

Selectboard  
November 6, 2023  
FINAL

**SELECTBOARD MEETING**  
**November 6, 2023**  
**7PM - MUNICIPAL OFFICE BUILDING - HANOVER, NH**

The meeting of the Selectboard was called to order at 7p.m. by Chair Athos Rassias. Also present were: Nancy Carter, Selectboard Member, Carey Callaghan, Secretary, Jennie Chamberlain, Selectboard Member, Alex Torpey, Town Manager

Absent: Joanna Whitcomb, Vice Chair

**1. Opening of Meeting**

**a. Call to Order**

A. Rassias called the meeting to order.

**3. Agenda Review**

**a. Agenda Review**

A. Rassias reviewed the order of the meeting agenda and noted that several items will be taken out of order this evening.

**4. Announcements/recognition**

**a. Employee Proclamation**

None

**5. Public Comment**

**a. Public may address the Board**

A. Rassias reviewed the procedure for public comment.

Jane Masters, 15 Willow Spring Cir asked to please build the sidewalk at Verona. It has been promised and delayed. It is a neighborhood with 100 houses, children and elderly and it needs to get done. She would like an update on the timeline and would like to see the plans regarding location.

Martha Clark, Willow Spring noted there is a daycare at the corner of Verona and Wheelock and children are using the road there.

Carlos L/N/U, Willow Spring noted how dangerous it is to walk his dog every day- especially in the dark.

David Vincelette, 93 Lebanon st

A. Rassias noted the Town is in the process of revising the Town logo, which Mr. Vincelette has pointed out needed a change. A revised logo is currently displayed in the meeting room.

Mr. Vincelle mentioned topics he has raised before such as Mink Brook, accusations towards the board members and actions on his property.

He mentioned access to public meetings where he has spoken are not publicly available and minutes are not accessible by phone. He noted he has been trying to contact the Town Manager with no results, even after A. Rassias informed Mr. Vincelette that A. Torpey will set up a meeting with the three of them so they can discuss the questions Mr. Vincelette has.

Selectboard

November 6, 2023

## **7. Business Requiring Action**

### **d. Approval of Items i to v by Consent**

#### **iv. Recommendation to Adopt Advisory Board of Assessors Recommendations**

N. Carter recused herself from the item as she has a conflict with one of the requests.

The Advisory Board of Assessors met on August 9, 2023 to hear requests for exemptions. The decisions of the Board of Assessors were provided and are ready for Selectboard acceptance. The Selectboard's role is simply to accept what the Board of Assessors has decided as their final step in the Town process. From there, if a property owner is still not in agreement with the decision of the Town, they can appeal their case to either Grafton County Superior Court or the NH Board of Tax and Land Appeals.

Action Requested: Accept the exemptions as recommended by the Advisory Board of Assessors.

A. Rassias noted the options for the Selectboard are to accept the recommendations, not accept, or suggest changes.

A. Rassias noted that since there are people in attendance interested in the Friends of Hanover Crew request, that the board discusses that item separately and then can move on the remaining requests together.

The board discussed this request noting they have received information from both the Town Assessor and Town Counsel on the matter.

A. Rassias was in favor of seeking additional information from Town Counsel on the effect of granting or denying the exemption for the organization.

J. Chamberlain did some research into court cases and believes the Town would be remiss to not grant them the exemption. She explained her reasoning and cases that support this.

C. Callaghan thanked the public for coming out, apologized for the late notice of this item and noted communication will be reviewed to be sure notification goes out to proper channels moving forward.

He agrees that no decision will be made tonight until further information can be sought. He would like to hear from some folks this evening to explain charitable work that they do as often the by-laws determine charitable qualification and perhaps the by-laws need to be updated to reflect charitable activities that may be going on in the organization.

Julie Stevenson, Norwich and Principal of Hanover High School and Fred Crestman, President of Friends of Hanover Crew explained the charitable work that they do which should qualify them for the charitable tax exemption including:

- 501.c.3 organization
- Fundraises in order to make the sport of crew an option at Hanover High School
- No one is cut from the team- regardless of registration within the school
- Financially Support the Cancer Center
- Educational mission of teaching the value of contributing to the greater community
- Paid for the dock at Wilson's Landing and donated it to the Town for anyone to use.
- Pay for taking the dock out and in each year
- Many equipment donations
- Support team's travel expenses
- Match HHS coaching stipends

The majority of the board prefers to table the item for further research and discussion with Assessor and/or Counsel.

