

Approved

Town of New Boston Selectmen's Meeting November 1, 2021

<u>PRESENT:</u>	Karen Scott	Selectman
	David Litwinovich	Selectman
	Donna Mombourquette	Selectman
	James Brace	Interim Town Administrator

Comcast Representative Bryan Christiansen, Finance Director Jennifer Allocca, Transfer Station Manager Gerry Cornett, Bill McFadden, Kaleb Jacob and one or more additional members of the public were present for all or part of the meeting.

A. CALL TO ORDER: A regular meeting of the Board of Selectmen was called to order by David Litwinovich at 6:00PM beginning with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Consent Agenda- The Selectmen reviewed the November 1, 2021 consent agenda. Donna moved to approve the November 1, 2021 consent agenda including payroll, Accounts Payable, personnel changes, inventory of valuation and other signed official documents. Karen seconded the motion. All were in favor. 3-0

B. PUBLIC FORUM:

David noted the Board always welcomes public comment and feedback. There are two opportunities for public comment, one at the beginning of the meeting and then another at the end. Anyone with a comment is asked to comment as per the rules for live meetings and state your name and address for the record and that comments be respectful and thoughtful. The Board will listen, but public comment is typically not back and forth. If there is any need for extended dialogue a request to be added to the agenda and supporting documentation should be sent to the Town Administrator beforehand. Seeing none, David closed the first session of public comment.

C. APPOINTMENTS:

Item 1: Bryan Christiansen, Comcast Government Representative To Discuss Broadband In New Boston: Comcast Senior Manager of Government and Regulatory Affairs Bryan Christiansen was present to meet with the Selectboard to discuss broadband options for New Boston. Finance Director Jennifer Allocca introduced him and updated the Board on the progress of the group/unofficial broadband committee including herself, Donna and Bill McFadden that is considering the possibility of expanding broadband in New Boston by changing copper to fiber with Consolidated Communications. Consolidated Communications and Comcast responded to a Request For Information and Alfred Eisenburg used this proprietary information to map services in town that was reviewed at the October 18 meeting. Jennifer and Bill have been looking at all the wires to confirm the data received and finding discrepancies.

Bryan noted the pandemic has changed the way the world uses internet, increasing demand and identifying areas that do not have broadband service. This caused Comcast to update its system in record time. Upgrades and improvements continue. Grant funds are available and a federal infrastructure bill including broadband is pending. He then explained the information provided in the recent Request For Information and the technical aspects of expanding broadband in New Boston in detail. Many towns are currently going through this process and awaiting confirmation of grant funds. The “last mile” is a concern. Comcast is willing to work with New Boston on this project. The Selectboard thanked Bryan for meeting with them.

E. NEW BUSINESS:

Item 2: Appointment Of Joe Constance And Re-Appointment Of Floyd Guyette to Solid Waste Advisory Committee: The Selectboard reviewed Joe Constance’s and Floyd Guyette’s applications for appointment to the Solid Waste Advisory Committee. Transfer Station Manager Gerry Cornett was present and noted Joe was the Committee Chairman in the past and assisted the facility with his attention to detail. Floyd has been serving on this committee for many years and this group of members including Jim Keyes are anticipated to be a wealth of information to continue to assist the facility. Two additional members are sought. Donna moved to appoint Joe Constance and reappoint Floyd Guyette as members of the Solid Waste Advisory Committee for three years. David seconded the motion. Discussion: Karen requested two separate motions. The motion carried. 2-1

Item 3: Review And Approve Selectboard 2022 Meeting Schedule: The Selectboard reviewed and revised the draft 2022 Meeting Schedule. Karen moved to revise the 2022 Selectboard Meeting Schedule June 20 to June 27, eliminate July 6 and change September 7 to August 29, 2021. Donna seconded the motion. All were in favor. 3-0

Item 4: Review and Approve 2022 Town Holidays: The Selectboard reviewed the draft 2022 Town Holiday Schedule. Karen moved to approve the 2022 Town Holidays as presented. Donna seconded the motion. All were in favor. 3-0

Item 5: Holiday Potluck And Yankee Swap: The Selectboard reviewed a proposal for a holiday potluck and yankee swap for town employees. Donna moved to approve the proposed Town Employee Holiday Potluck And Yankee Swap December 15, 2021 as presented. The motion was rescinded as Karen would like to attend and is not available that date. Donna moved to revise the proposed Town Employee Holiday Potluck And Yankee Swap to December 22, 2021. Karen seconded the motion. All were in favor. 3-0

