

TOWN OF ACTON SELECT BOARD MEETING

December 18, 2024

6:00pm

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

2. **WARRANTS/BILLS - Signed**

3. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Norwood made a motion to approve the agenda for December 18, 2024; Walsh seconded. All in favor. Motion carried.

4. **MINUTES OF LAST MEETING - Tabled**

5. **TOWN ADMINISTRATOR WEEKLY UPDATE- None**

6. **LIASION UPDATE**

McGurty: Municipal Finance, Warrant & Finance Committee, APAT

- Municipal Finance –
 - There have been recent interest reductions by the Feds. The town is still doing well with their investments. Treasurer notes are going down but still continuing to earn good money. Mutual fund is earning a little better. There is money with Partner's to cover bills; this was at a higher rate and there has been two reductions but still running at a good percent. The policy is still working well.
 - There is a new state law regarding paid family and medical leave. This applies to business with personnel to provide family leave. McGurty read aloud the reason for the program, circumstances for leave and discussed the funding source as it was a tax. The employer would be responsible for ½ percent and the employee would be responsible for the other half. For Acton this relates to \$12,000 (\$6,000 per each group). McGurty recommended that the Town of Acton paying the full percent. This program goes into effect January 1st. Discussion ensued.

McGurty made a motion that the Town in implementing the paid family and medical leave program offered by the State, pay the full cost of 1% of payroll that will cover both the employer and employee cost; Norwood seconded. All in favor. Motion carried.

- APAT – There was an issue with the sound of last meeting. There was some reconfiguring work done and a cable was accidentally disconnected but it is now fixed.
- Warrant & Finance – The Town Administrator met with the Warrant & Finance Chair, Leslie Berlan. The Chair was complementary of the Board regarding the process last year and getting the information they needed. Good conversation/good meeting. She is looking forward to meeting soon to go over the municipal budget. Everyone will be put on the agenda starting in January.

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

- Animal Control Officer is working on his budget
- Mary Grant – No update
- Transfer Station – will be discussed further down under solid waste bids; expect some significant increases contractual. Everything is going up when new contract goes into effect in June. Has all numbers to formulate budget. Will be meeting with T/S Superintendent tomorrow to review and work on the budget.

Norwood: Fire Department, Recreation Committee, Conservation Forest Committee

- Met with fire Chief regarding budget.
- Rec Committee - The Rec Committee voted not to have a meeting in December. They did have a tree lighting which was successful. Norwood thanked all those who helped alongside the committee – Girl Scouts, Fire Dept., Church, and Nolan Photography. Norwood also had a budget meeting with the Rec Director and a budget should be received this week before the deadline.
- Forest Conservation Committee – Committee Chair has submitted the committee's budget. The Committee has changed direction with regards to purchasing town property signs; they just want to help raise awareness of where town properties are and have looked into diamond shaped signs around the perimeter so others would know they ventured onto town property.

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

- School Department – Attended school committee and their budget meetings have been scheduled starting January 9th. Safety drills with the kids were held today and safety training with staff have been scheduled.
- Cemetery Committee – working on budgets; due Friday.
- Planning Board – Meets Dec 19th to discuss two small developments. The Code Officer has been busy with several violations done without permits – Flat Ground Road, Lakeside and Balch Lake. The Board met with him today to help establish some guidelines regarding fees and penalties. This item to be discussed further with the Board in the future. The ordinance clearly spells out the Board's authority; if there are changes to the ordinance it will need to be itemized and presented to the Town at Town meeting.
- Yesterday was the deadline for the CRP application; application was submitted on time. Response will be sometime in march on receivership of money

Winchell Jr.: Roads & Road Committee, Municipal Grounds

- Road Committee – No update
- Municipal Grounds –
 - Asked Sebago about permit for driveway and designs for the lines for the church which will be done by Ted; waiting for response.
 - Some work has been done at the Rec. fields; excited about it.
 - Questions regarding trailers on municipal grounds was addressed. Winchell indicated the Board has allowed trailers here without rent in lieu of getting work done at the

Rec fields and Town hall. It's a win/win for all. Regarding the inquiry about the ramp into the trailer. It is the state's policy to have ramps on their structures.

- Winchell has not heard from Road Commissioner about the budget but will be in touch.
- Audit – McGurty mentioned that the Town audit work is 95% done; waiting for 1 schedule. Soon to be complete. The major holdup is the schools which has been delayed. Ther school audit is consolidated with the municipal's audit. An extension was filed and all work should be done in early January. With the final touches on the dedication, the Town report is ready once audit is available.

7. DEPARTMENT HEAD / COMMITTEE CHAIR UPDATES - None

8. OLD BUSINESS

9. NEW BUSINESS

A. Bridge Re-Naming Request

Ms. Cross asked the Board to name a bridge of their choice after a veteran. Ms. suggested the name be changed on one of the the following bridges to “Acton Veternan’s Memorial Bridge”: Bridge 2363 (Heath Brook Bridge), Bridge 6365 (West Shore Drive Bridge) or Bridge 1208 (Rowe Bridge). The other option example it to include the name of the bridge, example: West Shore Drive Vetean’s Memorial Bridge; your choice. Discussion ensued about locations, whether state bridge, constraints and what the history of the original bridge naming was. The Select Board indicated it was a great thing to do but wanted to do a little more research before deciding which bridge to do. They will contact her with their decision. Ms. Cross asked for the Board’s consideration and decision before December 31, 2024 or it will be done at end of 2025 for 2026. Senator Chipman and Senator Libby are both involved in the program. The Select Board is interested and the Town Administrator will research the bridge selected and send an email of the Board’s decision.

