



WEARE BOARD OF SELECTMEN
MEETING MINUTES
January 8, 2024

PRESENT: FREDERICK W. HIPPLER CHAIRMAN; BENJAMIN D. KNAPP VICE CHAIRMAN; SALIM BLUME, SELECTMAN; SHERRY M. BURDICK, SELECTMAN; JANICE MATHEWS, SELECTMAN.

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR: Naomi L. Bolton

GUESTS: Chief Mark Roarick, Jackie Pratte, David Pratte, Kyle Parker, Tom Flaherty, Steve Roberts, Denise Purington, Chief Chris Moore, Bill Marcotte, Beth Rouse- Finance Administrator, Frank Campana, Tom Clow, Ray Banks, John Hardy, Avril Hardy, Jason Fiske- DPW Director, Mark Bailey, Neal Kurk, Clay Kriese.

These minutes were transcribed from the following link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zkuJNQ06sEk>

Chair Hippler called the meeting to order at 6:32 PM.

Public Comment: Frank Campana, 322 Quaker Street, said that the BOS is going to be looking at budgets and he has mentioned before that Police Chief Moore has a new line for the Cruisers. In 2020 there was a similar attempt, and the BOS eliminated the line. Mr. Campana said this has always been a request through the CIP process. Mr. Campana said he has not heard a discussion from the BOS regarding this new line and although it was not funded this year if the line remains, he is sure there will be funding next year and the years to come. Mr. Campana asked that the BOS eliminate this line.

Richard Butt, 90 Old Town Road, asked if the BOS had received a legal opinion that will either allow or not allow the East Street field to be developed. Chair Hippler said they have received it but have not discussed it. Mr. Butt said that Chairman Hippler discussed back in October the issue of the transfer station being short \$26,000 in demolition and there was a suspect of dumping at night. Mr. Butt said he has not heard anything more from the BOS regarding the issue. Mr. Butt stated on December 18th he came to the BOS meeting and asked the same question of acting Chair Blume and indicated to him that Selectman Blume would email him or present the information to those same questions. Mr. Butt said he still has not heard anything.

Kyle Parker of 483 Old Old Francestown, asked if there has been a legal opinion about the stamped plans yet and if that is going to be discussed. Chair Hippler said that he believes they did get something about that back and probably discuss it at tonight's meeting.

Steve Roberts, 815 Concord Stage Road, asked the BOS if they would be allowing for public input on the warrant articles being presented tonight. Chair Hippler said that will be up to the BOS but he does not believe that they have done that in the past. Mr. Roberts asked if they were going to eliminate some of the warrant articles. Chair Hippler said the BOS has not discussed them yet. Mr. Roberts said his concern is

that if the BOS decides not to put an article forward at this time it would be prudent to allow public input on that article.

Ray Banks, 38 Buzzell Hill Road, said that it has been six and a half months since he asked for the fence to be fixed on their property boundary lines where the cemetery is and now his insurance has gone up \$2,000. Mr. Banks asked when the trees will be taken down that have been marked. Mr. Banks said the other issue is that the BOS has given the recreation fund \$25,000 to go to counsel to get information about what is being proposed on East Road, when is the BOS going to allow the forestry division to get their information from legal counsel? Mr. Banks said his lawyer is asking about it and would like a phone call this week about the matter.

