreider said the Master Plan Committee met recently and the plan is coming along well. They
132 unanimously feel the next sections to be updated should be Housing, Recreation, Natural and Water
133 Resources, and Community Facilities. The Housing section is a large section. The costs for those four
134 sections will be approximately \$30,000 and the Board needs to think about how to fund those. We should
135 move quickly on these before the first sections that were just updated become obsolete.

136

137

138 **7:00 Continue Work Session with Department Heads on FY23 budgets:**

139 Police: Chief Glen Drolet presented the Police budget. All the salary lines include a step increase for all
140 employees. All the benefit and tax lines are related to salary. Internet and cruiser modems costs have
141 increased. The heating oil line may be adjusted later as we look at energy prices into the winter months.
142 The legal line is showing an increase. The prosecutor retired and the increase is for a new prosecutor.
143 That is a flat annual fee to handle all the prosecution cases for the department. The security camera line
144 is an increase due to needing to upgrade some equipment. The contracted services line includes the
145 report management system, water delivery, evidence.com for the taser and body camera systems. Those
146 have price increases. The other professional services line is for the testing for hiring, blood draws in DUI
147 cases, which are \$100 each, and the certification of the radar in the cruisers. The gas line was increased
148 by \$3,000 because we don't know what will happen with the price of fuel. Uniform prices have increased,
149 along with ammunition costs. The books line has been reduced because most of the items are now online,
150 not in print. There is an increase in the vehicle maintenance line because of cost increases. For the vehicle
151 purchase line, one cruiser is planned to be purchased, but the funds will come from the Special Detail
152 Revenue Fund instead of the operating budget. There is \$3,500 in the SRO cruiser line incase someone is
153 hired for that position.

154
155 Animal Control: Chief Glen Drolet presented this budget. The budget is mostly level funded, except for
156 wages, which have been reduced and gas and vehicle maintenance, as the ACO van is going to need a lot
157 of work soon.

158 The Board and the Chief talked about the difficulty of hiring new officers when competing with other
159 communities that have higher pay scales. The Police Commission recently offered a \$12,000 signing
160 bonus for a full-time certified officer and did not get any interest. The Commission is looking to bring up
161 the wage scale to make it more appealing to applicants. An officer with three years of experience in
162 another town makes \$15,000 more than the Northwood Sergeant who has been with us for 20 years.
163 Chairman Kreider said the Chief and the Police Commission need to look at re-structuring the department.
164 He also asked if the condition of the facility was a factor in hiring. The Chief believes it has been a factor
165 for some candidates when they see the facility.

166 The only warrant article requested is funding of the Police Equipment Capital Reserve Fund.

167
168 Fire: Chief Tetreault presented this budget. The Chief's salary line has never been included in the budget
169 since he has been here, due to default budgets. The Full-Time wages line shows a decrease because the
170 former Chief's wages used to be in that line. Our Paramedic is most likely going to be leaving. It will be
171 difficult to hire a Paramedic at the current rate. The Fire Captain wages are increasing with a market
172 adjustment and step increase. B. Boudreau asked what the grades and steps are for the employees. Chief
173 Tetreault will get that information. The Chief recommends that the call back wages be increased from
174 \$10.20/hour to the employees regular part time rate. He believes this can be done within the \$30,000 in
175 call back wages and \$10,000 in overtime. This may help with participation in call backs, but will definitely
176 be a morale booster.

177 **Motion: "To make the pay rate for call backs to be the same rate the employee gets for part-time hours,**
178 **effective with the next pay run."**

179 **Motion: P. Sanderson**

180 **Second: J. Guzofski**

181 B. Boudreau is concerned with starting this now because it could add up to a large amount of money over
182 the next few months. She would rather wait until the budget passes.

