

SELECTBOARD MEETING
January 27, 2025
5PM - MUNICIPAL OFFICE BUILDING - HANOVER, NH

The meeting of the Selectboard was called to order at 5p.m. by C. Callaghan, Chair.

Also present were: Joanna Whitcomb, Vice Chair, Athos Rassias, Selectboard Member, Rob Houseman, Town Manager, Jennie Chamberlain, Selectboard Member, Jarett Berke, Selectboard Member; Ellen Bullion, Finance Director

Absent: None

1. Opening of Meeting

a. Call to Order

C. Callaghan called the meeting to order.

2. Public Hearing

None

3. Agenda Review

None

5. Public Comment

a. Public may address the Board

David Vincelette, 93 Lebanon St read a letter he recently sent to the police department filing a complaint relative to the incidents he has mentioned before about pollution at Mink Brook and fencing installed by the Town at his property. He expressed concerns about the actions of many staff members he listed. He asked questions relating to who authorized the dumping of asphalt waste and who participated.

Jenny Masters, 15 Willow Springs Circle requested to have the parking map updated. She expounded on the parking situation on Sunday mornings in the lots near the Saint Thomas Episcopal Church which have become permitted lots.

4. Announcements/Recognition

R. Houseman recognized the 5-year anniversaries of employees.

6. Business Requiring Discussion

a. Department Budget Presentations

The following Departments presented their FY26 budgets:

R. Houseman noted at the last meeting that he and Ellen have been working with the departments on a zero-base budget plan and they will present those budgets tonight.

i. Howe Library

Rubi Simon, Director presented this item and highlighted:

- Department functions
 - Strategic plan
 - Investing in the community
 - Investing in the facility
 - Providing professional development

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- Staffing
- Current Budget/ Proposed Budget

Clarifications were asked for by the board and addressed by staff.

ii. Parks and Recreation

Recreation staff John Sherman, Liz Burdette, and Nicole Leonard presented this item and highlighted:

- Department staff
- Goals for 2025
 - Staffing
 - Professional development
 - Asset management plan
- Current Budget/ Proposed Budget
 - Discussion about the previously proposed childcare budget. Project was not done. Discussion ensued.
 - Consolidation of line items to different locations
 - Revenues
 - Community center
 - Youth athletics transition to the schools
 - Relative warrant proposal for Richmond Middle School funding proposed
- Challenges
 - Staffing/ housing
 - Increased costs of fees for field trips, transportation etc.
- Opportunities
 - Working with Downtown Group and college staff

Clarifications were asked for by the board and addressed by staff relating to street trees, cemeteries/ natural burials.

iii. Fire Department

Fire Chief Michael Gilbert and Deputy Fire Chief Josh Merriam presented this item and highlighted:

- Department overview/ staffing
- Goals
 - Recruitment/paramedic staffing
 - Engagement and response rates in recall efforts
 - Mental health and wellness services for personnel
- Current Budget/ Proposed Budget -Fire Fund
 - Capital Improvement spending
- Current Budget/ Proposed Budget- Ambulance fund
 - 11% increase explained
 - Equipment
- Personnel costs
- Capital Expenses
- Challenges and Opportunities

The board asked for some clarifications which the staff addressed.

iv. Police Department and Communications Center/ Parking

Jim Martin, Acting Chief presented this item and highlighted:

- Police Department and Communications Center Overview and staffing
- Goals
 - Recruitment and retention
 - Training and professional development
 - Employee health, wellness and resiliency
- Current Budget/ Proposed Budget
 - 3.22% increase mostly due to cost-of-living increases
 - Additional details on fees, rates and cost increases
 - Discussion with the board members
 - Capital reserve funds
 - Line items highlighted
- Challenges and Opportunities

Questions from the board were discussed.

- Parking Department Overview and staffing
- Goals
 - Collaborate with parking committees and other stakeholders to determine the best practices for parking related functions and system upgrades
 - Upgrade safety measures in the stairwells and staircases to the parking garage
 - Explore efficiencies within operations and incorporate and update best practices
- Current Budget/ Proposed Budget
 - 6% variance
 - Line items highlighted
 - Staffing
 - Capital expenses
- Challenges and Opportunities

The board asked questions which were discussed and addressed.