Unanswered Questions with the BOS: Mr. Pratte read the following statement into the record. Mr. Pratte stated on December 5, 2022, he presented to the board on behalf of both his wife and himself concerns of a neighboring property. The presentation included what they perceive to be gaps in the town's permit issuing and a timeline of a permit issuing that shows the progression of the property owner obtaining a goal of a party venue which the town issued a cease-and-desist order for. At the end of that presentation was a list of six questions that they were requesting answers for. Either the BOS at the time, the TA, or Both had these questions forwarded to the town attorney to craft answer questions for them. On January 15, 2023, Mr. Pratte requested a status from TA Bolton. On January 19, 2023, the Pratte's received an email from their lawyer notifying them that he was contacted by the Town's Attorney with a request to whom the Town response she was preparing should be sent and to let the Pratte know that he responded that it would be okay to send to the Pratte's. On January 29, 2023, the Pratte's sent requests to the Town's Code Enforcer referencing Federal and State violations relating to a sign permitted by the Town. On January 30, 2023, at 12:18 pm we received an email from TA Bolton that their request originally presented to the BOS had been sent to the Town Attorney for response and the Pratte's received an email from the Town's Code Enforcer that their questions were sent to the Town Attorney for response. On February 11, 2023, the Pratte's received an email from the Town's Attorney, and it answered most of the questions, some rather remedially, but the last question was not answered. After leaving emails and messages for TA Bolton and receiving no response, the Pratte's reached out to the Town Attorney on April 2, 2023, to request an answer to six rebuttal questions with one being the last of the original questions. On April 26, 2023, a follow-up email was sent. On April 27, 2023, the Pratte's received an email from their Attorney letting them know he had been copied on some emails between the Town Attorney and TA Bolton, referencing the Town Attorney questioning TA Bolton as to if TA Bolton wanted her to let them know under the Right to Know Law these questions need not be answered, with TA Bolton replying she had no issue with if it was legally appropriate. Finally, on April 28, 2023, the Pratte's received an email from the Town Attorney stating the "Right to Know Law does not require me or the town to answer the questions you have posed, and therefore we decline to do so. I encourage you to speak with your attorney should you have further concerns regarding this matter." Mr. Pratte included the original questions asked of the Attorney and a copy was given to the BOS. The following are the questions that were directed by the Town Attorney:

- 1.) Why were our original questions, and e-mail requests, sent to you for a response?
- 2.) Why did we not receive notice from the Town that your office would be responding, before receiving a call from our lawyer requesting if the response should come directly to us?
- 3.) Why was the response sent to our lawyer Mr. Jack Cronin, Esquire, and Ms. Kelly Ovitt Puc, Esquire as they were not invoked upon our request?
- 4.) You state that we must direct our complaint to the Post Office or State regarding the advertising sign hanging from the mailbox. We are unclear why this is the response when the permit issued by the town clearly states that the sign can be hung from the main post. Does the Town not have an obligation to uphold a federal regulation, especially when they come to understand that a permit was issued directly against the regulation?

- 97 5.) Why was there not a response to our last question, "By what authority did the town grant permits
98 of change in a shoreland protected area without having the property owner receive approval through
99 the State of NH?"
- 100 6.) How would we know that a permit is issued to contest if there is no notice of the change to abutters?
101 By the time the project starts the window for appeal could be gone.
102

103 Mr. Pratte said realizing that this is not the same Board as assembled when the original requests were made,
104 and as some members of the Board have made inquiries as to the content of our Public Comment dialog
105 regarding this situation, we would like to ask if the Board intends on heeding the response given by the
106 Town Attorney or if the Board is inclined to answer or have an open dialog regarding our questioning, as
107 we would look forward to either. Selectman Blume said that he doubts they would be able to resolve
108 everything tonight but will hope that the BOS will continue to dialogue and get this all sorted out.
109 Selectman Mathews said that she was one of the people who said that she would review the Right to Know
110 Request and has not had the chance to do so yet and will make sure to get it on her calendar. Mr. Pratte
111 said that they received a response to a Right to Know Request within the last couple of weeks and it was
112 one of the better organized responses he has received from the town. Mr. Pratte said there is still information
113 that he has obtained himself and should have been included with some of the documentation. Mr. Pratte
114 said that there are a few gaps in the town that need to be addressed. Mr. Pratte said the first is to permit
115 follow-through on structure setbacks. In February 2023 Mr. Pratte said he posed the question to the Town
116 Attorney asking why setbacks on their neighboring lawn do not conform with the setbacks outlined in
117 article 18 2.3 for the zoning ordinances after searching through planning and zoning minutes and finding
118 no references to a variance Mr. Pratte said that they were responded to that the lot is nonconforming and
119 would fall under zoning ordinance. 3.5. Mr. Pratte said they have received documentation from the town
120 and found references to setbacks handwritten on the building permit application checklist and printed. Mr.
121 Pratte said that on November 4, 2020, there was an order issued by the superior court of NH in the case of
122 Travis and Jennifer Corcoran versus the Town of Weare case No. 216-2019-Cv-00297 stating that the
123 setback reductions as stated in Article 3.5 do not apply to accessory structures on the lot and reversed the
124 subject building permit in the case. That same order states there was a site visit on the subject property on
125 September 10, 2020, and a hearing on the merits of appeal on September 15, 2020. Mr. Pratte said though
126 the Town's position was that an accessory structure is allowed in a reduced setback of a nonconforming lot
127 before the order, shouldn't a building permit being issued on September 8, 2020, have considered the
128 following:

