

**Holderness Select Board  
Meeting Minutes  
January 2, 2024**

**Select Board Members Present:** Chair, Jill White, Vice Chair, Woodie Laverack, Sam Brickley, Peter Francesco and Kelly Schwaner.

**Others Present:** Town Administrator, Michael Capone, Holderness Resident, Stephen Uhlman and Police Chief, Erik DiFilippe.

**Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order at 5:00PM in the second-floor meeting room of the Town Office.

**Correspondence Items:** reviewed the payroll and accounts payable manifests, and other correspondence.

**Pledge of Allegiance:** Ms. White led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**5:30PM Agenda Items:** in the second-floor meeting room of the Town Office.

**5:30PM Public Hearing on adopting a resolution to declare that effective February 8, 2024, new FEMA rate maps will be in effect:** Ms. White opened the public hearing to accept public comment on adopting a resolution to declare that effective February 8, 2024, new FEMA rate maps will be in effect. No one was present to make comment. Ms. White left the hearing open.

**Public Participation:** Holderness resident, Stephen Uhlman was present to speak to the Board regarding a firewood bank for which he has obtained funding. This is a program similar to a food bank except it is designed to provide wood for heat to those in need. He is asking if the Town will sponsor the agreement and accept the grant funding for him. He has the support of the Holderness School, but they cannot except federal funds.

Mr. Uhlman provided the Board with some history behind his involvement with this project. He mentioned there has been a fair amount of volunteer participation in splitting wood for the bank. He also mentioned that he would be working with "Keep the Heat On" in Plymouth to assist with determining how and where the wood should be distributed.

The Town Administrator mentioned that he had contacted the Alliance for Green Heat (AGH) and they confirmed approval of a \$10,000 firewood bank grant for the Jeff Uhlman Memorial Wood Bank. This program is administered in partnership with the US Forest Service and is federally funded. They mentioned that a number of Towns nationwide have sponsored these programs. Mr. Uhlman noted that there were similar programs running in the Towns of Hopkinton, New London, Antrim and Warner.

If we agree to be the fiscal sponsor, the grant would be awarded to Holderness for the Jeff Uhlman Memorial Wood Bank. The funds would be wired electronically. The Town of Holderness would be responsible for ensuring that the grant funds are spent appropriately and that the reporting is done in a timely manner. This would be similar to other projects we have done where we work with other

community partners to accept and dispense federal or State funds on their behalf. Stephen has developed a budget that has been reviewed and approved by AGH.

Mr. Francesco made a motion to have the Town sponsor the Firewood Bank and authorize the Town Administrator to sign the agreement on behalf of the Town. Mr. Brickley provided a second. There being no further discussion, the Board voted 5-0 in favor of the motion.

The Town Administrator asked Mr. Uhlman to send along a copy of his budget so he could follow up with AGH to get a copy of the agreement. The Board wished Mr. Uhlman great success with his project. Mr. Uhlman thanked the Board for their support.

**Department Head Visit: Police Chief Erik DiFilippe:** Chief DiFilippe was present to provide an update on department activity to the Board. He mentioned that the recent flooding activity had damaged some of the properties in the vicinity of Exit 25, but there were, thankfully, no injuries or other issues to report. He was going to review and possibly update the current safety plan to make certain all the necessary procedures are in place to manage these situations effectively. His biggest concern was keeping curious onlookers away from the river during flooding as it posed a threat to their safety given how quickly the river can rise and currents can form.

Chief DiFilippe did mention that while things seem to be quieting down a little recently, the department still handled approximately 13,000 calls for service in 2023. This was up about 3000 calls from last year. The Chief mentioned that some of the uptick was due to an increase in emphasis on vacant house and site checks, but the department was still seeing an increase in crimes of a more serious nature.

The Chief and the Board also discussed facilities and staffing including repairs to the floor in the booking room and ways to keep Police wages and benefits competitive going forward.

Chief DiFilippe also advised the Board that he had followed up on an inquiry received from abutters to the Fish and Game club regarding some recent shooting activity at the facility. While the Chief noted that the club was not in violation of any ordinances, he did speak with a representative of the club and discussed a notification procedure for the department and the possible use of noise suppressors for some of the activity at the club. The Chief mentioned that he planned to reach out to some of the abutters to inform them personally of the discussion.

The Board thanked Chief DiFilippe for his time and his continuing efforts on behalf of the community.

**Approval and Signing of Payroll and Payables Checks:** Mr. Francesco made a motion to approve the payroll and accounts payable manifests and to issue checks accordingly. There was a second from Mr. Laverack. There being no further discussion, the Board voted 5-0 in favor of the motion.

**Approval of the Public Meeting Minutes of December 18, 2023:** Mr. Francesco made a motion to approve the public meeting minutes of December 18, 2023 as written. Ms. Schwaner and Ms. White provided two minor corrections to the minutes. Ms. Schwaner provided a new motion to accept the minutes as amended. Mr. Francesco provided a second. There being no further discussion, the Board voted 5-0 in favor of the motion.

**Consent Agenda:** Veterans Exemption Map 210 Lot 015  
Intent to cut Map 217 Lot 012

Mr. Francesco made a motion to approve the consent agenda as presented. There was a second from Mr. Laverack. There being no further discussion, the Board voted 5-0 in favor of the motion.