183 **Motion carried by vote of 3 to 1, with B. Boudreau against.**

184 The telephone, internet, and cell phones lines stayed the same. In electricity, the new lighting is helping,
185 but an increase was added to cover the rate increases. Heating oil and propane prices are unknown. The

186 building maintenance line is level funded. They have done well this year, but there are some issues at the
187 Narrows that need to be addressed soon. Ambulance billing costs could be taken from the Ambulance
188 Revolving Fund, according to our auditors. TA Johnson stated that the net revenue should be the amount
189 going into the revolving fund, not the gross revenue as it is now. Chairman Kreider wants to get some
190 analysis of the health of the fund if the Comstar fees are taken from it to ensure the fund retains enough
191 money to meet the obligations already committed. He asked Finance Director Eastman to do a study
192 using \$175,000 ambulance revenue each year and a high-end of \$200,000 revenue each year, with no
193 inflation being calculated. The dispatch line has increased due to the new property value assessment in
194 town. Medical supplies cover any supplies that are not free from Concord Hospital and prices have
195 increased on those items. Diesel pricing through the state pumps saved us some funds this year, but the
196 state contract has run out and right now we are paying market rates, minus the taxes. Gear has been
197 level funded, but there are delays in receiving new gear – some may take up to 12 months to deliver.
198 Other lines were level funded.

199 EMS: EMS equipment could be anything from batteries to hard products that last more than 5 years.
200 Batteries for all the equipment are expensive and the Lucas CPR device will need new batteries this year.
201 They run about \$600 each. The training line is to reimburse part of the cost of training for EMT and
202 Paramedic classes.

203 B. Boudreau requested the increases for the full-timers pay. B. Boudreau stated the increase in the
204 bottom line looks like a large increase over the past 5 years. Chief Tetreault said most of the increases
205 are in the wage and wage – related lines. Chief Tetreault said it is his job to present a budget that will do
206 the job. If the voters don't want it, that is fine, but they can't then complain if it takes 20 minutes to
207 respond to a call. J. Guzowski stated part of the issue with staffing is that some part-time people have
208 reached their maximum number of hours for the year and can't work any more until 2023. Chief Tetreault
209 said they continue to cross train people to help with staffing shortages.

210 A warrant article was requested for \$50,000 to take the chassis from Ambulance 1 and make it into a
211 forestry truck to replace the old forestry truck and \$200,000 to remount the box from Ambulance 1 onto
212 a new chassis. The Board briefly discussed the various available funding options.

213
214 Selectboard: TA Johnson presented this budget. The Selectmen stipends will stay the same. The only
215 other lines are the wages for the recording secretary, taxes, dues, training for board members, and travel
216 for training.

217
218 Town Administrator: TA Johnson presented this budget. The salary line is based on a 2% Cola and 3%
219 step. The Cola was voted by the town. Contracted services cover any outside consultant, if needed. The
220 dues line will go down slightly due to a reduction in dues to ICMA in 2023. The training line is for the
221 MMANH, GFOA, and ICMA conferences. He has not attended any of those conferences since he has been
222 here due to the pandemic, even though it is a contract it. He is hoping with a new approved budget he
223 can resume going to the conferences.

224
225 Moderator: TA Johnson presented this budget. It is level funded except an increase in the training line.

226
227 Executive: TA Johnson presented this budget. It covers support for the general governmental functions.
228 The wage line is a portion (25%) of the Administrative Assistant hours. All benefits are also pro-rated 25%.
229 Printing/Advertising is for printing the town report, the voter guide, and notices for public hearings. The
230 software line is for Adobe subscriptions. Adobe was purchased during Covid to allow for electronic
231 signatures. Staff will investigate if that can be reduced. Contracted services covers the IT support for all
232 the town hall office and the fire department. It includes support and licenses and Office 365. Legend
233 Software is for the website hosting, Crystal Rock is drinking water, Leaf is a copier lease, Absolute Data

234 Destruction is for document shredding services, and Seacoast Business Machines in the maintenance
235 agreement for the copiers. Postage is allocated across several different departments with 25% to this
236 budget. Books, Periodicals, and Subscriptions covers the updates to the RSA's. Dues includes the fees to
237 NH Municipal Association and a membership to Sam's Club.

