

**Board of Selectmen
Meeting Minutes
February 12, 2025**

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

Others are present: Marian Baker, Dana Clow, Riche' Colcombe, Cathy Houle, John Segedy, Samantha Gallo, Kenny Stafford, Jr., Chris Parsons, Angela Poluchov, James Clough, Tom McClure, Penny Griffin, Richard Head, Trish Bush, Dave Lewis

Meeting opened at 6:00 pm
Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

1. MANIFEST

Chairman Bailey made a motion to authorize the Selectmen to sign manifests and order the Treasurer to sign Payroll Check numbers 19922 – 19968 a/k/a Vouchers 5, 6 & 7 in the amount of \$397,235.43 (includes 332 direct deposit stubs) and Accounts Payable Check numbers 033253 – 033272 a/k/a Vouchers 5 & 6 in the amount of \$1,395,872.30. Selectman Pelletier seconded the motion, the motion passed.

** A/P Checks include payment to HDSD in the amount of \$905,640.46

2. CONSENT AGENDA

Chairman Bailey made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda for February 12, 2025. Selectman Pelletier seconded the motion, the motion passed.

- Intent to Cut – Map 4 Lot 50, 60 & 61 (Cooledge Road)
- Solar Exemption – Map 12A Lot 192

3. SIDEWALK PROJECT

Ms. Buono provided an update on the sidewalk project. There are still easements the Town is having problems obtaining and to avoid going through the long process of eminent domain, there is an option to redesign the areas where the easements have not been received. She said although it's still a delay, it is a quicker process than going through eminent domain which the State would have to handle. She said our engineer will put together a scope of work along with a cost, and then she and Ms. Payson will estimate what we feel the cost should be which is required due to the LPA funding, bring it to the Board to review, and then send it to the State for funding approval.

4. ASSOCIATED ELECTRIC PROPERTY

Ms. Buono said the demolition process is moving forward. All the hazardous waste has been removed. Selectwoman asked about the removal of the trailer from out front. Ms. Buono said she hasn't heard from Mr. Butler but due to all the snow, it's not a current priority. Chairman Bailey had information from Mr. Butler and said the trailer in front will be moved in the spring due to a couple of things that would need to be done.

5. PUBLIC HEARING – TAX INCREMENT FINANCING (TIF) DISTRICT

**(adoption of RSA 162-K) & ADOPTION OF THE NORTH BRANCH
GATEWAY ZONE TIF DISTRICT PLAN**

Chairman Bailey opened the public hearing at 6:15 pm and turned the hearing over to Matt Monahan from Central NH Regional Planning Commission. Mr. Monahan said the Economic Development Commission in Hillsborough has been working on creating a Tax Increment Finance District. In an established TIF District, as development occurs there, the assessed value increases and those funds from the increased value are used to finance improvements in the TIF District. The development of the North Branch Gateway Zone is located on the Antrim line and along Antrim Road. Mr. Monahan used conservative numbers for development potential of about \$934,000 for the North Branch Gateway Zone annually. TIF helps development occur where it may not otherwise occur. Ms. Buono said the adoption of RSA 162-K is another tool that will promote development in the areas that can be developed, and the articles have no tax impact.

Chairman Bailey called for public comments.

Marian Baker said as the former secretary of the Contoocook North Branch Local Advisory Committee she is not sure the plan has gone to them. Mr. Monahan said the RSA spells out that only the school district and the county need to be notified.

Chairman Bailey closed the public hearing at 6:31 pm.

6. PUBLIC HEARING ON THE 2025 PROPOSED TOWN BUDGET

Chairman Bailey opened the hearing at 6:45 pm.

A review of the operating budget line by line asking for questions from the public.

- Riche' Colcombe asked if the commercial properties are included in the revaluation of the town. The Board said all properties are included in the revaluation this year.
- General Government Buildings, Tom McClure asked if anything has been done about insulating the police department. Chairman Bailey said the roof was replaced and will look up the information that was previously obtained regarding the vapor barrier and the insulation. Mr. McClure also mentioned the metal roofing at the museum needs to be painted. Chairman Bailey said a cost for the roof painting will be looked at. Mr. McClure said the flashing on the chimney needs to be fixed at the Club House and he also feels the town doesn't put enough money into its buildings. Ms. Buono said a mason is scheduled for this spring. Chairman Bailey said in the highlight's paperwork hand outs, it talks about what's being addressed. The building repairs are noted in the capital budget not the operating budget.
- Marion Baker talked about the Methodist Church in the Center which also needs repairs. Ms. Buono said when the town voted to accept the church it came with a big price tag. She said the town could use 3 times the amount budgeted for the buildings, but currently the budget gets used up on the occupied buildings that have a lot of deferred maintenance over the years that are getting caught up. The town can't budget enough in one year to cover all the buildings. Marian mentioned that there are grants for older buildings.
- Riche' Colcombe asked if the work was completed on the old fire house. Chairman Bailey said the painting had been completed. The cost was paid from the capital reserve fund.
- Someone asked about the police department budget increase. Chairman Bailey said the increase is mainly for payroll and the union contract. Police Chief Chris Parsons said he is hoping to hire 2 more officers in 2025. One would start in April and the other in October,

