

Town of Haverhill
SELECT BOARD MEETING MINUTES
Wednesday, July 1, 2024, 6:00 p.m.
Robert E. Clifford Building

Zoom link to the recording:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/rec/share/711lbQsxxiCEcSKGe9nneWfeXPeGvHUCoQERpzpqcXXALvEn2WMvHq6ppLai25SO.2jNAXaupcz-qW1mK>

Passcode: 4xp&4Dvy

Select Board Present:

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

Attendees In Person:

Thomas Mayo, Evelyn Elms, Vickie Wynn, Carolyn Hofmann, Lorraine Prescott, Paul Kidder, Matt Bjelobrk, Marie Bjelobrk, Don Vaillancourt, Kathleen Vaillancourt, Dottie Long, Lynn Wheeler, Erin Atkinson, Ellen Hurlburt

Attendees Online:

Mary Houde, Delcia Vinnacombe, Melin Boutin, Guy Mitchell, Harv Keyes, Polly Marvin, Joanne Young, Dustin Vigneault, Amy Nixon (The Journal Opinion), Bernie Marvin, Skip Gadwah, Jessica Young, Leslie Ramsay, Roger Newman

CALL TO ORDER

Chair O’Shana called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

ATTENDANCE/ROLL CALL

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

AGENDA APPROVAL

MOTION #1: T. Paige moved to approve the Agenda as presented. 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.

CONSENT AGENDA APPROVAL

MOTION #2: J. Longacre moved to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. 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.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chair O'Shana explained his additions to the minutes, due to volume difficulties on the video.

MOTION #3: J. Longacre moved to approve the June 17, 2024, Selectboard minutes as amended. 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.

APPOINTMENTS

Kevin Shelton, Woodsville Village Administrator

Kevin Shelton appeared before the Board to voice concerns regarding the financial condition of the Town and offer his assistance. He shared his personal experience with problems that were occurring in the District when he took office. The audits he completed proved that some of the accusations were untrue. The Board's goal should be to ensure the truth is told and shared with the Townspeople, and to take the necessary actions to ensure the betterment of the Town.

He reviewed issues with receiving payment for the ambulance contract and asked for an explanation.

In response to K. Shelton's questions, Chair O'Shana reviewed the process the Board went through to approve payment of the first installment. He said the Town is not out of money. He explained that taxes are paid twice a year and the Town can only spend what it has. The payment wasn't made in a timely fashion as the person responsible for accounts payable is new and was not made aware of the payment schedule.

K. Shelton challenged Chair O'Shana's explanation. Chair O'Shana stressed that former Town Administrator Codling has been gone for two weeks and the Board has been trying to unpack everything in that two-week period.

K. Shelton shared information he received from K. Knapp. R. Hurlburt shared a text from B. Codling that supported Chair O'Shana's description of the situation. Chair O'Shana said it is better to have open dialogue.

In response to questions that K. Shelton emailed to the Board, Chair O'Shana said there is nothing to report regarding the financial condition of the Town that the residents don't already know. When the Town changed from the Town Manager to the Town Administrator form of government, they had to pay \$96,000 in benefits and time, per B. Codling's contract. This

contract was negotiated and signed by a former Selectboard. When the financial director resigned, she was paid \$33,000 per her contract.

A consultant, Greg Colby, was hired to assist with completing the audits, as the Town was three years behind. The 2022 audit should be complete by August 1, and the 2023 audit by September. All non-essential spending has been stopped. A meeting was held on June 20th with the employees to update them on the need to control spending.

In response to K. Shelton's question about Board members expressing their support for the administration when running for office, Chair O'Shana refused to criticize the past administration. He stressed the need for employees to have what they need to be successful. He agreed that people need to be held accountable, and noted that rumors and innuendos are damaging.

R. Hurlburt reiterated that the Board has been working for the past two weeks to address and understand the situation as it stands.

J. Longacre said he made a statement in support of B. Codling and her accomplishments, and he has heard nothing to challenge it. He ran for office to support the Town, as he thought his experience in town government would help.

In response to K. Shelton's question about the location of money for Articles 27 and 28, Chair O'Shana said it is in the unfunded balance, which contains approximately \$2.8 million. K. Shelton asked if those funds are being used for cash flow and Chair O'Shana said they are not. R. Hurlburt said they are waiting for the audit to be completed to itemize everything.

In response to K. Shelton's question about grants, Chair O'Shana said R. Hurlburt will be meeting with the people involved with grants to ensure they are in compliance with all requirements.

In response to K. Shelton's question about the precincts receiving taxes, Chair O'Shana has made the A/P person aware of this and she is investigating. He will follow up on this.

In response to K. Shelton asking if the Board is aware of any criminal activity, Chair O'Shana said the Board's only crime was having no oversight. He stressed the Board would take appropriate action, if criminal activity is discovered.

