

Town of Danville
Selectboard Minutes
December 21, 2023
Danville Town Hall (6:00 pm)

Board Members Present: Janice Ouellette, Alison Low, Eric Bach, Peter Griffin and Glenn Herrin

Others Present: Keith Gadapee, Bill Bailey, Shane Drinkwater, Dennis Tillotson, Rich Eaton, Tom Gould, Chris Harrod, Walter McNeil, Clayton Cargill, and Jonathan Austin-Shortt

Others Present Using Teams: Ken Linsley

Meeting called to order by Chair Eric Bach at 6:00 pm.

1. Additions to the agenda:

- Brief discussion of budget guidance. Glenn Herrin was assuming the budget strategy will include a baseline, i.e. service continuity, etc. The answer was yes. There was some confusion about how the budget process was going to work. Clarification: these will be warned meeting because at least 3 members of the selectboard will be present. There is not going to be a special committee.
- Dog, parking ordinance deleted from the agenda.

2. Approve minutes:

*Motion by Peter Griffin, 2nd by Janice Ouellette to approve **minutes of Regular meeting of December 7, 2023** with edits made by Keith Gadapee and Glenn Herrin. Vote 5-0-0. Motion carries.*

3. Visitors

- **Walter McNeil, Jr., NEKWMD - Update –**
Walter McNeil reported that the Board of Supervisors met last Tuesday, and they passed a budget of \$947,429.00. He noted that this was a vote by supervisors rather than a town vote. The NEKWMD will need a new skid steer (which is a front-end loader or forklift) – since the current one needs about \$35K in repairs. Paul Tomasi has found one for under 50K. The board of supervisors voted to use up to 48K, with 16K to come out of the capital fund, the rest to be financed. The district is running even in terms of revenue over expense. Foam densifier grant will be received early in the year. Collection of styrofoam going well. He also noted that the metal bin is about a quarter full, so it is being used.
- **Greg Prior – Bid discussion –**
Wants to discuss NDSA painting. He questioned the bidding process for this. Do we need to beef up our bid process? Were we comparing apples to apples when we sought bids for the painting? Concerned about we are spending money in the bid process – do we need to ‘manipulate’ the process. Keith Gadapee noted that the way to bid is that the specifications need to be perfect. Get proposals and then we can choose. Alison Low also pointed out the bids were based on availability, which is crucial to ensuring that the work gets done when it needs to be.
- **Spencer Frandsen & Aaron Webb, TextMyGov - Presentation –**
Aaron and Spencer, via Teams, reintroduced themselves to the selectboard and public. Their company works with municipalities, and they are essentially a mass texting tool for the municipality. Their services provided the town with a web-based portal that’s all cloud-based, so no special equipment is required. Texting services can be used for:
 - Weather; office closures; etc. – mass text alerts
 - Residents can submit information such as trees down, loose animals, via text
 - Residents can submit general questions and get answers via text.

Spencer and Aaron set up a sample text and asked attendees to text the phrase “Park Use form” to a dummy address. They immediately receive a text in response with hyperlinks. The service allows residents to sign up for information, and they can get all alerts or customized alerts, such as road closures and special event notifications. Peter Griffin wanted to know about set-up. It’s the TextMyGov staff that set up the initial load. Glen Herrin wanted to know how we make changes. TextMyGov staff provides training and unlimited support, and it’s included in the fee. Waterboro Maine is currently using this service. Subscription cost is \$3,000 a year with an initial setup fee of \$1,500. There is an end-of-year limited special that will waive the setup fee. Eric Bach wanted to know about what other towns are doing with this and how heavily they use it. Usage varies, and it all depends on how the town is actively promoting the service through fliers and social media. The more the municipality promotes it, the more heavily it gets used. There are 25,000 texts a year included in the subscription fee, and most towns use far less than that, so they roll over to the following year. Each transmission counts as a text. For example, if someone submits an inquiry and they receive an immediate response, that is two texts. Greg Prior wanted to know if there is any liability on the part of the town if mis-use of the service occurs. The board could not answer, but Glenn opined that most organizations with a web presence that he is familiar with have internal controls to address rogue usage. Glenn commented that it might be a nice service to have in the future. There were some lingering concerns about dead areas in cell coverage. No action was taken.

