

TOWN OF ALLENSTOWN
Selectboard Meeting
16 School Street
Allenstown, New Hampshire 03275
June 17, 2019

Call to Order

The Allenstown Selectboard Meeting of June 17, 2019 was called to order by Chair Ryan Carter at 6:07 pm.

Chair Carter called for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call

Present on the Board: Sandy McKenney, Maureen Higham, Ryan Carter

Allenstown staff: Derik Goodine, Town Administrator; Debbie Bender, Finance Director; Kathleen Pelissier, Town Clerk/Tax Collector; Police Chief Michael Stark; Trish Caruso, Welfare & Human Resources Clerk

Others present: Crystal Venegas, Jeffrey Venegas, Jeanne Hills, Michael Frascinella, Holly Riley

Citizens' Comments

Mr. Frascinella reporting meeting with the Bear Brook State Park Manager for a lengthy and productive discussion at the recent EDC meeting. They agreed to share publicity regarding events. He added that Allenstown residents currently pay the same price as other visitors to the Park, and the Manager is going to talk with her boss about a break for Allenstown residents. He said that renovations are being made to cabins in the 4H Camp area. Also, the water level has been lowered at the pond, tons of sand have been brought in, and trees are being cut for an access road. He said that admittance to the fly-fishing pond operated by NH Fish & Game is free.

Chair Carter thanked Mr. Frascinella for the report and said a fee break for Allenstown residents would be nice.

Ms. Riley stated that she has been emailing members of the Board regarding Riverside Drive Road. She said she is an investment builder and was not told this is a private road. She said that mortgage companies want to see a maintenance agreement, and the town owns more than half of the property on the road.

Ms. McKenney said that the town did not purchase the properties, FEMA did; the town just holds the deeds.

Mr. Goodine said the area is a flood plain and people who no longer wanted to live there sold their properties to FEMA. The town was not part of that.

Chair Carter said there was heavy flooding in 2007, 2008 and 2009. A dam above was opened without notification and the course of the river changed.

Ms. Riley said there used to be a maintenance agreement.

Ms. McKenney said there was not one.

Mr. Riley said that she wanted the Board to vote tonight on this.

Chair Carter said that they had read her emails and she is finding out the hard way what the situation is there. He said it could be designated an Emergency Way, which would require a public hearing. He added that there is a Winter Maintenance RSA which could be explored. It is a tricky situation. He said the town cannot spend tax dollars to maintain a private road.

Ms. Riley asked if she needs to take the town to court if she wants to make the town pay. She said the town owns a lot of property on that road.

Mr. Goodine asked what it is worth, though. He said this issue will be on the July 1, 2019 meeting agenda and he encouraged Ms. Riley to be there. The BOS needs to consult with the Town Attorney.

Regular Agenda

• Action on Parking Ordinance - Parking Ordinance Changes to add and delete parking rules Section CO 213:

Mr. Goodine said that Police Chief Stark is here with exhibits regarding the parking ordinance proposed ban on parking between Webster and Whitten Streets on Main Street.

Chief Stark said that visibility there is poor even when vehicles are not parked there, but parked vehicles make it even worse.

Mr. Goodine next said that in January of 1998 there was a request for speed limit signs on Riverside Drive Road. At the time, parking was restricted to one side of the street. This should not have been enacted since this is a private road, so this ordinance revision would remove that ban.

Chair Carter opened the public hearing at 6:23 pm.

Chair Carter closed the public hearing at 6:23, as there were no members of the public wishing to speak.

Ms. McKenney made a motion to approve the revised parking ordinance. Ms. Higham seconded the motion, which carried, with the abstention of Ryan Carter.

• Action on Purchase Policy Changes to Sections 5.2 through 5.4, which adds Local Vendor Preference

Mr. Goodine presented an addition to the town's purchasing policy, adding a local vendor preference section, which would allow department heads to grant a contract to a local bidder within three percent of the lowest bid.

Chair Carter opened the public hearing at 6:29 pm.

Mr. Venegas said this is a good idea.

Ms. Pelissier agreed that this would be a good addition to the purchasing policy.

