

**Town of Haverhill  
Select Board Meeting  
MINUTES  
Tuesday, January 3, 2023, at 6:00 PM  
R. E. Clifford Memorial Building  
65 South Court St.  
Woodsville, NH 03785  
Or on ZOOM**

**CALL TO ORDER:** Chair Fred Garofalo called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

**Select Board Attendance:** Kevin Knapp (Here), Katie Williams (Here), Mike Graham (Here), Vice Chair Steve Robbins (Here), Chair Fred Garofalo (Here). A quorum was met.

**Town Employees Present:**

**Town Manager (TM):** Brigitte Codling (Absent)

**Assistant Town Manager (ATM):** Jennifer Boucher

**Members of the Public Present**

***In Person:***

Darwin Clogston  
Matthew Bjelobrk  
Howard Hatch  
Phil Blanchard  
Vickie Wyman  
Dick Guy

Joe Longacre  
Margo Longacre  
Ed Ballam  
Shawn Bigelow

***Online:***

Jim McKinnon  
J. Henson  
Evelyn Elms  
Heidi Debrino  
Mike Bonanno  
Robert Maccini  
Lorraine Prescott  
Mike Lavoie  
Joanne Young  
Guy Mitchell  
Alex Nuti-de-Biasi (*Journal Opinion*)  
Janice Dube

Renzo Chumbes  
Tom Mangels  
Bob Long  
Dorothy Long  
Justin Boulter  
Jessica Moody  
Delcia Vinnacombe  
Jon Bouffard  
Carol Norcross

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**AGENDA APPROVAL**

**MOTION #1:** Williams made the motion and Chair Garofalo seconded the motion to approve the Agenda as written.

**Voice Vote:** All approved, none opposed, none abstained. The motion passed unanimously.

**CONSENT AGENDA**

**Approve minutes from the previous meetings**

**MOTION #2:** Williams made the motion to approve the Minutes from **December 19, 2022**, meeting as written. Chair Garofalo seconded the motion.

**Voice Vote:** All approved, none opposed, none abstained. The motion passed unanimously.

**SCHEDULED PUBLIC APPEARANCES:** None.

**TOWN EMPLOYEE APPEARANCES:**

**Jacob Ingerson, Haverhill Police Department Sargent**  
(Not in attendance)

**PUBLIC WANTING TO ADDRESS THE BOARD:** None.

**PENDING (OLD) BUSINESS:** None.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**Encumbrances**

ATM Boucher addressed four encumbrances:

- \$16,000 for work on the Center Haverhill Armory.
- Repairs for \$2,000.
- Dump truck for \$56,630, which has a date in May 2023 for delivery.
- The last installment of the Master Plan at \$8,434.

This was for repairs to the Caboose as confirmed on SB Meeting recording.

This was \$66,631 as confirmed on SB Meeting recording.

Vice Chair Robbins asked to table this discussion until later in the meeting. There was consensus among the Board members.

**DRA Tax Rate Letter**

Chair Garofalo read the letter from the DRA Assistant Director Municipal and Property Division Adam Denoncour dated December 22, 2022, as follows:

“As you are no doubt are aware, on October 12, 2022, the Woodsville Fire District appealed the Department’s order denying the request for a hearing before the Commissioner pursuant to RSA 21:J:35, VI, to the New Hampshire Supreme Court. Despite our effort to have the appeal dismissed so that we could set tax rates on November 29, 2022, the Supreme Court accepted the appeal.

Due to the interconnection of the issues raised by the Woodsville Fire District in its appeal and the rates to be set for the Town and the Woodsville Fire District, upon the advice of counsel, we cannot set tax rates while the appeal remains pending.

We appreciate that this may cause some complications for the Town and its taxpayers, and ask for your patience while the process runs its course.”

