



**TOWN OF THORNTON
BOARD OF SELECTMEN**

Town of Thornton • 16 Merrill Access Road • Thornton, NH 03285 • 603.726.8168

Approved on: 12-29-21
BOS Initial: mr
Rec'd by Town Clerk on: 1-3-2022
Town Clerk Initials: pdw

**Board of Selectmen Meeting Minutes
December 15, 2021**

3:00 p.m. Chairman Roy Sabourn opened the Thornton Board of Selectmen meeting work session with the Pledge of Allegiance.

This meeting was held at the Thornton Town Hall and via Zoom. The Zoom code was referenced on the posted agenda.

ROLL CALL: Chairman Roy Sabourn, Vice-Chairman Joseph Monti, Selectwoman Marianne Peabody, Selectman Brad Benton, Selectman Peter Laufenberg

ABSENT: None

STAFF PRESENT: Debra Shepard, Town Administrator; Kerrin Randall, Board Secretary

OTHERS PRESENT: Judy Rolfe, Myrtle Lewis, Steve Babin, Katie Hadaway, Diane Gravel

OTHERS PRESENT VIA ZOOM (*names are as they appeared via Zoom*): None

Manifests

MOTION: "To approve the payroll manifest dated 12/17/2021 in the amount of \$28,231.59."

Motion: J. Monti

Seconded: P. Laufenberg

Discussion: None

Motion Passes: 4 – Yes, 0 – No, 1 – Abstained

MOTION: "To approve the vendor manifest dated 12/17/2021 in the amount of \$529,427.79."

Motion: P. Laufenberg

Seconded: M. Peabody

Discussion: None

Motion Passes: 4 – Yes, 0 – No, 1 – Abstained

MOTION: "To approve the IRS vendor manifest dated 12/17/2021 in the amount of \$7,655.50."

Motion: P. Laufenberg

Seconded: J. Monti

Discussion: None

Motion Passes: 4 – Yes, 0 – No, 1 – Abstained

Consent Agenda

1. Notice of Intent to Cut Wood, Emmylou Vollmer, PID 10-1-4-1, Route 175, Thornton, NH,
2. Notice of Intent to Cut Wood, Vincent Levasseur, PID 9-1-2, Merrill Access Road, Thornton, NH.

3. Notice of Intent to Cut Wood, Roy A. Sabourn, Sabourn Family Trust, PID 3-7-3, Gore Road, Thornton, NH,
4. Tax Collector Supplemental Warrant, Kennedy Family Trust to Lauren & Patrick Frazer, PID 17-18-7, \$531.00.
5. Abatement, PID 17-18-7, Lauren and Patrick Frazer, P01, P02, P11 and P12 in the total amount of \$531.00.
6. Capital Reserve Fund – Highway Vehicle, Equipment and Major Maintenance, parts to outfit used sander for new F550. Total cost \$3,673.93.
7. Notice of Intent to Cut Wood, Cynthia Thomas, PID 6-6-6, Mirror Lake Road, Thornton, NH.

MOTION: “To approve the Consent Agenda for December 15, 2021 as presented.”

Motion: B. Benton

Seconded: M. Peabody

Discussion: R. Sabourn stated he will abstain from the vote since he has an intent to cut in the consent agenda.

Motion Passes: 4 – Yes, 0 – No, 1 – Abstained

TA Presents

TA Shepard submitted a current use change tax warrant for property located on Centennial Way for the board’s signature.

MOTION: “To accept the current use change tax warrant as presented for property on Centennial Way.”

Motion: R. Sabourn

Seconded: B. Benton

Discussion: None.

Motion Passes: 5 – Yes, 0 – No, 0 – Abstained

TA Shepard updated that she spoke with RA Kubik about adding ledge pack to the concrete pad by the recycling building at the Transfer Station to avoid a potential trip hazard. RA Kubik indicated that he will pack out the concrete pad with sand and gravel right now and add ledge pack in the Spring when the ground is not frozen. J. Monti commented that this has been completed.