Chair Carter closed the public hearing at 6:31 pm.

Chair Carter said this would encourage the growth of local businesses.

• **Tax Deeds Discussion**

Mr. Goodine said he plans to complete the deeding of properties by July 17, 2019. He said he would have a coded list ready for the next meeting. The Building Inspector will be going out to check the conditions of these properties.

Ms. Pelissier said this is one of the larger lists the town has had. She said the campgrounds are challenging because the owners are responsible for the land, and the campers are responsible for their motor homes. They are allowed property tax exemptions if they present their vehicle registrations to the Assessor by a certain deadline.

Ms. McKenney made a motion to authorize the Town Administrator to negotiate agreements with mobile home cooperatives in conjunction with the deeding process. Ms. Higham seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

Mr. Goodine said he would get back to Mr. Carter regarding the property for which a deed was created 50 years ago but for which the first tax bill was generated three years ago.

• **Zone Change and 79E Tax Program Update**

Mr. Goodine reported that a few issues have come up regarding the proposed ordinance change, and a second hearing will have to be scheduled. First, the proposed revised ordinance mentions Lot 3, when in actuality Lots 4 and 5 are also included in the expansion. Attorney Somers recommends omitting reference to specific lots. Mr. Goodine also said that the minimum square footage for one-bedroom apartments was reduced from 1,000 square feet to 650 square feet, based on data presented showing units ranging from 460 square feet to 1,200 square feet. It was established that requirements for Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU) are not relevant because these proposed apartments are independent. The minimum for non-residential areas is 500 square feet in the proposed ordinance. Questions about enforcement of the ordinance – whether the Planning Board or the ZBA would be responsible – need to be resolved. Mr. Goodine said they are moving in the right direction and are learning a lot. For the special town meeting, ballots can be created inhouse.

Ms. Pelissier said the hours must be 8:00 am to 7:00 pm, as with any election, and they must set up the same number of voting booths as for any election. She said she has contacted Pembroke about borrowing some tabletop voting stations, which are easier to put up and take down than traditional booths.

• **Personnel Policy Changes Proposal Review**

Ms. Bender stated that she has been working on several revisions to the town Personnel Policy to be reviewed by the Board. She said the entire policy is over 100 pages long, and she hopes to go through the whole document and condense it when time permits. She said that the first revision just reflects the switch from weekly to bi-weekly reporting of hours worked. The second is about paychecks and whom an employee should contact with issues. The policy currently says the employee should contact the Board Chair. Ms. Bender suggested contacting one's department head, then the Finance Director and

then the Town Administrator. The next change proposes removing petty cash and paycheck adjustment as methods of reimbursement, leaving a check from the town as the only method.

Ms. Pelissier said she still distributes petty cash, keeping the receipts and reconciling the account every month or two.

Ms. Bender said she would leave petty cash in the policy as a method for reimbursement.

Chair Carter asked if it was permitted to take a vacation week but also work 40 hours.

Chief Stark said that would only happen if the employee was needed to fill shifts.

Ms. Caruso said that different departments have different needs.

Ms. Bender continued, saying that sick time cannot be pushed to overtime. An employee has no claim to sick time unless he or she is sick. Vacation time, but not sick time, can be used to reach overtime.

Chair Carter said they do not want to create opportunities for abuse.

Ms. McKenney asked about the Fire Department requirement to work 53 hours before being eligible for overtime.

Chief Stark said this is from the Fair Labor Standards Act because most fire departments have sleep-ins. Since the Allenstown Fire Department does not have sleep-ins, this should be changed to 45 hours and the Police Department should be 40 hours.

Ms. Bender said the policy should say that overtime starts after reaching normal hours. She will make revisions and re-present this.

Ms. Bender said that the Sewer Department wants the policy to state that employees get one paid break, if possible. She said that employees will be paid for a Monday holiday only if they work the previous Friday or schedule the Friday off ahead of time.

Chief Stark said that officers working a holiday get overtime pay in addition to holiday pay (2.5), since the other officers get the day off.

Ms. Bender next presented the concept of converting vacation time to sick time with a doctor's note and department head approval.

