

MINUTES OF THE MILFORD BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING

Monday July 22, 2024

PRESENT: Tim Finan, Chair Lincoln Daley, Town Administrator
Paul Dargie, Vice Chair
David Freel, Member
Chris Labonte, Member
Tina Philbrick, Member

1. CALL TO ORDER, BOARD OF SELECTMEN INTRODUCTIONS & PUBLIC SPEAKING INSTRUCTIONS: Select Chair Finan opened the public meeting at 5:30 pm in the Town Hall Select Board Meeting room.

2. APPOINTMENTS:

Finance Department Update – Troy Neff, Interim Director

Director Neff reviewed the responsibilities for the Finance Department including the overall financial position of the Town, ensuring audit is completed and without issues, internal financial controls on all financial assets of the Town, cash management, accounts payable, NHDRA (New Hampshire Department of Revenue Administration), tax collection and reporting, compiling Town budget, debt service to the Town.

The burn rate is 44.93%, this is made up of transfers to special purpose funds is 0%, debt service is 82.6%, property & liability expense 98.4%, benefits expense 30.9%, tax collecting 52.2%, Finance operating expense 53.2%

Regarding Turnover, Kathy Townsend is the rock of the department, new hire Lauren Marquis is on board for about a month and has picked up the job quickly and ready to be independent. Interim Director Neff is temporary director but happy to be here.

Major projects over the next three months includes new banking relationship, Town has been with Citizens since about 1996 and the relationship can be stale after a while. Shopping for other services, he feels Town is being overcharged for services that are being provided.

Financial software review, MUNIS is difficult to work with and cost is high at \$66k a year. The way the interface works is one of the biggest issues. So, he is looking into a couple different options for software.

Also working on the Town budget, he highlighted the inverted yield curve and said that could possibly be indication of recession in future.

He worked on Excel Budget Import Template to help reduce errors and make it easier for departments. He has a worksheet template to import from MUNIS.

2023 Financial Audit - met with TA Daley and Jared (auditor) to get it started, and he will sit with Kathy Townsend to work on that and goal is to get audit done by September 30. He feels if everything is staged, prepped and scanned, and we can limit time they are on site we have a good chance to meet the September 30 date.

Looking for opportunities for people to be trained in MUNIS.

Residents can report issues or ask questions that require attention of Finance, call 603-249-0640 or you can email Finance@milford.nh.gov and that email is seen by three people in the department. TA Daley clarified, for Assessing questions contact the Assessing department.

Select Chair Finan asked if Director Neff has used MUNIS before in other assignments. Director Neff says one other, and it's designed for entities with budgets over \$50 million and not designed for smaller budgets. Designed for specialization in job responsibilities not for smaller size where people have their hands in many pots, because it is cumbersome to go from one module to the other.

Selectman Labonte inquired what other products were available to us that would be fitting to us. Director Neff replied one of the top 10 software out there for budget size \$12 to \$24 million, approved by AICPA, it is considerably cheaper and has a QuickBooks or Peachtree feel to it. Selectman Labonte asked how catastrophic it would be to change from MUNIS to something of that nature. Director Neff said he wanted to do this before Bruce (IT Director) left. There will be time when you run parallel, and if consultant or software

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company tells you “We can do it in 3 months”, it’ll take about 8 months. The more you can get them to interact with your data, versus the perfect canned data, the better. It would be a long methodical process, a big endeavor, but he would never make a change to make a change, he would work out the ROI to be sure it was a good pay back.

Selectman Freel, asked about growth, if we got to be bigger than \$24 million would we need to change again. Director Neff said it’s Cloud based, so the limitations on smaller systems are physical storage, and that won’t apply. Cost would be about a 70% cut to change to different system.

Selectman Freel asked about the timeframe to do conversion and whether we would be paying for MUNIS during that time. Director Neff confirmed we would be paying MUNIS during the cutover, plus implementation costs. Selectman Freel asked if payroll would convert also, Director Neff said it’s an accounting system, not a payroll processing system.

Selectman Labonte noted Director Neff mentioned Warrant Article and asked why a Warrant article not a budgeted item. The response was it could be done either way.

The Select Board could help the Finance department meet its goals by keeping the communication open, ask questions with the intent to understand, and be receptive to appropriate levels of change. Support for the team. As we come to the end of the year with the budget, to fund the budgets in 2025 budget to move the department forward.

Other items he would like to talk about are the 2019 Warrant Article for Town Hall HVAC system, for \$450,000. The ability to expend the money is coming to the 5-year window (in March 2025) and will expire. The loan matures in 2029 and we have a total balance of \$239,523 to pay on the loan, and Director Neff feels we could save some interest costs if we approach our lender and see if we can pay off the loan early.

