

TOWN OF ACTON SELECT BOARD MEETING

October 23, 2024

6:00pm

1. **CALL MEETING TO ORDER / PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

2. **WARRANTS/BILLS - Signed**

3. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Walsh made a motion to approve the agenda for October 23, 2024; Denekamp seconded. All in favor. Motion carried.

4. **MINUTES OF LAST MEETING**

Norwood made a motion to approve the minutes for October 16, 2024; Denekamp seconded. All in favor. Motion carried.

5. **TOWN ADMINISTRATOR WEEKLY UPDATE**

- A. The Transfer Station/Handyman position is posted with a blurb at the bottom of the possibility of separating the positions for the right applicant.
- B. The Fire Chief and the liaison will be doing some interviews tomorrow night (October 24, 2024).
- C. Next week Norwood and the Town Administrator will doing interviews for the EMA Director.
- D. Having trouble connecting with contractor doing Memorial Ground project; Winchell will touch base.
- E. AED training will be held Wednesday, October 30th for staff and Transfer Station; both Town Hall and Transfer Station will close at 3 pm.
- F. There will be no Select Board meeting, Wednesday, October 30th due to Special Town meeting to be held at the Acton Elementary School at 6 pm.
- G. All the metal chairs have been taken; now the green chairs are on their way out. Anyone who would like to have them are welcome to take them.
- H. The State updated the General Assistance notice requirements. The State has changed the requirement that the Town have a staff member available 24/7 and a personal cell phone number on the door to outside of business hours, emergencies go through the York County Sherriff's Department, who then calls the person on file.
- I. Received a call from Travis and the contract has been expired for about a year and they have been working on a month to month basis. This is something that normally happens and was wondering if the Town was going to go out to bid. They are in a low place and want some direction from the Board. Their current hauling fees are based on the contract they are in and feel that the numbers are low for the actual costs to do the job. Discussion ensued. A bid will be worked on.

6. LIASION UPDATE

McGurty: Municipal Finance, Warrant & Finance Committee, APAT – No update.

Walsh: Transfer Station, Mary Grant Committee, Animal Control Officer

- The only update he had was given in the hauling and hauling fee discussions above. More information will be forthcoming after meeting tonight in North Berwick.
- Lincoln School will be presented later on Agenda.

Norwood: Fire Department, Recreation Committee, Conservation Forest Committee

- Fire Department –
 - Met with Fire Chief last week to go over some proposals that he will be bringing up later.
 - Reviewed some of the applications received for the open Firefighter position.
- Recreation Committee –
 - Interviewed two potential committee members who will be presented later on the agenda.
 - Met with Receation Director to discuss future plans, goals and updated them on what was going on and where the Board hoped to see the program go in the future.
 - The committee will be having their first meeting on Monday, October 28, 2024.
- Conservation/Forestry Committee –
 - Discussion were had with the Chair regarding committee discussions. Visits were done at two of the Town properties and discussed if there were any future uses for them. One of the things noted was that many in town were not aware of these properties. An idea was floated about potentially getting some signage to let people know when they pass by that there is a town property present and it was accessible. Committee was interested in who printed town signs and costs of said signs. Town Administrator responded if the Board approved, signs could be ordered and the costs should be minimal. Discussion ensued about specific properties or all of them and what the signs would say. Norwood will verify number with committee; after verification the Board will discuss further at their next stated meeting.
 - Next meeting is November 12, 2024.

Denekamp: School Department, Planning Board/Land Use, Cemetery Committee

- School Department – Reached out to John Ross to get new staff in to have a meet and greet with the Select Board.
- Planning Board –
 - Issued three growth permits in the past month and three certificates of occupany.
 - Both staff members are continuing their trainings; Dave Rielly is getting ready for his test for his Radon certificate.
 - A preliminary application has been approved for the Martel Estate subdivision on Young's Ridge Road.

