

APPROVED  
MINUTES OF THE MILFORD BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING  
January 22, 2024

**PRESENT:** Gary Daniels, Chairman Lincoln Daley, Town Administrator via Zoom  
Chris Labonte, Vice Chairman Tina Philbrick, Executive Assistant  
Paul Dargie, Member  
Tim Finan, Member  
Dave Freel, Member

**1. CALL TO ORDER, BOARD OF SELECTMEN INTRODUCTIONS & PUBLIC SPEAKING INSTRUCTIONS:**

Chairman Daniels called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m., introduced Board members, and then led the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**2. APPOINTMENTS – (Approximate times)**

**5:30 p.m. -** Quote Request for Provision of EMS Services – Ambulance Director, Eric Schelberg  
In summary: Amherst Fire Rescue (AFR) has provided EMS service to Mont Vernon (MV) for over 20 years.

Milford Ambulance Service received an email from Fire Chief Jay Wilson requesting a quote for the provision of EMS service. MV annually averages 130 requests for ambulance service based on call volume data from 2021 to 2023. The per-call cost of the department is \$969.12. This amount is the sum of all department, expenses – 2024 proposed budget, 2024 benefit expenses, facility bond, ambulance lease, and utilities. Using the MV call volume, a quote for service is \$126,309.

In addition to an annual fee for service, ambulance transport revenue is estimated to be \$64,137. This amount is calculated using a 74% transport rate and an average revenue per call of \$665. Director Schelberg believes that his department could take on the additional call volume with the current ambulance schedule without the need to add personnel or infrastructure. This is contingent on all positions being filled and the approval of both Boards.

Chairman Daniels asked about protecting ourselves from a scenario where we would lose money. Director Schelberg said it's providing them a service and this is what it will cost for them. We would also bill for transport. There would be no change to our staffing.

Director Schelberg gave a detailed explanation of how he got to his numbers. The number provided is the cost per call. Selectman Freel said we shouldn't be using the revenue stream. There was additional discussion about call volume, overtime, and staffing. Amherst is currently charging Mont Vernon \$17,000 per year plus transport costs and they are going up to \$90,000. Mont Vernon is unhappy with the increase so they are shopping around. Selectman Freel asked why Director Schelberg doesn't make his number match Amherst's number. Why would we go lowball? That wouldn't be done in the private sector. Selectman Dargie said our number isn't a low-ball number, it's higher and includes transport costs.

Mike Thornton, a Milford resident, asked if we have a third ambulance available. Director Schelberg said we don't staff the third ambulance. It's a ready spare. Director Schelberg said we would not need to add additional staffing to cover additional calls.

Lynn Coakley, a Milford resident, responded to Selectmen Freels comment about the private sector, a town isn't the same as a private business. Selectman Freel doesn't want to take resources from Milford residents.

Selectman Labonte asked about eventually combining Ambulance and Fire. Ken Flaherty, Fire Chief, said it would have some impact on the fire department. He explained the process. Chief Flaherty said a combined department was looked into before and it could be an option.

Selectman Dargie is in favor of this but feels we should quote a lower number. The incremental cost would be small. This would be a good revenue stream.

## APPROVED MINUTES OF BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING – 1/22/2024

Selectman Labonte asked how long it's been since Ambulance was fully staffed. Director Schelberg said since August. He has two spots that should be filled shortly. Selectman Labonte is concerned about staffing and pay levels with the additional workload.

Chairman Daniels said at this time, we are just authorizing Director Schelberg to talk to Mont Vernon. He could support this as long as we are not losing money. He is concerned about wear and tear on the ambulances and having to buy new ones. Director Schelberg said we still need to stay in a replacement cycle. This is an opportunity to get our foot in the door. This would add about 6,000 miles to an ambulance.

Selectman Labonte asked what an average call costs on a third-party ambulance. Director Schelberg said he didn't know.

Selectman Finan asked if Director Schelberg was confident about the amount that Amherst may go up to. Director Schelberg said it was just mentioned to him but there is nothing in the minutes. Selectman Finan said Director Schelberg should get more information. Administrator Daley asked for more information on how this would affect the Fire Department as well.

Selectman Dargie recommends Director Schelberg offer Mont Vernon a rate of \$90,000 at a flat rate with a 5% escalation cost for up to 5 years.

