

**JOINT BOARD
OF THE TOWNS OF
SUNAPEE, NEWBURY AND NEW LONDON
MINUTES**

**JUNE 21, 2017
8:00 AM
NEWBURY TOWN OFFICES**

Present: Dennis Pavlicek (Newbury Town Administrator), Kim Hallquist (Newbury Town Administrator), Donna Nashawaty (Sunapee Town Manager), Tina Helm (New London Resident), Sue Gottling (Sunapee Selectboard Member), Joy Nowell (Newbury Selectboard Member), Gary Daniels (Newbury Resident), Norm Bernaiche (Assessor), Kristen McAllister (Assessor), Patricia MacDonald (Newbury Land Use Coordinator), Melissa Pollari (Sunapee Assessing Technician)

Absent: Janet Kidder (New London Selectboard), Rem Mastin (Sunapee Resident)

1. Introduction of New Members and Thank You to Departing Members: Ms. Hallquist welcomed the new members, Tina Helm and Joy Nowell to the Board. Ms. Hallquist thanked Gary Daniels and Sue Gottling for their time on the Board. Mr. Bernaiche thanked Ms. MacDonald as well as she is moving to Florida with her family.
2. Review & approve minutes of March 22, 2017: Mr. Pavlicek made a motion to approve the minutes. Mr. Daniels seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
3. Budget Recap (2017 year-to-date): Mr. Pavlicek went over the 2017 proposed budget for the Board. The first quarter is complete and the second quarter has been updated as of June 10, 2017. There is 57% of the budget remaining and they are in pretty good shape. This year, the workers compensation and liability are billed from July to June 30 and that bill has not arrived yet.
Mr. Bernaiche said there has been line item since 2012, which were his remaining wages from that year, that has been for data verification as they have had issue since 2006 / 2007 with trying to keep up with data verification. This year, they budgeted \$10,000 to continue a small portion of data collection for contracted outside services. They have met with the managers because the managers wanted to know why this is still being done. If the Assessors go to a property and do not measure and then they get checked they could get decertified or penalized. The managers were concerned about the budget and wanted to know where the budget could get cut as most is personnel. The managers and the assessors have decided that it would be a good idea to keep the \$10,000 for the outside services and explain to the municipalities that they need to upgrade the database software. The three towns have used the software for many years and have a long-term relationship with them. They pay \$5,500 per year per town for support and rarely use the support. They are exploring other options for software for better pricing or they are looking at renegotiating with Vision. Therefore, the assessors are giving up the \$10,000

for contracted services and will do most of the data verification themselves. This means that they will be doing more outside work and will not be in the office as much. Ms. Hallquist said that the goal is to keep the budget low and there are two years that the Assessors are not doing revals. Mr. Pavlicek explained that they only bill out what is expended so the three towns will save money.

Mr. Bernaiche said that the change in software is not part of Tri-Town budget as each community pays for their own software. Mrs. Nashawaty said that she would like to know if Tri-Town could use the same software support with extra seats and separate Town codes. Mr. Bernaiche explained that the problem is that there are different reval years for each Town. There was further discussion regarding this matter as the tables would be the same for all three towns.

Ms. Hallquist said that they are talking to the head of Vision today. The goal is not to change software as there will be additional expenses. Ms. Nashawaty explained that one of the reasons the joint assessing concepts worked is that all Towns agreed they would use the same software. There was a discussion regarding the Towns sending a letter to Vision. Mr. Bernaiche explained that Vision wanted him to be part of the test group and would give \$5,000 off but install would still be between \$20,000 - \$25,000. The problem is that Microsoft and Oracle are not getting along and the software will no longer be supported so Vision is developing a new software. Typically, part of the support cost is development of new software and it should not cost each town \$25,000. There was further discussion regarding this issue.

