

**Town of Farmington**  
*Board of Selectmen – Public Meeting Minutes*  
**Monday, January 26, 2015**  
**Selectmen's Chambers**  
**356 Main Street**

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**Board Members Present:**

Charlie King, Chairman  
Vice Chairman  
Arthur Capello  
Brian St. Onge

**Others Present:**

Town Administrator Keith Trefethen Paula Proulx,  
Public Works Director Dale Sprague  
Tom DeJulio, resident

**Non-Public Session A:**

**Motion:** (Capello, second St. Onge) to enter non-public session under RSA 91-A:3 II C passed 4-0 on a roll call vote (King, Proulx, St. Onge, Capello-yes) at 5:30 p.m.

**Motion:** (Capello, second King) to come out of non-public session passed 4-0 on a roll call vote (King, Proulx, Capello, St. Onge-yes) at 5:45 p.m.

The board discussed the duties and responsibilities of the Town Treasurer with the Financial Administrator to determine what steps are necessary to have the Treasurer more involved in the future.

**Non-Public Session B:**

**Motion:** (King, second Capello) to enter non-public session under RSA 91-A:3 II passed 4-0 on a roll call vote (King, Proulx, St. Onge, Capello-yes) at 5:45 p.m.

**Motion:** (Capello, second St. Onge) to come out of non-public session passed 4-0 on a roll call vote (King, Proulx, Capello, St. Onge-yes) at 6:05 p.m.

The board discussed a candidate for Deputy Town Clerk with the Town Clerk.

**1. Call to Order/Pledge of Allegiance:**

Chairman King called the public portion of the meeting to order at 6:10 p.m. All present stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

**2. Approval of Minutes:**

**Motion:** (St. Onge, second Capello) to table the review of the minutes until later in the meeting passed 4-0.

**3. Public Comment:**

Resident Tom DeJulio came before the board to discuss saving the display of Christmas lights in the downtown area. DeJulio said that after PSNH told the town they will no longer allow the lights to be hung from their poles, he took up a campaign to get the company to change their minds so the 104 year tradition can continue. He said he began a letter writing campaign and urged residents to contact PSNH Community Relations Board member Kathleen Lewis in an effort to get them to reverse their decision. He reported that the campaign failed even after the town agreed to accept full responsibility for the installation of the display on their poles and to provide insurance coverage for their use. He said he has been interviewed by several media outlets and added that other towns are watching what happens in Farmington as some of them want to return to hanging Christmas decorations in a similar fashion in their towns.

Selectmen then asked him what he thought the next step should be. DeJulio said he has begun a petition drive to propose a possible solution to the issue and asked the board for their support. The petition seeks voter approval to spend \$23,000 to purchase and install 26 poles to be used to string lights across the streets in the downtown area from the Main Street bridge to Central Street. The poles would be about 30 feet in length and would be installed

about six feet into the ground adjacent to the existing electric company's poles he said.

Chairman King said once the poles are purchased with tax money and installed on town property, the town must maintain them and becomes liable and responsible for them.

Selectman Capello said the company has an easement around their poles and questioned if they would allow anything to be installed within the easement.

Selectman St. Onge said he was also concerned about the aesthetics of such a set up and added he did not want it to end up looking like a picket fence in the downtown area.

Town Administrator Keith Trefethen asked DeJulio if he had collected enough signatures to allow the petition to appear on the warrant at Town Meeting. DeJulio said he has enough signatures but they have not yet been certified by the Town Clerk.

Selectman Capello told the board that because the proposed article involves expending town funds, the board must vote to recommend or not recommend the article. He added that the Budget Committee must also vote on whether or not to recommend the expenditure.

Discussion also included finding a way to hang the lights from building to building only, hanging them at the proper height that would allow truck traffic to pass unimpeded but not too close to the power lines, using something more pleasing to the eye than metal poles and how to reduce the number of poles needed to reduce the cost of the proposal.

Selectman Capello applauded DeJulio's efforts and called the light display a "beautiful thing". He said that although he would support the proposal as a private citizen, he wasn't sure he could support it as a Selectman who spent the last three months cutting money from the budget and is now being asked to recommend spending \$23,000 for poles.

Vice Chairman Proulx asked if the installation of the poles could be completed in sections instead of all in one year to lessen the cost impact to the town. She suggested the plan may be more successful with residents if it used a phased approach. DeJulio agreed that could be done, but said that it would take longer to get what residents want.

The board then suggested DeJulio could rewrite the original petition to include a multi-year proposal to complete the project or two articles could be submitted that would give voters the choice of a one year or a multi- year installation plan. Selectmen also asked DeJulio to consider what options may be available to reduce the number of poles needed for the display and to provide a layout of showing the proposed location of the lights.

The board took the matter under advisement and no action was taken.

#### **4. Economic Development discussion with Denise Roy-Palmer:**

Economic Development Committee member Denise Roy-Palmer came before the board to discuss how the town can increase business development and to answer Selectmen's questions.

