

Minutes
Nottingham Select Board Meeting
November 19, 2018

6:30 PM Chair Danis opened the meeting and asked all those present to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Members Present: Donna Danis, Tiler Eaton, Charlene Andersen, Anthony Dumas, Benjamin Bartlett

Others: Town Administrator Chris Sterndale, Secretary Dawn Calley-Murdough, Steve Soreff, Chris Stewart, Dominic Lebell

Approval of Manifest:

Motion: by Mr. Dumas, second by Ms. Andersen to approve the November 19, 2018 accounts payable and November 20, 2018 payroll manifests.

Vote: 5 – 0 in favor.

Approval of Minutes:

Motion: by Mr. Eaton, second by Mr. Bartlett to approve the minutes of the November 5, 2018 meeting, as amended.

Vote: 5 – 0 in favor.

Motion: by Ms. Andersen, second by Mr. Eaton to approve the non-public minutes of October 22, 2018 as written and November 5, 2018 as amended.

Vote: 5 – 0 in favor.

Select Board Department/Board/Committee Reports:

Budget: Mr. Bartlett stated the committee met on November 15th to review the 1st draft of the 2019/2020 school budget. There is an initial increase of 3.7% in the operating budget, without any warrant articles. Some required costs are due to salaries, benefits and insurance, and worker comp. The School Board stated they are meeting to consider the possibility of building expansions and for a world language teacher.

Mr. Bartlett stated student populations, with the exception of a current 5th through 8th grade bubble, student populations appears to be shrinking.

Mr. Bartlett stated the school continues to review and consider upgrades to the school building, as the budget proposes repairs to school grounds with sink holes and paving. Negotiations are taking place for a new paraprofessional contract.

Chair Danis asked how the town plans for building and ground repairs and does the town does help the school with the grounds. Mr. Sterndale reported the town would complete minor repairs within the budget, and plan a warrant article for major renovations. The town does assist the school with general driveway issues, such as plowing and sanding, and any emergency related needs.

The committee will meet on November 29th to continue reviewing the 2019/2020 school budget.

CIP: No meeting scheduled.

Master Plan Sub-committee: Ms. Andersen reported the committee continues to review the Master Plan to determine what has been accomplished, what hasn't been accomplished, and if items should remain on the list.

**Minutes
Nottingham Select Board Meeting
November 19, 2018**

The next meeting will be sometime in January 2019.

Planning: Mr. Dumas stated the board reviewed a series of site plan reviews and did not discuss policy related topics.

300th: Mr. Eaton stated the committee continues to move forward with plan. Mr. Soreff stated the committee attended the Recreation Craft Fair to share upcoming plans, continues to sell t-shirts and hats, and will participate in the Holiday Parade.

Town Administrator Reports, Mail, Signature Items:

Highway: The 1st of the season plowing was completed fairly successfully. The new pickup truck has made a positive impact in making sure plowing is completed efficiently and more quickly.

Recreation: The Craft Fair went well and the Nottingham Holiday Parade will start at 10:00 am on December 1st.

Fire: Annual Employee Holiday Potluck has been scheduled.

Office Holiday Opening and Closings: The town offices will be open on Wednesday, and all town offices will be closed on Thursday and Friday. However, the Recycling Center will be open on Friday for residents.

ZBA: Mr. Sterndale reported he will met with the ZBA to address a legal appeal.

Election: Mr. Sterndale reported there was a very strong turnout for the General Election in November, with the number of people attending probably reaching the maximum number that the town offices should hold. There were some parking related issues and in the future all town and election staff will park in the upper lot by the gym to make it easier in the future.

Looking ahead, the Select Board should consider asking the School Board to use the school for the Federal Primary that will take place in early 2020. Unfortunately because of the politics and NH being 1st in the Primary the date won't be known until shortly before the election. There is the understanding that it is difficult to cancel school on short notice, but the town office parking and the available building people capacity exceeds what could be handled with an election as busy as the last presidential election.

Mr. Sterndale was asked to reach out to the School Board about the need of the school for the 2020 primary election.

Appointments:

7:00 pm: Mr. Sterndale reviewed that the town was contacted by Granite Apollo, LLC about possible use of the Route 4 property as a solar farm, and enough information is now available to bring the proposal forward to the public. The board received a Letter of Intent from Granite Apollo outlining their proposed contract to start the preparation for the solar farm proposal. The intent is to have a warrant article at Town Meeting in March 2019.

Chris Stewart and Dominic Lebel introduced themselves. Mr. Stewart reviewed the history of his company, Granite Apollo, LLC, and his experience in the solar field since 2014. Mr. Stewart stated he has been discussing the proposal of installing a large scale solar project on the Route 4 property for a while. The available preliminary information indicates the property is good for this type of solar project.

