

Town of Canterbury, NH
Board of Selectmen
Date: 2023 November 6
Location: Meeting House

Selectmen:

Cheryl Gordon (Chair), Kent Ruesswick, Scott Doherty

Town Administrator:

Ken Folsom

Historic District Commission:

Kevin Bragg, Jeffery Leidinger

Others Present:

Edgar Rivera (Libertad Press NE)

1. Call to Order
 - a. The meeting was called to order at 5:00 p.m.
2. Administration
 - a. The Selectmen signed:
 - i. Kent made a motion to sign the Accounts Payable Manifest in the amount of \$464,574.52. Scott seconded. All in favor by roll call, motion carried.
 - ii. Kent made a motion to sign the Payroll Manifest in the amount of \$57,632.80. Scott seconded. All in favor by roll call.
 - iii. Cheryl signed the Health Trust 2024 Rate Package.
 - iv. The Selectmen signed Yield Tax Levy for Map 257 Lot 3.
 - v. The Selectmen signed DRA 2023 Municipal Assessment Data Certificate.
 - b. Previous Minutes Approval
 - i. Cheryl made a motion to approve the public minutes for the Selectmen's meeting on October 16th, 2023. Scott seconded. All in favor by roll call, motion carried.
3. New Business
 - a. School Board Budget Meeting
 - i. The Selectmen met with the Shaker Regional District School Board at their meeting on October 24th, 2023 to discuss the budget. The School Board would like to get together again to discuss the budget further.
 - ii. The Selectmen agreed to invite the School Board to the Selectmen's meeting on December 4th, 2023. At that meeting the Budget Committee and Selectboard will be reviewing the first proposal for the 2024 budget.
 - b. Transfer Station Bag Purchase
 - i. The price for trash bags will be going up next year. There is enough money left in this years bag budget (item 4323.17) to purchase one more order of small bags. If we purchase them now before the price increase, we will save money next year and have enough small bags to last until the end of 2024.
 - ii. The Selectmen agreed to purchase an order of small bags using the remaining 2023 budget.
 - c. Class VI Road Inspection
 - i. Ken distributed the Class VI Road Inspection 11/1/23 from Road Agent John O'Connor.
 - ii. This inspection is done annually by the Highway Department.

- iii. The only notable change was an additional driveway on Old Gilmanton Road. John is going to send the property owner a letter, letting them know that they need a driveway permit.
 - d. Town Center Solar Array
 - i. See Energy Committee Minutes 10/2/2023 Section 6 for previous discussion.
 - ii. One of the inverters on the Town Center solar array is reporting that is it using power rather than generating power.
 - iii. An electrician examined the solar array and found that there was a wiring issue between the panels. The electrician estimated it would cost less than \$500 to fix it. Ken approved the fix and the electrician will be back in the next week or two.
 - iv. They also found that one of the inverters is having issues and may need to be replaced in the near future. The cost would be \$1,200 plus installation fee.
 - v. Ken will also ask the electrician if anything can and/or should be done about the panels facing different directions due to being moved by high winds.
- 4. Old Business
 - a. Library Roof
 - i. See Selectmen's Minutes 10/16/2023 Section 2.d. for previous discussion.
 - ii. Both the Library and Municipal Complex roofs have been successfully fixed.
 - b. Elkins Memorial Building Maintenance
 - i. The Elkins Memorial Building needs repairs on the windows and bricks. Ken is working with a contractor to arrange for these repairs.
 - ii. The window that needs to be replaced has been taken to the shop. Jeffery Leidingner will be repairing the remaining windows in the Spring for free.
 - iii. Ken will ask the mason for their opinion on exactly what repairs the bricks need.
 - c. Historic District Commission (HDC)
 - i. See Selectmen's Minutes 10/16/2023 Section 5.b. for previous discussion.
 - ii. The HDC met and created a new proposal. They decided to break up the originally proposed changes into incremental warrant articles that will be introduced two at a time over the next few years.
 - iii. The HDC would like the Selectmen's endorsement on the proposed articles for this year.
 - iv. First Warrant Article
 - 1. Rather than having the districts described in the regulations by metes and bounds, the regulations will instead refer to the zoning map.
 - 2. This would be easier for the average person to understand when figuring out if their land is within a district.
 - 3. They will need to figure out if the warrant article must include a copy of the map or if it can simply refer to the existing zoning map.
 - v. Second Warrant Article
 - 1. Section 13.5 of the HDC regulations reads "The Historic District Commission shall conduct a public hearing on all applications."
 - 2. The HDC would like to change this to allow for some applications to be exempt from a hearing, application fee, and abutter notices.
 - 3. All changes would still require an application, but a waiver could be issued if the HDC Chair and Board of Selectmen representative on the HDC both agree that the change would have no impact on any abutter, would not be visible to public right of ways, and would have no material impact.
 - 4. By still requiring an application, this will allow any changes to be recorded
 - vi. The HDC is also going to move forward with the regulation changes that were not contested by the Town's Counsel. This includes changing the proposed language from "shall" to