Selectman Labonte mentioned we’ve been paying 2.16% interest, what have we been making off the interest that’s due, does it go to PDIP. Director Neff says we stick close to the Warrant Article, the goal isn’t to take a loan to make money off interest.

TA Daley noted the \$25K used for the HVAC study is still valid, and we can do this in phases. We could spend up to \$400k to do the first phase.

Selectman Freel wants to know more, what do the phases get us? TA Daley noted the first phase would provide some efficiencies, and replace internal controls of the system, the thermostats would go away and be a more centralized computerized system would be put in place.

DPW Director Lessard said anything to update this current system, would stay in place, and explained changes that would be made, such as baseboards being discontinued and removed, everything will go through air exchange. Four years ago, phase 1 would have been about \$200k, but now would be more money. He encouraged the Board to have Paul from ENE Systems to come in and explain the nuts and bolts.

TA Daley has time scheduled with Dave and Paul of ENE Systems of NH, Inc this week.

Selectman Dargie what the status of a getting a full quote for the entire system is. Director Lessard said it ended up being \$1.1 million and take \$400k off, and an additional ~\$800K. Selectman Dargie thought we didn’t accept that one and it was going out to bid again.

TA Daley noted we have until the expiration in February 2025 to get quotes to do the work, so we have time to get ENE to give us a bid. ENE has been our provider for many years.

Selectman Dargie suggested we put out a competitive bid to do that sub-section and do bid for \$200K or whatever it is.

Selectman Freel asked how get an apples to apples bid if you do a bid for a portion of the job.

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Selectman Labonte said we already have an engineered system, so you can pick the parameters of the tasks you want to do for the next phase.

Selectman Freel asked why the \$12.5K was put in and then taken out? Director Neff said it was reclassified, and went against a different budget. He could find out where it went if needed, he hadn't done that for this meeting.

Director Neff sent out two memos clarifying support for employee reimbursement to the department heads and their admins and had numerous conversations to ensure the correct interpretation. Also, a memo about the accounts payable process changing from Monday to Friday to align with payroll checks and get the treasurer to only come in once resulting in more efficiency.

Director Neff said currently we fund Retirement is thru the operational budget, under RSA 31:27 you can set up an employee expendable trust similar to a capital reserve type fund you can put in and payout funds so it doesn't come out of departments operational budget. The last check would come out of the Expendable Trust which is governed by the Select Board and keeps the impact out of a departments operating budget. Also, he'd like to look into having the police detail funds to be put into a separate bank account and then the funds can be used to minimize the tax rate impact on residents when a new cruiser needs to be purchased, with Select Board approval.

Director Neff noted we just came out of tax season and he wanted to thank Kathy Doherty and outline some of the statistics from her department.

- During 2023 \$45.6 million was balanced and billed for real estate tax
- As of April 30, 2024, 99% had been collected, before the tax lien execution consisting of \$363K with 78 properties.
- 2024 tax billing was \$22.9 million, comprising 5,662 active properties, to date 95.6% has been collected
- Kathy has a very high reputation for her accuracy of her records, so we expect a clean audit in her area.
- In the turmoil of the Finance department, she's picked up a lot of revenue recognition and bank deposits. This called for longer hours during the week and on weekends.
- The volume of work has continued to increase as the Town has grown. In years past there was a floater who could assist during busy periods and vacations. Joan Dargie has started to work with Belinda as a floater. Not having the floater has been a problem for several years, leaving little time to be able to utilize earned vacation time.

Selectman Freel noted the Finance Director position has not been filled, and there's wages not being used, but how long before the Town ends up losing money because the Temp position is expensive. Response was by 3rd quarter we'll be over.

Selectman Labonte asked about the burn rate and noted they have not gotten the monthly reports in a while. He also asked about the \$1.8 million, if Director Neff has had a chance to look at that and what's the status. Director Neff has sat with auditor and reviewed the interplay between the two, and the \$1.2 doesn't seem like a solid number. This question is part of the overall audit and will be looked at further. Selectman Labonte would like to see the results of the research/audit. Director Neff feels its how the data is being looked at, and different reporting rules. Selectman Finan suggested a separate meeting just to discuss this topic.

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Welfare Department Update – Lisa Emerson, Welfare

Ms. Lisa Emerson introduced herself and read RSA 165:1, “Whenever a person in any town is poor and unable to support himself, he shall be relieved and maintained by the overseers of public welfare of such town, whether or not he has residence there.” This RSA has very few specific rules on what and how much it to be provided so New Hampshire Municipal Association (NHMA) has published a Model Welfare Guideline the Town uses as the basis for its own guidelines. In addition to “The Art of Welfare” that the NHMA also published, that provides additional guidance with challenging and emotional decisions welfare administrators make on a daily basis. There are frequent training sessions to address trends, provide updates to laws, and support the role of welfare officers through the New Hampshire Local Welfare Administrators Association (NHLWAA) quarterly.