Scott Kimball, a Milford resident, said he agrees that our ambulance service should stay in Milford. Mont Vernon has more money and can buy their own ambulance service. He is concerned about the wear and tear on the ambulances.

Mr. Thornton, suggests that the Finance Director and Ambulance Director work together to figure out if we are going to make money without risk to ourselves. Director Calabria agrees with Selectman Dargie that the incremental cost won't be much.

The consensus was to have Director Schelberg go forward and talk to Mont Vernon.

### **3. PUBLIC COMMENTS (items not on the agenda) –**

Jay Duffy, a Milford resident, gave an update on the plaque for Mr. Courage to be placed at the Public Works building. He thanked the Keyes Trust for donating the money for the plaque.

Susanne Fournier, a Milford resident, referenced a status report that Administrator Daley will be giving about the AoT permit. She talked about the threatened and endangered species on the Brox Town land. She feels the town isn't interested in protecting the endangered species.

Mike Thornton, said he understands Ms. Fournier's comments but the Brox property was set aside for multiple uses, not just conservation. There has been an opportunity for compromise for all parties and to take the land away from the public who paid for it is wrong. He encourages taxpayers to make their voices heard about this property.

### **4. DECISIONS**

#### **a. CONSENT CALENDAR**

1. Acceptance of Milford Emergency Operations Plan
2. Approval of donation for the Granite Town Rail Trail Revolving Fund from a Ghost Train Trail Race Runner processed through Piscataquog Land Conservancy - \$500.00
3. Acceptance and Appropriation of Unanticipated Revenues Under \$10,000 (31:95(b))
  - Donation to the Milford DPW Department for the Robert Courage plaque to be placed at the DPW office facility from the Arthur L. Keyes Memorial Trust - \$1,200.

Selectman Labonte asked that 4. a) 1) be removed from the consent calendar for discussion. Selectman Finan asked that 4. a) 3) be removed from the consent calendar for discussion.

**Selectman Freel made a motion to approve the 4. a) 2) on the consent calendar. Seconded by Selectman Dargie. All were in favor. The motion passed 5/0.**

Selectman Labonte asked to hold off on decisions for 4. a) 1), the Milford Emergency Operations Plan because he had additional questions that he needed answers for. He will meet off-line with Chief Flaherty.

Selectman Finan thanked Jay Duffy for a great job with the plaque for Mr. Courage. Selectman Finan is on the Arthur L. Keyes Memorial Trust Committee and won't be voting on 4. a) 3).

**Selectman Dargie moved to accept item number 4. a) 3 from the consent calendar. Seconded by Selectman Labonte. The motion passed 4-0-1 with Selectman Finan abstaining.**

## **b. OTHER DECISIONS**

### **1. N/A**

## **5. TOWN STATUS REPORT –**

### **1. Milford Community Lands (Formally Brox) Alteration of Terrain Permit - Gravel Operations (Update)**

The Town and Northeast Sand & Gravel submitted responses and revised plan set to the NH Dept. Of Environmental Services (permitting agency) and NH Fish & Game (NHFG) on December 1, 2023. The submittal was in response to a list of detailed comments from NHFG involving several areas of the project.

Town staff continues to communicate with NHFG and await their response/comments. The Town and Northeast Sand & Gravel will be meeting with both state agencies in February to hopefully resolve the remaining elements of the application/permit for approval and allow the Town to resume the gravel operation this year.

Selectman Labonte asked about the cost. Administrator Daley said there will be survey cost on the conservation area. Who pays it will be determined at a later date.

### **2. Milford Community Power/ Standard Power - Informational Meeting**

Milford Community Power is launching this spring after being approved by Milford voters in March 2023. The program provides stable rates for 20 months, from March 2024 to November 2025, and three options with more renewable energy for electricity customers up to 100%. There is no cost to the municipality for running the program, no individual customer contracts, and customers can leave, change products, or rejoin the program with no fees or penalties effective on their next meter read date. See the attached Press Release.

On Wednesday, January 31st, the Town will be hosting an informational meeting to present and discuss the program. The public meeting will be held in the Town Hall Auditorium (3rd floor) beginning at 6:00 pm. A short presentation will be followed by an opportunity for residents to ask questions about program options and how to enroll, opt-out or make another choice. We encourage residents to bring their electric bill to the public session to ask questions. Please visit [www.MilfordCommunityPower.com](http://www.MilfordCommunityPower.com) for more information.