- Graham asked ATM Boucher for a timeline and action following receipt of the letter from the DRA. ATM Boucher stated that she read the letter, copied the Town Manager, and contacted the Town’s attorney seeking advice on possible solutions. ATM Boucher noted that she messaged the Board shortly afterwards.
- Williams noted that she believed everyone on both sides is frustrated and even the DRA does not know what to do.
- Graham recommended that the Town’s attorney file a lawsuit.
- ATM Boucher suggested that the tax rate be set without the warrant articles included and prepare a supplemental billing rather than issue refunds.
- Williams noted the options from the attorney – to write a letter to the DRA requesting that they immediately set the tax rate or to prepare a lawsuit to the NH Superior Court. Vice Chair Robbins stated he is in agreement with the attorney sending a letter.
- Williams read a section of a letter, “It is possible that the DRA will set the tax rate for the school district once the school’s January 9th meeting is over. Likewise, they may set the rates for the three districts other than Woodsville. If this happens, the Town will need to send the bills for those taxes as quickly as they can and distribute out the tax revenues received to go to the school, as well as to the districts who had their tax rates set. This will mean that multiple tax bills will have to go out, but there really isn’t any other way around it. However, tax bills need to be manually produced for every person, which will be an enormous task.”
- ATM Boucher discussed the payment obligations in such a scenario.
- Chair Garofalo asked where the school budget funds would come from. ATM Boucher stated that the Town will pay what they have collected to the schools.

**MOTION #3:** Vice Chair Robbins made the motion to follow the attorney’s recommendation to forward a letter to the DRA. Graham seconded the motion.

- Chair Garofalo read the section from the Town’s attorney to act on, as follows:  
“The first step would be for a letter to come from our office to Attorney Peter Roth at the DRA. We could send this letter as early as Wednesday, January 4. The letter would clearly explain that the DRA has no legal authority in this situation. To refuse to set the tax rate until some unknown date in the future. We will demand that the DRA set the

Town’s tax rate now based upon the status quo or in the alternative to send out tax bills now based on last year’s tax rate with the understanding that adjustments may need to be made later. We will very clearly explain that if one of these two things does not happen, the Town will seek relief in Superior Court.”

- ATM Boucher noted the TAN funds are allowable for certain payments, and this issue needs to be resolved.

**Voice Vote:** All approved, none opposed, none abstained. The motion passed unanimously.

**MOTION #4:** Vice Chair Robbins made the motion to ask Woodsville to delay the second installment of \$245,000 until this DRA issue is settled. Williams seconded the motion.

**Voice Vote:** All approved, none opposed, none abstained. The motion passed unanimously.

**MOTION #5:** Vice Chair Robbins made the motion to encumber the four amounts stated previously, and except for the Master Plan funds, none of the [garbled]. Williams seconded the motion.

**Voice Vote:** All approved, none opposed, none abstained. The motion passed unanimously

#### **Woodsville Ambulance 2023 Budget**

Chair Garofalo introduced the request from Woodsville Ambulance for supplemental funding of \$206,325 due by June 1, 2023.

- Vice Chair Robbins noted that healthcare in the United States is in crisis with hospitals and emergency department beds filled. EMS in the state is a nonessential service, so there is no state money for EMS.
- Graham suggested writing letters to the state representatives and senators to address this issue.

**MOTION #6:** Graham made the motion to authorize Town Administration to write letters to state representatives and senators to address this issue of the lack of funding for local ambulance services, consider them essential services, and work out a plan for appropriate funding. Williams seconded the motion.

**Voice Vote:** All approved, none opposed, none abstained. The motion passed unanimously.

#### **State One-Time Bridge Aid**

Chair Garofalo introduced the letter citing a one-time payment for \$99,241.50 for bridge maintenance, construction, or reconstruction. ATM Boucher noted these unanticipated funds earmarked for bridge aid were received last week.

**TOWN MANAGER’S REPORT:** None.

**ASSISTANT TOWN MANAGER’S REPORT:** None.

**COMMISSION AND COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

