



**TOWN OF NORTHWOOD
BOARD OF SELECTMEN**

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

**Board of Selectmen Meeting Minutes
December 27, 2022**

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

STAFF PRESENT: Town Administrator Walter Johnson

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:

None.

Approve Minutes:

Motion: "To approve the minutes of November 10, 2022 as presented."

Motion: P. Sanderson

Second: J. Guzofski

Motion carried by vote of 3/0/1 with T. Colby abstaining as he was absent from the meeting.

P. Sanderson said that line 71 in the December 13, 2022 minutes should say the motion carried by vote of 4/0/0 because H. Kreider stepped away from the table for the discussion and vote.

Motion "To approve the minutes of December 13, 2022 as amended."

Motion: P. Sanderson

Second: J. Guzofski

Motion carried by vote of 4/0.

Consent Agenda:

Accounts Payable Manifest dated 12/14/22, Batch #86 for \$1,380.00.

Accounts Payable Manifest dated 12/21/22, Batch #87 for \$596,727.66. This includes the monthly payment to Cross Country Appraisal for \$4,500, payment to Interware Development Company for 2023 software for the town clerk for \$6,626.65, payment to the school for \$500,000, Pyrotechnico for \$3,000, Rockingham County Nutrition and Meals on Wheels for \$2,728, Strafford Regional Planning Commission for \$3,297.50 for the monthly planner costs, and Northwood Conservation Commission for \$19,531.82

42 which is the share of the land use change tax collected and voted by town meeting to be allocated to the
43 Conservation Commission annually.

44 Accounts Payable Manifest dated 12/22/22, Batch #88 for \$26.00. This was a check needed to be sent out
45 last week outside the regular check run.

46 Accounts Payable Manifest dated 12/27/22, Batch #89 for \$3,155.86. This was made up of additional
47 payments needing to be paid before the end of the year.

48 Accounts Payable Manifest dated 12/28/22, Batch # 90 for \$930.00. This was a late entry for requests.

49 Payroll Manifest dated 12/28/22, Batch # 122822 for \$53,545.22.

50 Property Tax Exemptions: Approve or Deny per Assessor's Recommendations:

51 Blind Exemption – Map 219, Lot 39 – Nicoletti

52 Veteran's Credit – Map 107, Lot 15 – Erwin

53 Veteran's Credit & Disabled Vet Credit – Map 106, Lot 9 – Brown

54 Appointments:

55 Kevin Madison – Public Safety Facilities Evaluation Committee

56 Tom Chase – Public Safety Facilities Evaluation Committee alternate

57 Abatements:

58 Allison & Joseph Jodoin – Winding Hill Road

59 Advent Christian Church – School Street

60 Others:

61 Junk Dealer's License – Northwood Auto Salvage.

62

63 T. Colby wants to remove the abatement for the church from the consent agenda and to discuss the
64 payroll manifest separately in a non-public session while leaving it on the consent agenda.

65 **Motion "To approve the consent agenda as adjusted to remove the church abatement."**

66 **Motion: T. Colby**

67 **Second: J. Guzofski**

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

69

70 Advent Christian Church abatement – the church received a tax bill for the first time this fall because they
71 didn't file the A9 form that is required by law to remain in tax-exempt status. They were unaware of the
72 requirement to file and did so in October, after the filing deadline. In the past Northwood and most other
73 towns didn't enforce this rule until a recent court case. This will have to be an administrative abatement
74 (if approved) because it has nothing to do with the assessed valuation. T. Colby feels the church should
75 have filed the form like other churches did. P. Sanderson said she could see it could fall through the cracks,
76 but this is an active church with a large congregation. She doesn't have a problem with granting the
77 abatement but wants all tax-exempt organizations to be aware of this requirement. H. Kreider agreed
78 saying it is sometimes hard for religious organizations to have professional help to handle these things for
79 them. J. Guzofski said he feels they shouldn't be taxed just because they missed the deadline.

80 **Motion "To approve the abatement for the Advent Christian Church."**

81 **Motion: T. Colby**

82 **Second: J. Guzofski**

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

84

85 **TA Report:**

86 Staffing: The police department currently has 4 full-time positions open. The fire department still has 1
87 full-time firefighter opening.

