

<b>BOARD OF SELECTMEN</b>	<b>MARCH 06, 2024 6:00 P.M.</b>
<b>TOWN OF HAMPTON FALLS</b>	<b>TOWN HALL</b>

**FINAL**

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

**GUESTS:** State Representative Susan Porcelli; JP Pontbriand, Town Moderator

**OLD BUSINESS**

**Financial Reports: General Fund Balance: \$ 3,095,203.43** K. Anderson reported the General Fund balance and noted that since the Selectmen moved \$400,000 to the NH PDIP (Public Deposit Investment Pool - that is only for municipalities), February’s interest was \$1,700 at 5.35% (the interest rate is calculated weekly), so it was a good move for the Town. She stated that there is some potential legislation that may eliminate that option and L. Gargiulo asked for more specifics. K. Anderson explained that because PDIP is not invested exclusively in NH banks and investments, it has access to similar investment vehicles, like the Trustees of the Trust Funds utilize. She further explained that this legislation is being promoted by the banking industry, to make PDIP adhere to the same rules as the banking industry. L. Gargiulo responded that he thinks that proposed legislation is going to adversely affect municipalities and that the Selectmen should talk with their State Representative and State Senator about this proposed legislation to oppose it.

State Representative S. Porcelli asked for the reference number of the proposed bill, and K. Anderson responded it is Senate Bill 553.

M. Lane asked how the amount of \$400,000 was determined to invest in the NH PDIP, and K. Anderson responded that the \$400,000 is the approximate amount in the Undesignated Fund Balance, and that the funds are liquid within 24 hours and gives the Town options.

L. Gargiulo asked about the NH Municipal Association’s posture on the proposed bill, and K. Anderson said that NHMA opposed the bill. She continued that the bill passed the Senate 24-0 and has been forwarded to Senate Finance.

M. Lane asked if there is an alternative that is better, and L. Gargiulo stated that the Provident Bank in Newburyport, but the problem is that the Town cannot use that bank because they are chartered in Massachusetts but not federally. K. Anderson responded that before funds were put in PDIP she went to M&T Bank and asked if they could match the rate, and they could not. K. Anderson said that what M&T does for the Town is waive many of the fees at the end of the year. Additionally, she continued that M&T significantly increased the interest rates on the Town’s escrow accounts.

L. Gargiulo asked why the Town was using M&T Bank, and K. Anderson stated that M&T is federally chartered, and banks used by municipalities in NH must either be federally or NH chartered. State Representative S. Porcelli stated that she thought the proposed bill would be going to the Committee on which she serves, Commerce.

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

**MOTION:** To approve Payroll Warrant # 623 dated February 28, 2024, in the amount of \$35,074.30; Accounts Payable Warrant # 862 dated February 28, 2024, in the amount of \$68,020.22; Escrow Warrant #49 dated February 28, 2024, in the amount of \$4,997.51.

**MOTION:** L. GARGIULO

**SECOND:** M. LANE

**UNANIMOUS**

**Executive: JP Pontbriand, Moderator Re: Poll Pads:** JP Pontbriand, Moderator gave the Selectmen an update regarding the status of the proposal to acquire and to utilize Poll Pads for elections in Hampton Falls. He stated that Poll Pads are a really good tool to use as soon as possible, with the goal of getting an order for purchase submitted because there is a three-month (3-mos) lead time followed by a training period. He said that time is getting short already if the Poll Pads are to be in place in time for the September 2024 Primary, with an additional goal of having the November Presidential election not be the first time the Poll Pads are used, and to give the community time to get used to the new procedure.

JP Pontbriand said that it would be a good idea to give the community the chance to ask questions about the process, so that they are not surprised upon arrival at the polling place. He continued that the other question is how is it to be funded, and he stated that presently there are no State funds for Poll Pads, so the question becomes does the Town wait to see the result of the pending State legislation that may include some funding for purchasing Poll Pads and not accomplish the purchase of Poll Pads this year. He stated that the legislation has passed the House this year, and is currently in the Senate, but is a long way from being law, and he invited Representative Porcelli to update the Selectmen on the status of that bill in the Senate.

