

Adopted

Town of New Boston Selectmen's Meeting September 16, 2019

<u>PRESENT:</u>	Joe Constance	Selectman
	Karen Scott	Selectman
	Christine Quirk	Selectman
	Peter Flynn	Town Administrator

Transfer Station Manager Gerry Cornett, Road Agent Dick Perusse, Police Chief Jim Brace, Recreation Director Mike Sindoni, Fire Chief Dan MacDonald, Finance Director Elisa Fitzgerald, Library Director Sarah Chapman, Selectmen's Assistant Laura Bernard, Bill Gould, Joyce Whelton, David Litwinovich, Susan Carr, Angela Sullivan, Kaleb Jacob and Bill McFadden 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 Joe Constance at 6:00PM beginning with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Consent Agenda-The Selectmen signed the consent agenda. Christine moved to approve the consent agenda. Karen seconded the motion. All were in favor. 3-0

B. PUBLIC FORUM:

Joe 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 state their 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 asked for more details after he noticed someone on social media said they contacted the Town Administrator regarding the \$1.5 million unreserved fund and learned some might be used for a lawsuit. Peter noted New Boston has been involved in a lawsuit for years with 70-80 other towns against public utilities for taxation evaluation of utility assets including poles and conduits. This could cost nearly \$500,000 if the utilities win. A Warrant Article was passed for Doherty Lane and \$130,000 is put aside for that. Kaleb asked if there was funding from the state for the Doherty Lane Bridge and Peter said it was not a state bridge project and did not get state bridge aid.

Susan Carr of Leach Hill Road noted a couple weeks ago she heard that Karen had stopped by a road job and rudely interrogated the New Boston road crew working there. Susan was unsettled by this as she doesn't think this is an appropriate way to manage things going on in town and doesn't understand why it happens that way.

Karen asked how she was rudely asking the road crew what was going on. She noted she looked at a payment that New Boston had spent a lot of money, saw them working on the road and backed up to see what was going on in New Boston. She was not rude or told she was rude and didn't see Susan there.

Susan noted she is letting the Selectmen know that this is a perception of how town employees are being treated and brought it up tonight to confirm the town has a procedure and a protocol for how information about town employees is handled as Karen's procedure didn't seem to follow town protocol.

Joe noted there is a protocol and if any Selectman has an issue with a project and how it is being conducted, the standard course is to contact the Town Administrator who will contact the department manager, get any questions answered and set up a meeting if there is a need. Joe noted he wasn't aware of this situation and is not sure if there is a report of it from the Road Agent.

Peter noted nothing was reported to him.

Karen asked Peter to set up a meeting with her, the Road Agent and the employee involved.

Kaleb asked if he would have to follow the protocol mentioned above if he had an issue with a town project.

Joe noted if it had to do with a current project and a citizen thought something wasn't right, they should contact the Town Administrator before contacting the department manager involved.

Kaleb asked if he could just approach an employee or department manager and ask them what they are doing. He is not sure if the incident mentioned tonight was confrontational and, in a situation where it wouldn't be confrontational, would a citizen not be allowed to talk to an employee or department manager.

Joe said no.

Bill Gould of Town Farm Road noted the difference is a citizen who is not a Selectman can ask what is going on.

Angela Sullivan of Briar Hill Road submitted a letter to the Selectmen and asked for an appointment with the Board at the next meeting. It was distributed to Peter and the Selectmen will review beforehand.

Seeing no further comments, Joe closed the first session of public comment.

C. APPOINTMENTS:

None.

D. OLD BUSINESS:

Item 1: Second Reading-Public Input-No Through Trucking Ordinance Revision: Police Chief James Brace was present and noted the ordinance was revised based upon input received at the last meeting. The Selectmen are in favor. Christine moved to adopt the No Through Trucking Ordinance as presented. Karen seconded the motion. All were in favor. 3-0.

