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Town of Danville  
Board of Selectmen  
Monday, October 23, 2023  
7:00 pm

Meeting is Video-Recorded

**Selectmen present:** Shawn O’Neil, Chairman; Annemarie Inman, Vice Chair; Joe Hester; Sheila Johannesen; Dennis Griffiths

**Others present:** Kimberly Burnham, Selectmen Administrator; Brian Delahunty, David Knight, Steve Woitkun, Art Griswold, Jim Bradbury, Judy Jervis, Carol Baird, Walter Baird, Kim Cote, William Baur, Vince Edwards, Jon Haskell, Brandon Daly, Chip Current, Carsten Springer, Christi Unger, Angela Arden, Bill Hull, Scott Barr, Josh Manning, Robert Loree, Paul Pazolt and Bruce Carye

Shawn called the meeting to order 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. It was announced that the Delegate Session would be held later and the public hearing would be first on the agenda.

**I. Public Hearing-Consider Declaring Tuckertown Road an Emergency Lane**

Shawn announced that the hearing was pursuant to RSA 231:59-a and the Board of Selectmen will consider designating Tuckertown Road or Tucker Road, or a portion thereof, an emergency lane. Sheila made and Annemarie seconded a **motion to open the public hearing**. The motion **passed unanimously**.

Before the Board opened the discussion to the public, Shawn read some of the statements regarding why this is being considered.

For the reasons outlined and defined by the Danville Police and Fire Chief:

- residents experiencing medical emergencies or events
- residents getting lost or disoriented
- walking, hiking, and ATV accidents that we can have in our town forest
- fire suppression access
- Fish and Game’s lack of resources to assist
- preventing damage to emergency equipment, or worse, injury to first responders,
- all identifiable public safety and welfare interests, and therefore for any private benefit to any landowners abutting such lane

Shawn explained that the Board is considering a motion to declare a portion of Tuckertown road from Main Street, going west a distance of 887 feet, beyond the gate at the Eversource power line easement, an emergency lane pursuant to RSA 231:59-a and said declaration shall continue in perpetuity or until such time as the Board of Selectmen rescinds or disregards the declaration under this RSA 231:59-a.

The hearing was open to the public for questions and comments. Paul Pazolt asked if the actual plans for cost and repair will be presented. Shawn explained that this is just to declare the road an emergency lane

and to enable the town to spend the funds to make those repairs. He said there is no plan to pave the road; this hearing is just to enable the Board to fix aspects of the road to make it more passable. He said it's been neglected for a number of years to the point that parts of it are impassable to certain vehicles, including OHRVs.

Scott Barr said he and his wife frequently walk through the town forest and he'd feel better knowing there is better access for emergency vehicles if there is ever a need for one. He said he'd feel safer.

Judy Jervis explained there are at least three other points of access to the area. Shawn concurred there are multiple points of access. Judy asked if the Board is going to present actual data and written findings, stating that this is needed per the RSA. Shawn said he just read the data. Judy said that per the RSA, with the public hearing, written findings are required if this is to be declared an emergency lane. Annemarie said what Shawn read are the findings. Judy then asked where the data is. Annemarie said they're not required to have data. She said this has been cleared with the town attorney.

Jim Bradbury said he doesn't have any objections to the declaration, he specifically wants to know what will be done and why there and why now. He also said he wants to hear from the Fire Chief and would like to know if this will allow a truck to get through and will this declaration alleviate the problem. Shawn said this will alleviate the problem of getting a fire truck down that road. Jim asked if that is according to the Fire Chief.

Chief Woitkun was asked to comment, and Chief said yes, but his greater concern is an injury occurring in the woods and getting the ambulance there. Jim asked exactly what is going to happen. Shawn said we would be maintaining the road to a point to allow it to be passable and putting gravel down occasionally. Jim said there are drop-offs on the sides and asked if the road will be widened. Annemarie and Shawn said the road might not be widened. Shawn said as long as we can get a vehicle down there, we are not looking to expand it. The goal is to make it passable in the cheapest way possible. With roots, snowmobile traffic, and erosion from rainwater it has become impassable over time.

Jim asked if there are other class 6 roads in town that are in greater need of repair. He asked specifically about Rockrimmon Road that goes from Opal Drive to Kingston. Shawn said he got a Jeep down Rockrimmon Road recently. Jim asked if a Jeep can traverse Tuckertown Road. Shawn said the distance down Tuckertown Road is much greater than Rockrimmon and depending on the flood conditions, there may only be one way in.