A (former?) employee said it appears the Selectboard was not serving as the head of the chain of command. Chair O'Shana pointed out that no one attending a public meeting questioned the Town Manager when she presented her reports. T. Paige explained that the Board expects the Town Manager to tell the truth and that sometimes employees believed that instructions were coming from the Board when they were not.

Chair O'Shana explained the impact the Board's request to eliminate \$50,000 in healthcare costs had on the budget and the work they are doing to rectify that.

In response to K. Shelton's question about Town records being shredded, Chair O'Shana said that is a rumor. He explained different documents have different retention schedules. He added that keys were returned and passwords changed when the Town Manager and Finance Director left the Town's employ.

Chair O'Shana stressed all Board members are aware of what's going on and no one member is working independently of the other members.

In response to K. Shelton asking if the Town is planning to conduct a forensic audit, Chair O'Shana said they are not, due to the cost. If Mr. Colby uncovers any evidence of wrongdoing, they will revisit this option.

In response to K. Shelton's question about the interim plan for the Town's operation, Chair O'Shana reiterated they had a staff meeting on June 20. He explained that Board members are serving as liaisons to each department. R. Hurlburt added the Board is trying to hold monthly or biweekly meetings with employees/department heads. The Board members are working to be less insulated from the employees. T. Paige added the Board is analyzing and consolidating positions. Chair O'Shana noted they are also defining employees' roles and holding them accountable. He commended the staff on the work they are doing.

Chair O'Shana explained the process being followed to find a new Town Administrator. K. Shelton suggested a thorough background check be done before anyone is offered the position and Chair O'Shana agreed that would be done.

NEW BUSINESS

AR Cash Policy

Chair O'Shana shared the cash policy with the Board for their review. They will vote on it at the next Board meeting. He noted the Police Department is delivering the cash bag to the bank and expressed his appreciation for the chief and the officers' help.

OLD BUSINESS

FEMA Update December 17, 2022, Storm

Chair O'Shana reviewed the meeting the recent meeting with FEMA to understand what information is missing. They will submit that information as soon as possible.

COMMISSION / COMMITTEE EX-OFFICIO REPORTS:

Theresa Paige – Conservation Commission

T. Paige had a conflict, so was unable to attend the meeting.

Joe Longacre – Planning Board

J. Longacre gave an update on the projects reviewed by the Planning Board.

Kevin Knapp – Parks & Recreation Commission

The Commission will meet on July 3, 2024.

Rod O’Shana – Airport Zoning Commission

The Commission will meet on July 12, 2024.

Joe Longacre – Zoning Board

There was no meeting.

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

A resident said the recent abrupt changes in leadership have created a very difficult situation. He said that K. Shelton's concerns are legitimate, but the Board needs time to address the issues before them. He noted that the Board members are not full-time employees of the Town and have other responsibilities.

A resident thanked the Board for the work they are doing, and for trying to make positive changes regarding human resources management. She asked if any of the Board members have formal training in human resources and if not, if they had anyone who could assist them. R. Hurlburt explained Jessica Young is the Town human resources administrator. T. Paige added the Town also has access to a human resources attorney. R. Hurlbut noted most of the Board members are independent business owners, so are familiar with many aspects of running a business. He added the Board members have the Town's best interests at heart and are working together to achieve this.

R. Hurlburt expressed his gratitude that so many members of the public attended the Board meeting and provided input.

SELECT BOARD MEMBER FINAL COMMENTS

T. Paige said it is rewarding for the Board to have the opportunity to work together to address the issues facing the Town.

J. Longacre asked that the residents give the Board a chance to work through the problems.

R. Hurlburt thanked K. Shelton for having the interest, energy, and desire to reach out to the Board representing the residents and giving the Board the opportunity to address many issues.

Chair O'Shana thanked K. Shelton for sending his questions to the Board before the meeting and giving them the opportunity to answer them completely and correctly.

MISCELLANEOUS

Chair O'Shana shared draft policies and procedures with the Board and asked them to review them by July 31, 2024, so that they can be reviewed by counsel and implemented on January 1, 2025.

NON-PUBLIC MEETING

The Board entered non-public session per RSA 91-A:3, II (a, e): (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; and (e) Consideration or negotiation of pending claims or litigation which has been threatened in writing or filed by or against this board or any subdivision thereof, or by or against any member thereof because of his or her membership therein, until the claim or litigation has been fully adjudicated or otherwise settled.

MOTION #4: J. Longacre moved to close the public meeting and enter into a non-public session under RSA 91-A:3, II (a,e). 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.

The public meeting was closed at 7:19 p.m.

The Board returned to public meeting.

ADJOURN MEETING

The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,
Beth Hanggeli