

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN
TOWN OF MADISON
January 7, 2025
MINUTES**

Selectmen Present – John Arruda; Adam Price; Joy Gray

Others Present –Town Administrator Linda Shackford; Videographer Kasia Scentsas; members of the public

Where and When Posted – Town Hall upper & lower bulletin boards and Madison & Silver Lake Post Offices on December 16, 2024.

Meeting Called to Order – By Price at 4:30 pm.

Pledge of Allegiance: Price led those in attendance in reciting the Pledge.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Gray asked for the approval of the November 12, 2024 minutes to be postponed to the next meeting. Gray would like to add things to the minutes. The Board agreed to postpone with Price asking Gray to be sure to have them for the next meeting.

Motion by Gray, seconded by Arruda to approve the minutes of the December 23, 2024 meeting with changes. The motion passed **3-0**. Gray agreed to L. Shackford's request to send her those changes in writing.

Motion by Gray, seconded by Arruda to approve the non-public minutes of December 23, 2024 as written. The motion passed **3-0**.

APPROVAL OF MANIFEST:

Motion by Gray, seconded by Arruda to approve the Manifest of December 30, 2024 in the amount of \$55,662.73 for accounts payable. The motion passed **3-0**.

Motion by Arruda, seconded by Gray to approve the Manifest of January 6-13, 2025 in the amount of \$499,488.32. The manifest breakdown is as follows: \$254,312.45 for accounts payable; \$34,417.64 for payroll; \$10,758.22 for payroll liabilities; and \$200,000 for Madison School District. The motion passed **3-0**.

PUBLIC HEARING: To discuss and receive input on the acceptance of FEMA funds.

Noticed in the December 28, 2024 edition of the Conway Daily Sun and posted at the upper and lower boards of Town Hall, the Madison Post Office and the Silver Lake Post Office on December 26, 2024.

Price opened the public hearing at 4:34 pm.

Price explained that the Town has received two payments from the State of NH for FEMA reimbursement for storms in 2024. The payments total \$387,267.10. Those funds will be placed into the general fund.

Sharon Schilling reiterated that those payments are reimbursement for the rebuilding of Colby Hill Road and a combination of smaller road repairs. Price confirmed Schilling's statement adding that we have not received any of the anticipated funds related to the Modoc Hill Road repair request or the allowable reimbursement for the administrative time spent applying to FEMA.

Price asked if there were any other questions or comments. Seeing none, Price closed the hearing to public comment at 4:37pm.

Motion by Price, seconded by Gray to accept both FEMA payments equaling \$387,267.10 for storm damage reimbursement. The motion passed **3-0**.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Donna Veilleux asked Price to explain this use of the word "fiasco" at the last meeting as related to the wells being private or public. Price explained he would have to go back and review the video to see if he used the word and in what context before commenting.

Nicole Nordlund commented on the grader warrant article, last year's addition of DPW personnel and how the bottom line of the budget should be determined.

Sharon Schilling commented that the Town has a habit of creating new hires or payroll increases mid-year. Schilling stated the Advisory Budget Committee wants the Selectmen to not institute salary increases until April 1st which would be after Town Meeting approves a budget and created an organizational chart that would show if a position is open.

Donna Veilleux asked if there has been a policy change about having department heads attend the meetings. Price said there has been no policy change. The Rec Director is at a game, the DPW Director submits a sheet that goes online; the Board receives information in different ways.

DISCUSSION ITEMS/NEW BUSINESS:

NH DOT Route 16 Project with DOT Representatives Ayotte & Spetelunas – Jason Ayotte, NH DOT Project Manager, gave a detailed presentation that described the plans and challenges related to Project #29597 Albany/Madison that encompasses a six mile stretch of Route 16. Improvements include road widening, rumble strips and turn lanes. Initial work could begin as early as 2028 with subsequent portions taking until 2036.

Corey Spetelunas, NH DOT Project Safety Manager, expounded on Mr. Ayotte's presentation offering the particulars to the safety benefits and statistics about rumble strips. The strips help with stopping land departures through visual and audible cues. It is a relatively small investment at \$130,000 for an eight mile stretch that can be completed in less than a week. This project is expected to begin in March of 2025.

