

**TOWN OF DEERFIELD  
BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
December 23, 2019  
MINUTES**

**Call to Order**

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

**Present:** Andrew Robertson, Chairman; Richard Pitman, Vice Chairman. Fred McGarry, Jeff Shute and Cindy McHugh, Selectpersons.

**Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag**

Chairman Robertson asks all to rise and pledge allegiance to the Flag

Chairman Robertson stated that the first item on the agenda is a discussion with the fire chief, Matthew Fisher and he believed that it was in regard to a command vehicle for the fire department. Correct him if it is more than that.

**Matt Fisher – Fire/Rescue**

Chief Fisher stated that it is going to be a little more than that in that he wanted to update the Board on a few things that are going on.

So, to start with the Tahoe, as they knew, it was a 2004. Last year they ended up spending \$4,500.00 on maintenance and this year, it didn't pass inspection due to body rot on both the driver and passenger sides. He was able to get a few quotes that ranged from \$3,500.00 to \$10,000.00.

So, the \$3,500.00 was Mark Rollins here in town. His plan would be to use money from the equipment maintenance fund and the vehicle maintenance fund to repair the body work on the Tahoe. He is going to request the Board put in another warrant in to purchase a new Tahoe or lease, whichever they would want for next year but a) they are still three months March and even if the town were to pass it, it probably would not see the Tahoe until August, September so he would still be looking at nine months of not having a command vehicle.

The Tahoe currently, in regards to repairing it, the statement prices for different vehicles, similar model would be a Ford Expedition or a Tahoe, the Tahoe is a lower value than the Expedition and worked to get some baseline prices to outfit the vehicle.

Chairman Robertson stated that they still had a couple of weeks before they had to turn in or finalize warrant articles so did, he expect to have the "outfit" prices.

He stated that he had looked at the bid prices and they had a range of vehicles and he didn't know if they had a four-wheel drive Tahoe included in that.

Chief Fisher stated that they did have the 2020 Tahoe special services vehicle package, as you would, which comes in a four-wheel drive option.

Chairman Robertson asked if he recalled roughly what the price was on that?

Chief Fisher stated that what they were looking at an outfit is similar to last year's value. Last year, he believed, they were right around \$57,500.00 for a full outfit.

He was able to get some prices for some estimates on an extended warranty as well.

Without the warranty, this year they are looking at \$58,850.00 with some price increases. The warranty would be about \$2,200.00 which would be seven years/75,000 miles. There is an 100,000-mile option as well for a little more money. He didn't believe that they needed that as they wouldn't have 75,000 miles in seven years.

The purchase price of the Tahoe straight out would be right around \$37,000.00 and some change for just the vehicle and the rest would be outfitting it after that.

Chairman Robertson asked if there would be any saving to be had by looking at a club cab Chevy pickup or F-250.

Chief Fisher stated that he didn't feel that it would be the right fit for a command vehicle for the town.

Chairman Robertson asked the Board if they had any questions for the fire chief regarding a vehicle at this point?

No one did and asked for other updates.

Chief Fisher stated that he didn't know if the Board wanted to review the other warrant articles. Mr. Harrington had given him an overview of what they were looking at this year. It's basically the same as last year from his standpoint.

Chairman Robertson stated that the funding for those that he had in there are from different funds.

Chief Fisher stated that the first one appears to be Warrant Article 5 which is the annual \$50,000.00 which would be put in the fire apparatus capital reserve fund.

Chairman Robertson stated that the Board had gone over these at a previous meeting and he felt that the Board didn't have a problem with any of those numbers.

Chief Fisher stated that he is in favor of moving forward on all the ones that they had last year.

Chairman Robertson stated that the one that might have stood out was seven because they weren't sure because that isn't as cut and dried as they have been putting in year on year for equipment and he didn't know if he had explanation regarding that?