TA Shepard stated the uni-loader and backhoe at the Transfer Station need routine service. RA Kubik has agreed to perform this routine maintenance and will keep track of his hours for billing relative to the Transfer Station.

TA Shepard shared some information with the board relative to the hours at the Transfer Station. This included what the hours were in the past and some suggested changes. She indicated she has been discussing this with Assistant Manager Zach Simon and once the new Transfer Station Manager is hired, she will work with both of them to come up with some suggestions for hours going forward to present to the BOS for discussion.

R. Sabourn stated an issue has come to light after a ZCA for a single-family home was received for a property on Roma Road, which is a private road that is part of a subdivision that was established before Planning and Zoning standards were in place. The property in question has road frontage, but per RSA 671; 41, no types of building permits can be given for a property on a private road that was not previously approved by the Planning Board without additional review and comment by the Planning Board First.

R. Sabourn stated the issue of properties with no frontage has been looked at over the past year, and to resolve this particular ZCA problem, the Planning Board will need to review the application. He stated he has spoken with Planner Menici, and she will bring this to the Planning Board on the behalf of the BOS for their recommendations and will submit an update to the BOS.

Non-public pursuant to RSA 91-A: 3, II (b-hiring)

MOTION: "To enter into non-public session pursuant to RSA 91-A: 3, II (b-hiring) at 3:22 p.m."

Motion: R. Sabourn

Seconded: B. Benton

Discussion: None

Roll Call: R. Sabourn – Yes, J. Monti – Yes, M. Peabody – Yes, B. Benton – Yes, P. Laufenberg – Yes

Motion Passes: 5 – Yes, 0 – No, 0 – Abstained

MOTION: "To exit the non-public session pursuant to RSA 91-A: 3, II (b-hiring) at 3:32 p.m."

Motion: R. Sabourn

Seconded: B. Benton

Discussion: None

Motion Passes: 5 – Yes, 0 – No, 0 – Abstained

MOTION: "To offer Candidate A the position of Transfer Station Manager at a Labor Grade 10, Step 7 with a waiver of the one year of employment requirement relative to vacation time. Candidate A will have ten days of vacation time available effective January 1, 2022. This offer is contingent on all three Boards approving the offer of employment."

Motion: J. Monti

Seconded: P. Laufenberg

Discussion: None

Motion Passes: 5 – Yes, 0 – No, 0 – Abstained

2022 Draft Warrant Article Review

TA Shepard reviewed a draft of the 2022 Warrant Article. She stated elected positions that are up for voting are listed first, with the financials following.

TA Shepard discussed the Draft Warrant Articles as reflected on the Draft CIP. There was some discussion on what the Fire Department Building line was in reference too. Discussion followed. If this line is for the Main Fire Station in Campton, town counsel has suggested a new capital reserve account be created. If it is for the Thornton substation, then it would come under Municipal Buildings. Discussion followed.

A majority of the Board agreed that if this was for the Main Fire Station, it would be appropriate to establish and fund a new capital reserve account titled Campton-Thornton Main Fire Station renovation, maintenance, and repair. TA Shepard will research this further and bring another draft warrant to the next BOS meeting.

Meeting Minutes

MOTION: "To approve the Board of Selectmen minutes of December 1, 2021 as amended, with the further amendment of adding B. Benton and M. Peabody as contacts to reach out to Mill Brook Road property owners in the vicinity of proposed road improvements."

Motion: B. Benton

Seconded: J. Monti

Discussion: J. Monti questioned if M. Peabody was designated as the point of contact for Mill Brook residents that are abutters to the proposed improvement sites; this is not listed in the minutes. Discussion continued. It was established the B. Benton was the contact person for Site 1, and M. Peabody was to be listed as the contact for Sites 2-4. J. Monti stated he will assist with Site 4, as that is his property.

The minutes will be amended further to reflect this.

Motion Passes: 5 – Yes, 0 – No, 0 – Abstained

MOTION: “To approve the non-public meeting minutes of December 1, 2021 as presented.”

