

**TOWN OF DEERFIELD  
BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
January 4, 2021  
MINUTES**

**Call to Order**

5:30 pm – Chairman Robertson called the meeting to order

**Present:** Andrew Robertson, Chairman; Richard Pitman, Vice Chairman, Fred McGarry, Alden Dill, and Cynthia McHugh, Selectmen.

**Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag**

Chairman Robertson stated that he was going to forego the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag

**Regular Business:**

**Review of Outstanding Minutes of December 28, 2020**

**Motion:** Vice Chairman Pitman moves to approve the minutes of December 28, 2020 (as corrected)

**Second:** Selectman Dill

**Discussion:** Vice Chairman Pitman asked Mr. Harrington if he could clarify them that when they discussed the loader and that, that it says, "Deerfield Sand and Gravel" or town shed, and not just "pit". It is a little misleading on them.

Mr. Harrington stated that he could and believed that when "pit" is mentioned, that refers to "Deerfield Sand and Gravel" and not the town "pit" if he remembers correctly. He continued if he could correct with "town" shed, that would be great. Mr. Harrington stated that he would make those corrections. There are multiple entries so he will go through the minutes and correct those out.

**Vote: Yea 4, Nay 0, Abstained 0 – Motion Carries**

**Vouchers/Payroll Manifest/Accounts Payable Manifest**

**Accounts Payable week ending December 31, 2020 - \$48,211.51**

**Motion:** Vice Chairman Pitman moves to approve the accounts payable for week ending December 31, 2020 in the amount of \$48,211.51

**Second:** Selectman McGarry

**Discussion:** The chairman asked for discussion and recognized Vice Chairman Pitman who asked Fred if he noticed that they got charged for processed gravel when they used reclaim on Candia Road and the other two?

Selectman McGarry stated that he did notice that.

Vice Chairman Pitman stated that he didn't know what it was, nothing against Pete of course, but it shows a total of \$1,504.00 for processed gravel. They know that it was reclaim that they probably already owned but that is more your thing than mine. He looked at two of those roads and it definitely has that stuff mixed in with the gravel.

Selectman Dill asked what was usually cheaper, that or gravel to which the vice chairman stated that reclaim is and Selectman McGarry added that reclaim should be cheaper, and the vice chairman added, a lot cheaper and Selectwoman McHugh added that "we own it".

Vice Chairman Pitman stated that they owned it at one point.

Chairman Robertson asked if they wanted to make a motion to remove that \$1,504.00 until they get some clarification?

Vice Chairman Pitman stated that it was up to the Board. He just wanted and Selectman McGarry asked the chairman if he wanted a motion to that to which the chairman stated that he thought that they should.

(Motion was withdrawn per the vice chairman)

**Motion:** Selectman McGarry moves to approve the Accounts Payable Manifest in the amount of \$

**Second:**

**Discussion:** While the town administrator was getting the new figure for the accounts payable, the vice chairman asked where the meeting room floor was for the bill from Northern Oaks for the meeting house floor. He was just curious as to where it was.

Selectwoman McHugh stated that this would be for upstairs and the chairman added that he was assuming that it was either at the town offices or the town hall.

Selectman Dill stated that it was "FR" which would be and Selectwoman McHugh continued to say that this is the floor at the fire department and Mr. Harrington stated that it was the fire department and rescue.

Vice Chairman Pitman asked if that got done again and Selectwoman McHugh stated that she didn't know what it was for.

Vice Chairman Pitman stated that he thought that he already did it and Selectwoman McHugh stated that he did the office part but the big part isn't done yet and Mr. Harrington agreed and Selectwoman McHugh continued that she didn't know if this was \$1,700.00 just for a third of the floor and was going to come back in for the rest of the floor?

Mr. Harrington stated that the way that he understood it from Matt was that they are only doing the floor initially under where the offices were going to be built and once, they were finished, they were going to go in and finish the remaining part of the floor.

Selectwoman McHugh continued, so we are paying Northern Oaks just now for what he did last spring?

Vice Chairman Pitman stated that he didn't know, that is what he was asking and Mr. Harrington stated that this might be the remaining part of the floor, he would have to look at the invoice.

Selectwoman McHugh stated that the remaining part of the floor isn't done yet, that is what she was saying.

