

**Town of Haverhill  
Select Board  
MEETING MINUTES  
Tuesday, January 19, 2021  
6:00 PM  
R. E. Clifford Memorial Building  
65 South Court St.  
Woodsville, NH 03785**

The meeting was **CALLED TO ORDER** at 6:01 PM by Darwin Clogston, Chair. A quorum was met.

**Pledge of Allegiance**

**Town Employees Present:**

**Town Manager:** Brigitte Codling  
**Assistant Town Manager:** Jennifer Boucher  
**Road Agent:** Colton Grant  
**Chief of Police, Interim:** Derek Sullivan  
**Office Administrator, Police Department:** Lori Aldrich  
**Meeting Assistant:** Alex Collins

**Members of the Public Present:** Lorie Aldrich, Phil Blanchard, Doug Henson Ed Ballam, Ruth Ranno, Joe Longacre, Margo Longacre, Marilyn Blaisdell, Mary Partridge, Susie Tann, Brendan O'Donnell, April Dunn.

**Matt Bjelobrk, Vice Chair:** Per Gov. Sununu Meeting Compliance CHECKLIST to Ensure Meetings are Compliant with the Right to Know Law During the State of Emergency (abbreviated)

- **January 19, 2021**, Select Board Meeting
- Executive Order—This public body is authorized to meet electronically
- Confirming a) providing public access by telephone, with additional access by video or other electronic means, ZOOM conferencing is being used. All members of the Select Board have the ability to communicate contemporaneously, the public has the ability to contemporaneously listen and, if necessary, participate in this meeting by dialing the following number: 1-312-262-6799 (US) or the website <https://ZOOM.US/meeting> (ID# 93281031672; passcode: 232067); b) public notice has been provided of the necessary information for accessing the meeting though ZOOM or telephonically, instructions have also been provided on the website of the Town of Haverhill at [www.haverhill-nh.com](http://www.haverhill-nh.com), and c) providing a mechanism for the public to alert the public body if there a problems with access (call 802-793-0535 or email at [townmanager@haverhill-nh.com](mailto:townmanager@haverhill-nh.com)); d) adjourning if the public is unable to access the meeting. In the event that the public is unable to access the meeting, the meeting will be adjourned and rescheduled. Please note that all votes taken during this meeting will be taken by ROLL CALL vote.

**ROLL CALL ATTENDANCE:** Steve Robbins (Here), Darwin Clogston (Here), Fred Garofalo (Here), Howard Hatch (Here), and Matthew Bjelobrk (Present). A quorum was met.

## **AGENDA APPROVAL**

### **Agenda Modifications:**

- Garofalo added a discussion of the Woodsville Ambulance Service under Pending / Old Business.
- Clogston added under Town Employee Appearances the Health Officer and Treasurer.

**MOTION #1:** Robbins made the motion to approve the Agenda with additions, and Garofalo seconded the motion.

**Roll Call Vote:** Matthew Bjelobrck (Aye), Howard Hatch (Aye), Fred Garofalo (Aye), Steve Robbins (Aye), and Darwin Clogston (Aye). The vote was unanimous.

## **CONSENT AGENDA**

### **TOWN EMPLOYEE APPEARANCES**

#### **Karen Noyes, Finance Administrator**

Noyes introduced herself to the Board noting that she has 23 years of government accounting experience. She worked for Haverhill from 1998 to 2002, and she just retired from the Town of Littleton, NH. She stated that she was extremely happy to work for Haverhill, and she felt like it was home. Karen noted she is scheduled to work 20 to 25 hours per week.

The Board members welcomed Noyes back to Haverhill.

### **SCHEDULED PUBLIC APPEARANCES**

#### **Gary Hebert, Health Officer (letter)**

Hebert stated in a letter to the Select Board that he has been responsible for childcare at his residence for the past 3 months. Hebert noted that work as the Health Officer with his child-care duties is limited. Hebert requests an unpaid leave-of-absence from the Health Officer position for 6 months. The Deputy Health Officer will be able to respond to any complaints in the interim.

**MOTION #2:** Bjelobrck made a motion to approve an approximately 6-month unpaid leave for Gary Hebert, Health Officer. Hatch seconded the motion.

**Roll Call Vote:** Matthew Bjelobrck (Aye), Howard Hatch (Aye), Fred Garofalo (Aye), Steve Robbins (Aye), and Darwin Clogston (Aye). The motion passed unanimously.