Mr. Goodine said he did not favor this because an employee might get a sunburn or food poisoning and then try to convert some or all of his/her vacation time to sick time. He said this is creating potential for abuse, and he is concerned about the public perception.

Ms. Caruso said that if you create a policy for the exception, then the exception becomes the policy.

Chief Stark said that they have small town flexibility. If an employee tries to abuse this, the department head probably has other problems with this employee as well.

Ms. Higham asked what the Chief would do if they did not have this policy.

Chief Stark said the policy just makes it easier for him.

Ms. Bender said they could leave it as it is and let department heads deal with it.

Chair Carter said this is out of the norm.

Ms. Caruso said that if it is not a stated policy, they won't think of it on their own.

Chair Carter said he would rather have the policy and the ability for the department head to say 'no.'

Mr. Goodine raised concerns about fitting these employees back into the schedule.

Ms. Pelissier said that if the policy is abused, they can pull the plug.

Chair Carter suggested allowing up to 50% of vacation time to be converted to sick time.

Ms. Bender suggested it be an 'all or nothing' policy. She said they could re-visit this later.

Ms. Bender next said that the Highway Department can accumulate up to 300 hours of vacation time. The revision says any hours over 300 would be lost with no compensation. Why accrue it if you can't use it? Regarding sick time, six days will be changed to 60 hours.

Ms. Bender said the next proposed revision is about the health savings account benefit and is to correct an error. If an employee commits to putting \$600 in the bank over the course of a year but leaves after only putting in \$80, the town must cover up to \$200. This is per the IRS. She said the town does not pay into these accounts and most employees leave money on the table, so the town is not losing.

Ms. Bender next addressed reporting for work during inclement weather. Employees are expected to report unless notified otherwise. The revision says that an employee who does not report to work because of the weather is not entitled to pay for that day, even if the office closes at noon. Those who did report for work who are sent home at noon would receive a full day's pay.

Ms. Bender said that the next revision simply adds e-cigarettes and vaping to the no smoking policy.

Ms. Bender said that the existing policy regarding longevity is wordy and convoluted. She said she is suggesting longevity bonuses as follows: \$500 for ten years; \$1,000 for 15 years and \$1,500 for 20 years.

Ms. Higham said the town might not have the money for this in some years. She suggested that the granting and the amount of any longevity bonuses should be at the discretion of the Board.

Ms. Bender then presented the concept of a sick bank, which is humanitarian but an administrative nightmare.

Ms. Caruso suggested that this could be created as needed but not ongoing.

Ms. Bender presented the concept of a stipend for employees electing not to take health insurance. She noted that Allentown is the only town in the area not offering this.

Ms. McKenney said the town would save money in the long run. She suggested that Ms. Bender find out the budget impact and re-present this item.

Ms. Bender next presented a proposal to provide pay incentives for employees with college degrees and advanced degrees.

Ms. Pelissier said this is built into the pay scales already. She said tuition reimbursement is better.

Chief Stark said that the town and its departments benefit when employees advance their education.

Chair Carter said they are looking at too many benefits.

Ms. Bender referred to the Highway Department policy regarding reimbursement for safety glasses (no \$ limit); boots (\$150); and clothing (\$250 per year).

Ms. Higham said that safety glasses should not be very expensive. If vision correction is involved, vision insurance should cover that.

Mr. Goodine noted that vision insurance is an elected benefit.

Chair Carter said that the allowance for boots should be \$250.

Ms. Bender agreed to get more information and re-present this item. She presented the final proposed policy change regarding the conversion of overtime to comp time. This allows an hour of overtime to be converted to one regular hour of comp time.

Ms. Pelissier said that this is enticing to millennials.

Ms. Caruso said that supervisors must manage this and there need to be limits.

Ms. Bender suggested allowing a maximum of 30 overtime hours to be converted to regular hours and used within 90 days

Mr. Goodine said that if the employee isn't able to use all of the accumulated time, he/she can be paid instead.

Purchasing Policy

Mr. Goodine said that the current Purchasing Policy is dated 2013 and has had 10 revisions. He would like to clean this up, incorporate all revisions and make his proposed change the first revision of the new 2019 document.

