

**Town of Haverhill
Select Board Meeting
MINUTES
Monday, August 2, 2021, 6:00 PM
R. E. Clifford Memorial Building
65 South Court St.
Woodsville, NH 03785
Or on ZOOM**

The meeting was **CALLED TO ORDER** at 6:00 PM by Fred Garofalo, Chair.

Town Employees Present:

Town Manager: Brigitte Codling (excused)

Assistant Town Manager: Jennifer Boucher

Members of the Public Present:

In Person

Richard Clifford
Mark Johanson
Bob Long
Darwin Clogston
Robert Roudebush

Thomas Mayo
Jim McKinnon
Paul Kidder
Patricia Brady
Kevin Shelton

Online [Participants who do not use their full names online are not included on this list.]

Linda Buermeyer
Regis Roy
Kristi Garofalo
Mary Brooks
Kaylee Heath
Ron DeRosia

Mike Bonanno
Alison Nolan
Joanne Young
Don Vaillancourt
R. Newman

ROLL CALL ATTENDANCE: Matthew Bjelobrck (Here - virtual), Steve Robbins (Here), Howard Hatch (Here), Mike Graham (Here), Fred Garofalo (Here). A quorum was met.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

AGENDA APPROVAL

Agenda Modifications

MOTION #1: Robbins made the motion and Bjelobrck seconded the motion to approve the Agenda as written.

Roll Call Vote: Matthew Bjelobrck (Aye), Steve Robbins (Aye), Howard Hatch (Aye), Mike Graham (Aye), Fred Garofalo (Aye). The motion passed unanimously.

CONSENT AGENDA

MOTION #2: Robbins made the motion and Bjelobrck seconded the motion to approve Minutes from the Special Joint Meeting on **July 8, 2021**, and Select Board Minutes from **July 19, 2021**, as written.

- Hatch made a statement at the Joint Meeting with the precinct commissioners noting that if they cannot do their jobs as commissioners, they should give up their jobs, and Hatch stated that he wanted that in the Minutes. Hatch noted that the statement has been corrected.

Roll Call Vote: Matthew Bjelobrck (Aye), Steve Robbins (Aye), Howard Hatch (Aye), Mike Graham (Abstained), Fred Garofalo (Aye). The motion passed with four Ayes and one Abstention.

TOWN EMPLOYEE APPEARANCES: None

SCHEDULED PUBLIC APPEARANCES: Precinct Commissioners

Bob Long stated that he is speaking on behalf of the Haverhill precincts – Haverhill Corner, No. Haverhill, Mt. Lakes, and Woodsville – in relation to the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). Long thanked the Select Board and the Commissioners for their work. Long read from a letter from the Governor’s Office of Emergency Relief and Recovery, as follows:

“Village districts and precincts should plan on collaborating with the county or municipality [garbled] for the funding of the fiscal recovery plan.”

“Local fiscal recovery fund does not separately include funding for the village districts or precincts. Such districts and precincts, however, are included in the population calculations for the localities [garbled] for the federal government.”

Long asked the Board members if the ARPA funds allocation was discussed. Garofalo stated that early in the COVID pandemic, the precincts were discussed, but things changed until late June when the federal government provided the final draft, and the stipulations were specific. Garofalo noted that the Town funds are allocated by the Town Manager without direction from the Select Board. The Town Manager reports to the Board. Garofalo the Town Manager and the Board discussed expending funds that would promote the entire Town and not just the precincts.

Long continued that in RSA 37:3, it states that Select Board takes care of the money for the Town and it is their responsibility to make decisions on the allocation of funds.

Long stated that the ARPA is incredibly important to the districts that they represent.

Robbins noted that when the Board discussed this, the vote was 4 to 1 that the Board would be involved in the ARPA money. Long stated that that vote did not show up. Robbins stated that those minutes will be corrected.

Long asked if there are any questions on the material the Commissioners sent to the Select Board.

