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Town of Danville
Board of Selectmen
Monday, December 6, 2021
7:00 PM

6:57 PM

Meeting is Video-Recorded

Selectmen Present: Shawn O’Neil, Chair; Steve Woitkun, Vice-Chair; Sheila Johannesen, Dottie Billbrough, and Scott Borucki

Others Present: Kimberly Burnham, Selectmen Administrator; Brian Goshon, Casella Waste Management; Tyler Nicoletti, Transmission & Vegetation Management, Eversource; Bill Hayes, Vegetation Management, Eversource; Kelly Merritt, Community Relations, Eversource; Richard Sampson, Arborist, Eversource; Carsten Springer, Chair, Conservation Commission & Forestry Committee; Art Griswold, Fire Ward; Barry Hantman, Chair, Planning Board; Police Chief Wade Parsons; LT Justine Merced, Danville Police Dept.; Gail Turelli, ZBA Secretary; Danville residents: Wayne Brown, Dave Drislane, Josh Manning

Shawn called the meeting to order at 6:57 PM and opened the meeting with a moment of silence for the troops who put themselves in harm’s way. All stood for the Pledge of Allegiance

I. Delegates

Shawn asks if there are any members of the public not on the agenda who wish to address the BOS.

Fire Ward Update: Steve reminds the BOS of Mr. Sharpe’s recent resignation as a Fire Ward. He states that the remaining Fire Wards met on Wednesday, December 1, and officially nominated Art Griswold to fill that vacancy. Shawn states that he supports that nomination and asks for a motion for the appointment. Steve motions for the BOS to appoint Art Griswold to fill the vacant Fire Ward position opened by Robert Sharpe’s resignation until the March 2022 elections. Second by Dottie. Vote is unanimous (5-0). Shawn congratulates Mr. Griswold and thanks him for being willing to serve.

As no more members of the public wish to speak, Shawn closes the Delegate session at 6:59 PM.

II. Agenda

Eversource Restoration Plan: Kelly Merritt, re-introduces himself as the Community Relations Specialist for Eversource for Danville and the surrounding towns. He explains that Eversource is returning as agreed after everyone reviewed the areas of concern addressed at the November 15, 2021, BOS meeting. Eversource has toured those areas with Carston Springer, Chair, Conservation Commission & Forestry Committee; and other Town officials including BOS Vice-Chair/ Fire Chief Steve Woitkun. He notes that Eversource appreciates being able to see all those areas of concern. Mr. Merritt explains that everyone met at GH Carter, walked to Colby Pond (referred to as the “fire pond”), and hiked a “good way” down the Eversource right-of-way which provided a good opportunity for a lot of discussion.

Mr. Merritt explains that in one of the later discussions with Mr. Springer and Mr. Hantman, Chair of the Planning Board; they expressed their need and desire for improved communications between Eversource and the Town. As the Community Relations Specialist for Eversource, he has committed to doing that. Mr. Merritt notes that some of those communication issues for this project were a result of the transition from his predecessor, Elizabeth LaRocca’s retirement from Eversource. One of the suggestions was for Eversource to attend a Planning Board meeting or a Forestry meeting every six (6) months regardless if there is an Eversource project coming so that he

could hear the Town's concerns and discuss them with the Town. Mr. Merritt states that he plans to do that. He reiterates that this was a long-term area of concern, but is doable and he looks forward to working with the Town on that.

Bill Hayes reintroduces himself as the Senior Transmission Vegetation Manager. He also introduces Richard Samson, the Eversource arborist. Mr. Hayes states that he met with the BOS three (3) weeks ago and the next day he visited the sites that were discussed as areas of concern. He explains that they started at GH Carter, and after being called away for a conference to discuss the issue further, returned that same day and with Mr. Sampson and completed a review of those areas.

Mr. Hayes states the first immediate action that Eversource took, which was obvious to them, was to address the issues with Colby Pond (the fire pond). He notes that further down the road was another pond. Brush was left in that little pond that was too high and on the other side is a culvert that goes into the southside of the wetlands. Mr. Hayes arranged for the vendor to go in there and finish cutting those stumps down. It was obvious to him that the brush was cut too high and he wanted it cut flush and the brush cleaned up.

Mr. Hayes states that he walked the rest of the right-of-way through the ballfields to the wetlands, the gate, and the road. He took a second walk with Eversource's environmental vendor GZA and asked for criticism so that he could come back to the BOS with mitigation ideas to address the issues. Mr. Hayes notes that in order to appreciate the community's interest, he met with Mr. Sampson, Mr. Nicoletti, Cole, GZA, and Mr. Merritt and walked the areas again. Mr. Hayes agrees there are a number of sites that he will address, and Eversource will address the others.

- Colby Pond (fire pond) at GH Carter: Eversource has installed straw bottles along the access road that curves around the pond and up a slope. They have also installed some in the field area previously discussed, and additional straw bottles and straw to make sure that no soil goes into the pond in the future. Mr. Hayes notes that the access road has ruts from the project vehicles going up there and is discussing installing water bars as a mitigation effort. He notes that he and Mr. Sampson started that conversation this morning and have secured vendors. He wants to be sure to get the right specifications to install the water bars are properly so that Eversource is doing the right thing. Mr. Hayes reiterates that Eversource will continue with that process. Eversource will quickly deploy more straw bottles and additional straw that they will lay down to prevent soil erosion into the pond, and they believe they can have the water bars installed within two (2) weeks. The straw materials will be installed during the week of December 6.

