

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING MINUTES
TOWN OF EPPING, NEW HAMPSHIRE
June 1, 2021**



ATTENDANCE

Chairman Mike Yergeau; Selectmen Joe Trombley, Tom Gauthier, John Cody; Town Administrator Gregory C. Dodge. Selectman Bob Jordan and Executive Secretary Joyce Blanchard were excused.

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Mike Yergeau called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM.

ENTER INTO NON-PUBLIC SESSION 91-A:3 II (b) hiring

Motion by Selectman Mike Yergeau to enter into Non-Public Session in accordance with RSA 91-A:3 II (b) hiring. Seconded by Selectman Tom Gauthier. Motion carried 4-0. Roll Call vote was taken and carried unanimously.

RECONVENE

Chairman Mike Yergeau reconvened the public meeting at 7:00 PM in the Town Hall meeting room and via Zoom.

EOC DIRETOR DON DeANGELIS

Chief DeAngelis was on vacation. Chief Lombardo reported on his behalf that as of today the EOC is closed and returned to "normal" operations.

FIRE CHIEF LOMBARDO REPORT

Chief Lombardo reported that the regular training schedule has begun and will run through June. In July training will slow down and go back to a regular schedule in August.

New ambulance "A1" went through State inspection and will run at the BLS (Basic Life Support) level due to a deficiency in the narcotic box lock. A new lock is on order due in this week.

Engine 3 had some major transmission issues and was towed to the repair shop. Several valve body parts and control module were needed to get it back in service. The repairs were handled through Selectman Jordan and the engine is now back in service. Engine 2 is now back in service as well and in West Epping station.

Details have been set up for the major National event next week. Chief Lombardo is waiting for the Emergency action plan and expects that before the major race.

POLICE CHIEF WALLACE REPORT

Chief Wallace reported that last Thursday there was a meeting with Exeter, Brentwood, State Police, DOT, Exeter Hospital and the Dragway for the major event on June 11, 2021. There will be a new traffic plan in effect and he expects that to work well. Chief Wallace expects everything to go well. There will be a command center on site as in past races. The only unknown being the crowd expectation since we are a post COVID situation.

Chief Wallace met with the School Administration and Superintendent on May 20th to introduce the new SRO. SRO Huard was impressed with his welcoming.

The radar trailer has been placed on Shirkin' Road in response to the joint meeting last week. He will collect data and share that at a later date.

CONSENT CALENDAR

Minutes from the May 17 and 24, 2021 Selectmen's meeting was submitted for approval.

Payroll manifest for the pay period ending May 27, 2021 in the amount of \$152,803.73 was submitted for approval.

Accounts payable manifest for the week ending May 27, 2021 in the amount of \$1,406,991.95 (\$1,064,698.00, school payment, \$90,000.00, school impact fee, \$252,293.95, town) were submitted for approval.

Intent to Cut for Janice DeFilippo Pleasant St. Map #27, Lot #98 was submitted for approval.

Abatement from Seacoast United Soccer Map #35, Lot #27-003 was submitted. This abatement has been reviewed by Scott Marsh and it is recommended to be denied.

Land Use Change Tax for Prescott Orchards Land Development Map #8, Lot #14-106 in the amount of \$10,000.00 was submitted for approval.

Selectman Trombley brought up the fact that the "Intent to Cut" seems to be a moot point since the cut has been done. Joyce is out this week and this will be followed up on next week.

Probably just a formality but Selectman Trombley felt that at the very least cuts should wait until approved before the actual cut.

Motion by Selectman Tom Gauthier to approve the Consent Calendar as recommended and submitted. Seconded by Selectman John Cody. Motion carried 4-0.

FIRE DEPARTMENT FULL-TIME HIRES

Chief Lombardo recommended the following two new full-time hires; Robert Aliberti (Firefighter/EMT) starting rate of \$21.58 per hour and Michael Sitar (Firefighter/EMT) starting rate of \$20.58 per hour. Both with a starting date of on or about July 1, 2021 pending a satisfactory background check.

Motion by Selectmen Tom Gauthier to approve two new full-time hires of Michael Sitar (Firefighter/EMT) starting rate of \$20.58 per hour, Robert Aliberti (Firefighter/EMT) starting rate of \$21.58 per hour. Seconded by Selectman Joe Trombley. Effective on or about July 1, 2021 pending a satisfactory background check. Motion carried 3-0-1 (Selectman Cody abstained).