Vince Edwards explained that there are fire extinguishers in the town hall because there could be a problem, not because there's an active fire. He said he used to work for the power company and there is an immense opportunity to be hurt while working in that environment, so he'd like to see an ambulance be able to get out there. He said he supports the declaration and that the more options you have for access, the better the chances are of getting help.

Shawn said that it is designated a Class 6 trail, therefore the town is not allowed to expend taxpayer money to maintain it. This declaration does not mean that the road will have to be upgraded to a specific condition, this is just to get it to a point that it is considered passable. If a load of gravel needs to be put down, the town is not currently legally able to do so and that is the travesty. Vince asked that that reason be added to the list of reasons. He said the 345,000-volt line is an additional source of fire as well as potential injury to workers. He said there is a lot of activity, including people flying drones, in the powerline corridor. He said the more options for egress, the better.

Carol Baird said she wanted to clarify something about the Class 6 road status. She said the town voted in 1954 to classify Tuckertown Road and several others as Class 6, making the town exempt from the cost of repair and maintenance and from any liability to anyone using those roads. She said it's not that the road has been neglected, but rather that the town voted to not spend any money on these roads. Shawn and Carol agreed that neither one of them is aware of any funds being spent on the road. Shawn said the only activity he's aware of on that road is the 120 yards of gravel deposited by Chris Stafford. Carol explained that the other roads designated Class 6 by the 1954 vote are Hersey Road, Cross Road which has a house on it today, and Rockrimmon Road. She emphasized that by vote the town closed the roads so taxpayer money would not have to be spent to maintain them.

Jon Haskell asked about alternative access and in the event of a wildfire or a mishap with the powerline people, he said you can't rely on the power line corridor as an access. He said he has a background in fighting wildfires across the country from California to here. He gave the example of a fire caused by the powerlines and that the carbon produced in the smoke is the same carbon that's in spark plugs. He said there was a large wildfire in Utah, there was a big boom, and everything caught on fire. He agreed that there is a real need for secondary access and egress.

Dave Knight asked if the town has reviewed or used the work done by the town engineer, Dennis Quintal, from 2015 or 2016. Annemarie said she intends using that. Dave asked if Mr. Quintal will be involved and if the intention is to put this in Jim Seaver's highway budget to do the work. Dave asked where the money will be put until it's utilized to pay for the work, and if a dollar amount has been decided.

Shawn said a couple of areas have been identified that need work and it's not estimated that it will cost a great deal. Dave said he can think of one area that needs to be leveled and another that needs to be widened, as identified by Dennis. Dave said suggestions were made for areas that should not be graveled: there are other materials that are preferable. Shawn said that gravel is a common fill so that is why he's using that term, but he agrees there are other materials that would better address what could be done. Dave asked how this is being addressed to ensure the NHDES doesn't have concerns about what will be done. He mentioned that there are culverts under the road and some work has been done out there since 1954 since the culverts require some maintenance. He said he believes a previous highway department used to put gravel out there. Shawn said we also have to consider the Audubon Society, and it's his opinion that Audubon would be in support of what is proposed. He said it will allow the Forestry Committee (FC) to do an operation that Audubon has already brought up has not been done. Dave said he'd rather use the forestry plan that Audubon suggested.

Carol said Tuckertown Road is in the Historic District and that the town is to comply with the Historic District Ordinance. She asked, if it's declared an emergency lane, will the requirements of the Historic District Ordinance continue to be followed regarding work and changes on the road? If not, are the Selectmen going to have a public discussion and a public vote on that so that the public knows and the appeal rights and the appeal time for interested parties are protected? Annemarie said she thinks that question has already been answered. She read the town attorney's statement that "although not clear, RSA 231:59-a does suggest that the Board of Selectmen is charged with oversight over any repairs or maintenance for an emergency lane. Regardless however, because the town is not subject to its own zoning regulations, the Board of Selectmen and any other public body like the FC, are arguably exempt from zoning compliance. Of course, Heritage Commission (HC) can still review any proposed repairs or maintenance, but its decision would really be advisory only under these circumstances."