In Milford the Welfare department assists with the basic needs of residents through financial assistance and or referrals for housing, (rent, mortgage, lot fee, temporary housing). They do not help with food, that can be obtained through the pantry at the SHARE Outreach Center.

Anyone requesting assistance must first fill out an application that is available at SHARE (note the welfare shares space with them) and online and provide documentation of income and expenses for the previous 30 days. Once need is established, vendors are contacted and vouchers are processed through accounts payable. All vendors are paid directly and no money is given to the residents. After the decision is made the clients receive a notice of decision.

The bottom-line budget is 68.3% of the total budget 6 months into the new year. She also has rent with no heat and rent with heat line items.

Selectman Freel asked if Ms. Emerson extended out to the end of the year to finish off the rent that is coming, does she know what the total cost would be. Ms. Emerson explained she has no way to know because each request is taken and decided individually. Selectman Freel asked when this budget is overextended in the past can the state help at all. The answer was that they have to find money from elsewhere by RSA law. So, the burden is on Ms. Emerson to balance residents and the budget. If there is an unanticipated number of requests it is hard to budget for that. She reached out to other Welfare Administrators in other Towns and we are doing good in comparison.

Selectwoman Philbrick asked how many times the budget has gone over. Ms. Emerson can’t answer that Selectman Freel asked who picks the budget number, and can she just add say \$50K to last year’s number. Ms. Emerson makes her best forecast based on trends she is aware of and also works with the Town Administrator, who asked what trends does Ms. Emerson see. Selectman Dargie noted in talking with the people at SHARE and said they had a big increase in need for food for people. Ms. Emerson said the SHARE budget for food for Milford residents only, is the same amount as the Welfare budget and our budget would have been that much higher.

Some reasons Ms. Emerson’s clients come are: change of household, recent increase in domestic violence, or substance abuse. Eviction and homelessness, federal and state benefits are pending or suspended. Medical and mental health and unemployment or layoffs. She has not particular order of increase because she doesn’t have software to track this.

Ms. Emerson is the one part time employee in Welfare and her office is at the SHARE building. So, when she is on vacation or out of the office, SHARE is there to offer some assistance if there is an emergency, and she notes we don’t pay a line item in our budget for that.

When residents are in need, they are referred by share, 2-1-1 or even landlords.

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The Social Services committee meets in September to review application for the Warrant article voted on in the spring. She anticipates members returning, but is always open to anyone interested in serving on the committee.

The Board can continue to financially support the department, and continue to provide rental space at SHARE.

Selectman Freel again asked if our expenses are, \$190 to \$200K, and we were to go with a budget of \$250 to \$300K and you don't expend it, what happens with that, does it go into the fund balance? He understands you want to be as close as possible on the budget but not pull more money from taxpayers than you have to, but if Welfare is bound by RSA or law, wouldn't you always just over budget. Ms. Emerson that it comes from taxpayers and it was noted that if Welfare goes over budget, it comes out of surplus in other places. In the last 6 months Ms. Emerson has had 44 vouchers that were approved, and 29 that were denied.

MACC Base Surplus – Craig Frye, MACC Base Board of Governors

Selectman Finan noted there was an updated form in the package.

Captain Craig Frye explained the total to return to member towns is \$81,882.00, and Milford's share is \$58,415.70. For the last few years, he's been asking to keep some for the Federal Hill for the future communications on that tower and they currently have about \$17k for that. He further explained that during the last microburst they ran into some radio problems that came about from all the power surges, they didn't lose Crown Castle, but had problems in MACC base.

Police could still talk to each other but MACC base had difficulty talking to police. They had repairs for \$610.00 and a quote for \$3,396.34, there is also an unknown cost to install an updated receptacle for the battery backup system, so he estimated about \$1K for that. He is asking out of the \$58,415.17, that we pay for the repairs and upgrades of \$4,006.34 leaving a balance of \$54,409.37, and that MACC base hold \$5409.37 to go towards Federal Hill leaving a balance of \$49K, the extra \$1K will pay electrician to add power.

Selectman Freel asked if we had a generator here. Captain Frye explained the power surges/outages were so brief the generators did not cut over. They called in to check the system because they were concerned that something else could have happened to the systems. That's how they found out the issues with the equipment that needs to be replaced or upgraded.

Selectman Labonte asked if the battery backups that have been there and wouldn't they be MACC's to replace. Captain Frye explained it's our system hooked into our console. Selectman Freel said if the battery backups are bad, they need to be replaced.