Chief Fisher stated that this would be the third year that they have asked for this. The first year, he believed, actually passed but there was some language that stopped them from being funded so this is the second year. The intent there is to have some money to be able to upgrade some of the waterholes and establishing new ones throughout town.

Vice Chairman Pitman asked if he had some new ones away from the center?

Chief Fisher stated that he had a few existing waterholes that he would like to pursue reclaiming and installing dry hydrants. Most of the waterholes currently don't have dry hydrants so this time of year, it involves some work to get to the water as it involves cutting through the ice and putting hard suction down in the water.

Chairman Robertson asked if he had any new warrant articles beyond that to which the chief stated that he didn't have any other new warrant articles.

He asked if the Board had any questions in regards to the capital reserve funds and the equipment funds and the maintenance funds that they looked at?

Vice Chairman Pitman stated he didn't right now and the chairman thought that they were in general agreement with the chief.

Chief Fisher asked if the Board was in general favor of using the \$3,500.00 value, if you will, to pursue keeping the Tahoe in service?

Chairman Robertson stated that he is not in favor of spending any money on that vehicle really but if he has to go nine months....

Chief Fisher continued that that is best case if the town approves the Tahoe in March. So other feedback was that last year they ended up going more towards the lease. Are there any feelings regarding a three-year lease as opposed to buying the vehicle?

Chairman Robertson stated, that given the amount, he would speak for himself, it would be wiser to buy the vehicle especially if they are going to keep it for sixteen or seventeen years.

In regards to regular updates, a few things around the firehouse, they are planning on using some of that maintenance fund for updating some things on Engine 2. Basically, Engine 1 is about 25 years old. They are utilizing Engine 2 more now on a day-to-day basis. It is somewhat limited for that use, He is going to try to reclaim some

space on the truck by removing the generator and upgrade some of the scene lights so that they are all LED and basically gain one till so that they can keep some more equipment and use that truck a little more.

In December, he put together a tool demo, if you will. He has some power tools and equipment that needs to be replaced. It is either outdated or parts aren't available to repair a couple of saws. The airbags for lifting vehicles or solid objects are at a point where the manufacturer has said to cut them up and take them out of service because they are still steel reinforced and they have exceeded their lifespan by ten-plus years at this point.

So, there are safety items that they are working on at the end of the year and the beginning of next year to upgrade and replace things.

Chairman Robertson asked if any of the Board had any other questions.

Vice Chairman Pitman asked how he was doing help-wise?

Chief Fisher stated that they could always use more help. He has had a few people reach out to him and expressed interest, more on the fire side.

Basically, one of the things that they have been talking about as officers, he heard that the Policy Committee is revisiting participation in the department. He stated that they had quite a few members on a piece of paper but how many actually come to calls and that is something that they will have to sit down and decide what minimum participation needs to be in order to be a member of the department when he is outfitting them with thousands of dollars of equipment.

If they are not coming to calls, not coming to trainings, they are not participating and could be a liability risk on an emergency scene.

He stated that they are always looking for a few members. Mr. Harrington helped him out a few months ago by putting out the flyer around town and by online means stating that they are still looking for call members for both fire and EMS.

Vice Chairman stated to keep up the good work.

Chairman Robertson asked the Board if there were any questions for the fire chief and none were heard. He thanks him for his report and stated that they would be back in touch.

#### **Robert Wolfgram – Veteran's Tax Credit**

Chairman Robertson stated that before things get rolling, not to throw a wet blanket on his presentation, but he thought that the Board was in general agreement with using the maximum figure for the Veteran's Property Tax credit. For lack of a better reason, they were not aware that it had been increased to \$750.00 but certainly let the Board know what his feelings were.

Mr. Wolfgram stated that he just wanted to make sure that the Board was aware of it and it says that as long as the town approves, and he didn't know what the process was, whether it would be a warrant article so that is why he wanted to talk with them.

