

## CAMPTON BOARD OF SELECTMEN

### MEETING MINUTES

Monday, November 6, 2023

Board attendees: Chair Sharon Davis, Vice Chair Nik Coates, Selectman Craig Engel, Selectman Mort Donahue, and Selectman Dan Boynton

On Zoom: Road Forman Matt Abear

Public attendees: Campton Administrator Corey Davenport was present along with Janet Lucas, Shelly Thompson, Kelsey Bouchard, Ron Goggans, Jim Butler, Jane Kellogg, Jake Tuck, Jade Hartsgrove, Bill Copeland, Maximilian Kent, John Whitney, Roland Benoit, Patricia Benoit, Robin Morse, Jessica Bartlett, Sharon Wall, Wilbur Coffey, Kenneth Wall, Susan King, Kevin King, John Pierce, Caron Pierce, Nancy Hedley, Pam Avery, and Paula Woodward as members of the public.

Call to order: A regular meeting of the Town of Campton Board of Selectmen was called to order at 4:30 p.m. on Monday, 6 November 2023 by Chairman Sharon Davis in the Campton Town offices and via Zoom.

In Public Session, a motion was made by Selectman Donahue to go into Non-Public Session under RSA 91-A: 3, II (c). The motion was seconded by Selectman Engel. The roll call vote was as follows: Selectman Donahue, aye; Selectman Engel, aye; and Chair Davis, Aye. The Board came out of a non-public session at 4:42 p.m.

### **New Business**

#### **Budget Work Session:**

**Library Budget.** Shelly Thompson, Library Trustee, previously distributed a copy of the proposed budget to the Board and presented it. The “special programming” line item was increased to attract more participants. The budget grand total was decreased due to a change in personnel and their recommendations to improve efficiencies. The Board Members had no additional questions.

**Recreation Department.** Kelsey Bouchard provided explanations for the proposed budget. More partnerships have been formed, leading to negligible changes in the budget. An “entrance fee” line item has been added but is offset by additional summer camp trip fees. Mr. Davenport stated that insurance figures aren’t yet in, but a meeting with the insurer is scheduled for later in the week. The Board Members had no additional questions.

**Selectmen’s Budget.** Mr. Davenport provided the overview. An increase is noted in the Moderator’s line due to four elections this year. Discussion ensued regarding the probable

purchase of a new voting machine in 2024. The estimated cost is \$5000-\$7500. It was decided to add a new line item for \$7500 under the Selectmen's budget for this purchase to provide funding in case the State requires a new machine to be purchased in 2024.

**Executive Administration.** Mr. Davenport provided the overview. He added a line item for the new compliance/health officer position. Various departments and boards have asked for this position. Mr. Davenport detailed a few small increases within the budget. He explained each increase, such as a budget increase for mileage (since more staff are attending training). There was an increase in budgeting for the website and internet due to the creation of a new website (under construction). Vice Chair Coates has recommended an increase to the training line to include membership to the International City Management Association so Mr. Davenport may attend the annual conference.

Selectman Engel asked about dual listings for the new compliance/health officer position. (One line will be the new position, and the other line will be deleted once the position is voted on favorably.) Vice Chair Coates suggested that a backup plan be developed to fulfill the duties if town voters turn down the new position.

**Conservation Commission.** Members of the commission were on hand to comment on the proposed budget. The budget is consistent with that of the past, with the bottom line remaining the same. A discussion ensued about upcoming projects. The Commission may have some expenditures related to demonstrations on invasive plants. Possible trail building was briefly discussed. Members of the commission would especially like to see financial assistance going to landowners involved in conservation work (incurring stewardship fees, etc.). Pemi-Baker Land Trust is the organization most involved in local projects, but the Forest Society is looking at a large proposed project on the Campton/Rumney line involving many hundreds of acres. Members of the commission will keep the Selectmen informed of this project.

Chairperson Davis raised the issue that Blair Cemetery roadways need gravel. She also said that unused cemetery land should be surveyed for plots. Vice Chair Coates asked if ground penetrating radar had ever been used. No one knew the answer. The selectmen decided to add \$5000 to the materials line and create a new planning line of \$10,000.

#### **Town Administrator Update:**

**Review Manifests, Sign Permits & Warrants.** None.

**Auditor RFP Results.** Vachon Cluklay & Company was the only bid submitted. A fee reduction was offered if the contract included the audit years of 2023, 2024, 2025, 2026, and 2027. Selectman Engel motioned to accept the bid of four audit years from 2023-2026. Selectman Donahue seconded the motion, and the Board unanimously approved.