#### **Lorie Anne Aldrich, Treasurer or Deputy Treasurer**

Codling discussed that Deputy Treasurer, Evelyn “Bunny” Elms, has been serving as Treasurer and has voiced that she may prefer to return to her position as Deputy Treasurer. Aldrich is stepping up to serve as an interim Treasurer or Deputy Treasurer until an election, which ever Bunny prefers she serve as.

**MOTION #3:** Bjelobrck made a motion to approve the appointment of Lorie Anne Aldrich as interim Treasurer. Hatch seconded the motion.

**Roll Call Vote:** Matthew Bjelobrck (Aye), Howard Hatch (Aye), Fred Garofalo (Aye), Steve Robbins (Aye), and Darwin Clogston (Aye). The motion passed unanimously.

Codling noted that as a next step, Aldrich will go to the Town Clerk for a swearing-in. Clogston thanked Aldrich for stepping up to the position of Treasurer.

### **MEETING MINUTES REVIEW**

Clogston stated that the minutes from the Select Board meeting of **January 4, 2021**, have not been approved.

**MOTION #4:** Clogston made a motion to table the approval of the **January 4, 2021**, Minutes until the next meeting. Robbins seconded the motion.

**Roll Call Vote:** Matthew Bjelobrk (Aye), Howard Hatch (Aye), Fred Garofalo (Aye), Steve Robbins (Aye), and Darwin Clogston (Aye). The motion passed unanimously.

### **SCHEDULED PUBLIC APPEARANCES, cont.**

#### **Request to Waive Fee for Clifford Memorial Building Use (letter)**

Clogston read a letter from Linda Smith who requested waiving the fee for the rental of the Clifford Memorial Building for a celebration-of-life service for her grandson who passed away on January 5, 2021.

**MOTION #5:** Robbins made a motion to approve the waiving of the rental fee for the use of the Clifford Memorial Building as requested by a letter from Linda Smith. Bjelobrk seconded the motion.

**Roll Call Vote:** Matthew Bjelobrk (Aye), Howard Hatch (Aye), Fred Garofalo (Aye), Steve Robbins (Aye), and Darwin Clogston (Aye). The motion passed unanimously.

### **PUBLIC WANTING TO ADDRESS THE BOARD**

#### **Jacob Clifford (letter)**

“To the Select Board of North Haverhill:

Below is a Petition signed by 422 citizens of North Haverhill (digitally). The Petition is an appeal to the Select Board to asking for the removal of the current Town Manager, Brigitte Codling, from her position. Myself, as well as 421 of my fellow citizens believe that her conduct is unbecoming of a Town Manager and that her performance is subpar. The Petition originally had 667 signatures but was signed by a few individuals who were not Town residents. I took the liberty of crossing out the names of the nonresidents, as well as correcting the towns some signatures had come from. After her derogatory comments during the last budget hearing referring to individuals against the abolition of the ambulance service.

She referred to them as “[blank] morons.” As if that was not enough, she proceeded to edit the video, delete the Town of Haverhill’s Facebook page, and eventually only reactivating the account to give a half-hearted apology and shift the blame to all of you while also playing victim. I believe this serves as an example of her attitude toward the Town and might serve as a clue of why we have lost scores of Town employees since she became Town Manager.

I appreciate your consideration during these trying and divisive times.

Respectfully,

Jacob Clifford”

Clogston noted that there were copied pages of digitally acquired signatures, which he shared with the members.

Clogston asked for the public to address the Board.

### **Proposed Pellet Plant / Haverhill Industrial Park**

Doug Henson (Airport Road, North Haverhill) stated that he is not against the pellet plant, but he felt there was a better place in Town other than near a school. Henson noted that with the 35-foot height restriction for the airport, the pellet plant chimneys may not be suitable. But, being downwind from the Industrial Park, he gets the exhaust from the oil refinery because, he noted, the stacks are not high enough. Henson encouraged the Board to enforce the covenants.

Robbins asked which covenants are not being enforced. Henson replied, “The lights and parking.” Henson stated that the covenants are for the protection of the abutting landowners. Henson asked if the Town has site plans for all the industries in the Industrial Park.

Susie Tann (North Haverhill) stated that there is not definition of *light industry* and it is missing the environmental impacts in regard to odor and noise.

Mary Partridge stated that the processing and burning of wood pellets creates volatile compounds particularly nitrogen oxide and carbon monoxide, which are detrimental to health and pollute the air. Partridge noted that if the Town accepts this plant that they install the proper filters.

