

**Town of Haverhill  
Select Board  
MEETING MINUTES  
Monday, May 8, 2023, at 6:00 PM  
R. E. Clifford Memorial Building  
65 South Court St.  
Woodsville, NH 03785  
Or on ZOOM**

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

**Select Board Attendance:** Joe Longacre (Here), Phil Blanchard (Here), Kevin Knapp (Here), Mike Graham (Here), and Katie Williams (Here). A quorum was met.

**Town Employees Present:**

**Town Manager:** Brigitte Codling (Present)

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

**Recording Clerk:** Joanna Bligh (Present)

**Members of the Public Present**

***In Person:***

Preston Hatch

Harve Keyes

Gene Popien

Tracy Page

Wayne Talbot

Tuesday Griffin

Helen Klebes

Don Hammond

Mike Bonanno

Doug Henson

Airon Shaw

Linda Buermeyer (*Journal Opinion*)

Howard Hatch

Norman Darby

Bill Daley

Regis Roy

Jim McKinnon

Dawn Lavoie

Ken Huard

Sherri Sargent

Don and Kathleen Vaillancourt

Lynn Graham

Margo Longacre

Shawn Bigelow

Chris Caderat

Dottie Long

Susie Tann

Diane Arel

Ryan Arel

Dick Guy

Matthew and Marie Bjelobrk

Valerie Morse

Fred Garofalo

Gary Scruton

Carolyn Hofman

Ron Hurlburt

Chuck Decato

***Online:***

Lorraine Prescott

Ron DeRosia

Robert Maccini

C. Elliott

Carol Norcross

Jodie Lang

Paul Hayes (*Caledonian Record*)

Bob Long

Joanne Young  
R. Newman  
Pam Aldrich

Guy Mitchell  
Vickie Wyman  
Polly Bonanno

## **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

### **AGENDA APPROVAL:**

**MOTION #1:** Knapp made the motion and Vice Chair Graham seconded the motion to approve the Agenda as written.

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

### **CONSENT AGENDA:**

**MOTION #2:** Chair Williams made the motion and Blanchard seconded the motion to approve the minutes from **April 24, 2023**, as written.

**Voice Vote:** Four in favor, none opposed, one abstained. The motion passed.

## **PUBLIC APPEARANCES**

- As a Board member of the Cohase Chamber of Commerce, Gary Scruton introduced the Chamber's new Executive Director Airon Shaw. Director Shaw spoke about being new to New England and learning about winter and snow. She asked for anyone if they needed any information to contact her at [chamber@cohase.com](mailto:chamber@cohase.com) Chair Williams welcomed Shaw.
- Susie Tann (Haverhill) spoke about promoting transparency at Board meetings by:
  - Answering questions asked of the Board.
  - Providing the public with a rationale of thinking on a topic.
  - Identifying the reason (RSA) for going into Non-Public Session.

## **PUBLIC HEARING**

**MOTION #3:** Chair Williams made the motion and Blanchard seconded the motion to enter into the Public Hearing at 6:07 PM.

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

## **Pond Circle**

TM Codling introduced Tom Hurlburt of Pond Circle to present his proposal to open Pond Circle to ATV/OHRVs.

- Hurlburt stated that Mt. Lakes has successfully opened their roads to ATV/OHRVs use; however, currently, Pond Circle residents cannot legally access the trails because a 1/3-mile portion of French Pond Rd. is off limits to the northern entrance of Pond Circle. Hurlburt also requested allowing access on French Pond Rd. to the boat ramp on French Pond.
- TM Codling clarified that the Board could approve or deny two options or both:
  - Allowing ATV/OHRVs from Bear Rd. to Pond Circle.

- Allowing ATV/OHRVs from Bear Rd. to the second entrance of Pond Circle.
- Tracy Page commented that the trail goes through her property, and she asked for the hours of use, the seasonality of the use, the maintenance, trash removal, and if the use can be canceled.
- Hurlburt and TM Codling stated the trail-use guidelines from the State of NH – ATV/OHRVs use in NH is confined to May 23 to October 31 and one-half hour before sunrise and one-half hour after sunset.
- Helen Klebes asked if NH Fish and Game approval is needed to protect the loons on French Pond.
- Gene Popien stated that he is the last property on Pond Circle and ATV/OHRVs will dead end there and turn around. Popien noted that there are eight locations of limited sight distance on the trail, which are a safety issue. Popien suggested that the approval be for residents only.
- Doug Henson suggested erecting a gate.
- ATM Boucher noted that Mt. Lakes had similar concerns and implemented a year trial.
- There was discussion about the speed limit, and Mark Lang noted that it is usually 5 MPH less than the posted speed limit. Lang also noted that allowing residents only cannot be done, but new signage could be posted.

**MOTION #4:** Blanchard made the motion and Chair Williams seconded the motion to approve a 1-year trial of the Pond Circle route as discussed (*on French Pond Road, from Bear Road ending at the Pond Circle NH Park Service Road & along the Class VI portion of Pond Circle ending at the start of the Private portion of Pond Circle*) to be open to ATV/OHRVs from May 23 to October 31 and one-half hour before sunrise and one-half hour after sunset with a speed limit for Pond Circle only of 10 MPH and all other trails the speed limit is per State law.

