

**Town of Auburn  
Board of Selectmen  
Town Hall  
Stritch Meeting Room  
April 15, 2024  
7 PM  
Approved Minutes**

**Selectmen Present:** Keith Leclair, Michael Rolfe and Tom Carroll

**Others Present:** Tax Collector Susan Jenkins and Deputy Tax Collector Patricia Loranger, Rene LaBranche of Stantec, Harry Robbins, Mike DiPietro, Town Administrator Chris Sterndale, Nancy Hoijer, Recording Secretary and other persons unknown to the minute taker

**I. Call to Order**

Mr. Leclair called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**II. Public Comments**

Mr. Leclair asked if there were any comments, outside of agenda items, from the public at 7:00 PM.

**III. Consent Agenda**

Mr. Leclair read out loud and offered for inspection the Consent Agenda dated 4/15/24 which consisted of a payroll manifest dated 4/8 in the amount of \$84,306.33, an accounts payable manifests dated 4/15 in the amount of \$80,171.12, reappointments to the Conservation Commission and Zoning Board of Adjustment and appointment of Alternate Library Trustee.

***Mr. Rolfe motioned to approve the Consent Agenda dated April 15, 2024. Mr. Carroll seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed 3-0-0.***

***Mr. Rolfe motioned to appoint Mary Royer, and Margie McEvoy, to the Parks & Recreation Commission. Mr. Carroll seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed 3-0-0.***

**IV. Manifest**

A. Highway \$6,805 dated 4/15/24

***Mr. Carroll motioned to approve the Highway Manifest dated 4/15/24 in the amount of \$6,805. Mr. Leclair seconded the motion. A vote was taken, Mr. Rolfe abstained, the motion passed 2-0-1.***

## V. Appointments with the Board

### A. Tax Collector & Deputy

#### i. Tax Deed Property

Tax Collector Susan Jenkins provided materials for the Board to review for one property that had fallen behind in payments and could go to tax deeding. The Board reviewed the tax card, billing statement and payment history. Mrs. Jenkins noted the date for deeding is May 9<sup>th</sup>. The property is the owner's primary residence. She recommended the Board have the owner come in and discuss a repayment plan. Mrs. Jenkins will reach out to the owner.

Mr. Carroll asked if there were additional costs with the deeding process and Mrs. Jenkins indicated there were.

#### ii. Transition

Tax Collector Jenkins noted that Deputy Collector Loranger was ready to step up to be the Tax Collector and Mrs. Jenkins will serve as Deputy one day per week. She noted that at the end of April the MS61 will close out the books and a recomittal warrant will be provided for outstanding funds not collected. Mrs. Jenkins noted the transition will occur after the audit, the third week of May.

### B. Rene LaBranche – Stantec

Mr. LaBranche provided the Board with a written status report for the replacement of Griffin Mill Bridge which included design, funding, permitting, easements, NH DOT agreements, updates on engineering scope and fee and schedule from April 10, 2024 to December 10, 2024. He provided an itemized estimate of expenses for materials and labor, and a proposed project description, scope of work, permitting, bid phase schedule, assumptions and exclusions and projected engineering fee. He discussed the grant to pay for the majority of the project and the town's responsibility.

Mr. LaBranche reported the project would take longer than anticipated and that while the cost had changed there would be funding for the majority of the project from the Mobil Fund for \$932,000 and the Town would be responsible for \$35,000. Mr. Sterndale noted the Town's portion had been encumbered. Mr. Leclair noted the Town has \$80,000 into this.

Mr. Leclair recommended having a landscape architect come in as the Board would like to beautify the area after the work is finished.

***Mr. Rolfe motioned to allow Town Administrator Sterndale to sign the amended agreement presented in regard to Griffin Mill Bridge. Mr. Carroll seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed 3-0-0.***

Mr. LaBranche indicated he would come back before the Board on June 11<sup>th</sup>.

Mr. Leclair asked if there were any risk of this project not happening and Mr. LaBranche indicated no.

## **VI. New Business**

### **A. Tree Removal Expense**

Town Administrator Sterndale provided an invoice from Clear Grain Tree Service for the removal of a large elm tree off Exit 2, Route 101.

Mr. Leclair asked if the balance of the Town's Property Rehabilitation Fund would cover the expenses and Mr. Sterndale noted after deposits to the town's funds this March, there were sufficient funds in that account to cover this expense. Mr. Sterndale noted it was fortunate the tree was taken down before the severe snow and wind storm that occurred the following day.