### **Social Media Presence on Facebook**

Codling began the discussion about the Town’s Facebook account and the issues. For the Town, Facebook is a business page not a personal page. The issues are with negative content and some not suitable for public consumption. The Town employees met and decided on using a Facebook group, which allows no comments. If residents want to bring a topic to our attention, they will come by the office, send a letter, call, or email. For the Select Board meetings, all questions and comments come through ZOOM and not Facebook. Zoom allows documentation of the communication by audio and video. On Facebook groups, messages can be sent, but there is no commenting on posts. Discussion continued.

Codling addressed the Petition noting that she received a notice from change.org stating that the Petition was removed from their site because it violates multiple policies, including bullying and misinformation.

Codling noted that the Town’s staff agreed that Facebook comments were derogatory and distracting and asked to go to a Facebook page with no comments. Other departments, such as Police and Recreation, have Facebook pages. Codling will communicate with department heads.

**MOTION #6:** Robbins made a motion to approve the social media policy that the Town of Haverhill has a Facebook GROUP page only allowing for messaging, but not comments on posts. Clogston seconded the motion.

**Roll Call Vote:** Matthew Bjelobrck (Aye), Howard Hatch (Aye), Fred Garofalo (Aye), Steve Robbins (Aye), and Darwin Clogston (Aye). The motion passed unanimously.

## **PENDING / OLD BUSINESS**

### **Public ROW Ordinance**

Brendan O'Donnell (DTC Lawyers, Exeter, NH) introduced discussion on the Telecommunications Act and State Statute 12:K, which puts limitations on how towns can regulate telecommunications and internet-type companies. There are three main points:

- Towns must be competitively neutral.
- FCC instituted shot clocks, in which towns need to act quickly on deadlines.
- Town cannot regulate small cells through zoning.

O'Donnell stated that DTC Lawyers drafted an ordinance to address all the applicants equally who are seeking to get into the public ROW. Discussion ensued. O'Donnell noted that it is important for the Town to be prepared for the deployment of small cells vs cell towers, so that the regulations can be in place and the structures will be built safely. Discussion continued.

April Dunn (on ZOOM) asked if O'Donnell had statistics on the problems in other towns. O'Donnell stated he does not have numbers but noted that the small cell colocations have begun in Keene, NH.

Susie Tann asked if there is a way to pay for what is needed out of this ordinance.

Clogston asked Codling to reach out to other municipalities who have addressed this ordinance to discuss implementation.

### **Lyme Green Heat Purchase Proposal**

Tabled because Morton Bailey was not in attendance.

### **Ambulance Service**

Garofalo expressed his confusion about the issues with the Woodsville Ambulance Service. Clogston stated that the Town has a purchasing policy that also relates to service contracts with the local ambulance services. Codling stated that the contract with the Town is for 9-1-1 emergencies only. Discussion continued.

Marilyn Blaisdell stated that ambulance services are paid by insurance companies, and she asked what the Town is paying for. Robbins replied that the volume of calls in the area does not sustain the budget of the ambulance service, so the service contracts with area towns that are charged a per capita contract fee to supplement the budget.

April Dunn (on ZOOM) asked how many staff are on each shift.

Jon Bouffard (on ZOOM) caller stated that he believes there are not paramedics on all shifts. Robbins replied that it is not possible at this time; however, two people have just finished paramedic school.

Codling asked the Select Board members if they still want to see a proposal from Robert Clay, Warren-Wentworth Ambulance Service, Warren, NH.

Clogston read his response letter to emails from Kevin Shelton, Woodsville Administrator, as follows:

“Kevin Shelton:

I have received and read your email concerns over competitors’ bidding services to resident taxpayers and guests of the Town of Haverhill. After due deliberation, I determined it was best to be direct so there is no confusion or claims fabricated whether through a misunderstanding a twisting of words by anyone. I believe, stating the facts allows everyone, including those busy raising families and working hard to provide for their family to fully understand it; therefore, I give you the following:

There is no need to have a Roll Call. The Town of Haverhill has a responsibility to the taxpayers to seek the best services at the best price. Woodville Ambulance was ready to simply ready to discontinue a vital service if Haverhill continued to seek negotiations on the cost to taxpayers. While many involved in the ‘enterprises’ in Woodsville are doing well financially, many others in Haverhill are struggling.

The government reaction to Covid-19 has families unable to have both parents work because one parent has to stay home to school the children who no longer are schooled in the public buildings with human contact and the ability to ask a teacher for help at any time during the day. Many families have seen both parents lose hours, causing less money to be available to buy food, clothes, or medicines, and some will not be able to make their tax payments because their kids and basic needs, like a roof over their heads, come first.

