

**Wentworth Select Board  
Meeting Minutes  
November 17, 2020**

**Those present:** Arnold Scheller, Omer Ahern, Jordan King, Chief Trott, Chief Ames, Paul Manson, Francis Muzzey, Palmer Koelb, Kay Bailey, Tamsin Stuart, Rick Ducheneau, Andrew Lasser and Linda Franz.

**Called to Order:** Arnold Scheller, Chairperson, called the meeting to order at 5:00pm.

The Select Board approved and signed the following:

Payroll and vendor checks

Minutes from October 20, 2020

Driveway permit for O'Connell and Doherty

Sewage Disposal System local approval-Comeau

Tax refund-Ingles

Intent to cut-Davis

Timber tax-Boucher

A Zoom meeting with Tyler Paine of Plodzick and Sanderson, PA regarding the audit of the Town records for 2019. He stated that the records are in order and free of fraud and in the category of unmodified opinions across the board which is the most desirable position.

Chief Trott presented his report for the Police Department, and it is a part of these minutes.

Chief Ames presented his report for the Fire Department, and it is a part of these minutes.

Chief Ames will issue a fire permit to the Town for Christmas on the Common.

**A.Scheller made a motion to purchase six previously owned breathing apparatuses at \$700.00 each to come out of the 2020 Fire Department budget. Seconded by O.Ahern. All three voted in the affirmative, and the motion carried.**

A.Scheller reported that he is organizing training for the Fire Department with DHART and the New Hampshire Fish & Game to be held on January 16, 2021 at the Wentworth Aerodrome. He will also look into getting a Black Hawk (used for the rescuers) for training as well.

The need for a forestry utility vehicle was discussed. The size, capacity for water and where to garage were considerations. There is no funding as of yet, so it will be discussed at a future date.

A.Scheller reported that the Transfer Station employees are doing a great job. They are getting a metal dumpster that will be emptied periodically and are finally able to get rid of the refrigerators after freon was removed. He also discussed disposing waste oil. Paul Manson is looking into getting a waste oil furnace for the town garage at a cost of between \$5,800 and \$7,200. There is enough money left in his 2020 budget for this purchase. He will bring more information before the Select Board at the next meeting.

Paul Manson, Road Agent presented his report for the Highway Department, and it is a part of these minutes.

The Town received two sealed bids for the vibratory roller.

**A.Scheller made a motion to accept bid of \$300 from Tim DeSorsier of Campton, NH. Seconded by J.King. All three voted in the affirmative, and the motion carried.**

The Board agreed that department budgets are to be presented on December 1, 2020. Linda Franz will consolidate for presentation at a budget hearing. A date for the hearing will be set upon completion.

Tamsin Stuart, Deputy Health Officer reported that the state has asked health officers to participate in the COVID-19 tracing program. She and Rebecca Bordonaro, Health Officer, opted out as there is no compensation or mileage paid for this service.

There was a lengthy discussion regarding setting the Town’s tax rate for 2020. A handout was read that explains, as simply as possible, how the tax rate is set by the DRA, a break down of the tax rate by municipal, county and school, the fund balance and how much should be retained, and the use of capital reserves. This handout is a part of these minutes. The new tax rate is \$25.76 and will create an average tax increase of \$200 to \$300 in 2021.

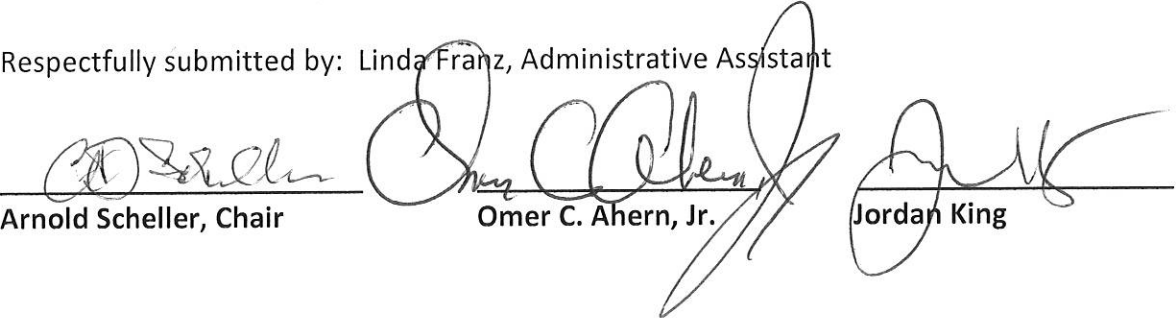
Many arguments were made to use or not to use the fund balance to reduce taxes. It was explained that the highway department purchase of a backhoe for approximately \$128,000 would not come from taxes, but from capital reserve. Also, it is proposed to lease a Western Star truck with an extended warrantee. The first year’s payment would be in lieu of funding the capital reserve for highway equipment which would not significantly increase the 2021 budget.