Carol clarified that she did not say the town attorney said that the town is required to follow its own zoning. She asked if there will be a public vote so that the appeal rights for any interested parties will be preserved. She asked that a vote be made, making it an administrative decision with appeal rights that follow. Annemarie said this can be taken up with town council to ensure everything is done correctly. Carol asked again if a public vote and announcement will be made so that interested parties will know. She said that is an administrative decision. Annemarie reiterated that she will take this up with town council.

Shawn said that it's already been mentioned that the town is exempt from its own zoning, however it's not advisable to go against it. He said it's already been alluded to that the Selectmen will take advice from the HC, but the advice is in the capacity of a recommendation or guidance and not the final vote. Carol said that is in conflict with the Zoning Ordinance. Annemarie said that is not the opinion they received from town council, but the Board can take this up with council at another time. She said this is not the forum for discussing that point; this meeting is regarding declaring the road an emergency lane.

Carol said she was going to clarify what she is asking, but Shawn said he wanted to ask if anyone else had a question. Carol asked if the Board is ignoring the appeal rights of other people. Shawn and Annemarie said no. Annemarie said this Board has not had the chance to review what Carol is saying, and this is something that will be done with council. She said this Board has not said anything about not honoring appeals or administrative decisions. Carol said she's asking if a public announcement of any decision will be made so that the appeal time will be known by interested parties is protected. Annemarie said she will make sure Carol knows about that.

Dave asked about the next step and if the intention is to put this into this year's budget and this year's plan. Shawn said that how this is budgeted is usually a separate discussion. Dave said it's been about 15 years since he's looked at the RSAs and wondered what if anything changed in the RSA.

Angela Arden asked if the road is reclassified for emergency access, what are the parameters around that? Who is using the road? Is it only for emergency vehicles specifically or can it be used by private entities? Shawn said that has yet to be discussed by the Board but he would like to keep the same classification as a class 6 trail. What this Board is looking to do is to make it possible that some of the road's deficiencies can be addressed. In order to do that, town funds have to be expended which cannot be legally done right now. The intent is not to pave it or make it a racetrack, but to make it passable for emergency vehicles. Angela asked if the HC no longer will have purview over it, is there a way to ensure that it is still perceived as a historic feature and doesn't continue transforming into a raceway? Annemarie said the existing designation will not change; it will remain a scenic road, a Class A trail and a Class 6 road. This is just adding another layer.

Walter Baird asked if this will be used by Terra Realty Trust. Annemarie said no and Shawn said they had so many conditions for that to happen and the permits they had at the time have all expired. He opined that to try to meet the current standards would be even more insane for them to meet. Walter said they still own the land and still have the right to use that road. He reminded the Board that the town spent a lot of money going to the Supreme Court and the town lost and said he's afraid Terra will come back and use large, heavy trucks on the road frequently. Shawn said he would not support that volume of traffic with that amount or size of vehicle. The idea is this is for an occasional emergency vehicle when needed. He also said those two people involved with Terra Realty are no longer there. He said additionally, it didn't make sense in their business model with the old permits they had. He said there's now been a 20-year

advance in EPA regulations, etc. There would be a monumental effort for them to overcome and his opinion is that Terra is no longer a threat.

Paul asked if there are any documented incidents that justify making this an emergency lane. He said something must have triggered this and is wondering what it is. Shawn said there has been an incident in which someone was lost on the trails. Sheila said the police parked at the entrance with sirens on and the person followed the noise.

Sheila said the proposal is making the road an emergency lane for the sake of emergencies and mentioned plowing in winter. Shawn said the road won't be plowed in the winter just for the sake of plowing. A member of the audience said a backhoe can be brought in to plow if necessary.

Paul asked about costs and asked for clarification of who pays and the amount of money to be spent. Shawn said right now they're looking at putting down gravel, or a gravel like product, so the base won't wash out. He explained that this will come from taxpayer money if the road is declared an emergency lane. He said again that without this designation, the Board cannot do anything with the road that costs the taxpayers.

Paul said he's been part of the Building Committee, of which the main task is finding a new police facility. He said that road maintenance will have a cost and is wondering about the priority of repairing a road that isn't used compared to getting a new police station, for which there is a sincere need. He said it is unknown what the tax increase will be in December, but there are rumors that it will be large. He opined that with the need for a new police station, we should be "gathering our eggs" into the right basket.