Representative Susan Porcelli, Taylor River Rd. presented a synopsis of House Bill HB-447 that is a grant relative to the purchase of electronic equipment for elections. January 3, 2024, HB 447 overwhelmingly passed the House with an amendment; and, February 15, 2024, it was introduced into the Senate and is still in the Election Law and Municipal Affairs Committee, with no hearing date yet published. She stated that her best guestimate for the earliest the Bill might have a final vote would be in the May-June timeframe. Representative Porcelli reported that she has received some questions regarding the proposed Poll Pads such as: are they connected to the Internet? What are the software security requirements? What are the capacity concerns? Is there a quality assurance process? Who would maintain the iPads? And how would the maintenance occur because they will be used approximately once every six months? Will paper copies be available also? Rep. Porcelli said that she will keep the Selectmen updated as she is made aware of additional details regarding the proposed Bill.

JP Pontbriand stated that the question for the Selectmen is whether the Town should wait for the proposed legislation to work its way through to completion at the State to potentially partially fund the acquisition costs of the Poll Pads? He said that his general sense was that there was agreement that the Poll Pads will be a very useful tool to help the election process. He said that answering questions from the community, such as those posed to Rep. Porcelli will be a good step along the way. He would expect the Poll Pads to be welcomed, will be better for the voters, and will provide more documentation and accuracy for both the check-in process and closing out

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at the end of the night. He stated that the downside of waiting is to continue doing the process as it is done now, with the expectation that there will be another opportunity to make that change in the future. The downside of going forward currently is missing out on the potential grant funding offered through the pending legislation. JP Pontbriand made the point that the Poll Pads are not the only equipment need that the elections are going to have, he said that at some point the ballot machine will need to be replaced so that may be another potential future use of those grant funds. In summary, he stated that his recommendation was to not wait for State funding, and to move forward with the purchase of the Poll Pad equipment as soon as possible.

L. Gargiulo asked the Moderator how to have an open dialog with the Town about the proposed Poll Pads, to provide the opportunity for the voters to have their questions addressed, with explanations, and to obtain voter “buy-in”? JP Pontbriand responded in agreement and said that either a discussion, or a hearing could be held by utilizing the typical avenues to invite the public to a meeting to have their questions answered, such as: the Town Newsletter, the Town’s website, and News and Announcements e-subscription, and flyers on bulletin boards at Town Hall, the Library, and at the Post Office. He added that it would be important to tell the attendees at the Information Meeting how the system works today, so that people can understand and appreciate the current context to understand the difference that the Poll Pads have the potential to make. Poll Pads will not replace paper, they will be in addition to paper. JP Pontbriand stated that the paper trail is the binding authoritative source, so that if the election workers are using an electronic Poll Pad to check people in, it does not replace the paper checklist. The paper checklist will still be maintained. He said that it would be great to have more engagement from the community to not only understand the value of the Poll Pads but to also understand and to have greater confidence in the whole process. Poll Pads are an electronic tool used to enhance a system, not to replace a system. He likened the effect to using a calculator. He offered to assist in getting the word out to the community about an Information Meeting. He stated that this year may be the best year to engage interest because of the Presidential election, whereas next year voters may not be as interested.

L. Gargiulo stated that until an Information Meeting is held to give the community the opportunity to have their concerns addressed, he does not see the Selectmen committing to making a purchase of the Poll Pads, so he recommended tabling this discussion and scheduling the Information Meeting for the April 3, 2024, Selectmen’s meeting, to allow time for getting the word out. JP Pontbriand asked to what extent the Informational Meeting will inform the Selectmen to assist in making their decision? L. Gargiulo said that it would get the public “on-board” to provide a higher comfort level regarding a decision to move forward.

