

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN
TOWN OF HAMPTON FALLS**

**APRIL 17, 2024 – 8:00 AM
TOWN HALL**

FINAL

PRESENT: Lou Gargiulo, Chairman (via Zoom); Mark R. Lane, Vice-Chairman;
Ed B. Beattie, Selectman
Karen Anderson, Town Administrator; Rachel D. Webb, Assistant Administrator
GUESTS: Justin Ranauro, Police Lieutenant; Russ Hilliard, Road Agent; Jay Lord, Fire
Chief; Bobby Hudson, Deputy Fire Chief; Mark Sikorski, Building Inspector

Chairman Gargiulo called the Board of Selectmen's meeting to order at 8:03 AM.

Lincoln Akerman School 4th Grade – Mr. Jim Cutting: A dozen of the 4th grade class representatives and their parents were in attendance to request permission from the Selectmen to purchase and plant a 12' sugar maple tree on the Town Common to replace one of the four (4) trees that were removed due to disease and damage in recent history.

Chairman Gargiulo stated that he thought it was a wonderful idea, given the loss of trees on the Town Common. (Zoom connection with Chairman Gargiulo lost temporarily, for a few minutes.)

E. Beattie stated that it would be important to make sure that the tree replacement be as salt resistant as possible due to the proximity of adjacent State roads where heavy salt use happens in winter months. **The students** stated that they plan to use Gypsum around the base of the tree to prevent potential salt damage. **E. Beattie** asked when the tree is planned to be installed, and from where is the tree coming, and **the Students'** responded middle of May from a plant nursery in Connecticut.

MOTION: To accept the donation of a Sugar Maple tree from the 4th grade class of Lincoln Akerman School, to be planted at the Town Common, under the direction of Jim Cutting (LAS).

MOTION: M. LANE

SECOND: E. BEATTIE

Yes=2, motion PASSED.

Police Department / Animal Control Monthly Report – Police Lieutenant Ranauro:

Police Lieutenant Ranauro stated that Police Chief Veno had previously provided the March 2024 monthly report to the Selectmen, and asked if there were any questions, and there were none.

J. Ranauro stated that the Crimeline of the Hamptons is offering a Shredding event this Saturday from 9am to 1pm at the Hampton Police Department, at no cost, which is a service provided twice annually. **K. Anderson** stated that June 8th 9am to 12 noon, is the Shredding event in Hampton Falls, at the Brush Dump, at \$7.00 per box, pay onsite cash or check only (no pre-payment).

Chairman Gargiulo asked about the status of the Policer Officer who was out, and **J. Ranauro** responded that the Police Officer is back with a doctor's note, and all seems to be well.

Road Agent Monthly Report – Russ Hilliard: **Russ Hilliard** reported that March was a very busy month with:

- Lots of rain and more trees down.
- Larger culverts took the rain well.
- Frost bans were lifted on March 18, 2024.
- Shed at Brush Dump is 1/3 full of salt, with little projected use.
- Still working on cleaning up the Brush Dump, getting ready for Spring

FINAL

- Dumpsters have been ordered for delivery at end of April, in time for first Bulky Waste Day on May 04, 2024 (first Saturdays thru October).
- Five (5) tree stumps at the Town Common were inspected for grinding out and removal by Doug's Tree Service, who provided an estimate of \$700 and could do the work next week. **R. Hilliard** stated that Doug's Tree Service was the only vendor who returned his request for pricing, and that he thought the work estimate price was reasonable. He added the vendor is the same one who removed the trees, and said that he thought it would be good to get it done before the tree planting in mid-May. **E. Beattie** agreed, and **M. Lane** said that it was good that this vendor said they could do the work next week. There was a consensus of the Selectmen for the Road Agent to work with Doug's Tree Service to move forward with the proposed stump grinding work at the Town Common work as quoted.