Ayotte and Spetelunas answered questions from the Board and public. The Board expressed their appreciation to them both for coming to the meeting.

Marc Ohlson, Planning Board Chairman regarding Master Plan Funding – Ohlson came to discuss the Board's decision to cut the \$100,000 warrant article for funding of a re-write of the Master Plan. Ohlson would like to at least have some funds in a warrant article to bring before Town Meeting to fuel the topic for discussion. The Board and Ohlson discussed options.

Gray suggested a split, putting \$50,000 into an ETF this year and next year. Price suggested using \$25,000 to open the conversation at Town Meeting allowing for the public to amend the amount on the floor if they so choose. The Board was in agreement to put up a \$25,000 article to be placed into a new ETF.

Request for Relief of Late Tax Payment Fees: Map 121 Lot 016 – The owner of the property requested that this discussion be done in non-public under **Non-Public Session per RSA 91-A:3II (c)** Matters which, if discussed in public, would likely affect adversely the reputation of any person, other than a member of the public body itself, unless such person requests an open meeting. This exemption shall extend to any application for assistance or tax abatement or waiver of a fee, fine, or other levy, if based on inability to pay or poverty of the applicant. The Board tabled this to the end of the meeting.

MadTV Regarding Alternate Board Member and Franchise Fees – Hope Hutchinson asked the Board to appoint Noreen Downs to serve as an alternate for MadTV noting she does not serve on any other Town committees or boards.

Motion by Price, seconded by Gray to appoint Noreen Downs as an alternate to MadTV Board. The motion passed **3-0**.

Hutchinson requested that the franchise fee percentage be increased after being at 3.5% for several years. It was noted that we are in negotiations for a new cable contract.

Arruda stated he is not in favor of an increase equating the fee to a tax that only cable tv subscribers have to pay.

Motion by Gray, seconded by Price to request an increase of the cable franchise fee by 1% bringing it to 4.5%. The motion passed **2-1-0** with Arruda against.

Requests for Payment: Rec Rev Fund – The Board received two requests for use of Rec Revolving Fund money. One was for \$110.00 for 300 newsletters to be printed at Minuteman Press; Arruda asked how often the newsletter would be published and was answered quarterly. The other request was for \$650.00 to a DJ at the Snowball Dance on January 21st. Gray thought that amount seemed high with Price explaining there are not many DJs available and a recent \$500 donation has been received. The Board will add the forms to their signature items.

OLD BUSINESS:

Member of VSC Regarding Veteran's Credit Warrant Article – Sharon Schilling, VSC member, asked the Board to consider adding a warrant article that would ask Town Meeting if they would be willing to offer an All Veterans tax credit. This differentiates from the one currently offered in that it is not restricted to certain dates of service; 90 days of honorable service is needed to apply; the amount of the credit would be the same \$500 already offered. The Board was in agreement to add the article to the warrant.

2025 Budget and Warrant: Discussion points included:

- L. Shackford explained a change in two budget lines regarding copy machines and printers. Ultimately, a savings of \$10 per month will come with a new contract that will be signed with Porter Office Machines in the signature items.

- Gray opened discussion regarding a part-time floater to assist in Town Hall. Ultimately Gray stated that the budget is too tight this year to offer her idea for that position as a department floater to assist different department in Town Hall. While on the subject, Gray would like to see any open positions reflected in the budget so there are no surprises. Price noted that the Police Department has accounted for their open positions in their 2025 budget; Arruda explained how the need for personnel changes seasonally at the Transfer Station with the potential of current part-time DPW employees being able to fill the gaps.
- Information to incorporate into the CIP has been received from Code, Library, Rec and Police; DPW and Fire are still needed. The Board requests that the department heads for DPW, Fire and Police attend the next BOS meeting.
- While assisting the Rec Director with compiling the Rec Department receivables, Gray has found that it takes a village to document every payment; giving kudos to the Shackford and Young for all they did before passing it over to the Director. Gray proposes budgeting for a bookkeeper for the Rec Department with Price not disagreeing but you'd need to find the funds and a person. Arruda feels that the department head should be handling and accounting for their department's funds. Gray projected the need for an increase in the director's hours. Price does not see room in the budget for this but left the topic open for future discussion.
- Gray hopes there are backup plans in place because she is concerned that the warrant article for the grader will not pass. Price noted that an amendment on the floor of Town Meeting could be done to ask for funds to rent a grader while research can be done as to what else for machines is available.
- Gray asked for pdf versions of all the expenses and manifests for 2024. L. Shackford will supply them.
- The Board was in agreement with an article to create, and fund with \$500, an ETF for the Conservation Commission to offer scholarships and conservation education. The Commission would be listed as the agents to expend.

