

**Minutes  
Nottingham Selectmen's Meeting  
April 20, 2015**

6:30 PM Chair Bonser opened the meeting and asked all those present to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Members Present: Mary Bonser, Donna Danis and Mark Carpenter

Others: Town Administrator Chris Sterndale, Secretary Dawn Calley-Murdough, Kevin Coyle, John Reagan

**MANIFEST SIGNATURE:**

**Motion:** by Mr. Carpenter, second by Ms. Danis to approve the April 13, 2015 accounts payable and April 14, 2015 payroll manifests.

**Vote:** 3 – 0 in favor.

**OUTSTANDING MINUTES:**

**Motion:** Mr. Carpenter, second Ms. Danis to approve the minutes of the April 6, 2015 meeting as amended.

**Vote:** 3 – 0 in favor.

The Selectmen agreed to postpone the non-public minutes from April 6, 2015, April 9, 2015 and April 16, 2015.

**SELECTMEN BOARD/COMMITTEE/LIASON REPORTS:**

**Budget:** Mr. Carpenter asked if the next meeting has been scheduled. Ms. Calley-Murdough stated she had reached out to Vice-Chair Jeff Wheeler for a date, has not yet received an answer, and would contact Mr. Wheeler again.

**Planning Board:** Ms. Danis reviewed her first meeting was on April 8<sup>th</sup> and they discussed reviewing the sub-division regulations. The sub-committee is providing the recommended changes in smaller sections for the full board to review and comment on, and will vote on all the changes once they are complete. Ms. Danis asked that comments from the other Selectmen be emailed to both herself and the Planning Board. The Planning Board has agreed to change to a once a month meeting schedule, as they currently have a light schedule.

**CIP:** Chair Bonser asked if a meeting has been scheduled, as the full CIP report is still needed. Mr. Sterndale would gather information about the final report for the Selectmen's next meeting.

**TOWN ADMINISTRATOR/DEPARTMENT REPORTS, MAIL & SIGN ITEMS:**

**Police:** Officer Sardinah graduated the academy last Friday, with special honors, and is working in the field with regular department staff until he can work on his own. Chief Foss is working on hiring a part-time candidate.

**Recreation:** A new recreation assistant has been hired; Kourtney Doro has started her first full time week with April Vacation camp. Ms. Danis asked about the new software proposed for Recreation and the possibility of reducing the need of having a part-time office coordinator. Mr. Sterndale reported the software won't be ready to be used this summer, but should be fully ready to use by next summer.

**Highway:** Applications are being reviewed for the full-time maintenance position. Mr. Sterndale reported the individual should have vehicle mechanical experience, in addition to vehicle operator/driver experience. Interviews should take place sometime next week.

The Selectmen requested to review the applications and/or resumes for all candidates, before a candidate is recommended to be hired to help them understand what type of candidates are applying.

**Assessing:** Mr. Sterndale requested that the Selectmen have a shortened or early start meeting on June 1<sup>st</sup> in order to hold a DRA hosted Revaluation Presentation to provide understanding of the

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upcoming town wide revaluation. The June 1<sup>st</sup> presentation will be recorded and re-aired. Mr. Sterndale asked if the town should meet with any additional groups regarding the upcoming revaluation, including the PLIA. The Selectmen recommended meeting with the seniors at Senior Luncheon, holding a shortened session at the Library, provide handouts at the Recycle Center, in addition to promoting the re-broadcast on Channel 22, the website and Facebook.

The intent is to get the information about the upcoming revaluation to the public before new property value letters are mailed sometime in late July or August.

Mr. Carpenter asked if Avitar was notifying taxpayers before they started visiting properties. It was stated Avitar did not notify taxpayers before they were in town and the Selectmen requested a meeting with the Avitar representatives.

**Recycle Center:** Mr. Carpenter asked to receive the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter material data from the Recycling Center. Mr. Sterndale would provide the information.

**APPOINTMENTS:**

**7:00 pm: County Commissioner Kevin Coyle** – Commissioner Coyle reviewed the county budget is about \$80 million. Approximately half of the budget amount is used for elderly services, and that amount is determined by the State of NH. The County tax rate is established based on property value and not per-capita; any change in determining the tax rate can only come from the Legislature. County services include elderly services, the County Attorney, Registry of Deeds, Sheriff's Department, District Court and the jail. Commissioner Coyle reported some of the taxes are raised at the county level but are passed over to the state.

Elderly care includes the nursing home, as well as at home and other community based care programs. Nottingham is required to use the County Attorney for felony related cases even though they use their own prosecutor for lower level cases.

Ms. Bonser asked about future plans for elderly care programs as the elderly NH population grows larger. Commissioner Coyle reported the State has the most control over the largest part of the elderly services provided in addition to establishing the budget amount. There are approximately 226 beds at the nursing home and 49 beds at the assisted living facility, which has a waiting list.

Ms. Danis asked if statistical information was available for Town usage of County services. Commissioner Coyle stated the County is working on receiving and providing that information to towns, but Nottingham is probably in the middle of the road in regards to the quantity of services received.

Mr. Coyle reviewed that the County Budget is approved by a delegation made up of NH Representatives, and does not go to the NH Senators or the Governor for approval. The County presented a budget that the NH Representative delegation increased by an approximate half million dollars. The increase provided additional funds to the drug court to try and reduce incarceration by offering other drug support services, added one new Sheriff Deputy, one full time delegation employee, as well as other miscellaneous expenses. It was stated the NH Representative Delegation has a separate County office, secretary and other CPA type employee, with an approved budget of \$407,000.00; up 95.28% from the county proposed amount of \$167,000.00.