**5:30PM Public Hearing on adopting a resolution to declare that effective February 8, 2024, new FEMA rate maps will be in effect: continued: Ms. White closed the public hearing at 6:02PM.**

There having been no public comment from the meeting, Ms. White asked if the Board was prepared to adopt a resolution to declare that, effective February 8, 2024, new FEMA rate maps will be in effect. Mr. Francesco moved that the Board adopt the following resolution: Pursuant to RSA 674:57, by resolution of the Holderness Select Board, all lands designated as special flood hazard areas by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) in its "Flood Insurance Study for the County of Grafton, NH" dated February 8, 2024, together with the associated Flood Insurance Rate Maps Panels 33009C0841F, 33009C0843F, 33009C0845F, 33009C0863F, 33009C0864F, 33009C0865F, 33009C0866F, 33009C0868F, 33009C0869F, 33009C1006F, 33009C1007F, 33009C1026F, 33009C1027F, 33009C1030F, 33009C1031F, 33009C1032F, 33009C1033F, and 33009C1034F dated February 8, 2024, are declared to be part of the Town of Holderness Floodplain Ordinance and are hereby incorporated by reference. Ms. Schwaner provided a second. There being no further discussion the Board vote 5-0 in favor of adoption.

**New Business: 2024-2025 Draft Budget Review and Discussion:** The Board deferred further action on this item until their next meeting as there was still another budget meeting scheduled for January 8<sup>th</sup>.

**Old Business: Conservation Commission LCHIP Grant -update:** the Town Administrator mentioned that he had reached out to both the Conservation Commission and LCHIP to get further information on the project so he could make a determination as to whether a warrant article would be required for Town Meeting. He had not received a reply from either party as of yet.

The Board briefly discussed the matter of who should hold the easement on the property. It was suggested that a conversation be held with the Squam Lakes Conservation Society to get their thoughts on the matter.

**Old Business: Proposed Use of ARPA for renewable energy project:** The Town Administrator mentioned that Ms. White had asked for this item to be placed on the meeting agenda for discussion. He mentioned there were still available funds to support a renewable energy project at the Transfer Station and suggested the Board set aside a not to exceed amount of forty thousand dollars to fund the project.

Mr. Brickley asked if there would still be sufficient funds available for other needs that may arise. The Town Administrator noted there was a sufficient balance available to support other projects presently under consideration.

With that Mr. Francesco made a motion to set aside existing ARPA funds in an amount not to exceed forty thousand dollars for a renewable energy project at the Transfer Station and to further authorize the Town Administrator to solicit bids for a renewable energy project at the Holderness Transfer station. Ms. Schwaner provided a second. There being no further discussion, the Board voted 5-0 in favor of the motion. The Town Administrator will put together a bid package.

**Town Administrators Report**  
**January 2, 2024**

1. An update on the cemetery funding research; as I mentioned in the last report, it is unclear what vehicle exists to spend our existing Cemetery funds other than for their original intended purposes which in most cases, would be for individual lots. Bonnie Hunt has done an amazing job collecting all of this information as part of a Trust Fund report she prepared for the State. This means we will have to allocate additional funds if we intend to do other work on our cemeteries. A capital reserve account or an expendable trust might be good options to consider. I will also follow up regarding the option of allowing volunteers do work in the cemeteries as we have had at least one resident express interest in doing so.
2. As mentioned previously, members of the Zoning Board would like to attend a future meeting to discuss enforcement of zoning regulations. I can schedule them for a future meeting, if you feel it appropriate. *Ms. White mentioned that they are welcome at all meetings and suggested the Town Administrator contact them to have them attend a future meeting at a time convenient to them.*
3. Wanted to report that I did follow up with Highway regarding an item mention in the 12/18 Town Administrators report regarding difficult road conditions on the evening of 12/13/23 and the efforts of a resident to contact the department via a text message. Kevin explained that if residents should encounter difficult road conditions on the roads rather than relying on texting or cell phone calls, which are not always reliable, they should contact the Highway Department at 603-536-2932 and leave a message if no one is available to answer the call or contact the Police Department through dispatch so they can reach the Highway crew by radio and inform them of the area of concern. This way we know the message will get through in a timely manner. During that evening the highway crew was out on the roads making every effort to deal with the conditions that developed quickly as the squalls came through the area. Unfortunately, they cannot be everywhere all at once, but as we all know, work very hard to address needs as they arise.
4. Follow up on a reported zoning violation. *The Town Administrator provided some additional information to the Board. The Board asked for some additional clarification which the Town Administrator will provide at a future meeting.*
5. Also, as mentioned previously, the abutters to the Pemi Fish and Game club would like to come speak with the Board at one of your January meetings. *Ms. White mentioned that the public is welcome at all meetings and suggested the Town Administrator contact them to have them attend a future meeting at a time convenient to them.*
6. We are going to get some quotes on updating our phone system at the Town office. Our phone system is more than twenty years old and we would like to have a system that more efficiently directs calls within the office and provides greater flexibility for office staff when handling calls.

7. I had an inquiry regarding the Holderness 2000 legacy fund established in 2008 with the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation (NHCF). I checked in with them and was informed the fund would not be eligible to make distributions prior to 2033. Planning on getting some additional details so a more complete update can be provided at a future meeting.

**Board Member Reports:** **Ms. White** mentioned that she had contacted the Plymouth Town Manager to get some additional information regarding the details on how the contract price of the new ambulance agreement was determined. The Town Manager provided some additional details which she will forward to the Town Administrator for review.

**Mr. Laverack** expressed some concern regarding a number of what appear to be unregistered vehicles at a property on Sargent Road. *The Town Administrator mentioned that the former compliance officer had checked the property previously and found no evidence of a violation, but he will refer the matter to our current Compliance Officer for follow up.*

**Adjournment:** With no further business to come before the Board, Mr. Brickley moved, with a second from Mr. Laverack, to adjourn the meeting at 7:21PM. The Board voted 5-0 in favor of adjournment.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael R. Capone  
Town Administrator