

**South Berwick
Town Council Meeting
August 9, 2022**

Chair Mallory Cook called the meeting to order at 6:49pm. Councilors present included John James, John C. Kareckas, Jeff Minihan, and Jessica Cyr. Town Manager Tim Pellerin and Assistant Town Manager Jennifer Janelle were also in attendance.

On a motion by Mrs. Cook, seconded by Mr. Kareckas, it was unanimously voted to take up item #1 under new business first. See below.

On a motion by Mr. Kareckas, seconded by Ms. Cyr, it was voted 4-0 (Mr. James abstained) to reconsider the Council action taken on July 26th regarding the adoption of the Resolution Condemning White Nationalism and Extremist Groups.

Mr. Kareckas had provided the other Councilors an amended version of the Resolution making it broader and giving it a more generalized approach. Mr. Pellerin made note that the Attorney reviewed the Resolution and stated that it is legal; the Council is not prohibiting or infringing on anyone's rights. However, he did caution the Council to keep the Resolution focused on behavior not a specific group or groups. Mr. James commented that he did not like the title of the Resolution and should cover everyone's behavior.

On a motion by Mr. Kareckas, seconded by Ms. Cyr, it was voted 4-1 (Mr. James opposed) to affirm the Council action of July 26th adopting the Resolution Condemning White Nationalism and Extremist Groups.

Approval of Minutes

1. Public Hearing 7-26-22: On a motion by Mr. Kareckas, seconded by Mr. James, it was unanimously voted to adopt the minutes as written.
2. Town Council 7-26-22: On a motion by Mr. Kareckas, seconded by Mr. Minihan, it was unanimously voted to adopt the minutes as written.

Treasurer's Warrant

1. On a motion by Mr. James, seconded by Mr. Minihan, it was unanimously voted to sign the warrant dated August 4, 2022 in the amount of \$22,441.29 [FY 2022].
2. On a motion by Mr. James, seconded by Mr. Kareckas, it was unanimously voted to sign the warrant dated August 4, 2022 in the amount of \$914,608.89 [FY 2023]. Mrs. Cook made note that this warrant includes the monthly school payment of \$730,000.

Reports & Presentations

1. The Manager explained that per 23MRSA §754, the State highway roads running through South Berwick meet the criteria for transfer to the Town. The transition is scheduled for July 1, 2023 to coincide with the Town's fiscal year. The Town will receive an additional \$20,254 per year; bringing our total Local Road Assistance Program funding from the state to \$86,634 per year. (The additional funds will not cover the Town's ultimate costs).

Mr. Kareckas commented "we don't want to own the bridge" over the Great Works River.

Public Comment

1. Brad Christo, Oldfields Rd, asked why should we be concerned with the tax rate if we are getting a committed increase in revenue sharing from the State. The Assistant Manager explained that in the past we have been using money from our undesignated fund (savings account) to help with the budget and therefore keep the tax rate down. This year we budgeted for 3.75% from the State and got the full 5%. Next year we will get the full 5% and will budget accordingly. We are required to maintain a minimum amount in the undesignated fund and cannot continue to use it to offset the amount required to fund expenses. Mr. Pellerin made note that we do not know what could happen if there is a change at the State level as a result of the upcoming Gubernatorial Election.

2. George Muller, Portland St, addressed the Council in regards to speeding and vehicle noise on Portland Street. He stated that he has been begging for help for years. He added that more enforcement is needed; give tickets, not just warnings.

3. Audrey Fortier, Rodier Rd, in regards to the Resolution discussed earlier, asked the Council if the Town has any ordinances that regulate behavior.

4. Pat Robinson, Brattle St, commented that the Resolution should be retitled.

Town Manager's Report

-Highway: Backhoe tank replaced. 41 loads of leaves hauled from transfer station. Currently working on Hooper Sands ditching and tree trimming on Dawson. Staff is cross training on the new roadside mower.

-Police: 7 arrests, 4 accidents, and 84 traffic stops. Working with Berwick Academy to establish a school resource officer position for next year. Participated in the National Night Out with several other departments; it was a great success. A new used car has been purchased for the Detective to drive. Officer Arsenault has completed the firearms instructor course. Lt Upton is working with the school on an emergency plan in the event of a critical incident.

-Fire: 16 calls bringing the year's total to 237. The new Chief has been cleaning out the station and meeting with staff to discuss short- & long- term goals. Training is ongoing.

-Code: Issued 17 permits. Continue to work on minor home occupation changes. Working with Jay on several code violations. Still working with 12 Lord's Lane to bring them into compliance.

-Planning: Working on the 4th revision of the solar farm ordinance. Working on ordinance language for upcoming state required changes in 2023 & 2024.