- “may” in the instances where the HDC wanted to offer guidelines rather than proscribe new processes.
- vii. The current zoning map has an issue with the legend that they are working on fixing. The drawing only shows the Shaker Historic Overlay District, but the legend labels it as the Shaker Museum Preservation District. These two districts have different zoning rules. They will either change the legend or the colors to distinguish between the two as it was on the previous map.
 - viii. The Selectmen agreed that these changes should be brought forward as warrant articles in the 2024 Town Meeting.
- d. Offer to purchase town owned property Tax Map 101 Lot 36
- i. See Selectmen’s Minutes 10/16/2023 Section 4.a. for previous discussion.
 - ii. Two proposals have been received for this piece of property from abutters.
 - 1. 10/4/23 from Mike Pelky for \$5K
 - 2. 10/30/23 from Donald Pare from \$6.5K
 - iii. The property is in the Sherwood Forest area, .71 acres, and assessed at \$38K.
 - iv. Historically, Selectboards have agreed to sell lots in that area with the condition that no additional residential dwellings be built upon it or that the lot be merged.
 - v. Scott asked what are the Selectboard’s obligations when considering these proposals.
 - vi. Ken said that in the past the only advertisement that we have done for this is through the website or agenda posting. The Selectmen are under no obligation to notify either bidders.
 - vii. Kent asked if they should turn this into a sealed bid.
 - viii. The Selectmen debated what would make this most fair. If the Selectmen had voted on this at the last meeting, then Mr. Pelky would have gotten it.
 - ix. Historically, the Selectboard have been selling lots in that area for \$5-6K to get them back on the tax rolls. The previous Selectboards have not wanted the Town to own property in that area.
 - x. Kent made a motion to accept Donald Pare’s offer of \$6,500 with the stipulation that no additional residential dwellings will be put on the property. Scott seconded. All in favor by roll call, motion carried.
- e. 2024 Budget
- i. Ken distributed the Profit & Loss Budget vs. Actual for 1/1/23 to 11/1/23, an initial draft of the 2024 budget and accompanying notes, and a wage comparison with similar NH towns.
 - ii. The Selectboard reviewed the wage comparison and proposed wages for Canterbury.
 - 1. Ken looked at population, operating budget, and median income to find similar towns to Canterbury in the Central NH area.
 - 2. This comparison shows that Canterbury is about in the middle of the wage ranges.
 - 3. These towns are having similar issues with recruiting and filling vacancies.
 - 4. He did not do a comparison for the Library wages.
 - 5. Wages are going up by 4% for all non-library employees. Wages are going up by 8% for library employees.
 - 6. The Library is semi-autonomous and their budget is created by the Library’s Board of Trustees. The Trustees will be contributing \$9K to the library wages.
 - iii. Ken asked the Selectboard to look at the wages, notes, and budget line by line before the next meeting. If anything unreasonable stood out, he wanted to know so that he could make revisions before they meet with the Budget Committee on 12/4/23.
 - iv. The Selectboard and Ken discussed the notes that Ken compiled about the budget.
 - 1. Health Insurance is going up 15.6%.
 - 2. Election wages are up because there are going to be four elections in 2024.
 - 3. The new voting machine may need to be encumbered.