Chairman Beattie stated that the Selectmen should not operate out of fear of the election machines, and from his perspective, NH does it the right way. He told of a scenario he witnessed in Hampton Falls where a hand-count was completed for a contested Selectmen’s vote of a difference of three votes. He stated that he thinks that what is needed is an Informational Session where people can see what the Poll Pads do, not the fear of what they might do. He stated that it would be useful to discuss the towns that are using Poll Pads already as evidence of their effectiveness, appropriateness, and success. He agreed that a positive impact of the Poll Pads will be to eliminate the lines at the voting place when someone wants to change their affiliation

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because they will not have to go back around and get in line again to change back, since the Poll Pad will make that change automatically.

L. Gargiulo asked how many towns are using the Poll Pads, and JP Pontbriand responded that it is still a small number. Stephanie Grant, Town Clerk, said that some of the bigger towns have started using them such as Salem and Derry. Chairman Beattie requested information from those towns' Town Clerks regarding their experiences using the Poll Pads.

L. Gargiulo asked if it would be possible to get a sample of the Poll Pad for the Informational Meeting? JP Pontbriand described that the Poll Pad equipment includes: a customized iPad, a scanner, and a mini printer. Rep. Porcelli echoed L. Gargiulo's request for a demo, if possible, and JP Pontbriand responded that he was not sure if they could obtain a demo in relatively short order or not. S. Grant stated that when they were pricing them, at that time, the demos were booked out four-months. L. Gargiulo asked if there was a video that could be viewed and shown at the Informational Meeting?

M. Lane stated that he is a proponent of the proposal for Poll Pads, and he is in support of an Informational Meeting in early April. He said that there is money in the Comcast account to fund the Poll Pads, so there is money available without going into the budget. He confirmed, because of his own witnessing of elections since 2020, that people are more paranoid of the election box, but the Poll Pad does not count votes so he finds it less "scary". If everything goes well at the Information Meeting, he said that he sees the Selectmen deciding to purchase the Poll Pads in time for the September Primary to use the first time, and to be ready for the Presential Election in November.

L. Gargiulo said that explaining the process to anyone who is interested will go a long way, and then referencing a video, and/or a sample, and having stories of towns that are doing it will be good information to share. Chairman Beattie said that he would describe it as an Information Session, and it is an appropriate time of year being a federal election year.

M. Lane asked if the Poll Pads would eliminate the number of hours that Eileen Baker works, and JP Pontbriand responded that this equipment would facilitate but not eliminate the need for the work. Ultimately, everything needs to be tied back to the paper checklist.

Chairman Beattie stated that if the meeting announcement was worded such that "the Selectmen are in the process of making a decision about this equipment", and JP Pontbriand added, "to find out about the new check-in process."

Susan Porcelli, Taylor River Rd (as taxpayer) reiterated that this Bill passed the House overwhelmingly, and she would think that it would also pass the Senate. As a taxpayer, if she were to find out that taxpayer money was spent to purchase equipment for which there was grant money available and was not used, she would take issue with that strategy because the intent of the grant money is for this specific type of equipment. L. Gargiulo requested that Representative Porcelli add an amendment to the Bill for municipalities purchasing the equipment prior to the release of grant monies to be reimbursed retroactively. Chairman Beattie clarified that expenditure of funds for the Poll Pads would not be taxpayer money for because the Selectmen

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would utilize the Comcast franchise monies received quarterly. L. Gargiulo further clarified that those Comcast funds are expressly for the purpose of technology acquisition, and this would be a good use of those funds.

L. Gargiulo said that it is his understanding that there may be a push from the Secretary of State's office for new ballot machines for next year to be partially funded with the grant money from this proposed/anticipated bill, and that the Secretary of State's Office has already chosen two types of ballot machines to recommend to municipalities. Representative Porcelli inquired as to the approximate cost, and JP Pontbriand estimated \$10,000. Everyone agreed that there would be more information available in April, and there was consensus to move ahead with scheduling the Information Session April 3<sup>rd</sup> at the Selectmen's meeting.