Administrator Daley said the default rate was around .10 or .11 cents. Eversource came in slightly lower. The Town has an opportunity to opt-out or in at anytime. Mr. Thornton said he would encourage people to opt out at this time unless they which to use renewable energy.

### **3. Library Building Maintenance**

Town Staff and two Selectmen attended the recent Library Trustees' meeting to discuss several maintenance items involving the library. Staff discussed the roof project, the proposed warrant article to replace the electrical panels,

and water issues infiltrating the interior of the building from sections of the exterior brick walls which is causing additional water damage. Our Public Work Director, Mr. Lessard is currently assessing the building and will be contacting contractors to provide cost estimates, mostly likely in the early late Winter/early Spring.

Mr. Duffy asked how many trusts the library has. Lynn Coakley said they have small ones for books and programs and one larger trust that they can use at their discretion. Mr. Duffy recommends the library review their trusts and if there is one in there for infrastructure, bring that information to the Selectmen. The Cemetery Trustees were able to have work done at the cemeteries with their trust monies.

Ms. Coakley said they have talked to the Trustees of the Trust Funds and will be discussing items needed at a later date.

Mr. Thornton, a Cemetery Trustee, thanked prior Cemetery Trustees for building up monies in the trust that were used to solve the water spigot problem. It's been a team effort. He also thanked Director Lessard and Mr. Brickley for all of their hard work. There are more items that the team wants to accomplish within the budget at no taxpayer expense.

#### 4. Town Staff 2024 Goals & Objectives

Department Heads were asked to submit their 2024 Departmental goals and objectives. Staff was challenged to include several what are termed "Stretch Goals". A stretch goal is one that will be difficult (not impossible) and will "move the needle" or make a noticeable difference for the town.

#### 5. Ambulance Mutual Aid Agreement (DRAFT)

Director Schelberg discussed a draft Emergency Medical Services Mutual Aid agreement with the Board for consideration, discussion, and approval at a future meeting. This agreement would update and replace the previously executed agreement from 1994. Participating towns include Amherst, Brookline, Hollis, and Wilton.

Director Schelberg, said there are not many changes, we are just making sure it's compliant and has the current RSAs. It would now be a joint agreement signed by the five communities. It's a five-year agreement that will renew annually every year until year five where it forces all parties to reevaluate the agreement and resign if changes are made. This doesn't lock the town into providing mutual aid if we are on another call. He is hoping to have this available at the first February meeting for review and signatures.

#### 6. Boards, Commission, Committee Volunteers

The Town is actively seeking volunteers to serve on various boards, commissions, and committees. The following is a list of current vacancies:

Zoning Board of Adjustments	2 alternate positions
Conservation Commission	2 alternate positions
Economic Development Advisory Council	TBD (January 2024)
Recycling Committee	1 full-time position
Planning Board	2 alternate positions

#### 6. SELECTMEN'S REPORTS/DISCUSSIONS

##### 1. 2024 Warrant Article Votes – Pre-deliberative votes were taken on the Town Warrants

##### WARRANT ARTICLE 4 - TOWN OPERATING BUDGET - \$18,264,516

Director Calabria found an error in the default budget. He left some of the warrant articles out of the total. This dropped the default budget. He later sat with Chief Viola and realized that they also didn't include the differential pay, military stipend, and educational benefits for the AFSME in the default budget. He had to take the default budget down by the \$106,000 that was left in but then add the \$61,640 back into the default budget. This left a

delta of about \$50,000. He approached the Town Administrator with a solution to shrink the gap of the new delta of \$290,000 down to \$259,000 by reducing a couple of items for positions in the town that have not yet been filled. They are all one-month cost for the Planner position, DPW Truck Driver, DPW Cemetery Laborer, and Patrol Officer. If these changes are made, we can reduce the budget and the new delta between the operating budget and the default budget would be \$259,000. Administrator Daley said all Department Heads agreed to the changes.

The new proposed budget would be \$18,261,680. This is a 4.6% increase over 2023's approved budget. The new default budget is \$18,002,107.

**Selectman Dargie made a motion to accept changes to the default budget as presented. Seconded by Selectman Labonte. All were in favor. The motion passed 5/0.**

**Selectman Dargie made a motion to accept the change to the operating budget for \$18,261,680. Seconded by Selectman Freel. All were in favor. The motion passed 5/0.**

**Selectman Freel made a motion to recommend Warrant Article 4, Town Operating Budget. Seconded by Selectman Finan. All were in favor. The motion passed 5/0.**

Chairman Daniels will write the majority report on Warrant Article 4 Town Operating Budget.

