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APPROVED
TOWN OF PELHAM
BOARD OF SELECTMEN–MEETING MINUTES
October 25, 2022

CALL TO ORDER – Chairwoman Corbett called the meeting to order at approximately 6:30pm

PRESENT: Jaie Bergeron, Heather Corbett, Jason Croteau, Charlene Takesian, Town Administrator Joseph Roark

ABSENT: Kevin Cote

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

MEETING MINUTES REVIEW

October 11, 2022

MOTION: (Croteau/Bergeron) To approve the October 11, 2022 meeting minutes as is.

VOTE: (3-0-1) The motion carried

OPEN FORUM

No one came forward in open forum.

APPOINTMENTS

Paul Gagnon, Conservation Commission: 2 of 2 Public Hearings resulting from a plan entitled “Stonegate Estates” lot consolidation.

- **Acceptance of donation of a 39.6-acre parcel, Map 10 -351-63, as Conservation Land.**
- **Acceptance of a trail easement that will allow the Town to maintain the existing trail system through this new development.**
- **Acceptance of a Conservation Easement on a 19.2-acre parcel abutting Tower Hill Road.**

Mr. Gagnon stated that developers get the freedom to put houses closer together on one acre lots, but in return they must, at minimum, protect 40% of the parcel. This area would have over 60

47 acres of open space, a lot of it being prime wetlands. Mr. Gagnon added that the Conservation
48 Committee does not recommend accepting all the open space the contractor is offering to donate
49 to the Town. He stated that they think they should not accept a certain area being donated,
50 because either way it will still not be able to be built on. He added that this area would be
51 required to be maintained by the Homeowner's Association instead of the Town.

52
53 Mr. Gagnon also stated that the Conservation Subdivision states that if there are trails on a parcel
54 a developer wants to develop, they must be maintained. They do not have to be maintained in the
55 exact same spot, but, even if they are moved, they must still connect to the same area as before.
56 The Conservation Committee is also recommending the Town accepts the trail easement being
57 offered. He stated that the Town will have to maintain the trails if they accept them, but it is
58 worth it to keep the trails.

59
60 Thirdly, Mr. Gagnon stated that the Conservation Committee also is suggesting that the Town
61 accepts the conservation easement on a 19-acre parcel. The stormwater treatment for all the
62 homes and roads in the area is taking place in the buffer of the prime wetland. Any disturbance
63 of this prime wetland buffer requires a 10-to-1 mitigation, as required by the State. There are also
64 3 vernal pools on the land. Mr. Gagnon stated that the developer is spending a lot of money to
65 buy the conservation land easement from the landowners to donate it to the Town. He also stated
66 that the State of New Hampshire will be a third party in the easement, meaning they will have
67 rights to enforce the language of the easement if the Conservation Committee fails to do so.

68
69 Ms. Takesian asked what the relationship was between Gumpas Pond and the land on Currier
70 Road. Mr. Gagnon stated that since the developer disturbed an acre of prime wetland buffer on
71 Currier Road, they had to then protect 10 acres of prime wetland buffer. The Conservation
72 Committee then told him about the parcel off Hines Lane, connected the developer and the
73 landowner who then came up with an agreement for him to protect those prime wetland acres.
74 He then decided to donate it to the Town.

75
76 Ms. Takesian asked if it was common for developers to donate the land to Towns. Mr. Gagnon
77 stated it depends on if the Town wants to accept it or leave it up to the Homeowner's Association
78 to maintain the open space.

79
80 Mr. Bergeron asked who pays the property tax on the 19-acre conservation easement. Mr.
81 Gagnon stated that since the land is current use, the taxes remain low, and the landowner pays
82 the taxes.

83
84 Mr. Croteau asked if they have ever mitigated off premises before regarding prime wetland
85 disturbances. Mr. Gagnon stated that he believes it is the first time.

