

TOWN OF NEW BOSTON
New Boston Select Board Meeting

April 24, 2023

APPROVED

In attendance at New Boston Town Hall: Donna Mombourquette, Jennifer Brown, and Kary Jencks

Staff present: Paul Branscombe, Town Administrator, Jennifer Allocca, Finance Director, and Kristan Patenaude, Recording Secretary

A. CALL TO ORDER: A meeting of the Board of Selectmen was called to order by Chair Donna Mombourquette at 6:30PM beginning with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Consent Agenda- The Selectmen reviewed the April 24, 2023 consent agenda.

Jennifer Brown moved to approve the April 24, 2023 consent agenda items including payroll, Accounts Payable and other signed official documents. Seconded by Kary Jencks.

Roll Call Vote: Donna Mombourquette – aye; Jennifer Brown – aye; and Kary Jencks – aye; 3-0-0 motion carried unanimously.

1st PUBLIC COMMENT:

Donna Mombourquette stated that this is a business meeting of the New Boston Select Board. Comments and feedback are welcomed but because this is not a public forum or public hearing, comments will be on the agenda items only. Dialogue or answering of questions will not be part of the meeting. Should you have an issue you wish to discuss, please communicate with the Town Administrator who may resolve your issue or potentially schedule your appearance before the Board at a later date. The Board appreciates your understanding and cooperation.

Seeing no public comment at this time, Donna Mombourquette closed the first session.

B. APPOINTMENTS

Item 1: Facilities Manager – Budget Review

George St. John, Facilities Manager, presented his budget review.

Donna Mombourquette asked about the COLA and the additional 4% in the Wages line. George St. John explained that he has two positions which were very difficult to hire for. The additional 4% is as incentive to keep these two employees. Donna Mombourquette noted that these additions to the wages equate to approximately \$16-\$17/hour for each employee.

George St. John noted that he will be advertising for a new employee for maintenance grounding keeping and equipment, as the current person gave their notice last week. This will not be an additional position for the payroll. This position is difficult to hire for, as it is essentially on-call.

Jennifer Brown stated that she believed George St. John cut his budget in all the possible places.

Kary Jencks asked about maintenance on a hedge located at the end of Route 136, heading into Town. George St. John explained that the property belongs to the State and any changes would

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have to be requested through them. Removing some of the hedge may cause damage to the entire thing. Also, the monument behind the shrub has existing damage and may be an eyesore if the hedge was removed.

The Board discussed that the total transfer amount needed for the Facilities budget is \$15,800. George St. John expressed concern over the electrical and oil line items. He noted that there is \$1,800 budgeted for fertilizer and grub control, and he suggested not spending this money in case it is needed for the electrical and/or oil lines. The Board concurred.

Donna Mombourquette asked about the janitorial service line item. George St. John stated that he removed any item that is not required maintenance.

George St. John explained that, over the past ten years, he has used his own truck and trailer to move equipment, and his shop to service the equipment, at no cost to the Town. As he recently closed his business, these items are no longer options, and the Town will have to consider what to do. Donna Mombourquette noted that there is no money in the default budget to purchase a truck to pull a trailer. She suggested that the Town get creative with its existing vehicles in order to share them. The other Board members agreed.

Jennifer Allocca noted that the Select Board budget will be used as a placeholder for coverage in the Facilities budget.

Item 2: Fire Department – Budget Review

The Board tabled this item to later in the meeting.

C. NEW BUSINESS:

Item 3: Review and Adopt Proposed Ethics Policy

Town Administrator Branscombe explained that the draft policy has been approved by Town Counsel. Donna Mombourquette requested that item #18 in the policy be simplified from the existing legalese. She also asked that the disclosure requirements be reviewed to potentially simplify them. Town Administrator Branscombe noted that this policy will be reviewed by the Personnel Policy Committee.

Item 4: Review and Adopt Proposed Conflict of Interest Policy

Town Administrator Branscombe noted that this policy will also be reviewed by the Personnel Policy Committee. He explained that the draft has been approved by Primex. Donna Mombourquette suggested that the language in the policy be more specific regarding those who serve on committees/commissions/boards in addition to those who volunteer for the Town.

The Board agreed that both draft policies should be run through NHMA.

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Item 5: RFP for Printing and Copying Services

Donna Mombourquette explained that there should be a standard RFP for bids.

Jennifer Brown stated that this item is singling her out. She has completed an RFP for her work before and asked why this is being brought up now. She stated that she has always done this work by the law in the past.

Donna Mombourquette stated that this item is in relation to RSA 95:1, elected officers doing business for municipalities. Jennifer Brown stated that Mike Sindoni did exactly as he was asked to. She noted that she believes this is being brought up because Donna Mombourquette was not in the loop on this item. Donna Mombourquette stated that she was told she was informed of this matter on Monday, but she was not. Jennifer Brown stated that Donna Mombourquette told Mike Sindoni to go through a bid process for this item, so he did and received four bids.

Jennifer Brown asked why she was being singled out for this. Donna Mombourquette stated that it is because she is the only elected official who does business with the Town. Jennifer Brown stated that there are others who do too. Donna Mombourquette stated that this will apply to them as well.