**Consent Agenda.**

1. **October 16, 2023 Public Minutes.** Vice Chair Coates made a motion to approve the minutes. Selectman Engel seconded the motion, and the Board unanimously approved.
2. **October 16, 2023 Non-Public Minutes.** Vice Chair Coates made a motion to approve the minutes. Selectman Engel seconded the motion, and the Board unanimously approved.
3. **October 16, 2023 Sealed Non-Public Minutes.** Vice Chair Coates made a motion to approve the minutes. Selectman Engel seconded the motion, and the Board unanimously approved.
4. **Conservation Commission Appointment.** Hope Eagleson submitted a letter of interest to join the Conservation Commission. She has attended several meetings of the Commission, and the members are enthusiastic about her appointment. Discussion ensued about ongoing three-year terms. Selectman Donahue motioned to appoint Hope Eagleson to complete Shannon Garnsey's vacated term through 2026. Selectman Engel seconded the motion, and the Board unanimously approved.
5. **Community Power Appointment.** Mark Renquist submitted a letter of interest to join the Community Power Committee. Vice Chair Coates made a motion to accept Mr. Renquist's application and to adjust the terms of the Community Power Committee members as follows:
  - Mark Renquist 1 year
  - Bill Sebastian 2 years
  - Rita Sebastian 3 yearsSelectman Engel seconded the motion and the Board unanimously approved.
6. **Timber Intent off Page Road.** Chairperson Davis said that the property owners of the proposed timber harvest wish to use the Town bridge over the Beebe River, instead of the adjacent private logging bridge, for the logging trucks (weighing an estimated 100,000 pounds). Chair Davis indicated that this parcel is only accessible from Eastern Corner Road. Mr. Davenport indicated that the Page Road location must have been wrong and said he would research and correct the matter. Selectman Donahue motioned to approve the intent to harvest application but deny the use of the town-owned bridge due to its six-ton load limit. Vice Chair Coates seconded the motion, and the Board unanimously approved.

On a related note, Mr. Davenport said that another property owner in the area recently asked about using the town bridge to have propane trucks (weighing approximately 32,000 pounds) cross. Discussion ensued regarding the Beebe River Bridge State inspection, which was done at the end of September. Overall, the bridge needed only minor maintenance, which the town is responsible for. The Board agreed to stick to the currently posted weight limit of 6 tons.

A member of the Conservation Commission asked what factors (such as waterways, roads, bridges, clear cuts) are considered by the Board when making decisions about intent to cut forms. Vice Chair Coates responded that the Board has no say about the harvest unless the logging is done for a site plan.

**Road Work.** Corey Davenport and Ron Farnsworth have discussed the work done to date. Eric Grenier recommends an RFP for one year. Ron resurfaced several roads impacted by the mud season of 2021, such as Lower Beech Rd, Turnpike Rd, Bog Road, and sections of Beech Hill Rd and Perch Pond Rd. Mr. Davenport indicated that the Road Agent proposed the resurfacing projects for Windmill and Ryder Roads in 2024. Reconstruction of a portion of Mason Road will be planned for 2024. In response to Selectman Engel's inquiry, Corey said that equipment is being placed at Eastern Corner this week. Public member Paula Woodward and Selectman Engel pointed out that there are four new homes on Lower Beech Hill Road, a new home on (eastern) Windmill Road, and a new home on Ryder. Portions of Lower Beech Hill Road were just graded but not rolled. Suggestions for vehicle impact assessments were raised.

Vice Chair Coates attended a UNH workshop for municipalities on road resurfacing strategies and said it was extremely valuable. He recommends the Board members attend when the workshop is again offered. Mr. Davenport will investigate this workshop offering.

**Accounts Payable.** A new amendment was made to Page 2, Number III, Paragraph 2, Section #2b. Selectman Donahue motioned to approve the proposed policy change so that the Finance Director can hold reimbursement requests until they have reached a minimum of \$10. Selectman Engel seconded the motion, and the Board unanimously approved.

**Building Permit Fees Discussion.** Jade Hartsgrove gave a presentation on information that she had gathered from surrounding towns. Ms. Hartsgrove discovered that Campton's fees are lower than most surrounding areas. An increase in some fees would help offset the new Compliance/Health Officer position. Discussion ensued in regard to specific suggestions outlined in a handout given to the Board. All suggestions need to be discussed and voted on at a public hearing scheduled for December 4<sup>th</sup>. If passed, implementation would take place on January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024.

Ms. Hartsgrove said that after a zoning plan application has been approved by the Planning Board, a permit form should be created for posting.

Ms. Hartsgrove has received an Administrative Appeal from an attorney requesting the overturning of a planning board decision for site review.

She also mentioned land change tax forms on four contiguous lots. The tax for removing the land from Current Use should be paid by the seller of the lots, not the purchasers. She is seeking guidance on how to proceed. Mr. Davenport is going to obtain advice from the town assessor this week.

**Electronic Signature Citizen Concern.** Maximilian Kent represents All Mountain Rentals and has experienced numerous challenges with the town clerk's office refusing electronic signatures on documents. NH RSA 294-e2 recognizes electronic signatures. He would like the Selectmen to weigh in on this issue. Mr. Davenport stated that he spoke with Hannah Joyce, and she didn't provide specific reasons/rules for her denial of electronic signatures. Mr. Davenport will discuss this matter with the Town Legal Counsel and have him follow through in writing with Hannah Joyce.

#### **Privilege of the Floor.**

Paula Woodward asked that "equestrian" signage be posted on Beech Hill Road at the dam and the intersection of Lower Beech Hill Road and Beech Hill Road. She explained that vehicular traffic travels very fast on these roads, and she would like to raise awareness of equestrian activities. Mr. Davenport and Ron Farnsworth discussed the matter earlier this day. Chairperson Davis pointed out that there is also equestrian traffic along the town roads near Kastle Equine.