Motion: B. Benton

Seconded: M. Peabody

Discussion: None

Motion Passes: 5 – Yes, 0 – No, 0 – Abstained

Agenda Items: (no public input unless approved by the Chairman)

Events Committee Budget

Judy Rolfe, Chair of the Events Committee, entered at 4:09 p.m.

R. Sabourn asked if there were any outstanding invoices or revenues that are not reflected in the budget before the Board.

J. Rolfe stated there are no revenues and a few expenses from the “Light Up Thornton” Event that still need to be submitted. She stated there is also a raffle for a cord of firewood that will be extended until January, and those funds will be added in as revenue. J. Rolfe stated the Committee is stretched thin for members right now, and fundraising has not been as successful as hoped.

J. Rolfe stated she would like to reduce her initial budget request from \$4,000 to \$3,000.00 for 2022, as many items purchased in 2021 will be reused at future events; this was a building year for the Committee. She stated the “Concert Series” is anticipated to be the costliest event for 2022. She stated “National Night Out” expenses will be discussed with Chief Gilman.

J. Rolfe stated the Committee would like to do a spring event, as “Discover Thornton” has not been successful. P. Laufenberg suggested a “Sugar on Snow” event and J. Rolfe thanked him for the suggestion.

M. Peabody stated she was disappointed the BOS was not invited to town tree lighting, as it has been a tradition to have the BOS Chair light the tree; this has been the norm since the lighting event was established. J. Rolfe stated there were no volunteers available to coordinate the BOS members attending and M. Peabody said all the Committee needed to do was ask.

J. Rolfe stated there were advertisements everywhere for the event, and the Board could have attended. J. Monti stated he was present at the tree lighting and M. Peabody reiterated her disappointment in the BOS not being invited by the Committee.

The Board reviewed the submitted budget for the Events Committee. R. Sabourn stated he would not support a budget of \$3,000.00. M. Peabody stated she would suggest the budget be between \$1,500.00 and \$2,000.00. Discussion continued.

J. Monti stated the Events Committee is the one entity that gives residents something to do, and it is well worth it to grant the Committee a \$3,000.00 budget, as they are all volunteers doing something for the residents.

Discussion continued.

The Board agreed to a budget of \$2,500.00 for the Events Committee. The Board thanked J. Rolfe and she exited at 4:35 p.m.

Conservation Commission Budget

Myrtle Lewis, Chair of the Conservation Commission entered at 4:35 p.m.

M. Lewis stated the Conservation Commission budget has been level funded. She stated that Thornton was not chosen for the Antioch University program to create a Natural Resource Inventory (NRI) for the town; this could have dramatically changed their budget if Thornton had been selected.

The Board thanked M. Lewis and she exited at 4:36 p.m.

P. Laufenberg stepped off the Board at 4:39 p.m.

Cemetery Budget

P. Laufenberg, as cemetery trustee, reviewed that the budget for the cemetery. He stated is it basically level funded. There is \$10,000 in the budget for road work, but this will ultimately come out of the Library Trust Funds. Discussion followed relative to the past tree removal and the road improvements needed.

P. Laufenberg stated there is a new budget line for a stipend for the Cemetery Trustee who is the point person for the public of \$1,500.00 per year. This person is responsible for dealing with all public inquiries, meeting with families, picking out lots, etc. This person currently does not receive any compensation and Trustees feel this person should receive some compensation for the amount of work they perform for the Cemetery Trustees.

J. Monti asked if this would set a precedent, as the person currently in the position is an elected official. P. Laufenberg stated the stipend would go to whomever is in that position regardless, and they do not need to be an elected official or trustee; the person currently performing the tasks happens to be a trustee, but that may not always be the case.

The Boards agreed that the stipend is appropriate for the tasks being done.

R. Sabourn asked if accountability in the system has been resolved with the cemetery and P. Laufenberg stated there has been improvements in the paperwork aspect of the cemetery operation, and the trustees are in the process of revising their rules and regulations to reflect a process in billing, fees, etc. He stated all money will flow through the Town and paid out to appropriate parties; this will be put in place for 2022.