- Garofalo stated that any money to the districts has to go to shovel-ready projects. It is not general funds.
- Long stated that the projects would have to have been planned by March 5, 2021 and will have many years to complete.
- Garofalo stated that all the accounting goes through the Town and not the districts. Boucher confirmed that the Town has to keep track of the entire project, and any errors in reporting, the Town is accountable for.

- Long discussed the use of the funds within the districts, for example water and wastewater projects, where the money is spent in the area and, he stated, that it is true stimulus. Discussion continued.
- Long discussed the proportional amount and the formula for precinct payment based on the percentage of taxes sent to the Town. Garofalo noted that the ARPA money is to fund projects and not just to apportion money. Boucher noted that it is possible to look for other sources of funding for the project and ARPA can be a supplement.
- Boucher discussed the Commissioners' proposal identifies 59% of the ARPA money for the precincts, when those residents not in the districts will not receive benefits. Boucher noted that right now the Welfare Department has \$92,000 for shelter housing, which is \$77,000 over budget.
- Bjelobrk noted that he suggested looking at the Town as a whole, and it is for infrastructure projects, such as the feasibility study for a sewer system; welfare; and projects that all Town residents will benefit from. Bjelobrk noted that the Select Board works for the Town and not the districts.
- Long stated that he is looking to the Select Board to make the right decisions.
- Long asked whose job it is to make decisions about dispersal of funds – Administration/Town Manager or the Select Board. Garofalo responded that the Select Board has given the Town Manager the authority to spend Town funds without the Board's approval, except if the funds were part of a warrant article. Garofalo stated that it is our job to set policy.
- Boucher presented numbers: ARPA impact on taxes over 2 years would be approximately \$1.47 reduction. Boucher continued that the Town would only get a \$.28 value on their taxes if the funds were distributed to the precincts.
- Long stated that ARPA money has nothing to do with taxes, and Long stated that taxes have nothing to do with this conversation.
- Mark Johanson stated that ARPA was not a local tax-reduction bill. The Commissioners are asking for consideration of their projects.
- Hatch noted that this ARPA money is a fraction of the infrastructure money that is coming. Hatch stated that none of the projects are fully funded.
- Garofalo stated that if the districts get no money from the Town, then the district taxes will reflect the cost of the project. Garofalo note that the district funding was removed from the language of the bill and brought up again in the state's interpretation of the bill that funds could be distributed from the Town to the districts. Garofalo mentioned those who do not live in the districts and will not benefit from projects. Graham stated that the money is being spread out among the districts.
- Patricia Brady noted the bill was written to stimulate economic activity.
- Robert Roudobush wished to hear from other members of the Board.
- Bjelobrk stated that the Town has \$680,000 in needs, and the Select Board has to fulfill that revenue. Bjelobrk does not want the precincts to misuse funds that the Town is responsible for. Bjelobrk stated that the Board has to advocate for the Town as a whole.
- Long expressed that Bjelobrk's response was insulting.
- Robbins stated that Long's proposal makes sense, and gives the Board an opportunity to work with the districts to spend on infrastructure.