- 129 1. The possibility of the variance being required knowing that the Town was involved in a legal
130 conflict?
- 131 2. Required that a variance be applied for after the court order was handed down?
- 132 3. Before the issuance of an amended permit, require that the reduced setback be substantiated through
133 a variance with the zoning board.
- 134 4. Has the Board directed the building department to act upon this order to ensure this does not
135 continue to happen?
136

137 Mr. Pratte said that though the Town Attorney responded to their question of the setback reduction, as
138 technically correct, why, knowing the context of their inquiries, would there not be a complete answer
139 knowing that variance should in fact be required for an accessory structure with a reduced setback? Mr.
140 Pratte said that in a recent RTK received there was a document of Administrative Order issued September
141 2005. Mr. Pratte read Article 4, section 4.1.8. Mr. Pratte said that the plan was not submitted to the Town
142 until May 20, 2022, and this was confirmed that the town did not have this document to the Building
143 Inspector Dubreuil on May 19, 2022, in a meeting with him and TA Bolton, of which Mr. Pratte has a
144 recording, yet the structure was allowed to be built to near completion before the cease and desist was
145 issued because of unresolved issues with the State of NH. Mr. Pratte said that they ask that the Board
146 initiate discussions around this matter to make sure that the town rules are followed and not overlooked.
147 Mr. Pratte proceeded to the third issue of the Town allowing the issuing of building permits in shoreland
148 protected areas without verifying permits from NHDES. Mr. Pratte said they have brought this point up to

the BOS and Planning Board on multiple occasions over the last couple of years. Mr. Pratte said at the last PB meeting they attended they asked if there had been any changes to mitigate this issue and were told that this was not the PB's responsibility but rather the Building Inspectors and the group in charge of the building inspector would be the BOS. Mr. Pratte said they ask that the Board initiate discussions around this point so that the State permits are acknowledged by the Town before the building is started. Fourth sign permits. Mr. Pratte said a sign permit was issued by the Town and the sign was posted on a mailbox in front of his property. This in itself was not a contentious point from their point of view, other than the sign was allowed to stand without a permit for over a year. However, last winter brought unfortunate events destroying their mailbox because of snow removal that he had done for the past six years and somehow was deemed not good enough. Mr. Pratte said his wife did some research and found both federal and state laws regarding the displaying of signage for both the content and location. Mr. Pratte said the Town Attorney informed them that these were not matters that were of concern to the Town and that they would have to take the points up with the Post Office and the State. Mr. Pratte said when a sign permit is granted by the Town or any permit, the Town finds that the issuance of the permit violates Federal and State policy why would the Town not want to rectify the error and ensure that these errors are not repeated in the future? Mr. Pratte said they ask that the BOS initiate discussion around this issue to develop a course of action for response to this type of situation. Mr. Pratte said they have been to the BOS meetings, and informed the Code Enforcer and TA, that there have been bookings on the property abutting ours to large groups of people that have resulted in the renting of more than just the main building, as noted on the sign permit, however, there has been no action by the town that Mr. Pratte knows of. Mr. Pratte asked how they will move forward and what vehicle are they going to use that will give them confidence that the town will legitimately look into these concerns and not just pay lip service to them. Selectman Blume asked Mr. Pratte what he would like to see the BOS accomplish first. Mr. Pratte said the building permit protocol. Selectman Blume asked when the last bookings were that Mr. Pratte knows of on the property. Mr. Pratte said summer of 2023. Chair Hippler said he would like to follow up on the Shoreland Protection because he thought it fell under the Planning Board. Mr. Pratte said to be fair about the bookings there have only been two that he knows of one in 2022 and one in 2023. Chair Hippler asked if the sign was still there. Mr. Pratte said that it is but in a different location. Selectman Blume stated that they should try and determine anything if there is anything that they can do before a new BOS starts in March. Selectman Blume asked if there was an amendment to the original permit issued. Mr. Pratte said not that he was aware of. Mr. Pratte said they come in and check once a week to see if there are any new permits pulled. Otherwise, they would not know unless it was like a variance and the abutters were notified. The BOS continued the discussion to January 29th. Mark Bailey said he is the neighbor to the Pratte's they share a common driveway. Mr. Bailey said that Camp Bailey rentals fall under the LLC that is all it is originally they thought they could do small venues and then the Town notified him that it was impossible they had shut everything down and he had never had a rental and only had a website. He said that he did have one rental last year because it is a two-family and it is his primary residence. Mr. Bailey said all the events that the Pratte's are referencing are friends and family events and he is always on property. Mr. Bailey said that he does agree with the Pratte's as far as the process goes. Mr. Bailey said for him and his building team it was very confusing, and they were always in touch with the town. Chair Hippler said they would continue the discussion on January 29th.