7. Business Requiring Action

b. College and Wheelock Street Intersection Presentation

Following a pilot implementation of eliminating the left-turn lane at the College Street and Wheelock Street intersection, WCG prepared a report of observations for safety and operations during the elimination period. Rob Houseman presented the information to the Board and discussion ensued with board members giving their thoughts and opinions. J. Berke expressed a need for consideration, with one student crossing after another, blocking traffic. His delivery van was stuck in traffic for 45 minutes travelling just a few blocks downtown. J Whitcomb noted it's a college town. Beginning discussion of the topic was not captured by audio or video.

Public Comment

Daniel Cai, Dartmouth student government liaison, resident of Lebanon and student at Dartmouth noted he uses this intersection as a pedestrian six times a day and a couple times a week as a driver. It is important to prioritize pedestrian

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safety. The lane drop is ideal as a solution to make the intersection safer. Examples given and discussion about routes taken. Options 4 and 4b pros and cons asked about and addressed by R. Houseman. The resident is in favor of the raised crosswalk.

Rai-Ching Yu, Sophomore at Dartmouth and Hanover resident elaborated on her experience of biking in that area which is where she lives and gave insight to how she would maneuver biking with the proposed option.

Elliot Gomes, Freshman at Dartmouth living in the dormitories talked about the raised intersection as a great option. Many students are from other areas (further south) and are not familiar with it getting dark so early in the day. This is the safest option. And it would lower maintenance costs because it would stop ice and snow from accumulating.

Chris Miller, Hanover resident, agreed with the comments about the biking. A raised crosswalk and more lighting would be much safer.

Kevin Hogan, Hanover resident and recent Dartmouth graduate, is working with J. Chamberlain on a project for designing Wheelock Street and asked for additional information about the considerations reviewed when creating the alternatives and if there were metrics used to grade the alternatives on.

R. Houseman addressed this noting sight distances, geometry, turning movements, the stack, the queue, the volume of pedestrians or non-vehicular traffic versus vehicular traffic, the peak impact for all. We know eastbound is an AM peak, westbound is a PM peak for vehicles. We know that lunch and the 2:30 PM traffic and sports are drivers. At the end of the day, we're looking at turning radius of our vehicles: fleet, maintenance, fire department vehicles, and the volume of vehicles. We asked how does a raised intersection like the mid-block crossing at Dart Hall impact ambulance, fire, DPW, and transit buses? There's 120+ transit buses driving this area any given day on average. We're looking at all of that and then trying to plug in those numbers and understand how the design solution addresses safety and improves the intersection based on how we currently approach our road maintenance and our traffic and safety patterns. We also need to acknowledge up front if we are going to make improvements that have maintenance costs, we need to be sure we can support those costs over the long term.

J. Chamberlain asked if there was any data collected at night. R. Houseman noted the cameras ran 24 hours. Speed likely wasn't collected. Speed at night could be collected as a data point. Discussion ensued.

Timeline and next steps: J. Whitcomb said we kind of need a decision now. It's not our decision. Dartmouth needs to design and build this before they open the Hopkins Center and their construction window starts in April so they're trying to package this so that they're putting back the transit hub at the same time and the design solution for raised intersection changes this discussion. It includes drainage improvements and other things that need to be incorporated.

C. Callaghan asked if we can get quick analysis from Erica and Pete why that wouldn't be their first-choice option.

R. Houseman noted there has been one before and it was removed because it couldn't be maintained.

J. Chamberlain noted there is a recently installed raised crossing at Dartmouth Hall.

The question to the board is how to approach this.

J. Chamberlain supports having Hanover Bike Walk look at it at the February meeting. She also noted the Selectboard has a responsibility to Hanover's public spaces, including town roads.

R. Houseman offered to present option four, but not present all five options and open a conversation about why and how we ended up with this suggestion and whether it's the best decision. Raised crosswalk could be included or not included within option four.

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a. CPCNH Refresh Review

CPCNH does a refresh of accounts quarterly to establish new accounts. This rate period, CPCNH's rate will be higher than the default utility rate for Liberty Utilities and NH Electric COOP, so CPCNH is seeking Selectboard approval to do a refresh and enroll new customers into the Granite Plus rate.

R. Houseman explained the item and the recommendation provided.

At 8:00 pm J. Chamberlain MOVED to approve the refresh and enrollment of new customers at the Granite Plus rate.

J. Whitcomb SECONDED. All in favor

c. Visions Creative Housing Solutions, Inc. Tax Exemption Follow-Up

Visions for Creative Housing Solutions, Inc. has requested a Tax Exemption for their property located at North Park Street. Selectboard had requested Town Counsel review and those analysis have been provided to the board members.

R. Houseman explained the attorney noted multiple state statutes that could apply to this item. The board has the option to abate the taxes, but a PILOT would have to wait for another tax year.