4. Quarterly Recap: Norm Bernaiche

- Schedule – Mr. Bernaiche explained that their schedules remain pretty normal. The abatements are finished and they are going over exempt properties. They will then be out in the field.
- Staffing (staff training) – Ms. MacDonald is leaving Newbury so they will need to train a new staff member. Ms. Nashawaty offered Ms. Pollari to work with the new staff member if needed.
Mr. Bernaiche explained that he and Ms. McAllister went to Mystic for the Northeast Conference. Mr. Bernaiche gave an overview of a case in Groton, CT that was discussed at the conference and there was a discussion regarding the case.
- ASB – Mr. Bernaiche explained that the ASB is dealing with the utility values and the methods of valuing them. DRA and the utilities just lost the case at the Supreme Court. The utilities are attempting to use legislature to carve out a way to do their values. The towns would lose over \$20,000,000 in tax dollars, however, it would only lower electric rates by 2%. Ms. Nashawaty said that this was an important win to the Towns. Mr. Bernaiche explained the way DRA values the whole company and then breaks out the values to the Towns. The ASB is supposed to have a report to the legislature at the end of June, which is not feasible. Mrs. Gottling said that she thinks that something that will hurt the local communities will have a hard time passing the House. Norm continued to explain how this can affect different communities. There was further discussion regarding this matter
- Pending Cases – Mr. Bernaiche explained that currently there are no pending cases. They lost a case in New London, both a Superior Court and Supreme Court, regarding a fire damaged house. There was a case in Sunapee that was filed by a taxpayers'

representative and Ms. McAllister had made a motion to dismiss and they withdrew it. Ms. McAllister said that the taxpayers have filed for an abatement again this year. Mr. Bernaiche said that a Sunapee resident with 7 – 8 acres, assessed at \$8 million just purchased the 4.5-acre property next to him for \$4.35 million.

There was a discussion regarding previous cases and estate quality properties.

Mr. Bernaiche said that there was an abatement request for house in New London in a community with access to Pleasant Lake. They have seen sales ramping up there and just had a \$700,000 building permit for a new home. The taxpayer just purchased a lot next door to his lot for \$300,000 and built a \$2.1 million home. The assessment is \$1.3 million and the owner thinks it is a \$925,000 value.

- Safety Concerns – Mr. Bernaiche said that there are no safety concerns at this time.
- Mrs. Gottling asked what will happen with the McCarthy's subdivision in Sunapee. Mr. Bernaiche said that he spoke with DES as they filed for an abatement. DES was not ready to let it go as of Monday. Ms. Nashawaty said that they filled in part of the retention pond and the last rain storm caused the retention pond to be filled in and everything went across the road. There was further discussion regarding this property and other properties that were damaged in the past and water that ran into the lake.

5. Election of New Chair – Ms. Hallquist moved to nominate Mrs. Nashawaty as the new chair. Mr. Pavlicek seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
6. Set Next Meeting Date – Mrs. Nashawaty explained that the Tri-Town meets quarterly. Mr. Bernaiche's review will be due in September. Mr. Pavlicek explained that, typically, the three Town Managers / Administrators meet with Mr. Bernaiche and then the review is confirmed at the meeting. The next meeting will be September 12, 2017 at 8:00 am in Sunapee.
7. Other Business – Mr. Bernaiche said that he is working with LSPA and the three Conservation Commissions to try and to get oblique imagery to measure homes. He is exploring if the costs can be deferred or another program can pay for it. It is called Pictometry and is done by planes with numerous cameras at numerous angles flying over at a low, slow pace. It gets the entire property at different sides and angles so you can see what has been added. There was further discussion regarding this matter.
Ms. McAllister said that they will be working on contacting the various condo associates and meeting with them to inform and educate them regarding permitting. There have been sales that have been over assessments because they have not had permits pulled. Mrs. Nashawaty asked and Ms. McAllister explained that they want to meet with the Association presidents or the managers.
Mr. Bernaiche said that there will be a demo of Avitar after this meeting. The Board is welcome to stay for the demo if they would like.

Mr. Pavlicek made a motion to adjourn at 9:05. Ms. Hallquist seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Melissa Pollari

Sunapee Assessing Technician