

**Holderness Select Board  
Meeting Minutes  
July 18, 2022**

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

**Others Present:** Town Administrator, Michael Capone, Tracey Tarr, GZA GeoEnvironmental, Inc., Chris Danforth, Keach-Nordstrom Associates (KNA), Roy Sheehan, PSNH and Jeremy Fennell, Eversource, Richard Miller, Chief Jeremy Bonan, Chief Erik DiFilippe, Town Clerk/Tax Collector, Ellen King.

**Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order at 5:26PM in the second-floor meeting room of the Town Office.

**Correspondence Items:** reviewed by the Board members.

**Ellen King -Tax Deeding:** Town Clerk /Tax Collector, Ellen King was present to review the status of the properties currently under review for tax deeding. She indicated that all of the property owners planned to pay their past due balances by the deadline. There may be one property owner seeking a payment plan. She would prepare the necessary paperwork for the Board should it be necessary.

Mr. Francesco made a motion that the Board take the matter under advisement and consider any further action at the August 1, 2022 Board Meeting. Mr. Brickley provided a second. There being no further discussion the Board voted 4-0 in favor of the motion.

**5:30PM Agenda Items:** Second Floor Meeting Room

**Old Business: PSNH E115 Transmission Line- Steep Slopes Permit- Continued Deliberation.**

The Town Administrator provided an update on the outstanding items from the July 5, 2022 meeting. There is clarification on the definition of a structure from Counsel. A tower does meet the definition. In a follow up conversation with GZA they indicated that the replacement towers would be located in the same area as the existing towers so there would be no additional impacts to areas where the towers were over 25% slope.

KV Partners indicated they would be available to do on-site inspections if requested. Mr. Vignale suggested that two may be all that were necessary. Mr. Vignale indicated that the approximate cost for each visit would be \$425.00. Counsel indicated that the inspections could be required as a condition of approval and paid for by the applicant, but would be limited to only those portions of the project over which the board has jurisdiction.

Counsel did indicate that the Town cannot force Eversource to pay an abutter for costs the abutter incurred relating to a prior project. The reason is that there is no law authorizing a municipality or a land use board to require such a condition or make a land use applicant bear such costs. PSNH contacted the abutter and has conducted an initial meeting to review his concerns.

With regard to surety, Mr. Vignale provided an estimate of \$30,000 for the restoration of slopes should it be necessary. Per Counsel, surety could only be obtained for those portions of the project over which the Board has control which would be the work in the steep slope areas.

Mr. Laverack asked if there were any further questions from the Board. Mr. Francesco asked if the tower locations would be staked out and reviewed with the abutters should there be any concerns. Mr. Sheehan indicated that he had followed up with some of the abutters already and would address any concerns they might have.

There were no further questions from the Board.

Mr. Brickley made a motion to approve the Special Use permit application as submitted on May 2, 2022 by GZA GeoEnvironmental Inc. on behalf of Public Service Company of New Hampshire for the E115 Transmission Line Structure Rebuild and Optical Ground Wire Project subject to the requirements outlined in section 500 of the Holderness Zoning Ordinance and the following conditions:

- The applicant allows up to 2 site visits by KV Partners to monitor adherence to section 500 of the Holderness Zoning Ordinance. Cost associated with the site visits will be paid by the applicant.

- Surety obtained in the amount of \$30,000 to ensure there is no cost to the Town for stabilization measures to prevent water or soil damage, including inspection and consultation fees, in the event of deferment or abandonment of the project. Work shall be completed within two years of the approval on the application and surety shall not be discharged before one year following the completion of the project.

Ms. Schwaner provided a second.

There being no further discussion, the Board voted 4-0 in favor of the motion.

Mr. Fennell asked if the project could proceed while the payment details on the surety were worked out. The Board had no concerns with honoring his request.

The Board thanked the representatives from GZA and PSNH for their efforts regarding the project submission and follow up with abutters.

**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 Ms. Schwaner. There being no further discussion, the Board voted 4-0 in favor of the motion.

**Approval of the Meeting Minutes of July 5, 2022:** - Mr. Francesco made a motion to approve the meeting minutes of July 5, 2022 as written. There was a second from Mr. Brickley. There being no further discussion, the Board voted 4-0 in favor of the motion.

**Consent Agenda:** Abatement Response Map 232 Lot 006  
Raffle Permit-Holderness School  
Health Insurance Deductible Approval

Mr. Brickley made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. Mr. Francesco provided a second. There being no further discussion, the Board voted 4-0 in favor of the motion.

**New Business: Fire Chief, Jeremy Bonan-** Chief Bonan was present to review a 911 road name request with the Board. The request was to name the private road at the entrance to Betsy's Park "Elizabeth Lane". Chief Bonan had reviewed the name with 911 and there were no concerns.

Mr. Francesco made a motion to accept the Chief's recommendation and honor the request to name the road "Elizabeth Lane". Mr. Brickley provided a second. There being no further discussion, the Board voted 4-0 in favor of the motion.

**Primex CAP Agreement** – The Town Administrator reviewed the details of the agreement with the Board. It would place a limit of nine percent on our Workers Compensation and Property Liability insurance premiums through June 2026. This program has proven successful in prior years.