Bruce Carye said that he thinks this is a "no-brainer" that we should have this road declared an emergency lane. He said no one wants to ruin the historic nature of the road and it is much less expensive than building a new police station. He said the current station works just fine. He said the road has been in disarray since 1954. He offered the scenario of an injured hiker who needs assistance and an ambulance unable to get to him. This would necessitate first responders risking their own safety and well-being by carrying the hiker on foot. He said he doesn't understand the issue since this seems like common sense to him for the betterment of the community so people can enjoy the area.

Chief Woitkun said the town has access to its own gravel and this could alleviate the cost. Shawn said the labor cost will be minimal. Vince Edwards said that this designation does not commit the town to doing any repair, its just allowing the town to spend money to fix the road. This vote will untie the hands of the Selectmen to allow them to decide what to do, how extensive any repair should be, what material to use, etc. Shawn concurred that is exactly what they are trying to address. He said currently they couldn't put even one bucket of gravel on the road because that defies the \$0 commitment.

Robert Loree asked about the cost of the police station and if it's going to be millions of dollars. Shawn said that is unknown. Robert then asked if the cost of the road is going to be thousands of dollars or tens of thousands of dollars. Shawn said his opinion is that thousands of dollars would be a high number, and this would not approach ten thousand dollars. The town has access to its own gravel and equipment, lessening the burden on the taxpayers.

Dave pointed out that if a decision is made to make a repair, there's no ongoing commitment to keep the road in that condition or to keep it plowed in winter. Shawn concurred this is correct. Dave also said that this does not commit any future board to repair or maintain the road.

Carol asked if information will be coming back to the voters regarding cost and if information will be given to voters before the money is spent. She asked if money will be put into a special fund or if it will be absorbed into the Highway Department. She said she thought the RSA mentioned a special fund should be set up for this purpose. Shawn said we can probably set up a special fund but they expect the dollar amount to be so small that a special fund will not be necessary. He said there is no cost estimate at this time. The road will be examined to see the work needed in specific areas. After reviewing the road, it might be decided to repair a portion one year and another portion the next year to get to a final goal. This Highway Department will be consulted to get their cost estimate. Carol asked again about the actual cost being revealed to the taxpayers and Shawn said that everything is talked about at “this table”, meaning the Selectmen’s meetings.

Chief Woitkun said the cost is included in the budget and the voters get the opportunity to vote on that. The public can sit in on meetings when the Highway Department discusses their budget with the Selectmen. He also said that the public has the opportunity to be on the Budget Committee.

Walter asked, if this is so imperative, why didn’t the police or fire chief, or the Fire Wards, come to the Selectmen. Shawn said that people speak to the Board about a lot of different topics and sometimes it falls on deaf ears. Chief Woitkun said they are supporting it now when the Selectmen are taking an action on it. Shawn said this is an issue that can be dealt with using minimal effort and minimal cost. Art Griswold said if the fire department has to go out there and hand carry someone, it will take at least 10-15 firefighters. It’s rough walking out there and it will require mutual aid.

Kim Cote asked about four-wheel drive vehicles, saying she thought the town has voted to acquire them. Shawn said that we have four-wheel drive vehicles, but the issue is we can’t get a tanker down the road in the event of a forest fire. Vince Edwards said if a vehicle gets stuck there during a fire, it could burn and there would be another loss to the town. He said this vote is to prepare for the “what ifs” in life. He said money is spent on fire extinguishers and fire alarms not because there’s an active fire but because there might be a fire. He said the prudent thing to do is identify a hazard, the likelihood or potential of the hazard, and mitigation measures. He said the issue is not the money to be spent but the ability to repair a road if we can find the money. A road can be built, or a trail can be built that is passable for a truck. Shawn said the aim of the Selectmen is to use local resources and do this with minimal cost, using a strategic timeline according to the needs. He said the benefit gained is greater than the cost. Scott Barr said if one life is saved then the cost is worthwhile.

Shawn asked for a motion to close the public hearing. Annemarie made and Joe seconded a **motion to close the public hearing**. The motion **passed** unanimously.

Sheila read Article 2022-19, voted on by the town in the March 2022 election.

