

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
TOWN OF HAMPTON FALLS**

**FEBRUARY 21, 2024 – 8:00 AM  
TOWN HALL**

FINAL

**PRESENT:** Ed B. Beattie, Chairman; Lou Gargiulo, Vice-Chairman;  
Mark R. Lane, Selectman; Karen Anderson, Town Administrator;  
Rachel D. Webb, Assistant Administrator

**GUESTS:** Ryan Venio, Police Chief; Russ Hilliard, Road Agent; Bobby Hudson, Deputy Fire Chief; Mark Sikorski, Building Inspector

Chairman Beattie called the Board of Selectmen's meeting to order at 8:00 AM.

**Police Department / Animal Control Monthly Report – Police Chief Ryan Venio:**

Police Chief Venio stated that he submitted his monthly report and commented that during January, for the first time in 1-1/2 to 2 years, the Police Department has been fully staffed, and he is looking forward to the rest of 2024 with those staffing levels. He asked if there were any questions and there were none.

**Road Agent Monthly Report – Russ Hilliard:** R. Hilliard reported that:

- High winds and storms caused trees and power lines to be down that resulted in some road closures.
- Rain and snow and above-normal temperatures created many frost cycles leaving numerous potholes through town.
- There is enough frost in the ground now to warrant installing the annual Frost Ban signs on the roads. He said that the signs usually go up the first or second week of March.
- The large culverts and streams are flowing normal.
- Assembled a proposal for Storm Damage with a total of \$32,170, of which \$5,730 has been paid, so the net bill is \$26,440 to be submitted to FEMA for reimbursement.

K. Anderson reported that Rockingham County has received a FEMA declaration as a "disaster". She said that Fire Chief Lord will be attending a meeting tomorrow where Preliminary Assessments are done and list the costs incurred by various towns. If approved, the Town would receive 80% of the costs submitted for the Storm Damage. R. Hilliard reviewed his proposal that listed:

- Eight (8) streets/locations of emergency roadside wash-outs include parts of Drinkwater Rd, Nason Road, King Street, the Public Safety Building, Goodwin Road, Crank Road, Brown Road, and Avery Ridge.
- Three (3) streets/locations of emergency roadside repairs include: Mill Road culvert, Old Stage Road swale, and Merchant Road catch basin.
- Storm tree clean-up disposal of existing logs at the Brush Dump.

Chairman Beattie asked if there are any hardwood trees in the pile at the Brush Dump, and R. Hilliard responded that there might be one piece, but it is predominantly Pine trees that snap off in the wind, and deposit their pine cones on the roadways.

R. Hilliard asked K. Anderson the timing to commence the work, and she asked him to wait until Friday, pending the Selectmen's decision to proceed today, and then after the FEMA meeting that Fire Chief Lord is attending tomorrow and the resultant paperwork that needs to be submitted, etc.

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R. Hilliard commented that compared with the storm damage in other communities that Hampton Falls' cost is relatively low, where it was discussed that Hampton, by comparison, must have damages significantly higher than Hampton Falls, due to the repair work that will be needed to Route 1 at the Marsh because during the storm they had to close Route 1 due to flooding.

**Frost Ban Notice:** K. Anderson commented that, in the past, the Selectmen have not added a date for the posting of the Frost Ban notice, to leave it to the discretion of the Road Agent. R. Hilliard stated that he typically posts the Frost Ban Notice after a couple of fifty-degree temperature days.

**MOTION:** To sign the Frost Ban Notice, with the posting date to be determined by the Road Agent.

**MOTION:** L. GARGIULO

**SECOND:** M. LANE

**UNANIMOUS**

**MOTION:** To approve the Road Agent's Core Services monthly bill for the month of January 2024, in the amount of \$8,738.00.

**MOTION:** L. GARGIULO

**SECOND:** M. LANE

**UNANIMOUS**

**MOTION:** To approve the Storm Damage proposal of \$32,170, of which \$5,730 has been paid (in tree damage that has been cleaned up), to authorize emergency roadside work, to commence, contingent upon approval by FEMA for the partial reimbursement to the Town.

**MOTION:** L. GARGIULO

**SECOND:** M. LANE

**UNANIMOUS**

M. Lane asked about the timing of the approval from FEMA and how soon the Town would know the result so that the work could start, and K. Anderson responded that Fire Chief Lord will have a sense as a result of the meeting tomorrow. She stated that sometimes FEMA sends a representative out to view the damage, but where it is a relatively small amount and R. Hilliard has photos to supplement the documentation, she doubts FEMA will conduct a visit.