Chairman Robertson asked if they also wanted to remove the \$1,777.00 until they had some clarification?

Vice Chairman Pitman remarked that he would.

Mr. Harrington asked if they are removing the \$1,504.44 for Deerfield Sand and Gravel and the \$1,777.50?

Chairman Robertson added, "for Northern Oaks".

Mr. Harrington asked them to hold up please.

Vice Chairman Pitman stated that while he was doing that, he asked Selectwoman McHugh if they had 34 members that they pay dues on to, is there that many on the fire department and rescue now?

Selectwoman McHugh stated probably, on paper to which the vice chairman stated okay.

The vice chairman stated that the next question, and he would wait for John, he had one more after this, he stated to the chairman.

The chairman asked if the town administrator had that figure to which he remarked that he was doing it now.

Mr. Harrington stated that removing the \$1504.44 for Deerfield Sand and Gravel and removing the \$1,777.50, Northern Oak, he comes up with \$44,929.57.

Chairman Robertson stated that what they were looking at now for an account payable is \$44,929.57 and he would turn to Dick.

He asked if he wanted a motion and Selectman Dill stated to him that he had said that he had something else. He stated that he had a question only, not to take off the payables. We can vote on this.

**Motion:** Selectman McGarry moves to approve the accounts payable, week ending December 31, 2020 manifest in the amount of \$44,929.57

**Second:** Selectman Dill

**Discussion:**

**Vote: Yea 4, Nay 0, Abstained 0 – Motion Carries**

Vice Chairman Pitman asked why is there so many numerous reimbursements to like the fire chief and different ones? Do they not have a town credit card they could use so that the auditors don't have to go through this?

Mr. Harrington stated that he (fire chief) does not currently, have a town credit card.

Vice Chairman Pitman asked if there was a reason to which Mr. Harrington stated no. Back with the former chief, he had a credit card because he was also the maintenance supervisor at the same time and he had one under that role. It is entirely possible to get Matt a credit card as well.

Vice Chairman Pitman stated that he didn't know what the Board thinks but he thought transparency would be in his favor if didn't have to run it through his personal credit card and then get reimbursed.

Numerous members agreed and the chairman asked if the Board was in general agreement that they should supply the fire chief with a town credit card. All members of the board agreed.

Chairman Pitman asked Mr. Harrington if he could make the arrangements to get the fire chief a town expense card and he stated, absolutely.

#### **Accounts Payable – January 4, 2021 - \$1,025,771.50**

**Motion:** Selectman McGarry moves to approve the accounts payable in the amount of \$1,025,771.50

**Second:** Selectwoman McHugh

**Discussion:** Chairman Robertson asked for discussion and remarked that obviously, a large chunk of this is going to the school district.

**Vote: Yea 4, Nay 0, Abstained 0 – Motion Carries**

Chairman Robertson asked Vice Chairman Pitman if he had a question on the payroll just to the credit card and the vice chairman stated that he did, just to the payables from the credit card and not the payroll.

Chairman Robertson stated that he had multiple tax refunds and he thought probably the easiest way to process these is if he reads from the master list and someone could make a motion to grant the request at the end of that unless there is a question on any of the refunds but if there is no objection, he would read through the list with name and amount.

Vice Chairman Pitman asked if these were overpayments, is that why we are reimbursing them.

Chairman Robertson stated that these are overpayments. Typically, either a mortgage company has made a second payment after a property owner has. A number of them involve closing or closings for refinancing where a title company or a mortgage company has made a payment at the same time that the property owner has. Lots of times there is confusion at closing that results in double payments.

Vice Chairman Pitman remarked that then it was nothing that was conflicting and the chairman continued that they do have about and then went to answer the vice chairman that he was right and that Kelly Roberts did give them about 25 pages of backup for each of the refunds.