R. Hilliard presented a worksheet for Roadside Brush Clean-up to clean-up the roadsides of Town roads from winter storms. He stated that he typically does this work annually at this time of year. He received the following price quotes: (a) Doug's Tree Service at \$2,000/day, (b) Urban Tree Service at \$1,950/day, and (c) Hampton Falls Road Agent at \$1,600/day. He stated that in the past, Chairman Gargiulo had put a limit on the work of three (3) days, and **R. Hilliard** stated that he could start with the through roads and was not sure if he would get it all done in three (3) days. **M. Lane** asked for some clarification, and **R. Hilliard** explained that brush of the approximate size of an adult person's arm, he removes from roadsides and either brings to the Brush Dump or chips for fire prevention purposes. **Chairman Gargiulo** recommended the Selectmen approve three (3) days of the Road Agent doing roadside brush clean-up, and on the third day the Road Agent checks-in with the Town Administrator to determine the necessity of extending one more day, dependent on how much work was accomplished and how much still needs to be done.

MOTION: To approve the Road Agent to perform annual Roadside Brush Clean-up at a rate of \$1,600.00 per day for a total of three (3) days, with the possibility of extension for a fourth day, to be determined on Day 3 by communication between the Road Agent and the Town Administrator.

MOTION: E. BEATTIE

SECOND: M. LANE

UNANIMOUS

Road Agent Core Services: **R. Hilliard**, Road Agent, presented his monthly bill for Core Services for March 2024 in the amount of \$9,302.25.

MOTION: To approve the Road Agent's monthly Core Services bill for the month of March 2024 in the amount of \$9,302.25.

MOTION: E. BEATTIE

SECOND: M. LANE

UNANIMOUS

Fire / Ambulance / Emergency Management Report – Fire Chief Jay Lord: Fire Chief Lord stated that he had provided the Fire Department's March 2024 monthly report to the

FINAL

Selectmen, and asked if the Selectmen had any questions, and there were none. **Fire Chief Lord** stated that most of the calls last month (March 2024) were medical and fire activation calls.

Fire Chief Lord provided updates on the following topics/projects:

- **Fire Chief Lord** reported that the first week of April the Fire Department had their first structure fire in Hampton Falls in 8-10 years. He commended everyone who assisted with that event including Hampton Falls fire fighters and Mutual Aide partners who assisted. **Fire Chief Lord** reported that the house is save-able, having suffered some smoke and water damage, and the owners should be able to move back in by summer, pending completion of contractor work.
- **Fire Chief Lord** stated that at a previous Selectmen's meeting the Fire Department asked that the Fire Tank Truck be declared as Surplus so that the Fire Department could sell it. They went ahead and listed the vehicle for sale and almost had it sold to a Fire Department in Oklahoma but a pump test failed and that buyer withdrew. **Fire Chief Lord** said that the Fire Dept. plans to repair the pump, and now have another buyer interested from the Chicago area. He stated that the Fire Dept would update the Selectmen as buyer interest evolves.
- Today is the first high fire danger day in a year, which means that it is not going to rain.
- Official Results of the 2024 Seabrook Station Exercise Cycle April 3, 2024 at the Hampton Falls Emergency Operations Center have not yet been received, however, **Fire Chief Lord** stated that informal feedback he has received is good, and that the reviewers were happy the way the drill was run, and they were confident that Hampton Falls could do it right.
- **Deputy Fire Chief Hudson** introduced a discussion of a Fire Department Command Car. He said that a Command Car is also known as a Chief's car, or a take home car, or a utility vehicle with potential use for many things. He stated that the Volunteer Firemen's Association recently received significant funds from Community Benefit nights held at The Brook in Seabrook, and discussed obtaining a Command Car with some of the proceeds from those funds, and donating the Command Car to the Town. **B. Hudson** stated that the new vehicle outfitted with lights, sirens, radios, and a command center for the rear would cost up to \$78,200.

Chairman Gargiulo asked what the obligations would be for the Town, if the Town were to accept the donation, and **B. Hudson** responded that it would be the same as any other vehicle in the PSB fleet, that is: the Town would insure it, and then the maintenance would be added to the Fire Department budget, which he did not anticipate to be a problem. **B. Hudson** explained that the Fire Dept. used to have Car 6 that was inherited from the Police Dept., and that would last for approximately a year or two since the vehicle was already "done" as determined by Police use.

