

Board of Selectmen
Minutes February 21, 2022

Meeting convened at 6:00 pm

Present: Ken Christiansen
Robert Mantegari
Andrew Artimovich
Jon Morgan

Christiansen called the meeting to order.

Mantegari read the dedication of the town report. The annual report was dedicated to Ken Christiansen.

The Board reviewed payroll, accounts payable and signed the register.

Karen Clement, Town Administrator, presented the board with the appointment slip for Michelle Siudut for a 3-year term on the Conservation Commission. Mantegari made a motion to accept, Artimovich 2nd the motion. All were in favor.

Clement also presented an appointment slip for Jessica Balukas for the local river advisory committee as recommended by the Conservation Commission. Mantegari made a motion to accept, Artimovich 2nd the motion. All were in favor.

Kip Kaiser, Building Inspector, had the following building permits to be approved this week:

- D&H Realty Trust, 388 Route 125, Plumbing – 2 toilets, 2 sinks, water heater: signed by Board
- D&H Realty Trust, 388 Route 125, Electrical – installation of lights and outlets: signed by the Board
- D&H Realty Trust, 388 Route 125, Plumbing – common bathroom install: signed by the Board
- Biscotti Family Trust, 36 Longmeadow Drive, Electrical – heat pump and duct work: signed by Board
- Wright Builders LLC, 35 Route 107, New Dwelling – Plan Examination: signed by Board

Mantegari made a motion, 2nd by Morgan, to approve the public minutes of 2/15/2022 as written. All were in favor.

Mantegari made a motion, 2nd by Morgan, to approve the non-public minutes of 2/15/2022 as written. All were in favor.

Clement presented a memo from Jim Michaud to continue the educational exemption for painters and allied trades. They traditionally receive 95% exemption off of their assessment. Michaud would recommend that to continue after reviewing all their documents. Mantegari made a motion to accept, Artimovich 2nd the motion. All were in favor.

Clement then presented the board with land use change tax warrants and bills for the following properties in the following amounts for a total of eighty thousand, two hundred fifty dollars (\$80,250).

- Scrabble Road – \$16,000
- 23 Route 107 – \$12,500
- 25 Route 107 – \$12,500
- Densen Properties (5 units on Crawley Falls Road) – \$39,250

Morgan asked what these were for. Clement explained these are properties coming out of current use to be taxed. Mantegari made a motion to accept, Artimovich 2nd the motion. All were in favor. Morgan asked who makes the determination of the amount. Clement responded it was Jim Michaud, the town's contracted assessor. The board signed the warrants.

Clement presented the board with a revised contract for SA Engineering. Mantegari made a motion to accept, Artimovich 2nd the motion. All were in favor.

At 6:17pm, the bond hearing for the conservation warrant article was opened.

Daphne Woss, the Town Clerk/Tax Collector, was present to discuss the set-up for the election. She will not be available to set-up the day before the election because of her commitments to the school meeting. Her plan is to set-up on Sunday, March 6 at 1pm ahead of the March 8th election. Woss has requested the assistance of the select board members to help with the set-up. The board members agree to be there to assist.

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Bob Stephens, Conservation Commission Chairperson, presented a draft warrant article. As read, "To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate three million dollars (\$3,000,000)(gross budget) for purchasing land or other interests therein for conservation; three million dollars of such sum to be raised through bonds or notes in compliance with the Municipal Finance Act (RSA 33:1 et seq., as amended); to authorize the Selectboard to issue, negotiate, sell and deliver said bonds and notes and to determine the rate of interest thereon and the maturity and the other terms thereof, and to take any other action they deem appropriate to effectuate the sale and/or issuance of said bonds or notes, subject, however, to the following provisions:

- no such bonds shall be issued with a term of maturity less than 15 years;
- such bonding authority shall expire at conclusion of the fiscal year 2027;
- purpose of Warrant Article is to conserve parcels determined by the Conservation Commission to be of strategic conservation interest to protect wildlife habitat and water resources while helping to maintain the town's rural character;
- where practicable such land would be made available for use of the citizens of town for recreation (i.e., hiking, biking, running, hunting, fishing, etc.) within the laws of New Hampshire. Use restrictions may be imposed by town, however, after purchase, to comply with future grants, easements and/or sale of property rights to permanently ease for conservation and to offset the cost to Town, as long as such restrictions comply with the spirit of purpose, and at the discretion of the Selectboard; and
- land or property interests to be purchased with bond proceeds shall be acquired in the name of the town by the Conservation Commission, subject to the approval of the Selectboard, pursuant to RSA 36-A:4."

