

TOWN OF WENTWORTH, NEW HAMPSHIRE
SELECT BOARD MEETING MINUTES
March 26, 2019

1 **1. Call to Order**

2
3 Chairperson Morgan Currier called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

4
5 Select Board Members Present: Morgan Currier, Omer C. Ahern, Jr., and Francis Muzzey.

6
7 Staff/Officials Present: Administrative Assistant - Tanya Houseknecht Vela, Chief of Police –
8 Wallace Trott, Transfer Station Attendant – Randy Ruger, Road Agent – Kevin Gilbert

9
10 Public Present: Carol Young, Janice Thompson, Jared King, Joshua Leiter, Kaye Bailey, Sharon
11 Sanborn

12
13 O. Ahern, Jr. asked Chair to make a point of order and then asked the public if during the
14 course of the meeting, members of the public could please identify themselves before speaking
15 to help him as the new Selectperson. T.H. Vela said it would help her as well.

16
17 F. Muzzey added that he would like to request a sign-in sheet so that all could indicate their
18 presence at the meeting and to assist the Administrative Assistant taking notes.

19
20 Select Board reviewed Agenda, made format recommendations for the Agenda and discussed
21 their intent to conduct weekly meetings until further notice.

22
23 Jared King and discussed which roads were Class VI roads. J. King expressed concern about
24 setting up a barrier on certain roads vulnerable to damage from individuals off-roading for fun
25 during mud season. Select Board acknowledged J. King's concerns and discussed what would be
26 most beneficial to the nearby residents and the town. After coming to an agreement, the Chair,
27 on behalf of the Board, gave permission at this point for him to block specific roads to avoid
28 damage that would cost the town money to repair due to off-roading, adding that it would be
29 helpful to obtain a list from him of the roads he mentioned. J. King also offered to show the
30 roads he referenced to anyone interested.

31
32 Chief of Police Report:

33 Assisted a Wentworth resident with a background investigation; Assisted State Police with a
34 motor vehicle accident on Route 25; Conducted a pro-active motor vehicle enforcement detail
35 on Route 25 after receiving a number of complaints, made a number of stops and gave a
36 number of warnings and issued some citations; Assisted NH State Police and U.S. Fire Marshals
37 with an arrest without incident and the individual was bailed later; Arrested a Wentworth
38 resident on an active Arrest Warrant that Chief obtained through the Court and the individual

39 also later released on bail; Attended three different trainings over the course of the last three
40 weeks which included Training of the Sheriff's Dept., Human Trafficking Course in Wakefield
41 sponsored by the NH Human Trafficking Collaborative Task Force and a Course on Trauma
42 Informed Care sponsored by the NH Coalition Against Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault.
43 These are trainings that are at no cost to the Town. Chief capitalizes on the opportunity to
44 attend these types of trainings when possible, stating that it's great training for him and his
45 Officers. It has proven very beneficial in a number of different ways.

46
47 O. Ahern, Jr. referenced a meeting he attended last week with the NH Municipal Association the
48 week about Cyber Security and asked Chief Trott if he had all he needed to ensure regarding
49 Cyber Security. Chief said he had what he needed but added that these are genuine concerns that
50 the Select Board should consider regarding the Municipal Office where Tanya works, adding
51 that his office has the necessary firewalls in place because of the sensitive information that Chief
52 handles not available to the public, even under the Right to Know law, so the Police Dept is
53 mandated to have this security in place. Chief emphasized again that he recommends that the
54 Board looks into the firewalls in place regarding the Town Office. O. Ahern, Jr. discussed the
55 risks to the compromise of residents' personal identifiable information (PII), as well as the
56 process and costs associated with implementing higher Cyber Security measures for the Town.
57 Chief stated that there are Municipalities in other parts of the U.S. that have been hacked and
58 'held hostage' and had to pay a ransom to get their computers unlocked again adding that there
59 are people out there with the technology to do this and that it's something worth looking into.

60
61 The Administrative Assistant added that given the high cost of implementing these type of
62 security measures, she wanted just state for the record that she takes this issue seriously, has had
63 training in this type of security from the military and is committed to protecting everyone's PII
64 as much as possible by not asking for sensitive information via email and shredding documents
65 as necessary. J. King offered to provide the contact information of an individual in a neighboring
66 town who does a lot of computer work and can check for firewalls, etc.

