

## CAMPTON BOARD OF SELECTMEN

### MEETING MINUTES

Monday, March 18, 2024

Board Attendees: Dan Boynton, Sharon Davis, Craig Engel, Mort Donahue, Karl Kelly

Town Employees: Kate O'Connor, Lisa Vincent, Jade Hartsgrove (zoom), Matt Abear, Nancy Mardin, Michelle McCaleb (recorder)

Public Attendees: Wade Reed, Robert Bain, Cami Bain, Jon Gablinske, Mary O'Brien, Linda Molinaro, Ted Baumeister, Joann Moser, John Parker (zoom), Marilyn Woodward, Ron Goggans, Paula Woodward

Call to Order: Chair Davis opened the meeting at 4:30 p.m.

Selectman Boynton noted that a new agenda item has been added and will be touched upon later in the meeting. He also wanted to welcome Kate O'Connor as the new Town Administrator. Chair Davis stated the Select Board will have a shorter meeting on April 1 and hold a Meet-and-Greet for Kate following the meeting. Chair Davis also wanted to welcome back Karl Kelly, who has been re-elected.

#### **Deposit Procedure**

Nancy Mardin, Town Treasurer, stated she will do the deposits moving forward instead of the Town Clerk's Office. This will go into effect on April 1, 2024. Anna Hanrahan, Deputy Town Treasurer, has been made aware of this change and is on board with it. Nancy will order new deposit bags from Amazon (cheapest). The Town Attorney recommended the Board change what they are doing because it is New Hampshire Law for the Treasurer to do the deposits and it will help with getting the record of deposits in a timelier fashion.

#### **Reeds Complaint**

Chair Davis explained that Ron Farnsworth, Road Agent, had a family emergency and could not be here. Matt Abear, Assistant Road Agent, is filling in and will respond for Ron. Wade Reed, Owner of Wade A. Reed Logging, summarized his complaint and what happened from his point of view. Selectman Donahue asked Mr. Reed if he was ticketed, and Mr. Reed responded that he was not. Mr. Abear responded with his side of the story; what Mr. Farnsworth had given Wade A. Reed Logging permission to do, what Mr. Reed had done that the Highway Department didn't have

knowledge of, etc. Chair Davis stated that when Mr. Farnsworth can come back to work, the Select Board will have a conversation with him about future actions for next winter.

### **Administrative Tasks**

- a) Review Manifests, Sign Permits & Warrants

NONE

- b) Consent Agenda

Selectman Boynton made a motion to approve the consent agenda which includes the public and non-public meeting minutes for March 4, 2024. The motion was seconded by Selectman Engel and was unanimously approved. Selectman Engel made a motion to approve the revised meeting minutes for February 5, 2024. Selectman Donahue seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.

- c) General Updates and Correspondence

NONE

### **Selectmen Officer Elections and Selectmen 2024 Assignments**

- a) Elections of 2024 BOS Officers

Selectman Engel nominated Selectman Boynton for Chair of the Select Board. Selectman Donahue seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved. Chair Boynton nominated Selectman Engel for Vice Chair of the Select Board. The motion was seconded by Selectman Donahue, and it was unanimously approved. Selectman Engel wanted to take a moment to recognize Selectman Davis and the work she has done for the Board over the past year.

- b) BOS Assignments

- a. Planning Board

Selectman Engel stated he has been doing it for the past year and can continue to do so if no one else is interested. It was decided that Selectman Engel will continue with this assignment.

- b. Conservation Commission Ex Officio

Chair Boynton has done it before and will continue with this assignment.

- c. Policy Committee

Selectman Davis volunteered for this assignment.

- d. CIP Committee

Selectman Kelly would like to continue with this assignment.

- e. Recreation Committee

Selectman Davis and Selectman Donahue will fill this assignment.

- f. HR Committee

Selectman Engel will continue with this assignment. Selectman Kelly also volunteered.

- g. Ad hoc Committee

Selectman Davis and Selectman Donahue volunteered for this assignment.

- h. Roads Committee

It was decided that Selectman Kelly, Chair Boynton, and Selectman Engel will fill this assignment.

### **Appointment of Road Agent**

Selectman Davis made a motion to nominate Ron Farnsworth for the ensuing year. Selectman Engel seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.

### **Appointment of Emergency Management Director**

Selectman Davis made a motion to table the decision, so the Board can advertise the position. Chair Boynton agrees to table it until the last meeting in April. The motion was seconded by Selectman Donahue and unanimously approved.

After some confusion and much discussion, the Board decided that the April meetings will be held on April 1<sup>st</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup>. The deadline for parties interested in joining a committee/board is April 8<sup>th</sup> and the meeting regarding board member appointments will be on April 15<sup>th</sup>.

### **Statement of Town Meeting**

Selectman Davis read the Statement of Town Meeting (attached below).

Selectman Davis was impressed by the number of people that showed up and Selectman Engel was impressed by the way people were speaking and addressing each other. Robert Bain stated he had never been to a meeting that professional before. Ted Baumeister wondered about the threats of violence and the Select Board responded that they could set up a meeting with the Police Chief. Linda Molinaro read an email from a former Select Board member that she is upset with. Chair Boynton responded that the email was not condoned by the Board and the Board did not give their approval for the email to be sent out. Chair Boynton continued to say that there was nothing the

Board could've done without violating his Freedom of Speech Right during his campaign for Selectman.

### **Privilege of the Floor**

Paula Woodward wanted to apologize to Linda Molinaro for the commotion while Mrs. Molinaro was trying to speak at the Town Meeting. Selectman Engel recommends moving the Town Meeting to the Saturday after Town Election. He suggested they start at 9 am and the Select Board would host a cookout following the meeting.

