

Town of Haverhill
SELECT BOARD MEETING MINUTES
January 13, 2025, 6:00 p.m.
Robert E. Clifford Memorial Building

Zoom link to the recording:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/rec/share/Jaw1wQdtaTdgCX9dNBORLyYd8YbBpc6xD6bA6qmFPx5T1qfCKuUOiQGpMH76x--r.IKuWHESWL5Zmis2h>

Passcode: pAsYd7m5

Select Board Present:

Chair Rod O’Shana, Kevin Knapp, Ron Hurlburt, Theresa Paige, and Joe Longacre. A quorum was met.

Attendees In Person:

Gary Hebert, Mike Bonanno, Evelyn Elms, Tuesday Griffin, Joe Kirkpatrick, Lynn Graham, Vickie Wyman, Greg Mathieson, Carol Dennehy, Dustin Vigneault, Nancy Hassan, Miguel Vasconcelos, Kathleen Vasconcelos, R. Michael Small, Darwin Clogston, Margo Longacre, Denise Neskorik, Micah Amey, Ashley Amey, Eleanor Ingbretson, Dawn Lavoie, Belinda Elliott, Kathy Hatch, Keyan Kaplan, Ivan Chase, Jennifer Wilcox, Janet Smith, Diane Keith, Mary Ann Brant, Nicole Brant, Marie Bjelobrck, Shawn Bigelow, Ray Martin, Jeff Stimson

Attendees Online:

Bridget Lanctot, Patrick Kerin, Christina Hebert, Howard Hatch, Dennis Cunningham, Joanne Young, Jessica Moody, Brady Cassidy, Mary Houde, Dottie Long, Lisa Edwards, Alex Nuti-de Biasi (Journal Opinion)

CALL TO ORDER

Chair O’Shana called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m.

ATTENDANCE/ROLL CALL

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

AGENDA APPROVAL

Chair O’Shana added a non-public meeting on personnel to the Agenda.

MOTION #1: K. Knapp made a motion to approve the Agenda as amended. T. Paige seconded the motion.

Voice Vote: The motion carried 5-0-0.

CONSENT AGENDA

MOTION #2: J. Longacre made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. K. Knapp seconded the motion.

Voice Vote: The motion carried 5-0-0.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

December 9, 2024

MOTION #3: J. Longacre made a motion to approve the Selectboard meeting minutes of December 9, 2024, as written. R. Hurlburt seconded the motion.

Voice Vote: The motion carried 5-0-0.

December 16, 2024

The in-person attendees need to be added.

MOTION #4: R. O'Shana made a motion to approve the Selectboard meeting minutes of December 16, 2024, as amended. R. Hurlburt seconded the motion.

Voice Vote: The motion carried 5-0-0.

December 30, 2024

MOTION #5: R. O'Shana made a motion to table approval of the Selectboard meeting minutes of December 30, 2024. K. Knapp seconded the motion.

Voice Vote: The motion carried 5-0-0.

January 7, 20245

MOTION #6: R. Hurlburt made a motion to approve the Selectboard meeting minutes of January 7, 2025 as written. J. Longacre seconded the motion.

Voice Vote: The motion carried 5-0-0.

SCHEDULED APPEARANCES

Town Libraries - Gary Hebert, ABC Chair

Advisory Budget Committee Gary Hebert clarified that the ABC did not recommend to the Selectboard that any of the libraries be defunded. They recommended that the funding be changed from a budget line item to warrant article, as the library property and employees are not part of the Town. This way, they will be funded like the non-profits are funded. He explained the difference

between being funded via the budget and via warrant articles, and why it is preferable for the libraries to be funded via warrant article. He noted this is only a recommendation; the Selectboard has the authority to act on this recommendation.

Chair O'Shana explained petition warrant articles are due February 4th. If the Selectboard decides the libraries should be funded via warrant article, a petition warrant article needs to be submitted by that date, with the appropriate signatures. He asked that all libraries be included in one petition article.

Chair O'Shana opened public comment.

Joe Kirkpatrick, president of the Haverhill Library Association, explained the library appropriation was put into effect in the 1800s to ensure the operation of free public libraries. He explained why leaving the libraries in the budget is preferable, including avoiding political whims and having to wait until March to know if they will be funded. He noted that interpretation of State law requires that the Town vote on whether to change the funding to a warrant article.

Jeff Stimson, treasurer of the Patten North Haverhill Library, shared copies of the 2024 Library budget. He explained the difference between the libraries and other non-profit organizations. They would like the library funding to remain in the budget.

The chair of the Woodsville Free Public Library shared information about the library and the services it provides. She asked that the Town support the libraries.