- Recreation Fields and Access Gate: Mr. Hayes explains the discussion was ultimately relative to off-road traffic coming across the right-of-way to the area that Eversource cleared, the easement edge next to the fields, to ensure that off-road vehicles don't go onto the fields and cause damage. Eversource has discussed putting up a temporary snow fence along approximately 750' from one end to the other until an appropriate time, approximately the end of June 2022, when the natural growth will have grown high enough to stop the off-road traffic. The snow fence will be removed with the vegetation becoming the natural obstacle to driving onto the fields.

- Culvert installation at the field with the gate: Mr. Hayes states that the edges of the culvert are exposed and that Eversource will need to install more gravel there. He explains that the Line Construction department will bring in additional gravel to build up and protect the exposed edges of the culvert as well as grade it out on both sides of the gate. Mr. Merritt states that he does not have a date on that project, but doesn't anticipate that it would take very long. He reiterates that it was something that Eversource looked at and agreed that something needed to be done. Mr. Hayes clarifies that the same people who did the structure rebuild in 2020 would be the ones repairing the culvert and gate area.

- Culverts further out in the right-of-way: Mr. Hayes notes there are three(3) culverts in particular that need to be addressed. Mr. Merritt reiterates that the immediate restoration will start with the culverts, fields, and barriers in the pond as discussed above. Mr. Springer explains that the three (3) culverts of concern are "on a long-term basis" damaged from the work. Carsten states they were permeated and that he has the maps of them because they can't find them right now. Mr. Merritt notes that this is not an area of immediate concern and he looks forward to working with Mr. Springer on this issue. Mr. Springer states that "the road is in very good shape because Forestry built the whole thing in coordination with Eversource about eight (8) years ago, so the culverts

are not that old. Mr. Springer notes that when Eversource repairs them, they need to put much larger rocks around the ends and stake the ends so that people know where the ends are. Mr. Springer states he believes that drivers can't see the ends from the construction equipment and that is how the damage occurred. Mr. Springer states the road goes up to the northern wetlands crossing and is in good shape because of what they (Conservation Commission/Forestry Committee) did and they want to keep it that way. Mr. Hayes notes that was a great point and makes a lot of sense to him. Mr. Hayes reassures everyone that Vegetation Management is well aware of Danville's interests and that Eversource is also interested in improving the communication with the Town. He notes that he and Mr. Sampson "still plan on being here in the coming years, and the next time will be in three (3) years when Eversource has to do vegetation management in Danville again. He explains that because Eversource is interested in investing in the Town, both as a relationship and physically, the plan is that as Eversource gets closer to the time of trimming down the right-of-way, they will reach out ahead of time to the Conservation Commission and do a field visit with the vendor, look at the areas of concern, and discuss them so that the same issues will not happen again. Mr. Hayes reiterates that communication is key and that a site walk would solve a lot of these issues and heartache for the Townspeople. He notes that these issues have become a part of Eversource's structure sheets, the permanent records for this right-of-way.

Mr. Merritt notes the Town had requested the environmental data that Eversource collected on Town property. He has sent that directly from the environmental consultant at GZA, who did the work. The data is in a proprietary .gis file so the Town can't open it, but he will get them this data as printed copies for the BOS. Mr. Springer states that one of the reasons they are looking so carefully at the data was because Mr. Hantman made sure this was in the last conditional use permit for several reasons. In this context, the road is in good shape up to the northern wetlands crossing, after that it is a disaster. If the Town can take that data from Eversource, select a surveyor and environmentalist to help prepare an application for a wetland crossing, it will eliminate a large part of the expense associated with that project. The second reason it is important is that every landowner should have access to that data so that, in future discussions, they will be able to understand what the area was like 10-12 years earlier. He explains this is a permanent situation where there needs to be a baseline to understand if something is altered or changed. The third reason the Town needs this data is to update the Town's maps. Mr. Springer explains there are many areas of "prime wetlands" reflected on the tax maps that aren't there. Shawn explains that the Town will be able to import the Eversource data into its mapping program. Mr. Springer notes the Town must be careful and verify the accuracy of that data first. Mr. Hantman states that the information can be imported as a "data from Eversource" layer. Shawn reiterates that the Eversource data has a lot of beneficial use for the Town.

- Northern wetlands right-of-way access crossing: Mr. Hayes explains that from the vegetation management perspective, Eversource will continue to mat unless there is some other activity. Mr. Springer suggests the Town could build a crossing to Eversource's specifications and just use the mats for heavy equipment. That would provide access if Eversource "needs to get through in a hurry." He notes that currently, the area is inaccessible in the spring.