- Cemetery Committee – Steve Parrello is waiting on his two new committee members to come in and get sworn in. Denekamp suggested a meeting be scheduled and then they could work on getting those two members sworn in prior to the meeting.
- Norwood asked Denekamp to update his communications with the school regarding the upcoming Special Town meeting being held at the school. Denekamp complied and noted the first couple of rows of seating will be set aside for those who are hearing and seeing impaired.

Winchell Jr.: Roads & Road Committee, Municipal Grounds – no updates.

7. DEPARTMENT HEAD / COMMITTEE CHAIR UPDATES

A. Will Langley, Road Commissioner

- All the winter sand has been put up (1900 yards).
- All the paving and reclaim is done on Acton Ridge Road; they will be back to shoulder H Road and then go to West Shore Drive.
- County Road will be ditched and is scheduled for the Spring time; all depending on Special Town meeting.

8. OLD BUSINESS

- ### **A. CRP Update – Denekamp noted he had a meeting on Thursday, October 24, 2024 with Alex Brown, local CRP representative, to go over the language to properly submit application and to review drafts done for other towns as examples. Anyone interested in seeing what is going on is welcome. Next steps are to come before the full Board to get a resolution.**

9. NEW BUSINESS

A. Soccer Update

Hope Denekamp approached the Board to recap the soccer season. It was a great start to the season with 74 athletes spanning the ages of 3.5 to 13 years old. Ten coaches led the teams through 12 games for a 2 - 12 record. Despite this, the kids played really well and a lot of these games were close. One coach noted that in a few weeks time he seen Acton's athletes improve their skills, had a better understanding of their field positions, build on the importance of team work and develop a clear understanding of the rules of the game. All agree these advances in skills and self-confidence bring a very successful year.

Hope thanked Kayla Bleakney, Ember Colwell, Kassi Dobson, Matt Garner, Ian Heller, Melissa Heller, Paul Knight, Mary Lemay, Ann Saulnier and the new Rec Director Amanda Winchell for continuing to share their talents with these kids. The Town is so lucky to have them. Hope also thanked all the parents and the Select Board for all their support and patience as the team worked to put out fun and a good program for the kids this year. The season will end with a games with Wakefield on Monday afternoon.

The snack shack was open for all of the home games and was staffed by Kelly, Tim and Calvin Collins together with the Gardners. Closing ceremonies for all age groups will be held Sunday, November 3, 2024 at 1 pm at the field. All are welcome to attend.

Winchell asked Hope to stay. He proceeded to thank her for stepping in and that all things went well. The Board then presented Hope Denekamp with flowers, a card and gift card to express their appreciation.

Norwood commented that he had the privilege to attend some of the games and the work and organization that Hope did in a short amount of time was impressive. Conditions weren't ideal but she did an incredible job. Thank you.

B. Acton/Shapleigh Historical Society

Tracey Levasseur, President of Acton/Shapleigh Historical Society presented to the Board a possible grant program to pay for some of the higher priced activities such as Lincoln School in Acton and the former Grange Hall which is the Mousam Lake Pavillion in Shapleigh.

The prices on these projects is more than the dues and donations received from members and visitors. While doing research, Ms. Levasseur found on Facebook a post from the Maine Historic Preservation Commission that they were opening the application for their 2024 grant.

Ms. Levasseur presented one sheet to the Board with grant information to help them understand what was available. Eligible participants needed to be a municipal government or non-profit organization. Application allowed for buildings or properties that are currently on the national register of historic places or seeking nomination. The Lincoln School is on the historic register. Eligible projects include surveying and planning, public education, redevelopment and development.

There are funds available. Grants are a minimum of \$10,000 and a maximum of \$30,000. The grant will cover 75% of the budgets for each project leaving the Town to cover 25% via donations or general funds available and in place.

Ms. Levasseur attended a webinar on October 15th to garner the information being presented and noted that the application was 18 pages long and the instruction was 87 pages. There is a draft review of the preliminary application in about 1 month; submitters are told whether they are in compliance and everything is in order before officially submitting the application. Submittal deadline is December 13, 2024 for receipt of mailed in or electronically drop box submitted application. Grant recipients will be notified in the Spring of 2025 with the expectation of the projects to be completed by June 2026.