FINAL

M. Lane clarified that the Fire Dept has not had a Command Vehicle for quite some time, and **B. Hudson** said that the pick-up truck purchase was made instead of replacing the Command Car, as the pick-up has greater versatility and keeps unnecessary miles off the larger equipment trucks. He explained that most Fire Departments in the area have a Command vehicle so that the Chief officer does not occupy a spot on the large apparatus and take away a working body on the large apparatus. He stated that the Chief officer should be taking command at a scene and not working the fire. He provided some context that ten years ago their program did not have enough responders to support an officer structure to facilitate professional growth, but now they have so many more responders. **B. Hudson** said that currently, if either the Chief or he has a meeting outside of Hampton Falls, they take the pick-up truck, so they maintain some accessibility; however, taking the pick-up truck removes that vehicle from being used by anyone else in Hampton Falls while they are gone, and having the Command Car would make the pick-up truck available for its purpose.

E. Beattie asked about the recent fire on Drinkwater Road and if there had been a Command Car onsite, how would the car's resources have been used. **Fire Chief Lord** responded that the desk in the middle of the road would have been replaced with the Command Car that has multiple radios for different groups working on different frequencies. **B. Hudson** responded that the Command Car will have dual-head radios with one in the front and in the rear, in the Command area, there will be three head units used with direct lines to: a) dispatch, b) crews inside the building (first floor, second floor), and c) water ops or May Day, to make the scene more accountable, and to function as a mobile dispatch. It was explained that a Command Car consolidates many resources, and can be used for events other than structure fires such as large medical events or large accident events where accountability is paramount, such as on Rt 95 and on Rt 1. **B. Hudson** further elaborated that on fire scenes when Mutual Aide comes to help Hampton Falls, or when Hampton Falls goes to help other towns, the fire fighters all look for the Command Car to check in. He described that occasionally a Command Car from another town will let Hampton Falls use theirs at a scene, but Hampton Falls does not currently have that to offer at emergency scenes.

Chairman Gargiulo asked what type of safety equipment will be carried on the Command Car, and would that include a Defibrillator? **B. Hudson** said that they would be equipping it with a First Aid kit (aka BLS bag-Basic Life Support bag) and are considering adding a defibrillator and looking at those costs. He said that it would add more equipment available in whatever part of town he was in. He would also be able to go direct to the site to meet the Ambulance there (instead of going to the PSB first, then to the site second), and could start treatment if he arrived first. **K. Anderson** clarified that the Command Car would be fully marked, and **B. Hudson** confirmed. **Chairman Gargiulo** reiterated his request to add a defibrillator on the Command Car, and **B. Hudson** estimated an approximate cost of \$2-3,000, and **Fire Chief Lord** recommended to go through the State bid process to get a better price.

Chairman Gargiulo asked what type of vehicle is proposed to be acquired, and **B. Hudson** responded a 2024 Chevy Tahoe.

FINAL

M. Lane asked how does the Town delineate between money raised by the Fire Association and versus the budget. **B. Hudson** stated that the Fire Association has its own Treasurer and bank accounts. He continued that all of the funds raised by the Fire Association go towards their mission statement which is *“to support and to enhance the needs of the Fire Department.”* He elaborated further stating that typically those are things that the Fire Department would Like but that just don’t fit into the budget, and that are difficult to ask the Town to fund, like the frills of the recently replaced garage doors. He said that the Fire Department could have repaired the garage doors, but the Association had the funds so instead decided to replace. He said that the Fire Association does not like to keep a balance in their accounts so are always looking for things to expense to help the Fire Department.

Fire Chief Lord provided contextual background on the evolution of the Fire Association and the Fire Department. The Fire Department, Inc. (which they refer to as the Fire Association) was, at one point the Fire Department twenty-plus (20+) years ago. The Town built the Fire Department a building, and the Town insures the Fire Dept. vehicles, and the Town pays the Firefighters a stipend, so they had a municipal Fire Department, and at that point it was decided to separate the two entities. The budget for the Fire Department is for all things municipal, whereas the Fire Association is the fundraising arm for purchases the Fire Department does not want to float as Warrant Articles, nor to add to their budget. The fundraising events such as the Pancake Breakfasts, and the Christmas Tree Sales are held by the Fire Association. **Fire Chief Lord** stated that the Fire Association has a discussion with him about what needs the Fire Department might have on which to expend those raised funds, and **Fire Chief Lord** responds about whether the Fire Association’s proposal fits within the Fire Department’s program. And then the Fire Association purchases the items and turns them over/donates them to the Town Fire Department.