Mr. Hantman notes that Eversource had discussed updating some of its processes, spec sheets, etc. He asks exactly what processes Eversource has changed to ensure that the Town will not have the same situation in three (3) years. Mr. Hayes explains that in NH, Eversource has all its different right-of-ways and line numbers in "structure sheets" with maps, habitats, notations, highlights, the owners, past interactions, etc. This information is shared with the vendors whenever a project goes out to bid. The SPN's and notification to communities, all that information is also updated on the structure sheets. These are "live" documents in a database that is updated and shared on a continual basis. Mr. Merritt explains that as a result of the recent discussions, Eversource will meet with Town officials before the next vegetation management project. Mr. Hayes explains that Tyler Nicoletti is part of "Project Services", an umbrella department that deals with the Town through Community Relations (Mr. Merritt). He notes that Vegetation Management doesn't necessarily know when there is line activity going on. Whatever interaction Eversource has with a community, Project Services is aware of this and the information is shared through internal conversations so that everything is brought up and Vegetation Management isn't going into a project where there were previous issues they weren't aware of. Project Services would have that latest information. The other function of Project Services is to sync projects as much as possible to do them together, and this latest project was an effort to sync the recent structure rebuild with vegetation management. Mr. Hayes notes this system is only 2-3 years old and is still evolving. Mr. Nicoletti explains that he will be working with Mr.

Merritt to minimize these situations and overview all these sensitive areas of concern. He wants to go in together on the next project and work with the other construction departments to sync everything together and minimize a situation like this one from happening again. He states that he will be working on communication with the Town and landowners to get the work done and keep everyone happy. Mr. Nicoletti reiterates that he and Mr. Merritt will be getting in touch with the Town “well before the next project” to minimize escalated issues. Mr. Hayes notes that a lot of this is about communication and that he can’t promise to solve every issue. He notes that anything to do with vegetation management involves things like the convex system, state regulations, and prior habitat issues that limit when Eversource can come in. He explains that while it is all Eversource, “there are all these other moving parts.”

Mr. Springer notes that Mr. Hantman asked a specific question and has not received an answer. He states that he agrees that when things go wrong, it has always been because of a lack of communication, but believes that the root of the issues is with the vendors, and reminds Mr. Hayes that this is where this project went wrong. Mr. Springer states that the vendors either went beyond what they were told to do, or they did exactly what they were told to do and it wasn’t communicated to them the way it was done before. He notes that “everyone here” knows the current project was done to a degree it has never been done in the last forty (40) years and going forward, Eversource expects to be doing this project every three (3) years. Mr. Springer reiterates the issue is at the vendor level and expresses his concern that Eversource uses different vendors each time. Mr. Springer notes that a landowner at last Thursday’s meeting had noted that the Eversource structure sheets could be communicated through cell phones. Mr. Springer asks if the Town culvert under GH Carter was on the structure sheet. Mr. Hayes admits that it is not to which Mr. Springer responds “that’s the kind of thing we should be looking at” noting those same structures will still be there in twenty (20) years.

Mr. Springer suggests that to answer Mr. Hantman’s question, the Town should see specifications are put on the bids that are specific, e.g: “do not clog culvert.” He notes that the easement document that Eversource has on all these pieces of land specifically states that Eversource has the discretion as to where and how much vegetation is cut along roads, streams, ballfields, and other public areas. These areas should be permanently reflected on the Eversource structure sheets so that all the bidders are aware of them. Mr. Springer states he feels that will solve the problem.

Mr. Hayes agrees that the culvert is not on the structure sheets, but that Eversource does not want them to become “graffiti”. He agrees the way the right-of-way was cut was a vendor issue, but it was his and Mr. Sampson’s responsibility to make sure that the specifications were taken care of, and that right-of-way was not cut to spec. This is an Eversource issue, no matter who the vendor is and Eversource is holding the vendor accountable. He states that Mr. Sampson was on the job constantly and there was a lot of oversight on this project. He notes that GZA and Cole were also out there, so the oversight is there. He explains that when they determined that additional brush needed to be removed and that it was draining into a culvert, as they walked to the other side, they realized the culvert had been broken. That was Eversource keeping the vendor accountable to the specs. Mr. Hayes explains that in addition to the structure sheets, bidders receive a “Section 3” which describes the whole scope of the work, and a “Section 2” that outlines the specific technical requirements of each specific right-of-way and an SPN of any habitat issues. Mr. Hayes reiterates that bidders get this whole package and when the bid is awarded, Eversource and the vendor meet and work out a schedule for the year. There is also a kick-off at the beginning of each project when the requirements for that job are reviewed again. Mr. Hayes also notes that the arborist or an outreach person or a superintendent is always on the site. He does state that “it’s a point well taken, that it’s an update of that structure sheet, and it’s Eversource enforcing the scope that’s there in the first place.” Mr. Springer asks if Eversource could have that information on the ballfields because there was not anything along the edge that would have affected the power lines that could not have been left growing at 5-8’ and then they wouldn’t have to worry about vehicles going onto the field. Shawn asks Chief Parsons if the Police Dept. had received any reports of off-road vehicles on the fields. Chief Parsons states that they have not had reports of off-road vehicles on the fields, but have had reports of recent activity on the Eversource right-of-way.