**Fire / Ambulance / Emergency Management Report – Deputy Fire Chief Bobby Hudson:**

Deputy Fire Chief Hudson reported that it was a fairly normal month for the Fire Department. He said that they have been operating on a "find it and fix it" mode in the Public Safety Building (PSB). He stated that heating was an issue for the month of January, and said that the Fire Department was able to fix most of the problematic heating system in-house, without too many plumbers involved, and saved the Town those repair costs.

K. Anderson asked for a status report on the generator, and Deputy Chief Hudson responded that the generator is up and running as of last week although he has not yet received the bill.

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Chairman Beattie asked if there were any questions regarding the monthly report, and there were none.

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

The Building Inspector verbally updated his written report stating that the first item under code enforcement (3 Weare Road) has requested a continuance to the ZBA March meeting date of March 28, 2024. Additionally, M. Sikorski reported that last week the Fire Department and the Building Office participated in a viewing of the Applecrest dormitory for the Spring season. He continued that this is something new that the State has decided to ask the local departments to assist with the meeting and to create reports of what they found and any corrections that need to be made. Chairman Beattie asked for clarification on who is responsible for the report, and M. Sikorski responded that the State comes to Hampton Falls annually to inspect the dormitory to issue the certificate ahead of the Spring season for the workers who arrive from outside of the USA. He said that it was determined at the State that the local departments should now be involved, so now they will be and everyone will be “on the same page”.

**OLD BUSINESS**

**Financial Reports: General Fund Balance:** **\$3,126,197.77** K. Anderson reported the General Fund Balance at \$3,126,197.77 and stated that the balance includes \$400,000 in the NH Public Deposit Investment Pool (NHPDIP) for a higher interest rate, and the first month interest on the account earned \$826. Chairman Beattie expressed satisfaction with the interest earnings.

**Executive: Payroll Warrant, Accounts Payable, and Escrow Warrant:**

**MOTION:** To approve Payroll Warrant # 622 dated February 15, 2024 in the amount of \$36,118.04; Accounts Payable Warrant #861 dated February 15, 2024 in the amount of \$48,671.07; Escrow Warrant #48 dated February 15, 2024 in the amount of \$1,745.35.

**MOTION:** L. GARGIULO

**SECOND:** M. LANE

**UNANIMOUS**

**Paper Shredding Event:** K. Anderson reported that at a recent Board of Selectmen’s meeting it was suggested that the Town host a paper shredding event for residents. K. Anderson contacted two companies that provide this service and received a proposal from one company. The Saturday morning dates available are June 8, 15, and 29. April and May were already booked up. The cost to the Town would be \$900.00 plus any surcharges detailed in advance. She continued that the Town would have the option to charge residents a per box fee, or collect donations, or provide it as a service to residents.

K. Anderson continued that someone who has been involved with the *Crimeline of the Hamptons*, which hosts a similar event in Hampton annually in November, said that the price was comparable to what they have paid. They handle it on a donation basis. Some towns charge \$5-\$10-per-box and other towns offer it as a service at no cost. The Hampton event typically fills up before the end of the three-hour period, but K. Anderson stated that she did not think that Hampton Falls would have that problem if the event were limited to residents only, and excluded

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businesses. Another consideration would be to limit the total number of boxes a resident could bring.

L. Gargiulo asked if the shredding would be done on site, and K. Anderson responded yes, that everything is shredded before it leaves the site. He followed up asking if she had received a second price proposal from the second company yet, and she said she had not. L. Gargiulo is interested in having the event before June. K. Anderson asked if the \$900.00 price was cost prohibitive, and L. Gargiulo said that his opinion was that the Town should charge a fee per box, and the “going rate” is \$5-per-box. He said that he thought that the event would pay for itself, or may even make some money.

K. Anderson asked if the shredding event should be held in the Town Hall parking lot, or at the Brush Dump, and the consensus was that traffic flow at the Brush Dump would be easier.

Chairman Beattie asked if there was a municipal need for shredding, and K. Anderson responded yes. The Police Department pays monthly for a shredding service, but it is not bulk. Periodically, if Town Hall has a box of sensitive information, such as payroll, that would be added to the Police Department’s shredding service.

Police Chief Veno said that he has been on the board for the *Crimeline of the Hamptons* and said he is attending their meeting tomorrow night, and he could ask if they would consider doing an event in Hampton Falls.

L. Gargiulo provided K. Anderson with the name of New England Security Shredders that his business used for shredding.

Chairman Beattie stated that he is in favor of doing the shredding event, because it makes sense. L. Gargiulo recommended tabling it for now, until another price quote can be obtained. Then, at the Selectmen’s next meeting in early March, the Selectmen can discuss the subject again, hopefully with some additional price quotes, and select a date for the event.