86
87

88 **Police Chief Anne Perriello and 2-Way Communications: Radio system project update**

89

90 Chief Perriello stated that about two weeks ago, the Board voted to accept some funds from the
91 American Recovery Funds. She stated that Chief Roark asked that she put together a final
92 proposal for the radio replacement for the Board. She stated that their original quote from

93 Motorola was \$511,000.00, which was put into the budget to be approved. With the assistance of
94 Chief Midgley, they were able to find a better price. Motorola will sell them all the products they
95 need to build what is needed need at their agency, and it will be built in a lab at 2-Way
96 Communications and then installed by the same company. Chief Perriello stated that the new
97 quote for the new proposal for the project is \$319,333.14.
98

99 Chief Perriello also added that they needed to update the mobile radios in the police cruisers; this
100 will cost an extra \$23,260.74. She stated that their current radios are at their end of life, and the
101 mobile radios in the certain police cruisers are extremely past their end of life. They do not make
102 parts for them anymore, so if anything breaks, they are unable to fix them.
103

104 There is another quote for \$51,594.98, which will upgrade all the portable radios and allows
105 them the capability for encryption. Chief Perriello stated she does not want to encrypt all their
106 equipment because the Town likes to listen to the scanners. But she would like the option to
107 encrypt certain sensitive subjects if they would like to. She stated that Hudson uses encryption,
108 and Dracut is about to start using it too. This would also give them a key to unlock other
109 agencies encryptions, so they can listen and communicate with other agencies when needed.
110

111 The total requested amount is \$394,128.86 for the new project. She is also requesting that they
112 remove the radio placement out of the current requested budget, since they can use the American
113 Recovery Funds.
114

115 Mr. Croteau asked if the \$70,805.72 in extra upgrades was in the original contract with 2-Way
116 Communications. Chief Perriello stated it was not in the original contract, and that she wanted
117 them to be able to see all the different upgrade quotes separately. Mr. Croteau stated that this
118 new proposal is \$116,861.14 less expensive than the original quote from Motorola. He asked Bill
119 Bartlett from 2-Way Communications how he can do the project for less money than Motorola
120 can. Mr. Bartlett stated that Motorola added a lot of extra engineering that was not needed. Mr.
121 Croteau asked if they had ever done anything to this magnitude in other municipalities before.
122 Mr. Bartlett stated that they have done projects much bigger than this one, as they have
123 completed majority of the dispatch centers throughout the State of New Hampshire.
124

125 Mr. Bergeron asked how long the life is on the new equipment. Mr. Bartlett stated that they
126 would propose a plan for support to help with maintenance systems that keeps the program
127 running. He stated they would at least get 15-20 years with the system.
128

129 Ms. Takesian asked how long the project would take. The Mr. Bartlett stated that due to supply
130 chain issues, the project would take longer than normal. He added that the project would most
131 likely be started in the Spring of 2023. Ms. Takesian asked if the current prices that they have in
132 the contact are looked in until the project is completed. The Mr. Bartlett stated that once you
133 commit to the contract, the price is locked in. Chief Perriello added that the original project with
134 Motorola was also expecting to take 12-18 months to complete.
135

136 Chairwoman Corbett asked if Chief Perriello wanted all the different quotes put together into one
137 budget or listed separately. She stated she preferred to have them all together if possible.
138

139

140 **MOTION:** (Croteau/Takesian) To use funds from the American Recovery Act in the amount
141 of \$394,138.86 for the purchase of a new Motorola communications for the Police
142 Department.

143

144 **VOTE:** (4-0-0) The motion carried.

145

146

147 **Kimberly Abare: Water Commission update**

148

149 Ms. Abare stated that the Water Commission has selected an engineering firm of the three
150 proposals they had asked for. They have selected Weston and Sampson, located in Portsmouth,
151 New Hampshire. They do business in Hudson, Salem, Londonderry, and Litchfield as well. She
152 stated there is a small feasibility study grant \$50,000.00. There is also another grant, amount
153 unknown, that they will get as well. The feasibility study cost from Weston and Sampson is
154 \$67,000.00. The Water Commission is asking the Town for \$17,000.00 for the remaining cost of
155 the study. Ms. Abare stated they are on a timeline and would like to start working with the
156 company as soon as possible.

157

158 Mr. Thomas from the Water Commission stated that there are people in Town who are struggling
159 to find water. The Water Commission's first focus was bringing water down route 38. Now, as
160 more people move into Town, the need for water is even higher. He stated that the Water
161 Commission had put out a survey to those in Town addressing any issues they have with water.
162 The feasibility study will help find where any water issues are in regard to amounts, quality, and
163 capacity. The other part of the project is trying to help the residents get water.