Mr. Hayes explains that Eversource and the Town also discussed the issue of “incompatibles” and the need for vendors to be more mindful of these specifically in NH. Because Eversource is “cut only” in NH, they discussed the

issue of the damage done by machine cutting the slope on GH Carter and the ballfields, and have agreed that hand-cutting brush in those areas is a better approach. This issue has also been noted on the structure sheets. He acknowledges that Eversource needs to preserve the “compatible” plant species as much as possible and that they need to do a better job making sure these “compatibles”, viburnum, witch hazel, high bush blueberry, junipers, etc. are not cut. Mr. Hayes notes these plants species would be 15’ tall or less in the border zone. He admits it’s the end of the season, so it does look “pretty stark” out there, but the root systems are still in place, so the growth will come back. Mr. Springer notes that “in two years, it will be a mecca for wildlife.” Mr. Hayes notes that in the future, Eversource will need to do a better job of making sure the “compatibles” are kept there (in the right-of-way) as much as possible and this is an objective of his department because it will also help stabilize the right-of-way. He notes that when they are machine cutting, the operator can’t see the various species, especially when there are no leaves on them. This is why these areas will be designated for hand cutting which requires ground-level observation of the various plants. Mr. Hayes explains this issue would be addressed in the portion of “scope of work.”

A member of the public asks if putting up the snow fence is necessary. He states that people still like to walk their dogs “out there”, as well as snow-shoeing. He explains that he feels the ATV issue is limited, noting that he lives in that neighborhood. Mr. Hayes explains that the snow fence is temporary, intended to be visible to the off-road vehicles. He notes there are plenty of other ways to get onto the right-of-way for people who want to recreate and the fence is just to keep the vehicles out. Mr. Springer states that when the gate was installed, an area was made so the ATVs could go around it, noting they help to develop the trails in that area.

The gentleman explains that he rides an ATV and stays off the fields. He noted there is a huge divot in the hill that goes up from Colby Pond. Mr. Hayes explains this is the area where Eversource will be putting straw at the base of the hill and installing water bars up the slope to direct water at an angle so that it won’t cut river channels into the slope. Mr. Hantman states his understanding is that the snow fence is just along the edge where the power lines and field meet. He notes the intent is not to stop the ATVs but to stop off-roaders from coming off the power lines and driving onto the fields.

Mr. Hantman asks if Danville could be invited to the “kick-off” meeting that Eversource has with their vendor at the start of a project. Mr. Hayes responds that Eversource can certainly do that and would notify Kim ahead of time so the Town could schedule somebody to attend. He notes that these usually take place at a substation, but there are “tailgate” meetings every day. He states that he will do that “kick-off” meeting specifically when they are entering Danville. Mr. Hayes reiterates that the snow fence is just temporary until about the end of June when the growth will have come up enough to create a material barrier between the power lines and the fields.

Mr. Carsten states that he appreciates Eversource putting in the culvert under the gate. He notes the Town attempted to do something a few years back, but it didn’t work well. Mr. Hayes reminds him that the environmental data has been sent to the Town, but can’t be opened without a program license, so Eversource will be providing printed copies.

Mr. Hayes reviews the issues that were discussed at last Thursday’s meeting. He reiterates the team’s recommendations included leaving those “compatible” species and making sure that Eversource’s vendor could recognize and identify the proper plants. Mr. Springer notes that is a good point, if the vendors are not from NH, they probably won’t recognize what are the “native compatibles”. Mr. Hayes states it is Eversource’s responsibility to develop relationships with their vendors and know “who’s who” so they can educate the right people. Mr. Merritt reiterates that the specific areas for hand-cutting will be identified in advance. Mr. Springer states that vendors from NH usually do a good job figuring out what brush to save and what to cut, and this is vastly better for wildlife and erosion control and is cheaper in the long run. Mr. Hayes notes that John Brown is part of the Eversource system, as well as Northern and Asplundh, with the latter two companies operating mostly in northern NH. However, the superintendents are often from other parts of the country and may not be familiar with the local plants.

Mr. Merritt reiterates that one of the recommendations agreed to at last Thursday's meeting is that Eversource will review the sensitive areas with their vendors and the Town. Mr. Hayes notes that the best way to prevent these issues is to communicate with the Town ahead of the project. Mr. Springer states that the resolutions discussed will help prevent the damage that Eversource caused at the northern end of the wetlands, almost off Town property. Once the damage is done, it can't be fixed. He explains that in future projects he would like to see the vegetation management process go alongside, around, and reach across the wetlands, avoiding going through the middle of them. He also notes that the Conservation Commission wants to establish a road up there.


Shawn states that Eversource has now had two projects in which they used Town property to access their right-of-way and this allows Eversource to reduce their cost exposure of matting requirements to go through the wetlands. He explains that the Town and Eversource were starting to negotiate a permanent easement, but he wants to take that off the table because he feels it is better for Eversource to come back and talk to the Town each time they need to do a project. He states that he feels it is better for Eversource to have an "allocation budget" for each project, noting that paying for access to Town land for each project will make Eversource's life easier and is more economical. Shawn explains that he would recommend those payments go directly to the Conservation Commission and Forestry so they can do projects such as developing permanent wetland crossings. He notes that Eversource would be partial beneficiaries of this future access and that having these permanent crossings also fit in with the master plans of Forestry for future forestry management and timber harvests. Shawn suggests that Mr. Hayes discuss this idea with Eversource and that he feels it is a sound and reasonable approach. He states that Eversource's request for "temporary access" every three years is not really "temporary". Shawn states that he wants this on the record and would like Eversource to issue a follow-up statement that states how they want to approach this suggestion.