Ms. Higham made a motion to replace the 2013-010 Purchasing Policy with a 2019-001. Ms. McKenney seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

- **Honoring Ronnie Pelissier**

Ms. Pelissier said she has been talking with Marc Boisvert about naming the boat launch or the bridge park after Ronnie Pelissier because he did so much work on those projects.

Mr. Goodine said that was a good idea and he will check about the logistics for each location.

Town Administrator's Report

Mr. Goodine said he recently attended a Community Development Agency workshop. They are making some changes to the CDBG program and are planning grants for housing studies. They have \$300,000 grants for housing improvements – lending homeowners \$15,000 for such items as furnaces and window winterization. The grant could also go toward a mobile home purchase, and the grant is forgivable if the homeowner stays in the home for five years.

Mr. Goodine said that he and Mr. O'Meara will be meeting soon with Central NH Regional Planning to update the CIP for the Master Plan.

Regarding the budget, he said he still expects the CPI to increase by no more than two percent. He has instructed department heads to present budgets as flat as possible.

Ms. McKenney said it is going to be a tough year because of the School portion and the fact that there will be no School surplus.

Mr. Goodine reminded the Board that there is a two percent increase in the merit scale.

Mr. Goodine said that the list of equipment and building values for the Primex property and casualty list is complete. Two vehicles which should not have been on the list were removed.

Mr. Goodine reported a Pembroke Water leak which blew up in the mill. The canal was drained to fix it.

Mr. Goodine reported that the personal liability portion of the Holiday Acres case has been dismissed by the Court.

Consent Calendar, Minutes and Manifests

Ms. Higham made a motion to ratify the Consent Calendar of June 17, 2019. Ms. McKenney seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

Ms. Higham made a motion to approve the minutes of the June 3, 2019 public session. Ms. McKenney seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

Ms. Higham made a motion to approve the minutes of the June 3, 2019 non-public session. Ms. McKenney seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

Ms. Higham made a motion to approve the Payroll and Accounts Payable manifests listed on the June 17, 2018 agenda. Ms. McKenney seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

Lien Discharges

Chair Carter made a motion to discharge the lien listed at the Merrimack County Registry of Deeds as Book 1408; Page 0971; dated 1981. Ms. McKenney seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

Chair Carter made a motion to discharge the lien listed at the Merrimack County Registry of Deeds as Book 1735; Page 0452; dated 1988. Ms. McKenney seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

Ms. Higham made a motion to discharge the lien listed at the Merrimack County Registry of Deeds as Book 2807; Page 0205; dated 2005. Ms. McKenney seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

Non-public Session

Ms. McKenney made a motion to enter non-public session in accordance with the provisions of RSA 91-A:3, II (c) at 9:23 pm. Ms. Higham seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken: Sandy McKenney, aye; Maureen Higham, aye; and Ryan Carter, aye.

Ms. McKenney made a motion to return to public session at 9:44 pm. Ms. Higham seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken: Sandy McKenney, aye; Maureen Higham, aye; and Ryan Carter, aye.

Ms. McKenney made a motion to seal the minutes of the non-public session because they discussed matters which, if discussed in public, would likely affect adversely the reputation of a person

not a member of the public body itself. Ms. Higham seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken: Sandy McKenney, aye; Maureen Higham, aye; Ryan Carter, aye.

Ms. Higham made a motion to approve tax payment applications for the following parcels: 109-19, 107-12-27, 407-40-6, and 112-131. Ms. McKenney seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

Ms. McKenney made a motion to adjourn at 9:50 pm. Ms. Higham seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

DRAFT

TOWN OF ALLENSTOWN
SELECTBOARD
PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES

JUNE 17, 2019

Signature Page

Original Approval:	
RYAN CARTER, Chair	DATE
SANDRA MCKENNEY, Vice Chair	DATE
MAUREEN HIGHAM, Member	DATE

Amendment Approvals:		
Amendment Description:	Approval:	Date:
	RYAN CARTER, Chair	DATE
	SANDRA MCKENNEY, Vice Chair	DATE
	MAUREEN HIGHAM, Member	DATE