238
239 Voter Registration: TA Johnson presented this budget. Wages lines are for the Supervisors of the Checklist
240 and related taxes. They are based on an hourly rate. The rest is minimal amounts for printing/advertising
241 and supplies.

242
243 Elections: TA Johnson presented this budget. This includes wages and taxes for the ballot clerks and
244 counters for elections. Printing/Advertising is for the cost of printing ballots for the town election.
245 Contracted Services is the annual maintenance contract on the ballot machine and the coding of the
246 machine for ballots.

247
248 Audit: Finance Director Eastman presented this budget. The audit services through Plodzik & Sanderson
249 and the GASB 75 audit through Jefferson Solutions are the second year of two-year contracts.

250
251 Assessing: TA Johnson presented this budget. Wages lines cover 25% of the Administrative Assistants
252 hours and related benefits and taxes. Tax maps shows an increase in the quarterly fees to maintain the
253 maps. The software line is for Avitar appraisal software. In the past these were budgeted under
254 Contracted Services. The Contracted Services line covers the contract with Cross Country Appraisal, which
255 runs through 2024. The actual for 2022 looks high because of the additional costs for the revaluation.
256 Postage is allocated at 10% of the total costs. The only other increases are in training and travel for
257 training.

258
259 Treasurer: TA Johnson presented this budget. It includes a stipend increase because it hasn't been done
260 in at least the last 5 years. She is spending a lot more time dealing with increasing issues due to credit
261 card processing and complex reconciliations. The other lines are minimal for bank fees, office supplies,
262 dues to GFOA, training, and travel.

263
264 Trustees of the Trust Funds: TA Johnson presented this budget. It includes \$300 stipend for each trustee
265 and a flat fee for bookkeeping work to prepare the annual reports and DRA reports. The rest is a minimal
266 amount for training and travel for training.

267
268 Legal: TA Johnson presented this budget. This budget is increased based on actual expenses. When we
269 get closer to the end of the year, that may be able to be adjusted. This legal line covers land use and
270 ongoing cable franchise negotiations.

271
272 Personnel Administration: Finance Director Eastman presented this budget. The health/dental insurance
273 line covers costs for all current employees at the current plan participation levels. Rates reflect a
274 maximum of 8.4% increase over last year for medical and dental rates by 1.5%. Administration covers
275 the costs of hiring, including advertising, criminal records checks, driver records, and drug testing.
276 Employee disability reflects a not-to-exceed 3.2% increase to short-term disability and no rate change to
277 long-term disability. Unemployment and workers compensation insurance rates are actual quotes for
278 the coming year.

279

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280 Insurances: TA Johnson presented this budget. It covers the property liability insurance for the town. The
281 budgeted amount is the full amount. There is a possibility there could be a payment holiday, depending
282 on the results of the actuarial study.

283
284 Welfare: TA Johnson presented this budget. Activity in the welfare department has been getting busier.
285 In the future we may have to look for a part-time person to take on the tasks. The \$2,500 for wages will
286 cover that.

287
288 Direct Assistance: TA Johnson said he continues to defer people to the county for assistance, thereby
289 reducing the effect on the town.

290

291 At 8:44,

292 **Motion: "To go into non-public session under RSA 91a;3 II (b) (hiring)"**

293 **Motion: P. Sanderson**

294 **Second: B. Boudreau**

295 **Motion carried by roll call vote 4/0.**

296

297 **Resumed Public Session at 8:55pm**

298

299 **Motion: "To seal the non-public minutes because it is determined that divulgence of this information**
300 **likely would adversely affect the reputation of any person other than a member of this Board and render**
301 **the proposed action ineffective".**

302

303 **Motion: P. Sanderson**

304 **Second: B. Boudreau**

305 **Motion carried by roll call vote 4/0.**

306

307 **Adjourned at 8:59pm**

308

309 Minutes respectfully submitted by

310 Cheryl Eastman

311