C. Callaghan supports the abatement as it allows flexibility but does not set precedence. J. Whitcomb also supports an abatement.

At 8:02 pm J. Berke MOVED to abate the 2024 tax bill for Visions Creative Housing Solutions, Inc. A. Rassias

SECONDED. All in favor

d. Second Reading and Proposed Adoption of Complete Streets Policy

No changes to the policy were made since the last discussion.

Board members commented on:

Amount of resources attached, mandating private developments support the policy might discourage investment, the terms "excessively disproportionate" and "equitable" being vague.

At 8:06 pm J. Chamberlain MOVED to adopt the updated complete streets policy. A. Rassias SECONDED. All in favor

e. Review and approval of water and sewer abatement – 22B W. Wheelock Street

Due to incorrect reporting from a multi-unit building with five meters, the owner of 22B Wheelock Street was incorrectly assessed water usage for another unit in the building. Due to this incorrect reporting, 22B W. Wheelock was assessed a large water and sewer bill for water not used by this unit. The 5 metering units have now been labeled to correct any future confusion.

Action Requested: Abate the amount of \$1,611.11 for incorrect water and sewer billing at the 22B W. Wheelock Street location.

At 8:07 pm A. Rassias MOVED to Abate the amount of \$1,611.11 for incorrect water and sewer billing at the 22B W.

Wheelock Street location. J. Whitcomb SECONDED. All in favor

f. Approval of January 6, 2025 Selectboard Minutes

At 8:15 pm J. Berke MOVED to approve the minutes of January 6, 2025 as submitted. J. Whitcomb SECONDED.

All in favor

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g. Approval of items i to ii by Consent

i. Banner Request- Dartmouth Athletics

Dartmouth Athletics has requested an overhead banner be hung from March 2, 2025, to March 9, 2025, to promote their NCAA Skiing Championships as well as 6 light post banners to be hung from March 3, 2025 to March 10, 2025, for the same NCAA Skiing Championships. If approved, staff can accommodate these banner requests.

Action Requested: Approve Dartmouth Athletics' request for an overhead banner from March 2, 2025, to March 9, 2025, and 6 light post banners from March 3, 2025, to March 10, 2025, promoting their NCAA Skiing Championships.

ii. Donations – Etna Library

The Etna Library has received the following donations:

Frances and Paul Gardent \$100.00, Victoria and Reid Drucker \$100.00, Frederick Perkins and Patricia Armstrong \$100.00, Winthrop and Mundy Piper \$500.00

Action Requested: Accept the donations to the Etna Library as listed above.

At 8:10 pm C. Callaghan MOVED to approve the consent agenda. J. Whitcomb SECONDED. All in favor

R. Houseman, Town Manager gave an update on the Police Chief search process.

8. Selectboard Reports

- J. Berke
 - Downtown working group
 - Parking committee
- J. Whitcomb
 - Trustees of Trust Funds
 - Bressett Fund discussion
 - Sustainable Hanover
 - Howe Library Corporation
- C. Callaghan
 - Finance Committee
- A. Rassias
 - Nothing to Report
- J. Chamberlain
 - CIPC
 - When does the board want them to give a presentation on the projects
 - Planning Board
 - Zoning change options
 - Bike Walk
 - Walk audit

9. Adjournment

Per NH RSA 91-A:3:II A, B, D, E and L, the Selectboard needed to attend a non-public session. The board took a roll call vote to enter the non-public session at 8:26pm.

Roll call vote: Whitcomb- yes, Rassias- yes, Callaghan- yes, Chamberlain- yes, Berke- (not in the room)

Respectfully Submitted,

Jarett Berke, Secretary

SUMMARY

Item 7a

At 8:00 pm J. Chamberlain MOVED to approve the refresh and enrollment of new customers at the Granite Plus rate. J. Whitcomb SECONDED. All in favor

Item 7c

At 8:02 pm J. Berke MOVED to abate the 2024 tax bill for Visions Creative Housing Solutions, Inc . A. Rassias SECONDED. All in favor

Item 7d

At 8:06 pm J. Chamberlain MOVED to adopt the updated complete streets policy. A. Rassias SECONDED. All in favor

Item 9

Per NH RSA 91-A:3:II A, B, D, E and L, the Selectboard needed to attend a non-public session. The board took a roll call vote to enter the non-public session at 8:26pm.

Roll call vote: Whitcomb- yes, Rassias- yes, Callaghan- yes, Chamberlain- yes, Berke- (not in the room)