

BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING
AUGUST 16, 2016

PRESENT: Becky Doyle, Chairman, David Lage, Tim Johnson, Joanne Meshna

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. at the Town Office.

USA Properties, Inc.: Mr. Peter Holden from Holden Engineering and Mr. Bruce Simpson, President of USA Properties, met with the Board to discuss Stowell Road in relation to their proposed subdivision. Mr. Simpson stated with regard to a secondary entrance to their subdivision there were a few issues. They looked at making a connection through the Gary Litchfield property through a quarry road extending off Kennybeck Court. This would involve going through the open space land of the Craven subdivision and all the owners of lots in the subdivision have an undivided interest in the open space which would probably make it impossible to connect at that location. Mr. Simpson continued some years ago there was a little section of Stowell Road that the Town quit maintaining and they would like to petition the Selectmen to reclassify it as a Class V road. They also have contacted Jeffrey Ela to buy his property which could be used as a connection but without success.

Mr. Simpson once again stated they would like to present a petition to reclassify that part of Stowell Road to Class V, approximately 250 feet. Selectman Lage asked what documentation they had that determines where the Class V section ends and Mr. Simpson responded he was going by where the Town maintained the road. Selectman Lage stated the Selectmen should do a site visit. A separate issue is the upgrading of Stowell Road. The Selectmen agreed to research Town records. Mr. Simpson added the law states if the Town stops maintaining the road for five years it becomes as Class VI road. The Selectmen scheduled a site visit for Saturday, August 27 at 8:00 a.m.

Tim Jones and Deborah Harrity: The Board received a letter from Deborah Harrity and Tim Jones exercising their option to renew the lease with the Town for lots 11/90-6 and 11/91A being used for agriculture. Selectman Lage made a motion to renew the lease agreement from September 23, 2016 to September 23, 2017. Selectman Johnson seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Fire Chief Hiring Committee: Discussion was tabled.

Michael Kane lawsuit: The court has granted the motion to dismiss the Michael Kane case and he has until August 29 to appeal the finding. So far the Town has spent \$10,384 on legal fees.

Minutes: Selectman Lage made a motion to approve the minutes of the August 2, 2016 public and nonpublic session minutes and the August 8, 2016 nonpublic minutes. Selectman Johnson seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Heritage Commission: Selectman Doyle read the powers of the Heritage Commission under RSA 674:44-b and added the Board is still seeking volunteers to serve.

Stearns Burton Lecture Committee: The Board received a letter of resignation from Carol Scollans from the Committee and accepted it with regret which leaves no members left on the Committee. Selectman Doyle explained the purpose of the Committee.

Board of Assessors: Assessor Frank Danisienka submitted a document looking at the pros and cons of **solar** exemptions. Currently there are 103 municipalities with exemptions. The Board used the published State file showing the breakdown of how those municipalities handle solar exemptions. Seventy-six percent of the municipalities have a 100% exemption. Of those, 17 towns have an upper limit on the exemption ranging from \$5,000 to \$35,000 max - 6 town have a \$5,000 max, 3 towns have a \$10,000 max, 5 towns have a \$20,000 max, 1 town has a \$25,000 max, 1 town has a \$30,000 max, and 1 town has a \$35,000 max. The 6 towns having an exemption of \$20,000/25,000 have 105 solar units installed. Their analysis led the Assessors to feel comfortable if the proposed exemption were to read "A solar exemption 100% of the assessed value with a \$20,000 max." A proposed exemption with a maximum greater than \$20,000 would be a matter of discussion at the deliberative session. An example would be if a taxpayer was assessed for \$350,000 for their property and received a \$20,000 exemption for their solar, they would be paying taxes on \$330,000.

Ken McHugh asked how leased solar systems would be handled and Assessor Coffey responded there would be no difference if it was owned or leased; it is part of the property being taxed.

Selectman Lage asked if the Assessors had any information from the assessing company on how to assess solar systems and asked for that information.

Doug Waitt stated an important point is being missed in that solar systems are being looked at with the same value as a granite counter top. The PUC has set up guidelines for net metering for solar systems and the purpose is to incentivize people to install solar systems for the general good of the taxpayers. They give rebates to those that install systems. This sets solar systems apart from other property values. To say that other people have to pay for the solar systems is missing the entire point of solar. Mr. Waitt submitted the PUC documentation and encouraged the Selectmen to read it. Mr. Craig Dudley stated the legislature has seen fit to enact RSA 72:61-72 which gives towns the ability to completely exempt renewable energy.

The Assessors next discussed the new legislation relative to the **veteran's tax credit**. Assessor Coffey stated the legislation allows the Town to modify the veteran's tax credit by eliminating the specified qualifying period of service. All the other conditions are identical to the old law.

The Board of Assessors next discussed the **Disabled Exemption** as provided in RSA 72:37-b, granting an exemption of \$50,000 from the assessed value of property occupied as the principal abode by the disabled person. Any person eligible under Title II or Title XVI of the federal Society Security Act for benefits to the disabled shall receive a yearly exemption in an amount to be chosen by the town or city. The exemption is means tested. The qualifications for the exemption are identical to the elderly exemption but you cannot have both.

David Cotzin: Mr. Cotzin announced the New Ipswich Athletic Association will be having fireworks on Saturday, August 20. Also, he added the Association has a ball field that anyone can use with permission, and to contact Brett Kivela or Dick Lord if interested.

7:35 p.m.: Recess.

7:50 p.m.: Selectman Johnson made a motion to enter into a nonpublic session under RSA 91-A:3 II (c). Selectman Lage seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

8:11 p.m.: The Board returned to public session. Selectman Doyle announced no decisions were made in the nonpublic session. Selectman Johnson made a motion to seal the minutes of the nonpublic session. Selectman Doyle seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Treasurer: A memo was received from Treasurer Nancy Lashua recommending the hire of Carlene Wardwell as Deputy Treasurer for 12-15 hours Tuesday through Friday. The Board asked Joanne to schedule Treasurer Lashua for an appointment to discuss the recommendation.

Northeast Wilderness Trust: A letter was received from Northeast Wilderness Trust requesting support for the Binney Hill project. The request will be forwarded to the Conservation Commission.

Safety manual: The Board scheduled discussion of the Safety Manual for the September 13 meeting.

Selectmen goals: Selectman Lage stated one of his short term goals was the beautification of the Town signs on Highbridge Road and Route 123 coming from Peterborough. The areas are overgrown. He suggested digging out the area and putting in new soil and planting some shrubs. Selectman Johnson and Doyle were in favor. Selectman Lage suggested having a group of people maintain the islands in Town by planting and care of plants next year. Selectman Doyle noted she would like to see the intersection of Mason and Ashby Roads cleaned up by getting rid of the trees in the area and perhaps installing a bench.

CIP: Selectman Doyle will be meeting with Bert Hamil and Deidre Daley to discuss the CIP on August 23.

The meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Joanne Meshna, Town Administrator

Board of Selectmen August 16, 2016 minutes approved by:

Rebecca M. Doyle, Chairman

Timothy Johnson II

David S. Lage

Timothy Johnson II