N. Carter rejoined the board at this time.

Selectboard

November 6, 2023

**At 7:30, C. Callaghan moved to accept the recommendations of the Advisory Board of Assessors of August 9, 2023 with the exception of the Friends of Hanover Crew which will be addressed at a later date. N. Carter seconded.**

**All in Favor**

## **2. Public Hearing**

### **a. Public Hearing to Correct the Current Rates and Fees Schedule Town Parking Garage Short Term Rates 4th Hour from \$3.00 to \$1.00.**

A Public Hearing is scheduled to make a correction in the current Rates and Fees Schedule in the Town Parking Garage – Short Term Rates – 4th hour from \$3.00 to \$1.00. Action Requested: Correct the current Rates and Fees Schedule in the Town Parking Garage – Short Term Rates – 4th hour from \$3.00 to \$1.00.

Public Hearing opened

E. Bullion, Director of Finance explained the published rate and the correction that needs to be made.

J. Chamberlain asked about the rates and consistency between street parking and garage parking. E. Bullion addressed this.

Public Comment

None

Public Hearing closed

**At 7:35, N. Carter moved to Correct the Current Rates and Fees Schedule Town Parking Garage Short Term Rates 4th Hour from \$3.00 to \$1.00. C. Callaghan seconded. All in Favor**

## **7. Business Requiring Action**

### **b. Approval of Amended Bridge Bond Loan Documents**

At the July 13, 2021 Town Meeting warrant article 7 was approved, giving the Town authority to raise and appropriate \$950,000.00 for the purpose of capital repairs and renovations to selected bridges throughout the Town. The Town executed a General Obligation Note on December 10, 2021 for this amount. However, due to project timing and administrative changes, the Town did not draw the full amount of the Note by December 10, 2022 when the one-year line of credit expired. The Town now seeks approval of the amendment to the Note to draw the remaining balance.

Action Requested: Approve the Amended Bridge Bond Loan Documents

**At 7:37, A. Rassias moved to approve the amended bridge bond loan documents at an interest rate of 3.49% and pass the resolutions that are listed within. N. Carter seconded.**

E. Bullion confirmed Mascoma Bank has agreed to this second draw at the interest rate presented. If the Town has to renegotiate this, the interest rate is 6.5% as of a few weeks ago. She did discuss this with the Finance Committee who asked important questions. There is a bridge capital reserve fund with \$195,000 which is not something we can access today – it would have to go through Town Meeting. Also, there is no prepayment penalty with these loans.

Kari Asmus, Finance Committee Chair asked if we did a prepayment, would we have to pay down the first part of the loan (which is at a lower rate) or could we pay down the portion that is at the higher rate?

E. Bullion noted the new loan is a separate document from the first loan.

Kari Asmus is curious to know how Mascoma will look at these documents- whether it will be separate or viewed as one loan. She also wondered why project timing is given as a reason for the delay. It appeared the DPW staff completed the work in a timely fashion.

E. Bullion stated the major factor was staff transition in the Finance Department. She also gave some additional details.

Selectboard

November 6, 2023

Kari Asmus expressed some concerns about communications and wants the Town to be more diligent moving forward and have processes and back-up systems in place for when the unexpected occurs.

C. Callaghan noted with Ellen in place and the new CIPC developing, people and processes will be in place to prevent these issues in the future.

Greg Snyder, Finance Committee commented that strengthening the Town financial accounting and reporting systems is a work in progress. The Selectboard goals and priorities document does not mention this topic. It would be helpful to have that priority in that document to require us to focus on it.

J. Chamberlain commented that with bridges, it is incumbent on the Selectboard to be clear to staff that they should be applying a complete streets policy which the Selectboard passed. For bridges there is specific language that people should have the space to walk and bike.

**Vote: All in favor**

## **6. Business Requiring Discussion**

### **a. FY 24-25 Budget Discussion**

The discussion/decision points tonight revolve around the following topics and should include discussion and input from the Selectboard and the Finance Committee who has been invited to this meeting.

Topics tonight include:

1. Review of updated budget timeline for FY24-25
2. Review and memorialize the FY24-25 priorities from the 10/18 Selectboard Goal Setting Workshop
3. Review and commit to allocations for ARPA spending
4. Review high-level forecasting and identify FY 24-25 tax rate target guidance

### **ii. ARPA Allocations**

A. Torpey reviewed that there is \$1.2M in ARPA funds available for qualifying projects. Previous conversations leaned towards projects with high community impact, or programs that needed a jumpstart of funding to get started.

Some projects were identified last year, and some are under discussion this year.

- Road and sidewalk for Main, Lebanon, Allen
- Downtown place-making/ hard-scaping
- Public Wi-Fi/ internet for downtown
- Records digitization and online services
- Home internet grant funds
- New air exchangers for dispatch center
- FitTest machine for fire department
- Howe: 2<sup>nd</sup> Zoom room and furniture replacement
- New, upgraded portable radios for police

Discussion and further detail was given regarding roads/ sidewalks project, internet, fire equipment and Howe projects.