First of the list he had:

<b><u>Make Check Payable To:</u></b>	<b><u>Check Amount:</u></b>
Peter Viar	5,253.60
George Robert Widdick	4,317.00
Martin Miccio	12.00
Donna Ramirez	41.46
Law Offices of Joseph A Torra	2,363.88
Accurate Title	3,230.00
Samuel Bickford	38.61

Wayne Pollock	9.64
Bradley Briggs	17.97
Donald Wyman	7.00
Michael Gayhardt	20.70
Renee Darling	16.12
Scott Emerton	13.88
George Lermond	822.00
WFG National Title Insurance Co.	10,423.00
CoreLogic Centralized Refunds	6,057.00
Jacqueline Berry	5.42
TitleVest, LLC	3,308.00
Lereta, LLC	3,412.00

**Motion:** Vice Chairman Pitman moves to approve the tax refunds as read by the chairman

**Second:** Selectman Dill

**Discussion:** Selectwoman McHugh asked if there was any way that they could lessen this? Is there something that we are doing wrong or something that we are not catching before they accept payments to which the chairman stated that no, it is nothing that is happening on the town end. As he has said, most of these involve, lots of times it is a new mortgage or a new purchase where there is confusion on who is supposed to pay the taxes. Happens with the insurance too and either the mortgage company or the title company or the law office pays the taxes. The town clerk gets the check and then she gets a check from the property purchaser as well.

Selectwoman McHugh stated that she didn't know if there was something that they could do to make it easier so that they didn't have to do this.

Mr. Harrington stated that the town clerk is joining them in the meeting if they wanted to ask her directly.

Chairman Robertson stated that he didn't think there was much that they could do as the double payment is sort of out of our hands. It comes from the property owner or their legal or their mortgage partners but if you have anything to add Kelly, feel free to.

Ms. Roberts stated that she didn't. She stated that he was absolutely correct. It is just the nature of the tax bill. Whenever there is a tax bill, it is a time that a lot of people refinance and, in that refinance, it results in that overpayment so they could expect this going at the end or near a tax bill to see refunds and this bill is a little strange because we are straddling 2020 and 2021 so this is the first wave. There might be another wave closer to the due date or after the due date. Hopefully, she stated, she has the bulk of the bulk payments in. She thought that she had another bulk payment coming in from Loreta that might result in some overpayments and the bulk payments are usually electronic files, multi-million-dollar payments that are applied automatically so it is not something she could kind of cherry pick, you know, leave out so it is just the nature of the bill and she tried to put all the refund requests in one motion for them so they are not doing it like twenty times.

Vice Chairman Pitman stated that was great and the chairman stated that he appreciated it. Selectwoman McHugh thanked Ms. Roberts.

Mr. Rhodes asked the chairman if he could ask a question to which he was granted and continued to ask if that correlated with the amount of real estate transactions generally and as she was understanding the question, she thought, because of the large payment, the amount of refunds, percentage-wise, rather small. If a two-million-dollar payment came in and she is refunding \$5,000.00, the error rate isn't that big.

Selectman Dill stated that he thought what Mr. Rhodes was saying that there have been a ton of real estate transactions in town, does that correlate with why they had more of these than usual and Selectwoman McHugh agreed with that.

Chairman Robertson stated that they had a motion on the floor, if there is no further discussion.

**Vote: Yea 4, Nay 0, Abstained 0 – Motion Carries**

**Signatures/Correspondence:**

Nothing to discuss

### **Town Administrator's Report:**

Mr. Harrington stated that he had two items for the Board this evening.

One, just to let the Board of Selectmen know that Ray Ellis is taking a leave of absence until further notice. Out of an abundance of caution from his physician, is recommending he avoid the work place until he gets a vaccine for COVID given his health situation so they will be attempting to work without Ray for a while. He will be in touch with him. He is certainly available by phone, if he had any questions that come up during this time.

Also, he wanted to mention that he had sent the Board the 2021 draft warrant based on conversations that the Board has previously had to begin the discussion. Just to put a date in mind, they have to be posted by January 25<sup>th</sup>, 2021 which is a couple of weeks away. They had one more board meeting before then in order to approve those and then the warrant must be signed by the Board prior to posting.

Just keep that in mind in your discussion tonight that there is a deadline coming up quickly and that is it for him tonight.

### **Unfinished Business:**

That is probably a good place to pick up. He knew that John gave them last week, the warrant articles that they had for the year. We are leaving, the general sentiment of the Board is that they did not want to have a fairly lengthy list of warrant articles this year. John has given them a bare-bones set of house warrant articles. It has the zoning amendment obviously, the town budget, reconstruction money for roadways and they had the two lake warrant articles.