Minutes
Nottingham Select Board Meeting
November 19, 2018

Mr. Dominic Lebel reviewed the key for the project, stating the proposal is a partnership with the municipality. The proposal is for an initial 3 year term to finalize all needed surveys, test, and establish sale of power contracts, which could be completed faster than 3 years. The final contract will be a 25 year lease for the land with the final installation of solar panels. The proposal is a per acre lease cost, a PILOT (Payment In Lieu Of Taxes) agreement for payment of property taxes, and a bond for removal of the panels when the project is done. This agreement is similar to existing agreements already in place with the town of Londonderry Hopkinton.

Mr. Stewart explained that a PILOT agreement is to establish a set property value, providing the company with a regular amount for their tax liability. The PILOT agreement will be negotiated between the town and Granite Apollo, with final approval of the agreement given by the state. The tax liability would be only for the improvements, as the town owns the property. It was stated the town will receive income from the lease of the land, as well as the tax on the property improvements.

Mr. Stewart compared the Nottingham project to their other projects, stating Nottingham is a proposed 20 megawatt system, which is enough to power approximately 4,500 houses. Solar panels will be posted into the ground on a stationary pole, and they will put in as many panels as the property can hold in the available ground space. There will be variable foot buffer between the panels and the existing property line, paying careful attention to nearby property owners in residential areas; there should be little impact to surrounding property owners. Installation will take approximately six months. There will be little traffic once the installation is complete, there won't be any lights on the panels, and commercial grade fencing will surround the property to keep people out. There is currently no decision about what to do with the existing structures on the property. Utility wires will connect to the grid from the property, near the existing structures.

Mr. Stewart reviewed the potential revenue to the town with the property value of the solar panels, stating some towns have PILOT agreements that are based on the per megawatt capacity, at approximately \$6,000.00 to \$8,000.00 per year per megawatt. The lease rate per acre is on all acres in the parcel, used or not.

Mr. Stewart stated the town is welcome to remove whatever revenue can be received from the land, such as timber or scrap metal, as his company will only use the raw land. Mr. Lebel stated there is an expectation that not all the property will be utilized and it will stay well away from any delineated wetlands. General discussion took place about what the town would possibly do with any of the natural resources and the current property conditions.

Ms. Andersen asked about the definition of sub-lease option. Mr. Stewart stated Apollo Granite starts with the permitting and connection process, and as they are ready for the installation construction they will seek an owner/operator partner. Each project is created with their own LLC and the owner/operator keeps that existing name.

Ms. Andersen reviewed the prior history of the property and asked to include water and mineral protection in the contract, and to also include a waiver of liability and insurance. Mr. Stewart agreed, and they will actually stay away from constructing any panels near the wetlands. Mr. Lebel stated there will be a full wetland delineation survey and vernal pool studies.

Mr. Sterndale recommended moving forward with a warrant article that will authorize the Select Board to take action on a long term lease options, similar to the agreement with the solar panels at

**Minutes
Nottingham Select Board Meeting
November 19, 2018**

the Community Center and Fire Station. This will prevent the need to include the entire lease into a warrant article. There is the expectation for possible construction to take place in 2020.

Mr. Stewart stated the initial three year lease option is to make sure the installation can be completed, connection can be made to the electric grid, and find a buyer of the power.

General discussion took place about the number of operations Mr. Stewart and Mr. Lebel have worked with, how many projects the company has created, and those that were not complete after the initial term, which was zero.

Mr. Sterndale stated the board should review the proposal to consider if they would want to enter into this type of agreement. If the board agreed to the letter of intent, a public hearing should be expected to receive public comment regarding the project and people should feel free to reach out to the town for additional questions. In the meantime he is communicating with others, such as the town attorney, and assessor, as well as speaking with other towns regarding the agreement process and PILOT agreements. If the board agrees to move forward with signing the letter of intent, the town will act quickly for any needed steps to have a warrant article for approval of the 25 year lease authorization ready for Town Meeting in March 2019.

Mr. Stewart and Mr. Lebel would answer any questions from the public at any time and would be able to come to the Nottingham Town Meeting on March 16, 2019 for a presentation.

The board thanked Mr. Stewart and Mr. Lebel for their presentation. Granite Apollo would make themselves available for a public hearing and at town meeting.

General Business:

Proposed 2019 Budget: Mr. Sterndale reported the board has received what is still very much a rough draft and highlighted the bigger budget requests. Mr. Sterndale stated he will continue to work with department heads on their budgets, and the Select Board before the 1st draft is presented to the Budget Committee on December 6th.

Mr. Sterndale stated he has started to pull out all software related items from general equipment accounts to new software accounts to better track the expenses. He is also asking the board to approve the budget amount for a transition to MS Office 365 to put all employees on the same operating platform and make it easier for collaborative work, address email related problems seen with some accounts, as well as address any licensing issues. The budget also includes the needed replacement of at least one PC, all the phones have been consolidated into one account.