Mr. Springer suggests that Mr. Merritt, the Forestry Committee, and the Conservation Commission have that conversation with Eversource. Shawn agrees. Mr. Springer explains that the Conservation Commission could then come back to the BOS, noting that this process would not take up so much BOS time. Shawn reiterates to Mr. Hayes that this will "pay off down the road" because the Town would take those Eversource fees and put them back into fixing and improving the wetlands, Forestry management, and access. Mr. Hayes agrees that he will advocate for this approach as the Vegetation Manager and notes that Mr. Merritt would be the lead on the agreement process.


Scott asks how Eversource sets up the bids for their vendors. Mr. Hayes explains that maintenance bids go out for a three (3)-year contract for each area. Scott asks if anyone from the Town reviewed the RFP. Mr. Hayes notes that Eversource is a private utility and that information is not for communities but has updated "walk-downs" each year from ground and aerial information. Sections 3 and Section 2 are also updated to align with Federal regulations. Scott reiterates his question if the Town can review the RFP with the next three (3) years as the next maintenance cycle approaches. Mr. Hayes responds that he cannot answer that question as it is not something that Eversource has ever done with anyone. Scott notes that vegetation management is probably not proprietary. Mr. Sampson (?) explains that the RFP is not just for Danville, but includes all the other towns involved in the maintenance project. It is not specific to each individual town but is bid out as a whole project. Mr. Hayes gives the example that the environmental data provided to the Town includes data for the whole project, not just Danville. Mr. Springer and Shawn thank Eversource for returning to discuss everything with the Town. Shawn states he hopes for better days with Eversource.


III. Budgets

#4210.10- Police Dept. Budget Update: Shawn explains to the BOS that Chief Parsons was still waiting for information from the Finance Director to complete his budget. Chief Parsons notes that he did find some information and was able to put some updated numbers together. He provided this updated information to the BOS and will send everything over to them electronically later. Chief Parsons first notes that he had to adjust the information because it included staff that no longer worked for the Police Dept and he had to plan on new staff that will be added. He has added the Town's costs for health/dental insurance, life insurance, short-term disability, and the NH Retirement System. He added those costs into his budget based on the Town's contribution


 **Health Insurance:** Shawn explains that Chief Parsons will need to create permanent account/budget lines for these expenses. After reviewing the numbers, he questions the amount reflected, noting it looked too low to represent the Town's 85% contribution. Steve notes the Family Plan is almost \$30,000 per year. Shawn suggests that the data sheet may be reflecting only the monthly costs, not the yearly costs. Chief Parsons apologizes. Kim returns with the latest insurance breakdowns and confirms that Chief Parsons' data reflects the monthly costs. She states that the total of the December bill for health, dental, short and long-term disability, and life was \$148,000 for the entire year for the Police Dept. Chief Parsons adjusts his budget to \$142,488 for the yearly costs of these insurances.

Shawn explains that Kim is breaking out the Personnel budget by department and the total of the departments' expenses should equal the amount that is normally in the Personnel budget. The BOS will use this process to make sure everything and everyone is budgeted correctly in each department.

 **Life and AD & D Insurance:** Chief Parsons notes the budget for Life, AD & D is \$1038, and for short-term disability is \$1798. Shawn confirms that these numbers are broken down in the same way. Chief Parsons states that the Finance Director calculated these on a yearly cost. He did correct a duplicate entry, so if her information is correct, these two lines should reflect the yearly cost.

 **NH Retirement:** His budget for NH Retirement is \$158,860 and that amount is based on payroll earnings.


This brings the new total for the Police Dept. budget to \$930,892. Scott confirms the totals for insurance decreased for FY2022. Shawn notes that these changes are due to personnel changes and allotments. Kim clarifies how the totals are reflected in the budget. Scott confirms the amounts for the life, AD & D, and short-term disability insurance costs with Shawn who breaks down the rates. Kim explains that her spreadsheet shows the costs for all the insurances together and is a total before splitting out the Town's portion. LT Merced confirms that one officer is not taking any of the insurances. The discussion continues regarding the actual amount of the Town's portion. Shawn notes that without being able to confirm the source and calculation of the amounts, he is more comfortable keeping the amount of \$142,488 in the insurance line to cover the Town's 85% costs. Dottie motions to approve the updated budget for #4210.10-Police Dept. for \$930,822. Second by Sheila. Vote is unanimous (5-0)

 **#4210.10- Updated Police Dept. Budget is approved for \$930,822. Vote is 5-0.**


Chief Parsons confirms that the BOS will continue to meet weekly. He states that would like to get the information to them in advance for a purchase the Police Dept. would like to make. Shawn suggests that he ask to be put on next week's BOS agenda.

#4323.10- Waste Disposal and Recycling: Brian Goshon from Casella Waste and Gail Turelli, the ZBA secretary present the budget for #4323.10 Waste Disposal and Recycling for \$518,223. Mr. Goshon explains that the waste industry has seen improvement in the commodities market in 2021. He explains the Town is set up on a formula system for recycling costs based on the market value of recycled materials. He notes these fixed costs include processing, transit, and handling. Based on the transit and handling costs, Casella subtracts the average commodity value (ACR). He notes that in 2020 the ACR was \$30/ton. Transit and Handling costs were \$122/ton, so the Town was paying \$92/ton for the disposal charge. Today the ACR is \$109/ton so it is now costing the Town only \$13/ton for recycling disposal.