J. Chamberlain would like more information on the objectives of the street/sidewalk project and a copy of any designs or presentations that have been made.

Selectboard

November 6, 2023

Kari Asmus noted the Finance Committee is excited to use the ARPA funds for items on the Capital list which many projects listed above are. She noted a couple inconsistencies on the memo from what is actually in the 2024 budget and what isn't.

Discussion occurred regarding the timeline for bids to go out and come back and since that may take a month or two, it is optimal to vote forward as many projects tonight as the board feels comfortable.

**C. Callaghan moved to commit allocations for ARPA funds as presented. N. Carter seconded. All in favor**

**iii. FY24-25 Tax Rate Guidance**

A. Rassias explained the Selectboard provides tax rate guidance by taking a comprehensive look at what is forecasted for revenues and expenditures and what the public may or may not be able to contribute. He reviewed past practices.

E. Bullion presented the details of a memo which she had provided in advance. She thanked Kari, Carey and others for all of their input to these models which are a great starting point for the conversation.

Board members gave their opinions on the topic.

C. Callaghan noted the many competing demands on our finances- both operating and capital. The intension is to be more methodical and less episodial with our capital spending, which creates a higher path to taxes. Though in negotiations regarding operational spending, we are still at the low end of the wage scale and want to address that which will be costly. The tax rate increase needs to be palatable to existing residents as well as potential residents. This is a challenging task and priorities need to be defined for when we need to make decisions about what needs funds immediately versus what can be pushed off.

The Finance Committee is guided by a charter that was readopted in 2004. The role is advisory to and independent from the Selectboard.

Finance Committee members Kari Asmus, John Dolan, Greg Snyder spoke on the following topics:

- Undesignated fund balance preferred level
- Timing / April 1 for increased assessing values
- Priorities and sticking to completing basic projects
- Town population/ tax base
- Added students are actually a cost to the town which exceeds the tax revenue produced by a new living unit
- Better financial management systems should be a priority

A. Rassias noted having the town be more accessible, affordable, equitable is one of the focuses that came out of the Selectboard priorities retreat.

Discussion occurred about the ideal tax rate range. Board member initial suggestions included 5%, 5%-7%, 7% (increase). Discussion occurred about Dartmouth properties and the taxes they pay and the option of a PILOT.

**i. Results and vote on priorities from Selectboard Goal Setting Workshop**

On October 18<sup>th</sup> the board held a retreat (noticed and open to the public) to discuss Selectboard priorities moving forward.

A. Torpey wrote a three-page document summarizing the retreat. The main goal of the priority setting is to allow better management and coordination of budget requests of department heads and what gets presented to the Selectboard for approval. Top priorities include:

Selectboard

November 6, 2023

- Invest in the organization and its staff
- Make Hanover more affordable, accessible and resilient for a wider range of people
- Expand the ability of people to move in and around the community safely and economically without motor vehicles
- Reevaluate what and how community services and programs are offered- anyone from any economic background can access any community services
- Create partnerships to assist in stakeholder long term planning, budgeting and community engagement
- Add layers of community engagement interactivity and transparency

A. Rassias noted he is in support of the document as a guide for priorities.

Discussion occurred with E. Bullion and the board about the policies that need to be reviewed/ updated specifically relating to the Finance Department and in relation to comments earlier about strengthening the Finance reporting and accounting.

Board members highlighted some details they would like to see in the document.

The board consensus is in support of the document and using it to prioritize projects and spending. A. Torpey will send the updated version to board members.

## **7. Business Requiring Action**

### **a. Set public hearings via RSA 41:14a for 11/27, 12/11, 12/18**

Campion Rink Drainage Easement

Hanover Inn – Porte-cochere

Old Tuck Drive, sidewalk easement (2018)

West Wheelock Sewer Pump Station (2020-2022)

North College Street Sidewalk (2020-2021)

North College Street Retaining Wall (2020-2021)

Pine Park – public access

Removal of Enforcement Rights/Restrictive Covenants for 33 Goodfellow Road

Pond Conservation Easement from Lebanon

**At 10:25, N. Carter moved to set public hearings via RSA 41:14a for 11/27, 12/11, 12/18 for the items listed. A. Rassias seconded. All in favor**

### **c. Approval of October 9, 2023 and October 16, 2023 Minutes**

**At 10:28, A. Rassias moved to approve the minutes of October 9<sup>th</sup> as amended. J. Chamberlain seconded. All in favor**

**At 10:30, A. Rassias moved to approve the minutes of October 16<sup>th</sup> as submitted. C. Callaghan seconded. All in favor**

### **d. Approval of Items i to v by Consent**

#### **i. Donations – Hanover Fire Department**

The Hanover Fire Department has received a donation of a 2009 Volvo S40 motor vehicle from Stephen Rich and Judith Sterndale for training purposes. As the value of the car is estimated to be over \$25.00 the Selectboard must accept this donation.

