

# Adopted

## Town of New Boston Selectmen's Meeting June 15, 2015

**PRESENT:** Joe Constance                      Selectman  
Dwight Lovejoy                      Selectman  
Christine Quirk                      Selectman  
Peter Flynn                              Town Administrator

SAU 19 Superintendent Brian Balke, Energy Commission Chairman Susan Carr, Keith Lavalieri from NH Solar Garden, Energy Commission member Betsy Whitman, Road Agent Dick Perusse, Road Committee member Willard Dodge, Brandy Mitroff and another members of the Energy Commission were present.

**A. CALL TO ORDER:** A regular meeting of the Board of Selectmen was called to order by Dwight Lovejoy at 6:00PM beginning with the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Consent Agenda-**The Selectmen signed the consent agenda. Joe moved to approve the consent agenda. Christine seconded the motion. All were in favor. 3-0

### **B. PUBLIC FORUM:**

SAU 19 Superintendent Brian Balke was present to follow up after Emergency Management Director Dan MacDonald spoke to Peter about the School District's application for a FEMA 50/50 matching grant for a new generator at the school to replace the old generator. The school is also the town emergency shelter. The School District is hoping the town can join them in funding this. The total project is estimated to cost approximately \$100,000, Dan has the cost estimates. This matter is scheduled to be discussed at the July 6 Selectmen's meeting. Brian is unable to attend that meeting. The Selectmen said they will be happy to consider it at their July 6 meeting.

### **C. APPOINTMENTS:**

**Item 1: Susan Carr and Andrew Keller-Solar Energy Project Request:** New Boston Energy Commission Chairman Susan Carr was present to meet with the Selectmen to discuss a potential solar garden to supply electricity to town government buildings. More details have been learned since this was last discussed and Susan learned a power purchase agreement is good for municipalities.

Keith Lavalieri from NH Solar Garden was present as Andrew Keller was unable to attend tonight due to meetings at UNH. Keith said after the Selectmen signed the letter of intent, several locations around town were considered. The landfill was not the best location as it is steep and not large enough but a better location was found near the ballfield parking area on Old Coach Road along with a small strip of the land recently purchased next to the post office along the tree line on the south side. This will not affect the potential Fire Station building planned

there and the building will not block the array from the sun. These two locations could handle almost all of the town government building electricity usage. The third best location is probably the library and field by the library. A Power Purchase Agreement is another option.

Dwight thought it would be a hard sell to put them where they are visible. Keith said that hasn't been an issue in other towns and the arrays are not too visually adverse.

Joe asked about the financials and Keith said the equipment costs nothing to the town to install; NH Solar Garden does that and sells the electricity back to the town. There is also a land lease from NH Solar Garden for additional savings to the town. The numbers can be submitted to the Town Administrator for review. The expected rate is 2-4 cents off the kWh rate long term fixed to help the town budget for electricity. Solar is popular in NH now as NH has some of the highest electricity rates in the nation and they are expected to go up. There is no infrastructure cost to the town for the equipment; the only cost is for contract review by town attorneys. Two dozen NH towns including Franklin, Milton and Hillsborough are in the permitting process now but the solar gardens are not in use yet.

Joe was concerned it is not sunny enough in NH to support this. Keith said Germany is the top solar user in the world and has the same latitude as NH, a desert climate is not needed.

Joe wondered why solar is warranted as the town would be committing and leasing land for only a small decrease in electricity rates. Keith expected this to save New Boston \$1-1.5 million over the twenty year contract period. These figures will be included in the information given to the Town Administrator.

Dwight asked if donations of private land would be considered. Keith said that would be possible, sand pits would be a good option but NH Solar Garden has not spoken with any private landowners yet.

Willard said New Boston would be providing space for the investors to make a living generating power and asked what happens to the power when the sun goes down. Keith explained how the equipment works and said the New Boston arrays would be part of a grid, transmission lines would bring power to the grid to be distributed to the places purchasing power from them, including the town government buildings. If the New Boston array goes down power at town buildings will still continue as New Boston is not using only the power it generates, it is using power stored and transmitted over the lines at the same price.