Chairman Robertson stated that no, typically, the Board of Selectmen can make a motion to do that. He would suspect that the Board is willing to do that and they would probably make it effective, for lack of a better date, January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2020,

Move forward, the other thing he would take a look at, and he wasn't sure what they were allowing for fully disabled tax credit but that may have been increased. He wasn't sure if it was at \$2,000.00 before but he believed that it was at \$2,000.00 at this point.

He stated that they would look into that and make sure that they are allowing the maximum credit for fully disabled veterans as well.

**Motion:** Vice Chairman Pitman moves to raise the tax credit to \$750.00, the maximum amount allowed by law for the veterans of this town for their property tax

**Second:** Selectwoman McHugh

**Discussion:** Selectman Shute asked if they wanted to add the disabled veteran's tax credit also and the chairman stated that they would verify the correct amount and keep it separate.

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

Chairman Robertson stated that what he would suggest is that they talk with the tax collector/town clerk and find out how they could implement this going forward, making sure there is no little hitches that they are not aware of but he didn't believe there were.

Chairman Robertson thanked Mr. Wolfgram for bringing this to their attention.

**Regular Business:**

**Review of outstanding minutes of December 9, 2019**

**Motion:** Vice Chairman Pitman moves to approve the minutes of December 9, 2019 as presented

**Second:** Selectman McGarry

**Discussion:**

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

**Accounts Payable Manifest - \$66,908.19**

**Motion:** Selectman McGarry moves to approve the Accounts Payable Manifest in the amount of \$66,908.19

**Second:** Selectman Shute

**Discussion:**

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

**Signatures:**

Chairman Robertson stated that there appears to be a number of items that need signatures.

**Timber Tax Levy – Daniel Holdridge - \$152.88**

**Motion:** Vice Chairman Pitman moves to collect the timber tax levy from Daniel Holdridge in the amount of \$152.88

**Second:** Selectman Shute

**Discussion:**

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

**Correction Request from Sherie Sanborn, Assessing Office:**

This is a recommendation from Avatar Associates that they refund a supplemental abatement request of \$481.00 to Sherwood Woods Senior Housing Development.

**Motion:** Vice Chairman Pitman moves to refund \$481.00 to Sherwood Woods Senior Housing Development

**Second:** Selectman Shute

**Discussion:**

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

Chairman Robertson stated that they have four tax payment agreements as a result of meeting with the Board of Selectmen and also meeting with Denise Greig and town administrator John Harrington and working out terms that the Board had agreed to with individual tax payers. These require a motion to move forward with the taxpayer agreements.

William and Charlene Cartier for property at 106 Nottingham Road.

The Board had agreed to the specifics of this but they now have the actual agreement.

**Motion:** Vice Chairman Pitman moves to sign the tax payment agreement for William and Charlene Cartier for property located at 106 Nottingham Road

**Second:** Selectman McGarry

**Discussion:**

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

Various members of the Menses family for property located at 152 North Road. They met with their representatives and agreed to the payment agreement but they now have it on paper and need a motion to move forward.

**Motion:** Selectman McGarry moves to sign the tax agreement for the Menses family for property at 152 North Road

**Second:** Selectman Shute

**Discussion:**

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

Susan White for property at 8 Shady Lane

**Motion:** Selectman Shute moves to sign the tax agreement with Susan White for property located at 8 Shady Lane

**Second:** Selectwoman McHugh

**Discussion:**

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

Susan White for another property at 8 Shady Lane

**Motion:** Vice Chairman Pitman moves to sign the tax agreement with Susan White for other property located at 8 Shady Lane

**Second:** Selectman McGarry

**Discussion:**

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

**Review of Correspondence:**

Chairman Robertson stated that first in the correspondence file, they have a letter from the Deerfield School Board as signed by school board chair Mr. Deely.