- Hatch stated that putting this out to the districts will help pull the Town together.
- Graham stated that he agreed with the speakers, but he had issue with the Town Manager who would use the money as revenue replacement. Graham asked how is that infrastructure, and where is that money going to be used. Graham stated that it has not been shown that the Town suffered any revenue loss. Graham wanted the money to go to infrastructure projects rather than for no plan.
- Brady stated that the Commissioners' process of thoughtfully requesting this money is inspirational and operate in a collaborative way.
- Garofalo stated that money going to the districts, for example, Woodsville, who has not managed their budgets in the last 5 years properly according to audits.
- Paul Kidder stated that Garofalo was out of line, and the audits have been completed with the NH Department of Revenue Administration's satisfaction. Kidder stated that rumors have been spread by the Town. Long asked to return to the topic of discussion.
- Bjelobrk noted that Garofalo's comments are not out of line because, after reading the audits, there were multiple violations of the Municipal Finance Act, which is willfully unlawful.
- Johanson stated it will give the Town the opportunity to establish a reporting method that is satisfactory to the Town and the districts going forward.
- Garofalo asked if all districts were looking for funding.
 - Dutile, Chair, Haverhill Corner, stated that the proposal from Haverhill Corner was submitted. Dutile asked if the Board would vote tonight. Garofalo stated that he thought the Board would vote.
 - Long stated that the Board could approve that the funds go to the precincts for shovel-ready projects.
- Boucher noted that there are representative from the districts at this meeting, but no one representing the Town as a whole, so the members may want to hear from the other parts of Town. Long stated that the Commissioners are not interesting in hearing from Administration, they are at the meeting to talk to the Select Board.
- Graham asked if the districts support the other districts' allocations. The Commissioners stated that they all agree.
- Long asked where the Town Manager was and if the Assistant Town Manager represents her. Boucher noted that the Administration offices will be managing this process, so the personnel need to be taken into consideration and not be dismissed.
- Brady suggested the district administrators and the Town administration get together to manage this process.
- Long thanked the Board and urged that they take a vote on this.
- Board discussion:
 - Bjelobrk stated that 43 of 52 square miles of Haverhill are not in a district, so how do we represent those outside the districts. Bjelobrk noted that the Board has to serve the best interests of the Town as a whole.
 - Robbins responded stating that this is a committee in front of us and made a plan.

MOTION #3: Robbins made the motion and Graham seconded the motion to accept the plan as presented by the precinct Commissioners.

- Garofalo rechecked the figure amounts.
- Boucher noted that these projects have not been vetted to see if they apply to the ARPA criteria.
- The members discussed that if the precincts do not have projects proposals ready, the funding goes back to the Town.

MOTION #3 -- DIED: Robbins withdrew his motion and Graham withdrew his second.

MOTION #4: Robbins made a motion to accept the Commissioners' plan with the understanding that all projects that receive any funding from the Town of Haverhill meet the criteria of the ARPA. Graham seconded the motion.

- Bjelobrck asked who would be responsible to vet the projects.
- Robbins suggested that precinct and Town Administration meet to assess the projects.
- Long, the audience, and the members discussed the various projects and their costs.

Roll Call Vote: Matthew Bjelobrck (Nay), Steve Robbins (Aye), Howard Hatch (Aye), Mike Graham (Aye), Fred Garofalo (Aye). The motion passed with four Ayes and one Nay.

Garofalo noted that he has reservations but will hope for the best.

PUBLIC WANTING TO ADDRESS THE BOARD: None.

NEW BUSINESS:

Nomination of Zach Henson to the Zoning Board of Adjustment

Boucher noted that Henson is not online. Garofalo stated that this will be scratched from the meeting.

Bath-Haverhill Covered Bridge Engineering Report and next Steps

Garofalo stated that from the engineering report there is a lot of work to be done on the bridge. Jim McKinnon, Town Maintenance Department, presented the report to the Board and stated that the firm did a thorough report with many recommendations. McKinnon stated that much of the work he could do. Discussion continued. McKinnon note that the work is not in the budget this year, but he stated the repairs do not reach crisis stage. McKinnon noted that he is in the process of replacing the burned-out lights. McKinnon discussed the movement of the bridge, and the engineers in their report had measurements. McKinnon will monitor it every 6 months. McKinnon discussed a washed-out sinkhole, which he will replace with hardpack. McKinnon noted that the Town should avoid gatherings on the bridge with its 200-person capacity. Boucher noted that the Town is not allowing any permits for weddings or events to take place on the bridge. McKinnon discussed the alarm system, which was recently tested.

PENDING / OLD BUSINESS: None.

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT: None.

FINANCIAL REPORT / COMMENTS

- Boucher discussed the NH Municipal Association and the different training offered. Upcoming is a Budget and Finance Workshop on September 14 from 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM. Boucher mentioned other webinars, such as cybersecurity, land use conference, and zoning amendments from the NHMA for the members. The NHMA annual conference is November 17 to 19, 2021, in Manchester, NH.