the impact on the budget is \$54,000. The payroll increase is because of the union contract as well as yearly step and cost of living increases. Selectman Pelletier explained that the union contract was voted on and approved last year and the 2025 budget is showing 2 years of that contract. The resident then asked why the town needs two more officers. Selectman Pelletier explained that Hillsborough's population is 1.5% of the county but the crime is 5.5% of the crime in the county. The town of Bedford also has 5.5% of the crime in the county which is a much larger community with 37 police officers. The town of Hillsborough has the same percentage of crime as Bedford but is a smaller community with 16 officers, that is why there is a need for 2 more officers. The resident said the town is living beyond their means by the amount of money that is spent on certain services, particularly police & fire.

- Ms. Buono explained another increase to the police budget this year is for New Hampshire Retirement. There were wages from 2018 that did not have NHR deducted and should have and is part of this one-year increase of \$150,000 which is adding 5% to the increase.
- Dana Clow asked if adding the officers would reduce the over-time cost. Chief Parsons said there will be some reduction.
- Riche' Colcombe asked if any of the contracts with other towns have been increased? Chief Parsons said he works cautiously with the communities; he doesn't want to lose the revenue because those communities will begin to look elsewhere for cheaper dispatch services.
- John Segedy asked if there is hope the rooms & meals tax will begin to be more in the future? Ms. Buono said there is always hope, but that is State driven.
- Chairman Baily explained Manahan Park and Youth Services wages show an increase for competitive purposes.

No further questions, the hearing moved on to the warrant articles.

- Riche' Colcombe asked if there is a legal issue for Water/Sewer who pays the legal fees. Ms. Buono said Water/Sewer has a legal line.
- Riche' Colcombe asked for the status of the grant money received for the work force housing. Ms. Buono said the Board has not discussed what they want to do with that money. The auditors are tracking the money in the general fund. Ms. Colcombe asked if there would be a public hearing to spend that money. Ms. Buono said the auditor recommended putting any expense from the grant money in a warrant article.
- John Segedy asked the Board to use \$60,000 from the grant money for Article 8 instead of using tax dollars. Chairman Bailey said the Board has not met to discuss the use of that money. Selectman Pelletier added that the Board does know it would like to use the money on something that will impact the town (infrastructure) rather than spending it here and there.
- Riche' Colcombe asked the Board if the town approves the submitted petition regarding streaming the Selectboard meetings will the Board follow through, on the warrant it says the petition is advisory. Ms. Buono explained that Town Meeting cannot dictate policy which the petition is a policy.
- John Segedy asked what RSA says a Town Meeting cannot dictate policy. Ms. Buono said she has a legal opinion from an attorney.
- Riche' Colcombe asked if the Board is seriously considering disregarding the wishes of the voters should the petition pass. Chairman Bailey said streaming the meetings has already been discussed as a Board and decided against it and it will be discussed again if the petition passes. Ms. Buono said it's responsible to let the voters know the petition is

advisory. Ms. Colcombe said it is disheartening to learn the Board could decide not to stream the meetings if the petition passes.

- John Segedy submitted a petition article regarding meeting recordings to keep the recordings for 10 years for transparency purposes not for creating the minutes. Mr. Segedy is concerned that the Board would not listen to the public. Chairman Bailey corrected John and said the Board did not say they would not listen to the voters. Ms. Buono asked John, who is a Conservation Commission member, how long they keep their meeting recordings. John said the Conservation Commission does not record their meetings.

Chairman Bailey closed the hearing at 8:29 pm

7. PUBLIC BOND HEARING FOR \$240,000 FOR THE WATER & SEWER DEPARTMENT

Chairman Bailey opened the hearing at 8:30 pm

Commissioner Dave Lewis said the Bond is for mitigating lead and copper per the US Environmental Protection Agency guidelines, at this time there may be 70% that could be forgiven. (A lot of background noise during this hearing)

- Riche' Colcombe asked what the terms for the 70% forgiveness are. (The answer was not audible).
- Penny Griffin from the water department said they need to identify water pipes and what the material is (a lot of background noise, hard to hear the audio). There are 271 locations not identified.

Chairman Bailey closed the hearing at 8:37 pm.

Ms. Buono asked the Board if they will be keeping the budget as presented tonight, since she needs to finalize the items for the Town Report as well as the Department of Revenue, or if they would like to make any changes. The Board will keep the budget as presented this evening.

Meeting adjourned at 8:42 pm

A true record
Mary Whalen
Recording Secretary

Date: _____

Approved by:
Hillsborough Selectboard

James C. Bailey, III, Chairman

Iris Campbell, Selectwoman