Director Anderson explained when the radio vendor came in to install the console at MACC base, there were not enough wall outlets where they were installed to just put them into the wall and obviously, they need to put them on something. So, they used the UPS, surge protection, battery backups to give as much protection as they could. The power was coming on so fast and so frequently during that storm that there was an up, down, up, down, up, down, and eventually the batteries themselves, they're only designed to be an interim for a very brief amount of time. The amount of radio traffic in a normal power down situation is not nearly as much as they were experiencing with this storm. It was immediately overwhelming of the dispatch center in the terms of telephone calls, radio traffic, etc., so it used all the power that was available in the UPS. And what was happening was the consoles were turning off, the UPS was no longer able to protect them, and then they were not auto powering back on, so it took someone physically to go over and turn it back on, which took them away from the desk.

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Motion to retain \$5,409.37 leaving a balance of \$49,000 to be returned to the Town of Milford was made by Selectman Freel seconded by Selectwoman Philbrick. All were in favor. Motion passes 5/0.

Nutrient Upgrade Update – Jim Pouliot, Director Milford Water Utilities

Director Jim Pouliot department went out to bid in February and opened the bids in Mid-March, and unfortunately the bids came in very high compared to what was allocated in the Warrant Article. They tried to negotiate with the lowest bidder by taking some things out of the scope of the project or taking things on themselves. They could not come up with workable numbers, so they have rejected all bids and will be reworking the project to try to bring in workable numbers. Selectman Finan confirmed, there is no need to approve, Director Pouliot is just giving an update on the project.

Selectman Dargie noted they are several million over the amount in Warrant, so what is plan B, another Warrant Article to cover the extra money? Director Pouliot said the way they are bidding is with alternate bids, so they can choose and pick what they can get within the project for the price. He also noted they have to get certain portions done according to the permit they have; they have a deadline so that those portions of the project will be getting done. They've tried to scale back a bit and taken on some work as a group such as demolition work that the guys have already started.

Selectman Dargie asked if the items listed as alternates are something that could be done at a future date. Director Pouliot said some of it wouldn't be too far in the future, but like the primary clarifiers, they are near their end of life. So those might in a Warrant Article in the next year or two if they can't get in the project price. He's pretty confident in how they have redesigned and restructured things they will get most of it in the next bit.

Selectman Freel asked for clarification on what number they are over, is it \$1.7? Selectman Finan said the \$19M versus \$18M. Director Pouliot, said the original price was around \$23M so they were able to get a couple million off, but for every dollar they put in the bid they only gave us back 50 cents. He feels they will get a better price just rebidding the whole project restructured and the bids should be out in a little bit.

Selectman Freel asked if we know why the bids came up so high. Director Pouliot said a lot of it has to do with the deep excavation, there were metal pilings were being left in place so they redesigned a little bit so that's been eliminated as much as possible. He mentioned some pilings are deeper than 25 feet.

Cemetery Trustees Updates – Mike Thornton, Dan Sadkowski, Gretchen Heald Brooks

Mike Thornton introduced Bill Wilson from Watertown engineering and he handed out brochures for columbaria. Mr. Wilson noted they are a supplier of columbarium's and they have done this for 40 years helping communities from New York to Maine. There is an increase in cremation, and he believes New Hampshire is at 78% or more cremation. One reason for that is it's less expensive and saves land. All the cemeteries are losing land with earth burials even with cremains at 3 or 4 per lot. Looking at 24 sq ft per lot, versus 12 sq ft for a columbarium that would hold 48 companion cremains. The Town of Milford was looking for a proposal was two 24s, that would take up maybe 200 sq ft with two columbarium's along with some podscape and a little bit of landscape. At 200 sq ft, you could put 96 cremains in the one small area, it would be 24K square feet for 96 earth burials. (Note, two companion urns can go into one spot). Mr. Wilson gave some numbers that explained the return on investment possible.

The product Mr. Wilson is offering to the cemetery board is all granite, with 24 individual doors, it would be single sided because of the location. For \$32,400 the return is \$63,600 when they are all sold. With average cost of \$1500 per niche space holds two urns, has your headstone (which is your personal door), and opening fees (someone has to witness and open the doors) would be \$250 each time. This would be a total of \$2,000, the total cost of the 2 columbarium's would be \$32,400, when you sell all 48 niche spaces that comes up to \$96,000, the profit margin is \$63,600, minus the cost of the foundation.

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Mike Thornton noted Leo Lessard offered to do the foundation, and the cemetery would pay for the materials. Selectman Labonte noted there is still a financial number attached (ie materials and labor).

Selectman Freel asked if the \$1000 is a yearly fee, or do they own it like they would own a plot. Mr. Wilson confirmed it is a one-time cost.

Mr. Wilson also noted the hardscaping and landscaping would be additional cost. He then shared slides with pictures of different designs and capacities. He suggested that 7 units could fit in the space but at minimum erecting 2 units so the area won't be disrupted a second time.