**Other Selectmen’s Old Business:** There was no Other Selectmen’s Old Business.

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

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**Appointments to Boards & Committees:** Chairman Beattie shared some comments about the subject of the timing of the Selectmen’s decisions to appoint and re-appoint positions expiring March 31<sup>st</sup> annually. He said that historically, the Selectmen have made appointments in February, before the election in March, and his opinion is that the new Board of Selectmen, after the election, should make those appointments at their second meeting in March. He said that it may not be an issue with an un-opposed ballot and no controversy, but he thinks it is the right thing to do in the future. Additionally, he said that in the future he would like to know, before he

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receives his packet with the proposed appointments, whose terms are up for re-appointment, and which boards and committees have openings ahead of time. L. Gargiulo agreed

K. Anderson said that the Town Clerk had prepared appointment forms for people with terms expiring March 31, 2024, so those appointments can be addressed at a future Selectmen's meeting in March, and do not need to be acted upon at this meeting.

M. Lane said that it might be useful to invite people in to the Selectmen's meeting to give a one-minute introduction of who they are, and why they want to be appointed to a particular board so that people can associate a face with a name and get to know them a little. K. Anderson said that the Selectmen could invite them all to the second meeting in March. Chairman Beattie said that it could be part of the re-organization of the Board following the election. K. Anderson said that a "News and Announcement" could be sent identifying the openings on Committees and Boards. Chairman Beattie said that it may help create some volunteerism.

L. Gargiulo said that a Candidates' Night should be planned for this year, even though the elections are uncontested. He said that, in his opinion, it should be held every year regardless. K. Anderson reminded the Selectmen that the event needs to be sponsored by an individual, with no technical involvement by the Town, with responses sent to individual Selectmen. A date of Monday March 04, 2024 at 6:00 PM at Town Hall was decided for the Candidates' Night and K. Anderson said that she would pull the invitations together. Chairman Beattie reflected that Candidates' Night historically was held at the Library.

**Other Selectmen's New Business:**

**Assessment Write-Off:** K. Anderson stated that this is a request for a write-off for a unit at Wakeda Campground that did not pay the taxes for 2021 and 2022 and the previous owners sold the unit and left. Unlike real property when sold, taxes due on a trailer in a campground are not prorated at the closing. No abatement application was filed and the taxes of \$423 have been declared uncollectible.

**MOTION: To write off the tax amount of \$423.00 for Map 6-39-A53.**

**MOTION: L. GARGIULO**

**SECOND: M. LANE**

**VOTE: UNANIMOUS**

**Request from Rockingham Planning Commission (RPC) for a Letter of Support:** K.

Anderson explained that the RPC is applying for a federal RAISE planning grant proposal to support planning and engineering for Phase 3 of the NH Seacoast Greenway rail trail through Hampton Falls and Hampton. She said that the RPC is looking for funding in 2024 through the ten-year transportation plan. Currently the Hampton Falls Phase 3 is later in the ten-year plan, and they are looking to get this grant that would get their planning done in advance and it would move it up the list to be ahead of the Seabrook section and after the Hampton section. She stated that this is a letter of support that the RPC requested yesterday.

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**MOTION: To authorize the Chairman of the Selectmen to sign the letter of support to the RPC regarding the federal RAISE planning grant proposal.**

**MOTION: E. BEATTIE**

**SECOND: L. GARGIULO**

**VOTE: UNANIMOUS**

**REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES: February 7, 2024**

R. Webb stated that Police Chief Venio called to her attention on page 4 that the final vote was not identified after the two motions, regarding the denial of the First Baptist Church's request for tax abatement. The Selectmen recalled that it was a Unanimous vote, so the word "Unanimous" will be added to complete the vote.

**MOTION: To approve the minutes of February 7, 2024 as amended.**

**MOTION: L. GARGIULO**

**SECOND: M. LANE**

**UNANIMOUS**

**NEW BUSINESS PUBLIC COMMENT:** There was no New Business Public Comment.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

**MOTION: To adjourn the meeting at 8:45 AM.**

**MOTION: L. GARGIULO**

**SECOND: M. LANE**

**UNANIMOUS**

Candidate's Night is Monday, March 4, 2024 at 6:00 PM.

Next Selectmen's Meeting is Wednesday, March 6, 2024 at 6:00 PM.

These minutes prepared by Rachel D. Webb; Assistant Administrator.