

**Town of Tinmouth  
Select Board  
Tuesday, January 25, 2022  
Regular Monthly Meeting Minutes  
Approved 2/10/2022**

**Members present in person:** Cathy Reynolds, Meadow Squier and Frank Sears

**Others present:**

**Via Zoom** Eric Buffum – Road Commissioner, Sherry Johnson, Kim Harbaugh, and David Birdsall - Tree Warden

**In-person-** Stan Wilbur-Public Works Project Manager, Michael Fallar, and Gail Fallar – Select Board Assistant (SBA)

**Frank** called the meeting to order at 6:39 and welcomed everyone.

**Board** reviewed agenda, added town clerk's request to make an announcement, and Frank's request to discuss a re-consideration of the motion regarding town meeting at the 1/13/22 meeting.

**Minutes:** Minutes of 1/9/2021 – Cathy presented multiple corrections - the third sentence in the *Public Works Facilities Update* was replaced with *'The new proposal includes line items discussed at the November 11<sup>th</sup> meeting.'* In the next sentence replaced 'a firm' with *'signed'*, added *'early'* before summer and deleted *'it will not be a spring ground breaking.'* In the *Highway* section removed *'that no questions are allowed'* and *'no one is allowed to question any employees'* and inserted *'personnel feedback is not appropriate in open meeting.'* Also inserted *'upon strong argument from Michael'* after *'Frank ruled him out of order,'*.

Michael raised objections to the proposed minute changes in the *Highway* section. Frank instructed Michael to cease comment, advised that he is not allowed to speak unless recognized by the Chair, is again out of order and that he would only be allowed to speak in the **Others** section of the agenda.

Frank moved to approve the minutes with changes proposed by Cathy, Cathy 2nded, all voted in favor.

**Public Works Facilities Update** ~ Stan advised that only one well driller submitted a proposal, they would like to drill the well in March, and will come back to hook it up once the building is constructed. As it is a commercial building, the state requires 60' of casing and grouting which increases the cost. Road crew will dig the trench, Parker will run the pipe, install the pump, etc.

**Well Quotes** ~ Parker Water Wells submitted a proposal for \$9,880. Cathy moved to accept the proposal from Parker Water Wells, Meadow 2nded, all voted in favor. All signed the contract. Stan advised the town already has its state water and waste water permit.

Stan reported he had updated the proposed cost sheet, has talked with Eric about what the town crew can do, is waiting for estimated time. He would like to include charges to the Project for using the town's equipment and employees. Board questioned why the Town would charge itself, discussion – charges for equipment could be added to the Equipment Fund, no action taken. Eric will keep log of equipment used and road crew time. Stan advised he will submit the application for a Fire and Safety permit for the town garage, Morton will provide the data. Stan also noted that Morton's contract says they own the building until it is completed, so the Town may not need to purchase Builder's Risk insurance. Cathy asked Stan to email his Excel spreadsheet of the proposed project cost. Board thanked Stan many times for his service as the Project Manager.

**Highway** ~ Eric reported they are working on the same old stuff. Cathy passed along a compliment from her mother Jo, who noted she saw Eric going by all the time and was doing a good job. Thank you.

**Potter's Brook Arch Culvert Project-** Board opened the only bid sent by mail from Lane Enterprises. Another vendor sent an email with information for the town to purchase the culvert using the State's contract and pricing. After brief discussion, Cathy moved to reject all bids, and get quotes from vendors using the State contract. Frank 2nded, all voted in favor. Board asked Eric to get this information for the Board's meeting on February 10<sup>th</sup>.

**FY23 Draft Highway Budget** ~ Cathy noted that the highway budget was increasing \$104,000. And that there is a general fund year end balance that could be used to reduce taxes or the Board could ask voters to use some of it for the town's share of the culvert project. Some towns retain a cash flow balance that is 5 to 10% of the budget. After brief discussion, Cathy moved and Meadow 2nded to add an Article to the Town Meeting Warning asking voters to allocate \$18,800 of the unencumbered General Fund year-end balance to be used for the Town's match of the Potter's Brook Culvert Project. All voted in favor. Replacing the culvert is estimated to cost \$54,800, a state grant has been approved to cover \$36,000 of the cost. The other big increase is the \$24,000 bond payment. The FY21 highway fund balance of \$3,274 will be used for highway expenses in the current year – FY22.

The **Highway Paving and Construction Reserve Fund** was discussed. SBA explained the purpose of the fund was to save for a major re-construction project, started a few years ago.