Selectman Labonte asked what the cost difference is between a 32 and 24 and whether there is room for a 32 niche. Mr. Wilson thinks it is \$4,000. There would be room for 2 – with 32 niches.

Selectman Freel asked what if you build it and no one wants it? Mr. Thornton said Boscawen Veteran Cemetery has hundreds and they are very successful, and they are putting in 400 of these units.

Mr. Wilson said many people have urns at home and don't know how to memorialize the person and this is a good way to do that.

Selectman Finan asked if people ever move remains. Mr. Thornton replied you pay a fee to reclaim and they can take urn and placard with them, they also get to sell back to the Town at the original purchase price.

Selectman Labonte asked who is buying, is it the Town or the Cemetery Trustees. Mike Thornton said they would discuss that later in the meeting.

Mr. Wilson continued with the video demonstrating the columbarium process of putting in urns and sizing. The cost was further discussed and noted looking at \$4K for cremation or \$14K for earth burial.

Selectman Labonte noted you are getting something different; everyone has different preferences.

Mr. Thornton noted that there are 60 internments at Riverside, each year. Mary from DPW said 96 lots, so 96 times 2 is 192 in one area, plus 23 and 36 in other areas. Based on that there are 251 sales ready plots.

Selectman Finan needs to know how long Riverside can sustain burials if we do nothing but clear the land. Mr. Thornton said he's gotten quotes of 20, 30 and 40 years. This can be increased using the columbarium which could bring it to year 2250 if we develop it right.

Mr. Thornton had an idea for a memorial garden where ashes would be spread out. You could use the same 25 to 50 square feet. The area by Kaylee Park has areas that are heavily forested, and the cost of removing trees could be offset by the value of timber, however the stumps still need to be removed. There are about 100 cremation lots on cremation hill but they try not to sell because of the terrain.

Mr. Thornton is asking the Select Board to consider sharing the cost with the cemetery trustees and referenced RSA 289 and in 289.2 it says "Every municipality shall provide, or may enter into agreements with adjacent municipalities or nonprofit entities to provide, one or more suitable cemeteries for the interment of deceased persons, which shall be subject to such regulations as the municipality may establish. In the absence of regulations established by vote of the legislative body, the cemetery trustees may establish such regulations pursuant to RSA 289:7, I(a). The operation and maintenance of all cemeteries owned and maintained by the municipality shall be in the charge of the cemetery trustees.")

Selectman Finan said it should be simple arithmetic to figure out how many spots for burial are available. To Mr. Thorntons credit this presentation sounds like a good additional option. But Selectman Finan needs to know how long Riverside can sustain burials today if we do nothing but clear land, especially if spending money on it. Mr. Thornton got 3 estimates, and they were 20, 30 and 40 years.

Selectman Freel says for him, if we are talking about the cost of building one of these the \$35K is go rip the trees down and make more land available within the cemetery already. That money should be spent to produce the land that is still left there. You could take the 35 build it, and then make \$66 and take that and also develop the land. Some people may not like this option, some may. He asked if the Trustees could spend the money

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without the Select Boards approval. Mr. Thornton answered yes, they could, but they also would like matching funds and referred to RSA 289.2 and RSA 289.7 again.

Selectman Dargie noted in the variety of different examples of them, very few of them have actually been inscribed on the front. They are like new installations, so he is curious how well these things actually sell in real life. Do people really want to buy these when they can cast the ashes or put on a mantle.

Mr. Thornton said a veteran has a choice for free and many make the choice to be interred in a columbarium instead of a full body burial.

Selectman Dargie said it's different because its free for veterans and that it's not a good comparison. He also noted they haven't done this in New Hampshire yet that he's aware of.

Selectman Labonte asked if there was a way to change a plot holding one full burial and 3 cremations, to 6 cremations. If you could do 6 cremations, people might not have purchased so many lots for family burials.

Mr. Thornton stated you would have to pay an opening and closing fee and purchase a vault.

Selectman Labonte said the amount is irrelevant to his question, he has no desire to be interred in one of these because he feels it being on a bookshelf. The government is paying for veterans so they are pushing the cheapest way. If money is your deciding factor when it comes to final resting place, you're not going to a cemetery, you are going to go home on someone's bureau, or spread somewhere like their favorite lake or mountain, or whatever. It's not a bad idea, but to him it reverts back to his question about 6 cremains in a plot and asks if statutorily mandated by law, and asked if other towns do it? Mr. Thornton said it's in DPW regulations, he is not sure about RSA's. Gretchen Heald Brooks said she hasn't seen towns that do 6 cremains, typically she sees three.