- **Highway Crew – Overtime Pay (good time vs bad time) –**

Road crew was present to discuss “bad time vs. good time” for accrual of overtime. They all felt that the new system was lowering morale. Bill Bailey, for example, discussed responding to an emergency situation, only to discover that it was on straight time pay. In reality, about 90% of the time when they get called in outside of regular work hours, it is an emergency. Under the old system when they received a call to come in outside of scheduled time, it was considered overtime. (Winter is considered the bread-and-butter time to earn overtime.) Now they are afraid to take vacation time to jeopardize their overtime.

Janice Ouellette wanted to know how they were going to fare under the pay raises. Keith Gadapee noted that as of 12/7, we had paid \$9,900 of OT out of a budgeted \$121,000. Last year the general pay was \$269K. This year as of 12/7, the general pay is \$309K, but we can’t identify the actual hours worked.

Eric Bach indicated that we need one more payroll to look at to find out where we land on the budget. We won’t have those numbers until next week, so we will want to revisit it. One possible change may be to the OT accrual process: we could tie it to 8 hours instead of 40 hours. If anyone is worse off, he noted, then we need to revise this.

There were some questions: is person time synonymous with vacation time? Is bereavement “good” time or “bad” time? Right now, the only “good” time is holidays. In closing, the road crew noted that it would be “a huge morale booster if we could take a day, and it’s not going to be penalize us.”

4. **Highway Report (Keith Gadapee) –**

Keith Gadapee introduced new personnel, since they were all there.

Keith Gadapee is working on budget stuff. As of 12/7 we are in the hole. The shortfall is from FEMA and that we are behind on capital equipment. He discussed the matter of explaining the numbers to the public, such as measuring it in terms of pennies on the dollar, or in percentages. Either way it is necessary to:

- Identify a scenario that entails the same level of service from the previous year – i.e. baseline

- Identify the desirable projects that can be isolated to identify budget impact.

Alison Low wanted to know how we budget for disaster, especially since the increasing precipitation levels might ensure that 2023 is not a one-off. In short, Keith Gadapee stated that you don't budget for disaster. He felt that we are covered, and putting a line item for disaster in the budget starts to feel like reserve funding. "It's a slippery slope," he said.

Keith Gadapee talked about the roadside mower. The advice from the tractor dealership is to NOT fix it. We could put it up for auction. He's currently talking to Ryegate, who did not come out well on this deal. He's considering buying them back out and rent it out to them. We could also do a new purchase arrangement based on the disproportionate share of roads to maintain, such as 70/30 based on Danville/Ryegate road mileage.

5. Issues and Information (All)

(a) **Personnel Policy** –

Janice Ouellette is still working on edits and promises to have something in January.

(b) **Pay Scales** –

Eric Bach met with staff today and indicated that some changes had to be made based on accurate hourly rates, which we didn't previously have. The pay scales give everyone a raise to be more competitive. Not ready to vote on. Eventually we will end up adopting and they will become effective in January.

The proposal is paying out 50% of OT and include a \$2,500 stipend. This pertains to Keith Gadapee and Wendy Somers. There needs to be flexibility for employees, but we can't go broke paying OT. Keith Gadapee noted that he wants to punch a clock for maintaining accountability for how he spends his time. Transparency is important to him.

(c) **West Shore Road Drainage** –

There was a site visit. It was chilly with rain coming down one side of road and running across the intersection, resulting in a perched pipe (where silt has built up under the outlet). This is difficult to trench it out without the cooperation of neighbors, and it's not clear where the property line is. Mr. Dimick (the property owner) wants to pay for materials if we provide the labor (which, according to Keith is about a day's worth of work). However, it's not clear that what Mr. Dimick has proposed will solve the problem. Also, there is a lot of work to get under the road. Keith Gadapee noted that what Mr. Dimick wants to do is not really changing the amount of water entering the area. He could dredge from his land; however, he needs to survey the property and determine where the town line is. The selectboard deferred on request, and the selectboard said no to the provision of labor. Audrey will let him know.