**WARRANT ARTICLE 7 - RECONSTRUCTION OF TOWN ROADS - \$ 300,000**

**Selectman Dargie made a motion to recommend Warrant Article 7, Reconstruction of Town Roads. Seconded by Selectman Labonte. All were in favor. The motion passed 5/0.**

Selectman Freel will write the majority report on Warrant Article 7 Reconstruction of Town Roads.

**WARRANT ARTICLE 8 - WADLEIGH LIBRARY ELECTRICAL SYSTEM SAFETY AND EFFICIENCY UPGRADES - \$90,000 (Final project cost to taxpayers offset by \$25,000 from the Wadleigh Library Maintenance and Upkeep Capital Reserve)**

Ms. Coakley said the Library Trustees voted at their last meeting to ask the Select Board to remove this from the Town warrants.

**Selectman Freel made a motion to remove the Library Warrant Article from the Town Warrants. Seconded by Selectman Finan. All were in favor. The motion passed 5/0.**

**WARRANT ARTICLE 8 - SOCIAL SERVICES - \$40,000**

**Selectman Dargie made a motion to recommend Warrant Article 8, Social Services. Seconded by Selectman Finan. All were in favor. The motion passed 5/0.**

Selectman Finan will write the majority report on Warrant Article 8, Social Services.

**WARRANT ARTICLE 9 - NON-EMERGENCY COMMUNITY TRANSPORTATION BUS SERVICES – \$32,000**

**Selectman Dargie made a motion to recommend Warrant Article 9, Non-Emergency Community Transportation Bus Services. Seconded by Selectman Freel. All were in favor. The motion passed 5/0.**

**APPROVED MINUTES OF BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING – 1/22/2024**

Selectman Dargie will write the majority report on Warrant Article 9, Non-Emergency Community Transportation Bus Services.

**WARRANT ARTICLE 10 - INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY INFRASTRUCTURE CAPITAL RESERVE - \$ 20,000**

**Selectman Dargie made a motion to recommend Warrant Article 10, Information Technology Infrastructure Capital Reserve. Seconded by Selectman Finan. All were in favor. The motion passed 5/0.**

Selectman Finan will write the majority report on Warrant Article 10, Information Technology Infrastructure Capital Reserve.

**WARRANT ARTICLE 11 - SUMMER BAND CONCERTS SUPPORT - \$9,000**

**Selectman Labonte made a motion to recommend Warrant Article 11, Summer Band Concerts. Seconded by Selectman Dargie. All were in favor. The motion passed 5/0.**

Selectman Labonte will write the majority report on Warrant Article 11, Summer Band Concerts.

**WARRANT ARTICLE 12 - MEMORIAL, VETERANS & LABOR DAY PARADES AND RECOGNITION SUPPORT - \$8,000**

**Selectman Dargie made a motion to recommend Warrant Article 12, Memorial, Veterans & Labor Day Parades and Recognition Support. Seconded by Selectman Finan. Selectman Dargie removed his motion.**

Selectman Labonte mentioned that this was overspent last year, he asked about lowering our expenses to match the \$8,000 or increasing the amount. Chief Viola said he can't go lighter on details, they already cut it down as much as they can. There was some additional discussion on details and how many flags may be needed.

**Selectman Dargie made a motion to recommend Warrant Article 12, Memorial, Veterans & Labor Day Parades and Recognition Support, and increase the amount to \$11,000. Seconded by Selectman Finan. All were in favor. The motion passed 5/0.**

Selectman Dargie will write the majority report on Warrant Article 12, Memorial, Veterans & Labor Day Parades and Recognition Support.

**WARRANT ARTICLE 13 - ANNUAL LABOR DAY PARADE - \$6,000**

**Selectman Dargie made a motion to recommend Warrant Article 13, Annual Labor Day Parade. Seconded by Selectman Finan. All were in favor. The motion passed 5/0.**

Selectman Finan will write the majority report on Warrant Article 13, Annual Labor Day Parade

**WARRANT ARTICLE 14 - DISCONTINUE OSGOOD POND CAPITAL RESERVE TRUST FUND - \$0**

**Selectman Dargie made a motion to recommend Warrant Article 14, Discontinue Osgood Pond Capital Reserve Trust Fund. Seconded by Selectman Finan. All were in favor. The motion passed 5/0.**

Selectman Labonte will write the majority report on Warrant Article 14, Discontinue Osgood Pond Capital Reserve Trust Fund.