Ms. Levasseur emboldened on her sheet her approach when asking for a grant for the Lincoln School. Details are to eliminate mold and invasive pests from the building through deep cleaning and encapsulating (enclosing) the building and removing vegetation within a designated distance. There are several things that have to be done, but these things proposed the most logical steps. Once that is in place a budget will need to be developed. There will be requests for work quotes to accompany budget. No work can start on the cited project until the grant money is granted and procured.

Required is also stewardship and a preservation agreement; meaning for every \$1 to \$50,000 they grant, they require a 5 year minimum stewardship to maintain the building. Whatever is done to the building must continue to be done.

Ms. Levasseur reviewed the definitions of restoration versus preservation and how the Lincoln School qualified.

Questions:

1. Denekamp – Is this a one time grant. Response: Yes. Phase II and Phase III would have to be applied for in subsequent years.
2. Norwood - Is there an idea of the amount to be asked for because matching will be impacted by that? Response: No clue until more information is gathered by having someone come in who knows about mold, critters and vegetation; possibly several contractors.
3. Norwood – Can the maintenance cost for the 5 years be included in the grant request to offset the costs? Response: No, the grant offered is a reimbursement grant and it ends in June 2026.
4. McGurty – Where do you think the matching funds are going to come from? Response: That would be up to the Select Board; there are some monies that the Acton/Shapley Historical society has set aside for the Lincoln School preservation, but it's probably not the 25% needed.
5. McGurty – The steward preservation is then assumed to be an ongoing operating cost for the Town? Response: Yes, at least the five-years. Ms. Levasseur expressed she did not know how much that would entail.
6. McGurty – Looking at the timing on this, the Town will need to submit an application by December 13th and grant notification will not be until the Spring of 2025. So, when the grant is submitted, the Board is committing themselves to the matching funds and the ongoing maintenance funds? Response: Yes, that is correct. McGurty further expressed that the Select Board would need to have the authorization to do that and it is not listed on the upcoming Special Town meeting. This means no authorization can be obtained until April 2025. Meaning the application will be submitted before the funding is approved; what happens if it is not approved at town meeting. Response: Grant providers will not expect the Town to have the 25% but will expect the Town to know where it would be coming from. McGurty – Commitment would be contingent on Town authorization as it would need to be a warrant article on the April Town meeting. Ms. Levasseur assumed that, that would be acceptable since the grant is available for Municipal Governments and would have to know that this is the way towns are run.
7. Norwood – Would that contingency be addressed when the preliminary draft is done? Response: Yes. And, Ms. Levasseur realized that this a time crunch item because on top of getting the town's vote, quotes and other parameters of the grant needs to be met by the 22nd of November. Reality is that there might not have time; but wanted the Select Board know that due diligence was being done.
8. Will grant be offered next year? Response: Did not know. There was money left over from Park Services and this might be a one time.
9. McGurty thanked the Historical Society's for their work and bringing it to the Board's knowledge. Then asked what the Historical Society saw as their role in this

process. Response: To clean up the area but now that time is running late that will not happen.

10. McGurty recapped that the Town would be responsible to develop a scope of the project, get quotes, fill out the grant application, getting quotes to support the budget in about 4-5 weeks. Walsh was willing to contact mold contractors; for the grounds, there was equipment available. Discussion ensued about encapsulation and work to be done and what work would be covered. Board was worried about the timeline and the town giving no expression of what will be done with the building in the long run. Once the town should interest, then the restoration work could be considered. Levassuer would not be offended if the Board did not pursue. To be relooked at if becomes available next year when there is more time.
11. Ms. Levassuer reminded the Board that this was town property and wanted to make all aware. This grant is an opportunity to give the town a poke of items that need to be done and get quotes as a guideline for when the town does apply. McGurthy again expressed the Board needed clarity of what the resident's want to do with the building. Once that was done they could go looking for grants.
12. Winchell commented that if there are bats in the building, the Board might want to take care of that now. Ms. Levasseur reminded the board that the building is on the historical register. Winchell indicated the Board could look into pest control.
13. McGurty suggested for the April meeting a project be considered to work on the building, get some costs to do so, and look into maintaining that building. Discussion ensued on how grants work and the next step of getting an assessment and then discussing in April. Timeline is too tight to be addressing it now.