Stephens went on to explain that the issue came to light recently when it was realized the town did not have the means to purchase properties that may become available for the purpose of conservation. The bond would not secure money except as needed to purchase property for conservation or conservation easement. Stephens went on to explain that in 2002 the town had a conservation warrant article where they secured 2 million dollars. The money was subsequently used over a five-year span to purchase conservation property. Stephens attempted to mirror that warrant article with the one he presented tonight. To off-set the cost, Stephens also spoke about the possibility of federal grants and matches that could be applied for in the future. The plan is to strategically purchase land.

Becky Dunham, Block Drive, commented on conservation of land. She explained her current property has land in conservation because of the bond that was done in 2002. Dunham believes conserving land is a good idea. The land she referenced is on the north side of the Exeter River east of Crawley Falls Road.

Doug Cowie, Middle Road, spoke about being involved in the 2002 bond process. He mentioned it "unties hands" when property becomes available to purchase. With the bond, there is a possibility to move the purchase along rather than having to wait for town meeting. With the bond in place, the town has the leverage to move the process along more quickly.

Stephens agreed with Cowie's statements. He went onto explain that the 3 million dollars in today's dollars is less than the 2 million in the 2002 bond. It is Stephens' opinion that with programs available and clever use of the properties there would be good use of the money. Mantegari asked how many acres of land are currently conserved. Stephens was unsure of the acreage, but stated he believes that currently 16-18% of property in the town is conserved.

Artimovich requested the conservation numbers be available for town meeting.

Christiansen asked Stephens if the Conservation Commission had done a study recently. Stephens is confident the Commission has the requested information; he just needs to find it.

Morgan asked if there has been a goal percentage of the amount of land to be conserved. Stephens responded that due to some transition on the Commission amid Covid a few years ago, they are still familiarizing themselves with the information and goals. Stephens went onto say they are currently focusing on an inventory of wetlands in town and land that would be best used for strategic conservation. He said the Conservation Commission needs to work with the Planning Board on their Master Plan.

Becky Dunham, Block Drive, stated the historical society has a large map of conservation land that the commission is welcome to copy or utilize to get the needed information. She stated it is a very large map.

Letty Bedard, Middle Road, asked if there was any news on the publication of the February issue of the Brentwood Newsletter. Christiansen responded that he has not heard anything. He sent an email to the editor, but he has not heard back yet.

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Becky Dunham, representing the Historical Society, presented the board with a certificate signifying the acceptance of the grange building as a historic site. The Historical Society applied for historic status last January and it has been accepted by the State. An official plaque for the outside of the building and a plaque with the history of the building will be forthcoming. Dunham said this accomplishment was thanks to the volunteers and donors. The grange makes the third building in town that has received historic recognition. The other 2 being Schmalzer House and Pilgrim Church. Dunham went onto explain a few details of the Schmalzer House. She suggested if you have not seen it, you are encouraged to visit it. Christiansen thanked Dunham for her hard work.

Bob Stephens shared more information on the Conservation Commission and its monitoring of conservation land. Previously the land was being monitored/audited by a hired company. Currently, the monitoring/auditing is being done by volunteers. Mantegari asked what that entailed. Stephens explained permission is sought by the landowner and then the property is walked. There are other means to examine the property, including drone usage, but walking is the current preferred method of the volunteers. Stephens spoke to those in the audience (in person and online) explaining that if there is interest in conserving property to reach out to the Conservation Commission. They are also open to new volunteers.

Michelle Siudut asked about the land that was taken out of current use and the funds received for those properties. She inquired about funds being sent to the Conservation Commission. Christiansen responded that the funds collected are put into the general fund. Clement went on to explain the town maintains \$75,000 in a separate fund for the Conservation Commission. Stephens asked for a recap of those properties. Mantegari responded with the list of those properties.

Mantegari asked Stephens about an update on the bridge. Stephens responded that the contractor has been notified about the award of the job. The work is slated to begin by July 1 in order for the job to be completed in the 8 weeks before the start of school. If the water levels are at a safe level, the work may begin sooner. Stephens asked for a copy of his contract. Clement explained it has been signed by the board and she will send a copy to him via email. Christiansen asked if the town has paid Stephens' invoice yet. Clement explained the town has not yet been invoiced but will pay it upon receipt of the invoice.

Carol Belliveau, Mill Road, inquired about the availability of the Town Reports. Clement stated they would be available on March 1st.

Artimovich asked if the Conservation Bond Warrant Article made it into the Town Report. Clement responded it did. She went onto explain Article 14 will be an insert.

Chief Ventura will be sworn in on March 1.

At 6:47pm, Christiansen asked if there were any further questions from the public. With no questions, Christiansen closed the public hearing.

At 6:47pm, a motion was made by Artimovich to adjourn the meeting. The motion was 2nd by Mantegari. All were in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Tamera Peek