The long and short of this letter is that the Deerfield School Board is looking to replace the gym floor at the Deerfield Community School for \$138,536.00. They are looking to have available impact fees for the school released in two stages, issuance of impact fees in the amount of \$96,975.00 to cover the required deposit for materials and the remaining \$41,561.00 being released upon satisfactory completion. Installation of the gym floor is scheduled for April, 2020.

They do have a proposal submitted from the vendor that they have selected and he didn't know what the Board's pleasure is in regards to this?

They do have money available in impact fees to which the town administrator confirmed with the Board.

Vice Chairman Pitman asked if it is earmarked school or earmarked town?

Mr. Harrington stated that it was earmarked for the school. There is a separate fund.

Vice Chairman Pitman asked if they just had to okay it and the chairman added that they would have to make a motion to release the \$138,536.00 total.

Mr. Harrington stated that Mr. Langlois from the school board was present if the Board wanted to talk with him

Selectman McGarry stated that it is probably a difficult question but is this a maintenance item for the school board or not?

Chairman Robertson asked if Mr. Langlois could take the microphone in order to get his response.

Chairman Robertson asked Mr. Langlois if the school board considers this a maintenance item or a capital improvement.

Mr. Langlois stated that the gym floor is an item that is listed on the capital improvement plan that the school has. They maintain the floor annually every year but due to the growth of the town, the floor has seen a drastically accelerated use over the years.

They have also seen, with Parks and Rec housing programs there that were never intended when the school was built, it is continuing to increase its wear on the floor.

The floor has been effectively, used up at this point and there isn't anything left that they can do with it to continue maintaining it. They have budgeted every year to buff it, strip it, sanded it, everything and finished it annually. It's unfortunate at this point that it is used up and that is just due to the growth of the town and the increased usage of the floor.

Selectman McGarry stated that they could probably make that an argument in regard to being able to use that for that purpose but the big concern that he had is if it is being used for simple maintenance then it can't come out of those funds.

Chairman Robertson stated that as Mr. Langlois mentioned, this has been identified for more than a year or two now as a project that they wanted to undertake.

Mr. Langlois stated yes and that it was also something that was also identified during an inspection a number of years ago.

Selectman McGarry stated that as Mr. Langlois pointed out, the need to replace it is based on expediated growth and the activities that are occurring there is the argument.

Chairman Robertson asked if there were other questions to which there were none and asked the Board what their pleasure would be regarding the \$138,536.00. They would definitely need a motion to release.

**Motion:** Selectman McGarry moves to release the school impact fees in the amount of \$138,536.00

**Second:** Selectman Shute

**Discussion:** Vice Chairman Pitman asked if they handled all the bid work to which both Mr. Langlois and Chairman Robertson stated that they did and also in conjunction with Amber Wheeler, the administrator for our SAU.

Chairman Robertson stated that the vendor is American Sports Floors

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

Chairman Robertson stated that next they had a packet from Avatar Associates of New England and this is in response to an abatement or adjustment request on a land use change tax levy involving property owned by John and Lorena Sinnamon. It looks like there are several lots on Mountain Road.

He didn't know if everyone has had a chance to read the letter. He thought that basically, he thought as to what Avatar is telling them, is that they feel that they are correct in their evaluation of their property and their handling of the features and assets of that property.

He didn't know if the Board has any issues. Mr. Sinnamon is available and didn't know although he wasn't on the agenda if the Board wanted to recognize him.

Vice Chairman Pitman stated that he didn't understand it so they might as well.

Mr. Sinnamon stated that the basic premises is that they did add a cabin on one of the pieces of property in Deerfield that was in current use.

What seems to appear to has happened is that they added a cabin and there has been a long, existing access road on the property that has history back to the 1800s. There are old stone walls along it, there is an old foundation and a cemetery down that road so he is sure that the road has been there forever.

In 2006, they improved the road due to Mountain Road washing out the road to include culverts and ditches and in 2016, they logged it and they used that same access road.

