

**Board of Selectmen  
Meeting Minutes  
February 22, 2023**

Present: James Bailey, Chairman; Iris Campbell, Selectwoman; Richard Pelletier, Selectman and Laura Buono, Town Administrator.

In Attendance: Deb McDonald, Samantha Gallo, Riche' Colcombe, Tammy McClure, Dave Lewis, Dana Clow, Keith Cobbett, Peter Mellen, Alan Dobrowolski

Pledge of allegiance was completed.

**1. OPEN SESSION**

Chairman Bailey called for questions during open session.

*Software:* Deb McDonald, Tax Collector, asked if she can go back to BMSI for the property tax system. She said has tried the new Avitar system for (6) months and is not comfortable with the support or the reporting, however she did agree there were some good aspects regarding the new system. Ms. McDonald said during the demonstration of the software 3 years ago, at that time, she said she wasn't interested in it. Chairman Bailey said they would investigate Deb's concerns.

Ms. Buono said the reason the Board approved the new Avitar system was to eliminate double entry for assessing which includes Avitar and BMSI (whatever is entered into Avitar must also be entered into BMSI). Ms. Buono asked Ms. McDonald if additional training would help her feel more comfortable. Ms. Deb said no, the reports and keying in is very different and it's a lot more work, she's not comfortable and doesn't like the system and is not happy with the results. Ms. Buono said she was not made aware of the difficulties with the system and would have called Avitar for more training. She did the same when the payroll system was changed and there were some start up issues. Ms. Buono said she did the same recently when she had BMSI come in and provide hands-on training for the payroll staff when they changed their system. The same can be done for the Avitar assessing/tax system. Ms. Buono said the Board approved the software change and \$10,000 was spent for the new system and it has only been in place for (6) months. Ms. McDonald said she has spoken to other Tax Collectors who agree with her, the new system is long and cumbersome.

Selectman Pelletier said the Board would first need to research the cost if they decide to revert to the previous tax system. Ms. Buono asked the Board what they will need for further discussion. Also, she feels the Board should discuss if 6 months is enough time to be comfortable with a new program when someone doesn't like change and isn't interested in more training. Selectwoman Campbell asked if the Board has authority over another elected official? Ms. Buono said the Board has the authority over approving the purchase of software used to run our assessing information, which is the decision the Board made. The software is for the assessing program which converts to the tax program. Riche' Colcombe asked if the tax system goes back to BMSI are we throwing away \$10,000? The answer was essentially yes. Someone else asked why it changed. Ms. Buono said because the Assessing department, for years, would have to double enter and at times there

would be mistakes that were not captured which converts to dollars in the tax system. There was a discussion about entering data into two tax systems and if it is efficient. Avitar was looked at because it's one of two programs that is currently used, and the Assessor uses Avitar so this enables all of his changes to be in our system at the time they are done.

Selectman Pelletier wants to table this discussion until the next meeting, meanwhile, he will do some research regarding Ms., McDonald's concerns.

Community Thrift Shop: Samantha Gallo and Tammy McClure feel the community would benefit from a community thrift shop with all the proceeds going back into the community. They have done some research and have visited a couple of shops. They have met with the directors of the community shop in Henniker which has offered to help Hillsborough get on board. The shop in Henniker has been operating for 13 years and is very successful because there is no overhead, the building it occupies is owned by the church. For Hillsborough to create a similar shop they would like the town to be the sponsor of the Hillsborough Community Thrift Shop or as a project of the town. A portion of a town building on the corner of Church St. could be utilized. Chairman Bailey likes the idea. Someone said there is a commercial thrift shop located down the street from the proposed location, he said a municipality cannot compete with a private business. Chairman Bailey said they would need to investigate that. Samantha Gallo said the money generated from the shop would not go through the town, it would be a town project because the town is letting them use the building. Ms. Buono said the town would sponsor the project not run the project. A memorandum of understanding would be created as well.

Water & Sewer/Park & Whittemore Project: Peter Mellen, Dave Lewis, and Dana Clow met with the Board to provide an update on the project. There are some homes on Park Place that have sewer on a private line that runs behind the buildings. It is felt to at least plan on moving that sewer line into Park Place. There are other areas targeted that will need detailed topographic survey, wetland delineation, sewer replacement design and buildings that will require internal inspections. The engineering is covering a larger area than just the construction area. Mr. Mellen said they budgeted \$30,000 for engineering and the cost has come in for \$65,000 for all the engineering. He asked the town if they would consider sharing the cost of the engineering by providing \$30,000.

