

SELECTMEN'S MEETING– January 8, 2024

Present: Margo Connors, Richard Bielefield, Chris Ellms
Jennifer Gaudette

Guests: Chief Mike Ho-Sing-Loy, Nick De Mayo, Kenneth Leavitt,

The Select Board will not meet on January 15th, 2024.

Budget Hearing Date: February 5th, 2024 @ 6:00 pm.

The Select Board will have a Tri Town Board meeting with Franconia and Easton in Franconia on Monday January 22nd at 4:30 pm. The board will meet in Sugar Hill at approximately 6:00 pm on the 22nd for budget review with no appointments.

Motion to enter Nonpublic Session made by Dick Bielefield seconded by Margo Connors

Specific Statutory Reason cited as foundation for the nonpublic session:

RSA 91-A:3, II (a) *The dismissal, promotion, or compensation of any public employee or the disciplining of such employee, or the investigation of any charges against him or her, **unless** the employee affected (1) has a right to a public meeting, and (2) requests that the meeting be open, in which case the request shall be granted.*

Roll Call vote to enter nonpublic session: Margo Connors-Yes, Richard Bielefield-Yes Chris Ellms – Yes,

Guests: Chief Ho-Sing-Loy, Road Agent Douglas Glover

Entered nonpublic session at 5:00pm.

Motion to seal the minutes made by Richard Bielefield, seconded Margo Connors, because it is determined that divulgence of this information likely would render a proposed action ineffective

Roll Call Vote to seal minutes: Margo Connors – Yes, Richard Bielefield – Yes, Chris Ellms - Yes

Motion: PASSED

Motion to leave nonpublic session and adjourn at 5:39 pm., by Margo Connors, seconded by Chris Ellms. Motion: PASSED

RICHARD BIELEFIELD made a motion to approve the minutes of January 2, 2024, seconded by CHRIS ELLMS. The motion passed unanimously.

Correspondence was read and acted upon.

The board members offered their thoughts on the Pledge of Allegiance being said at Select Board meetings.

From Margo Connors: Statement Read

“There is no provision in the state or federal constitution for any ordinary citizen to take an oath of allegiance to the president, the country, or the flag. Certain government and military officials are required to take an oath – but only once, upon accepting their position.

The US Supreme Court has ruled that no one can be forced to say the pledge of allegiance (actually violates the first amendment).

The town has no authority to require the pledge before a meeting, nor has any resident the authority to ask that a meeting start with the pledge.

There is no reason to change established practice to require the pledge or a prayer or anything other than “The meeting shall come to order” to begin a meeting of the selectboard.

The pledge was authored by Francis Belamy for publication in a kid’s magazine. Some believe that having school kids recite the pledge was promoted by flag salesmen, who wanted to see their flags in every classroom in the country. The pledge is not in the state or national constitutions, and it wasn’t formally recognized by the US government until 1942.

Some folks believe that America currently does not provide liberty and justice for all.”

From Richard Bielefield: the pledge was stopped in schools because children did not understand the meaning of some of the words. It should be recited at special occasions.

From: Chris Ellms: The board needs to get away from political issues and focus on town business. There are other ways that the town can honor servicemen.

MR. ELLMS made a motion that the Select Board will not say the pledge every Monday night, seconded by MR. BIELEFIELD. The motion passed unanimously.

The board approved the use of the Crapo Building for Willing Worker’s luncheons on the first Thursday of the month from 10-2.

Gerry & Mamie Ramback received a time extension for their Shoreland Impact Permit 201—00222. Map 208, Lot 6

The board received an inquiry from ACT in regard to property located on Map 227, Lot 2/2.1 and if they were aware of any solid or hazardous waste on the property or other nearby land. The board was not aware of any issues.

The chair signed the most recent HOP progress update.

CHIEF HO-SING-LOY presented the board with the 2024 Prosecutor and Intermunicipal Agreements with Littleton. The cost for 2024 is the same as 2023 \$350.00. The Chief also updated the board on the recent storm and submission of costs for FEMA. The was approximately \$20,000 in storm damage.

MARGO CONNORS is trying to set up an additional meeting for Community Power prior to Town Meeting so that more understand the concept.

The Energy Committee reviewed the Sugar Hill Community Power Aggregation draft plan and found no problems. MARGO CONNORS made a motion to approve the final draft of the Sugar Hill Community Power Aggregation Plan, seconded by MR. ELLMS. The motion passed unanimously.

The Broadband Committee Zoom Meeting is rescheduled to Wednesday January 23rd.

Grafton County held a meeting at the Sugar Hill Meetinghouse on January 4th to accept the 12 million dollar broadband grant that will be the backbone and bring fiber to each town building, fire and police stations. It will make the broadband choices more competitive. The meeting showcased the need for broadband in rural areas like schools and libraries.

The board reviewed the procedure schedule for meetings and the board chair explained that having the public comment at 6:00pm would allow those attending to ask questions in their three minute time allotment. MR. BIELEFIELD made a motion to accept the latest draft, seconded by MR. ELLMS. The motion passed unanimously.

NICK De Mayo felt that the board is a political entity and as such if they don't want to be they should return federal funding that they received. The board should have respect to salute the flag.

KENNETH LEAVITT felt that the arguments that included wording that children didn't understand and flags being bought were not good reasons for not saying the pledge. Once a week saying the pledge is an honor to millions of military that have given the country freedom. The board's decision was disgraceful.

Mr. De Mayo asked if the pledge could be said before the board starts their meeting.

With no more business before the Board, CHRIS ELLMS made a motion to adjourn, seconded by RICHARD BIELEFIELD the meeting was adjourned at 6:22 PM. The next regular scheduled meeting is Monday January 22, 2024, at 4:30 pm in Franconia Town Hall to be followed by regular meeting at 6:00pm. upon the board's return.

Respectfully submitted:

Jennifer Gaudette
Administrative Assistant