

TOWN OF SEABROOK

SELECTMEN'S MEETING

FEBRUARY 6, 2023

Present: Aboul B. Khan
Theresa A. Kyle
Srinivasan "Ravi" Ravikumar
William M. Manzi, III

10:30AM

Mr. Khan opened the meeting at 10:35AM.

MONTHLY MEETING - POLICE CHIEF

Police Chief Brett Walker was present for his monthly report (see attached).

Mrs. Kyle is happy to see the department interacting with the children. She thanked the officers for the work with "stuff the cruiser".

Ravi thanked the police chief for a comprehensive report. He asked about the link for the officers who will be running the marathon and playing in the hockey game. The links will be made available to the public through the website.

The overdose numbers for 2021 and 2022 are not too different. However, there are substantial differences between 2022 and when the drug epidemic first began. Ravi said this affects entire families. Mrs. Kyle said the numbers have decreased a lot in part to the fire department and she thanked them as well.

Ravi pointed out warrant articles for the police department are #24 for the female locker room, #25 for the HVAC system and #26 for flooring in the weight room. Article 23 is for the capital reserve fund, and it is important to keep updates to the technical equipment in the cruisers.

Mr. Khan asked about the parking enforcement agents. Chief Walker said they do have some that return from the previous season. They have increased the rate which helps but some of the local fast food chains are also starting at that rate. If they do not return this season he may be back before the board for another increase.

MEETING - FINANCIAL REPORT

Town Manager Bill Manzi was present for his financial report (see attached). Mr. Manzi explained how the town get to the total tax levy with a reduction of revenues bringing us to what is raised in taxation. He explained the large increase in 20022 that was from a big change in tax dollars paid by NextEra. He showed a comparison from 2014-21 where NextEra paid 42% of the

tax levy in 2014 to 28% of the total tax levy in 2021 and residential paid 38% of the total tax levy in 2014 and 51% of the tax levy in 2021.

Ravi commented that the tax dollars had been increasing and NextEra's tax payment has been pretty flat. Mr. Manzi said the budgets have gone up 2.5% per year. Ravi feels that with the increase in budgets it has made NextEra's tax payments decrease towards the total tax levy. Mr. Manzi said it is a shift and it is astounding but cannot be downplayed as no matter what the tax levy is the money that has to be raised even if the budget didn't increase.

In 2022 the residents got a 2% tax decrease as NextEra paid the correct amount of \$15 million or 33.5% of the tax levy whereas the residents paid \$21.5 million or 47.3% of the tax levy. Public safety made up 77% of the increase in the total budget.

There was discussion on the water and sewer. There will be a full report on the water and sewer budget and funding at the meeting in March. The water department is self-sufficient operationally where the sewer department is not. However, the capital expenses are still subsidized by the taxpayers.

Ravi commented to the residents that they should not vote on the warrant articles based on how they feel about the budget or default budget. They should vote on the article based on their own merit as they are as important by their own merit.

Mrs. Kyle commented on the default budget and the laws that govern how it is created. There were decision made by the board to put certain items into the default budget based on ambiguous items.

Ravi said the law is clear and those items are in the budget but questioned if they should be included in the default budget. He is not looking to close anything but it is the choice of the residents if they want the proposed budget or the default budget which is where the selectman need to find ways to fund the important items.

Mr. Khan said this is a great report the town manager does every year. He would like to see a little more focus on what is raised for the school that they have no control over. The default budget has a big number in the fire overtime. He said our community is different with over 10 ways to get into the town and we are a beach community. He has not heard any resident asking to reduce services. Unless they want services

cut they cannot control how much houses are going to sell for as it is based on a formula of the assessed value.

The NextEra amount is not set in stone as we are in litigation for 2021 and could be in 2022. Mrs. Kyle commented that the tax rate is lower in Seabrook than Hampton and they do not have the services we have. The fire department has not had any new employees added since 2003.

Mrs. Kyle commented that Ravi was going to vote "No" on the article for 4 new firefighters where she is going to vote "Yes". The fire department doesn't just put out fires they go out for many other calls including drug overdoses. She is urging the residents to strongly vote in favor of this article.

Ravi commented that adding 4 new firefighters will not reduce the overtime in the department and wants to make that very clear and it is in the meeting minutes. Mrs. Kyle said the overtime won't be reduced because there's not sufficient staff working in that department. Mr. Khan said the firefighters are getting injured as they are working many hours.

Fire Chief Bill Edwards commented there were 5 employees out for a substantial amount of time which took a lot of extra manpower and overtime. He said they are running as many calls for service as Hampton with half the manpower. There was discussion on how many employees per shift they would need to just save on call backs. They are behind with the number of staffing and the employees are getting worn out with the amount of work they do per call. The on-call list is still in effect but they only come in for big fires they don't come in for ambulance calls.

The town clerk said her department added a full-time and part-time employee since 2003 as the town has grown and they have a lot of people coming in. She said the people are needed in this department as it is much more important than her department.

Maria Brown spoke about the free services that were trying to come into town at the building on Route 1 that the people voted in favor of. She said the The Brook agreed to pay to upgrade the building. She would like to have an update as it has been over a year and a half. Mr. Manzi stated the original non-profit organization that was approved by town meeting pulled back as they could not afford to fix the building. A second article was then placed on the ballot for a new non-profit organization that the people did not pass. He indicated from that point on there is no further update.

Ravi said the people are very happy with the services they receive. The budget money is part of the democratic process and cannot add things to the default budget just because the people may not vote for it in the budget.

Phil Walsh said the safety of this town is the best. He said they need to get ahead of the game. He feels it is putting a burden on the taxpayers and the public safety departments. He is 100% for the police and fire departments.