There is only one election for 2019 but there is the expectation to train election staff in December 2019 for the Federal 2020 Primary Election in January. There is also a drop in the Town Clerk accounts with the completion of renovations in 2018.

The Financial Administration account is a grouping of accounts for the bookkeeper, Tax Collector, Trustees of the Trust Fund, and financial operations of the town. The Auditor expenses in 2018 were less than expected with the new auditing firm.

There are expected savings in the salary line with the departed Assessing Coordinator by relying on existing staff and Avitar the assessing contractor. Mr. Sterndale reported the secretary has picked up some of the work and are requesting the contractor pick up additional tasks.

**Minutes
Nottingham Select Board Meeting
November 19, 2018**

Mr. Sterndale stated he expects to shop around for better prices with the mapping contract; the prior contract was a three year term. The town might be able to find a different provider for a lower cost.

Mr. Sterndale reported legal expenses in 2018 were higher than expected as the town spent more than anticipated on property appeal cases, as well as the Route 4 property. Unfortunately the same is expected for 2019 with property appeal and a Zoning Board appeal.

Health Insurance expenses continue to be the largest part of the budget. The increase is attributed to not only the premium increases, but also two employees now receiving insurance that did not do so in the past and changes of the type of plan being used, single versus family. The town is looking at all alternatives to try and lower health insurance costs, but nothing is standing out as a great option. There aren't very many cost effective options available to the town, such as Health Savings Accounts or Flexible Savings Account. The town could move to a higher deductible plan but there isn't a way to help offset the additional cost to employees, and the potential savings with the federal tax changes aren't fully understood.

A review of dental insurance has also taken place, Delta Dental partners with the existing health insurance company at an approximate annual cost of \$20,000.00 to insure all eligible employees. This will match what other towns are offering, making Nottingham a little more competitive.

NH Retirement rates are set by the state, with a recent decrease of \$0.01, which will save on Police and Fire retirement expenses. The 2019 budget also includes the annual amount needed for employee retirement contribution match, based on the new rate adopted by the Select Board mid-year in 2018.

The Select Board agreed they needed to discuss employee compensation, insurances, and benefits as a whole, rather than piece by piece review as they work on the budget. Chair Danis asked to also consider technology in a similar manner.

Mr. Sterndale stated he is still waiting for the Planning Board to provide any changes to their budget, per conversation with the Planning Board Chair. The account is currently level funded, but additional details are needed regarding the Planning Board needs of a Planner in 2019. Mr. Dumas stated the Planning Board appears inclined to utilize Strafford Regional Planning Commission on a case by case basis. Mr. Sterndale reported the board may be more in need of more structured professional help on a more consistent basis that what they are receiving right now. Strafford Regional Planning Commission is great, but may not be able to provide the technical skills the board might need. This includes an estimate for the SRPC Planning account.

The Town Hall and Other Building accounts are for building maintenance and management includes some small projects for repairs at the Community Center/Town Office. Projects include some grounds repair for the flag pole and at the driveway entrance. Another 2019 project may be to renovate the kitchen for approximately \$22,000.00. Other projects include replacing the Highway Department and Recycle Center waste oil furnaces, as both have needed costly repairs. A future project will be to also include paving of the upper parking lot, and should be considered at the same time as the lower parking lot.

The Select Board supported renovating the kitchen given that the space is utilized by many in the community. Mr. Dumas asked if it would be more cost efficient to install a new furnace at the Recycling Center and moving their waste oil furnace to the highway department, which will save on oil needs where the Recycle Center only open three days a week. Mr. Sterndale stated he would

Minutes
Nottingham Select Board Meeting
November 19, 2018

look into it, but there is still the plan to accept waste oil at the Recycle Center and transportation of oil may not be convenient.

Mr. Bartlett recommended purchasing a new furnace for the Highway Garage that would be a big enough system to support future renovations and improvements at the Highway Garage, such as adding an office space. Ms. Andersen also suggested considering alternative heating sources, such as a geothermal system.

Ms. Andersen suggested renovating the bathroom at the Recycling Center, as it is needed.

Mr. Sterndale recommended replacing the water softener system at the library, stating the system is original to the building and he has been waiting for the call for an emergency replacement.

Mr. Sterndale stated he continues to refine electric costs with the solar installation. He received new heating oil bids, requested updated amounts from companies, and has the expectation of a lower cost for 2019. However, propane expenses have increased.

There is the expectation to continue repairs at the cemeteries with fencing for the New North Cemetery. The fence provides delineation between the property boundaries, and the driving areas. Mr. Sterndale answered the account for cemetery road upgrades is zero, as the repairs will take more equipment than what the town has and will cost more than what the town might be willing to spend at this time. It was stated there is also the future plan for cemetery expansion.