164

165 Mr. Croteau asked what the match is for the second grant. Ms. Abare stated that the exact
166 number is unknown. The most recent quote they were given was that they would receive 30% of
167 the large grant. Mr. Bergeron asked if the grant was related to the Build Back Better initiative.
168 Ms. Abare stated that it is not related.

169

170 Chairwoman Corbett mentioned that this water issue has been going on in Town for a while, and
171 that there has been a struggle receiving funds from the State for these problems. Chairwoman
172 Corbett asked of the money available in years past, what portion of that has the State given to
173 municipalities. Ms. Abare stated that she was unsure how much money the State has given to
174 municipalities, but that Pelham has submitted multiple grant applications to the State in the past
175 and they were not accepted.

176

177 Ms. Abare stated that the Water Commission will be submitting a warrant article for the
178 feasibility study in the amount of \$50,000.00 in case the grant money is not awarded by the
179 State, as they will need a back-up plan. She stated Weston and Sampson are confident the money
180 will go through, but they want to ensure they will have the funds in case it will not.

181

182 Chairwoman Corbett asked where the water issue survey was posted and if it still available to
183 people in the Town. Ms. Abare stated it was posted online, social media, and in the Pelham

184 Evergreen. The survey is open until November 10, 2022. They currently have received 137
185 responses.

186

187 Mr. Croteau asked what their plan was if they do not receive the grant money and their warrant
188 article fails. He asked if the Town was then responsible for the \$50,000.00. Ms. Abare stated that
189 the Town would then be responsible for the \$50,000.00.

190

191 Ms. Takesian stated that she thinks they should support the feasibility study but asked if there
192 was any way they could do this without having to do a warrant article. Town Administrator
193 Roark stated that if the \$50,000.00 went to a warrant article and was defeated, the Town cannot
194 supplement the money in any way, and it would have to go on another warrant article the
195 following year. He stated that because of this, they should not put out a warrant article because
196 then there is no way out. Town Administrator Roark stated that it may be a good idea to use
197 funds from the American Recovery Act if the grant is not awarded. They can also use this fund
198 for the \$17,000.00 needing to be awarded now.

199

200 Mr. Bergeron asked when they would know if the grant would be awarded or not. Ms. Abare
201 stated that once they sign the contract with Weston and Sampson the grant is submitted, and they
202 will find out in December if they got it or not.

203

204

205 **MOTION:** (Takesian/Croteau) To expend \$17,000.00 from the American Recovery Act
206 funds to support the feasibility study by Weston and Sampson engineering firm.

207

208 **VOTE:** (4-0-0) The motion carried.

209

210

211 **2023 OPERATING BUDGET REVIEW**

212

213 Mr. Croteau stated that instead of listing wish-list items separately, the Budget Committee
214 requested they be added into the requested budgets and then voted on. He also added that,
215 starting next year, the budget process will be completely different.

216

217 **Highway Department**

218

219 **MOTION:** (Bergeron/Takesian) To add \$128,000.00 to the Highway Department's budget
220 for the replacement of a failing culvert on Bush Hill Road.

221

222 **VOTE:** (4-0-0) The motion carried.

223

224 Mr. Croteau stated that the Town received the grant money for the new catch basin truck, so
225 \$32,000.00 can be subtracted from their budget.

226

227 **MOTION:** (Bergeron/Takesian) To remove \$32,000.00 from the Highway Department's
228 budget for the catch basin truck.

229
230 **VOTE:** (4-0-0) The motion carried.

231
232 Mr. Croteau added that, originally, the Highway Department gave the worst-case scenario
233 pricing for salt. The quote that they ended up getting from the State was \$2,340.00 cheaper. He
234 stated that he thinks they should leave the budget how it is in case there is a bad winter.
235 Chairwoman Corbett agreed. Town Administrator Roark added that they can always keep the
236 extra salt for next year if necessary.

237
238
239 **Insurance**

240
241 Mr. Croteau stated that they are looking to add \$975.00 to the dental insurance budget, bringing
242 the total up to \$65,975.00. They also want to add \$10,591.00 to the property and liability
243 insurance budget, bringing the total to \$161,887.00. They want to add \$19,125.00 to the
244 workman's compensation budget, bringing the total to \$373,225.00. They want to add \$228.00 to
245 the unemployment insurance budget, bringing the total to \$5,434.00. Lastly, they want to add
246 \$126,865.00 to the health insurance budget, bringing the total to \$2,476,215.00.