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

## OLD BUSINESS

### Augie's Bypass

**MOTION #5:** Chair Williams made the motion and Blanchard seconded the motion to approve the Augie's Bypass route for ATV/OHRVs until revoked.

- Graham asked about the liability of the use of Augie's Bypass and whether the route can be shut down. Mark Lang responded that the use of the route once approved can be shut down in 30 days.

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

## SHOUT OUT...

- Harv Keyes commented on the VFW field and how he was impressed by the families watching the ball games and the people at the playground. He wished to thank all the volunteers who created that area. TM Codling stated that Sherri Sargent spearheaded the effort to get the playground installed.

## NEW BUSINESS

### Current Use Application

**MOTION #6:** Chair Williams made the motion and Blanchard seconded the motion to approve the Current Use application for Howard and Kendra Hatch for the 10.39-acre property at the intersection of Morrill Rd. and Benton Rd. (Map 413-132).

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

### **Health Benefits Review and Discussion**

Following up a request from the Advisory Budget Committee to reduce the cost of health care benefits, TM Codling provided the Board with documents related to health care benefit options for Town employees and the documents were labeled: Overview, Med 2022, Med 2023, and documents A through D.

Spreadsheet #1 Overview of Health Care Comparisons (July to July premium year).  
TM Codling introduced this to show the list of the following spreadsheets.

Spreadsheet #2 Medical 2022.

TM Codling stated that this 100% employee and family coverage cost the Town \$335.5K.

Spreadsheet #3 Medical 2023.

TM Codling stated that this 100% employee and family coverage cost the Town \$391.5K.

Spreadsheet #A Medical 10% employee/90% Town.

TM Codling stated that this coverage would cost the Town \$352.4K (5% increase).

Spreadsheet #A2 Medical and Dental 10% employee/90% Town.

TM Codling stated that this coverage would cost the Town \$372.5K (11% increase).

Spreadsheet #B Medical 100% single employee and 10% employee/90% Town above single.

TM Codling stated that this coverage would cost the Town \$372.3K (10.9% increase).

Spreadsheet #C Medical 100% high deductible plan with HAS Town contribution.

TM Codling stated that this coverage would cost the Town \$353.8K (5.4% increase).

Spreadsheet #D Medical 100% Open Access Plan with HAS Town contribution.

TM Codling stated that this coverage would cost the Town \$393.3K

### **Discussion:**

- Chair Williams noted that the deductibles vary from \$1,000 to \$13,000. Chair Williams stated that it may be a pay cut for employees with 3.5% COLA and the high increase in health care costs.
- ATM Boucher noted that after attending a Finance Officers' Conference, all towns are trying to retain and recruit staff. TM Codling noted that recruiting qualified candidates is difficult.
- Haverhill Police Chief David Appleby read a letter of support for retaining the existing health benefits, as follows:

*Dear Select Board,*

*2023 marked the first year since 2019 that the Haverhill Police Department has managed to attract enough skilled Officers to realize a fully staffed contingent. As Chief my focus on officer recruitment and retention in the Department promptly focused on options available not only to recruit but retain police personnel. The Town of Haverhill's lack of police officer staff had resulted in a disconnection with our community, allowed for inefficient operations, caused low morale, and officer burn out.*

*One of the many evident challenges was to fill open spots while not sacrificing professional standards to simply fill said positions. In an attempt to attract promising recruits, I started with rebuilding the trust within the department. Then extended that to our other town departments and strengthen our interdepartmental relationships. I improved the quantity and quality of training. In partnering with the Town Manager and the Selectmen, we were able to upgrade the dilapidated equipment and uniform issues to better serve the community and keep the Officers safer. As a final piece to the puzzle, a review of financial compensation in comparison to the surrounding areas, resulted in wage adjustments that further increased morale and also allowed a more attractive tool for recruitment and retention.*

*Now finally fully staffed, as the Chief of Police, I am looking to the near future and anticipate the difficulties of retaining officers in a very competitive field. There are several openings for officer positions in our immediate area and while the Haverhill PD employees are committed to continually addressing the ever changing and challenging needs of the town, they are also keenly aware of other opportunities in the surrounding towns that might offer better compensation of salary and benefits exacerbated by the increased cost of living and inflation rate.*

*With the towns intension to alter the town employees' contributions to healthcare, I fear that combined with Law Enforcements current competitive environment, this decision will drive our Haverhill Officers into the desperate hands of surrounding towns, who are already poaching our employees and offering more competitive rates of pay. One factor that keeps these towns from successfully pulling from our employee base is our superior healthcare benefits package. The financial impact of losing just one officer in our already weakened economy would place an undue strain on our community, affect the protection and security of the town and result in an indefinite increase in overtime expenses. This change in officer Healthcare benefits will play a large role in hindering retention and recruiting efforts.*

