

**Dunbarton Board of Selectmen
Meeting Minutes
December 14, 2023**

A meeting of the Dunbarton Board of Selectmen (BoS) was held on Thursday, December 14, 2023 at 7:00 p.m. at the Dunbarton Town Offices.

Board members present:

Mike Kaminski, Chair
Dave Nault, Selectman
Justin Nault, Selectman

Town Officials and Others present:

Line Comeau, Town Administrator
Mary Girard, Library Director
Dana Lavoie, Energy Committee
Jeff Crosby, Road Agent
Jennifer Cormier, Deputy Town Clerk

Members of the Public present:

Fred Mullen
Robert Hayden, Standard Power

Lee Martel recorded the meeting for the benefit of citizens that were unable to attend (Linda Nickerson uploads the videos to YouTube).

Board Chair Mike Kaminski called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

OLD BUSINESS

Approve Minutes

Motion: by Justin Nault, seconded by Dave Nault to approve the (6:30 p.m.) nonpublic meeting minutes of November 30, 2023 as written.

Discussion: none.

Vote: (3-0)

Motion: by Dave Nault, seconded by Justin Nault to approve the regular meeting minutes of November 30, 2023 as amended.

Discussion: none.

Vote: (3-0)

Motion: by Justin Nault, seconded by Dave Nault to approve the (7:59 p.m.) nonpublic meeting minutes of November 30, 2023 as written.

Discussion: Mike Kaminski noted that these minutes do not need to be sealed.

Vote: (3-0)

PUBLIC COMMENT

Resident **Fred Mullen** of Stark Lane said that it was brought to his attention that the town boundary marker at the Bow/Dunbarton town line on Clinton Street was found lying on the ground. He suggested to Line Comeau that they have someone from the town pick it up before it disappears and also notify the town of Bow so that they can coordinate with a surveyor to replace it. **Lee Martel** offered his assistance with retrieving the marker and storing it at the Highway Garage. Line Comeau will reach out to the town of Bow.

NEW BUSINESS

Post Replacement

Resident **Mike Guiney** appeared before the Board in regard to their decision at the last meeting to not reimburse him for his labor related to the post he had to replace on his property that was broken by a town plow truck in 2018. He was told that the town would replace the post upon completion of the court case that was in progress at the time. After 4 years he decided to replace it himself. The post cost \$29.48 and it took him 2 hours for which he feels he is owed \$100 per hour.

Mr. Guiney stated that he also takes exception to being charged a late fee on his taxes. **Line Comeau** explained that Mr. Guiney came to the office and offered an uncashed stale-dated check written to him from the town for \$300 and the receipt for the \$29.48 to put forward as payment toward his property tax bill. Because they cannot commingle tax funds with town business, she rewrote him a check for \$329.48. He did not cash the check but came back in and gave her \$329.48 in cash in payment toward the property taxes. At the time she ran the report, there was \$1.68 accrued in late fees.

Mike Kaminski said that because this was private property that was damaged by the town, he concurs with Mr. Guiney. If this were put toward the town's insurance, they would be paying for this as part of their deductible. He feels that they need to reimburse Mr. Guiney the \$200. **Justin Nault** said that although this occurred prior to his time on the Board, he agrees that because Mr. Guiney's

personal property was damaged by the town, then the town should reimburse him for what they damaged.

Mike Kaminski offered an apology to Mr. Guiney for the fact that this issue went on for far too long. This issue should have been put to bed long ago.

Motion: by Mike Kaminski, seconded by Justin Nault to reimburse Mr. Mike Guiney for the cost of post replacement (\$29.48 for materials and \$200 in labor).

Discussion: none.

Vote: (3-0)

Line Comeau noted that the late fee is under \$5.00, and she will be able to have it waived.

Police Department, 2024 Budget Proposal

Police Chief Christopher Remillard appeared before the Board to present the proposed Police Department budget for 2024. He said that they had a good budget year for 2023 and will end the year with a bit of a surplus.

For 2024, there were minimal increases in their contractual services. They are also switching all of their communications for computer and phone service to AT&T. There are other general increases as there are increases in the costs of everything (uniforms, etc.). The majority of the \$49,512 budget increase is related to personnel. They are now fully staffed, and they have step increases that employees are scheduled to hit in the upcoming year. Overtime has been increased because of a significant increase in court time because of a change in the way cases are handled.