Mike Small spoke in favor of the local libraries and the services they provide.

Miguel Vasconcelos spoke on the benefits of the libraries remaining as a budget item, including the ability to predict the funding stream. He noted libraries are a public function that should be protected. He asked the Selectboard not to accept the recommendation of the ABC.

Vickie Wyman, member of the ABC, said they are trying to hammer out a budget without information, and having information on the library budget would have been helpful. She thanked the public for sharing this information at this meeting and said they have changed her mind.

Other members of the public spoke in support of the library.

MOTION #7: K. Knapp made a motion that the three Town libraries remain in the Town operating budget. T. Paige seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote: O'Shana – aye, Knapp – aye, Longacre – aye, Paige – aye, Hurlburt – aye. The motion carried 5-0-0.

Maintenance Director Resignation

Chair O'Shana reported Jim McKinnon has resigned his position as Maintenance Director, effective Friday. The Board expressed their gratitude for the work he has done with a skeleton budget.

MOTION #8: R. O’Shana made a motion that the Board regrettably and respectfully accept the resignation of Jim McKinnon as Maintenance Director. J. Longacre seconded the motion.

Voice Vote: The motion carried 5-0-0.

Fire Truck Estimate

Chair O’Shana reported the Fire Chief submitted an estimate for the fire truck at \$1,095,215.

NEW BUSINESS

Town Property Lawn Mowing Bid

Chair O’Shana shared two bids that were received for Town property lawn mowing, including fall/spring cleanup, and the Board discussed them. They noted that Josh has been doing the work for three years, with no complaints.

MOTION #9: J. Longacre made a motion to accept Josh’s bid for Town property lawn mowing for 2025 through 2027. K. Knapp seconded the motion.

Voice Vote: The motion carried 5-0-0.

IT Usage and Proposed Increase

Chair O’Shana explained the Town has a contract with Acapella Technologies for IT support and services. He explained Acapella bid \$3,500/month to provide services, but have been doing \$8,632 worth of work each month. They respond to an average of three help requests a day. Their contract is increasing to \$9,100/month. This will be discussed at the upcoming public hearing.

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR REPORT

Chair O’Shana noted that from 2170-2020, the Town’s value did not change; however, the tax rate fluctuated. He explained the tax rate is driven by the tax effort/responsibility. In 2022, the tax responsibility was \$10,472,000; in 2023, it was \$11,824,000; in 2024, it was \$13,660,000. He explained how the equalization ratio is calculated. He also noted in five years, the Town has used \$875,000 from the unassigned fund balance to lower the tax rate. J. Longacre noted increases in the cost of services are driving up taxes.

COMMISSION / COMMITTEE EX-OFFICIO REPORTS:

R. Hurlburt – Conservation Commission

There will be a meeting next week.

Joe Longacre – Planning Board

The next meeting will be on January 28th.

Kevin Knapp - Parks & Recreation Commission

K. Knapp missed the last meeting, so had no report.

Rod O'Shana – Airport Zoning Commission

The next meeting will be in April.

Joe Longacre - Zoning Board

There has been no need to meet.

PUBLIC WANTING TO ADDRESS THE SELECT BOARD REGARDING ITEMS ON THE AGENDA (3 minutes maximum)

Vickie Wyman spoke on the quality of the IT infrastructure that it requires so much attention.

Marie Bjelobrk reported that the amendment to House Rule 44 was tabled. There will not be a bill that will not have a hearing. She urged the citizens to attend the hearing on January 16th on the Education Freedom Accounts on eliminating the income requirement.

SELECTBOARD SHOUTOUTS

Chair O'Shana gave a shoutout to J. McKinnon for the work he has done over the last four years, maintaining the Town buildings and property.

SELECTBOARD MEMBER FINAL COMMENTS

J. Longacre is not happy with the tax bills, but there is not an easy solution. The Town has to decide what they do and do not want to support in order to lower the tax bills.

T. Paige expressed appreciation for the library personnel and for showing their support for the libraries.

NON-PUBLIC MEETING

A non-public session was held per RSA 91-A:3, II RSA 91-A:3, II (a) The dismissal, promotion, or compensation of any public employee or the disciplining of such employee, or the investigation of any charges against him or her, unless the employee affected (1) has a right to a public meeting, and (2) requests that the meeting be open, in which case the request shall be granted.

MOTION #10: K. Knapp made a motion to enter non-public session. R. Hurlburt seconded the motion.

Voice Vote: The motion carried 5-0-0.

The public meeting was closed at 7:08 p.m.

The Board returned to public meeting.

ADJOURN MEETING

The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,
Beth Haggeli