Request for utility easement to install two poles on existing right of way to Eastman Conservation Area: Bill Marcotte and his wife recently purchased a property located at 139 Concord Stage Road Map 202 Lot 1 and intend to build a single-family home in the spring. Mr. Marcotte said that they are looking for an easement to install two poles. There are currently four on the property and there would be little to no impact on any trees or anything to that effect. Selectman Mathews said that conceptually it sounds fine but since the Conservation Commission manages that part of the property, she would like to hear from them before she says yes. Selectman Blume asked Mr. Marcotte if one week would put him off. Mr. Marcotte said not at all. Chair Hippler said that he does not have a problem with it and requested that the last poll be on your property to make it cleaner. Selectman Blume asked why the same condition existed on the other pole as well instead of jumping back and forth across the road. Mr. Marcotte said that

Eversource said they would like it like that due to the trees. TA Bolton will add the discussion to the CC agenda.

2024 Proposed Budget Discussion: Police Chief Moore stated that Officer Maguire's reclassification from part-time to full-time status will be effective January 12, 2024. Chief Moore said that his rate of pay will remain the same, there is no probationary period, and he does not require training. There will be no swearing-in because he is already a sworn-in officer. Chief Moore said he does have a procedural suggestion watching the public comment, if anyone has a public comment about a department you could inquire if they have had a conversation with the department head and what was the response and just go over that since it does have to do with the budget. Chief Moore said what Mr. Campana is referring to as a working proposed budget all of the lines are assigned by the state and are unfunded even if the BOS had a surplus and wanted to allow the Chief to purchase a car the BOS could not unless approved by the voters. Chief Moore went through three big items in his budget which are the body worn camera, taser, and ballistic equipment. They have not been funded fully or have never been funded. It is only 1.6% of the budget. There is a new priority increase which is due to Microsoft Office Licenses. Chief Moore gave the board three increases that if the BOS was looking to make budget cuts they could cut. They are as follows State accreditation, increasing ammunition, and the repair costs to vehicles. Chief Moore said his budget has increased by 1.66%, the rate of inflation was 3.4% and he was able to maintain the rate under the rate of inflation. Discussion ensued about line 236a. Chair Hippler asked why lines 612, 613, 615, 617 were not in the budget last year. Chief Moore said the BOS pulled them out and it was a miscommunication. The lines were funded with end-of-year funds and Chief Moore said he did not have advance notice that was going to happen, and he could have researched it and they were 2022 purchases. They should have remained in the budget. Chair Hippler asked what the additional \$10,000 would get Chief Moore in the ballistic equipment line. Chief Moore said that would give him three vests, three helmets, three trauma plates, and one ballistic shield per year. Chief Moore said he is fully staffed now with 14 officers, and he bases everything off 15 which is increments of three and all ballistic equipment expires after five years. Discussion ensued about ballistic equipment. Selectman Mathews asked if they could reduce line item 359 by 800. Chief More said he does not know if they are doing it yet but it is projected, and he will not spend it if they do get it but they do not have another line item to pull from if it does go through and the grant isn't available. Selectman Mathews asked about the postage with the new AFIS machine grant accepted could the postage line be reduced because they will not be mailing as much postage? Chief Moore said they probably could. They have gotten rid of summons with e-tickets, and they have gotten rid of reports with e-crashes and now they can get rid of the fingerprints with the AFIS system. TA Bolton said there was a postage increase in January. Chief Moore said the postage line could come down another \$100. Selectman Mathews asked if Chief Moore would feel comfortable removing the line for the State accreditation line. Chief Moore said he would not feel comfortable yet because he does not know their timeline. Selectman Blume asked what the implications would be for them not being accredited. Chief Moore said it drives the insurance rate and if there is a lawsuit a third party will review the policy and procedures and say if they meet the national standard for law enforcement performance which helps with court cases. The BOS and Chief Moore agreed to reduce line 258 by \$650. Discussion ensued about the vehicle life cycle. Chair Hippler asked Chief Moore if he anticipates more being spent on the fuel line with being fully staffed. Police Chief Moore said he does not anticipate it being more and can take \$100 out of the line. Chair Hippler asked Chief Moore to explain line 294 grant reimbursement. Chief Moore said that for the traffic grant, they need to have a funding source for the 25%. This will give them the potential to get up to \$ 20,000 worth of equipment.