After consideration of all arguments, it was decided to keep the tax rate as calculated without using the fund balance to reduce the rate.

**A.Scheller made a motion to set the 2021 tax rate at \$25.76. Seconded by J.King. All three voted in the affirmative, and the motion carried.**

**A.Scheller made a motion to adjourn. Seconded by J.King. All three voted in the affirmative, and meeting was adjourned at 7:36 pm.**

Respectfully submitted by: Linda Franz, Administrative Assistant



Arnold Scheller, Chair                      Omer C. Ahern, Jr.                      Jordan King

**WPD Activity Report**  
**Presented 11/17/2020**

**Please note that the following is a summary of notable activity conducted by the Wentworth Police Department, (WPD), but does not reflect “all” of WPD’s activity during this time frame.**

The WPD continues to take part in in the scheduled conference calls held during the week regarding updates concerning COVID-19, as well as Law Enforcement Update calls. These calls remain a priority for us.

COVID-19 Update-Reminder for the holidays. Per HSEM Director, Jennifer Harper, we have unfortunately hit 500 COVID deaths in the state. We do have good news on the vaccine front, as it is progressing quickly. For the purpose of information there are still clusters being traced back to hockey events. **The NH Department of Health and Human Services has announced new Universal guidance with regard to travel. This includes 14-day quarantine or 7-day quarantine depending on travel circumstances. Please check their website for details and hyperlinks for the publics access.**

Chief Trott attended another CAC interview regarding the welfare of a child in Wentworth. Also attending the CAC was a member of DCYF and a representative from Voices Against Violence. That matter remains under investigation.

There is an active new scam taking place in New England. The scam consists of someone calling a person and stating that their grandchild has been arrested and was in immediate need of bail money and the bail money would need to be cash due to the charges. The scam targets elderly people and arrangements would be made to have a person actually physically show up and meet with the grandparents to receive the money. Information regarding family members are usually obtained via the internet and social media sites so when the call they sound very convincing.

*WPD*

Chief Trott is currently investigating an accident where there was damage to the guardrails on Rte#25 in the area of Turner Road. The involved party has made contact with Chief Trott and a report will be completed and submitted to NHDOT for reimbursement for damage to the guardrails.

Chief Trott has returned firearms to a Wentworth resident per a court order. The firearms were originally taken per a court order and they were taken and returned without incident.

Chief Trott served a Domestic Violence Temporary Order of Protection on a Wentworth resident issued by the Plymouth Family Court. The involved party was also required to surrender his firearms to Chief Trott which he did without incident. The order was explained and served and the involved party was escorted from the Wentworth property.

Chief Trott wants to remind the Wentworth community that we are entering the holiday season and with that comes good memories for people and not so good memories for some people. This time of year is usually filled with domestic violence calls for service and calls regarding people who are depressed and even suicidal. The New Hampshire suicide hotline has seen a dramatic increase in calls for service. With COVID-19 restrictions, social distancing, and families not being able to see each other like they have in the past creates difficult emotional circumstances. I am asking that our community members remember to take the time to each out to family members, friends, and neighbors and communicate with them during this time. It doesn't need to be done in person, but if so, with the proper protective measures it can be just what someone may need to help through this holiday season. Having said that the WPD has done numerous welfare checks on people and if anyone has any concerns regarding one of our residents please do not hesitate in contacting us, we will check on them.



## Wentworth Fire

### Calls for service

Mutual aid response to Warren smoke in the building

Fire alarm activation King Forest Industries

Motor vehicle accident 2 vehicles and deer

Call for odor in the air rt 25a

Mutual aid response Rumney assist on animal rescue

Mutual Aid response to Rumney for carry out assistane for a injured hiker

### Training

We have been training in the use of the rescue tools for extracation also have been going over breathing apparatus types sizes and basic operation.

We also did a grab and tell training on engine 1, we have a fire fighter locate a named appliance from the truck and then explain its usage.

We have various trainings in the works for the winter months.

### Personell

We have again gained another new member to the department A young lady here in town that has an interest in pursuing fire fighting as a careea path, the crew is growing and we are all excited to see fresh members come on board. One difacultiy that we are overcoming is the training aspect of the members as we are traing at various levels with multiple firefighters.