**Other Selectmen's Old Business:**

**Shredding Event:** K. Anderson followed up on the request from the prior Selectmen's meeting to ascertain the feasibility of scheduling a shredding event for Hampton Falls residents in the Spring 2024. She reached out to several companies. New England Security Shredders does not do community events, they just do business events. She reported that Police Chief Venio looked into the Crime Line doing a community shredding event for Hampton Falls, and found that they will be in Hampton in April 20<sup>th</sup>, 2024, and have committed to that date and location. Crime Line also have a shredding event scheduled in August and may consider moving it to Hampton Falls and that fee would be \$600. K. Anderson stated that the earliest shredding event that could be scheduled in Hampton Falls is June 8<sup>th</sup> at the Brush Dump for \$900. She said that April or early May timeframes are booked in advance because it is the most popular time as towns tie into April Earth Day activities and post-tax season people have more to shred. L. Gargiulo suggested \$7 per box to cover the cost. He said that the company shreds on site and three containers would be the maximum, so when the containers are full the event would be done; therefore, arrive early.

**MOTION: To authorize the Town Administrator to contract a shredding company to schedule a shredding event for a fee not to exceed \$900.00 on June 8<sup>th</sup>, 2024, to be held at the Brush Dump, with residents charged a fee of \$7.00 per box.**

**MOTION: L. GARGIULO**

**SECOND: M. LANE**

**UNANIMOUS**

**OLD BUSINESS PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Rep, Porcelli provided updates on Legislative Actions that had two public hearings today on issues of special interest to Hampton Falls boaters and water sports enthusiasts. She reported that due to the overwhelming interest in these two Bills the hearings were moved from a room that could hold 30 people to a State House room to accommodate 400 because more than 100 people attended. One was HB 1562 relative to Personal Watercraft and removes the term "ski craft" from laws on navigation of state waters and defines such craft as personal watercraft. Headway speed and marked channels are defined for areas including the Landing in Hampton Falls to Hampton. The second bill was HB 1390 relative to regulating Wake Boating and Wake Sports that establishes prohibitions and limitations for the operation of wake boats and their use in wake sports on public waters of the State. Rep. Porcelli offered to share how to track the process of these Bills and how to watch the committee hearings and offered to provide more information if anyone was interested.

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Another update provided by Rep. Porcelli was regarding Epping where there was an override to some of the zoning decisions that was heard by the NH Housing Appeals Board (NHHAB). She provided some background about the NHHAB, that was created in 2020 by legislation, and has the responsibility *“to hear and affirm, reverse, or modify in whole or part appeals of final decisions of municipal boards, committees, and commissions regarding questions of housing and housing development.”* She stated that she is still looking into the composition of the board, their tenure, and affiliations. She added that there are many cases before the NHHAB so it is active.

L. Gargiulo asked if there is any move afoot to get rid of the NHHAB, and Rep. Porcelli responded no. M. Lane said that he is surprised that it is not challenged in court. Chairman Beattie said that it might be but it would be individually. L. Gargiulo stated that the whole purpose and rationale of the NHHAB was to cut through the “red tape” of going to Superior Court, and to make it simpler so that a developer could get something done. Rep. Porcelli said that she was surprised by the number of cases obtaining hearing dates before the NHHAB. Chairman Beattie stated that there are few Planning Boards in the State that are in support of it because Planning Boards work hard to establish their own local control over zoning regulations and then Planning Boards can be overridden by the NHHAB and no one in that locality has any democratic process to appeal or reject the NHHAB. Chairman Beattie said that the NHHAB’s initial intent was for workforce housing, that was to address where the State was lagging behind and is an example of a good initial intent that has become something less than that. Rep. Porcelli recommended that the activity of the NHHAB is something to watch and to keep eyes on.