Police Chief Moore went through the proposed Police Department warrant articles. The first would be for the Police Department revolving fund. There is no tax impact, and it would allow for them to be able to manage the funds they do have. It would need to be requested by the Police Chief to use the funds and cannot expend them without the Board's approval. Vice Chair Knapp asked where the money came from. Chief Moore said they got it from Police Details, cruiser fees, civil forfeiter cases, etc. Vice Chair Knapp voiced concerns regarding a cruiser being purchased with the fund without going to the voters. Finance

252 Director Rouse suggested different wording for the warrant article. Selectman Blume said that he is not a
253 fan personally of civil forfeiture. Discussion ensued about civil forfeiture. Neal Kurk said part of the cruiser
254 fees should be put back in the general fund rather than reimbursement of the private fund and percentages
255 should be figured out. Discussion about cruiser fees. Chief Moore explained the second warrant article for
256 the cruiser. TA Bolton said the tax impact was four cents.

257
258 Clay Kriese went through the library budget and warrant article. Mr. Kriese said he did assume and budget
259 for an increase in utilities and could reduce it if needed. Chair Hippler said it looked like building
260 maintenance had come down. Mr. Kriese said that he broke them apart kind of and made a new line for
261 landscaping and snow removal. It is a large expense for them. Vice Chair Knapp asked if they pay for snow
262 removal. Mr. Kriese said they do. Selectman Burdick asked what the current electric bill was. Mr. Kriese
263 said he went up \$250 based on what he paid last year. Chair Hippler said that they should take Mr. Kriese's
264 offer of \$250 off the budget and leave the rest of the budget alone. Mr. Kriese spoke about the proposed
265 warrant article and bumping up the hours to 38 hours a week for the assistant director. The warrant article
266 should be changed to a nine-month reflection.