Jennifer Brown stated that she was done.

Jennifer Brown exited the meeting at 7:14pm.

Donna Mombourquette stated that the legislature can be contacted in order to change the law on this item. The Board has to comply with the law as it exists. She stated that she does not understand why this was an issue.

Kary Jencks asked if the issue was the extra paperwork requested of Jennifer Brown at this time. She asked if this was considered too much of a lift. Town Administrator Branscombe stated that this was probably a feasible lift. Town Counsel suggested a blanket RFP, but the amount was not known. Most of Jennifer Brown's work for the Town was through the Recreation Department. Mike Sindoni completed an RFP and followed the law. An RFP was sent to four vendors and Jennifer Brown was the low bidder.

Jennifer Allocca explained that Town Counsel recommended an annual RFP for this item. Jennifer Brown was going to recuse herself from the vote of the Board on the bids. She believes this is what Donna Mombourquette was trying to accomplish.

Donna Mombourquette stated that she was not aware of the bid process for this item and so she asked for clarification. The process was satisfied. Other elected officials who do work for the Town will need to follow this process as well.

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Kary Jencks asked if the paperwork was too much of a burden, due to multiple RFPs. Town Administrator Branscombe stated that this is unclear. It is the first time an RFP has been fully executed for this item. Donna Mombourquette stated that the simple answer is that this process was not one that Jennifer Brown was used to doing. An annual RFP should be posted on the website so that anyone can apply. This has nothing to do with Jennifer Brown's business and she is unclear why Jennifer Brown felt singled out.

D. OLD BUSINESS:

Item 6: Approval of Public Meeting Minutes of April 10, 2023

Kary Jencks moved to approve the April 10, 2023 minutes, as presented. Seconded by Donna Mombourquette.
Roll Call Vote: Donna Mombourquette – aye; and Kary Jencks – aye; 2-0-0 motion carried unanimously.

E. INTERNAL REPORTS

Item 7: Town Administrator Report

Town Administrator Branscombe stated that, on April 13th, he orchestrated a meeting between two residents on Christie Road, the Road Agent, and Town Engineer to discuss concerns regarding the road. An action plan to mitigate issues affecting the road was presented and found acceptable by the residents. On April 14th, he and Chief Brace received a question from a resident regarding intersections along the rail trail not being posted. Chief Brace was able to answer the answer. Also, on April 14th, Town Administrator Branscombe stated that he met with Nancy Bax who has had concerns for at least two years regarding trucking issues on Wilson Hill Road. A subcommittee was proposed but never formed in 2021. He is recommending that this item be brought before the Road Committee next month and that a subcommittee be reformed to examine potential impacts. Regarding GIS mapping, he was notified that ground control targets were set on April 5th and 6th, and aerial photography was captured on April 14th. Staff will now be trained on this system.

Town Administrator Branscombe stated that, on April 20th, he attended a welfare meeting in Concord discussion the rising number of cases throughout the State and the tightening of communities' guidelines.

Town Administrator Branscombe reminded the Board that, per Chapter 165, confidential files should be kept under lock and key.

Town Administrator Branscombe noted a couple of resignations.

Kary Jencks moved to accept, with regret, the resignation of Jenn Mason. Seconded by Donna Mombourquette.
Roll Call Vote: Donna Mombourquette – aye; and Kary Jencks – aye; 2-0-0 motion carried unanimously.

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Kary Jencks moved to accept, with regret, the resignation of David Craig from the Zoning Board of Adjustment. Seconded by Donna Mombourquette.

Roll Call Vote: Donna Mombourquette – aye; and Kary Jencks – aye; 2-0-0 motion carried unanimously.

Town Administrator Branscombe explained that Chief Brace is taking steps with the architect to determine a timeline for beginning work on the new addition. He also noted that Chaos & Kindness has listed New Boston as one of 12 towns in New Hampshire eligible for a visit from the group. He has written a letter to the producers.

Item 8: Health Officer Report

Town Administrator Branscombe stated that he completed his three-week Dartmouth Health Hoarding Series. Also, on April 19th, he participated in the NHHOA Board meeting to review the agenda for the Annual Spring Conference next month in Concord.

Item 9: Department Manager Reports: Transfer Station, Recreation, Fire, Highway, Community Development, Police, Building

The Board reviewed the reports.

Item 10: Select Board Reports: Donna Mombourquette, Jennifer Brown, and Kary Jencks

The Board reviewed the reports.

Donna Mombourquette stated that she recently attended an NHMA Board meeting, and it is being requested that municipalities support a letter authored by NHMA regarding the Firefighter Union issues with the retirement system affecting 1,800 members. She noted that, if the firefighters succeed, teacher and police unions are likely to try next. The expectation is that this will cause tax rates to increase. It is unclear if the legislature will actually pay for a percentage of the retirement costs or not. The NHMA letter was to raise concerns from a municipal view as to destabilizing the retirement fund. The fund is currently mostly stable. The Select Board did not take action on this item.