88 Storm damage: High winds caused damage at the transfer station when the shed roof over the demo
89 container was blown off. There was damage to many roads with significant damage to the section of Bow

90 Street that had just been reconstructed and repaved this year. It has a temporary patch to get it back
91 open and will be rebuilt and repaved next summer. We will be putting in a claim for the transfer station
92 damage to Primex for reimbursement. Cost numbers are being requested to see if we will qualify for a
93 disaster relief declaration from FEMA with a total of 9 counties affected. DPW spent many hours taking
94 down trees and cleaning up tree debris. The electrical substation had a severe flooding issue and the fire
95 department pumped water to prevent major damage. At the town hall we lost one pine tree that
96 threatened the lower section of the parking area. We brought a tree crew in today to remove it. All our
97 people stepped up and did what needed to be done. Now we are waiting on the disaster declaration for
98 possible reimbursement of labor costs and the cost of the damage to the roads.

99 DPW Projects: The power work at the recreation field is still not done yet, due to scheduling with
100 Eversource and weather. We are hoping to get it done in the next few weeks. The message sign install
101 was impacted by the storm as well. The concrete footing is installed and they are scheduled to be back
102 on Thursday to install the sign. We are looking for more quotes for the center school for the warrant
103 articles that may reduce the amount of the demolition. The entry at the town hall renovation work will
104 start on Friday and hopefully be done by next Tuesday when the office re-opens.

105 Inspection Report on the transfer station: We are still waiting on reports from DES. The wastewater
106 division did acknowledge our response to them regarding the concerns with the lagoon.

107 Budget Update: An updated 2022 expenditure report is in the packet. TA Johnson wanted to clarify the
108 totals on the report. The amounts in the 2022 Budget column shows the default budget amount. Then
109 add the Carry Forwards and additional expenditures that were approved from last year and add the COLA
110 that was in a separate warrant article. That is the total amount we are approved to expend. The total
111 expenditures of the current year column include those additional expenditures and the default budget.
112 It is important to understand that the total expenditures are about \$209,000 higher than the default
113 amount. The bottom line looks like we have a \$210,000 unexpended balance, but if you back out the
114 \$209,000 over the default we are also allowed to spend, we are down to only \$1,000 projected
115 unexpended. The Carry Forwards is made up of grants, additional block grant funds, and what we carried
116 forward from last year. H. Kreider said we spent almost all the default budget and are thankful we had
117 the extra funds brought forward to use this year. We are darn close this year.

118 Meeting Dates: The Budget Committee public hearing on the budget will be January 11. The Deliberative
119 Session will be February 4 at 9 a.m. at the school. Warrant articles and any petition articles will be
120 reviewed by the Board of Selectmen on January 10.

121 Bridge Aid Funding: Our one-time supplemental bridge aid payment is anticipated this week. It will be
122 \$66,339.08. Those funds will be held over to the next year. PW Foreman Brown is getting quotes to redo
123 the walls on Bennett Bridge.

124 Staff Luncheon: The staff holiday luncheon went well and was well attended. The live entertainment
125 was excellent.

126 Board meeting schedule: The next Board meetings will be January 10 and 24.

127

128 **Uncollected Ambulance Fees Policy:** TA Johnson said that we are not currently following the policy
129 because these uncollected charges should be addressed annually. The collection agency continues to
130 attempt to collect for a long period of time because that is how they get paid. The issue has been making
131 sure during the year we review the outstanding ones that are possibly collectable. The Chief will make a
132 recommendation to the Board of what should be written off and what shouldn't. He is more aware of the
133 details of the situation than anyone else. The policy doesn't need to change. We just need to address this
134 backlog and address it annually going forward to prevent this kind of backlog. TA Johnson also said he
135 spoke to other towns and most write off about \$20,000 to \$30,000 a year on uncollectable ambulance
136 billing. The Board will have the Chief come to a meeting in January and make his recommendation and
137 moving forward will make a recommendation annually. P. Sanderson asked for clarity on the process of