***Mr. Rolfe motioned to approve payment of the invoice of \$3,200 from Clear Grain Tree Service from the Property Rehabilitation Fund. Mr. Carroll seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed 3-0-0.***

## **VII. Old Business**

### **A. Highway Planning**

Town Administrator Sterndale provided proposed postings and salary comparisons from other towns, for the Highway Department Director and Highway & Grounds Laborer positions. The Board reviewed the two postings and agreed they were satisfactory. Mr. Sterndale noted he would post the positions the next week or so and would ideally like to hire by the end of June/Early July. The Board agreed upon the salary range which Mr. Sterndale noted would be Grade 14 for the Director and Grade 6 for the Laborer, depending on their skills.

Town Administrator Sterndale provided the 2024 paving price sheet provided by Advanced Excavating & Paving, which the Board found satisfactory.

Town Administrator Sterndale provided a proposal for the "state rate" of hourly rates from Bellemore Septic, Sewer and Drain for cleaning catch basins and pipe jetting services.

### **B. Abatement applications**

#### **i. Map 3, Lot 6**

Mr. Leclair noted that more information was received and shared with Avitar. They responded with questions but there was no change. Mr. Leclair noted he was not sure what would come out of another meeting. Mr. Rolfe expressed concerns that he, himself, was not a trained tax assessor or real estate appraiser, but that he would like to have more time to review the new material provided from Avitar.

Harry Robbins of Fox Lane noted he could get another appraisal from Weeks Appraisal and that he is working with Pat Biggs of CPTM and Attorney Tim Cook. He indicated his lot was non-conforming and had no comparisons for valuation and it was a unique situation. He noted he felt there was no consistency in the tax cards. Mr. Robbins recommended coming to an agreement on the valuation with the Board of Selectmen rather than having to litigate the disputed assessment and incur expenses in hiring lawyers.

***Mr. Carroll motioned to assess Map 3, Lot 6 at \$2.7 million dollars contingent upon the next evaluation.***

Mr. Robbins indicated he would not accept that offer.

***Mr. Leclair amended the motion to include no escalators for the next five years, subject to terms to be negotiated. Mr. Carroll accepted the amendment to his motion.***

***The Board voted on the motion: Mr. Leclair voted nay, Mr. Rolfe voted nay and Mr. Carroll voted nay. The motion failed 0-3-0.***

The Board agreed they would give Mr. Rolfe more time to review the additional materials provided by Avitar before reaching a decision.

#### B. Personnel Policy Revision

Town Administrator Sterndale indicated that the meeting with the Joint Personnel Board is now scheduled for Thursday, April 25<sup>th</sup> at 7 PM. He noted the Police Department will be coming to the meeting with the grade changes.

### VIII. Committee Reports

Mr. Rolfe reported that the Planning Board met on April 3<sup>rd</sup> but there was nothing to report as they met in non-public session.

Mr. Carroll reported that the Budget Committee would be meeting with the School Board on April 25<sup>th</sup>. He indicated the School Board has made progress in planning for the unanticipated \$875,000 in expenses, finding \$400,000 in areas to cut, not paying stipends and having no professional development classes for other things. He noted that the School Board was confident they would be able to borrow \$140-\$150,000 from next year.

Mr. DiPietro noted that the Building Inspector and Administrative Assistant have over twenty years of experience and could provide a lot of support to the new Director. Mr. Leclair agreed but noted that unfortunately he expected there to be some retirements in the next year and a half.

## **IX. Minutes**

A. April 1, 2024

Town Administrator Sterndale recommended an edit to page one.

***Mr. Rolfe motioned to approve the April 1, 2024 public meeting minutes, as amended. Mr. Carroll seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed 3-0-0.***

B. Consideration of Unsealing Non-Public Meeting Minutes

- i. July 31, 1995
- ii. August 21, 1995
- iii. August 28, 1995

***Mr. Rolfe motioned to unseal the non-public meeting minutes as presented. Mr. Carroll seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed 3-0-0.***

## **X. Non-Public Session pursuant to 91-A:3(II)(c) and (e) reputation and negotiation of pending claims or litigation**

***By Roll Call, Mr. Leclair motioned to go into non-public session pursuant to 91-A:3(c) and e). Mr. Rolfe seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken, Mr. Leclair voted aye, Mr. Rolfe voted aye and Mr. Carroll voted aye. The motion passed unanimously 3-0-0.***

The meeting room was closed to the public at 8:32 PM.

***Mr. Rolfe motioned to come out of non-public session at 9:12 PM. Mr. Carroll seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed 3-0-0.***

The meeting room reopened to the public at 9:12 PM.

***By Roll Call, Mr. Rolfe motioned to seal the minutes of the non-public session. Mr. Carroll seconded the motion. A vote was taken, Mr. Leclair voted aye, Mr. Rolfe voted aye and Mr. Carroll voted aye. The motion passed unanimously 3-0-0.***

## **XI. Adjournment**

***Mr. Rolfe motioned to adjourn the meeting at 9:13 PM. Mr. Carroll seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed unanimously.***

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy Hoijer, Recording Secretary