*“Acceptance of the Town Forest Management Plan*

To see if the Town of Danville will vote to accept the 2020 Forest Management Plan for the Danville Town Forest, Danville, New Hampshire, prepared by Dalton Mountain Forestry and accepted by the Danville Forestry Committee and the NH Audubon Society (Town Forest conservation easement holder). This plan has been prepared in accordance with RSA 31:111 to encourage the proper management of natural resources.”

Sheila said this was recommended by the Board of Selectmen 5-0, had no tax impact, and the vote was 760-yes, 105-no. She said she’s read the management plan and would like to point out a few things.

She said page 57, paragraph 1 talks about Access Roads, Forest Trails, and Landings. She read, “It is most efficient and cost effective to have any road and/or log yard work completed as part of the forest management entry, and the costs incurred can be itemized and deducted from timber values harvested from that particular access point. Each management unit can be accessed utilizing an existing woods road or trail system.”

Sheila also read from page 59, paragraph 1 under the title Schedule of Implementation, “Costs associated with access roads and log yards will be a one-time expense.”

In the second paragraph, under the title 2021 – Management Unit 2, Sheila read and paraphrased some of the bullet points are as follows:

- “Utilize existing road along the powerline easement. Establish access road and log yard in Stand 8 for forest management. Estimated costs \$3,500.00”
- “Re-enter management unit 2 in 2041”
- “Example of 2021 financial summary: access road and log yard - \$3,500.00, listed as cost deduction from revenue.”

She said on page 15, there’s mention of forest protection. She read from the second paragraph: “In respect to forest fires, there is no imminent danger. Fire danger throughout New Hampshire is typically low. Average size of a NH forest fire is typically small in size. The natural vegetation and damp characteristics of the forest typically limit fire dangers without the need for man-made fire breaks or barriers. Natural fire breaks such as streams, wetlands, woods roads, and town roads are likely sufficient protection.”

Sheila also read from page 26 in the first and third paragraphs, “This management unit is located along the eastern side of the powerline easement and west of the large wetland complex that bisects that Town Forest and floods Tuckertown Road...There is an existing log yard opportunity in an old gravel pit located in stand 10 accessed via Tuckertown Road, but there is a section of Tuckertown Road that would require improvements, including widening the road and installing a culvert. It may not be economical to invest in this improvement since the majority of the timber in this unit is best accessed via the powerline easement utilizing a log yard situated within stand 8.”

Sheila referred to a letter from Dennis Quintal, the town engineer, dated September 23, 2016, Dennis notes on page 2, number 7, that particular area is too narrow for fire trucks, but all that is needed there is to cut a few trees on one side and excavate a narrow portion of a steep bank. She paraphrased number 8 on page 2 that this is the area that the FC applied to the HC to improve. His recommendation was to apply crushed stone on the surface to allow water to pass over and if gravel is used, it could erode into the wetlands. She read from page 3 of Dennis’s letter that Terra Realty agreed that a geo grid map would be placed over this section. Sheila stated that Dennis repeats that crushed stone would be placed to allow water to pass over during high levels and that gravel could erode into the wetlands.

Sheila said she doesn’t have a problem with fixing something but has a problem with where the money’s coming from. She said the funds should come from logging. Shawn said he agrees with that. He said that this hearing tonight is to see about declaring the road an emergency lane and that how repairs are funded is another topic entirely. He said he agreed with Sheila’s findings that if a forestry operation is to be done, then the proceeds from that operation should be used for that road improvement. Sheila said this is how the whole thing started: the FC went to the HC and applied for a certificate of approval. The first

application was denied, and the HC told the FC what needed to be done if they applied again. She said the FC submitted a second application, only changing who was to be notified and not changing anything else that the HC had suggested.

Shawn said that even if the FC wanted to do something, they could not because as part of the town, they are not allowed to spend any taxpayer funds on this road. He said there are multiple benefits that can come of this, including the road being an emergency lane and the improvements allowing the FC to do a forestry operation. He said the issue is having a common plan and common goal and the HC will always have a place to add commentary. He said if the HC has an issue with a particular part of the plan, they are invited to speak up and make their case.

Sheila said the money should not come from the taxpayers. Dennis said that the subject on the table is not money; this declaration allows the Board to have a conversation about money. Shawn said there is no plan or desire to make this a 60mph road; the aim is to address issues in town. He explained that the FC can potentially improve the road at their own expense to allow a timber operation which would yield a larger profit than the expense of upgrading the road. This is also going to address comments made by Audubon, specifically their statements regarding the town neglecting their management of the forest.