He didn't know if there were other items that the Board wants to consider putting on the warrant this year. As John mentioned, they had another week to review these and make some decisions.

He has not had a chance to talk to Steve Keech in detail about the police station and what they might be able to do at a reduced cost. He was hoping to have a meeting this week.

Other than that, he didn't know what the Board's pleasure was, maybe review these, think about what they wanted to do and make their final resolutions next week?

Mr. Harrington stated to Andy for clarification, if he may? The zoning amendment is just a place holder until he gets a final answer from the Planning Board as to whether they are going to be proposing any zoning amendments this year and Article 2, again, is just a place holder. The Board had discussed a warrant for road reconstruction funds as they put in last year.

The only two that the Board have been more final on in their discussion were the Northwood Lake Water Shed and the Pleasant Lake Preservation. That's why those two aren't highlighted. The other two are just placeholders.

Selectman Dill stated that they maybe getting something from the Rec Commission come as well. They have had discussions about, very preliminary. (Couldn't transcribe due to audio quality) the 25<sup>th</sup>.

Vice Chairman Pitman asked who again that was from and Selectman Dill stated that it was the Rec Commission.

Vice Chairman Pitman continued to stated that they should keep the lake ones there as that generates a lot of tax income with the quality of the lake.

Mr. Harrington stated to Selectman Dill to clarify, they didn't have until the 25<sup>th</sup>. He actually has to put them on a building on the 25<sup>th</sup> and the Board needs to sign the warrant prior to that.

Selectman Dill asked what the drop-dead date was for them so that he could send it over.

Mr. Harrington stated that he would need it prior to the 19<sup>th</sup> and the chairman added, which is their next meeting and Mr. Harrington restated that.

So, anytime before the 19<sup>th</sup>, preferably, not 4:00 in the afternoon.

Selectman Dill thanked Mr. Harrington for catching that.

Selectman McGarry stated that he had a couple of things.

One was, that from the Planning Board, there will be no zoning amendments this year.

The second item is, did they want to put in a warrant article with regard to election/appointment of the road agent. They talked about it last year but they never put anything in.

Chairman Robertson asked what the Board's pleasure was with regard to that. He didn't think it was a bad idea. They haven't had much success in the past but, and he didn't think it was a bad idea, a couple of reasons but the primary reason is that if they get a road agent that they just can't work with or something devastating happens to the road agent, it would be nice to have the ability to appoint and hire without going through a lot of rigamarole.

Selectman Dill stated that this would also open up the pool of available applicants beyond the town, correct?

Selectman McGarry stated correct as well as the chairman.

Vice Chairman Pitman stated that he thought that it would be a great year.

Chairman Robertson asked if the Board was in general agreement that they retry that warrant article and all agreed they should.

Chairman Robertson asked Mr. Harrington if he could put together the language for that to put it on the warrant.

Mr. Harrington asked them if they wanted a warrant for a public works director?

Chairman Robertson stated that would be it.

Selectwoman McHugh questioned a public works director or a road agent.

Vice Chairman Pitman stated that it should be a road agent.

Chairman Robertson asked if they just wanted it to be a road agent as opposed to public works to which all agreed.

Mr. Harrington stated that he was to get the warrant article language for an "appointed road agent" rather than an "elected road agent". Is that what he was hearing which members agreed it was.

Selectman Dill stated that he didn't think it was time to make the jump. He agreed with the public works director at some point but he thought that it would poison the well on this one and the vice chairman stated that this was a ways away and Selectman Dill agreed that it was for a different time.

Chairman Robertson stated that the only reason that he would be in favor of a public works director is that he didn't know if Mr. Pelletier was going to stay with them as Transfer Station manager given his retirement plans and typically a public works director also handles the transfer station but they could cross that bridge when they get to it.

Selectman Dill stated that this was a valid point that he hadn't thought of.

Mr. Harrington stated that just as a reminder, Rick has announced that October of this year is his retirement date.

Selectman McGarry stated that nothing says that they can't add additional duties to the road agent to which the vice chairman agreed.

Chairman Robertson stated that they would leave it as the road agent unless the group thinks differently. If you could draw up the language John for the warrant article to make the road agent an appointed position to which he agreed to do.