L. Gargiulo said that he would not be surprised if there was a Bill proposed to eliminate it. He said that taking local control and relinquishing it to a State board is fundamentally wrong and goes against NH tradition and law and he stated that he thinks it is a disgrace that Governor Sununu signed the Bill because it has overreaching consequences. Chairman Beattie stated that the smaller towns will get buried because they do not have the financial resources to fight it. There was discussion to craft legislation to rein it in or to propose something next year. L. Gargiulo stated that he thought it appropriate to ask people seeking election, such as the four gubernatorial candidates, their stance on the NHHAB. L. Gargiulo said that this is not an issue of red or blue, but what is in the best interests of New Hampshire. Chairman Beattie said that this is the type of thing that really changes the way communities look. Rep. Porcelli agreed to do some more research on the subject and to return to the Selectmen with updates.

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**NEW BUSINESS:**

**Executive: Appointments:**

**Assistant Town Clerk – End of Probation: Stacie Ohsberg**

**MOTION:** To appoint Stacie Ohsberg as Assistant Town Clerk/Tax Collector, until March 31, 2026.

**MOTION:** L. GARGIULO

**SECOND:** M. LANE

**UNANIMOUS**

**Firefighters – End of Probation: Peter King and Kassandra Lee**

**MOTION:** To appoint Peter King and Kassandra Lee as firefighters, until someone else shall be chosen and qualified in their stead.

**MOTION:** L. GARGIULO

**SECOND:** M. LANE

**UNANIMOUS**

**Deputy Fire Warden: Laurance Anderson**

**MOTION:** To reappoint Laurance Anderson as Deputy Fire Warden, until March 31, 2027.

**MOTION:** L. GARGIULO

**SECOND:** M. LANE

**UNANIMOUS**

**Part-Time Police Officers: Neal Casale, Bruce Preston, Barry Newcomb, Brad Von Haden**

**MOTION:** To reappoint Neal Casale, Bruce Preston, Barry Newcomb and Brad Von Haden as part-time Police Officers, until March 31, 2025.

**MOTION:** L. GARGIULO

**SECOND:** M. LANE

**UNANIMOUS**

**Animal Control Officers: Jackson Crouse and Paul Michael.**

**MOTION:** To reappoint Jackson Crouse and Paul Michael as part-time Animal Control Officers, until March 31, 2025.

**MOTION:** L. GARGIULO

**SECOND:** M. LANE

**UNANIMOUS**

**Requests for Volunteers:** K. Anderson stated that requests for volunteers were made for all the Town’s boards, committees, and commissions, and anyone who is interested is invited to complete and submit the Volunteer Application form to her office, and to attend the March 20<sup>th</sup> Selectmen’s meeting. M. Lane asked if there were any openings on the Zoning Board, and K. Anderson responded yes, that one of the incumbent ZBA members has indicated that they are not continuing. She said that the ZBA Chairman, John DeLeire, has spoken with a current ZBA Alternate member about moving up into a regular position, so there would then be a ZBA Alternate position open. All interested candidates have been instructed to submit the Volunteer Application for review and consideration by the Selectmen.

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**Financial: Veterans Credit:** This is an application for a Veteran’s Credit for a resident at Map 5 / Lot 35 who meets the statutory requirements. Chairman Beattie asked K. Anderson to please review the Veteran’s Credits information, as it has been a while since the Selectmen have reviewed this type of request. K. Anderson stated that the maximum allowed Veteran’s Credit by the State is \$750 and Hampton Falls credit is currently \$600. She stated that the minimum is \$50. She continued stating that in 2021 Hampton Falls increased the Veteran’s Credit from \$500 to \$600.