PROPOANE GAS AWARD

Town Administrator Gregory C. Dodge explained that the Town of Epping in conjunction with the Epping School District have looked at propane bids from three various companies; Palmer Gas, Proulx and Rymes. These bids were solicited by Business Manager Bonnie Sandstrom. It is recommended that the Board approve the bid of \$1.399/gallon submitted by Palmer Gas. This quote is good through June of 2023.

Motion by Selectman Tom Gauthier to award the propane bid to Palmer Gas at a price of \$1.399 per gallon through June of 2023 in conjunction with the Epping School District. Seconded by Selectman Joe Trombley. Motion carried 4-0.

BENIAH LANE TREE REMOVAL

The Conservation Commission would like to remove a tree that is leaning towards private property on Beniah Lane. The tree is on conservation land where two trees have already fallen and caused property damage. Selectman Trombley said that the Conservation Commission wanted to have the tree removed as a "good neighbor" gesture. Selectman Trombley said he believes the Town should remove a tree if it is posing risk to private property.

Motion by Selectman Tom Gauthier to have Dave Reinhold get a price to have the tree removed and bring it back to the Board or approve it tonight and put a cap on the cost. Seconded by Chairman Yergeau for discussion. Discussion continued with Chairman Yergeau suggesting that the tree be removed by the Town at the same time Dave Reinhold does other tree cutting in Town. Following the discussion, Chairman Yergeau rescinded his second and Selectman Gauthier rescinded his motion.

Motion by Selectman Tom Gauthier to authorize Dave Reinhold to remove the tree on Beniah Lane at the same he does other Town tree work or when he deems it to be the right time to take it down, coming from his budget. Seconded by Chairman Mike Yergeau. Motion carried 4-0.

RESPONSE TO FREMONT

The Board of Selectman discussed an appropriate response to the Town of Fremont following their joint meeting with the Fremont Selectmen and Shirkin' Road Committee on May 24, 2021.

Selectmen Gauthier started by saying he thinks the Town is "chasing its tail" in finding a solution to the Shirking Rd. matter. It is still unknown if Fremont will lift the restrictions if Epping spends money on Fremont road upgrades. Selectman Trombley got the impression that the restrictions will be lifted if road improvements were made.

Selectman Gauthier said that any offer would have to be "fair and reasonable" and he would not be in favor of adding sidewalks as mentioned at last week's meeting.

Selectman Trombley did not want to upgrade the Fremont roads per Fremont's engineering study, if we are going to put in a new road in the long-term. Making Fremont roads wider and perhaps repaving it each year could be considered. If years from now Epping is able to get a new access road built then Fremont can take back road maintenance on their roads.

It all depends on the solution. If the State and DOT allowed curb cut onto Route 101 perhaps that is a path that could be followed. A recent letter to the Governor's office may result in having some assistance in leveraging the DOT.

Selectman Gauthier said with fair and reasonable costs to upgrade Rogers and Shirking Rd. and with a long-term plan to make an access road parallel to Rt. 101, that may be viable. Selectman Cody agreed but said the Town may be "held hostage" to the State's time line.

Selectman Gauthier didn't think Fremont was in any hurry to lift the restrictions. Selectman Trombley agreed stating that at last week's meeting Fremont Selectman Roger Barham mentioned how the road restrictions is Fremont's "leverage". He didn't think Fremont was in any hurry to give up that leverage. Selectman Cody said that Fremont never seemed to want to answer the question of lifting the road restrictions directly. Fremont's focus appears to be on a long-term solution where Epping builds its own access road keeping Fremont out of it.

Chairman Yergeau said that according to Dave Walker (RPC) it costs approximately one million dollars a mile for road reconstruction. So if a half mile of road is done that is \$500,000 and it does not include design, etc. A whole new road would cost much more than that.

Chairman Yergeau asked Administrator Dodge to seek assistance from Attorney Ratigan so the Board could have a meaningful conversation with him and weigh the Town's options.

Selectman Trombley said that he doesn't want to have an excessive expense to do something twice. Safety issues can be addressed but you don't remedy road infrastructure.

Selectman Cody suggested that two questions be posed, 1. Epping will bring the roads to standard and maintain them until a permanent solution is found and, in that scenario, will Fremont remove the restrictions? If the answer is no then question two is if Epping were to rebuild and maintain the roads will the restrictions be lifted as Epping seeks a long-term solution, or do it without the long-term solution. Selectman Cody said that Fremont refuses to answer the question directly.

Chairman Yergeau said Epping should ask Fremont if there was any way to gain access to the roads if we are pursuing a long-term solution. If there is, what is it Epping needs to do?

Selectman Trombley said the Fremont Chairman Cordes answered that question at last week's meeting. He would not lift the restrictions until the road infrastructure is brought to the standards as stated in the engineering report.