Annemarie said that she and Dennis attended the meeting in which Parker Schuerman from Audubon was with the town forester. These two experts commented in layman's terms that we are literally allowing the forest to strangle itself. They're concerned about infestation, disease, the lack of sunlight coming down in certain areas, etc. She said they strongly expressed that we're letting something very valuable to the town die. She said the town was very lucky to have the two expert minds collaborate. She said she wants to preserve the forest and preserve Tuckertown Road. She said she wants the issue taken care of thoughtfully and with the care of the residents in mind.

Shawn said that with all the neglect, it creates an additional fuel source for wildfires. He said we could have a dry season and, as it was pointed out, a spark from the powerlines and there would be a fire. Annemarie said there are a lot of things to be addressed and this is the first steppingstone to achieve that.

Sheila asked about the class 6 roads which have houses on them and if anything is being done with those. She said this is opening Pandora's box. Annemarie disagreed, saying we'd have to go through the same process of a public hearing for each road. The concerns would be expressed and discussed for each road, each time, and these are the checks and balances.

Sheila asked for her notes to be attached to the minutes and said she'd email them to Kim.

Dennis made and Joe seconded a motion to approve the use of Tuckertown/Tucker Road as an emergency lane pursuant to RSA 231:59-a. Upon discussion, Dennis made and Joe seconded an amended **motion to declare a portion of Tuckertown/Tucker Road from Main Street west to a distance of 887' beyond the gate at the Eversource power line easement an emergency lane pursuant to RSA 231:59-a, and said declaration shall continue in perpetuity or until such time as the Board of Selectmen rescinds or disregards this declaration under this RSA 231:59-a.**

Shawn asked for any other comments. Sheila asked if she could read a letter from Chris Stafford addressed to the Board of Selectmen, Heritage Commission, and Forestry Committee regarding Tuckertown Road. Annemarie noted point of order, there is a motion on the table. Shawn agreed, but allowed Sheila to read the letter in its entirety. The letter, attached to these minutes, is summarized as follows:



*The letter states that during the August 9 Heritage Commission meeting, there was a discussion about unauthorized road improvements, spanning about a half mile, done in conjunction with the Stafford Family Trust timber cut in 2019. The statements made during the meeting were inaccurate and that no one had consulted the Stafford family prior to the meeting. In November 2019, the Stafford family consulted with a forester regarding tree cutting on their property, lots 1-55 and 1-64, which abut Tuckertown Road. An Intent to Cut was filed with the town and the taxes were paid. Prior to the cut, a site walk was held with the forester, logger, the Road Agent, and Chris Stafford to assess the best place to use Tuckertown Road to access their property. The agreed upon landing area for the vehicles was about .1 mile from the entrance of Tuckertown Road and that section of road was in good condition and did not need any improvements. The Road Agent had advised the Staffords that no debris should be trailed onto Route 111A (Main Street). However, when the project started, there was a heavy rain and mud was left on Main Street. Additionally, there were ruts on Tuckertown Road. Upon the Road Agent's request, the Stafford's logger deposited about 120 cubic yards of gravel onto Tuckertown Road to reduce the amount of mud being left on Main Street and to repair the ruts in the road.*

*The letter continues to say that the Stafford family does not support significant improvements or alterations to Tuckertown Road. Several reasons were given, and it was reiterated that they support maintaining the designation of the road as a scenic road and class 6 trail.*

The letter was signed by Chris Stafford, trustee of the Stafford Family Land Trust.

Regarding the motion, Shawn, Annemarie, Dennis, and Joe voted in the affirmative. Sheila voted against. The motion **passed**.

## **II. Delegate Session**

Shawn opened the delegate session to those in the audience. Carsten Springer gave bottles of apple sauce to each member of the Board of Selectmen, explaining that the orchard has been doing well and has about 30 trees currently. He thanked Bobby Lorree for his work there.

The Board took a five-minute recess.

## **III. Budgets**

### **4220.10 Fire**

Chief Woitkun explained the salaries have been increased 5% per the Selectmen's recommendation. The line for monthly on-call response increased to ensure there is enough in the fund to cover the increase in calls. Chief said that to date, there have been 426 calls, and last year's total was 464 with still two months left in the year. When questioned why there are more calls this year, Chief said he guessed it's because there are more people calling the ambulance for less severe issues. The population is also aging.