Mr. Harrington asked if there was any interest in the road reconstruction warrant amount on that? Was the Board interested in redoing that?

Selectman Dill stated that he thought that they should stay with the same amount that they used last year to which Selectman McGarry agreed.

Selectman Dill stated that the only think that he thinking on that, can they add "tree removal" to "road reconstruction and tree removal"?

He just thinks that they are going to be in a world of hurt next year on the ash borer but he didn't want to have a separate warrant article just for tree removal if everyone else agrees.

Chairman Robertson stated that he would agree with that and he thought that clearly, the ash problem that they are going to face is going to be roadside so is everyone in general agreement to add tree removal to the road reconstruction language. Selectman McGarry stated that he agreed.

Mr. Harrington stated that he was adding tree removal to Article 2 for the same amount of money, is that correct?

Chairman Robertson as well as others agreed that was correct.

Chairman Robertson stated that under other unfinished business, he circulated a copy of the letter to the board members. He got a few back from a couple of you with some edits. He will incorporate those edits into a final letter and have that out tomorrow and he thought that they should plan on having the road agent be at our meeting, at our next meeting.

He will present the letter to him prior to that but unless there is disagreement from the Board, he thought they should have him at the next meeting. Some members stated that it sounded good.

Vice Chairman Pitman asked if that was one week or two weeks and the chairman asked when their next meeting was to which Mr. Harrington stated that it was in two weeks on the 19<sup>th</sup>.

Chairman Robertson asked if they wanted to have a meeting next Monday or if that is not possible, another date this week or stick to next Monday to meet with the road agent.

Vice Chairman Pitman stated that they could touch on the articles and then meet with the road agent and gives them an extra week to finalize the articles.

Mr. Harrington stated that it would be January 11<sup>th</sup> and Selectman McGarry stated yes.

Chairman Robertson asked Mr. Harrington if they had any conflicts and he stated that he was checking the holiday schedule now and told him to go ahead and he would get back to the Board.

Chairman Robertson asked if there was other new business or other business?

Selectman Dill stated that they had to get to the loader agreement. Did they have to vote on the loader agreement again and the chairman stated that they did.

Chairman Robertson stated he was thinking that they may want to hold off until next Monday when they meet with the road agent. He knew that there were a couple of concerns specific to this particular agreement and Selectman Dill stated that this was probably a good point.

Mr. Harrington stated that there were no conflicts on the 11<sup>th</sup> so that is a good day to meet and the chairman added that their primary agenda items would be potential review of the warrant articles and meeting with the road agent.

Chairman called for other business and hearing none, at this point, he would move to Citizen's Comments.

#### **Citizen's Comments:**

##### **Mr. Rhodes – Old Centre Road**

Question on the tree removal that was just mentioned. Would it go smoother to limit that to ash trees since those are in fact, the issue, most prominent or would it be all tree removal?

Chairman Robertson stated that he thought that they would probably leave it at just tree removal to give them some broad scope and not. Warrant articles are very restrictive and focused on the specific language and he thought that it is probably in their best interest to leave that as tree removal in the event that they need to remove something beyond an ash. The Board may feel differently and adjust the warrant article as they move forward.

Mr. Rhodes stated that he was just thinking of the public perception of it, that's all because there has been some concern in the past from people on scenic roads about trees being removed and such that if the context were mentioned as being the ash issue, that might warm people up to it, that's all.

Chairman Robertson stated that it was a good suggestion.

Mr. Rhodes added that just a piece of information, the Heritage Commission is meeting on Thursday to consider the question of a warrant article regarding the town hall windows so it sounds like it will be in in time to communicate with you all following that meeting in the course of their warrant article discussions.

The chairman stated that they looked forward to seeing it and Mr. Rhodes thanked them.

The chairman called for other citizen's comments and upon not hearing any, called for a motion to adjourn.

**Motion:** Vice Chairman Pitman moves to adjourn at 6:00 pm

**Second:** Selection Dill

**Discussion:**

**Vote:** Yea 4, Nay 0, Abstained 0 – Motion Carries

**Next Meeting: Monday, January 11, 2021 at 5:30 pm**

*The Minutes were transcribed and respectfully submitted by Dianne L. Kimball, Recording Secretary  
Pending approval by the Board of Selectmen*