Chief Remillard also presented the Board with a breakdown of their personnel costs and a proposal to hire another full-time officer. Discussion occurred regarding their current staffing levels and anticipated needs within the next year, as a few of their part-time employees may decide to move on and it could take longer than anticipated to fill those positions. The community is growing and in order for them to be able to continue to provide the level of service that residents have come to expect of their department, he needs to make sure that he is proactive in maintaining their staffing levels. He would like to prepare to make this **fulltime** position active in the fall of 2024. This would be presented as a warrant article.

Dave Nault expressed **his** concerns regarding the recent increases in tax burden upon the taxpayers as well as the other major needs of other departments. **Chief Remillard** understands the needs of other departments but noted that his concern is the lead time involved in finding a qualified new-hire.

Library 2024 Budget Proposal

Library Director Mary Girard and the Library Trustees told the Board that they are seeking \$120,566 for 2024. Mary Girard gave the Board an overview of their past year, sharing that attendance within the library as well as their programs has increased, as has their downloads and checkouts. Due to the increase in volume, their subscriptions to the download services will increase as well. They have been able to make use of the renovated space upstairs for their programs and presentations. Mary also told the Board that they decided to switch banks in order to take advantage of higher yielding accounts. They are also expecting an increase in insurance costs.

PUBLIC HEARING

Mike Kaminski opened a Public Hearing at 7:45 p.m. per RSA 31:95-b III (a) to hear public feedback regarding the acceptance of **a one-time grant payment for additional Highway Block aid, which is separate from the regular state funding and a onetime bridge aid.** Road Agent Jeff Crosby noted that the grants are intended to supplement the budget but should not be used in lieu of the **highway** budget.

There were no comments from the public.

Motion: by Mike Kaminski, seconded by Dave Nault to accept the highway grant payment from the state in the amount of \$29,347.89.

Discussion: none.

Vote: (3-0)

Motion: by Mike Kaminski, seconded by Justin Nault to accept the bridge grant payment from the state in the amount of \$13,507.19.

Discussion: none.

Vote: (3-0)

Mike Kaminski closed the public hearing at 7:53 p.m.

Cemetery Trustee 2024 Budget Proposal

Justin Nault presented the proposed budget for the Cemetery Trustees. They kept their budget flat at \$24,400. They had \$835 left that they chose to put toward their SIMS mapping software. They have some planned projects including one involving erosion control in the East Cemetery.

Community Power Presentation

Robert Hayden from Standard Power and Dana Lavoie of the Dunbarton Energy Committee appeared before the Board to follow up on a previous presentation to see if they may present their community power plan (renewable energy) proposal to the public via warrant article at the upcoming Town Meeting (following at least two public hearings). He shared that there are several comparable towns in New Hampshire that are at various stages of the process.

Mr. Hayden said that Standard Power has been involved in this program since its inception. He explained that the only thing that changes on the utility bill is the line that defines the electricity supply: that will change to Dunbarton Community Power. They could also be looking at savings of at least \$15.00-\$20.00.

Discussion occurred regarding current utility rates and the recent announcement of rate decreases.

Residents will have options (decided upon by the town Energy Committee): decline and stay with the utility, go with the cheapest rate possible, 50% renewable energy or 100% renewable energy. Should they decide not to choose, then they get the default option (also determined by the town Energy Committee).

Mr. Hayden explained that Standard Power is a broker that accepts bids from third party electric suppliers.

Dana Lavoie feels that this is the right option for the town to pursue. It provides flexibility for residents to decide what works best for them.

Mr. Hayden stated that the next step is a Memorandum of Understanding. It is non-binding and severable at any time and is considered more of a 'paper handshake'. This will authorize the committee to proceed to begin to work with Standard Power to prepare to bring the proposal before the taxpayers through public hearings.

- *The BoS was in consensus to sign the Memorandum of Understanding presented by Mr. Hayden and to appoint Line Comeau as their designated signer and point of contact as they proceed with this process.*

Dog Warrant

The BoS signed 3 copies of the dog warrant as presented by the Town Clerk's office.

Request from Donna Dunn

Resident Donna Dunn requested that a retraction be placed in this year's Town Report stating that the photo of the watchtower used for the front cover of the 2013 town report was actually located in Goffstown.