Mr. Goshon explains that the budget does not reflect the ACR revenue because it fluctuates with the market values, though he feels that they will continue to see these current market conditions into 2022. He notes that Casella has also found a lot of domestic markets for recycled materials and has put a lot of capital into its infrastructure to meet the demands of these new markets. He states that based on what they have set for the budget for the processing, transit, and handling, the Town's actual costs should be approximately \$13,000/year if the market values remain constant where it is today. He reiterates that the budget for \$60,000 does not reflect the ACR.

 **WD-390- Curbside Collection:** Shawn asks how the curbside collection increases were calculated. Mr. Goshon explains that when the latest contract was constructed there was no Wards Way, Tequila Dr, Megan and Brandon Way, or Doe Run. He notes the Town has grown significantly since that contract and that has resulted in

more stops. The contract was based on 1550 stops and now Casella is closer to 1700 stops. He notes this information was confirmed when Ms. Turelli did a cart count and with data from the assessor's office. Mr. Goshon reminds the BOS that there is also the issue of inflation which is having a major impact on fuel, labor, and equipment. This affects both trash and recycling.

 **BPU-390- Bulk Pick-up:** Bulk Pick-up costs depends on the participation of the Town. Mr. Goshon states that he feels the Town is doing a good job controlling the costs by restricting pile sizes and having residents sign up. He notes this has a positive impact on controlling the amount of material Casella is picking up, but still allows the program to bring value to the taxpayer. He states that having the system has cut the volume of bulk material significantly, noting the amount that Casella is picking up annually is the same amount they used to pick up semi-annually. Mr. Goshon explains that the process is more efficient now, bulk pick-up is usually done by noon-1:00. Shawn explains that these changes cut the per-hour costs of the trucks and the disposal fees. Mr. Goshon explains that by having a list, Casella can plan on how much equipment they need to do the pick-up efficiently, noting that their drivers still must adhere to the federal regulations of hours of service. They are limited to sixty (60) hours per week.

Scott asks how many people sign up for the bulk pick-up and then don't participate. Mr. Goshon states that he does not believe there are many "ghost" sign-ups. He explains that Ms. Turelli provides the sign-up sheets so that Casella can develop the route sheets. The drivers check off the addresses as they service them and note if there is nothing out. Mr. Goshon notes there are very few "not-outs."

 **WD-393- Curbside Recycling Disposal:** Shawn notes the biggest driver of the budget increase is the \$60,340 budgeted for curbside recycling disposal. He confirms the disposal rate is \$140/ton for 431 tons. This does not include the ACR which right now is \$109/ton. Mr. Goshon confirms that the amount budgeted assumes the Town gets no ACR rebate and reminds the BOS that they are seeing "consistent improvement in the ACR". Shawn states that he understands that reflecting the rebate brings a "market-rate" element into the budget proposal. Scott agrees stating the Town "can't roll the dice" on the ACR rebate. Mr. Goshon states that he can show the improvement of the ACR over last year and could put an average of that dollar amount into the budget. Shawn notes that last year Casella budgeted more to accommodate the market's fluctuations and that he feels the dollar amount reflected in this year's budget is "very aggressive". He explains that the Town will have to raise that \$60,000 through taxation even though the Town will probably give it back. Scott asks if it's "worth the gamble". Shawn asks Mr. Goshon to break down that budget line more and to provide last year's amount of commodity revenue the Town received. He notes that Casella is in a better position than the BOS to make a more informed guess at these numbers.

Shawn confirms the year-to-date amounts are through November 2021. He reads into the minutes that the Town budgeted \$47,104 for two (2) bulk pick-ups. The actual costs of those bulk pick-ups are \$55,555. The bulk pick-up program is \$8,000 over budget for 2021. Scott notes the first bulk pick-up was after canceling one of the bulk pick-ups in 2020 due to COVID. Mr. Goshon notes that the Spring bulk pick-up is usually the heavier one. He reminds the BOS that the Raymond Transfer Station is still available for residents to drop off their bulk items.

Shawn asks if the BOS wants to approve the #4323.10 Waste Disposal and Recycling budget as presented, or do they want to wait for the additional data on recycling. Scott notes the proposed budget represents a 25% increase. Mr. Goshon states that Casella's proposed budget for FY2021 was \$467,000. Scott states the budget was changed at some point because the approved budget was for \$415,011. Shawn calculates that the year-to-date expenditure is approximately \$37,000 per month and should be about that for December, going over budget at \$445,800. Shawn suggests that if the BOS looks at the Casella budget in detail, they may be able to refine that \$60,000 for recycling variability. Mr. Goshon reiterates that Casella has found some solid markets and can give the BOS a good idea of the ACR for about ninety (90) days. Scott confirms that Casella's FY2021 recommended budget was originally \$467,000, noting that if they used that original amount of the proposed budget, the FY2022 budget would only be an 11% increase. Both Shawn and Scott agree that the Town will go over the current FY2021 budgeted amount of \$415,000 and will expend approximately \$445,000. The FY2022 budget is a 16% increase above the year-to-date expenditures.

Dottie looks up the FY2021 budget online and states that according to what she sees, Casella's budget was \$474,903 for FY2021. Shawn agrees the BOS needs to confirm the real numbers in the FY2021 budget. He recommends the BOS table Casella's budget. He states that he would like a breakdown with historical data on the ACR and that the BOS can revisit the budget next week.