247
248 **MOTION:** (Bergeron/Takesian) To add the increases to the insurance budget.

249
250 **VOTE:** (4-0-0) The motion carried.

251
252
253 **Parks and Recreation**

254
255 **MOTION:** (Takesian/Bergeron) To add \$4,150.00 to the Parks and Recreation budget for the
256 increased price in the new trash contract.

257
258 **VOTE:** (4-0-0) The motion carried.

259
260
261 **Planning Department**

262
263 Mr. Croteau stated that by signing a longer contract, the new software company will hold off the
264 5% increase in the contract until year four.

265
266 **MOTION:** (Takesian/Bergeron) To reduce the Planning Department's budget by \$3,500.00
267 to enter a new and longer software contract.

268
269 **VOTE:** (4-0-0) The motion carried.

270
271

272 **Police Department**

273

274 Mr. Croteau stated that the Budget Committee wants to add a \$1.00 place holder for the police
275 firearms instructor training, since departments cannot spend without appropriation.

276

277 **MOTION:** (Bergeron/Takesian) To add a \$1.00 placeholder in the Police Department's
278 budget.

279

280 **VOTE:** (4-0-0) The motion carried.

281

282 Mr. Croteau stated that they also want to reduce the Police Department's budget by \$511,588.00
283 so the radio project can be funded by the American Recovery Act funds.

284

285 **MOTION:** (Bergeron/Takesian) To reduce the Police Department's budget by \$511,588.00.

286

287 **VOTE:** (4-0-0) The motion carried.

288

289

290 **Technology**

291

292 Mr. Croteau stated that the Budget Committee wants to add \$64,067.00 to the technology budget
293 in order to purchase equipment for a new Town wide telephone system for a period of five years.

294

295 **MOTION:** (Bergeron/Takesian) To add \$64,067.00 to the technology budget for new
296 equipment.

297

298 **VOTE:** (4-0-0) The motion carried.

299

300

301 **MOTION:** (Bergeron/Takesian) To add \$55,000.00 to the technology budget to enter a three-
302 year software contract that locks in a lower price increase.

303

304 **VOTE:** (4-0-0) The motion carried.

305

306

307 **Town Buildings**

308

309 Mr. Croteau stated that they want to add \$52,254.00 the town building's budget for anticipated
310 increased electricity rates. This brings the total budget for electricity to \$261,270.00.

311

312 **MOTION:** (Bergeron/Takesian) To add \$52,254.00 to town building's budget for increased
313 electricity rates.

314

315 **VOTE:** (4-0-0) The motion carried.

316

317 Town Administrator Roark stated they got estimates from the Energy Information
318 Administration, who is historically accurate.

319

320 Mr. Croteau stated that since the rates for oil went up, the Budget Committee would like to add
321 \$5,130.00 the oil budget for town buildings. This brings the total oil budget up to \$12,330.00.

322

323 **MOTION:** (Bergeron/Takesian) To add \$5,130.00 to town buildings' budget for increased oil
324 rates.

325

326 **VOTE:** (4-0-0) The motion carried.

327

328 Mr. Croteau stated that they would also like to add \$52,720.00 town buildings' budget for the
329 natural gas budget. There are increased rates. This brings the total natural gas budget to
330 \$116,622.00.

331

332 **MOTION:** (Bergeron/Takesian) To add \$52,720.00 to town buildings' budget for increased
333 oil rates.

334

335 **VOTE:** (4-0-0) The motion carried.

336

337 Mr. Croteau stated that they would also like to add \$7,350.00 to town buildings' budget for
338 increased landscaping rates. This brings the total landscaping budget to \$134,250.00.

339

340 **MOTION:** (Bergeron/Takesian) To add \$7,350.00 to town buildings' budget for increased
341 landscaping rates.

342

343 **VOTE:** (4-0-0) The motion carried.

344

345

346 **Transfer Station**

347

348 **MOTION:** (Bergeron/Takesian) To add \$83,000.00 to the Transfer Station's budget for the
349 new solid waste truck.

350

351 **VOTE:** (4-0-0) The motion carried.

352

353

354 Chairwoman Corbett stated that they are looking to create a warrant article for the purchase of a
355 new dump rack body truck with a plow, that will cost \$110,000.00.