David Lewis, working with Underwood Engineers said the proposed work from Whittemore St. up and around Park Place to Gay Ave. would cost about \$1,500,000 for partial water, sewer, drain and roadway. Selectman Pelletier feels the cost for homeowners tying into the new storm water system (those with sump-pumps) needs to be considered during the actual reconstruction. At this time storm water is either drained into the sewer system or drained onto the yards.

Chairman Bailey asked if the rate impact is known for this work. Peter Mellen said the Sewer Rate Study recommended a 25% increase for 2023 and another 25% increase 3 years later. Selectman Pelletier asked if those rate increases will cover the cost of the project. David said yes, and for the cost for the next project in 3 years. Mr. Mellen has also heard through the grapevine about possible access to ARPA funds. Ms. Buono said the Board was talking about using the Town's ARPA funds. There is still funding through the county that can be applied for, the deadline is March 2<sup>nd</sup>. Ms. Buono will forward the information.

Mr. Mellen said the timeline for this project is for the design to be done in the Spring of 2023 , and then go to bid in the winter, and build during the 2024 construction season. A timeline of the project will be forwarded to Ms. Buono. Riche' Colcombe asked if Water & Sewer Trust Funds money will be used. Mr. Mellen said yes, most likely. The Board needs to decide if the ARPA funds will be used for this project. All Board members feels it's a good project for those funds.

*Avanru Development/Support Letter:* Avanru Development asked for a letter of support from the Town for their housing project on West Main Street. Avanru applied for ARPA funds for their infrastructure and development project planned in Hillsborough. The Board members signed the letter of support.

## **2. MINUTES**

Chairman Bailey made a motion to accept the meeting minutes from February 7, 2023. Selectman Pelletier seconded the motion, the motion passed unanimously.

Chairman Bailey made a motion to accept the meeting minutes from January 25, 2023. Selectman Pelletier seconded the motion, the motion passed unanimously.

## **3. CONSENT AGENDA**

Motion to approve the Consent Agenda for February 22, 2023

- Elderly Exemption Denial – Map 8 Lot 99
- Welfare Lien Notice – Map 17 Lot 129
- Welfare Lien Discharge – Map 12 Lot 38
- DRA Form MS636
- 2023 Town Warrant

Selectwoman Campbell seconded the motion, the motion passed unanimously.

## **4. MANIFEST**

Chairman Bailey made a motion to authorize the Selectmen to sign manifests and order the Treasurer to sign Payroll Check numbers 18267 – 18299 a/k/a Vouchers 7 & 8 in the amount of \$192,312.76 (includes 218 direct deposit stubs) and Accounts Payable Check numbers 028800 - 028971 a/k/a Vouchers 7, 8 & 9 in the amount of \$1,361,801.43. Selectwoman Campbell seconded the motion, the motion passed unanimously.

\*\* A/P Vouchers include payment to HDSO in the amount of \$729,892.47

## **5. OTHER BUSINESS**

*Henniker Building Inspector:* Ms. Buono said Henniker is without a Building Inspector at this time and is asking if Hillsborough would enter a mutual agreement using Hillsborough's Building

Inspector until Henniker can find a replacement. Ms. Buono sent Henniker the cost for reimbursement up to 6 months which Henniker was agreeable to.

45 School Street: Ms. Buono updated the Board on the code violations at 45 School Street and said the Building Inspector will accompany both the Town's Attorney and the property owners attorney for an inspection of the site on Friday 2/24 to document the violations. The Building Inspector is requesting structural engineering for the damaged barn. She said their court date still stands for March.

Associated Electric: Ms. Buono sent a copy of the scope-of-work from the Department of Environmental Services for the Associated Electric property.

Town Meeting: Ms. Buono said she had met with the Moderator last month regarding Town Meeting but will contact him with an update as to the final warrant articles.

## **6. ADJOURNMENT**

Chairman Bailey made a motion to adjourn at 7:30 pm. Seconded by Selectman Pelletier, motion passed unanimously.

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A true record  
Mary Whalen  
Recording Secretary

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Approved by:  
Hillsborough Selectboard

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James C. Bailey, III, Chairman

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Iris Campbell, Selectwoman

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Richard Pelletier, Selectman