**MOTION: To approve the Veteran’s Credit for Map 5 / Lot 35.**

**MOTION: L. GARGIULO**

**SECOND: M. LANE**

**UNANIMOUS**

**Financial: Abatements:** Three (3) abatements have been processed by the Assessor due to corrections in the data.

**MOTION: To approve abatement #811 for Map 1 / Lot 105, to abate \$93 plus interest, to correct the driveway from paved to partially paved.**

**MOTION: L. GARGIULO**

**SECOND: M. LANE**

**UNANIMOUS**

**MOTION: To approve abatement #812 for Map 4 / Lot 70-4, to abate \$1,036 plus interest, to correct the back land condition to wet and noting that the lot was not subdividable.**

**MOTION: L. GARGIULO**

**SECOND: M. LANE**

**UNANIMOUS**

**MOTION: To approve abatement #813 for Map 1 / Lot 26, to abate \$319, plus interest to correct the number of fireplaces and adjust the condition to “Good”.**

**MOTION: L. GARGIULO**

**SECOND: M. LANE**

**UNANIMOUS**

**Other: Other Selectmen’s New Business:**

**Avitar, Two New Modules:** K. Anderson presented a proposal from Avitar for two modules of the Avitar software for Motor Vehicle and for Tax, so that the Town Clerk/Tax Collector’s system can “talk to” the new accounting system software. She stated that the modules will eliminate double entry of data that can be a potential source of human errors. A report will be automatically generated that can then be uploaded directly into the accounting system. She explained that it is a feature in the new accounting system that the Staff were really looking forward to, and when she contacted Avitar about getting the link done she learned that Avitar charges \$1,500 per module, so it will be a total cost of \$3,000. M. Lane stated that it sounds like a Comcast account expense, and there was consensus.

**MOTION: To authorize the expenditure of \$3,000 from the Comcast account for the purpose of funding the cost of two (2) modules of Avitar software for Motor Vehicles and**

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for Tax in the Town Clerk’s office, to facilitate linking with the Town’s new accounting software.

**MOTION: L. GARGIULO**  
**SECOND: M. LANE**  
**UNANIMOUS**

**Request for Write-off:** The tax bill for Wakeda Campground Map 6 / Lot 39, Site A-40 was never paid and the owner has moved out of the campground. This is a request to write-off the uncollected taxes in the amount of \$107.81.

**MOTION: To authorize the Tax Collector to write-off the 2022 uncollectible taxes for Wakeda Site A-40 in the amount of \$107.81.**

**MOTION: L. GARGIULO**  
**SECOND: M. LANE**  
**UNANIMOUS**

**Door on Garage in parking lot next to Town Hall:** L. Gargiulo brought to the attention of the Selectmen the door on the detached garage located in the parking lot next to Town Hall. He stated that it is completely rusted through (and it looks horrible) and suggested that it be repaired. He asked what is stored in that garage? K. Anderson responded that it is used by the Fire Department, and is Town property: there are barricades, chairs, and an old fire truck stored.

**Town Hall Men’s Room ceiling fan:** L. Gargiulo brought to the attention of the Selectmen the ceiling fan in the Town Hall Men’s Room which (he joked) sounds like a helicopter is about to land, and he said that someone should take a look at it.

**Newsletter Update:** R. Webb stated that the March-April 2024 Newsletter is almost ready but she was waiting for one more contribution that is expected tomorrow, so she plans to email it to the Selectmen for their review, with hopes for distribution later this week. L. Gargiulo suggested adding a paragraph to the Newsletter about the April 3<sup>rd</sup> Information Meeting regarding the Poll Pads, and R. Webb agreed to write the paragraph.

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

**Monthly Reports: Selectmen’s Representative Reports:**

**Planning Board: E. Beattie:** Chairman Beattie stated that he anticipates the Planning Board will be getting busier in the coming months, as there are some potential projects in early discussion. He said that the Ordinances and Regulations Committee (ORRC) put together a massive number of Articles about zoning that people will see on the ballot next Tuesday March 12, 2024, on Voting Day. He said that the Articles are highly recommended by the Planning Board and are either for clarification or for concerns regarding types of commercial development and signage on Route 1. He recognizes the effort accomplished by the ORRC during the year to bring those Articles to the ballot.