### Other

We have had another safety meeting at the school..

Have a future meeting with several local chiefs for discussion on automatic responses to building fires in various areas of their and our town.

We have a fantastic oputuinty to purchase used breathing apparatus that is certified and ready



to operate at 700.00 per unit versus 7,000 per unit new as were looking to replace 6 pieces onto engine one and to remove/downgrade the older packs which are coming due for end of life requirements.

#### Budgets

We are working on budget preparation to present to the select board during budget hearing. Due to the increase in personell we feel we will see an increase in our budget more so in our incentive pay

# Road agent Report

November 17 ,2020

Over the last month we have been extremely busy. We have been getting our roads ready for winter , we had a nice stretch of weather for a week at the end of October which allowed us to do some culvert replacements and grade some of our roads before frost set in. We are proactively doing some much needed maintenance on the highway department garage. We have done some extensive outside cleaning to the building and while we are between seasons and no real snow in the forecast , we are doing some indoor maintenance that it appears have never been done, our indoor project are consisting of cleaning the walls in preparation of paint this winter , cleaning the office and painting and sealing up cracks in the walls and painting the office floor. We have completed all maintenance and repairs to the trucks. All trucks and equipment are running great and are 100% ready for winter. The Equipment/Truck committee had our last meeting last night and there will be no more meetings. I need to give a huge thank you to everyone that volunteered there time to be on the committee and sacrafise there family time. Jarod King , Travis & Hannah Heath , Francis Muzzey , Andrew lasser , Brian Dubois , Pete Characetti , Rick Deshaneau , Adam pattenen. I also need to thank Omer Ahern and Arnie scheller for making the meetings and listening to the conversations and hearing what the committee thought would be best for the town. We had Three committee meetings and they were all very productive and informative to myself , we had a diverse group and it was great to have everyone.

Paul Manson

## Setting the Tax Rate for 2020

### Overview

The NH Department of Revenue Administration (DRA) has set the Town's tax rate for 2020 at \$25.76. The figures used to calculate the tax rate come from what the Town reports to the state; such as municipal and school appropriations, revenue, and amounts used from fund balance. The net total of these amounts plus county tax and state education tax is the amount the Town needs to collect in taxes (tax commitment). The tax commitment is then divided by the total assessed value of the taxable properties which results in the tax rate.

|                                     |                       |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| The tax rate breakdown is Municipal | \$ 8.47 = 32.9%       |
| County                              | \$ 1.89 = 7.3%        |
| Local Education                     | \$13.23 = 51.4%       |
| State Education                     | <u>\$ 2.17 = 8.4%</u> |
|                                     | \$25.76= 100.0%       |

The Town has only 32.9% control of total expenditures.  
The Wentworth Elementary School controls 51.4%. (for 68 +/- children) With State percentage, 59.8% of taxes got to the schools.

### Town Commitments and Purchases to be addressed this year

Backhoe  
Plow truck  
Road compactor  
Town portion of FEMA grant to replace 2 bridges which were washed out in floods.  
Construction repair of posted bridge on East Side Road.

Poor equipment decisions in the past have lead to a significant increase in maintenance costs for Road Agent budget with the possibility that this equipment will not meet the needs of the Town this winter.

### Fund Balance

The Fund Balance is what you retain from revenue less all expenses. The balance carries over from year to year. You may want to think of this as a savings account. The Town can use the fund balance to pay for disasters, floods and emergencies. The Select Board also the authority to directly reduce the calculated tax rate by withdrawing from the Fund balance.

In 2019, the Select Board used \$100,000 from the Fund Balance to reduce the tax rate by approximately \$1.00, giving the Town a tax rate of \$23.22. This weakens the



financial position of the Town leaving a remaining Fund Balance of \$458,945 to be carried over to 2020 for all emergencies.

In 2019, by warrant articles, the Town voted to use \$121,577 of the Fund Balance. The Fund Balance is now \$431,570.

- The state requires a Town to retain between 5%-17% of total expenditures as a Fund Balance. The Town's policy to is retain between 8%-10%.
- Using the average of 9%, the minimum Fund Balance we would need to retain is \$285,000.
- A balance \$285,000 is insufficient to cover the commitments of ongoing bridge reconstructions, much needed equipment updates for the road agent as well as unknown emergencies and contingencies.
- Using the Fund Balance to reduce taxes weakens the Town's financial position.
- The Select Board will make a decision on using any part of the Fund Balance.

\*\*\*It should also be noted that the Town voted for additional veterans and elderly tax credits that reduced the amount of tax collected in 2020 by \$48,500. This impacted the tax rate and will continue to do so in the future and may increase based on newly eligible taxpayers.