(d) **Danville Ordinance Regulating Open Burning (Village Burning)** –

Jonathan Austin-Shortt brought the issue of open burning in the village to the board's attention. The Open Burning ordinance is not written clearly. The ordinance prohibits "open burning" in the Village and requires permits for such everywhere else. It appears that by definition, "open burning" does not include small fire pits with a ring of less than three feet or outdoor grills. However, this exclusion is NOT clear, and it is possible to interpret the ordinance as prohibiting ALL small fire pits and outdoor grills from the Village as well. It was generally agreed in the meeting that the intention was not to prohibit ALL outdoor fires in the Village, and that the ordinance needs to be re-written for clarity. Alison Low agreed to work on this and present a draft update.

(e) **Sheriff Contract** –

The selectboard discussed the contract with the Caledonia County Sheriff. If we want to spread it out for entire year, \$4,200 comes out to 8 hours a month. We can always add hours later, and the difference between 80-100 hours is not much. Alison Low inquired about special events

coverage, such as Autumn on the Green. Eric Bach explained that special events were covered by the Chamber.

Motion by Glenn Herrin, 2nd by Peter Griffin for Danville to enter into contract with Caledonia County Sheriff to not exceed \$4,200 - \$100 @ 42.00/hour. Vote 5-0-0. Motion carries.

(f) **Snow Shoveling –**

Audrey has reached out to three people and heard from Richie Benoit. Shoveling \$40/day Town Hall and North Danville Community Building. \$25/day for both facilities; \$40 if we were going to have to keep shoveling.

Motion by Alison Low, 2nd by Janice Ouellette to approve Richie Benoit to shovel as described above. Vote 5-0-0. Motion carries.

(g) **Paid Fire Chief –**

Jonathan Austin-Shortt would like the board to consider this when budgeting. Jonathan is kept very busy, and he answers a lot of phone calls and emails. He gets calls at the fire station, and a lot of people need help with smoke detectors/CO2 detectors, as well as fire places and stoves. And there is attending meetings, such as regional emergency management meetings. Now, with the second hazmat incident to date, there has been a lot of back-and-forth with billing and the insurance company. Just this week, Jonathan has incurred about 18 hours. As the supervisor of the department, he has HR issues to deal with as well. The workload is straining his family life and business.

Making the Fire Chief a paid position would have to be a town warned item. Jonathan noted that this measure has unanimous support from the volunteer FD. Historically the volunteers had more time to be available, and work and personal lives create a conflict for them as well. The move to a regionalized St. J fire department could dovetail with this. Also, a paid fire chief position could alleviate some of the responsibilities currently shouldered by the Town Health Officer. What do other towns do? Who in this region has a paid fire chief? Glenn Herrin offered to take the lead in the research for this.

(h) **Stipend Fire Department –**

Some questions – VLCT – we have no policies to apply the stipend – When do we pay the stipend. The selectboard proposed that Jonathan outline stipend policy.

(i) **Newsletter –**

Janice Ouellette proposed for the next issue Town Meeting Day committee activities, progress on Train Station, grants, policies and ordinance in review; class 4 road policy. Greg Prior asked about other possibilities, and the selectboard clarified that the Town newsletter pertained to Town business.

(j) **Dog Ordinance –** postponed

(k) **Parking Ordinance –** postponed

6. Financials: Orders to review and sign

Motion by Alison Low, 2nd by Janice Ouellette to authorize Eric Bach to review and sign the Financial Orders on behalf of the Selectboard. Vote 5-0-0. All in favor.

7. Adjourn - Motion by Alison Low, 2nd by Janice Ouellette to adjourn at 8:39 pm. All in favor.

Respectfully submitted.
Alison Low