Selectman Freel feels no rush to do this, because he doesn't see value in it because there are alternatives. He feels the Board should only be financing the land. Mr. Thornton said there is a stump dump and other rubble that he asked to be removed, and that would make more room at the cemetery.

Selectman Labonte asked about burials on the hill, but Mr. Thornton said it needs to be ADA compliant.

Selectman Finan said the Cemetery Trustees should decide what they want and come to the Select Board with a plan, an actual plan that says we want to do A, B and C and we want you to contribute. It was an interesting discussion, and he would have loved to see a comparable community to us and what they have done.

Selectman Labonte said not a community with no space, but a rural area in Massachusetts or Connecticut.

Mr. Thornton said Riverside is filling up and the Brox property is not an option in our lifetimes.

TA Daley suggested the Cemetery Trustees come up with a long-term plan with cost estimates to remove trees and stumps and do a thorough analysis and estimate the number of plots, whatever the form, and create the long-term plan that we can come back and understand and then work with Mr. Lessard on budgeting. It is part of projects going forward.

Mr. Thornton said they are just giving a 30,000 foot view now and are asking to be included in the Milford Master Plan, so that next year they can come to the Board as part of the CIP (Capital Improvement Plan) and say here's our budget request.

Selectman Labonte, says he wants complete numbers, including everything, not in lieu of DPW, include from preparation, base, landscaping, soup to nuts, square footage.

Economic Development Advisory Council – Council Charge and Member Appointments

Selectman Finan said we want to review the charge first. There was an EDAC committee that came up with the plan, and the Board after that fact created the EDAC.

TA Daley read the charge from EDAC web site which reads as follows *“The charge of the Economic Development Advisory Council (EDAC), approved by the Board of Selectmen on July 13, 2009, shall be to develop*

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and recommend economic development policy in accordance with the goals of the Milford Board of Selectmen and Milford Master Plan, and, utilizing the report Recommendations to Foster Economic Development in Milford dated June 8, 2009, facilitate the economic development goals, recommendations, and actions at the direction of the Select Board”

Selectman Finan said in a nutshell the EDAC charge is to implement the plan.

Selectwoman Philbrick said the plan was extremely detailed, and if group itself have suggested changes, they could come to the Select Board.

Selectman Finan would like to recommend a minor change to what TA Daley read, which basically adds reviewing that plan because the plan is 15 years old, they should review it then come up with proposals to implement. One of the first tasks would be for the committee to come up with their own rules and procedures and their own policies and procedures and bring back to the board.

Selectman Labonte asked if this whole plan has been implemented. TA Daley responded that portions have been and there is still work to be done, one of the goals of the committee is to review and pull-out items that need to be addressed or are outdated.

Motion to issue the following charge by Selectman Finan, to The Economic Development Advisory Council is charged with reviewing the June 8, 2009 document titled ‘Recommendations to foster economic development in Milford’ and to develop and recommend economic development policy in accordance with the goals enumerated in the document along with those of the Milford Select Board and Milford Master Plan and to facilitate these economic development goals, recommendations and actions at the direction of the Select Board and to further direct staff to work with the appointed members of EDAC to draft rules and procedures for the Select Board to review and adopt at a future meeting. Seconded by Selectman Dargie. All were in favor. Motion passes 5/0.

Discussion continued regarding member appointments and term length. Todd Leo and Dale White were present for this discussion. Selectman Labonte asked if we know where we are with length of term. Selectman Dargie suggests starting with 1-year terms for now and they can be changed later when the whole committee is together. Selectwoman Philbrick suggests the four people who sat through the last meeting be included as well. Selectman Finan asked the gentleman attending to introduce themselves for the record and why they want to be on the EDAC.

Todd Leo introduced himself as an 18-year resident of Milford, moved his practice here around the time he moved here, he’s watched his kids grow up through the schools. He’s been involved with the Milford Rotary Club, including being the immediate past president. He’s also been involved with the Town as an assistant Moderator for both the Town and School for the last seven or so years. When he was asked about joining EDAC, he thought it would be a great opportunity to lend some of his ideas. He runs a financial planning firm in town serving mostly local people, so he feels he has a sense for what people are going through, whether from inflation, housing, business owners where they are getting employees from.

Dale White was next up, and shared that he was on the first Economic Development Committee, he feels there were good reasons for the committee to be put together. There were issues in Planning or lack of coordination between departments and time restraints to get a permit completed, but the Economic Development Committee had a lot to do with streamlining that process. The group was a great cross section of people from town representatives from Select Board and other internal Boards and also business people. A lot was done, and when the economy turned and got better a lot of problems got fixed and the committee just kind of went away. With inflation and housing issues, it’s a good time for this committee to come back into play. He’s been to a couple of recent meetings and found it to be a good cross section of people. He noted there is always room for improvement on processes, especially in the beginning. For example, in the Permitting department for speed, there is ability to do things different administratively that is important. Housing was discussed and we all know what housing is costing, and young couples struggling for housing, Zoning laws could be changed such as changing density especially in town. He would love to be part of this and sees tremendous possibilities for Milford.