P. Laufenberg rejoined the Board at 4:50 p.m.

J. Monti stepped off the Board at 4:51 p.m.

Zoning Board Budget

J. Monti, as Chair of the Zoning Board presented the ZBA budget, noting that the Board only meets when there is an item on the agenda; in 2020 there were several meetings, whereas in 2021 there were a handful.

J. Monti stated that the payroll line was level funded, as there is no way of determining if the ZBA Assistant will be needed monthly or sporadically. He stated other line items were increased slightly to account for postage, materials, etc.

The Board reviewed the proposed budget and the number of hours needed for the ZBA Assistant were questioned, as the 2021 hours decreased significantly from 2020. Discussion continued.

The Board suggested the ZBA Assistant line be reduced to \$2,500.00. J. Monti agreed with this.

The Board suggested the operating expenses be reduced to \$800.00, and the training line be reduced to \$400.00. J. Monti agreed.

J. Monti stated the line for legal services could be reduced to \$4,000.00. Mr. Laufenberg asked if ZBA members had been consulted on this budget prior to its presentation and J. Monti responded no, that most items were housekeeping and weren't major changes. J. Monti thanked the Board and rejoined to Board at 5:00 p.m.

Board of Selectmen Item Discussions

R. Sabourn stated he was disappointed in how the Fire Department budget was presented at the Joint meeting with Campton on December 13, 2021. He stated there was an apparent vacillation by Chief Defosses regarding the number of necessary fire trucks, and it is hard to come up with a "game plan" when he keeps changing his mind.

R. Sabourn stated Chief Defosses sat before the Thornton Board and said that he cannot get multiple trucks out the door, but when he went before the Campton Board, he asked for new trucks. R. Sabourn questioned why trucks cannot be rotated out from the main station and relocated to sub stations, rather than have a brand-new truck sit in a garage. R. Sabourn stated the Chief claimed that there are small insurance benefits to getting new trucks, but he cannot justify saving a small amount of money for a truck that will sit in a garage.

R. Sabourn stated that he was also not impressed with Chief Defosses comment about how he was forced to buy cheap fire apparatus. He stated there are many other departments in the state that would never spend the kind of money the Campton-Thornton Fire Department does for apparatus. R. Sabourn stated he will have a discussion with Chief Defosses when time permits.

R. Sabourn stated he did not like the Campton BOS suggesting what Thornton should use as its COLA. He stated he believes that the COLA discussed by this Board should be increased based on inflation, and the fact that no employees are getting a step raise this year.

P. Laufenberg clarified that the Board agreed to examine the COLA numbers once the rest of the budget is finalized.

J. Monti stated this Board, needs a better communication plan, as he felt the Board was ill prepared for the joint budget meeting. He stated this is not any one person's fault, but there was no read ahead information provided. TA Shepard responded that she was not aware of the new COLA amount being used by Campton or the changes to the Fire Department budget prior to the joint meeting. Discussion followed

Library Budget

Library Trustees Katie Hadaway and Diane Gravel entered the meeting at 5:24 p.m.

R. Sabourn asked if a new Library Director had been hired and K. Hadaway stated yes, and she is doing great.

The Board reviewed the proposed Library budget. R. Sabourn stated the only item in question is why the General Expenses were reduced significantly; he wanted to ensure the number was correct, and nothing was being omitted.

D. Gravel stated the number submitted is correct, as the budget for books was reduced. She stated, in looking at other libraries compared to Thornton, that amount for books seemed like a large number and they will utilize the inter-library loan system. D. Gravel stated they also moved money for a custodian into the part time staff line, as a part time staff member is also serving as an independent contractor to clean the building.

The Board agreed that they were satisfied with the proposed budget. D. Gravel and K. Hadaway thanked the Board and exited at 5:29 p.m.

Planning Board

Steve Babin entered the meeting at 5:32 p.m.

The Board reviewed the proposed budget. J. Monti asked if the hours for the Planning Board Assistant were accurate. S. Babin stated yes, and the Planning Board is happy with the amount of work that is being billed for the eight (8) hours per week. The Board agreed with the hours and wages for the Board Assistant as presented.