Mr. Brickley made a motion to enter into the CAP agreement for our Workers Compensation and Property Liability Insurance programs with Primex and to authorize the Town Administrator to execute the agreements on behalf of the Board. Ms. Schwaner provided a second. There being no further discussion, the Board voted 4-0 in favor of the motion.

**Encumbrances from the 21-22 Budget-** the Town Administrator recommended that the Board encumber \$30,000 in funds from the Solid Waste line (account 4324-392) of the Sanitation budget. The account has excess funds due to a reduction in recycling expenses and some budget miscalculations. If these funds were applied against 22-23 budget expenses it would minimize the need to raise additional funds for that line of the budget. The Board discussed the matter briefly and asked questions of the Town Administrator.

Mr. Brickley made a motion to encumber \$30,000 in funds from account 4324-392 of the 2021-2022 operating budget. Ms. Schwaner provided a second. There being no further discussion, the Board voted 4-0 in favor of the motion.

**Public Participation: None**

## **Town Administrators Report**

**July 18, 2022**

1. We have received notification from Primex of premium holidays for our Workers Compensation, Property Liability and our Unemployment Compensation coverage. The savings total over \$4,000.00.

2. We have received the High-Level Design estimates for the last mile connections from the Grafton County Broadband Committee. These would be the connections between the individual homes and businesses to the Middle Mile or Backbone once constructed. The estimate is \$11,566,262.31.

The Committee has indicated the detailed level design process will be the next step and will be done at no cost to the Town. It will provide a more detailed look at the actual construction and provide a revised estimate.

As for the Middle Mile or Backbone project, we expect to have technicians stopping at the Town Hall to make a determination on what equipment may be necessary to suit the Towns individual needs as the last step to completing the estimate for the overall backbone. The preliminary estimate for the Grafton County Middle Mile project is \$30,000,000 dollars.

3. As you may be aware, the New Hampshire Electric Cooperative (NHEC) has also undertaken a project to bring Broadband to all of the customers in its service area which includes all of Holderness. I have contacted the project manager to get a better understanding of whether their project is complimentary to or supplants the Grafton County project. The project manager has been away on vacation and I will contact him again if I do not hear from him upon his return.

4. Regarding the opening for an Equipment Operator/Laborer in the Highway Department, the job listing has been placed on the Town website, at the Post Office, in Town Hall, on the NHMA website and in the local papers. Kevin has been reviewing applications received from potential candidates.

5. Chief Bonan, Mr. Francesco, myself and a State of New Hampshire Mechanical inspector met with agents for the owners of 832 US Route 3 to discuss their plans to renovate the property. We wanted to be certain they understood all that would be required to restore the property to a safe and compliant condition. Among the items discussed were the requirement for a new septic system, the probable removal and replacement of all of the existing plumbing and electrical systems within the building as well as structural repairs and life safety improvements. The agents

indicated that they would prepare a report of the necessary work needed for the owner's review and would be back in touch with us regarding their plans going forward.

6. The new municipal employee retirement rates for the next two years were released this week. There will be a reduction in the retirement rates for all three categories of employment. Group I employee rates will be reduced from 14.06% to 13.53%. Group II rates will be reduced from 33.88% to 31.28% for Police and from 32.99% to 30.35% for Fire. A modest reduction, but a reduction nonetheless.

7. Plans for the Fire and Police Department open house at the Public Safety building on August 13<sup>th</sup> are proceeding. Presently, the plan is to serve breakfast from 7:30 until around noon. The Public Safety building will be open for tours and conversations with department personnel until around 2PM. The information has been posted on the website.

8. We have received update information from the Squam Valley Masonic Association (SVMA) regarding their abatement request. *The Board reviewed the information supplied. Mr. Brickley made a motion to approve the SVMA abatement request. Ms. Schwaner provided a second. There being no further discussion, the Board voted 4-0 in favor of the motion.*

9. There has been discussion at Department Head meetings regarding the use of ARPA funds for the purchase of items that have been deferred in past years due to other budget funding priorities. As a result, many of the department office areas have equipment and fixtures in need of repair and/or replacement. *By way of example, Chief DiFilippe had prepared a list of items in the Police Department that have been deferred for years, but really need to be replaced. Among those items were desks, chairs and phones for the office to replace those that are broken. Replacing the worn carpeting which can no longer be adequately cleaned with a heavy-duty vinyl flooring. Additional ballistic vests and helmets for the cruisers as we have only one set. Three new radios to replace those that are no longer supported and do not work. The Board discussed this with both Chief DiFilippe and Chief Bonan and asked the Town Administrator to explore the process for the purchase of this much needed equipment with some of the ARPA funds available to the Town.*

**Board Member Reports:** Mr. Francesco mentioned that the Planning Board was going to be taking up the matter of short-term rentals.

**Adjournment:** With no further business to come before the Board, Mr. Francesco moved, with a second from Mr. Brickley to adjourn the meeting at 6:56PM. The Board voted 4-0 in favor of adjournment.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael R. Capone  
Town Administrator