Selectman St. Onge asked Roy-Palmer if there was a general tax rate increase on an unimproved property in the proposed Tax Increment Finance (TIF) District, would the increase in taxes go into the TIF fund or is the money in the fund collected only from improvements to the property. Roy-Palmer said the money for the fund would come from the increase in the value of the property and is not based on the increase in the tax rate. (Ex. A property worth \$100,000 increases in value to \$150,000 whether it is improved or not, the taxes collected on the additional \$50,000 in value would go into the TIF fund while the taxes on the \$100,000 would go into the town's general fund). The same principle would apply if the property increased in value due to a revaluation. If there was a decrease in valuation nothing would go into the fund she said.

Chairman King explained that the town's full time planner recently retired and the board decided to replace her with a part time interim planner who will have some economic development duties. He asked what options there are for seeking help with these duties and how to put out "feelers" for potential interested businesses.

Roy-Palmer, who is also the Executive Director of Wentworth Economic Development Corporation (WEDCO), said that all towns are different in the services they look for. Business clients may also look for different services than towns. King then asked her what types of services her company provides to towns. She said those services may depend on

the size and population of the community, where their focus is and what they are trying to accomplish. She cited the town of Brookfield which has a population of only 660 people and could be considered a “bedroom community” versus the town of Wolfboro which has a much larger population and is very active in business development as an example of towns with different needs. She said Wolfboro has also partnered with the UNH Cooperative Extension Business Retention and Expansion Program which promotes job growth by identifying the barriers to growth for existing local businesses. This program focuses on existing business as studies have shown that more jobs are created by expansion of existing businesses than by bringing in new business she said.

The program is a three step plan requiring a two to three year commitment and a small investment by the town to train local participants on how to implement the program. The first step is to assemble a core group of interested and supportive local leaders, residents and staff who would receive training and then interview local business managers or owners to determine their needs and concerns and future development plans. A task force would then follow up with the owners to respond to their needs. The next step is to submit the survey data to UNH who will computerize the information and compile a draft report which includes improvement recommendations for the local task force. The task force then develops an action plan. The last step is to implement the long and short term goals in the action plan with the assistance of the implementation team and other agencies.

Discussion also included choosing the number and types of businesses to be interviewed, setting up a system for referrals, pursuing the program through the Farmington Economic Development Committee and other organizations that help towns pursue new business.

Selectman St. Onge said he would like to see an assessment of how the UNH program might work before asking people to commit their time. Vice Chairman Proulx suggested it may be a good idea for the Economic Development Committee to flesh out a plan, answer some questions and bring the plan forward to Selectmen.

Chairman King said he was contacted recently by two businesses owners who were not ready to make the move to Farmington, but were looking for information. He said would give their contact information to Roy-Palmer following the meeting.

Selectmen then discussed the upcoming presentation to be hosted by the Planning Board on the proposed TIF District. The public meeting will include a Power Point presentation and discussion with Planner Jack Mettee. The proposal failed to gain voter approval last year and Chairman King said if it doesn’t pass this year he doesn’t know if the board will agree to bring it back again noting that it is up to the people to decide.

Roy-Palmer said the airport business park and the Ridge Marketplace (under construction next to WalMart on Rt.11) in Rochester are two examples of successful TIF Districts.

Maps of the town’s economic revitalization zones are available as a PDF file which also includes marketing material, frequently asked questions and how to apply she said.

#### **5. Discuss Snow Removal and Ice Control Policy:**

Town Administrator Keith Trefethen told the board he brought forth the town’s snow removal policy for their review and to determine if it needs modification. If no additions are needed, it provided a chance for the board to review it he said.

Chairman King said the policy was put in place about a year ago and said that he would like to discuss the amount of snow accumulation allowed and snow removal in the downtown area.

Selectman Capello said that it seemed like there was a delay in the highway crews’ response to road conditions and asked if there is a breakdown somewhere in the system.

Trefethen asked if Selectmen received any complaints during the previous weekend storm. Selectmen said they did not receive any complaints.

Trefethen said some of the snow removal issues stem from plow operators who leave snow near the edge of the right-of-way. The operators need to clean this up as soon as possible he said.

Chairman King said he was surprised at how much snow was left on Poor Farm Road after a recent storm due to plow

drivers who push the snow into the road and then don't push it off the road.

Public Works Director Dale Sprague said there is a lot of this during the midst of a storm and often the town trucks will go through and take care of it. He said he spoke with Police Chief Jay Drury to discuss the notification procedure for road condition issues. Officers have been instructed to call dispatch who will notify the highway foreman if a road issue exists. If the issue is caused by a repeat offender, they will be contacted by police he said.

Chairman King asked about the highway department response time. Sprague said crews usually respond between 30 to 40 minutes following notification of poor road conditions.

Selectman discussed the system of road levels where town roads are split into three categories based on priority. Level one roads are those that are considered to be the main roads in town with the most traffic. Level three roads are mostly outlying roads with the least amount of traffic activity. Selectman St. Onge said he was concerned about the maximum amount of six inches allowed to accumulate on level three roads. He said he would like to see it reduced to no more than four to five inches of snow accumulation.