D. OLD BUSINESS:

Item 6: Approval of Public Minutes of October 18, 2021, October 20, 2021 and Non-Public Minutes of October 18, 2021 and October 20, 2021: The Selectmen reviewed the Public minutes of October 18, 2021. Karen moved the Public minutes of October 18, 2021 be accepted as presented. Donna seconded the motion. All were in favor. 3-0 The Selectmen reviewed the Non-Public minutes of October 18, 2021. Karen moved the Non-Public minutes of October 18, 2021 be accepted as presented. Donna seconded the motion. All were in favor. 3-0 The

Selectmen reviewed the Public minutes of October 20, 2021. Karen moved the Public minutes of October 20, 2021 be accepted as presented. Donna seconded the motion. All were in favor. 3-0 The Selectmen reviewed the Non-Public minutes of October 20, 2021. Karen moved the Non-Public minutes of October 20, 2021 be accepted as presented. Donna seconded the motion. Discussion: These will be reviewed in Non-Public session.

Item 7: Energy Commission – Solar Power Initiative At Transfer Station: Transfer Station Manager Gerry Cornett and Energy Commission member Bill McFadden were present to meet with the Selectboard to update them on the voter approved solar power initiative at the Transfer Station. The Selectboard reviewed a memorandum dated October 17, 2021 from the Energy Commission recommending delay of this project due to the agreement with Engie and the current solar power market. The Commission would like to continue considering this in 2022.

F. OTHER BUSINESS:

Item 8: Update-Year-To-Date Expenditures And Revenues: Documentation reviewed. Jim noted the fiscal year is now 80% complete and the budget has 32% remaining.

Item 9: Town Administrators Report: Jim reviewed the Town Administrator's report as follows:

- The impressive Lyndeborough Road Bridge Project is progressing despite a setback last week during footing and bridge deck setting. A meeting is planned for tomorrow morning to discuss the next steps. The bridge portion of the project is anticipated to be completed this year, but not by November 9, 2021 as previously anticipated. Finance Director Jennifer Allocca noted payment of contractor F.L. Merrill invoices will be on hold until Road Agent Allen Brown reports the project is complete. Once payment is approved, it will be submitted for reimbursement through the ARM grant.
- Jim will be on a planned vacation November 3-7, 2021.
- Jim proposed transferring budget lines such as personnel benefits and town phone system to the Selectmen budget line beginning in 2022. These items will be controlled by the Town Administrator/Executive instead of including them in each Department budget as has been done since 2014. This will allow the town to notice savings that has occurred in these lines, which was approximately \$90,000 in Personnel Benefits in 2021 and allow the Executive level to manage these savings instead of Department Managers who had no control over these costs that were arbitrary and limiting the Department Managers' ability to move their department forward. The Finance Director can break these costs down by Department. The Executive level also has the authority to hire and fire employees. Cell phones and Comcast charges will remain in individual department budgets. Donna moved to support the recommendation from the Interim Town Administrator and Finance Director to move expense lines 210, 212, 213, 214, 215, 216, 217, 230 and 260 to the Personnel Departments cost center. Karen seconded the motion. All were in favor. 3-0 Donna moved to support the recommendation from the Interim Town Administrator and Finance Director to move expense line 341 townwide phone system specifically managed by Twin Bridge Services to the Government Buildings cost center. Karen seconded the motion. All were in favor. 3-0
- Jim reported as Police Chief an isolated shooting incident occurred at Popple Road this weekend. A Press Release has gone out. The Department deployed a significant amount

of resources including outside agencies for this incident that was reviewed in detail. They are working to solve this issue. The Selectboard thanked all for their efforts in this unfortunate and unsettling incident.

Item 10: Selectmen's Reports:

Karen reported the following:

- The Road Committee will meet November 3, 2021. Karen followed up on an e-mail she sent with questions for the Highway Department.
- Karen asked for updates about the historical New Boston High School bell. There are none at this time, but Jim will follow up with an e-mail to the School Board. David noted the School Board is considering placing it in the NBCS lobby.
- Karen asked for an update of any budget concerns caused by the need for generator replacement at the Ridgeview Radio Tower site. At this time there does not seem to be any concerns.

David reported the following:

- The next Planning Board meeting will be November 9, 2021 when the CIP Committee will present its Schedule and continue discussing a potential zoning and building code amendments for 2022.
- The Space Force Open House is November 3, 2021 for community leaders. The Selectboard plan to attend.
- The Safety Center Committee has a tentatively scheduled meeting November 4, 2021 and plans to visit Newbury, NH Fire Station November 6, 2021. The Committee is considering the possibility of holding public meetings. A Committee member published an informational article in the November 2021 issue of the New Boston Beacon. The Selectboard requested Safety Center meetings be public on an observation only basis for transparency to avoid public confusion. Karen noted this came up with the Fire Wards who voted in June to have public meetings. She requested they be held in the Town Hall Conference Room to allow streaming, but this has not yet occurred.