267
268 TA Bolton said there were no changes to forest fires. Chair Hippler said he had no questions regarding
269 forest fires. Selectman Blume asked about the wages and the stipend. Chair Hippler said the wages hourly
270 would be for the deputies for issuing and inputting permits into the system and the stipend is for the warden.
271 Finance Administrator Rouse said that years ago the BOS offered Bobby Richards a monthly stipend that
272 was approved and went into the budget. Then he became the acting or interim, so he was never paid. Chair
273 Hippler said if it is one of the duties of the Fire Chief then they should remove the stipend. The BOS agreed
274 to remove the stipend. Chair Hippler said that they had talked about upgrading the internet and they had
275 approved the new server and asked if it was going to cover the proposals. Chief Roarick said it would
276 probably help. The training room still must be outfitted with cable drops from either Comcast or the phone
277 company and the new server will help the whole situation. Selectman Blume said that when they did the
278 group with Comcast they had a list of the Town-owned properties that they would supply drops to and if it
279 is on the list, it should be free. Chair Hippler asked if he was correct in saying that 90% of the time the Fire
280 Chief is the EMD, but it does not have to be. Chief Roarick said that was correct as long as the person you
281 put in the position is trained. Chair Hippler asked about emergency shelter. Chief Roarick said their facility
282 is not set up for a shelter and will be having conversations with the SAU. Neal Kurk said in line 301a that
283 he believes the default budget has to be zero there and not 1120 your choice of personnel is your
284 responsibility and if you choose to hire somebody for this position, who is a member of the retirement
285 system then you have to pay him his salary plus his benefits, but you cannot put that in the default budget
286 because it was not there last year. Chair Hippler said he would want to run that by counsel because it is
287 staff specific. Selectman Mathews asked about lines 311 & 312 of the Fire Department Budget. Chief
288 Roarick said those lines could come out because they do not offer stipends anymore to the Fire Officers.
289 Chair Hippler stated that the positions were still there, and that the money being eliminated but would
290 remain in the default budget. Selectman Blume asked Chief Roarick to explain line 339 account 591. Chief
291 Roarick said in the last couple of years they have not done work to the cisterns and the town owns about
292 30 plus cisterns. There has been a huge lack of maintenance done to them and they need to go out once a
293 year if not twice a year to try and pump the systems to add chlorine to them and identify any problems that
294 may need to be addressed. Selectman Blume asked how many years they would have to spend \$5,000.
295 Chief Roarick said multiple five or six. Vice Chair Knapp asked if it would be something to help reimburse
296 the highway department. Chief Roarick said that if they could work something out with the Highway
297 Department when the roads are getting to be done but what he is referring to is the iron pipes that come out
298 and they are getting severely rusted and beyond the point of taking a wire brush and are past that life cycle.
299 Discussion ensued regarding cisterns. The BOS and Chief Roarick agreed to change the cistern line from
300 \$5,000 to \$2,500. Chair Hippler asked about line 344 and why it has continuously gone down. Chief
301 Roarick said that he believes they have changed vendors and are getting a better price. That is a call-
302 dependent line, and they also get their nitrous from the company too. Chair Hippler proposed to bring the
303 line down to \$2,000. Chief Roarick agreed to the change. Discussion ensued regarding CDL licenses. The

BOS agreed to change line 678 to \$1.00. Chair Hippler asked about line 359 and what that would pay for. Chief Roarick said that he currently has two people in paramedic school he needs to pay for. Vice Chair Knapp asked if there was any agreement with the employees that they must work for so many years with the Town after their schooling. Chief Roarick said no. Discussion ensued. Chair Hippler asked about line 315 wages over time and how they got the default number. Finance Administrator Rouse said one part of the overtime calculation increases by percentage two parts of the calculation are hours plus the wage. Discussion ensued regarding overtime. Chair Hippler asked about line 362 and if the number for the line was high. Chief Roarick said if the BOS wanted to cut the line in half to \$2,500, he would be okay with it. Chair Hippler said he would feel better at the \$3,000 if the BOS was okay with that. Discussion ensued about purchasing radios. Selectman Blume proposed taking out \$11,000 and waiting until the end of the year to see if they can try and spend the ARPA money. The BOS agreed with Selectman Blume. Chair Hippler asked about line 365 and the required testing. Chief Roarick said they do not have the time or the resources for hose testing. Selectman Mathews asked for more information regarding the uniforms. Chair Roarick said there is a policy in the town where they pay for the boots and the cost of uniforms has gone up. Selectman Mathews asked about line 330 food. Chief Roarick said it was for food, for training to entice people or if there was a big event. Chair Roarick said they are the host this year for Capital Area and the Central New Hampshire Wardens. Neal Kur said lines 311 and 312 if they are positions that are not funded then they need to come out of the default budget, and he would repeat that line 301 expenses are not according to how he read the state statute eligible for default budget and that would reduce the default budget by a couple thousands of dollars.