Selectman Capello asked Sprague if the road level list should be reviewed and re-shuffled. Sprague said the list was compiled by a prior Board of Selectmen and noted that the road levels are not under consideration unless any of the town trucks are down.

Chairman King added that the list might be different if there is a "situation" and asked Sprague if he would make any changes to the priorities list.

Trefethen said the primary focus is to keep the main roads open and that the smaller roads may have to wait a while to be attended so there may be a time when there would be six inches on level three roads. He added that the plow drivers do have designated routes.

Selectman Capello asked if all of the town trucks are up and running. Sprague said the needed repairs have been completed and the trucks are back in service. The repairs were done in-house and included fixing the split oil line on the 10-wheel truck and replacement of a decayed and broken line to the battery box on another vehicle he said.

Chairman King asked if the trucks and equipment are being cleaned after plowing. Sprague said the crews are doing a better job of hosing down and cleaning the equipment than before but admitted the cleaning was not as good as it could be. He added that he is looking into treating the equipment with a chemical film used in Biddeford, Maine that is reported to limit corrosion when applied at the beginning of the season.

Trefethen then asked the board if they wished to continue replacing mailboxes hit by a plow. He said he has not argued with the owner and approved replacing the box if it was correctly placed and installed. He said that so far this year, the town has replaced one mailbox and asked if the board wished to make any changes to the policy.

Selectman St. Onge said it is common practice in other towns to replace mailboxes damaged by town equipment. Vice Chairman Proulx recalled when the owner was given a bucket with a 4x4 post and it became the owner's responsibility to install the box and post in the spring.

Sprague said he did not have a problem with the replacement policy as long as the truck actually hit the box and the damage was not caused by snow coming off the plow wing. There's a lot of pressure especially if the snow is of the heavy, wet variety he said.

Selectman St. Onge asked if there is a list of private contractors' contact information and their prices that could be used as back-up if town trucks go down. Sprague said there aren't any plowing contractors available to do back up plowing for the town because they are performing on-call plowing for the state or have gone out of the plowing business. He asked if the town wants to pay contractors stand-by fees which are paid whether the contractor is called in or not. Chairman King asked for information on state pay rates for private contractors to see if the town pay rate is comparable.

Sprague said that during a recent storm, some roads were left snow covered to try to provide some traction when the snow was expected to change to ice until they are able to get plowing and sanding equipment to them. Selectmen discussed possibly reducing the maximum amount of snow accumulation allowed as it is difficult for the average private vehicle to navigate six inches of snow.

Discussion also included plowing the sidewalks downtown and making sure to at least “break open” the snow banks at the cross walks to make crossing safer.

Selectman St. Onge asked if it would be cheaper to only use salt and no sand on the roads. Trefethen replied that applied properly, salt use results in getting a clear road faster.

Chairman King then asked Sprague to review the snow removal policy and provide the board with any suggestions for modifications.

#### **6. Sewer Abatement Review:**

Sprague said he investigated a large increase in water use and found an underground water leak at the user’s end. The water was pumped into the ground and not into the sewer system, so he recommended the sewer fee be abated. The owner paid for the water he said.

**Motion:** (Capello, second King) to abate the sewer fee portion only for a total of \$1,646.51 passed 4-0.

Trefethen reported that a pot hole complaint regarding Ten Rod Road was addressed last month by the highway department. Sprague said a grader corrected the hole and crushed stone was applied to the site.

Trefethen also announced that the Town Hall would be closed the following day due to the severe storm expected.

Sprague said the highway department was released early today to allow them to prepare for a 1:00 or 2:00 a.m. call back.

#### **7. 2015 Warrant Review:**

Trefethen said the warrant for the March Town Meeting must be finalized by February 23 and asked if the board had any further questions. There were no additional questions.

**8. Any Further Business:** The board then returned to item 2 on the agenda. After a brief discussion, members decided they needed more time to review the minutes.

**Motion:** (St. Onge, second King) to table the review of the minutes to the next meeting passed 4-0.

#### **9. Non-Public Session C:**

**Motion:** (King, second Capello) to enter non-public session under RSA 91-A:3 II (e) Legal passed 4-0 on a roll call vote (King, Proulx, Capello, St. Onge-yes) at 7:45 p.m.

**Motion:** (King, second Capello) to end the non-public session passed 4-0 on a roll call vote (King, Proulx, Capello, St. Onge-yes) at 8:10 p.m.

**Motion:** (Capello, second St. Onge) to place a deadline on January 30, 2015 at 4 p.m. to have the Police Union and the Town agree and ratify the collective bargaining agreement between all parties and provide permission to Chairman King and the Town Administrator to sign the contract on behalf of the town passed 4-0.

#### **10. Adjournment:**

**Motion:** (Capello, second St. Onge) to adjourn the meeting passed 4-0 at 8:25 p.m.

Respectively submitted,

Kathleen Magoon

Recording Secretary

Chairman, Charlie King

Paula Proulx

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Arthur Capello

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Brian St. Onge