Donna reported the following:

- The first Finance Committee meeting is November 4, 2021.
- Donna has been working with Finance Director Jennifer Allocca to determine how ARPA funds should be used in New Boston and both will attend an upcoming virtual information session for Hillsborough County October 26, 2021 at 2:30 PM.
- Donna has been working with the group/unofficial broadband committee including Finance Director Jennifer Allocca and Bill McFadden considering the possibility of expanding broadband in New Boston. They, along with Jim, recommend New Boston use ARPA funds to participate in a broadband planning network, a partnership between the NH Municipal Association and the National Collaborative For Digital Equity, based in NH with consultants that would be very helpful to New Boston. It costs \$7,500 to participate with the group that would negotiate, apply for grants and bring a bond before town voters if necessary on this long-term project. Goals are to assist New Boston to develop required joint broadband investment funding proposals to provide fiber optic to 100% of town locations, design investment plans to support business models, support

pricing for low-income households, assist New Boston in becoming broadband-ready and other broadband projects as deemed fundable. David moved to empower the group/unofficial broadband committee to move forward with the NH Municipal Association for \$7,500 of ARPA funds for help and resources for broadband in New Boston. Donna seconded the motion. All were in favor. 3-0

- Donna reported she will attend the New Boston Space Force Station Wood Energy Center October 20, 2021 for sessions they are offering on using forest resources.
- Donna plans to attend a session about expanding net metering law October 25, 2021 at noon and will bring the information to the Selectboard. Energy Commission member Bill McFadden is also interested in attending.
- The Solid Waste Advisory Committee currently has four members. Transfer Station Manager Gerry Cornett will schedule a meeting. Committee procedures will be drafted.

Item 11: Department Manager Reports: None.

G. PUBLIC FORUM:

David noted the Board always welcomes public comment and feedback. There are two opportunities for public comment, one at the beginning of the meeting and then another at the end to comment as per the rules for live meetings and state your name and address for the record and that comments be respectful and thoughtful. The Board will listen, but public comment is typically not back and forth. If there is any need for extended dialogue a request to be added to the agenda and supporting documentation should be sent to the Town Administrator beforehand.

Kaleb Jacob of Fraser Drive was present and noted the following:

- He is disappointed as he does not expect the Fire Station Design Committee meetings to become public. He would prefer they are public.
- He noted two employees are changing status and asked if this is anticipated to increase health insurance benefit costs paid by the town. The Selectboard noted this was discussed in non-public session and should have been announced in public session. They noted Maralyn Segien has been approved as a full time Administrative Assistant and Sonya Fournier has been approved as a full time Administrative Assistant for the Building and Planning Departments. These employees have been moved from part time to full time.

Bill McFadden of Dane Road asked if any of the Comcast research discussed in Item 1 will cost money and if this funding needs Selectboard approval. Donna noted the group/unofficial broadband committee is meeting November 22, 2021 to discuss the next steps such as a survey for all residents announced in the New Boston Beacon, social media and/or postcards to all residents. Any updates will be discussed at the future Selectboard meetings as needed. Jennifer Allocca offered to manage an e-mail account and phone calls for the broadband group. The group was present at this meeting and began considering options including asking the Highway Department to help determine if broadband is available to each household.

Seeing no further Public Comment, David closed the second session.

Item 12: Possible Request for Non-Public-Per RSA 91-A:3, II(a)(b)(c): David moved to enter Non-Public session per RSA 91-A:3II at 7:52PM. Donna seconded the motion. All were in favor. 3-0 Poll Vote: David-yes, Donna-yes and Karen-yes. The Board then entered non-public session.

Move to exit Non-Public Session: Karen moved to exit Non-Public Session at 8:02 PM and seal the Non-Public minutes of November 1, 2021 for five years. Donna seconded the motion. All were in favor. 3-0 Poll Vote: David-yes, Donna-yes and Karen-yes.

ADJOURNMENT: Karen moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:03PM. David seconded the motion. All were in favor. 3-0

Prepared by Maralyn Segien

**Next Scheduled Meeting: Town Hall Conference Room November 15, 2021 (6:00 PM)
7 Meetinghouse Hill Road- New Boston, NH 03070
Phone: (603) 487-2500-www.newbostonnh.gov
Handicap Access available**