Item 2: Approval of Public and Non-Public Minutes of August 19, 2019: The Selectmen reviewed the Public minutes of August 19, 2019. Christine moved the Public minutes of August 19, 2019 be accepted as amended. Karen seconded the motion. All were in favor. 3-0 The Selectmen reviewed the Non-Public minutes of August 19, 2019. Christine moved the Non-Public minutes of August 19, 2019 be accepted as presented and sealed for five years. Karen seconded the motion. All were in favor. 3-0

E. NEW BUSINESS:

Item 3: Discussion: Primex Contribution Assurance Program (CAP)-Property and Liability Insurance: Peter reported the Property and Liability Insurance carrier periodically assesses the claims filed by the town to determine if the town qualifies for a credit holiday/refund /rebate given as a credit toward future bills. They offered a three-year contract with level increases at approximately 8-9% per year instead of higher increases of up to 15% per year that are anticipated in the industry. The town will not get quotes from other companies as no other companies provide Property and Liability Insurance to towns. Peter strongly recommends the Selectmen accept the offer from Primex. Christine moved to authorize the Town Administrator to sign the paperwork as presented on behalf of the town for Contribution Assurance Program for Property and Liability Insurance for 2020-2022. Joe seconded the motion. All were in favor. 3-0

Item 4: Request to Revise the Payroll Grade and Steps Including Two Grade Adjustments-Peter: Peter reported he has been working and researching this proposal as a team with two senior staff town employees. The number of steps is requested to increase from 10 to 14 as employees may reach step 10 and a COLA may not be given for years causing the employee to be at the same rate for years. Extra steps were added to encourage employees to continue employment with the town, give them hope of what they can work up to and give them confidence that the town and Town Administrator are supporting them in their positions. Peter developed the 10 previous steps when he began working in New Boston eight years ago, as most towns have this type of program. At that time New Boston employees had pay ranges with no order or plan for future pay ranges, a system developed by a group of town employees in a previous year along with a merit pay system that, in Peter's opinion, failed because the system seemed to award all the employees the same percentage pay raise. Joe noted the foundation of the current step and grade plan is not only longevity but also qualifications, skills and responsibilities. The current step and grade system has 10 steps but it is more like 14 steps due to four "B" steps. The "B" steps were removed from the proposed plan for fairness making the new plan 10 steps plus 4 steps. To provide an equitable migration to the revised plan, in 2020 any employees who were scheduled for a "B" step will move halfway between their current pay and the next step. In 2021 they would complete the move to the next full step. The revised plan

has been reviewed at Department Manager meetings and with the Finance Committee Chairman. All were enthused about being compensated as deserved according to the current economy and pay ranges in other towns, as New Boston's pay ranges have not been updated in eight years. The plan does not include Town Administrator pay as that is negotiated with the Selectmen separately. This is for town employees, the town's most important asset, working for the Selectmen and making sure everything is right in town. Hourly wages have not changed but have been spread out with the addition of the four steps with some additional at the top. Next year's budgets are currently being prepared and salary items cannot proceed without direction from the Selectmen and Finance Committee consideration.

Karen noted she agrees the additional four steps are the right thing to do. She needs to consider elimination of the "B" steps further as she has not served on the Board very long but raises and spending seem to be frequent, causing her concern.

Christine noted the proposal does not contain significant additional compensation compared to the current plan.

Joe noted it is time to do this as most organizations review salary plans every five years. He agrees with eliminating the "B" steps, staggering migration and extending the grid is the only other way to increase compensation other than longevity payments which is complicated and not always fair. He does not agree that the Selectmen have been passing out frequent raises to employees, as there was one increase due to increased qualifications and a department was discussed for equity. He supports the proposed grid.

Joe moved that the Board consider the proposal this week and each Selectman will contact Peter with their decision by Friday September 20. Karen seconded the motion. All were in favor. 3-0

Bill Gould noted he agrees with the proposal as Finance Committee Chairman and as Library Trustee Chairman he noted the Trustees support this revision.

Item 5: Request to Approve Adjustment In 457 Employees Retirement Plan-Peter: Peter and Selectmen's Assistant Laura Bernard reported New Boston does not use the NH Retirement System for town employees other than the Police, which it uses only because it is mandatory. The town offers a 457 plan from Wells Fargo to employees. Through the operating budget, the town has been contributing 50% of employee contributions up to 8%. Due to the current economy and inflation Peter proposes the town begin contributing up to 5% match and employees contribute 10%. Employees are not required to contribute, and they can choose if they want to increase their contribution for the increased town contribution if Selectmen approve. If the town used the NH Retirement Plan instead, the plan would cost the town more than the current or proposed levels. This proposal would cost approximately \$7,400 if all eligible employees participate. Christine and Joe noted they support the proposal. Christine moved to revise the retirement savings plan for employees as proposed. Karen seconded the motion. All were in favor. 3-0