Selectman Trombley agreed with Selectman Cody's options with one change. He would not bring them to "standards" but would want to do whatever is needed to get the road to the point where trucks can safely drive on them. In other words, the road will always be in a "like new" condition. Whatever agreement is made be mindful that standards change over time. The roads may have been adequate 20 years ago but are not now. If Epping were to make improvements, standards could change again and he wouldn't want the Town of Epping to have to maintain the roads in the future.

Motion by Selectman Joe Trombley to have Administrator Dodge email the Fremont Administrator, Heidi Carlson informing her that Epping's formal response will be sent by Wednesday June 9, 2021. Seconded by Selectman Tom Gauthier. Motion carried 4-0.

Chairman Yergeau said that at some point the Board needs to consider putting together an RFP to engineer the construction of a new road.

Motion by Selectman Joe Trombley to have Administrator Dodge draft a letter to Fremont with two options, the first option being to repair the roadway and maintain it at a fair and reasonable cost until such time a long-term solution is implemented that keeps all of Epping traffic on Epping property. The second option is to repair the roadway, Shirking and Rogers Rd., to be in compliance with Fremont's engineering report and the weight restrictions being lifted. Seconded by Selectman Tom Gauthier. Motion carried 4-0.

ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Town Administrator

Town Administrator Gregory C. Dodge reminded everyone that the tax bills are out and have a due date of July 1, 2021.

Administrator Dodge announced that the mask restriction for those who have been fully vaccinated has been lifted effective today although masks are still recommended. Those who are not fully vaccinated are still required to wear a mask when visiting Town Hall.

Administrator Dodge reported that Dave Reinhold was asked to give an estimated cost to keep Bunker Ave. one-way and reroute it from Route 27 to Main St. to Main St. to Route 27. Dave said that the project would cost no more than \$2,000. Selectman Tom Gauthier said that most of the costs would go towards changing the 4-5 parking spaces to a different angle. He also suggested that the abutters be notified and a public hearing be scheduled.

Selectman Trombley would like to get input from Chief Wallace on this change.

Motion by Selectman Tom Gauthier to have the Town Administrator send out letters to the residents and abutters of Bunker Ave. and businesses on Main St. regarding the proposed change to Bunker

Ave. and to have a public hearing in a month. Seconded by Chairman Mike Yergeau. Motion carried 4-0.

Administrator Dodge brought up the fact that the original reason for the non-public as voted by the Board was to discuss hiring only but after being excused from the non-public a legal matter was added. Chairman Yergeau was asked to restate his motion upon entering non-public session.

Chairman Mike Yergeau made a motion to amend his motion original motion to enter into non-public session to include a legal matter under RSA 91-A:3 II (e). Seconded by Selectman Tom Gauthier. Roll call vote was taken and carried unanimously.

INDIVIDUAL SELECTMEN'S REPORTS

Selectman Tom Gauthier

Selectman Gauthier said that there were three parades in Epping yesterday for Memorial Day with the Morrison parade being the biggest of the three. He also said that Chairman Yergeau is multi-talented as he played taps. Additionally, there was an event at the Grange Hall. There was also a separate tractor parade and go-cart parade. The weather held out and it turned out to be a nice day. Selectman Gauthier had a note stating, "equipment" but could not remember why.

Selectman Bob Jordan

Excused from the meeting.

Selectman Joe Trombley

Selectman Joe Trombley reported from the Conservation meeting of last week. The Commission is looking for volunteers to maintain the trails.

Selectman John Cody

Selectman John Cody reported from the Library Trustees meeting last week. The landscaping looks great and they are within budget. Selectman Trombley asked about the brick work. Selectman Cody knew only that there was a delay but did not have a date certain for the completion of the rear door.

Selectman Mike Yergeau

Chairman Mike Yergeau said that the American Legion was in a tough spot regarding the parade however he respects their decision to cancel. Though the Selectmen supported the parade the Legion decided to cancel due to the current COVID conditions at the time and things changed rapidly after that decision. Despite that Chairman Yergeau was delighted at yesterday's turnout all around.

ADJOURN

**Motion by Selectman Tom Gauthier to adjourn after 30 seconds. Seconded by Selectman John Cody.
Motion carried 4-0.**

Meeting adjourned at 8:23 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

**Gregory C. Dodge
Town Administrator**

Mike Yergeau, Chairman

Joe Trombley, Vice-Chairman

Tom Gauthier, Selectman

John Cody, Selectman

Note: Selectman Bob Jordan was excused.

Date: June 14, 2021