-Library: Will be hosting the Seacoast Science Center on Wednesday. Still waiting on contractor quotes for the gutters.

-Recreation: The A/C is fixed and the roof is not leaking. Summer camp is wrapping up. We have 75 signed up for soccer camp and 220 signed up for fall soccer. Maureen has left and we will be posting for a new programming coordinator position. The seniors have a Lake Winnepesaukee luncheon planned for October. Adult yoga went very well and we are looking to continue it.

-Town Clerk: Continue to see a lot of new car registrations. Busy with marriage licenses. Cleaning out prior election materials and starting to prepare for the November Gubernatorial.

-Transfer Station: New rates go into effect on September 1st. A new sign has been ordered "Resident dumping only, no commercial dumping."

-Finance: Tax Club applications are being processed. Tax bills will go to the printer tomorrow. Continue with year-end reconciliations.

-Admin: Working with York Ambulance to address the staffing shortage. Our custodian is retiring and we are interviewing for a replacement. The website update is moving along; we are half way there. The Owl system has been updated and should work better. We had to adjust a number of settings for the sound quality.

-It was agreed to hold a workshop on September 20th to discuss the new town hall.

Unfinished Business

1. & 2. Still with Planning

3. The Council discussed the proposed ballot questions for the November election regarding the Salmon Falls River Project. The Attorney drafted the language.

On a motion by Mr. James, seconded by Mr. Minihan, to place the following question on the November Election ballot, "To see if the Town will vote to appropriate \$250,000 from the Undesignated Fund to assist the Great Works Regional Land Trust Purchase 71 Acres of property on the Salmon Falls River Tidal Waters located at Map 6 Lots 14, 14A and 29A such property to be used for public uses, and the appropriation of such funds will not affect the current mil rate?"

On a motion by Mr. James, seconded by Mr. Minihan, it was unanimously voted to place the following question on the November Election ballot, "see if the Town will accept the ownership of land purchased by the Great Works Regional Land Trust on the Salmon Falls River Tidal waters, such property located at Map 6, Lots 14, 14A and 29A."

New Business

1. Mr. Pellerin introduced Denise Clavette. She has been appointed to the new position of Economic Development Director. She is currently working for the City of Saco. Denise has extensive experience in the field, is a TIF guru and will be a great asset to the Town. She will start on September 12th.

On a motion by Mr. Kareckas, seconded by Mr. James, it was unanimously voted to affirm the appointment of Denise Clavette to the position of Economic Development Director.

2. On a motion by Mr. James, seconded by Mr. Minihan, it was unanimously voted to approve the renewal of The Links at Outlook Golf Club's liquor license and special amusement permit.

3. On a motion by Mr. James, seconded by Mr. Minihan, it was unanimously voted to hold a public hearing on Tuesday, September 13, 2022 at 6:30pm to receive comment on the proposed amendment to Chapter 60 Building Construction, Section 3, Fees.

4. The Council discussed the request from Liberty Street residents to put a vehicle weight limit on the road. The letter sent to former Manager Ellsworth stated that there has been a significant increase in the number of large trucks. Gail Santos, Liberty St, did comment that the traffic is much slower now with the speed tables.

The Council agreed to monitor the area and consider changes at a later date, if necessary.

5. Councilor Cyr gave the Council a presentation on Community Action Grants available through the Community Resilience Partnership. We need to start thinking about climate change and the things we can improve on. We can tackle the "low hanging fruit" for little money. There are a number of items that should be considered during our discussions about a new town hall.

Councilor Comments

1. Mr. Kareckas:

-Announced that he would not be seeking re-election in November. Nomination Papers are available.

2. Ms. Cyr:

-The Comp Plan Update Committee has received 434 survey responses online to date. Hard copies should be hitting the mail within a day or so.

-Met with an Eliot Selectboard member to discuss networking opportunities.

3. Mr. Minihan:

-Has been spending time visiting various Town facilities. The guys at the Transfer Station are very helpful; no one is ever grumpy. Got a tour of the new highway garage. The guys are very excited about the new facility.

-Thanked the staff for getting the Owl updated.

-Reminded everyone that Lantern Fest is Wednesday.

4. Mrs. Cook:

-Stated that Facebook is not where we conduct Town business. Councilors must be careful about Facebook posts and acting as an individual vs. acting as a body.

Mr. Pellerin added that Facebook (social media) is not an approved place to conduct municipal business. Tim warned Councilors, "don't get baited."

Mr. Pellerin presented the following:

-Mr. James received a 5-year service pin

-Mrs. Cook received a 5-year service pin

-Mr. Kareckas received a 30-year service pin

Adjournment

On a motion by Mr. James, seconded by Mr. Kareckas, it was unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting at 8:25pm.

Attest:

Barbara Bennett, CCM