**WARRANT ARTICLE 15 - CONSERVATION LAND FUND - \$30,000 By Petition**

**Selectman Labonte made a motion to not recommend the Warrant Article 15, Conservation Land Fund. Seconded by Selectman Freel. The motion passed 3/2 to not recommend with Selectman Finan and Dargie opposed.**

Selectman Freel asked if they are looking to purchase something in the next year. Chris Costantino said no, it's there for when something comes up. The Budget Advisory Committee recommends that Conservation hold \$118,000 in its account. Selectman Labonte said he has a hard time supporting conservation when we cut things like a police vehicle. Selectman Finan said Conservation voluntarily removed this last year. There is currently \$82,000 in this account of which \$15,000 is already spoken for.

Selectman Freel will write the majority report on Warrant Article 15 and Selectman Finan will write the minority report on Warrant Article 15.

**WARRANT ARTICLE 16 – WALKABLE MILFORD - \$0 By Petition**

Selectman Dargie moved to not recommend this warrant article. Seconded by Selectman Labonte. Selectman Dargie removed his motion.

Selectman Dargie is in favor of sidewalks but are working on a master plan that includes sidewalks. Selectman Finan agreed that we already have a process but it might be good input to the Planning Board on how to proceed.

Janet Langdell, a Milford resident, said the concept of making Milford walkable isn't new. We've fallen off when projects have been brought forward with funding attached to them that have not been supported by the Selectmen.

Chairman Daniels said we've made a good effort to increase the price and prioritize roads and this is kind of competition for that.

Selectman Labonte feels we already have this as a priority. There is no action item on this, it would be easier to accept if they came in with a plan or number. Selectman Finan said we have a Steering Committee for things like this. Selectman Freel said we are already looking into this type of thing. After more discussion, the Board decided to not take a position on this warrant article. Administrator Daley said the intent is good but it's not committing us to do anything.

**Selectman Dargie made a motion to not take a position on Warrant Article 16, Walkable Milford. Seconded by Selectman Freel. All were in favor. The motion passed 5/0.**

**a) FROM PROJECTS, SPECIAL BOARDS, COMMISSIONS & COMMITTEES**

Selectman Finan said Selectman Freel came to the Library Trustee meeting and helped them understand what was needed with the electrical panels.

Chairman Daniels said we are still lax on Committees and Boards having minutes up to date.

**b) OTHER ITEMS (not on the agenda)**

**7. PUBLIC COMMENTS -**

**8. APPROVAL OF FINAL MINUTES** – January 3, 2024 work session, January 8, 2024, regular meeting and January 8, 2024, Budget and Bond Hearing.

**APPROVED MINUTES OF BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING – 1/22/2024**

Selectman Freel made a motion to approve the final minutes of January 3, 2024, as amended. Seconded by Selectman Dargie. All were in favor. The motion passed 5/0.

Selectman Dargie made a motion to approve the final minutes of January 8, 2024, as amended. Seconded by Selectman Daniels. The motion passed 4/0/1 with Selectman Freel abstaining.

Selectman Dargie made a motion to approve the final minutes of the January 8, 2024, Budget and Bond Hearing as presented. Seconded by Selectman Finan. All were in favor. The motion passed 5/0.

**10. INFORMATION ITEMS REQUIRING NO DECISIONS.**

a. Selectmen's Goals and Initiatives

**11. NOTICES.** Notices were read.

**12. NON-PUBLIC SESSION** – Selectman Finan made a motion to go into non-public at 8:17 in accordance with (RSA 91-A:3, II(a)) Personnel and approval of non-public minutes from January 8, 2024. Seconded by Selectman Dargie. All were in favor. The motion passed 5/0.

In nonpublic the Board addressed two sets of minutes and made two decisions.

**13. ADJOURNMENT:** Selectman Freel moved to adjourn at 8:35. Seconded by Selectman Dargie. All were in favor. The motion passed 5/0.

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Gary Daniels, Chairman

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Tim Finan, Member

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Chris Labonte, Vice-Chairman

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Dave Freel, Member

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Paul Dargie, Member