4. The Selectmen need to decide if the Treasurer should also receive a wage increase.
 5. There are several numbers in this draft that are placeholders until wages are decided.
 6. The Planning Board section is going up to include a new Land Use Professional.
 7. The one full-time Firefighter is planning on retiring next year. The Fire Chief proposes switching to a per diem plan instead of hiring a replacement. The Selectmen approved of this change.
 8. In 2024 the remaining ARPA funds must be designated for specific projects. Those funds must be spent by 2026. It is proposed to use these funds to fix the dirt roads.
 9. Transfer Station wages are up due to being fully staffed and increased hours.
 10. As of this draft, the overall operations budget is going up 2.8%.
 11. There are several warrant articles that are likely to be added including a backhoe and grader for the Highway Department, gutters for the Meeting House, and a Mini-split for the Historical Society room in the Library.
- f. 2023 Budget
1. Ken talked to the Police, Highway, and Fire Departments about what is left in the 2023 budget. He asked them to limit their purchases for the remainder of the year so that lines that are over can be compensated for.
 2. The 2023 Budget's bottom line is still looking good.
- g. Police Department Vacancy
- i. See Selectmen's Minutes 10/16/2023 Section 2.c.ii. for previous discussion
 - ii. There is enough money remaining in the 2023 Police Department budget to buy a cruiser. The Chief is looking at cruisers for sale and will propose a purchase if he finds a good candidate.
 - iii. This will be discussed with the Budget Committee at the December 4th Selectmen's Meeting.
- h. School District Withdrawal
- i. The Selectmen have been receiving a lot of questions from residents about the vote by the School Withdrawal Committee.
 - ii. In the 2023 Session, [House Bill 530-LOCAL](#) was passed which is "relative to withdrawal from a cooperative school district".
 1. During the meeting this was mistakenly referred to as NH RSA 194 C:2.
 2. This bill came into effect on July 30, 2023.
 3. This bill amends RSA 195 so that withdrawal may be achieved by one of two options
 1. Option 1: Simple majority in the withdrawing district AND simple majority in the entire cooperative district
 2. Option 2: 3/5 supermajority in the withdrawing district
 - iii. Ken wanted the Selectboard to release an opinion about the situation.
 - iv. Cheryl didn't think the Selectboard was legally allowed to have an official opinion.
 - v. Both the [majority and minority reports](#) estimate that taxes will go up if Canterbury were to withdraw from the Shaker Regional School District.
 1. The majority report estimates an increase of \$4.48 - \$5.87 to the current tax rate. (pg 4)
 2. The minority report estimates an increase of \$3.00 - \$9.00 to the current tax rate. (pg 13)
 - vi. Ken has posted the minutes of the committee and the majority and minority reports on the [town website](#). He will put a notice on the town email.
 - vii. The next step for the withdrawal process is a review by the [State Board of Education](#). If they say yes, then both Canterbury, Belmont, and the School District will need to vote. The School District vote would happen in the first session. The Canterbury vote would happen in the second session. No one present was sure when the State Board of Education would have a decision.

- viii. The Selectboard were not sure what combination of votes would result in what outcome. See above section 4.g.ii. for the answer.
 - ix. Randi Johnson, the Chair of the School Withdrawal Committee, has said that the Committee will be making a press release after the reports are sent to the Department of Education.
 - x. If the State Board of Education approves the request, the Selectmen will ask the Town's counsel what, if anything, they may officially say about the situation.
 - xi. Ken said they should be able to make an official statement since each warrant article in the Town Report has a note about whether the Selectboard recommends the article or not.
5. Adjournment
- a. Kent made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:54 p.m. Scott seconded. All in favor by roll call, motion carried.

Next Meeting: 2023 November 20, 5:00 p.m. at the Meeting House

Minutes submitted by Kathleen McKay, Administrative Assistant