356

357 Mr. Bergeron asked if this was an already approved wish-list item. Mr. Croteau stated that it was.

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MOTION: (Bergeron) To create a warrant article for the purchase of a new F-550 dump rack body truck with a plow for the cost of \$110,000.00.

Ms. Takesian second for discussion.

Ms. Takesian asked if the Highway Department plows or if the Transfer station does. Town Administrator Roark stated that the Transfer Station does have a small truck they now use for plowing, but that the Highway Department handles the sanding. The Transfer Station removed the sander from the new truck they want to buy, which reduced the cost. There are many uses for the new truck.

Chairwoman Corbett asked if the warrant article gets passed, are the additional fuel costs for running the truck were accounted for. Town Administrator Roark stated that they were not specifically, but he does not believe there will be a big difference between the new truck and their current truck.

The Board decided to vote on this at a later date.

MOTION: (No motion) To create a warrant article for the purchase of a new F-550 dump rack body truck with a plow for the cost of \$110,000.00.

VOTE: (0-4-0) The motion did not carry.

Chairwoman Corbett stated that the net of all the motions above will result in a \$62,368.00 increase of the original 2023 operating budget. This excludes the \$110,000.00 warrant article for the new truck.

DISCUSSION

Mr. Croteau stated that the Budget Committee has been discussing increasing the Town-wide minimum wage to \$15.00 an hour. Many department heads have mentioned they are having a hard time finding employees at the current rate.

Chairwoman Corbett stated that this increase would add \$7,190.00 to Cable's budget. It would add \$211.00 to the Conservation Committee's budget. It would add \$1,650.00 to the Senior Center's budget. It would add \$692.41 to Retirement's budget. The tax impacts for all three departments would cost \$9,051.00.

Chairwoman Corbett asked why they want to increase it to \$15.00 an hour. Mr. Croteau stated that any rate under \$15.00 makes it extremely difficult to find employees, and many departments are short staffed.

403 **MOTION:** (Croteau/Begeron) To make the town-wide minimum wage rate \$15.00 an hour,
404 effective January 1, 2023.

405
406 **VOTE:** (4-0-0) The motion carried.

407
408 Mr. Croteau stated that one of the goals of the CIP is to have more capital reserve budgets. They
409 are looking to establish a warrant article to annually fund \$150,000.00 for a municipal vehicle
410 capital reserve fund. This would grant the Board of Selectmen the discretion to expend the funds
411 when municipal vehicle needs arise. He added that there are many new vehicle purchases coming
412 up within the next five years, or so.

413
414 Ms. Takesian asked if it would be for vehicles only. Town Administrator Roark stated that these
415 funds would be for vehicles only. Mr. Croteau added that they could make a capital reserve fund
416 for anything they want, but this one specifically was for vehicles.

417
418 Ms. Takesian stated that she needs more time to think about it, as she sees both sides. Mr.
419 Bergeron agreed and thought warrant articles are the best way to go for large purchases. Ms.
420 Takesian added that they could possibly change the wording, so that the funds are reserved for
421 large purchases approved by warrant articles.

422
423 Chairwoman Corbett added that it may be a good idea to look at how much the Town has spent
424 in the last 15 years on replacing vehicles, to get a more accurate number of how much they need
425 to reserve.

426
427 The Board regretfully announced the passing of longtime fireman and Pelham resident, George
428 Gipper-Garland. George was 78 years old. The Board sends their deepest condolences to
429 George's friends and families.

430

431

432 **REQUEST FOR NON-PUBLIC SESSION**

433

434 **MOTION:** (Cote/Croteau) Request for non-public session per RSA 91-A:3, II, A
435 (personnel).

436

437 **ROLLCALL VOTE:**

438

439 Selectman Bergeron – Yes

440 Selectman Corbett– Yes

441 Selectman Croteau – Yes

442 Selectman Takesian – Yes

443

444 (4-0-0) The motion carried.

445

446 It was noted that when the Board returned, after the non-public session, the Board would not take
447 any other action publicly, except to seal the minutes of the non-public session and to adjourn the
448 meeting. The Board entered a non-public session at approximately 8:10 pm.

449

450

451 **ADJOURNMENT**

452

453 Respectfully submitted,

454

455 Makayla Clougherty

456 Recording Secretary