The BOS reviewed the Fire Department warrant articles. Chair Hippler asked what the Fire Department increases represent. Chief Roarick said it brings the members in line with the current State of NH 2023 study. Chief Roarick said they went with the middle of the road for those positions, and they went from ten steps down to seven. It is about a 6% increase for the full-time Fire Fighters. Steve Roberts Chair of the Board of Fire Wards spoke about the increase and keeping employee retention. Discussion ensued regarding wages. Neal Kurk the two articles dealing with town employees were extremely confusing. He would suggest re-writing them. Mr. Kurk agreed with Vice Chair Knapp that putting in a dollar amount without a percentage increase is asking for defeat. Mr. Kurk said that the BOS may get a much better chance of getting everything approved if everyone is getting the same increase except Highway because they have a different problem. Chair Hippler asked about the Fire Chief warrant article and what that would bring it to for a salary number. Chief Roarick said it would be \$106,000 he believes. Selectman Blume said that he would like to echo something Selectman Mathew said that it feels like an inappropriate time to make a big change like this when the Fire Department as a whole is transitioning under the BOS and feels like a very big change to him. Selectman Mathews said that she would think that the BOS would want time to review and evaluate what is going on in the Fire Department before they sponsor a full-time Fire Chief change. Chief Roarick said that the Board of Fire Wards worked very hard and spent quite a bit of the town's money on hiring a third-party agency to come in to do the testing process not to mention you were talking about overtime and the overtime that was spent with me and that was move towards having someone in a full-time Fire Chief status. Selectman Blume said it was the spent to find a part-time chief. Steve Roberts, Chair of the Board of Fire Wards said that they had their first part-time Chief and before that was an on-call Chief. Last year a majority of the BOFW voted not to pursue a full-time position but to continue with a part-time Fire Chief. The previous Chief was retired and was limited to how many hours they could work. Mr. Roberts said the previous Chief said several times that he felt he should be doing more to meet the job requirements than what allows part-time. Mr. Roberts said part of the reason that the board voted for the part-time chief was because it was asked by a board member if it could be done in twenty-five hours and someone who had not worked in the capacity as Chief said sure it could be. Mr. Roberts said that they paid the acting chief during that time more hours than the twenty-five. The Board of Fire Wards did take another look at the Chief position being full-time and the Board of Fire Wards did have a majority vote to pursue a full-time position. Mr. Roberts said that he received word from a lot of people in town who were kind of angry that the BOFW did not allow them the opportunity to vote on it. Selectman Mathews asked Mr. Roberts if he would go repost for a full-time chief or a part-time chief. Mr. Roberts said in his opinion

no he would not repost it and would put Chief Roarick in the position. Discussion ensued regarding the full-time chief position. Discussion of the full-time fire chief warrant article was carried to the public hearing. The Board reviewed the warrant article to replace the 1987 vehicle. Vice Chair Knapp asked where the vehicle would be stored. Chief Roarick said it is at the center station and engine two will move to the South station. Selectman Blume asked how many trucks were in service. Chief Roarick said three but engine one is out of service. Chair Hippler asked if there had been a second opinion on the pump. Chief Roarick said that the pump has been looked at multiple times by the same vendor and the truck is so out of date it is past its lifespan. Mr. Roberts said that there are NFPA standards for the refurbishment of apparatus and there is a standard for retiring apparatus to do a major refurbishment you have to bring the truck to up to standards and because of the age of it, it would not be worth it. They are doing fleet management. Chair Hippler asked how many years has engine one gone on in five to ten years. Chief Roarick said four or less. Chair Hippler said it looks like they will still be in a deficit in 25 and there is no money in the account. Discussion ensued regarding the fire engine. Selectman Blume said that would like to cut the article. He is concerned that they will not have the funds and does not like to spend money they do not have. Selectman Mathews and Burdick agreed with Selectman Blume. Vice Chair Knapp said that he is not overly excited about spending money they do not have but he is for hearing from the public. Mr. Roberts said that they could do a lease purchase but that would cost them interest. Mr. Roberts said the last time they asked for a fire engine they had money in the bank, and it still took three years to approve and then cost at least another \$50,000 and got way less truck. The BOS decided to take the truck off the warrant article.