Joe asked how long the federal government is providing the grants for this. Keith said once the town applies for the grant, the federal grant money is applied. Federal grants are preapproved in batches each year.

Dwight said he saw solar arrays in operation in Indiana, farmers leased land and got decreased electricity rates. Keith said the town could choose not to use the land, instead enter into a power purchase agreement for electricity at a lower rate.

Road Agent Dick Perusse was present and asked about the longevity of the equipment as the lease would be for 20 years. Keith said the array has a 30 year warranty, the inverters expected to last 15-20 years and the lease has an extension option. Technology is changing and solar systems have improved over the last few years.

Susan said the role of the Energy Commission is to research and advise, they have learned that NH Solar Garden is a NH company with NH investors, Keith is a resident of New Boston, and the committee has spoken to townspeople that want to continue to be posted on this project. She asked what the Selectmen's long term energy plan is as the industry is changing.

Dwight noted this is a new system and he is concerned technology will change even more.

Susan said the energy companies will negotiate and any contract terms that are a concern can be negotiated.

Joe said the town's position on energy can be found with the Energy Commission and in the Master Plan that the Planning Board is updating now. He would like to see the financials of a solar project and wants to contact other communities that are involved in this process. Susan said the communities have been contacted and are in the permitting process and pleased so far with no issues or complaints.

Christine would like to see documentation and the kWh usage in New Boston.

The Selectmen noted there is one windmill in town and it seems to rarely turn.

The Selectmen authorized the Town Administrator to review the financials, contract and investigate a solar garden in New Boston further. NH Solar Garden will provide options for locations and scenarios.

Brandy Mitroff was present and asked about security parameters for the arrays and Keith said there will be a fence around it, liability insurance and land maintenance all handled by NH Solar Garden, not the town.

**Item 2: Second Reading-Public Hearing: To Change Personnel Policy Re: Separation of Employees:** the Public Hearing opened at 6:30 PM. Police Chief James Brace was present to meet with the Selectmen to discuss proposed language to be added to the Personnel Policy. This was reviewed by Attorney Barton Mayer who said it would be better to add it to the police officer employment contract. The issue was discussed as previously, that the town incurs expenses when it pays for training, uniforms, unearned vacation time and legal costs when new officers leave employment before their contract ends. Peter requested this matter be moved to a third reading to allow him and Jim to review the employment contract language and rewrite the change in a manner that will not violate the RSA. Joe moved to carry this proposed Separation of Employees change to a third reading. Christine seconded the motion. All were in favor. 3-0 The Public Hearing closed at 6:38 PM.

**Item 3: Richard Perusse-Update on Personnel, Update on Hilldale Lane, Old Coach Road Overlaying Paving, Old Coach Road Rebuild and Equipment:** Road Agent Dick Perusse was present to meet with the Selectmen to discuss the following:

- Staffing: Terry Gordon will be out of work until approximately August 13 and Charlie Byam will be out of work until approximately July 1.
- Hilldale Lane Bridge: The membrane still needs to be installed.
- Old Coach Road paving: Overlay from the ballpark to the Police and Highway Department area is needed.
- Old Coach Road rebuild: Dick recommends this project be delayed to next spring. Dick received word from NH DOT that plan changes are needed and they will be added to the plans. The Alteration of Terrain permit is expected from NH DES in July. A public meeting will be scheduled to discuss this project with interested parties. Dick is developing the bid process and will put it out to bid in the fall with a spring start date. The town could try to do this project in the fall but that would probably make the project more expensive and more rushed. Spring might also be better for traffic flow on that road. The road will remain open during construction and delays are expected to be minimal.
- Highway Department vehicle purchases: The 1994 highway truck was in an accident this winter and insurance covered the repair. This vehicle also had a fire in the past six weeks that was partially covered by insurance. They said they would consider covering further repairs but Dick is not sure if it is worth getting further work done on a 1994 truck. He is concerned about the reliability of this vehicle. He suggested the town purchase a 2008 truck to replace it for \$55,000. He has viewed the 2008 truck and found it in great shape. It is being held at Liberty International until Thursday pending the Selectmen's decision. He suggested paying for it with \$43,727 from a FEMA grant and the rest from the Highway Block grant, from the truck repair line or from auction of the 1994 and 1997 trucks after applying \$10,000 from insurance. Peter agrees with this purchase and the Selectmen approved. This is an emergency replacement. An article will be published in the New Boston Bulletin. The 1997 truck replacement was approved at town meeting and paid for through the CRF. Brandy asked why the town does not purchase new trucks for the Highway Department. Dick said so far quality used vehicles are available and working for the town. Once that changes the vehicle acquisition process may change.
- It is unknown why the Mack engine had an issue, it is covered under warranty for now but Dick is concerned how it will hold up this winter.

#### **D. OLD BUSINESS:**

**Item 4: Second Reading-Public Hearing-Procedure:** The Public Hearing opened at 6:47 PM. Peter proposes adding this policy as the Selectmen hold public hearings occasionally according to state statute. This policy will help make sure all public hearings are held appropriately and organized. This policy is used in other towns and many towns have policies for public hearings. Joe moved to adopt this Public Hearing Policy as part of standard procedure. Christine seconded the motion. All were in favor. 3-0 The Public Hearing closed at 6:48 PM.

**Item 5: Adoption of Public and Minutes of May 1, 2015:** The Selectmen reviewed the public minutes of May 1, 2015. Christine moved that the minutes be accepted as presented. Joe seconded the motion. All were in favor. 3-0

**E. NEW BUSINESS:**

**Item 6: Review of Year to Date Expenditures-Peter Flynn:** Peter reviewed the year to date expenditures for each department and noted all are doing well at this time.

**F. OTHER BUSINESS:**

**Item 5: Town Administrator's Report:**

- Mont Vernon Road Land Purchase: Papers were passed two weeks ago.
- Purchase of Daniels Land behind Fire Station: Papers were passed last week.
- Stair Chair Lift: This item was encumbered in last year's budget. Peter is still researching this purchase for the town hall.
- Purchase of Trailer for Voting Equipment: A trailer has been selected. Peter will look at it with Willard Dodge and Don Chapman to make sure it is appropriate. It is planned to be kept at the Highway Department.
- Foot Traffic Safety Committee: The Committee plans to speak with a company that builds bridges to put the specifications together. They received a \$20,000 donation two weeks ago in addition to the \$10,000 previously raised through donations. This totals 1/3 of the expected cost.

**Item 6: Selectmen's Reports:**

Joe reported the Planning Board continues working on the Master Plan by reviewing goals.

**G. APPOINTMENTS:**

None.

**Public Forum:**

None.

**Item 9: Possible Request for Non-Public per RSA 91-A:3, II(c)-Personnel-Chief Brace:**

Joe made a motion to go into Non-Public session per RSA 91-A:3II (c) at 7:02 PM. Christine seconded the motion. All were in favor. 3-0 The Board then entered non-public session after a poll of all members. Roll Call: Joe-yes, Dwight-yes, Christine- yes.

**Move to exit Non-Public Session:** Joe Constance made a motion to exit Non-Public Session at 7:40 PM. Christine seconded the motion. All were in favor. 3-0

Christine moved to seal the non-public minutes for a period of ten years, with Joe seconding the motion. All were in favor 3-0.

Dwight Moved to appoint Matthew French as a new Lieutenant on the New Boston Police Department Pending final background check.

**ADJOURNMENT:** Joe made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:41PM. Christine seconded the motion. All were in favor. 3-0

*Prepared by Maralyn Segien*