

Minutes of Selectmen's Meeting

This meeting of the Board of Selectmen was called to order on Tuesday, February 25, 2020 at 6:00PM at the Town offices. Jason Petraitis and John Tripp present.

Anne Jannette from the Insurance Advisory Committee was present to discuss Health Insurance rates. Fallon had given the Town a quote with a 24% increase. The Committee said they couldn't accept that quote so went out to bid. MIIA came back with 21% increase, Fallon's second quote was for 18% increase, Harvard Pilgrim was a 16% increase, with a note that they'd try to decrease that to a 14% increase. The IAC went back to the people they represent and asked what they thought about the increase vs the trouble of getting new doctors. Trying to get new specialists, and continue on-going treatments, would be a hardship for many people. The IAC voted to recommend renewing with Fallon. Anne explained that this year's increase was the worst she's seen, and next year we should start looking at insurance early in the year. Mr. Petraitis asked why the increase was so much, Anne stated because of utilization and data (age, illness) that Fallon has. HIPAA laws prevent them from giving us more information than that. Mr. Tripp moved, and Mr. Petraitis, seconded a motion to accept the Insurance Advisory Committee's recommendation of renewing with Fallon. So voted.

Fire Chief Joe Holway and Eric Hevy were present to discuss Health insurance requirements for employees. Joe said after a recent fire he discovered a few of his firefighters did not carry health insurance. He'd like to make it a requirement that employees of the Fire Department carry health insurance. It's State Law, so it shouldn't be a problem. The Town does have insurance that would cover employees during a call, but it's the gray areas Joe is worried about. For example, if someone experiences chest pains 3 days after the fire, is it because of the fire or is it a preexisting condition? Mr. Petraitis asked if Joe's looked into this, he spoke with Mr. Kiley, and a lawyer in Holden, they both agreed it's state law so it can become part of the requirements for employment for the Town of North Brookfield Fire Department. Joe stated this would be good protection for the Town in general and we may want to look into making it a requirement across the board. Mr. Tripp moved, and Mr. Petraitis seconded, a motion to add the requirement of health insurance to the hiring process for the North Brookfield Fire Department. So voted.

Chief Holway also stated they are getting closer with the OPM for the new Fire Department building. The OPM said they may have to do bore sample in field, which could cost \$50,000. He asked if we'd want to fund this at a Town Meeting, or absorb it into the cost of the project. Eric Hevy said we want to understand what's there before we start. Mr. Petraitis suggested they absorb the cost, especially with the cost of the mandated Sewer upgrade coming. Joe stated he would let the committee know.

Mr. Tripp asked if we had received any funding from Green Gold, Ashley said not yet.

Joe spoke about a rescue on Brooks Pond. Spencer FD received the call and setup command. NB did not want to take over, but was on scene in case with their hovercraft. Spencer FD sent out their sled which folded and people got tangled in it's ropes. NBFD were ready and sent out the hovercraft, George Nolet and Pat Kiritsy rescued the people, took about 15 minutes to get them untangled and out of the water. Joe said the hovercraft is a critical piece of equipment they've had for 15 years, they maintain it as best they can but it's getting old. We should look into grants to replace. Joe also said Chris Donais from NBEMA called and Joe assigned George as Liaison to NBEMA.

Mr. Petraitis asked Joe if he could ask some of his FF to help with the town cleanup on March 7th at the Town Park, to help burn brush.

Mr. Tripp moved, and Mr. Petraitis seconded, a motion to approve the SPED request for \$12,776.55. So voted.

Conference Call with Chris Olson:

National Grid is not accepting applications for solar projects at this time. Usually utility companies will accept applications and at least put them in a queue, Nat grid is not doing this, and no one knows when they will start accepting applications again. Chris thinks he can get an application for the School canopy project in, if it's submitted as a net metering project. So, instead of producing energy that will go to the grid, it will feed back into the school. Chris is trying to pursue this and is just waiting on the school board to sign a Power Purchase Agreement, which is on their agenda for discussion for the March 2nd meeting. Chris thinks we could potentially do a net-metering project with the landfill since the Sewer is on the same property, the energy could go to powering sewer plant. Mr. Tripp asked if Chris could concentrate on the school first. Chris said yes, the school moves slowly, and he's trying to get our app in quickly because we risk losing out on incentives. The landfill remediation is still going slowly, waiting on approval from DEP. Chris stated if the school project gets accepted by NG then it's a good test for the landfill project. Our landfill is rare because most Towns have no significant buildings on the property, but the landfill and Sewer are on the same Deed, so we could use landfill solar to power sewer. Mr. Tripp stated he'd like to look at doing the Solar canopy at the police station, Chris agreed that would make a lot of sense.

Brandon Avery stopped in and suggested the Water Department may be another area we could look at future solar projects. Mr. Tripp said it would be a good neighborhood for it.

Brandon said a couple people approached him about becoming the official Town Historian. Mr. Petraitis said we don't have one right now, Mr. Avery left an application.

Mr. Petraitis said that Gabe Docimo (GD Property Management) had removed trees at a property on Hillside that had fallen and were in danger of falling. He left a portion of the stump because the ground is so mushy, he will come back if the homeowner wants. John made sure it wouldn't fall on the house.

Mr. Petraitis had texted Trevor, asking about progress on the solar landfill project. Trevor texted him back stating they submitted a plan for the swales, DEP is adding requests, engineer is talking with DEP, they now need to adjust plans and speak about the costs.

There being no further business, at 7:42 Mr. Tripp moved, and Mr. Petraitis seconded, a motion to adjourn. So voted.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ashley Barre