Chair Hippler asked DPW Director Fiske about line 412 if he was proposing to leave that in place. DPW Director Fiske said yes but it is less than what they are doing right now. Neal Kurk asked if the Board knew the percentage increase if the warrant article passed and the line was in place. The BOS did not know the percentage. Selectman Blume asked about the software support. DPW Director Fiske said the lowest bidder was \$10,500 for this year and gave a \$2,500 discount if they bought it by the end of the year. The prices went up \$2,500 this year and lost the discount. Chair Hippler asked how much oil has gone up over the last year. DPW Director Fiske said that it has gone up by a couple of hundred dollars. Chair Hippler asked about 444 being a new line. DPW Director Fiske confirmed it was a new line. Selectman Mathews asked for thoughts about putting line 412 of the bonus as a warrant article. Selectman Blume said they were adamant that it was going to be a one-time thing. Chair Hippler said the bonus is going to be \$4,200 split between them and \$300, not \$2,500. DPW Director Fiske said there has always been a bonus. Selectman Mathews said that the increase is ten times the amount. She said she is not saying that it is unreasonable, it is just a large increase. Vice Chair Knapp said in his opinion it belongs in the budget. TA Bolton said if it fails there would be no bonus. Discussion ensued regarding the sign-on bonus. Selectman Mathews asked about Wheelabrator. DPW Director Fiske said it is a contractor and is \$85 a ton this year and will be going up by \$5 every year for seven years. Selectman Blume asked why there was a spike in electricity. Chair Hippler said there was a pump in 2022 that needed some repairs made. The BOS reviewed the DPW warrant articles. The first article they spoke about was if the Public Works did not get their dedicated article, they would still get their COLA. The BOS talked about re-writing the warrant article to make it clear. The board spoke about the roadside mower warrant article. Selectman Blume asked if it was worth it. DPW Director Fiske said he believes it is. Neal Kurk asked how they would use the new machine if they don't have enough staff and are down staff. Chair Hippler said it is a hope to have them fully staffed and if they are not fully staffed, they would use more contractor services in the roadside construction aspect. Chair Hippler asked where the funds for the landfill cap would come from. DPW Director Fiske said through taxation. Vice Chair Knapp asked what happens if it gets turned down and no means no. DPW Director Fiske said DES would fine them. Chair Hippler suggested establishing and funding a CRF for capping the landfill.

Chair Hippler said that they got some information from legal counsel and there were questions asked and it went back again it sounds to him that it rolls back to conservation. It doesn't say where the fields would be. Denise Purington from Parks and Rec said the warrant article would depend upon the final decision of that property. She said she does think there was clarification in the email they received today and there was no restriction on where the fields were. Selectman Burdick said she thinks that Conservation should be

involved. Selectman Mathews agreed. Selectman Blume asked if would it be worth asking for an amount of money for PARC to consider alternatives. Chair Hippler said historically planning has not gone over well as a warrant article. Ms. Purington said that she thinks it would go well if there was an answer to where the money would be set aside. Ms. Purington said that she believes that the public has a right to know what is going to be happening with the land and if they are going to give it to Parks and Rec or the Conservation Commission. Ms. Purington asked that at next week's meeting or another meeting, the email be read into the record. Ms. Purington said that if the land is not going to be going to PARC then it should not go forth as a warrant article. Discussion regarding the warrant article. The BOS agreed to leave the warrant article on for the public hearing.

MANIFEST:

Chair Hippler moved; Selectman Burdick seconded:

To order the Treasurer to sign the payroll and accounts payables checks dated January 11, 2023, as included in the following manifests:

Checks Dated January 11, 2023,2023

Payroll Manifest	\$ 75,875.68 (<i>Weekly payroll checks</i>)
2023 Accounts Payable Manifest	\$ 77,204.81
2024 Accounts Payable Manifest	\$ 676,242.09
John Stark Accounts Payable Manifest:	\$ 500,000.00
Weare School Accounts Payable Manifest:	\$ 600,000.00

TOTAL:	<u>\$1,929,322.58</u>
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The following manifests were previously ordered to be signed at the December 27, 2023 Board of Selectmen meeting:

Payroll manifest: \$75,267.22 (Weekly checks dated 01/04/2024)
2023 Accounts Payable Manifest: \$ 34,221.95 (Checks dated 01/04/24)
2024 Accounts Payable Manifest: \$ 225,474.68 (Check dated 01/04/2024)

TA Bolton said that Hopkinton Land Clearing asked if the BOS could be at the next CC meeting for questions. Chair Hippler and Selectman Blume said they could be there Wednesday night.

Chair Hippler said he received an email from the Army Corps about flood plane management and it was a notification.

Being there was no further business to come before the Board, Chair Hippler made a motion, and Selectman Burdick seconded to adjourn at 12:21 a.m. Passed 5-0-0

ADJOURNMENT

A True Record.

Kearsten O'Brien

Kearsten O'Brien, Minute Taker