Selectman Davis made a motion to go into a non-public session in accordance with RSA 91-A:3, II (a), (c) at 5:43 p.m. Selectman Donahue seconded the motion. The roll call vote was as follows: Selectman Davis, aye; Selectman Engel, aye; Selectman Boynton, aye; Selectman Donahue, aye; Selectman Kelly, aye.

The public session reconvened at 6:20 p.m. Selectman Davis made a motion to seal the minutes. Selectman Engel seconded the motion because it is determined that divulgence of this information likely would affect adversely the reputation of any person other than a member of this board.

The roll call vote was as follows: Selectman Davis, aye; Selectman Engel, aye; Selectman Boynton, aye; Selectman Donahue, aye; Selectman Kelly, aye.

### **Board Concerns, Committee Updates & Directives**

NONE

With there being no further business, Craig Engel moved to adjourn at 6:30 p.m. and Sharon Davis seconded the motion.

Respectfully Submitted,

Michelle McCaleb, Recorder

## 2024 Town Meeting

At the Selectmen's meeting on March 4, 2024, it became very clear that the deliberative session of the Annual Town Meeting was going to be challenging.

At the Selectmen's meeting, a Campton citizen inquired about the procedure for secret balloting at the Town Meeting. He wanted to know if a petition could be presented at the meeting requesting that all voting on all of the warrant articles be by secret ballot. He was informed that the law requires that a petition signed by 5 registered voters would have to be presented to the Moderator on each article before the vote on each article.

The Selectmen and Moderator became very concerned what effect secret balloting was going to have on the Town Meeting. Concerns included:

- how to have an effective flow of voters walking to the ballot box to cast their secret ballot and then walking back to their seats, i.e. not walking into each other;
- with one petitioned article already requiring a secret ballot with voting to be open on that article for one hour, how to be sure that no votes on other articles were cast in that ballot box but were cast in the right ballot box;
- the concern of time – each time a secret ballot vote is taken, those votes will have to be hand counted by the Supervisors of the Checklist and the ballot box be returned to its stand for voting on the next article;
- concern that daycare would only be offered at the meeting until 9 pm;
- how to proceed with the meeting while the votes are being counted on each article without having to wait for the results of the counting which could be a total of 30 minutes on each article. Article 7 (petitioned SB2) already required secret ballot and opened for voting for an hour. Articles 8 through 23 = 20 articles; 20 articles x 30 minutes equals 10 hours. That would bring the meeting into the wee hours of the next day;
- what are the procedures for continuing the meeting to another night if the secret balloting were to continue at the meeting
- concern that there would be enough paper secret ballots available at the meeting and the concern that the past practice for numbering secret ballots 1 through 8 would be confusing. Having secret ballots numbered to match the article number being voted for would be less confusing for the voters, but this change would have to be approved by the Town Clerk and prepared by the Town Clerk.
- what day or evening would work where the meeting could be continued to – when the school gym would be available, what would be best for the voters, etc.
- there was also concern expressed for safety and police protection because of various threats of violence to occur at the meeting over the last couple of months.

A meeting was scheduled by the Chair of the Select Board for the Town Elections Officials to meet with the Town Attorney on these issues on Thursday, March 7th. Town Elections officials invited included the Board of Selectmen; Moderator; Town Clerk; Supervisors of the Checklist – plus the

Chief of Police and Town Attorney. Meetings with Town Counsel do not require the prior posting of a meeting agenda as meetings with counsel are considered “non-meetings” under NH law.

On March 7<sup>th</sup>, all elected officials attended the special meeting with town counsel except for the Town Clerk who declined to attend. The meeting lasted an hour and a half resulting in a plan for the effective flow of voter traffic during secret ballot process; the development of a sample for numbering the secret ballots the same as the number of the article being voted on; and a procedure to continue the meeting to another date if (1) we ran out of paper secret ballots and (2) the meeting was heading to mid-night.

Immediately following the March 7<sup>th</sup>, Nancy Donahue, Supervisor of the Checklist and Paula Woodward, Moderator took the sample secret ballot to the Town Clerk’s office. The Moderator advised the Town Clerk that she and Mrs. Donahue were there to bring her up to speed following the meeting. The Town Clerk responded that she knew her job. The Moderator advised the Town Clerk that the sample secret ballots were discussed and asked that the Town Clerk call the Moderator when she was free to do so. She never called.

After the vote on March 12<sup>th</sup>, the Town Clerk asked the Moderator if she had what she needed for the next night. Assuming that the Clerk was referring to the Moderator’s part of the evening, the Moderator responded yes.

Town Meeting – March 13. The Supervisors of the Checklist and several members of the Select Board arrived at the polling place between 5 and 5:30 to set up for registering voters starting at 6:00. The Town Clerk arrived at 6:00 p.m. and did not have the voting boxes, voting cards, secret ballots or pencils to mark the secret ballots. Registration of the voters could not begin until the boxes, cards, ballots and pencils were available. Select Board Chair called the Town Attorney and advised of the situation and that the doors could not be opened for voters to register, and that the voter line was out to the parking lot. Attorney Tanguay approached the Town Clerk as to where the ballot boxes were as well as the other items. Shortly after Attorney Tanguay spoke to the Town Clerk, she went to her vehicle and retrieved the items we needed to register voters – all except there were no pencils. The School Principal, Dave Hamnett, was approached to see if the school had boxes of pencils that could be used in marking the secret ballots. Fortunately, the school was well supplied in pencils.

There were 250 registered voters who attended, some had to leave before the meeting was over as their children were exhausted, and some who had early morning obligations that necessitated their leaving before they had the opportunity to vote on all the articles.

The meeting which was scheduled to begin at 6:30 p.m. did not begin until 7:15 p.m. making for a long night and frustrated voters.