

**Town of Haverhill
SELECT BOARD MEETING MINUTES
October 21, 2024, 6:00 p.m.
Robert E. Clifford Memorial Building**

Zoom link to the recording:

https://us06web.zoom.us/rec/share/21bUCuCazBxw5ep-ynhJlhq9brliQA6wHYsmFutFLi-zAUw827lXaOA9GXN_NuiR.5pcSisH5wGBiSu1a

Passcode: 8YfZjbHU

Select Board Present:

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

Attendees In Person:

Tina Hebert, Gary Hebert, Judy Harris, Gordon Harris, Darwin Clogston, Howard Hatch, Lynn Graham, Doug Datile, Mike Lavoie, Carolyn Hofmann, Matthew Bjelobrk, Evelyn Elms

Attendees Online:

Mike Bonanno, Joanne Young, James Duffy, Jim McKinnon, Lorraine Prescott, Regis Roy, Alex Nuti-de Biasi (Journal Opinion)

CALL TO ORDER

Chair O’Shana called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m.

ATTENDANCE/ROLL CALL

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

AGENDA APPROVAL

MOTION #1: J. Longacre made a motion to approve the Agenda as presented. T. Paige seconded the motion.

Voice Vote: A roll call vote was taken. O’Shana – aye, Knapp – aye, Paige – aye, Longacre – aye, Hurlburt – aye. The motion carried unanimously.

CONSENT AGENDA

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

Voice Vote: A roll call vote was taken. O'Shana – aye, Knapp – aye, Paige – aye, Longacre – aye, Hurlburt – aye. The motion carried unanimously.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

October 7, 2024

MOTION #3: T. Paige made a motion to approve the Selectboard meeting minutes of October 7, 2024, as written. R. Hurlburt seconded the motion.

Voice Vote: A roll call vote was taken. O'Shana – aye, Knapp – aye, Paige – aye, Longacre – aye, Hurlburt – aye. The motion carried unanimously.

October 10, 2024

MOTION #4: T. Paige made a motion to approve the Selectboard meeting minutes of October 10, 2024, as written. J. Longacre seconded the motion.

Voice Vote: A roll call vote was taken. O'Shana – aye, Knapp – aye, Paige – aye, Longacre – aye, Hurlburt – aye. The motion carried 4-0-1, with R. O'Shana abstaining.

NEW BUSINESS

Haverhill Corner Fire Station Two-Year Rental Agreement Update

Chair O'Shana reported he and T. Paige met with the Haverhill Corner Commissioners, who have agreed to increase the rent from \$675 to \$700 for 2025, and increase it \$25 in January for 2026. Everything else in the MOU will remain the same.

MOTION #5: R. O'Shana made a motion to approve the \$25 incremental increases for 2025 and 2026 for the Haverhill Corner Fire Station, with all current wording in the contract. J. Longacre seconded the motion.

Voice Vote: A roll call vote was taken. O'Shana – aye, Knapp – aye, Paige – aye, Longacre – aye, Hurlburt – aye. The motion carried unanimously.

Mildred Page Fund

Chair O'Shana reported there were two requests for the Mildred Page Fund: the Haverhill Corner Precinct for renovation of the fire station and Court Street Arts to maintain the Alumni Hall. The application date was October 15, 2024. The fund stands at \$8,200, so \$4,100 will be given to each applicant.

MOTION #6: R. O'Shana made a motion to split the Mildred Page Fund 50% to the Haverhill Corner Precinct and 50% to Court Street Arts. J. Longacre seconded the motion.

Discussion: J. Longacre suggested a roster be kept of the recipients so that different entities receive the funding each year. He noted the donation to the Haverhill Corner Precinct will help taxpayers, as they will not have to fund the renovations.

Voice Vote: A roll call vote was taken. O'Shana – aye, Knapp – aye, Paige – aye, Longacre – aye, Hurlburt – aye. The motion carried unanimously.

SB2 Scheduling

Chair O'Shana said a public hearing needs to be scheduled to discuss SB2. K. Knapp asked if this issue would be put on a warrant. Chair O'Shana said he assumes it will go on a petition warrant and he wants to ensure a public hearing is held to satisfy the criteria, if it does. The Board agreed to schedule public hearings on November 6 and December 4, 2024, noting that research will need to be done to determine if there is a time requirement involved.