The Hanover Fire Department has received a second donation of a non-operational 2009 Volvo station wagon from Gerald and Candace Webster for training purposes. As the value of the car is estimated to be over \$25.00 the Selectboard must accept this donation.

Selectboard

November 6, 2023

Action Requested: Accept the donations of motor vehicles from Stephen Rich and Judith Sterndale and Gerald and Candace Webster to the Hanover Fire Department for training purposes.

### **ii. Appointment of Election Officials**

A list of election volunteers who have agreed to help Town staff with the upcoming 2024 elections was supplied to the board. Staff recommends the Board formally appoint these individuals as Ballot Clerks for 2024 elections.

Action Requested: Appoint the individuals included on the Election Officials list.

### **iii. Approval of Upper Valley Business Alliance's Request for Free Holiday Parking**

Upper Valley Business Alliance has again requested free holiday parking on Saturdays to promote shopping in Downtown Hanover. This request would apply to all municipal parking lots and on-street parking on key holiday weekends between Thanksgiving and Christmas for a total of five Saturdays.

Action Requested: Approve Upper Valley Business Alliance's request for free holiday parking on November 25th, December 2nd, December 9th, December 16th and December 23rd.

### **v. Approval of 2023 Trial Ratio Study Report**

The New Hampshire Department of Revenue requires each municipality to annually submit the list of qualified sales to determine the Town's ratio. Norm Bernaiche has completed the 2023 Trial Ratio Study Report and requests approval by the Board.

Action Requested: Execute the 2023 Municipal Assessment Data Certificate pertaining to the 2023 Trial Ratio Study Report

**At 10:35, A. Rassias moved to approve consent items i, ii, iii and v. C. Callaghan seconded. All in favor with J. Chamberlian abstaining (out of room at time of vote)**

Donations were read into the record.

## **8. Reports and Communications**

### **a. Town Manager Report**

- None

### **b. Selectboard and Committee Reports**

- J. Whitcomb
  - None
- A. Rassias
  - Nothing to report
- N. Carter
  - Nothing to report
- C. Callaghan
  - Capital Improvement Program
    - Reviewed the process with Rob Houseman
    - Brian Edwards talked about the master plan
    - New form for Dept heads to use
  - Finance Committee
    - Discussed audits, MS-35, MS- 434, setting the tax rate and school related issues

Selectboard

November 6, 2023

- J. Chamberlain
  - Bike Walk
    - Working with Dartmouth on a device that counts walkers and bikers

## **9. Adjournment**

### **a. Move to adjourn**

**At 10:37, A. Rassias moved to adjourn. J. Chamberlain seconded. All in favor**

Respectfully Submitted,

Carey Callaghan, Secretary

## **SUMMARY**

### **Item 7.d.iv**

**At 7:30, C. Callaghan moved to accept the recommendations of the Advisory Board of Assessors of August 9, 2023 with the exception of the Friends of Hanover Crew which will be addressed at a later date. N. Carter seconded.**

**All in Favor**

### **Item 2a**

**At 7:35, N. Carter moved to Correct the Current Rates and Fees Schedule Town Parking Garage Short Term Rates 4th Hour from \$3.00 to \$1.00. C. Callaghan seconded. All in Favor**

### **Item 7b**

**At 7:37, A. Rassias moved to approve the amended bridge bond loan documents at an interest rate of 3.49% and pass the resolutions that are listed within. N. Carter seconded. All in favor**

### **Item 6.a.ii**

**C. Callaghan moved to commit allocations for ARPA funds as presented. N. Carter seconded. All in favor**

### **Item 7a**

**At 10:25, N. Carter moved to set public hearings via RSA 41:14a for 11/27, 12/11, 12/18 for the items listed. A. Rassias seconded. All in favor**

### **Item 7c**

**At 10:28, A. Rassias moved to approve the minutes of October 9<sup>th</sup> as amended. J. Chamberlain seconded. All in favor**

**At 10:30, A. Rassias moved to approve the minutes of October 16<sup>th</sup> as submitted. C. Callaghan seconded. All in favor**

### **Item 7d**

**At 10:35, A. Rassias moved to approve consent items i, ii, iii and v. C. Callaghan seconded. All in favor with J. Chamberlain abstaining (out of room at time of vote)**

### **Item 9a**

**At 10:37, A. Rassias moved to adjourn. J. Chamberlain seconded. All in favor**



