

**South Berwick
Town Council Meeting
January 9, 2024**

Chair Mallory Cook called the meeting to order at 6:33pm. Councilors present included John James, Jeff Minihan, Jessica Cyr, and Melissa Costella. Town Manager Tim Pellerin and Assistant Town Manager Jennifer Janelle were also in attendance.

Approval of Minutes

1. Public Hearing 12-12-23: On a motion by Mr. James, seconded by Mrs. Costella, it was unanimously voted to adopt the minutes as written.
2. Public Hearing 12-12-23: On a motion by Mr. James, seconded by Mrs. Costella, it was unanimously voted to adopt the minutes as written.
3. Town Council 12-12-23: On a motion by Mr. James, seconded by Mrs. Cook, it was unanimously voted to adopt the minutes after correcting the date of the Downtown Revitalization public input meeting from January 22nd to the 18th.

Treasurer's Warrant

1. On a motion by Mrs. Cook, seconded by Mr. James, it was unanimously voted to sign the warrant dated December 28, 2023, in the amount of \$354,812.91.
2. On a motion by Mrs. Cook, seconded by Mr. James, it was unanimously voted to sign the warrant dated January 4, 2024, in the amount of \$888,860.56.

Reports & Presentations

1. Peter Hall presented the annual audit review to the Council by Zoom. Mr. Hall stated that management was well prepared when the procedure started in September. The results are a "clean audit opinion". There are no material weaknesses or significant deficiencies reported. The Town is in a very good financial position.

The full audit is available in the Finance Office and on the Town's website.

Public Comment

1. Sam Flinkstrom, Main St, asked if the audit presentation is part of a larger document. Yes, the entire audit is available in the Finance Office.

Executive Session

1. On a motion by Mrs. Cook, seconded by Mr. James, it was unanimously voted to enter executive session at 7:03pm to discuss a personnel issue.

On a motion by Mrs. Cook, seconded by Mr. James, it was unanimously voted to end the executive session at 7:09pm.

Unfinished Business

1. On a motion by Mr. James, seconded by Mr. Minihan, it was unanimously voted to appoint Sam Flinkstrom to the Zoning Board of Appeals with a term to expire June 30, 2024. Mrs. Cook abstained from voting.
2. The Council and Manager discussed the requirements for postings for public hearings. Per the Town's Attorney, the Charter states that a 7-day notice must be given. There is no requirement for the notice to include a date and time certain. It is sufficient for the public hearing to be listed as part of the regular agenda.
3. Management received 4 responses to the RFQ/P for the town hall. On a motion by Mrs. Cook, seconded by Mr. James, it was unanimously voted to accept all four companies, Placework, Paul Designs Project, Oak Point Associates (Lassel), and McHenry Architecture for the short list.

Mr. Pellerin thanked resident Ken Weston for his help with the process.

4. On a motion by Mrs. Cook, seconded by Mr. James, it was unanimously voted to approve the schedule changes for the town hall RFQ/P process.

New Business

1. Rep Tiffany Roberts sent the Council a list of proposed legislation of municipal interest being considered by the State Legislature for review and comment. Ms. Roberts was not able to attend because the new Legislative Session had begun.
2. The Council and Manager discussed the process for making a nomination for the 2024 Spirit of America Award. The community's pick must be submitted before June 30th.

Town Manager's Report

- Mr. Pellerin introduced new employees Kandice Thompson in the Business Office and Brittany Howard in the Assessing Office.
- Highway: Part of Hooper Sands Road is currently one lane while being fixed. Have cleaned up the downed trees after the pre-Christmas storm and cleaning up after yesterday's storm. The large sidewalk plow is broken.
- Police: Officer John Willey retired as of January 5th. ACO Harvey Barr will be staying on until a new ACO is hired. Preparing for long-term, have opened the positions of interim LT and SGT.
- Fire: Had 483 calls and a total of 1100 training hours in 2023. Have moved to paperless record keeping.
- Town Clerk: Have finalized all necessary documentation for the November 2023 election. Have begun preparations for the March Primary. The office has issued almost 3300 transfer station stickers.
- Assessing: Still working on tax map updates. The Sales Return is complete. KRT will have its kick-off meeting today and will start in the field in zones B1 & R1A. Still dealing with a lot of resident inquiries.
- Library: Things have quieted down. Working on some new DIY programs. Developing a story book wall.
- Code/Planning: Issued 1 building permit and 3 plumbing permits. Have issued 624 building permits and 84 plumbing permits for 2023. Planning currently has 3 applications it is working on.
- Recreation: Haven't been able to open Powderhouse; no base. New winter programs will be starting this week.
- Transfer Station: Dan Lancaster has left the Town's employ.
- HR: Busy with new hires.
- Finance: Working on W-2s and 1099s. Reminded everyone that evaluations are due. Looking into getting credit card machines for the PD and Transfer Station. Working on budgets.
- Administration: Discussed the proper use of cellphones. Discussed sick time and the use of FMLA. Safety is a priority for everyone. Distributed the certificates for all that attended the Management Training. Made note that MDOT has inspected the Dover-Eliot Bridge and the pilings are failing. There is currently a weight limit and work will need to be done.

Sadly, we will be losing long-time Police Officer, Lt. Jeff Upton. Jeff has been an outstanding member of our police department and served as the School Resource Officer for many years. He has accepted a position with the School Safety Center of Maine. His last day will be January 31st. Kudos to Jeff!

On a motion by Mrs. Cook, seconded by Mr. James, it was voted 3-2 (Mr. James & Mrs. Costella opposed) to accept Jeff Upton's resignation. Best wishes and good luck.

Councilor Comments

1. Ms. Cyr:
 - It is Law Enforcement Appreciation Day.
2. Mr. James:
 - Made note that his campaign to spread the word about cake pans for lending at the library has been successful.

3. Mrs. Costella:

-Asked about the funds that had been voted for the Great Works Regional Land Trust purchase of land along the Salmon Falls River. Mr. Pellerin stated that the Trust had received an extension and will be attending an upcoming meeting for an update.

-Commented that, although nice looking, staff needs to stop using so much paper and color ink.

Executive Session

1. On a motion by Mr. James, seconded by Mrs. Costella, it was unanimously voted to enter executive session at 7:45pm pursuant to 1MRSA §405.6A to discuss a personnel issue.

The Chair reported the following to the Clerk:

On a motion by Mr. James, seconded by Mrs. Costella, it was unanimously voted to end the executive session at 8:48pm.

Adjournment

On a motion by Mr. James, seconded by Mrs. Costella, it was unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting at 8:49pm.

Attest:

Barbara Bennett, CCM
Town Clerk