#4155.90- Personnel: Kim asks for clarification on this budget. She confirms that the Fire Dept, Police Dept, Highway Dept. and the library should now have the Personnel cost lines in their budgets. She asks if the remaining departments; Town Clerk, Tax Collector, Town Welfare, and BOS Admin payroll costs would still be reflected in the Personnel budget. Kim notes that until she has everyone's final numbers, she will not have a proposed budget for #4155.90 Personnel (all the other departments). Shawn explains that every department should have these costs reflected in their budgets. He notes this should result in #4155.90 not having a budget because all those expenses have been integrated into every department's budget. Kim explains that BudCom's understanding was that only the Fire Dept, Police Dept, Highway Dept, and the library personnel costs were taken out of the #4155.90 Personnel budget and that all the other Town departments' personnel costs remained in #4155.90. Shawn states that he believes the Town Clerk had included the personnel costs in her budget. He states that he believes the BOS goal was to move all those costs into every department's budget, including the Selectmen's budget.

Dottie asks if, in the past, the BOS added "buffer money" into #4155.90 in case of staff changes. She expresses her concern that if the BOS does not fund that budget, there would be no "buffer" and there could be substantial shortages the BOS would have to cover. Scott suggests that is something the various departments should plan for in their budgets. Shawn explains the difficulty of budgeting for such issues unless the BOS budgets everyone for the "Cadillac plan" and then the BOS would have variability in those expenses. He notes this is not a realistic way to budget all the Town's benefit plans. Shawn suggests that changes to payroll (Personnel) costs would be "low frequency" and when these costs do change, the Town would have to accept the change and the change in the cost structure. He notes the issue would need to be brought to the BOS so they would be made aware of it because the individual department budgets may not be able to absorb that change and would need supplemental funding from the BOS.

Scott asks how many employees the Town has. Kim states she believes it is about eighty-six (86). Steve calculates that only eight (8) employees are eligible for benefits. Scott states that he is less concerned with the need for a buffer with that low number of employees involved. Shawn agrees and states that he believes a "buffer" was not ever budgeted in the Personnel budget, due to the expense of the plans. Kim reminds the BOS that the Town has an annual open enrollment for all insurance changes, so the Town and departments would know those costs at that point and could present them in their budgets. The BOS discusses how the provisions for "life changes" could impact those insurance costs.

Mr. Hantman states that at the last couple of BudCom meetings, they have taken a different approach and are recommending that departments plan for the "worst-case scenario" i.e: that all employees will opt for the "family plan". He notes that he believes there is a disconnect between BudCom and the BOS. Shawn agrees, noting that the BudCom Chair and he are "polar opposites in fiscal policy." Kim confirms that the #4155.90 Personnel budget would only have the Town's costs for Unemployment and Workmen's Comp insurance. Shawn states those costs should also be reflected as payroll costs in each department's budget. Kim explains that there is no classification for these costs, they are billed as a flat fee. She notes that she has asked the insurance company for those classifications multiple times and has not received a response.

Sheila notes the idea of moving these costs into each department's budget was a simple suggestion that has become increasingly complicated. The BOS discusses the accounting issues that moving the personnel costs into each department has caused. Shawn notes that he expects next year's process will be smoother. Scott believes the BOS can make recommendations to BudCom on how these lines are budgeted, noting they can choose what to do with it as a board until the Deliberative Session. Shawn explains to Kim that without the details (classifications) on the Unemployment and Workmen's Comp insurances, she could divide those costs per employee and move that amount into each department's budgets based on the number of employees in that department. He notes that the \$459,812 that was budgeted for FY2021 should be going to zero (0) because those costs have been re-

allocated to each department. Scott reminds the BOS that the Unemployment and Workman's Comp insurances would be divided among the total number of employees, not just those who are eligible for benefits and that once those costs are divided out, they should not have much of an impact on the individual department budgets. Shawn reiterates the importance of the BOS checking to ensure they are adding up all the benefit costs for the Town and that amount should be somewhere near what was budgeted in FY2021. If there is a discrepancy, the BOS will need to go back and find what is missing.

Default Budget: Shawn reminds the BOS that while the budgets are done, the budgeting process is not finished. He states the BOS needs to continue to work so that Sheila can have direction when doing the Default budget. Sheila expresses concern that last year she worked hard on the Default budget and most of it was changed. Shawn disagrees and states that only a few lines were changed. Sheila states that she would rather have someone else put together the FY2022 Default budget. Shawn reminds her that she is the BOS budget representative and that she did a great job with the FY2021 Default budget and spreadsheet. Sheila reiterates it is not something she can do this year. Shawn asks Kim to put this issue on next week's BOS agenda.

COLA/Salary increases: Shawn asks for a BOS decision to include the COLA and/or salary increases in the Default budget. Dottie motions that the COLA and salaries as defined by all Town employees are to be included in the Default budget. Second by Steve. There is further discussion.