COMMISSION/COMMITTEE REPORTS:

- **Conservation Commission** -- Garofalo commented that the Conservation Commission had their meeting, and the members are tasked with preparing a 2022 budget for expenditures, such as memberships. Garofalo noted that they also discussed the Conservation Scholarship. The Commission obtained a webcam for wildlife and were considering locations for setup.
- **Planning and Zoning** – Hatch stated that all operating private gravel pits are now in compliance. Hatch discussed the issues, safety and a reclamation plan, regarding the Woodsville pit. Garofalo asked about the gravel pits permit sign-off from the Conservation Commission. Boucher stated that the Conservation Commission has to be provided a copy of the application. Garofalo noted that the Commission needs to sign the permit.
- **Parks & Recreation** – Robbins noted that the meeting is Wednesday night.
- **Airport Zoning Commission** – Bjelobrk stated that the Commission is meeting later in the month.
- **Fire Committee** – No comments.

CORRESPONDENCE:

NHEC Broadband Update

Garofalo noted that a very small portion of Haverhill is on the Coop broadband service.

COMMENTS BY BOARD MEMBERS:

- **Graham** stated that he tried to get online to a meeting but was unable to connect.
- **Bjelobrk** stated that he felt that the Board failed tonight. Bjelobrk addressed Robbin’s comment about residents outside the precincts attending the meeting, but, Bjelobrk noted, they should not have to be at the meeting because the Select Board are their advocates. The majority of Haverhill is outside a precinct, only about 11 square miles (21%) of Haverhill is in within a precinct / district. That means 41 square miles (78%) of Haverhill is not in a precinct. These residents should not have to come to a Select Board meeting to petition the Select Board to act in their best interest. Bjelobrk stated that tonight the Board failed the people from all across Haverhill.
- **Robbins** stated that the Town’s police officers are working hard, and they are doing a great job in the Town.

- **Hatch** stated that last month Robbins brought up the cost of welfare, and Hatch calculated \$2,614/month in July. Hatch asked if the Board could invite the representatives to come to listen to the Board's concerns about welfare funding. Hatch suggested a half-way house in Haverhill to have no-frills, dormitory-type services for the homeless. Discussion ensued. Boucher discussed a meeting she had with the Welfare Administrator. The Welfare Administrator is working closely with the Grafton County Councilors to get people of the Town assistance and direct them to Tri-County CAP for emergency shelter housing for 15 weeks and then rental assistance for 1 year. Boucher stated that the Welfare Administrator would be happy to meet with the Board at a future meeting. Hatch then commented on the drinks that are provided for employees in the Administrative offices.
- **Garofalo** asked about the 2019 Town audit. Boucher stated that the auditors are trying to work remotely with Karen Noyes. Boucher noted that both the 2019 and 2020 audits will be done at the end of this year.

NONPUBLIC SESSION:

MOTION #5: Robbins made the motion and Bjelobrck seconded the motion to go into Nonpublic Session according to RSA 91-A:3, II(a) at 7:48 PM.

Roll Call Vote: Matthew Bjelobrck (Aye), Steve Robbins (Aye), Howard Hatch (Aye), Mike Graham (Aye), Fred Garofalo (Aye). The motion passed unanimously.

The Board came out of NONPUBLIC SESSION at 7:53 PM.

MOTION #6: Robbins made a motion and Garofalo seconded the motion to seal the Minutes of the Nonpublic Session because it is determined that divulgence of this information likely would affect adversely the reputation of any person other than a member of the Board.

Roll Call Vote: Matthew Bjelobrck (Absent), Steve Robbins (Aye), Howard Hatch (Aye), Mike Graham (Aye), Fred Garofalo (Aye). The motion passed unanimously with four Aye votes.

The meeting ADJOURNED at 7:55 PM.

Transcribed by Joanna Bligh