MOTION #7: J. Longacre made a motion to hold public hearings to discuss SB2 on November 6 and December 4, 2024, subject to date or number of day requirements for public hearings. T. Paige seconded the motion.

Voice Vote: A roll call vote was taken. O'Shana – aye, Knapp – nay, Paige – aye, Longacre – aye, Hurlburt – aye. The motion carried 4-1-0.

OLD BUSINESS

Water Testing

Chair O'Shana said 100 families have registered to have their water tested. There will be an hour presentation on October 22nd and information about the testing available for those who are participating.

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR REPORT

PSNH Electric Abatement

Chair O'Shana received a question about the PSNH electric abatement. He explained in May, J. Longacre and the former Town Administrator attended a hearing in Concord, where they presented what the Town thought they should pay as an abatement. Counsel suggested offering \$25,000. The agreed-upon amount was \$40,000. The actual full tax abatement would have been \$90,000. So, the Town paid \$40,000, saved \$40,000, and paid \$10,000 in legal fees. Other towns were higher. This was due to the equalization ratio being at 57%.

91-A Right-To-Know Requests

Complaints have been made to the Ombudsman regarding unreasonable delays in responding to 91-A requests. Chair O'Shana explained the time needed to collect the information requested, such as the need to redact personal, non-related information in text messages between Town employees, and physically collecting all of the requested information.

FEMA

Chair O'Shana submitted two additional FEMA requests to address costs incurred by repairing damage caused by the 2022 storm.

CIP

Chair O'Shana explained that some of the 6- through 10-year figures in the Capital Improvement Plan are there to serve as placeholders, in case funding becomes available.

Town Clerk Hours

Chair O'Shana explained that the Town Clerk is an elected position, and the office holder is entitled to make their own hours. This position is not supervised by the Town Administrator or the Select Board. The warrant voted on last year regarding the Town Clerk was only an advisory warrant, as was explained by Gary Hebert at the time. Chair O'Shana contacted Concord regarding who the residents could discuss this issue with, but did not receive an answer.

He reviewed the process and timeline involving in hiring new employees and when employees resign. He stressed the Board would like time to conduct an exit interview and try to convince an employee not to resign, but it is not always possible.

A member of the public asked what has caused the situation with the Town Clerk to deteriorate. He asked who will pay the fines when vehicles are not registered in a timely manner. He said if a person is not prepared to do the job, they should not run for it. R. Hurlburt noted with the elections coming up, a flood of absentee ballots are coming in.

A member of the public said when the computers were down last week, it affected the ability of the Town Clerk to do her job. She noted the impact of the coming election on the Town Clerk. She asked why the Board is not supporting the Town Clerk and that it is a two-person job.

COMMISSION / COMMITTEE EX-OFFICIO REPORTS:

R. Hurlburt – Conservation Commission

R. Hurlburt reported on issues discussed during their October meeting. The Commission is working to get information out to the community about what they do.

Joe Longacre – Planning Board

J. Longacre gave an update on projects being presented to the Planning Board.

Kevin Knapp – Parks & Recreation Commission

K. Knapp reported on past and planned events.

Rod O'Shana – Airport Zoning Commission

Chair O'Shana reported that the Commission met with Carol Niewola of the New Hampshire DOT, who works with municipalities to obtain federal grant funding. She helped them develop their ten-year plan to ensure they are in compliance. This is submitted to the New Hampshire DOT, which works with the FAA.

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

Carolyn Hofmann shared information on a law signed in June 2024, HB1002, regarding the ability to charge \$25/hour to address the cost of processing "extraordinary" Right-To-Know requests. Chair O'Shana noted it might narrow the scope of what is being requested.

SELECT BOARD MEMBER FINAL COMMENTS

There were none.

NON-PUBLIC MEETING

MOTION #8: K. Knapp made a motion to close the public session and enter into a non-public session per 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. J. Longacre seconded the motion.

Voice Vote: A roll call vote was taken. O'Shana – aye, Knapp – aye, Paige – aye, Longacre – aye, Hurlburt – aye. The motion carried unanimously.

The public meeting was closed at 6:45 p.m.

The Board returned to public meeting.

ADJOURN MEETING

The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,
Beth Hanggeli