67
68 F. Muzzey referenced a new Town employee who emailed the copies official documents (i.e.
69 Driver License, Social Security Card, etc.) and asked if the Town was supposed to discard our
70 copy once the information was verified. Chief replied that the Town can keep that information
71 because they will need it for tax purposes, but cannot retain information regarding a background
72 investigation. Any information regarding a criminal record or motor vehicle record cannot be
73 kept on file. All agreed that the information must and will be kept safe. The Road Agent added
74 that he feels the Town should keep copies of those documents because he was questioned
75 several times whether he had a Commercial Driver's License (CDL). Chief added that personnel
76 files are not subject to Right-to-Know. The Administrative Assistant added that the personnel
77 files are kept in a secure location. M. Currier stated that Certified Computer requires the Town
78 to maintain some type of firewall due to the job of the Town Clerk and Tax Collector. She
79 mentioned that the previous Select Board had discussed these types of upgrades and asked the
80 Administrative Assistant to look up the emails pertaining to Certified Computer's
81 recommendations so we can see how we can satisfy those requirements. Discussion continued

82 about the Town's server and M. Currier added that a lady from Certified Computer offered to
83 come speak before the Select Board to inform us further. M. Currier said she thoroughly
84 understands and agrees with this concern because she previously worked in Cyber Security for
85 five years.

86
87 Highway Department Report:

88 K. Gilbert informed the Town that the roads are still frozen, so is the gravel that they have at
89 the Town shed. They will be dispersing some over the rougher areas, mainly when you leave the
90 asphalt and hit the gravel road. They will try to smooth out the lumps as best as they can, but it's
91 not going to last, but when the thaw does come up, they will do some Spring grading and will fix
92 it. They will spend the rest of the week smoothing out what they can.

93
94 Transfer Station Report:

95 R. Ruger was not present but the Administrative Assistant spoke on his behalf to say that Randy
96 found a place that will accept the aluminum cans he's accumulated and pay 25 cents/pound
97 rather than 15 cents/pound, so that's more money for the Town. M. Currier added that the
98 Transfer Station is closed on holidays and wants to remind everyone that it will be closed on
99 Easter Sunday and it will be advertised to give people plenty of time to prepare.

100
101 Sharon Sanborn announced that an ex-Trustee invited Carol Young to come to the library as an
102 alternate and she agreed to be a Trustee since they had two Trustees resigned. So, she requested
103 that the Select Board appoint her as a Trustee until next year and that they'll look for someone
104 else. Carol Young is introduced. F. Muzzey stated that he checked with the RSA to make sure
105 of what the appointment laws were and basically, with some exceptions, the Select Board are
106 authorized to appoint fill-ins.

107
108 **F. Muzzey made a motion to grant Sharon's request to appoint Carol Young as an**
109 **interim Trustee. M. Currier seconded the motion. Voting in favor of the motion**
110 **were Muzzey-yes, Currier-Yes and O. Ahern Jr.-Yes. The motion passed 3-0-0.**

111
112 F. Muzzey asked S. Sanborn about who's paying the bill for cable TV and internet at the library.
113 Discussion followed about the internet at the school, library fire department and highway
114 department. What remains is an outstanding question about how the library is getting their free
115 internet. Chair as Administrative Assistant to look into the contract for the library.

116
117 Select Board continued business in the appointment of new Trustees by administering the oaths
118 to Carol P. Young, as interim Library Trustee (temporary election official) for a term ending
119 upon finalization of this election and Linda Franz as Trustee of the Trust Fund to serve until the
120 next annual meeting. Board signed pertinent forms making the appointments official.

121
122 Josh Leiter brought up concerns with his tax bill from 2018 and the grading of timber regarding
123 his timber cut. He acknowledged that it over 90 days for him to legally prompt the Town to
124 give him anything, but says we can still do it anyway. He stated that they told the Town it was a

125 number 1 (referencing numbers 1-6 in terms of quality and access), but that it was explained to
126 him that pretty much everyone in Wentworth pays a 3 because they average it out.

127
128 J. Leiter explained that the lot had been cut once or twice since the 1990s (before Jared King got
129 there), since it's a big area with different lots and that the wood is all scarred. He said it's over a
130 mile from Beech Hill Rd to get to the wood and the cut took place in the middle of a storm. He
131 mentioned a house floating down the river. J. Leiter says the Town is effectively charging him
132 close to 20% when they averaged it, so if someone cuts Veneer, the Town is charging him about
133 the same price on that bill.

134
135 J. Leiter said that it's the only bill he's never paid the Town because he came in about a month
136 after he got the tax bill and the Town didn't give him a satisfactory answer, so he put it off and
137 forgot about it, but emphasized that if the Town goes through all the numbers and don't even
138 deduct for all the road and access, it's still a 2 or a 1 with wood anyway.

139
140 O. Ahern, Jr. said that he'd like to see a copy of his Timber Tax application and M. Currier said
141 she could see if she could find one. F. Muzzey asked why it was over 90 days and J. Leitner
142 acknowledged that since it's over 90 days, he may have to go to the State or something of that
143 nature, but that the Town should look at what he's giving us and do the right thing.

144
145 F. Muzzey said he knew absolutely nothing about wood or taxing it or anything, but knows the
146 Town usually goes by a form. J. Leitner said it was a grade and Jared King explained that it's a
147 State matrix form. F. Muzzey said he thinks it would be best to listen to any advice that the
148 Board can get from somebody that's more qualified. A member of the public offered

149
150 J. Leitner said the bottom line is that he put down a 1 and the Town charged him a 3 and that
151 they average it for everybody, so even if he's cutting great wood, it would be a 3!