Town Moderator

The Board received a message from Town Moderator John Trottier that he is in favor of proceeding with the process of purchasing a ballot counting machine.

Mailbox Items

Mike Kaminski reviewed the following items of correspondence received since the last meeting:

- Nonpublic minutes, November 16. The Board signed off on the nonpublic minutes of November 16 (missed signature at last meeting).
- Email from resident Ryan Dillon requesting to pick up leftover logs from maintenance utility tree maintenance. The Board was in agreement to approve this request.
- 2 memos from Town Administrator regarding credit card purchase deadline for year-end and needing approval from the Board for encumbering funds for purchases.
- Quotes from Irish Electric to raise light fixtures at the Fire Department in preparation for new garage door install. \$1,293.00

Motion: by Dave Nault, seconded by Mike Kaminski, to approve the quote from Irish Electric in the amount of \$1,293.00 to move the wires above the garage door at the Fire Department.

Discussion: none.

Vote: (3-0).

- Revised gutter quote from Builders Install, to include entryways (increase of \$540). They are currently scheduling 30 days out but will attempt to prioritize so it could be sooner or later than 30 days. Funds for these expenses have been encumbered (\$5,920).
- Memo from Town Administrator regarding the repurposing of a town cellphone. The Board was in agreement to sell the phone to the Town Administrator for use as her personal phone (that is also used for town business).

PUBLIC COMMENT

Lee Martel remarked upon the continued parking issue at the town offices and suggested they revisit the idea of striping the lot in the spring.

BOARD MEMBER ISSUES

Justin Nault attended a recent Joint-Loss Committee meeting. He asked about the status of the roof at the fire department. Dave Nault said that they are currently monitoring the situation, but aren't proceeding with anything at this time.

Discussion had occurred regarding the rearrangement of offices, with concerns being noted about the condition of the floors and structure of the building being able to handle the weight of file cabinets, etc. They discussed installing commercial glass doors in the building to assist with temperature and sound control.

Discussion occurred about the deterioration of the walkways leading into the Town Office Building. Jeff Crosby said at that meeting they can dig out and repave the walkways at all 3 doorways (including the emergency exit).

Dave Nault hung some pictures at the Town Hall and said that they look great and that the frames they used are high quality. **Fred Mullen** noted that they seemed to cut down on the echoes in the room. He also offered a reminder that they still have the Grange Veteran's flags that can be put up as well.

Dave Nault noted that they are having some issues with the windows being opened but not properly closed because people do not notice that the tops of the windows are opening as well. Mary Girard added some signs to please keep the windows closed.

Dave Nault expressed concern about the round tables that they recently put up there. They are very heavy and are scratching the floors. He would prefer to order 6 additional rectangular tables like the ones they already have up there to use instead and have the round tables removed.

Line Comeau noted a few other Joint-Loss issues: an exit sign in the Library that is an exit to nowhere, and Jeff Crosby has a problem with a light fixture at the Highway Garage.

Mike Kaminski said that an issue with the Town Forest Committee was brought to his attention, and they are currently working on some **housekeeping issues** to present at Town Meeting (**for a required warrant**).

NONPUBLIC SESSION

Motion: by Mike Kaminski to enter into nonpublic session in accordance with RSA 91-A:3 II (c) at the request of the Town Administrator.

By roll-call vote:

Kaminski-yes. D. Nault-yes. J. Nault yes.

The Board took a 2-minute recess at 9:03 p.m. to allow the room to clear for nonpublic session.

The Board entered nonpublic session at 9:05 p.m.

The Board exited the nonpublic session at 9:15 p.m.

The Board discussion during the nonpublic session was to approve the dedication of the 2023 town report. A consensus was made by the Board with an action for the Town Administrator to complete.

NONPUBLIC SESSION

Motion: by Mike Kaminski to enter into nonpublic session in accordance with RSA 91-A:3 II (d) at the request of the Dave Nault at 9:16 p.m.

By roll-call vote:

Kaminski-yes. D. Nault-yes. J. Nault yes.

The board exited the nonpublic session at 9:25 p.m.

There were no motions made during this nonpublic session.

ADJOURNMENT

The Board adjourned the regular meeting at 9:26 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jennifer King, Recording Secretary

Signed:

Michael Kaminski, Chair

Dave Nault, Selectman

Justin Nault, Selectman