### Capital Reserves

Capital Reserves are amounts appropriated by the Town to fund equipment purchases, vehicles, building improvements, etc. They are part of the Town's budget.

- The funds are managed by the Trustees of the Trust Funds.
- The Town's Capital Reserves total \$1,178,261 as of this date.
- Capital Reserves may be used through approved vote of warrant articles.
- The Select Board can vote to use certain Capital Reserves that are designated as Expendable Trusts for emergencies or other necessary reasons.

The Town may have to use Capital Reserves to fund failing equipment such as:

Road Compactor-(scrapped) will rent as needed.  
Backhoe-replacement \$ 126,000.00  
Town truck-replacement \$186,000.00

**Wentworth Select Board  
Meeting Minutes  
November 24, 2020**

**Those present:** Arnold Scheller, Omer Ahern, Jordan King, Paul Manson, and Linda Franz.  
Attended via Zoom Chris Fournier and Kevin Kay.

Select Board reviewed and signed septic designs for A.Patten and P.Coursey

**Meeting started at 5:00pm.**

Chris Fournier went over the bridge type studies and costs prepared by HEB Engineers for the Cross Road and Frescoln Bridges. Each bridge has two options, A-precast concrete rigid frame and B-precast concrete arch. In each case, the option A is more economical and requires a \$90,000 compensatory payment for environmental impact. The option B design is more desirable as it would handle a larger volume of water flow. However, FEMA traditionally goes with the lower cost. Chris will check with FEMA to see if they will pay their 75% towards the \$90,000 additional cost.

**J.King made a motion to go with option B as long as DES and FEMA approve. O.Ahern seconded. All three voted in the affirmative, and the motion carried.**

A.Scheller signed the NHDOT Project Agreement for the Frescoln Road Bridge.

J. King will coordinate a Zoom meeting with Chris Fournier, Paul Hatch, Paul Manson and other who wish to attend to discuss FEMA's probable position on the two bridge designs.

P.Manson presented information for a Lanair waste oil furnace for the Town Garage. The waste oil would come from the transfer station and would eliminate the cost for heating oil. The cost of the heater with all attachments is \$6,149.99 from Tractor Supply. There will also be another small charge for installation supplies.

**J.King made a motion to purchase the waste oil heater from Tractor Supply. Seconded by O.Ahern. All three voted in the affirmative, and the motion carried.**

The new Covid-related state mandate for wearing masks was discussed. It was concurred that Select Board meetings should be closed to the public and limited to Select Board members, department heads and videographer. The meetings will be broadcast on YouTube and scheduled Zoom meetings. The public may request to be present by appointment only. Social distancing of 6 feet will be practiced.

**J.King made a motion to close future Select Board meetings to the public allowing only Select Board members, department heads and videographer to be physically present. The public may request to speak via the Zoom meeting. Also a member of the public may request to be present by appointment only. O.Ahern seconded. All three voted in the affirmative, and the motion carried.**


At 6:09 pm, A.Scheller made a motion to enter into a non-public session pursuant to RSA 91-A:3, II (a) *The dismissal, promotion, or compensation of any public employee or the disciplining of such employee, or the investigation of any charges against him or her, unless the employee affected (1) has a right to a public meeting, and (2) requests that the meeting be open, in which case the request shall be granted.* Seconded by. O.Ahern. By roll call vote, A.Scheller voted yes. O.Ahern voted yes. J.King voted yes. All voted in the affirmative and the motion carried.

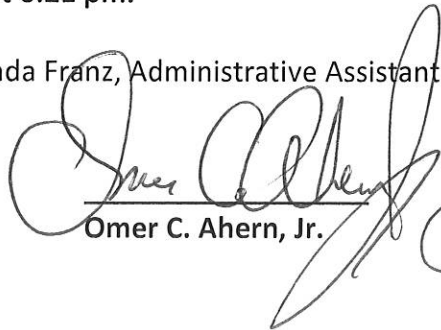
Re-entered public meeting at 6:17pm

A.Scheller made a motion to accept the hourly wage increases for the transfer station and park and rec employees. Seconded by O.Ahern. All voted in the affirmative, and the motion carried.

A.Scheller made a motion to adjourn. Seconded by J.King. All three voted in the affirmative, and meeting was adjourned at 6:21 pm.

Respectfully submitted by: Linda Franz, Administrative Assistant

  
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Arnold Scheller, Chair

  
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Omer C. Ahern, Jr.

  
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Jordan King