152
153 M. Currier said she completely understood what he was saying and added that the Board needs
154 to look into why it's automatically put as a 3, an average and not done based on the wood.

155
156 Jared King added that what usually happens in his experience is that usually it's charged
157 somewhere between 8 % and 10 % of the value of what he would pay a landowner for their
158 stumpage (their trees). He said a normal rate is usually around 10 percent and that usually for
159 fairly easy access – reasonable for thousands and thousands of dollars-worth of work. He said
160 that something like Leiter's property took upwards of \$8000 – \$10,000 just to access the
161 property. They end up paying more than 25% of what they actually got paid for the whole detail
162 in just road costs – getting the wood chipper into the woods also.

163
164 J. Leiter emphasized that not only was his access bad, but the wood's been logged and that it's
165 scarred wood and crap, so he's chipped much of it. It's not a good tinder lot.

166

167 F. Muzzey asked J. Leiter if he has the report that shows the amount he received from the
168 different lumber places to see what the value is for the total amount he received from all of that
169 harvesting based on the experts. He guessed 10% would be fair to give the Town. J. Leiter
170 responded saying that it doesn't account for all the work he has to pay for in order to get to the
171 timber. O. Ahern, Jr. opined that 10 % seemed reasonable.

172
173 Jared King said his opinion is that 8% is probably better. He stated that his objective is to
174 inform the Town that we need to have somebody keep an eye on how these tax bills are sent
175 out. He said it ends up making the timber industry look really poorly and that there's been
176 several occasions and not just recently, but over the years there have been lots of mistakes made
177 on these Timber Tax bills and that he doesn't mind talking about it in order to help somebody
178 fix them.

179
180 M. Currier responded by saying that she's mentioned it before, but that the Board members are
181 not experts by any means and that everybody has a different expertise. O. Ahern, Jr. said he has
182 a certified tree farm in Plymouth, so he has a lot of questions going forward. M. Currier agreed
183 that O. Ahern, Jr. is probably more educated on the topic than Francis or she, but that she
184 knows from working in the Admin office and seeing the applications come through and
185 handling the paperwork that even those who end up processing a lot of them might not really
186 understand it and what the Board needs to do is investigate this situation specifically. She added
187 that after the Board gets some information from the State of what needs to be done and how
188 the Towns are supposed to complete the paperwork, they will be able to understand the process
189 better in order to make sure the Town is not making mistakes.

190
191 F. Muzzey added that he doesn't know if the Board's hands are tied since more than a year has
192 passed and J. Leiter responded by asking the Town to just look at it and realize that they aren't
193 just cutting wood right at the road where trucks are moving in, adding that he put money
194 towards bridge work and the road which got washed out. He said that was supposed to be
195 considered, but the Town didn't consider any abatement and just gave him a higher grade of
196 wood and charged him for it.

197
198 Conversation continued and Jared King suggested the Board get in touch with Rick Evans from
199 the State, who handles all the Timber Tax. He said that Rick is willing to donate whatever time is
200 needed to educate anybody who wants to be educated on how the sliding scale works. Jared also
201 offered to take anyone willing to go on a ride up any of these roads and that he is more than
202 willing to contact him at any time. O. Ahern, Jr. expressed interest in taking a ride, along with M.
203 Currier.

204

205 J. Leiter said that he came into the office when Arlene (Patten) was working as the
206 Administrative Assistant, soon after he received his bill, but before the new year. F. Muzzey
207 asked what the tax bill amount was and he said \$3,099.69.

208

209 The Board agreed that they would update J. Leiter by May 14th.

210 O. Ahern, Jr. discussed IT/Cyber concerns and the Police Chief and said he feels it's a critical
211 concern and worth looking into further and conducting a risk assessment. M. Currier suggested we
212 reach out to Primex. A discussion followed about protecting the Town's private information when
213 working with outside companies and the Police Chief added that those companies are bound by
214 privacy agreements.

215 O. Ahern suggested the Board take part in a tour of the Board of Corrections and explained his
216 reasoning for this. He said he would try to arrange it. M. Currier added that she felt it was equally
217 important to set up a meeting with the Welfare Officer, who is extremely knowledgeable on the
218 process.

219 A discussion followed regarding the contract for the Town's leased printer and since the change-
220 over for the Select Board and Administrative Assistant took place at the same time a bill from W.B.
221 Mason arrived, the Board asked T. Vela to call the company and obtain an update on the contract.

222 A member of the public asked how often the Town's website is updated because she hadn't seen any
223 updates since 2016 on foreclosures, specifically land. A discussion ensued on foreclosed land from
224 the past.

225

226 At 8:22 pm O Ahern, Jr. made a motion to go into a non-public meeting, per RSA 91-A:3, II (a) to
227 discuss the compensation for a public Town employee.

228 **M. Currier voted-Yes and F. Muzzey voted-Yes.**

229 Meeting adjourned.

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