I swore an oath when I volunteered for this job and I mean to keep my word. When times are tough and we need to tighten our belts to get through it, and I will. When a contract is assumed to be an entitlement and the contractor is willing to place the residents of Haverhill in danger rather than negotiate, it is my duty to seek alternatives or at a minimum see if all providers of the ambulance services would refuse to respond to a heart attack or a serious automobile crash because the Town wanted to negotiate a price that people could afford. We, the Select Board and the Town Manager, are here to help people, to keep them safe as we possibly can, do our best to not create a tax burden so large they lose their homes.

I have no choice but to seek bids using the same specifications used with Woodsville. I could not live with the thought that one person died because Haverhill could not afford your price next year. You have proven it doesn’t matter, and the lives of Haverhill’s residents are only worth saving if it is profitable enough for the owners of the Woodville Ambulance. You actually notified the people that you would not respond to their worst moments. I sincerely hope not all ambulance companies operate that same way, but we shall know soon enough. ‘Your money or your life’ is not a service. The people of Haverhill should never again be in a position to be blackmailed.

Darwin Clogston”

## **TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT / COMMENTS**

Codling commented that she is glad that the Board discussed the ambulance services because there has been so much misinformation, and she thanked the Board for bringing up the topic. Codling stated that she will contact Robert Clay, Warren-Wentworth Ambulance Service, Warren, NH, for a proposal. Codling noted that the contract period is July to July, and Boucher stated that the service would want a signed contract by April 1.

Marilyn Blaisdell asked how many people are watching this meeting and how many people signed the petition. Blaisdell continued that they need to get involved and stop spreading misinformation.

## **FINANCE OFFICER'S REPORT / COMMENTS**

### **New Payroll System**

Boucher stated that she is working with Noyes to hand over the finance position. Boucher is gathering the information together to transfer over to the new payroll service by the end of January. Boucher explained the online Time Recording System to the members. Discussion ensued.

### **Advisory Budget Committee and Precinct Meetings**

Codling added details about Advisory Budget Committee meetings attended by Clogston, Hatch, Boucher, and Codling. Codling will also be attending the Haverhill Corner Commissioners' meeting to present the slide presentation of the Fire Department merger proposal. Codling wishes to set up another night at the Clifford Building to present the side presentation to whomever wishes to attend.

**COMMISSION/COMMITTEE REPORTS:** None.

### **CORRESPONDENCE:**

Clogston passed out a brochure from the Bridge House, one of the nonprofit organizations that requests annual appropriations, and this year with request funding using a petitioned warrant article.

Codling stated that of the numerous nonprofits that usually send in requests for funding, the Town has received two to date.

## **COMMENTS BY BOARD MEMBERS**

Clogston reminded Hatch to complete the dedication for the Annual Report and send to Bligh.

**MOTION #7:** Bjelobrk made the motion to adjourn for 5 minutes at 8:13 PM. Hatch seconded the motion.

**Roll Call Vote:** Matthew Bjelobrk (Aye), Howard Hatch (Aye), Fred Garofalo (Aye), Steve Robbins (Aye), Darwin Clogston (Aye). The vote was unanimous.

## **NONPUBLIC SESSION**

**MOTION #8:** Bjelobrk made the motion to go into **NONPUBLIC SESSION** at 8:18 PM and reconvene in five minutes. Garofalo seconded the motion.

**Roll Call Vote:** Matthew Bjelobrk (Aye), Howard Hatch (Aye), Fred Garofalo (Aye), Steve Robbins (Aye), Darwin Clogston (Aye). The vote was unanimous.

**The Select Board came out of NONPUBLIC SESSION and the meeting reconvened at 9:32 PM.**

**MOTION #9:** Matt made the motion to seal the minutes from the **NONPUBLIC SESSION**. Fred seconded the motion.

**Roll Call Vote:** Matthew Bjelobrk (Aye), Howard Hatch (Aye), Fred Garofalo (Aye), Steve Robbins (Aye), Darwin Clogston (Aye). The vote was unanimous.

**ADJOURN**

**MOTION #10:** Matt made a motion and Steve seconded the motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:32 PM.

**Roll Call Vote:** Steve Robbins (Aye), Matthew Bjelobrk (Aye), Fred Garofalo (Aye), Howard Hatch (Aye), Darwin Clogston (Aye). The motion passed unanimously.

The meeting was ADJOURNED at 9:34 PM.

*Transcribed by Joanna Bligh*