**FY23 Draft General Budget** ~ Board removed the \$4,000 proposed for cyber security, will think about using ARPA money once an assessment of needs has been made. Cathy again noted the cost of replacing the roof over the library should have come out of the Capital Building Fund. Gail again advised that the general budget was able to cover it, wanted to save the Capital Fund for a bigger project if needed. Current balance in the **Capital Building Repair/Construction Fund** is \$544,306.85, of that \$33,769 is for town buildings, and \$510,537.85 is the balance for highway buildings.

Frank inquired, on behalf of someone, about why the town supported the **Milfoil Project** when there was no public access. Gail responded that Bob Noble does a study every couple of years that shows how much of the tax base is supported by properties on the lake, keeping those values intact supports the tax base. Pond folks don't receive much in return, the roads around the lake are private and not maintained by the town, with the small exception of the south end (a bit of Tinmouth Pond Road). The Town donates \$2,500 per year, pond/lake owners last year donated nearly \$12,000 to continue the work to control milfoil.

Cathy moved to approve a proposed FY23 Highway Budget of \$640,000 and a proposed FY23 General Budget of \$239,735. Meadow 2nded, all voted in favor.

**New Loader RFP** ~ Board reviewed draft, edited a bit, decided to have bids due on February 22, 2022. Discussed how much the loader is used, current repairs needed, etc. Frank moved, Cathy 2nded to approve the RFP as edited. All voted in favor.

**Road Crew Vacation Schedule** – Eric advised he was thinking his vacation time would be near the end of June. Ronnie uses his during the summer when he goes out west to fight forest fires. Eric will check with Glenn Merrill to make sure he will be available to cover vacation times and the town garage site work.

**Others** – Gail advised that Cate Stone has resigned as town office assistant, thanked her for her service.

Frank recognized **Michael**. Michael expressed concern with the Board's treatment of a citizen attending a meeting, trying to ask the road commissioner a question and being denied the right to ask it.

**Old Business** ~

**Bond Application Question** – SBA reported that the Vermont Bond Bank had advised the cost of delaying principal payments would add about \$10,000 to the total cost. Cathy moved, Meadow 2nded to begin repayments in year one, no delay. All voted in favor.

**Reconsideration** – Frank asked the Board to reconsider the motion made on January 13, 2022 to hold Town Meeting as a virtual meeting, using Australian balloting for public question and budgets. Board agreed to discuss. Frank expressed concern that the virtual meeting would not be sufficient to explain the Board's request to authorize spending from the Capital Building Fund for the town garage. The Board needs to explain why they already spent money. Attendance would be less, he suggested waiting until a warmer time to hold an outside meeting. Meadow and Cathy both agreed that voters needed to be informed, spoke about ways to do that, Front Porch Forum, *Tales of Tinmouth*, a possible letter to all voters, and also agreed that

covid was a valid reason to not have an in-person meeting now. After more discussion, including noting that voters had authorized the bond, and had voted to add monies to the Capital Building Fund for a town garage, Board decided to not reconsider the motion.

**New Business ~**

**2022 Town Meeting Warning ~** Board approved and signed warning, contains 7 Articles.

**David Birdsall ~** David encouraged Board to watch the recent Emerald Ash Borer webinar he had attended. EAB is still coming.

**Petitions From Voters ~** Board formally accepted the two petitions regarding switching town meeting from voting from the floor to using Australian balloting for budgets and public questions. Officers are already elected using Australian balloting. Per State statute, these questions have to be discussed and voted on at a floor meeting, and the Board has to act within 60 days to warn such a meeting. Warning has to be not less than 30 nor more than 40 days from the date the Board acts to set the meeting. Board is looking to hold it outdoors in warmer weather – late April or early May perhaps.

**Process for Citizens Concerns ~** Board reviewed draft provided by the SBA (who borrowed it with permission from another town), discussed the need for a way for concerns to be addressed. After discussion, Board decided to try it for a year. There is a form that is filled out, action taken or resolution arrived at, if not resolved, then the Select Board can/will address. It is filed and kept at the town office – it's a public document.

**Members Concerns –** Cathy noted the Legislature is still working on redistricting, had sent a note regarding their latest proposal asking for local input and offering time to testify before the House Gov Ops Committee on February 1<sup>st</sup>. She asked that the BCA meet to consider. BCA meeting was set for Monday, January 31<sup>st</sup> at 5:00.

**Mail/Correspondence –**

**Executive Session –** None

**Next Meetings Schedule ~** Thursday, February 10, 2022 at 7:00 and Tuesday, February 22nd at 7:00.

**Meeting adjourned at 9:20 pm.**

Respectfully submitted,

Gail Fallar,  
Select Board Assistant