So, the bottom line is that the access road has been there. The clearing at the top has been there since the beginning of time. It has been used for logging and they use it to get access to the land for the same purposes.

They had a cabin delivered and there were no permits required since they weren't building anything. It's a cabin that's made to be moveable. It's built on skids and they can drag it around to wherever you want and they researched the laws to make sure that they weren't violating anything.

They used the access road to bring the cabin in to where it sits now and it wasn't mentioned but there is a solar panel there as well.

Long story short, they got the letter that says that not only is the area around the cabin taken out but the whole road is being taken out and one of their fields is being taken out and one of those fields has forage on it. They worked with UNH Extension, Trudy May, to do habitat management there.

So, somehow, the act of putting the cabin in, took all their land out of current use. The RSA doesn't support that.

Chairman Robertson stated that he knew that there was some concern about structures, particularly if there are not solely agricultural, on current use land.

He didn't know that they have had a chance to fully digest this and he thought that he would urge the Board to study this, take a good look at it, and they could get back to him. He wouldn't feel comfortable, necessarily to make a motion on this. He didn't know how the rest of the Board feels?

Mr. Sinnamon stated that in conclusion, he understood that there could be an argument around this cabin, and the RSA is very clear that you take out the cabin and maybe an area around for a ladder around the cabin, the RSA is very clear on this but the RSA is also very clear for the other portions that have been in existence for twenty years. How, now, are those areas coming out of current use because of the cabin?

So, they understand that there is discussion around the cabin but that they disagree with the total amount of area that was taken out.

Chairman Robertson stated to let them take a hard look at it and sorry to drag him out this evening but glad to hear what he had to say and they will make a decision on this probably in two weeks, at least before they were at that stage.

Next up they had a letter from NH Department of Revenue Administration and this is in regard to advising them of their median ratio as well as their overall equalization assessment sales ratio.

The DRA has found that their median ratio of land, buildings and manufactured housing for the tax year 2019 to be 80.9 percent. They have also determined that the overall equalization assessment sales ratio for the land, buildings and manufactured housing in Deerfield for tax year 2019 80.7 percent.

These ratios will be used to equalize and modify the local assessed evaluation.

That is what they got from the state and there is not much they can do about it but he has read it into the record.

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

Mr. Harrington stated that there were a few updates for the Board.

They received notification from NHDES that because of a lawsuit that has been filed, that the PFAS testing has been suspended until that court case is heard. They are set up for testing in 2020 but they won't begin until they hear the results of the court case.

Anticipated budget surplus, and again this is a "best guess" situation depending if they don't have snow before the end of the year or any unknown costs, should be slightly under \$200,000.00 at this time given left-over payroll and anticipated accounts payable.

He was bringing an answer back to the Board regarding the cost of the Northwood signs. He got that from the road agent that the cost of the two Gulf Road signs for "one-way" would be approximately \$180.00.

Selectman McGarry asked if that was each or total and Mr. Harrington stated that this is the total. The signs are \$65.00 each for a total of \$130.00. The posts would be \$25.00 each for a total of \$180.00.

He also included in their packets, a list of recently deeded properties and those properties that the town already owns from previously deeded action and prior to that and his question to the Board is the next step is a decision from them as to the next action on these properties? Is the intent to bring them to auction and if so, his recommendation would be to do it sometime in the spring but they need to make a decision because there are a few legal steps that need to be taken to notify prior owners.

Chairman Robertson stated particularly with the second half of this list, that they do want to move forward towards auctioning. He believed that all of these are vacant properties for the most part.

He knows looking at the list, there are three parcels that may be of interest to the Conservation Commission and he thought that they should make them aware of those parcels as well as they move forward.

Mr. Harrington stated if he could have the Board look at this list and make some recommendations as to which parcels, they wanted to include in the auction, which ones they didn't want to take action on.

The section above are parcels that the town has owned for quite a while and if there are any parcels in there that they are not interested in putting in the auction, many of those pieces are pretty small. They surround Freeze's Pond and might be of interest to an abutter.