*I come to you with this information in hopes of forestalling a predictable loss of employees as it is my hope to maintain an environment that will give Haverhill Officers the opportunity and tools necessary to sustain a long-term career. In closing, my team has made no demands nor expressed any intensions of leaving the department for greater monetary compensation. They are a dedicated team showing a level of professionalism and experience that the town of Haverhill cannot be easily replaced, if at all. I would ask you to reconsider your intention to have them pay for healthcare as it would hamper much of what we have achieved as a trusted and reliable Police Department.*

*Sincerely,*

*Chief David Appleby*

- Jim McKinnon (Director of Maintenance) stated that he calculated that the health benefit accounts for \$3/hour and with the low wages of Town employees, the health care benefit makes the difference.
- Detective Matthew Yao stated that with a family of a wife and three children when he was shopping for a position, the health care benefits made the difference.
- Lorie Aldrich (Police Department Office Administrator) asked all the Town employees in the room to stand, and she stated that there are people and not just line items on the balance sheet.
- Howard Hatch stated that this issue has been discussed for years, and I do not want to take anything away, but we have to listen to Town residents.
- Alex Collins (Interim Office Administrator) stated that losing staff will affect everyone in Town because the work of the Town will not get done.
- Chair Williams recommended the Board take a year to come up with better health care benefit options.

**MOTION #7:** Chair Williams made the motion and Blanchard seconded the motion to retain the existing health benefits for 1 year.

**Voice Vote:** Four in favor, one opposed, none abstained. The motion passed.

#### **TOWN MANAGER’S REPORT**

- For the last-mile broadband in Haverhill, the \$1M grant award is in process. HUB66 (<https://www.hub66.com/>) was selected as the provider to implement internet service to unserved and underserved residents.
- At 44 Railroad St., the demolition will soon take place. The property is considered a brownfields site, and the NHDES and the USEPA are funding the work to clean up the site.

#### **ASSISTANT TOWN MANAGER’S REPORT**

ATM Boucher presented the following:

- The tax warrant is available for Board signatures.
- This Thursday, tax bills will be sent out with a July 3 due date.

#### **COMMISSION/COMMITTEE ex officio REPORTS:**

**Chair Williams (Conservation Commission):** The Conservation Commission will meet on May 16.

**Knapp (Planning Board):** The next meeting is Tuesday, May 23. Knapp noted that the last meeting was particularly good with the Master Plan discussion of the Natural Resources chapter with the help of Joe Longacre and Joe Mitchell (Conservation Commission Vice Chair).

**Longacre (Parks & Recreation Commission):** Longacre enumerated the May events for the Parks & Recreation Commission: Craft Fair at CMB will be held on May 20th, the Parker Hill Road Band will play on the 20th at Railroad Park, Paddle the Border occurs on the 21st from the

Woodsville playing fields to Bedell Bridge boat launch ramp, and the Car Show will be held on the 27th at the Grafton County Complex.

**Vice Chair Graham (Zoning Board of Adjustment; Woodsville Ambulance Advisory Committee):** No report.

**Blanchard (Airport Zoning Commission [AZC]; Public Safety Facility Planning Commission [PSFPC]):** Blanchard announced the AZC meeting is this week on Wednesday. The PSFPC meeting is on May 18th.

### **CORRESPONDENCE:**

Chair Williams presented two correspondences to the Board:

- A letter from the NH Attorney General reporting on the harmful effects of social media on young children and young adults.
- A letter from Twin States Clean Energy announcing the availability of a clean energy transmission line in NH.

### **COMMENTS BY SELECT BOARD MEMBERS:**

**Chair Williams:**

#### **Procedures for Public Comments**

Chair Williams summarized the decision the Board reached relating to public comments, as follows:

#### **Select Board Meeting Public Comment Policy**

Public wanting to address the board must request to be placed on the agenda by 10:00am on Meeting Day, to ensure Town Administration has time to revise the agenda. Requests can be emailed to Town Administration or to the Select Board Chairman, be made in person at the Town Office or by Calling the Town Office. Requests must be made separately for each meeting. Public comment will be taken on each agenda as it arises.

- If you would like to speak to the agenda item being discussed, raise your hand and the first hand raised will be recognized by the Chairman.
- When you are recognized, please move to the podium to use the microphone, and begin by stating your name for the record.
- Public comments will not have a limit but will be kept on track by the Chair if required and may be limited based on the number of residents who have signed up for that particular meeting.
- After all public members have spoken on the topic at hand, if a previous speaker would like to be heard again, they will be allowed an additional two minutes to speak.
- Public attendees shall not have side conversations, interrupt or talk over one another.
- Public attendees and Board members shall be respectful to each other.
- If an individual fails to follow the procedures in a way that interrupts the meeting or prevents the Board from conducting its business, they will be asked to leave.

Approved unanimously by Select Board 5/8/23  
Katie William, Chair  
Michael Graham, Vice Chair  
Kevin Knapp