Mr. Carpenter stated he is concerned expenses are rising and people can no longer afford it, where a lot of the budget is out of the control of the Town. The Town budget increased an approximate 1.5%, but the other budgets have much larger increases. Mr. Coyle reported the Commissioners present as low a budget as possible, much was driven by the State, and then the Representatives increased the budget.

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The Selectmen thought they might send a letter to the delegation asking about their budget planning rationale and agreed to request a copy of the county budget expense report, specifically for the delegation. Ms. Danis asked to also start receiving more information about the services each town receives from the county on a regular permanent basis.

The Selectmen thanked Mr. Coyle for attending and stated they would like to have him back with the budget and service use information becomes available. The Selectmen stated they would like to meet with NH Representatives in regards to the county budget to hear both sides of the information.

**7:15 pm: NH Representative James Spillane – did not arrive.**

**7:30 pm: NH Senator John Reagan** – Senator Reagan stated this is his first year on the finance committee and a lot of work is currently taking place to provide the state with a balanced budget.

Chair Bonser asked about the proposed cuts to Meal and Rooms funding and Highway Block Grant funding that town receive. Senator Reagan stated those decisions are not yet final, but are cuts proposed by the House of Representatives version of the budget. The Governor presents a budget, then the House of Representatives reviews and recommends changes for a balanced budget, with the Senate completing a final review for additional recommended changes before the final House and Senate vote. The Senate is able to receive an additional two months of revenue statistics that the House does not because of the timing process.

Senator Reagan responded that he would not agree to closing of DMV offices, the Utility Pole Valuation issue is being reviewed by the Ways and Means Committee and he does not have a lot of information, and in regards to warrant articles he does not support changing the intent by changing the words. Senator Reagan agreed about the need to review the additional services that will be needed to help a growing elderly population but felt the Governors term is too short to try and make real changes to programs and services.

The Selectmen and Senator Reagan discussed the need to try and keep the younger population in the state and bring in new businesses; what agencies and/or groups are responsible for working on the issues and recommending incentives to encourage changes. Senator Reagan stated the legislature can reduce the business taxes to try and encourage businesses to come into the state, but NH has not typically supported changes to try and reduce potential expenses for businesses. Chair Bonser suggested reviewing the method of funding schools to try and reduce the amount of property tax, by introducing a sales tax. Senator Reagan stated he has not received many complaints about taxes but has received more complaints about energy expenses. A majority of the Selectmen disagreed, regarding the negative effect that property taxes have on NH businesses.

The Selectmen stated they would like to see an effort to come up with solutions to try and bring in new businesses to the state, and Mr. Carpenter stated he would be willing to volunteer on a group to work on coming up with solutions; working offensively instead of defensively. Senator Reagan stated the NH Department of Resources and Economic Development is responsible for help in that process but they appear to take little action in working towards the goal of bringing in new businesses.

The Selectmen thanked Senator Reagan for coming.

**GENERAL BUSINESS:**

**Appointment Forms:** The Selectmen reviewed the appointment forms for Alternate Library Trustees, one member to the Board of Assessors, and a new representative to the Strafford Regional Planning Commission.

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**Motion:** by Ms. Danis, second by Mr. Carpenter to appoint Gary Anderson as the Nottingham Commissioner to the Strafford Regional Planning Commission from April 2015 to April 2018, to appoint Deb Merrick, Allison Friend-Gray and Laura Cottrell as Alternate Library Trustees members from April 2015 to March 2016, and to appoint Arthur Stockus as a member to the Board of Assessors from April 2015 to March 2016.

**Vote:** 3 – 0 in favor.

The Selectmen thanked those individuals for volunteering to be on a board and committee.

**Sale of Town Property:** Mr. Sterndale and the Selectmen reviewed the list of town owned properties and those under consideration for public sale. In the 1990's the Town voted to give the Selectmen a permanent authority to auction and/or sell town owned property, with a subsequent change in authoritative statute giving them more leverage in the process. There was discussion about placing specific requirements and/or conditions with a sale, as some of the properties are very small and not necessarily buildable and that the land might mostly be of interest to the abutting land owners. While the sale of the smaller properties might not bring in a large amount of revenue, it would put the property back on the tax rolls bringing in annual property tax.

Mr. Sterndale reviewed the specific information regarding a couple of properties that the Selectmen might consider selling sooner versus later. The Selectmen requested additional information about their available options for special requests or considerations with the sale of a property and why these considerations should be made. The Selectmen also requested pictures of the properties they would consider selling.

**Recycling Video:** Chair Bonser stated there were a lot of changes in the school administration right after the decision was made to make a recycling video and it did not get done. The Selectmen agreed Mr. Sterndale would reach out to the elementary school principal so they could try to work on a video with the elementary students first. If there wasn't interest they would then try to work with the high school students on the video.

**NON-PUBLIC SESSION:** The Board entered non-public under RSA 91-A:3 II(e)

**8:36 PM Motion:** by Chair Bonser, second by Mr. Carpenter to enter non-public under RSA 91-A:3 II(a).

**Roll Call Vote:** Bonser – Yea, Carpenter – Yea, Danis – Yea. 3 – 0 in favor.

**9:20 PM Motion:** Mr. Carpenter, second by Chair Bonser to exit the non-public session.

**Vote:** 3 – 0 in favor.

**Motion:** Mr. Carpenter, second by Chair Bonser to seal the non-public minutes of April 20, 2015.

**Roll Call Vote:** Bonser – Yea, Carpenter – Yea, Danis – Yea. 3 – 0 in favor.

The Selectmen agreed to and signed a contract renewal for Mr. Sterndale through February 2017 during their non-public session.

**ADJOURNMENT:** Having no further business,

**9:21 PM Motion:** by Mr. Carpenter, second by Ms. Danis to adjourn.

**Vote:** 3 – 0 in favor.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dawn Calley-Murdough