**Recreation Commission: M. Lane:** M. Lane stated that he did not have much to report as he missed the Recreation Commission on Monday this week and had not yet seen their minutes.

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**LAS: M. Lane:** M. Lane stated that there will be more information to report following the Voting Day next Tuesday March 12, 2024, as there were a couple of big items on the ballot, so it will be interesting to see the outcomes of the voting. At LAS the Winter concerts and floor hockey and all the Winter activities are fully in place. He continued, saying that he had wanted to ask Representative Porcelli about a Legislative Meeting that was held on January 6<sup>th</sup> regarding a Resolution, that she is sponsoring, urging the federal congressional delegation to increase spending for Special Education. He said that he will follow up with Rep. Porcelli on the status of that Resolution. M. Lane stated that the one consistent commentary that people have made to him since the Deliberative Session is how shocked they are that the cost of Special Education is almost the same as the cost of regular education, with an approximate difference of \$200,000 in the School budget (\$1.6m and \$1.4m).

**Heritage Commission: L. Gargiulo:** L. Gargiulo reported that the Heritage Commission is moving ahead with a Barn Survey to take photographs of barns that have not been previously photographed. Additionally, the Heritage Commission is considering doing a Barn Tour later in the Fall.

**Conservation Commission: L. Gargiulo:** L. Gargiulo reported that the Conservation Commission has purchased a storage container that has been located at the Brush Dump for the off-season storage of the Greenhead traps.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

**Michael LaBarre,** Taylor River Rd. inquired about the status of the Library’s Strategic Plan mentioned at another Selectmen’s meeting. He reported that he spoke with a Librarian, at the library, and told them that he wanted to get involved, so he contacted some other libraries in the area and obtained copies of their strategic plans and some of their surveys that were sent to the public, and he gave that information to the Hampton Falls’ librarians. He asked Chairman Beattie if he knew the status of that request. Chairman Beattie responded that there is a Warrant Article on the ballot next Tuesday to get voted for funding. The Library Trustees are asking for permission to use their own funding from donations, that has “No Tax Impact”. Chairman Beattie continued that because there is no tax impact that he is assuming that it will pass and that the Library Trustees will be going forward with the Strategic Planning project.

M. LaBarre stated that the reason he decided to get involved with the project is because, regardless of the source of funding, he believes that there are better things to spend that money on than a consultant, and, in fact, he said that one of the librarians offered to do the project for one-third of the cost proposed by the consultant. Chairman Beattie said that he has received similar feedback since the Deliberative Session on the cost of the proposed Strategic Plan. He continued that the additional proposals from other companies to do a Strategic Plan for the library were even higher. M. LaBarre said that in his experience, he has seen consultants come in and typically do a survey of staff and report on their findings, which are really the ideas of the staff that management may not have wanted to previously address, but because the recommendations are from a “consultant” the ideas have more merit. He said that there are copies of those questions that will be asked (from other library’s strategic plans) at the library. Chairman Beattie said that it will be good to have those questions for reference.

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Chairman Beattie stated a reminder to those who may be watching this meeting video either in real time or afterwards, that the library is its own entity. He said that they ask for permission to do some things but as Library Trustees they are independent.

**REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES: February 21, 2024**

**MOTION: To approve the minutes of February 21, 2024, as written.**

**MOTION: L. GARGIULO**

**SECOND: M. LANE**

**UNANIMOUS**

**ADJOURNMENT:**

**MOTION: To adjourn the Selectmen’s meeting at 7:15PM.**

**MOTION: L. GARGIULO**

**SECOND: M. LANE**

**UNANIMOUS**

Next Selectmen’s Meeting is Wednesday, March 20, 2024, at 8:00 AM

These Minutes prepared by Rachel D. Webb, Assistant Administrator