Scott asks if that would require the Town to adjust the salaries before the end of 2021. Shawn confirms that the Town can do that. Sheila confirms that the COLA and salary adjustments will be included in the Default budget and that becomes effective on January 1, 2022, before the March vote. Shawn explains that the BOS has the discretion to implement those salary adjustments. Scott recommends the BOS adjust the salaries for the last pay period of 2021, so they would be implemented in this calendar year. Steve and Shawn explain the process was done a couple of years ago when Dave Knight was on the BOS. Sheila questions if it was done for all the Town employees or only for certain departments. Shawn states he believes the year that Dave Knight brought this matter up, it included all the Town employees. Scott states he remembers it being done for certain departments, but can't recall if it was done for all the Town's employees. Sheila agrees that it was not done for all employees. Scott suggests that the motion and second be withdrawn and a new motion made to increase the salaries to include COLA in the last payroll of 2021 so that now those increases must become part of the Default budget.

Dottie agrees to withdraw her motion. Steve agrees to withdraw his second. Scott motions to adjust the Town salaries as the BOS previously approved including COLA for the last pay period of 2021. Second by Steve. There is further discussion.

Sheila notes that the motion is for the BOS-approved salary increase and asks how the changes made by BudCom would be accommodated. Scott confirms that any changes BudCom makes to the salaries would not be implemented. Sheila states that is unfair. Dottie notes that BudCom is not done reviewing the budgets. Shawn explains that this has no impact on what the BOS is doing. Sheila states that it is unfair because it's only what the BOS is putting forward, not the budget itself. Scott explains the BOS is only acting on the salary component of the budget. Steve explains the BOS is trying to protect all the hard work they did to bring town salaries up-to-date and states that he didn't think BudCom had an issue with that. Sheila suggests the motion should say "Default budget to include the 4.4% COLA and salaries effective December (whatever)" and remove the reference to the BOS approval of those increases. Scott states that he is open to amending his motion to remove the reference to the BOS. Steve notes that the BOS is in a time crunch as it's already December 6. Sheila states that she believes the BOS is taking the voters' choice away. Scott states that he doesn't believe the voters vote on salaries. Sheila responds the voters vote on the budget and part of the budget is salaries. Shawn explains that the BOS has the discretion to put the COLA and salaries in the Default budget, noting that every year this has been done that Sheila has been on the BOS, she has supported this process. Sheila explains that the 4.4% COLA is one thing, but the increases in the salaries "make a big difference". Steve asks to call the question. Shawn calls the question and asks for a vote on Scott's motion. Vote is 4-yes, 1-no, 0-abstentions (4-1-0). Sheila votes no. The motion passes. The BOS-approved COLA and salary increases will be implemented in the last payroll of 2021.

IV. Old/New Business

Olde Road Issue: Shawn explains to the BOS that there is an issue with #29 Olde Rd that has developed due to other issues. The owners do not have a “bunch of permits” in place, including not having a driveway permit. Mr. Seaver has confirmed this and the owners do have an unpermitted driveway. He states that he would like the owner to come before the BOS and discuss this issue with them. He asks Kim to send the owners a letter, noting there are additional issues to be addressed. The consensus of the BOS is to move forward on this matter.

Signature File: The BOS review the documents in the Signature File. There is a letter from Affinity Lighting requesting an extension for the completion date of the LED light fixture installation from December 31, 2021, to March 31, 2022. Steve motions to authorize the Chair to grant that extension. Second by Dottie. Vote is unanimous (5-0).

The BOS review the pay warrants, Shawn notes there is a document for the assessments that is sent to the DRA that shows all the variabilities, etc. that was prepared by Fred Smith, the Town’s assessor.






Minutes: The BOS has the minutes for the November 22, 2021, and the November 29, 2021, BOS public meetings. Shawn asks the BOS to postpone the discussion and approval of these minutes until next week. The consensus of the BOS is to table the review and approval of the minutes until next week’s BOS meeting.

Shawn reads the Town Announcements listed below. He notes the next BudCom meeting is Tuesday, December 7, 2021, at 7:30 in the Town Hall.

Colby Pond Fire Hydrants: Steve notes there was an issue with the fire hydrants on Colby Pond. “Charlie” had received the e-mail from the BOS office. Steve states that he has finished negotiations with him and the issue is settled. Shawn notes that PWC’s viewpoint was that they were removing the hydrants. Steve explains that they are removing what is there, but will be replacing them with something else that will provide the same volume of water. Shawn cautions Steve to review the documentation carefully as there have been issues before. Steve states that he asked for written confirmation of what was discussed in the original planning stages and that he has received that.

V. Town Announcements

Calendar

-  **December 13- Monday:** Board of Selectmen’s Meeting at 7:00 PM at the Town Hall. The BOS will begin reviewing the Warrant Articles.
-  **January 11, 2022- Tuesday:** Citizen Petition Warrant Articles are due no later than Tuesday, January 11, 2022, by 4:00 PM
-  **February 5, 2022- Saturday:** Deliberative Session for the Town budget. 10:00 AM at the Community Center.
-  **March 8, 2022- Tuesday:** Town Elections 8:00 AM- 8:00 PM at the Community Center
-  **April 9, 2022- Saturday:** Danville Rabies Clinic at the Danville Police Station.

The final Hazardous Mitigation Plan meeting will be held on Wednesday, December 15 via ZOOM from 1:00 PM- 3:00 PM.

As there are no further items to discuss Shawn adjourns the meeting at 8:57 PM.

Minutes derived by video provided on the Town of Danville website.

Respectfully Submitted
Deborah A. Christie