Ms. Levasseur next presented a sign to the Select Board to be placed in front of the Town Hall from the Historical Society. Discussion ensued regarding where to put the sign on a pole or attached to the building. The society left with the Board; the Voard will figure the placement out.

C. Fire Department Salaries & Benefits

Fire Chief Wayne Ham made a presentation to the Board regarding update the Salaries and Benefits of the Fire Department staff. Data was presented on spreadsheets for the Board to review on how all the surrounding times handles vacation time, sick time, longevity and other fire department items.

Longevity – Fire Chief Ham noted he had some full time staff that's been working a long time and is making the same amount of money as new current staff. Staff tends to leave is between the 4 and 9 year mark. Number and precentages presented were used to show how base numbers would increase with longevity; a step plan. When the Board decides annual rates, those numbers will be applied to the current rates and reflected in step plans. Rate of pays were also noted from Day 1 to 22 years. If plan is approved, it will currently affected 1 person. The number of people who qualify for this program are 5 employees. All employees have gotten what the time has approved. Winchell asked if there should be an adjustment made. Response: There is one only person to be effected and adjusted immediately.

McGurty requested a workshop to sit down with the Fire Chief to review plan and the cost implication on total compensation – salaries and benefits. Understand the various components and what the cost is to the tax rate over time.

The Board asked to look at the information, have a workshop and then address the proposed plan. Norwood noted Chief Ham worked hard on this presentation taking the Board's feedback into consideration.

D. Appointment

1. Rec Committee

Norwood made a motion to appoint to Tim Collins and Cassundrato Donato to the Recreation Committee until 6/30/2025 effective October 23, 2024; Walsh seconded. All in favor. Motion carried.

2. Elections

Winchell made a motion to appoint Tammy Krampetz as Warden until 12/30/2025; Norwood seconded. All in favor. Motion carried.

10. PENDING

A. Transfer Station Position

11. PUBLIC COMMENT

A. Joyce Bakshi approached the Board to comment that the Lincoln School has come up at the Warrant & Finance Committee meetings and setting money aside for that and while the Historical Society was making their presentation she looked up mold remediation cost. These cost fell around \$18 per square foot making it close to \$9,500 - \$10,000 to do. This is the only building owned by Acton on the national history registry and as it is part of the town's history and that it is important, grant or not, to start taking one thing off the list at a time. Ms. Bakshi further commented that she also looked up bats and bats (depending how many you have) it is not a killer price to get rid of them. It might be only \$1,000 but it is how are they getting in and the costs to repair that; how is the mold get in and how to repair that. Further with the school, she thought it would be educational for students to see how school was done in the past.

B. Robin Ham approached the Board to make comments that he was unable to make 3 weeks ago. The library portion was discussed at Warrant & Finance. The Transfer Station, before \$65,000 is put towards the Town Hall parking lot, he would like to see something done to the Transfer Station at the entrance to eliminate the safety hazard there. That was his comment he wanted to make when told the Board was not going to discuss it anymore.

Winchell commented that they were going to do something up at the Transfer Station to address that issue and that the parking lot warrant article was pulled. The reason why the conversations were shutdown was because the Board had other things to address first and the conversation seemed to becoming confrontational. It was done for everyone's sake; not personal.

12. **MEMBERS PRESENT** - David Winchell, Jr., Chair, Tom McGurty, Ed Walsh, Daniel Norwood, Jon Denekamp and Jennifer Roux, Town Administrator.
13. **ATTENDANCE** – Hope Denekamp, Joe Ruma, Joyce Bakshi, Tracy Levasseur, Suzzanne Doyle, Robin Ham, and Wayne Ham

Walsh made a motion to ajourn; Denekamp seconded. All in favor. Motion carried.