Chairman Robertson stated that it looks like they are in the range of .01 of an acre for more than three-quarters of that list so let the Board take a look at them and also if they could, present this to the chairman of the Conservation Commission and maybe also the Heritage Commission.

He didn't see anything that jumps out as particularly of historical value but there may well be something and Mr. Harrington stated that he could share it with both of them.

Chairman Robertson stated that they would take a look at it at their next meeting.

Chairman Robertson asked Mr. Harrington if he was going to present the Parks and Rec warrant article to which he stated that he was.

Mr. Harrington stated that the Board also has an updated list of warrant articles that are pending for a decision and they had a new one included as a proposed warrant article from the Parks and Rec Department on a single sheet and there is still a decision on Warrant Article 4 which is in regards to the COLA.

He has not heard back from the Heritage Commission on the amount for the Elevator Expendable Trust or if they want to do that, they are still deciding that.

He stated that he talked to the road agent and he is recommending \$200,000.00 for the road reconstruction.

Chairman Robertson thought for the most part on those articles, leave the capital reserve sort of articles to which the Board is in agreement but if they wanted to come back on the 6<sup>th</sup>, it still gives them time to plug values in if folks want to take a look at that.

He stated that if the road agent is comfortable with \$200,000.00, he certainly was.

One thing that they discussed but had not included on there, was whether they wanted to put a warrant article for a Director of Public Works instead of having a road agent election and that is certainly something that they could discuss at that meeting as well if they wanted to plug that in or not.

Mr. Harrington has some sample RSA orchestrated so he has the sample language if that is something the Board wants to do.

Selectman McGarry asked what the cut-off date was for warrant articles and Mr. Harrington stated that it was the 12<sup>th</sup> or 14<sup>th</sup>, somewhere in there and that is the date for any petitioned warrant articles as well.

Vice Chairman Pitman stated that they could have two meetings in January and it was agreed that they could.



Selectman McGarry stated that they probably would submit a warrant article updating the master plan which is in need as they are well past the five years.

Mr. Harrington stated that the only time limit involved is typically, the warrant articles are put out in the newsletter prior to town meeting.

Chairman Robertson stated that they certainly could meet that deadline pretty quickly.

Most of these warrant articles have either been approved by legal in previous years or are RSA orchestrated, the language is so they are in pretty good shape.

Mr. Harrington stated that the proposed article that has to do with changing elected to appointed has already been approved by town counsel as well so that language is good as well as the Parks and Rec one. They have both been run by counsel.

Mr. Harrington stated that this was all that he had tonight.

#### **New/Other Business:**

None heard

Chairman Robertson stated that they have no reason for a non-public session this evening so he would move to Citizen's Comments.

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

##### **(Couldn't hear the person's name) – Church Street**

He just pulled up while he was sitting there, the service disabled and the surviving widow of a member killed while on duty, the tax credit was \$700.00 and it was raised to \$4,000.00 for both.

Chairman Robertson thanked him and they will be looking into what they are offering. He thought the Board was in general agreement that they would offer the maximum amount available on those as well if they are not there presently.

##### **Ms. Cady – Old Centre Road**

She stated that she was in Epping and used what she would call a three-person elevator in their town hall. She is just wondering why they couldn't put that in in the back area of the town hall where the safe was?

Chairman Robertson stated that it is something that they could look into.

Ms. Cady stated that they use it at the Garrison Play House also in Rollinsford. It fits a wheelchair or two or three people. It is just something that they wouldn't need to build onto the town hall and appears it would do what they would need to provide handicapped access.

Chairman Robertson asked for other citizen's comments. None were heard.

**Motion:** Vice Chairman moves to adjourn at 6:10 pm

**Second:** Selectman Shute

**Discussion:**

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

**Next Meeting: Monday, January 6, 2020 at 5:30 pm**

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