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Motion by Selectwoman Philbrick, to appoint Todd Leo and Dale White to the EDAC Committee for a one-year term. Seconded by Selectman Dargie. All were in favor. Motion passes 5/0.

Motion by Selectwoman Philbrick, to appoint Liz Calabria, Paul Amato, Janet Langdell, and Samantha Bellcourt, to the EDAC Committee for a one-year term with the caveat that the Town Administrator or Community Development Office fill out bio information. Seconded by Selectman Dargie. All were in favor. Motion passes 4/1.

Selectman Labonte dissented as he felt these 4 should be face to face appointments. Selectwoman Philbrick noted they were here for hours at the last meeting.

3. PUBLIC COMMENTS –

Suzanne Fournier, coordinator for Brox Environmental citizens. She noted that on July 15th, 2024, Milford DPW breached a Beaver Dam on heron pond with an excavator, and the DPW was going to replace the 12-inch beaver pipe with a larger pipe that continues to drain more water. This caused 5 species of fish to be found dead. She feels Conservation Commission thru Chris Constantino is pushing to shrink the size of Heron Pond down to birch brook and a wet meadow.

Fish & Game conservation officer is involved in the enforcement of state wildlife law, and endangered wildlife program is involved because they had already warned the town to keep sufficient water in the pond to protect wildlife and they didn't do that. The Department of Environmental Services compliance officer for the Wetlands Bureau is investigating as well.

In Mid-July the water in the pond was already at a summer low and now is extremely and unnaturally lower. This happened under the watch of the Select Board, Town Administrator and DPW and they are responsible. It needs to be fixed for the future environmental health of Milford. This is a very important ecological area for the Town of Milford and the Town should be protecting it.

TA Daley, said it's worth mentioning that the actions of the DPW were made to take advantage of trying to be proactive in storm water management of the properties that were historically flooded or have been impacted by the recent rains and the current level of the Pond being lower. This is a good time to look at management of Beaver ponds in a sustainable and balanced way where Mr. Lessard and crew took off a portion of one of the dams to the current level of the water. It allows the beavers to continue and also the animals and creatures out there to continue in a viable sustainable habitat. We are allowed under state law, RSA, to look at managing what the beavers do in the case of flooding and trying to protect properties and people going forward. He thinks this was done in a very sustainable way. He noted DPW Director Lessard was here and could answer questions.

Selectman Finan mentioned that the complaints also come the other way, where people complain because of flooding and the water is too high. So not as cut and dried as Ms. Fournier said, and he is glad there is an investigation taking place and if something is wrong, we will take corrective actions.

Ms. Fournier said there is no flooding and its only one house that needs a sump pump and the school side pond doesn't flood.

4. DECISIONS

a. CONSENT CALENDAR

- a) Recommendation to change Michael Thornton from Full-Time Member of the Board of Adjustments to Alternate Member
- b) Recommendation to change Rich Elliot from Alternate Member of the Board of Adjustments to Full-Time Member
- c) Nashua Street Water Booster Pump Station – Execution of Bond

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Motion to accept Consent Calendar items by Selectwoman Philbrick, seconded by Selectman Labonte. All were in favor. Motion passes 5/0.

b. OTHER DECISIONS

5. TOWN STATUS REPORT

- a) Microburst Storm Update, happened on July 16th and we had storms with winds up to 95 miles per hour. The Hilton Homes area was hardest hit, causing severe damage to residential properties, vehicles, structures, utilities. In total 6 homes were deemed to be uninhabitable, and basically have to be razed, with many others sustaining varying degrees of damage due to falling trees and limbs. Milford Fire, and Emergency Management worked with American Red Cross, and the state of New Hampshire Homeland Security management to review damage to the impacted neighborhoods. The American Red Cross met with homeowners one on one that were most impacted who will actually lose their homes as a result of the storm. He encourages residents affected by contacting Red Cross or calling 2-1-1 or Milford Welfare Department.

He also thanks residents for assisting, taking clothes to offering shelter, caring for animals and that sort of thing. Also, he thanks the DPW, Emergency Services folks, Fire, Ambulance and Police who were instrumental in providing direct assistance for many individuals during a trying time. He also thanks nearby communities, Peterborough, Wilton, Lyndeborough, Merrimack for allocating resources to assist the Town. Also, Representatives Maria Perez and Peter Petringo provided needed boots on the ground and Vanessa Sheehan continued to communicate the needs to various agencies. He again thanks the community itself and commends all departments for working so well together and employed new technologies, such as a drone to assess the damage and improved communication by using a direct command center which aided in communications between the departments.