S. Babin stated he received a memo from Planner Menici regarding her proposed wages and hours. TA Shepard stated that she was not provided with a copy of this memo and therefore, was not able to give to the board for read ahead.

J. Monti reviewed that the current wages and hours for the Planning Director are for 12 hours per week at \$275.00 per day. S. Babin confirmed this is what the Planning Director is scheduled for.

J. Monti stated, based on the proposed changes, Planner Menici's wages would increase from \$275.00 per day to \$300.00 per day.

S. Babin highlighted the following points as presented in Planner Menici's memo:

- Typical day in office is 6-6.5 hours
- Meeting days can be 10.5-11 hours
- Up to 7.25 hours are done additionally at home per week without compensation
- The increase of wages to \$30,000.00 will cover the office hours as well as hours worked at home

- More hours are to be expected as the Master Plan will be updated.

S. Babin stated he understands there are financial constraints, and the Master Plan will need two (2) days per month in addition to normal hours. S. Babin stated there is no statute that says the current Master Plan must be updated. He stated other states use a revolving Master Plan format that enables them to update when and as needed, rather than trying to update the entire plan on a set schedule.

S. Babin stated other items were level funded, except for legal.

J. Monti stated consulting work is charged per day, regardless of hours worked on those days. P. Laufenberg commented that Keach-Nordstrom also reviews plans and prepares reports for Owl's Nest.

S. Babin clarified that Keach-Nordstrom does review plans for Owl's Nest, but the Planning Director also reviews the plans for zoning compliance. He stated some of that work is duplicated by both parties, and the agreement with Keach-Nordstrom, Owl's Nest, and the Planning Board may need to be looked at again. Discussion continued.

J. Monti asked if the hours listed were enough for the workload the Planning Director receives. S. Babin stated he has never felt that the Board is unprepared for their hearings. He stated the workload is aggressive and applicants are trying to push more and more, but the Planning staff has set firm boundaries and deadlines that are being adhered to.

R. Sabourn commented that, in the past, some applicants would be presenting half completed applications and submitting materials the day of the meeting. S. Babin stated, and P. Laufenberg confirmed, that this has stopped due to the deadlines and standards developed by Planning staff.

Discussion continued on the proposed 9% increase in wages for the Planning Director and the rationale behind the increase.

S. Babin commented that he is in no way disappointed with the quality of work, but there is a challenge due to distance. The last Planning Director lived in town and was more accessible. J. Monti asked if the materials the Planning Board is getting now is improved from years past and Mr. Babin stated yes.

R. Sabourn stated consultants do not get a COLA increase, but in a show of good faith in working with her, the Board could increase her wages by \$10.00 per day. He stated he is completely against the \$7,500.00 for the Master Plan. The Board agreed that \$5,000.00 for the Master Plan line is enough to cover the additional hours required of the Planning Director, as well as other costs associated with the Master Plan. Discussion continued.

R. Sabourn advised that a breakdown of hours spent on each project per day, whether it be for the Planning Board or Master Plan, will be helpful in tracking hours allocated to each project. TA Shepard stated a note can be added to the Master Plan line item indicating 'legal and professional services'.

The Board thanked S. Babin for coming and he exited the meeting at 6:19 p.m.

Public Forum

J. Monti asked if the December 29, 2021 meeting is going to be held, as two members will not be present. R. Sabourn stated yes, the meeting will be held. R. Sabourn clarified that the final budget discussions and COLA determination will not be finalized at that meeting.

TA Shepard stated a meeting can be scheduled on January 5, 2022 at 11:00 a.m. to make final determinations, prior to the public hearing on January 12, 2022. The Board agreed to that date and timeline.

MOTION: "To adjourn at 6:25 p.m."

Motion: P. Laufenberg

Seconded: M. Peabody

Discussion: None

Motion Passes: 5 – Yes, 0 – No, 0 – Abstained

Respectfully submitted,

Kerrin Randall
Board Secretary