Several lines remained the same. The amount for Communication Equipment has been reduced due to the Selectmen giving the department ARPA funds with which new radios and portables were purchased. Batteries and pagers will be purchased by the end of the year. Shawn pointed out that using the ARPA funds is not just beneficial to the 2024 budget but to budgets for many years to follow.

Chief explained that the line 681 Rescue Equipment and Supplies is over budget due to an increase in runs. Those transfers have required using more supplies. With the six-town consortium, the number of transfers

has increased. The funds collected from those transfers go into a separate account. Chief said they are preparing to purchase a new ambulance.

Line 682 Protection of Personnel has been reduced. Chief said he doesn't expect to have to replace that many sets of gear. He's replacing gear on a rotational basis. FD 740 Station Equipment and FD 910 Training Reimbursement have been cut. Chief pointed out very few lines within his budget have increased.

Shawn mentioned the need for an ambulance and that this is not negotiable. There was discussion about creating a new line within the 4220 Fire budget. Shawn said the funds can go anywhere but this seemed the most logical. Chief said he did a study on how much it would be to do our own transports with per diem help. He said it was still drastically more than doing this with a contract. The contract as signed is for one year with an option for two more years with a 3% cap. He said there's no guarantee that Trinity will not pull out and we will have to do transports ourselves. When someone calls 911, they expect to see an ambulance. Shawn said our response rate is comparable to a full-time department and the fire department is very respectful of the taxpayer's money.

Sheila asked if some of the funds can be encumbered at the end of the year to offset the cost of the contract. Shawn said the contract won't start until March and there are no funds earmarked for that right now.

Dave Knight asked about the changeover to our system of selecting a fire chief, and asked if there is going to be a need to change how the budget is done since the chief will no longer report to the Fire Wards but to the Selectmen? Shawn said there's a line for the chief salary. The Fire Wards are working on the job description and the goal is to get a process together for getting candidates. There will be an overlap of hours to allow for training. Dave said that in his experience, a change like this has sometimes brought about dissatisfaction with personnel and asked if we need to plan for losing people in the department. He said the training and equipment funds may need to be reviewed in the off chance some people don't like the new boss. Shawn said this can be an issue at any time.

Dave asked if there is anything set aside for search funds. He said there may be a chance the search will be widespread and that he's seen on the municipal board several indications that finding a good, local match may be difficult. Shawn agreed but said he doesn't see someone from the Midwest coming to Danville to be a part-time fire chief. Shawn said we want to find the right candidate, and agreed a more widespread search could be more expensive.

Sheila made and Joe seconded a **motion to approve Budget 4220.10 Fire in the amount of \$649,302.00**. The motion **passed** unanimously.

#### **4240 Code Enforcement**

Shawn pointed out that the building inspector is the only inspector who holds office hours, not just site inspections. All the inspectors get a percentage of the permit fee. The building inspector's salary, 4241.20 Building Inspection, increased by the agreed upon 5%. Sheila made and Annemarie seconded a **motion to approve Budget 4240 Code Enforcement in the amount of \$5,283.00**. The motion **passed** unanimously.

#### **4411 Health Administration**

The salary has been increased. The lab analysis line is currently over budget. Shawn asked for a breakdown of what's been spent in this line. Kim said the health officer has mentioned to him that each home business

application should be reviewed by him when they are dealing with food. It was mentioned that the state regulates this at a certain volume.

Kim pointed out that under 4411.30 Mosquito Control the numbers are per contract. This makes the total \$33,342.00. The lab expenses line is still under question since this line has been funded just in case something needs to be sent to a lab. Without knowing if that was done or if something was put in this line erroneously, the amount for lab analysis was reduced to \$120.00. This makes the total \$30,855.00. This can be addressed again after getting information regarding labs. Sheila made and Joe seconded a motion to approve **Budget 4411 Health Administration in the amount of \$30,855.00**. The motion **passed** unanimously.

#### **4316 Street Lighting**

Shawn mentioned that the Police Department inventoried the number of streetlights in town to verify the accuracy of what we're charged. The benefit of switching to LED lights was mentioned as a significant cost savings. This year \$14,500.00 was budgeted but only \$6976.00 has been spent to date. Sheila made and Joe seconded a **motion to approve Budget 4316 Street Lighting in the amount of \$10,000.00**. The motion **passed** unanimously.