TA Daley ended by noting our hearts go out to those affected, or properties were damaged.

Selectman Finan asked if Town or Residents are eligible for FEMA or other Federal or State aid. TA Daley noted he doesn't anticipate the Town being able to qualify however he recommends individuals impacted to call 2-1-1 and that may facilitate opportunities through FEMA. Selectman Labonte asked about a brush pickup. TA Daley said for now we will do pickups for those with damage, also those who lost homes may be eligible for abatements with the Assessing department. Selectman Freel noted the utility workers got the electricity up for many in a short time and did a fantastic job.

6. DISCUSSIONS

a) 127 Elm St and Select Board Policy Work Sessions mid-August

Select Board Policy Work Session, hopefully Wednesday or Thursday August 14 & 15

127 Elm St, if we have a light meeting, we could include in regular Select Board meeting.

This will be a discussion on what to do with the building. Selectman Freel asks what will be discussed what can be brought to the table to make the decision, do we have new data. Selectman Labonte says Selectman Freel has a good point, we can decide what Select Board wants to do, but taxpayers are the ones that actually make the decision. He also asked if Nashua Regional planning assessment will be done. TA Daley said the Board can't rely on the two reports that were done a while ago, the report was released around 2023, but assessed around 2021. The building hasn't changed since then. TA Daley encourages the Board Members to review the reports, he notes the plan was to turn it into a multigenerational recreational center. Selectman Labonte asked when the last time everyone or if everyone has looked at it. Chief Flaherty noted that the building can't be entered because it is posted and the order has not been rescinded.

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Mike Thornton spoke and mentioned the implication he got from the reports was that the recreation center would be built on the footprint of the building, he said Mr. Lessard said it would be \$2 million to renovate the building and \$500k to tear it down and have bare land.

Chief Flaherty advised the order can be rescinded in order to allow the Select Board to enter on a temporary basis. TA Daley will work with staff to be sure they get items out of there. The public cannot enter the building legally.

b) South Street Parking Lot Project

TA Daley asks what action does the Board want to take on this to complete or start. Selectman Labonte says just forget it. Selectman Freel says it would be nice to pave it, he is not in favor of charging stations.

Director Lessard, noted that engineering design is set we need to hire a surveyor to be sure we are not in railroad area. Then they can do catch basins, lights, granite curbs, etc. TA Daley asked if we can get the survey done this year. Engineering survey would be \$12 to 15K, drainage would be about \$3,500 for materials, DPW could do the work.

Selectman Dargie would like to do the whole thing, but is ok with baby steps as well.

Selectman Freel made a Motion to authorize Director Lessard to have the south st parking lot surveyed within his budget. Seconded by Selectwoman Philbrick. All were in favor. Motion passes 5/0

7. SELECTMEN'S REPORTS/DISCUSSIONS:

TA Daley mentioned traffic safety committee reviewed complaint on Armory Road. The committee took no action.

Selectman Freel noted in Planning Board meeting Marmon was asking to move open space requirement to South side of lot and they will move forward with humongous project that will be good.

TA Daley noted they Planning board approved the multi town house project off of Ponemah Hill Road.

8. PUBLIC COMMENTS

9. APPROVAL OF FINAL MINUTES:

a) July 8, 2024

Motion to accept Minutes as amended from July 8, 2024 by Selectwoman Philbrick, seconded by Selectman Dargie. All were in favor. Motion passes 5/0.

10. INFORMATION ITEMS REQUIRING NO DECISIONS

11. NOTICES:

Chair Finan read the following public notices.

- The next Board of Selectmen's meeting is a Fifth Monday Forum on July 29, 2024 in the Board of Selectmen's meeting room, 1 Union Square, Milford NH at 6:00 pm. This will be a HYBRID meeting, information to access zoom will be posted on the Town's website on or before July 26, 2024.
- On Friday, August 2, 2024 between the hours of 8 am to 5 pm, the exterior windows of the Town Hall will be cleaned. Both parking spaces and the sidewalks around the perimeter of the building may be temporarily closed throughout the day.

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- July 28th corner of Nashua and Wheeler the road will be closed to replace a water line.
- August 4th, corner of Vine and Nashua the road will be closed to replace water line.
- July 24th, Mont Vernon, Amherst and Grove St will be closed for milling and paving.
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12. NON-PUBLIC SESSION:

13. ADJOURNMENT: Selectman Freel moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:10. Seconded by
Selectwoman Labonte. All were in favor. The motion passed 5/0.

Tim Finan, Chairman

Paul Dargie, Vice-Chairman

Dave Freel, Member

Chris Labonte, Member

Tina Philbrick, Member