#### **Board Concerns and Directives.**

Vice Chair Coates – none.

Selectman Engel – none.

Selectman Boynton – none.

Chairman Davis shared that the NH Municipal Conference will be held November 15-16. Training sessions are offered on a variety of topics, and she recommends as many selectmen attend as possible.

Also, a joint Fire Department Study Committee meeting will be held on November 9<sup>th</sup> at 10:30 a.m. in Thornton. Selectman Boynton said that he would attend as the currently appointed members could not make it.

#### **Committee Updates.**

Mr. Davenport said that the Community Power Committee is looking to add a selectman to their committee as an ex-officio member. Selectman Boynton volunteered.

#### **Public Hearing for the Campton Village Precinct (CVP).**

Chair Davis opened the Public Hearing at 6:30 p.m.

The Town has received thirteen requests from property owners to be removed from the Campton Village Precinct because they do not receive any services. Mr. Davenport clarified that the final decision by precinct residents will take place at the *annual* meeting of the Campton Village Precinct voters. At the meeting, the precinct residents will vote to approve or reject the removal of these properties. Selectman Davis said that the valuation of properties to be removed equals \$2,577,500. The valuation of properties already removed equals \$635,200.

Pat Benoit asked if a property could ask to be removed at a later date. Selectman Davis said yes.

Robin Morse asked how the removal of some households will financially impact those remaining in the precinct. Selectman Boynton said that the burden will likely be shifted to those who remain.

Wilbur Coffey stated that this matter first came up in 2013.

John Whitney, a Campton Village Precinct Commissioner, said street lighting is another inequity. Selectman Boynton responded that the Board is very interested in addressing the inequities.

Ted Hammond asked where the properties requesting to be removed are located. Selectman Davis responded that the thirteen properties are scattered across the precinct.

Karen Pierce asked who made the precinct boundaries. The boundaries were last set in 1901. Mr. Davenport said that Cindy's Lane was removed by court order. Three more were removed last March after the Annual Campton Village Precinct meeting.

Jessica Bartlett would like the Town to take over the sidewalk and lights. Selectman Boynton responded that the sidewalks and streetlights would have to be voted on during a town meeting in March.

Jessica Bartlett would like a warrant article drafted by the precinct residents at tonight's meeting. Chairperson Davis assured members of the public that no decision on the lights or sidewalks would be made at this meeting. Selectman Boynton stated that the current board wants to manage this matter correctly and has contacted their legal counsel to find the correct course of action.

An animated discussion ensued with many voices speaking over each other about what was, or was not, done in the past and by whom.

Vice Chair Coates stated that the Board can make a non-binding recommendation about the thirteen properties, but the precinct's voters will make the binding decision. They can also make a petition warrant article requesting that the Town take over the sidewalks and streetlights.

Jessica Bartlett asked if the precinct meeting could be held after the town meeting. Mr. Davenport said yes, and Village Precinct Commissioner John Whitney echoed this sentiment. Jessica stated that she had drafted a petition.

Vice Chair Coates said that the Board must put any petition with 25 signatures or more from residents on the warrant. A petition would need to be turned in by February. Selectman Boynton suggested that the members present carefully word their petition before turning it in. Animated discussion ensued, with many voices speaking over each other.

Vice Chair Coates stated that the Board's task is to make a recommendation to the thirteen properties. He said that a unified voice needs to be presented in a written document for consideration at the next BOS meeting.

John Pierce asked about the letters that were sent out. Mr. Davenport responded that approximately 300 registered letters were sent out to precinct members. Thirteen households requested removal. The only time individuals can be removed from the precinct is at the annual precinct meeting by vote of the precinct members.

Vice Chair Coates said that he understands that some folks want a tiered approach to the cost. John Pierce from the precinct responded that there is a 2-part system base rate plus a water rate. Alternatives to this approach are being discussed.

Selectman Boynton clarified that “most of us here” want the Town to pay for the sidewalks and the water district to pay for the water. The water district may need to be re-mapped to reflect actual use, not what was intended in 1913.

Jessica Bartlett clarified that the warrant article would only address the sidewalk and streetlights.

Vice Chair Coates refocused the conversation on the thirteen properties currently under discussion. The Board indicated that they fall outside of the service area and could not get water. He mentioned that he would be voting in favor of recommending removal because this would allow the precinct voters to vote on the matter. Vice Chair Coates reiterated that if the Board voted against the removal, the precinct membership present would have no vote in the matter.

Sharon Wall called for the vote. Selectman Boynton stated that this motion makes the matter actionable. Selectman Engel encouraged the public members present to get their neighbors involved. Chairperson Davis asked for any further discussion. None. Vice Chair Coates made a motion to remove the discussed thirteen properties from the precinct. Selectman Engel seconded the motion, and the Board approved unanimously.

**Adjournment.** Chairman Davis adjourned the public meeting at 7:25 p.m. There being no further business, the Selectmen’s meeting was also adjourned at 7:25 p.m.

Corey Davenport  
Town Administrator