F. OTHER BUSINESS:

Item 6: Town Administrators Report:

- Update on Record Retention Committee: The Committee received congratulatory letters from state representatives Dona Mombourquette and David Woodbury for its successful grant submission this year. The Committee met September 14 and is drafting a Warrant Article to digitize files from town departments. The departments are looking for ways to reduce paper files at low cost with the hope of decreasing the cabinet space needed by about 40 cabinets. Some departments have made significant steps to decrease paper usage and storage, such as Building Department with submissions now being done electronically and the Selectmen are considering switching from meeting binders to Tablets in the Technology budget.
- Expenditures and Revenues: Provided. Revenues: Motor vehicle registrations are less than anticipated so far but may increase at the end of the year as occurred the last two years. Propane gas inspection revenues were estimated at \$5,000 for this first year but more has been collected, partly due to revised Building Department fees and number of gas installations and conversions. The town offices have not received any complaints about the new fees and the inspection process is going well. Current Use fees are currently a large revenue source due to new home construction.
- Letter of Support for Highway Department Grant Application: Road Agent Dick Perusse was present and noted a site visit is scheduled for September 24. The grant award is not expected to be announced until December 2.
- Status on Rear Firehouse Lot: The Selectmen asked this be considered for Fire Department personnel parking when events are going on downtown. Peter is working on this with Town Engineer Kevin Leonard and this is expected to be a budget item.
- Status Report on Fire Station Siding Repair: This was postponed due to illness but will be done soon along with other projects on the person's to do list.
- Final Dates for Budget Review by Finance Committee/Selectmen: Provided. As part of the scheduling process, Peter met with Department Managers to review the budget process and will schedule meetings with each of them to prepare each department budget before November.
- Mill Street 'No Parking' area sign installation (240-foot area): Not discussed.
- 'Streams' Available at Whipple Free Library for Government Use Only: Livestreaming was installed at the library and will be provided to the town at no additional cost other than the one-time installation fee. This is a great asset to the town to hold meetings at the library periodically.

Item 7: Selectmen's Reports: Joe reported the Road Committee did not meet much over the summer and one member resigned to be discussed in non-public.

Joe reported Forestry Committee updates as follows:

- The Committee has been considering establishing Conservation Easements in four town forests. This is an important step to protect land in perpetuity. Currently, Selectmen could vote to sell town forests for development. Conservation Easements preserve the natural state of the town and forests the Committee has recently developed management plans for. However, Conservation Easements are expensive. The Forestry Committee does not have money, but the Conservation Commission and Open Space Committee do

and are considering this possibility.

- Joe and Tom Miller worked at the Christmas Tree field to plant new, bigger, hardier trees that should be planted in the fall. The Committee plans to use these types of trees when annually working with future NBCS first graders and schedule the annual planting in the fall instead of the spring.
- Reforesting is planned where cuts have taken place with adaptable and hardy trees.

G. PUBLIC FORUM:

Bill McFadden of Dane Road noted two areas of Bedford Road need patching. One is near Road Meadow Garden and one near Foxberry Road.

Kaleb Jacob of Fraser Drive asked who resigned from the Road Committee and the Selectmen noted it was Chairman Willard Dodge.

Item 8: Possible Non-Public Session per RSA 91-A:3, II (c): Christine moved to enter Non-Public session per RSA 91-A: II (c) at 6:46PM. Karen seconded the motion. All were in favor. 3-0 Poll Vote: Joe-yes, Christine-yes, and Karen-yes. Board then entered non-public session.

Move to exit Non-Public Session: Christine made a motion to exit Non-Public Session at 7:20PM. Karen seconded the motion. All were in favor. 3-0

Public Action from Non-Public- Joe moved to accept the resignation of Tyler Ruggiero as an Officer of the New Boston Police Department, seconded by Karen. Vote was 3-0 in the affirmative.

ADJOURNMENT: Christine made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:22PM. Joe seconded the motion. All were in favor. 3-0

Prepared by Maralyn Segien

**Next Scheduled Meeting: Town Hall Conference Room on October 7, 2019 (6:00 PM)
7 Meetinghouse Hill Road- New Boston, NH 03070
Phone: (603) 487-5504-www.newboston.gov**