PFAS Letter to Untested Well Owners – There are three properties that still need to have their water tested for PFAS reported Gray. The draft letters were reviewed. Price has no problem sending the letters but feels that L. Shackford shouldn't be the point of contact. Price feels that since Gray was made the point person by taking over from Brooks, the letter needs to reflect her as the contact.

Selectman Gray's List - Gray spoke to information for assistance through rebates for homeowners for water filtration systems on wells that have small amounts of contamination that are not to be included in the Town's remediation. There are three homes eligible. Gray will revamp the testing letter and send to L. Shackford to be sent out via certified mail and send letters to homeowners about the assistance for homeowner filtration systems.

The well that supplies the Town buildings is a qualified transient water system as it meets the DES criteria. A quick application process, \$150 fee per year and regular testing are the next steps. L. Shackford was assured that we would be hiring a company to do that regular testing noting that McLean hires a company for just that service.

Selectman Arruda's List – The 2024 year-end total for the Transfer Station receivables are \$70,730.

Selectman Price's List – Price asked if the Rec Department bus invoice issue has been resolved. Gray stated no, and asked L. Shackford if invoices have been paid in full. L. Shackford responded that we have paid what we have received. Price also:

- Extended positive comments about how well DPW is handling the winter maintenance in Banfield Hollow;
- Spoke for Rec Director O'Donnell that basketball has begun and there is an event on January 25th, the "Snow Ball".

Administrator's List – L. Shackford asked Gray about ordering the laptop approved at the last meeting. Both were surprised of the total cost at \$1,077 versus the \$800 expected. Gray will look into other purchasing options.

SIGNATURE ITEMS:

Manifest
Payroll & Accounts Payable Checks
Porter Office Copier/Printer Agreement

6:54 pm Motion by Price, seconded by Arruda to enter **Non-Public Session per RSA 91-A:3II (c)** Matters which, if discussed in public, would likely affect adversely the reputation of any person, other than a member of the public body itself, unless such person requests an open meeting. This exemption shall extend to any application for assistance or tax abatement or waiver of a fee, fine, or other levy, if based on inability to pay or poverty of the applicant; and **Non-Public Session per RSA 91-A:3II (I)** Consideration of legal advice provided by legal counsel, either in writing or orally, to one or more members of the public body, even where legal counsel is not present.

Roll Call Vote: Arruda – aye; Gray – aye; Price – aye

7:20 PM Motion by Gray, seconded by Price to return to public session and sealed the minutes of **Non-Public Session per RSA 91-A:3II (c)** Matters which, if discussed in public, would likely affect adversely the reputation of any person, other than a member of the public body itself, unless such person requests an open meeting. This exemption shall extend to any application for assistance or tax abatement or waiver of a fee, fine, or other levy, if based on inability to pay or poverty of the applicant; and **Non-Public Session per RSA 91-A:3II (I)** Consideration of legal advice provided by legal counsel, either in writing or orally, to one or more members of the public body, even where legal counsel is not present.

Roll Call Vote: Gray - aye; Arruda - aye; Price - aye

NEXT SELECTMEN'S MEETING – The next Selectmen's meeting is scheduled for January 21, 2025 commencing at 4:30 pm at Town Hall.

Respectfully Submitted,

Linda Shackford,
Town Administrator