#### **4319 Dams**

This line is for the town's alleged ownership of a small dam, just in case the state tells us we need to do something about it. Sheila made and Annemarie seconded a **motion to approve Budget 5319 Dams in the amount of \$134.00**. The motion **passed** unanimously.

#### **4520 Parks and Recreation**

Sheila asked about the last time the town went to bid for this service. Shawn said it's been a while, but last time there was only one bid. The problem would be going out to bid again, and the price being raised significantly. Annemarie said if there is a breach of contract, we'd go out to bid. Dennis asked if this would be something in which to put snow shoveling for town building. Sheila made and Annemarie seconded a **motion to approve Budget 4520 Parks and Recreation in the amount of \$36,215.00**. The motion **passed** unanimously.

#### **IV. Minutes**

The minutes of October 16, 2023 will be reviewed at the next meeting.

#### **V. Old/New Business**

**Emergency Management budget**—Kim said that the budget was reviewed by Rob Aliberti. He spoke with Kim about moving the \$2,000.00 in the supplies line to the salaries so they can take time for training. Shawn explained that the salary line is there for an on-demand staff line, put there to address the need when it happens. It doesn't pay for an emergency management director. He said if Rob's desire is to be paid, he can come to the Board with a presentation. Kim said there are other towns that pay for training, and she'll speak with Rob.

**Ballot Machines**—The Board discussed the ballot machines and poll pads as previously discussed with the Town Clerk. The cost is approximately \$20,000.00 and the deadline for purchasing these in time for the March election is November 8<sup>th</sup>. Shawn said his opinion is that he'd rather wait until the end of the year to see what's in the budget. There are other elections in which these new machines can be used before the Presidential election in November 2024. At the end of the year the budgets can be reviewed to see what funds are available that can be used to make the purchase. This would allow the town to test the

equipment for a state election before November 2024. Sheila said this would allow other communities who purchase early to work out the kinks.

Shawn asked the Board members how they'd like to proceed. It was agreed we don't want to try this out for the first time at the Presidential election. We have ballot machines that work currently, and we have the paper back-up of the checklist. Dave suggested encumbering unused funds. It was agreed that these voting machines will not be purchased at this time, and it will be reviewed at the end of the year. Kim was asked to let Chris know.

**Tax Rate**—Shawn said he's been in contact with Jamie Dow at NHDRA regarding tax rate setting. He's also been talking with MRI about an issue that he feels needs to be corrected. Some rates that are part of the tax bill and are not controlled by the town are as follows:

County \$.75  
Local education \$18.45  
State education \$1.53

When the municipality rate is set, hopefully this week, that will be announced.

**Welcome Sign**—Shawn explained the welcome sign on Main Street near the Christmas Tree is looking weathered. Materials had been donated but volunteers were bowing out. JJ from J&M Wood Creations has measured and taken photos of the sign to recreate it and is asking for \$1400.00. A similar sign would be at least \$3,000.00. The Board agreed this is a reasonable cost.

**Snow Shoveling**—Sheila asked about shoveling at the town hall and if the Road Agent can be tasked with this. She said there might be someone who is already plowing who wouldn't mind paying someone a little extra to do the shoveling. Dennis said there is an issue with insurance as soon as someone who is hired to plow steps out of the truck. Kim asked if Government Buildings and Community Center budgets should be discussed again. Dennis suggested looking at total snowfall for the last couple of years and come up with a number that could be used by Auger.

**Other:**

There has been evidence of a mouse at the Stagecoach Stop and Store. Dennis had no new information regarding that.

Sheila asked if we have any non-public minutes. Shawn said they've all been reviewed.

**VI. Announcements**

Friday, October 27: The Senior Coffee Hour at the Community Center will be held from 10am to noon.

Thursday, November 9: Town Hall will be closed in observance of Veteran's Day

Monday, November 13: A Veteran's Day breakfast will be held at the Timberlane Regional High School library, 9:30-11am, hosted by the Rho Kappa chapter. There is more information on the flyer found on the town website.

With nothing more to discuss, the **meeting adjourned** at 9:25pm.

10/23/2023 – 10/30/23 approved as amended.

Respectfully submitted,  
Janet Denison