F. 2nd PUBLIC COMMENT:

Donna Mombourquette stated that this is a business meeting of the New Boston Select Board. Comments and feedback are welcomed but because this is not a public forum or public hearing, comments will be on the agenda items only. Dialogue or answering of questions will not be part of the meeting. Should you have an issue you wish to discuss, please communicate with the Town Administrator who may resolve your issue or potentially schedule your appearance before the Board at a later date. The Board appreciates your understanding and cooperation.

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Karen Scott, 110 Dane Road, asked why it appears that Select Board members are reading through Department Head reports during these meetings, if they are released the Friday before. She asked, if the Facilities Department seems to need a truck, why vehicles were not previously discussed as part of the plan when hiring a Facilities Manager.

Seeing no additional public comment, Donna Mombourquette closed the second session.

The Board took a 15 minute recess.

Donna Mombourquette called the meeting back to order at 7:59pm.

APPOINTMENTS

Item 2: Fire Department – Budget Review

The Board took up this item at this time.

Fire Chief Fraitzl explained that the Fire Wards just approved the proposed changes to the budget. These have not yet been presented to the Finance Director. He reviewed the changes line-by-line, including cancelling the CDL license program for the Department this year. Donna Mombourquette asked what kind of an impact this would have on the Department. Chief Fraitzl explained that without CDL testing, there will be fewer staff available to drive trucks.

Regarding the reduction in the emergency call wages line, Fire Chief Plourde explained that there are fewer people responding to fire calls, yet the Town is still averaging an increase in calls. Chief Fraitzl noted that this is a nationwide issue. Chief Plourde explained that he believed the only way to combat this may be through additional funding for the Department to hire more staff.

Donna Mombourquette stated that the approximate transfer needed for the Fire Department per the proposed budget is \$78,000.

Kary Jencks stated that her concern with the proposed budget is the protection of those in the line of service. She does not want personnel to be at risk in the line of duty due to the proposed cuts. Chief Fraitzl agreed and noted that this is why there are no cuts proposed to protective clothing and other necessary line items. He explained that there is not enough of certain types of equipment, meaning that some staff members that attend a call may not be able to be used to their maximum capacity. Donna Mombourquette stated that she wants the Department to have the necessary equipment and to include this in the budget.

Donna Mombourquette asked if the Department filled its Administrative Assistant position last year. Chief Fraitzl explained that the role was not filled, instead the work is being completed by himself and Assistant Chief Dubreuil. This requires other tasks to be put off.

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Assistant Chief Dubreuil explained that last year, between June and December, the Department missed six 911 calls per month. The proposed budget for this year was the Department's way to remedy this. The changes were working, but the default budget could cause problems with this. Chief Fraitzl stated that the Town is long overdue for a strategic plan on how best to drive the Department.

Donna Mombourquette stated that the Board will discuss the transfer amount for this budget in the future.

G. 3rd PUBLIC COMMENT:

Jacqueline Malandrino stated that she sympathizes with the firefighters not having proper equipment to do their job. She asked if it would be possible to accept donations to purchase the necessary turnout gear. She stated that the public needs to be educated as to the cost of these items, in order to be able to help. She stated that the intention of voting on the default budget was not to disarm the Fire Department from being protected.

Karen Scott stated that it is a disservice to the public to state that the default budget is to blame for these problems. Most residents agree that the Town needs firefighters and a Fire Station, however at previous meetings she has raised questions about hiring Chief Fraitzl as the Fire Department Operations Manager without proper funding, and renting/leasing apartments for per diem staff without approval. Front work was completed without approval. She asked during the Deliberative Session what would happen if the Town was handed a default budget and was told that it would be figured out. She asked why a Fire Chief Operations Manager is needed if there is already a Fire Chief.

H. Requests for Non-Public per RSA 91-A:3, II(a)

Kary Jencks moved to enter into Non-Public Session per RSA 91-A:3, II(a) at 8:44pm. Seconded by Donna Mombourquette.

Roll Call Vote: Donna Mombourquette – aye; and Kary Jencks – aye; 2-0-0 motion carried unanimously.

The Board and Fire Wards discussed the Fire Department Chief Operations Manager contract and command vehicle, per the contract.

No votes were taken, and no final decisions were made.

I. ADJOURNMENT

Kary Jencks moved to exit Non-Public Session at 10:13pm. Seconded by Donna Mombourquette.

Roll Call Vote: Donna Mombourquette – aye; and Kary Jencks – aye; 2-0-0 motion carried unanimously.

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306
307 **Donna Mombourquette moved authorize Chief Fraitzl to dispose of the 2008 PL**
308 **custom ambulance, at his discretion, for approximately \$6,000-\$10,000. Seconded by**
309 **Kary Jencks.**
310 **Roll Call Vote: Donna Mombourquette – aye; and Kary Jencks – aye; 2-0-0 motion**
311 **carried unanimously.**

312
313 **Donna Mombourquette moved to adjourn the meeting at 10:15pm. Seconded by**
314 **Kary Jencks.**
315 **Roll Call Vote: Donna Mombourquette – aye; and Kary Jencks – aye; 2-0-0 motion**
316 **carried unanimously.**

317
318 Respectfully submitted,
319 Kristan Patenaude

320
321 **Next Scheduled Meeting: May 8, 2023**