Ms. Cross went on to talk about “On Flight Maine’ trips for veterans too and the wonderful experience provided to the veterans.

B. Solid Waste Bid

Walsh indicated that Tirano notified the town that there will be a rate increase. Walsh continued to speak about the hauling service without releasing rates due to going out to bid. Tri County group is dealing with disposal costs which includes recycling, CDC and solid waste. Recycling and CDC are being handled. As hauling is concerned we should go out to bid but we need to know where it is being hauled to – Pine Tree/Casella, Tirano or EcoMaine; most are going with EcoMaine. A lot of the members are going with EcoMaine; Shapleigh, North Berwick are both going with EcoMaine. Options are to be in contract with them or a part owner. There is a lot to it. To be an owner, you get a seat at the table and are part in the negotiation of the rates giving us a better rate. There is a buy in but it is all a part of the pricing and still a good number; very competitive. Hauling companies are in competition with EcoMaine. Discussion ensued. Walsh is looking for bids for hauling, household trash and demo material separately.

At any given moment Tirano will want a signed invoice with new rates. McGurty expected a consortium was in Acton's best interest. The Board decided they wanted to go out to bid. The Town Administrator and Walsh will work on getting out the hauling bid.

C. Resignation – Meg Pixley, Fire & Rescue

Norwood made a motion to accept the resignation of Meg Pixley and her continuance as per diem; Walsh seconded. All in favor. Motion carried.

D. Pole Permit

McGurty made a motion to approve the installation of Pole 8 on Garvin Road; Walsh seconded. All in favor. Motion carried.

E. Abatements

1. 143-145 for land area adjustment - \$173.22
2. 118-144 for land area adjustment - \$339.36
3. 142-013 denial; property owner was not able to demonstrate over evaluation

Winchell made a motion to approve the abatements as read; Walsh seconded. All in favor. Motion carried.

F. Sheriff's Department Contract

An updated 1-year contract was received from the York County Sheriff's Department. There was only 1 line added to the contract that read: "The Sheriff's office will report to the Acton/Shapleigh Select Board the number of hours the Contract Deputy uses the Acton/Shapleigh vehicle outside of the two contract towns." There is still a clause in the contract should the Board need to get out of it.

The Town Administrator recommends there be two articles presented at Town Meeting in April.

1) Ask the voters if they want to continue with contract and 2) If yes, then if the voters want to fund as is - 20 hours. If the voters choose not to fund the article, then the Town has a 30-day clause and enough money to get to June to get out of it if that is the direction the voters choose.

The car will not take effect until July 1st if the contract is continued; if not continued then car will not be considered.

Walsh commented that Sheriff King did not help his cause when he spoke at the informational night meeting; now understands why the contract deputies are not really needed because we will be covered by law enforcement one way or another. Discussion ensued regarding coverage through county taxing versus contracting. It was good to get all the public comment out on the table; presence is currently good with their feet to the fire.

Discussion ensued on whether to sign contract as the Town is budgeted for it. Winchell recommended that the Board sign this current contract, run it out and then ask the voters at Town Meeting their decision on whether it continues or not. Walsh wanted to let the record stand that the Select Board was listening and heard a lot of opinions on this hot topic

McGurty made a motion to approve a contract with the York County Sherriff's office to provide coverage for the Town of Acton for 20 hours effective January 1, 2025 to December 31, 2025 contingent upon funding by the Town at Town Meeting; Norwood seconded. All in favor. Motion carried.

10. PENDING

11. PUBLIC COMMENT

Joe Ruma approached the Select Board to ask what the total cost was for the Contract Deputy. Response: \$74,000. He then asked about the card maintenance costs of \$4,000. Select Board responded that maintenance would be included in the contract. The Town Administrator explained that the \$150,000 statement received from the Sherriff's department had a breakdown of everything: actual hours worked, vacation buyout, health insurance, gas, maintenance on the car, uniform and cell phone allowances, etc. All those added together equal the \$150,000. Mr. Ruma then asked about the 4 hour speeding details. Response was that those were being paid out of grant money received. Mr. Ruma then asked about having a detail added for Sat. mornings on H Road. Winchell commented that they did not want those requests in the contract. Town Administrator indicated that Mr. Ruma's request for H Road on Saturday morning could be made specifically but it would not go in the contract. These recommendations can also be made when placing the speed trailer; however, it is put away for the winter as to not incur damage from snow plowing. Discussion ensued regarding the speed trailer and what officers should do regarding speeding. The Town Administrator sends all road complaints and suggestions on to the Sherriff's department for them to handle; keep them coming.

12. MEMBERS PRESENT - David Winchell, Jr., Chair, Tom McGurty, Dan Norwood, Ed Walsh, Jon Denekamp and Jennifer Roux, Town Administrator.

13. ATTENDANCE – Calista Cross, friend of Calista Cross and Joe Ruma

Norwood made a motion to adjourn at 7:21 pm; Walsh seconded. All in favor. Motion carried.