Fire Chief Lord stated that he is a “Fire Association Member, not allowed to hold a position within the Fire Association”. The Fire Association is a registered 501c-3 charitable organization.

M. Lane clarified that the difference between vehicles is that a Tanker Truck is a necessary piece of equipment that the Fire Department needs and is funded by the budget, whereas a Command Car is a discretionary vehicle. **Fire Chief Lord** explained that the purchases of the Ambulance and Tanker Trucks were funded from the following three (3) sources of funding: a) Ambulance and Transport fees, b) Warrant Articles budget process, and c) Fire Association.

M. Lane stated that the funds raised through Charitable Gaming are considerable for benefiting non-profits like the Firemen’s Association. **Fire Chief Lord** stated that initially the Fire Association received charitable gaming funds from the former Poker Room on Rt 1 in Hampton Falls and **B. Hudson** stated that those funds enabled the purchase of: a Life Pack, the Jaws of Life for Engine 8, a Combi tool (battery powered Jaws of Life) for Engine 9, and lifting equipment for car accidents. **B. Hudson** stated that the Fire Association is not for-profit so they do not want money to sit in an account, as their purpose is to support the Fire Department.

FINAL

K. Anderson said that there would need to be a Public Hearing scheduled because the Command Car is a donation over \$5,000, (just like the recent Public Hearing for the garage doors) to accept the donated Command Car, that would put a Legal Ad in the newspaper.

E. Beattie stated that he recommended the Public Hearing be scheduled for the Selectmen's meeting May 1, so that the Fire Department can move forward with the acquisition of a Command Car, and both M. Lane and L. Gargiulo agreed.

Chairman Gargiulo thanked the Fire Department for their personal assist to him recently when he needed their services.

Building Inspector, Code Compliance, Health Officer Monthly Report – Mark Sikorski:

Mark Sikorski stated that it was an honor to work alongside such a generous organization as the Hampton Falls First Responders, especially in their recent efforts with Chairman Gargiulo and also with the residents of the Drinkwater Road recent house fire.

E. Beattie said that the Town of Hampton Falls has terrific First Responders in Hampton Falls, whether it is an injury or water in the basement, and those response workers work above and beyond their call of duty on a regular basis.

M. Sikorski asked the Selectmen if they had any questions about his monthly report for March-April 2024, and **Chairman Gargiulo** stated that he was astounded by the number of Code Enforcement issues. **M. Sikorski** responded that the wheels run slowly with many issues regarding code enforcement because sometimes he has to wait for an applicant to meet with an engineer or an attorney to make a plan to address some alternatives to solve the problem of the enforcement issue. **M. Sikorski** said that he contacts each applicant during the month to see if there is an update to include in his monthly report, and added that it is always a pleasure to remove a case from his report because that means there is some type of success or resolution.

Chairman Gargiulo asked if there were any enforcement cases that M. Sikorski felt should go beyond the enforcement report, and **M. Sikorski** responded no not at this time. **M. Lane** had a similar concern and stated that some of the cases recur, and he questioned at what point do you take a forward action. **M. Sikorski** said that even when an issue reaches a point to need to go back to the board to address, there is a long duration between actions, and those land use boards only meet once per month, so that is another reason that the enforcement issues move slowly.

OLD BUSINESS:

Financial Reports: General Fund Balance: \$1,485,871.65 **K. Anderson** presented the General Fund balance of \$1,485,871.65 from last week when the agenda was drafted, and obtained an updated balance yesterday from the Treasurer of \$645,000 that is a dangerously low balance. She continued that the Town will be holding off paying any large bills and she will ask all Department Heads not to incur any unnecessary expenses in the next several weeks until tax revenues can replenish the General Fund in May. She stated that the April school payments have been made and the May school payments will be held until the end of May.

FINAL

M. Lane asked when the tax bills will be going out, and **K. Anderson** responded that it will probably be the second week in May, and will be due July 1, but as soon as the tax bills come out then some cash flow can start to replenish the General Fund.