The Insurance account amounts have been received with slight increases across the board.

There are minimal changes in the Police budget. There is an expectation to have a warrant article to add computers to every vehicle, which will also hopefully be partially paid for with a requested grant; the department is completing the paperwork now. Mr. Bartlett asked to consider the cost of using older military equipment. Mr. Dumas thought the proposal the department has received is a good one, and it includes a 90 day trial for in vehicle use/testing, as part of the contract consideration to make sure it works. The department budget also includes a new cruiser, which will be offset by the trade-in amount.

The Fire Department includes increases to the per diem part time salary account for weekend days and evening coverage, but it remains to be seen if the Chief can actually find staff for the recommended additional coverage. The department does not have any dry hydrant replacements for 2019 reducing the account by \$15,000.00. The department will replace all breathing apparatus equipment in 2019, which will be paid seen in a warrant article and be paid for from the capital reserve fund. The purchase of the new equipment will save on

The Building Inspector is asking for funds for a new set of code books, if the codes change. Additional hours may be needed with another new subdivision development.

The Highway budget includes increased funds for a Highway Director, and the actual 2019 expenditures will determined on whether or not the town can find one. Budgeting for plowing continues to be a struggle, as the weather remains unpredictable. Mr. Sterndale asked the board to consider establishing a new reserve fund to help deal with any peaks and valleys in plowing expenses as plowing is not an optional cost.

General discussion took place about different methods of budgeting and trying to plan for plowing expenses, which included unpredictable weather, number of people plowing, quality provided by

Minutes
Nottingham Select Board Meeting
November 19, 2018

the plowing contractors, and having essentially two winters per budget. Discussion took place about the funds in a plowing reserve fund would be managed, and concerns were expressed.

Additional expenses for the Highway Department include equipment maintenance with truck sandblasting/painting the Mack truck to try and lengthen the years it is used. Higher cost for gravel but it is providing a better quality on the dirt roads with positive feedback and should provide the town with some maintenance costs. Fuel can also be unpredictable depending on the amount of need.

Mr. Sterndale reported he is close to the end of the road maintenance study with the expectation to receive a recommendation to change the type of materials being used for a better quality and longer lasting end product. This information should be available at an upcoming Select Board meeting.

Mr. Sterndale reported for the Recycling Center budget he is still waiting to hear back from NHDES about how to address the PFAS found at the Recycling Center old landfill. The Recycling Center is also seeing some changes in the market have changed the amounts they receive for recycling revenue and there has also been a transition in needing to pay to dispose of some items.

There is also a need to purchase a new storage container to cover the disposed tires in order to meet state requirements. The Recycling Center stores approximately 100 to 150 used tired before they are transported for removal and disposal. General discussion took place about alternative options to try and cover the tires. Mr. Sterndale reported the department is seeking a grant that should pay for half the cost of the storage container.

There are exact request received from the General Assistance/Welfare and Social Services agencies and the amounts will be reviewed with the Welfare Director and other Department Heads to determine if the amount is justified by the services Nottingham residents receive. The Welfare Director and other departments will weigh in on the agencies being supported. There are also no changes to the budgeted amount for the General Welfare accounts.

Mr. Bartlett asked if the town can repurpose a retired town vehicle for the Animal Control Officer to drive. Mr. Sterndale reported the town has two animal control officers and it would probably cost the town more in vehicle maintenance and loss of trade in value.

Recreation has no program changes, except to add one more summer concert with an increase in participation. Recreation has applied for and received approval for a UNH Intern, at no cost for approximately five months that will help them out during the spring and summer months.

Additional detailed budget information can be received for the library, if the board wanted to review it. Historical Society amount remains level funded. The Conservation Commission submitted their budget with little change. Debt service remains as previously established with the final payment in 2019 for the landfill.

General discuss took place about what should be considered as a priority for the 2019 budget, such as the Recycling Center bathroom. Chair Danis reported the town has consistently not taken action on repairs for town facilities in an effort to save money, but people should have a clean facility to use. Chair Danis asked if the town could take action for repairs in 2018, the other members agreed, and Mr. Sterndale was asked to seek a quote to renovate the Recycling Center bathroom.

Ms. Andersen asked to consider what emergency road work might need to happen during the spring just in case there is flooding. The water tables are currently higher than normal, the snow season

Minutes
Nottingham Select Board Meeting
November 19, 2018

has just started, and it could mean a higher than anticipated spring melt. This could mean adding funds to the gravel account, and other accounts as necessary. Mr. Sterndale would also consider potential expenses.

The board thanked Mr. Sterndale for a great first pass with the budget.

NON-PUBLIC SESSION: None

ADJOURNMENT: Having no further business,

8:44 PM Motion: by Mr. Eaton, second by Mr. Dumas to adjourn.

Vote: 5 – 0 in favor.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dawn Calley-Murdough