138 receiving the ambulance billing funds. TA Johnson explained that funds collected by Comstar or the
139 collection agency are deposited directly into our bank account and reports are received by the Treasurer
140 and Finance Director. Each month Comstar submits a bill to us for their portion of those collections. P.
141 Sanderson was satisfied that if legal opinion agrees the town can take the fees from the Ambulance
142 Revolving Fund it will be easy to do on a monthly basis by the Treasurer.
143

144 **2022 Budget Report:**

145 P. Sanderson is looking for explanations for the overages in the budget report in the wage lines. It was
146 explained that the current expenses are being compared to the default amounts which are several years
147 old. Any wage increases granted cannot be included in the default calculation from year-to-year.
148 Essentially the current wages are being compared to five-year old budget amounts and therefore are
149 overspent, unless a position had been vacant.
150

151 **2022 Encumbrances and Carry Forwards:**

152 Outstanding purchase orders from the operating budget through the end of the year include items for the
153 library totaling \$12,336.17, final payment to Cross Country Appraisal for the remainder of the work on the
154 statistical update for \$1,000, payments to Kofile for restoration of town clerk records for 2022 for \$3,495,
155 additional restoration of the next set of records by Kofile for \$ 11,800, roadside trimming services for
156 \$13,750 to prevent storm related damage and blockage of roads, and payment for recording fees to
157 Rockingham County for \$153.00. The total to be encumbered is \$42,534.17. Some of those expenses may
158 be paid out before we close the books in January. Continuing appropriations from approved 2022 warrant
159 articles include the Route 4 Recreation complex improvements for \$4,400, the Master Plan work for
160 \$2,132, and the Narrows station paving project for \$3,920. These funds will be carried forward to pay out
161 in 2023.

162 **Motion: "To authorize to encumber the funds as stated from the 2022 appropriations."**

163 **Motion: P. Sanderson**

164 **Second: T. Colby**

165 **Motion carried by vote of 4/0.**
166

167 **7:00 p.m. Public Hearing on Changes to Northwood Ambulance Service Fees:**

168 H. Kreider opened the hearing. Chief Tetreault was present to discuss his proposal to increase ambulance
169 service fees. He looks at the rates annually to ensure we are competitively priced. The current rates are:
170 Basic Life Support = \$935; Advanced Life Support 1 = \$1,500; Advanced Life Support 2 = \$2,130; mileage
171 = \$22.00 per loaded mile. Chief Tetreault is proposing increasing the rates to the NH average which is:
172 Basic Life Support = \$1,150; Advanced Life Support 1 = \$1,800; Advanced Life Support 2 = \$2,650; mileage
173 = \$25.00 per loaded mile. H. Kreider opened the hearing for public discussion. There was none. H. Kreider
174 closed the public hearing. Chief Tetreault also said the medicare rates are increasing this year.

175 **Motion: "To adopt the recommended rates with an effective date of January 1, 2023."**

176 **Motion: P. Sanderson**

177 **Second: T. Colby**

178 **Motion carried by vote of 4/0.**
179

180 The Board wants the Chief to send the entire fire department the thanks of the Board for all their efforts
181 during the storm. They have received a lot of great comments and without their quick work at the
182 substation there would have been a huge problem for the entire town.
183
184
185

DRAFT

186 **Board Task Manager:**

187 TA Johnson said he has added the town newsletter to the task manager. He has a vendor giving a proposal
188 to develop a newsletter for the public that will be distributed through an email blast residents can sign up
189 to receive. Once the platform is created, we may be able to have a staff person enter the information
190 weekly and get it out with a quality, professional presentation.

191

192 At 7:16 the Board entered a non-public session under RSA 91-A:311 (a) and (d).

193

194 **Motion: "To go into non-public session under RSA 91a;3 II (a) (personnel compensation)"**

195 **Motion: T. Colby**

196 **Second: P. Sanderson**

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

198

199 **Resumed Public Session at 7:50pm**

200

201 **Motion: to seal the minutes of the non-public session as to divulge the information discussed would**
202 **likely benefit a party or parties whose interest are adverse to those of the general community.**

203

204 **Adjourned at 7:52pm**

205

206 Minutes respectfully submitted by

207 Cheryl Eastman

208