Executive: Payroll Warrant, Accounts Payable, and Escrow Warrant: **K. Anderson** reported the Payroll Warrant dated April 12, 2024 in the amount of \$36,285.27; Accounts Payable Warrant dated April 12, 2024 in the amount of \$882,889.40. Escrow Warrant Communication Fund dated April 12, 2024 in the amount of \$427.90; Escrow Warrant Recreation Revolving Fund dated April 12, 2024 in the amount of \$300.00.

MOTION: To approve Payroll Warrant dated April 12, 2024 in the amount of \$36,285.27; Accounts Payable Warrant dated April 12, 2024 in the amount of \$882,889.40. Escrow Warrant Communication Fund dated April 12, 2024 in the amount of \$427.90; Escrow Warrant Recreation Revolving Fund dated April 12, 2024 in the amount of \$300.00.

MOTION: E. BEATTIE

SECOND: M. LANE

UNANIMOUS

Other Selectmen's Old Business: There was no Other Selectmen's Old Business.

OLD BUSINESS PUBLIC COMMENT: There was no Old Business Public Comment.

NEW BUSINESS:

Use of Town Hall for 8th Grade Dance: **K. Anderson** stated that the LAS PTO is tentatively requesting to use the Town Hall for the annual 8th Grade Dance on Friday, May 31, 2024 from 6:00 – 9:00 PM.

MOTION: To authorize the use of the Town Hall for the 8th Grade Dance, May 31, 2024 from 6:00 to 9:00 PM.

MOTION: E. BEATTIE

SECOND: M. LANE

UNANIMOUS

Memorial Day Ceremony: **K. Anderson** said that the American Legion, Hamptons Post 35 has invited the Board of Selectmen to participate in the annual Memorial Day Ceremony on the Town Common, Monday, May 27, 2024 at 9:00 AM.

May-June 2024 Newsletter: The Draft of the May – June Newsletter was emailed separately and added to the Selectmen's paper packets.

MOTION: To authorize the Assistant Administrator to release and publish the May/June 2024 Newsletter.

MOTION: M. LANE

SECOND: E. BEATTIE

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FINAL

Other Selectmen's New Business: **K. Anderson** said that she received a request from the Hampton Falls Historical Society of \$6,000 for a new exhibit display case for the Museum to be funded by the Frying Pan Lane fund. **Chairman Gargiulo** asked the current balance, and **K. Anderson** responded that the current balance in the Frying Pan Lane funds, that has not yet been allocated, is approximately \$12,000.

M. Lane asked if there were any other requests for funding from the Frying Pan Land fund.

K. Anderson stated that the Library may have some requests in the future. **E. Beattie** said that at the last Library Trustees meeting he attended, that he encouraged the Library to request funds from the Frying Pan Lane fund. **K. Anderson** stated that the Selectmen would not want to allocate all of the funds in the account in case another eligible project proposal arises later in the year.

MOTION: To approve the utilization of Frying Pan Lane funds in the amount of \$6,000 for the Historical Society to purchase a pedestal display case for the Museum.

MOTION: M. LANE

SECOND: E. BEATTIE

UNANIMOUS

NEW BUSINESS PUBLIC COMMENT: **Chairman Gargiulo** requested that K. Anderson look into some better tools/mechanisms to make Zoom calls more efficient for wireless Zoom calls. **M. Lane** said that maybe a large, flat screen monitor with external speakers and better microphones would be an improvement. **E. Beattie** said to consider something on a cart, that could be wheeled into the meeting as needed. **K. Anderson** said that it could be paid for with the Communication funds, and she said that she would explore some options.

REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES: April 3, 2024 –

MOTION: To approve the minutes of April 3, 2024 as written.

MOTION: E. BEATTIE

SECOND: M. LANE

UNANIMOUS

MOTION: To Adjourn the Selectmen's meeting at 8:50 AM.

MOTION: M. LANE

SECOND: E. BEATTIE

UNANIMOUS

Next Selectmen's Meeting is Wednesday, May 01, 2024 at 6:00 PM.
These minutes prepared by Rachel D. Webb; Assistant Administrator.