Chief Edwards commented that the 1.9 million Ravi had in the overtime line at his presentation is not accurate. He said their number is just shy of 1.4 million. He has asked for more in the budget for overtime as they have over expended last year and will again this year. The chief hopes this is the year they see fit to increase the number of firefighters as it is needed and needs to be addressed. The town is changing in a bunch of different ways and those changes need to be addressed.

Carole Howley asked how they can explain the addition of 4 new firefighters with no decrease to the cost of overtime. She said they want to help support the department and thanked the public safety departments for their work. Chief Edwards said they have minimum staffing and they cannot predict what will happen and need to man the department 24/7. Mr. Manzi said he doesn't fully agree with the chief on the addition of 4 new personnel. He believes there would be a reduction in overtime as they have split the overtime into 2 categories. The first overtime is for vacations, call outs, etc. and the second overtime is for injuries. These employees may be out for 2 months and are filled by overtime. Mr. Manzi said it is his personal belief that the injury overtime will decrease with the addition of 4 new firefighters.

There was further discussion on how to present this article to the voters. The chair of the budget committee, who is also a retired fire chief in another community has stated numerous times they have paramedics who are also firefighters whereas other communities the paramedics do not put out fires.

Maria Brown asked if the articles can be changed at deliberative session for adding additional firefighters. She asked about the special article for collective bargaining agreements. Mr. Manzi explained how that warrant article works and stated it is only for collective bargaining and to convene a special town meeting.

James Hunt introduced the new Seabrook Citizens Association on Facebook and asked for people to join. They will hold a meet and greet on Saturday February 18 from 9:30AM to 12:30PM at the library.

The board took a break at 12:37PM. The board reconvened at 1:13PM.

TAX ABATEMENT

B33 Seabrook Commons II - 700 Lafayette Road #2 - \$46,407

Angela Silva was present and explained this is for a negotiated settlement for 2021 and 2022. She explained they are assessed on market value. Ravi asked if there are statistics on the number of calls to police and fire. Ms. Silva said she does not have that information but maybe the police will have that information. Ms. Silva said she doesn't feel that information is relevant when determining the market value of a property. Mr. Manzi said those calls for services are not going to fly with the BTLA when we are before them with this case. He said he concurs with Ms. Silva and her recommendation. Ms. Silva stated this would be a credit back to them on their 2023 tax bill.

MOTION: Theresa A. Kyle To approve and sign the
Second: Ravi tax abatement.
Unanimous

Mary Messina - 219 Bristol Street said in the covid years there was a lot of relief sent down to the towns and asked who distributed that money to the businesses. Mr. Manzi explained in NH there were programs but they went directly to the state and then to the businesses. Ms. Silva said if they did receive that money, it should have shown up on the revenue statements.

CURRENT USE LIEN RELEASE TAX

219 Lower Collins Street - \$17,500

Angela Silva was present and explained the current use lien tax in NH. She said they pay a very low tax but when they go to change the land or develop it they pay 10% of that value. This amount will be paid to the town to take it out of current use.

MOTION: Ravi To approve the current
Second: Theresa A. Kyle use lien tax release.
Unanimous

3 ELDERLY EXEMPTIONS

MOTION: Ravi To approve and sign all
Second: Theresa A. Kyle elderly exemptions.
Unanimous

VETERAN EXEMPTION

Donna Hashem - 34 Brooks Road Ext.

MOTION: Ravi To approve and sign the
Second: Theresa A. Kyle veteran exemption.
Unanimous

REFUND

177 Lafayette Road - \$300

MOTION: Ravi To approve and sign the
Second: Theresa A. Kyle refund.
Unanimous

AUCTIONS - DEEDED PROPERTIES

202 South Main Street

141 South Main Street

Mr. Manzi explained these 2 properties are tax deeded and have reached the timeframe to be auctioned. This would allow the town to recoup the back taxes and the interest. Mr. Manzi said they can put in a reserve amount so if the bids come in lower they do not have to accept it.

MOTION: Ravi To approve the auction
Second: Theresa A. Kyle of these 2 properties.
Unanimous

Mr. Manzi said the only award to the highest bidder is from the board. There will be a condition on the 202 South Main Street to remove the existing structure.

SEWER SERVICE APPLICATION

John Reynolds - 11 Elephant Rock Road

MOTION: Ravi To approve and sign the
Second: Theresa A. Kyle sewer application.
Unanimous

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PERFORMANCE GRANT AGREEMENT

This is a \$4000 grant and a soft match of \$4000 by the town.

MOTION: Theresa A. Kyle to accept the terms of

Second: Ravi
Unanimous

the Emergency Management Performance Grant as presented in the amount \$4000 for Seabrook. Furthermore, the Board acknowledges that the total cost of this project will be \$8000, in which the town will be responsible for a 50% match of \$4000.

LAND DONATION - MAP 16-5-1

MOTION: Ravi
Second: Theresa A. Kyle
Unanimous

To accept the land donation.

REQUEST OF HAMPTON/AQUARION WATER

MOTION: Theresa A. Kyle

To table until a representative from Aquarion come before the board to answer questions.

Mr. Khan asked if they should be making an agreement with a private company on behalf of the Town of Hampton. Mr. Manzi feels it would be between Hampton and Seabrook but without a representative they cannot answer that.

Second: Aboul B. Khan
Unanimous

Ravi asked if Seabrook would have access to the meters to see how much water consumption is actually being used. Mr. Manzi said the inter-municipal agreement would deal with all of this and it would be the Board of Selectmen who would approve that. Mr. Khan commented there would need to be some end time in the agreement so that it could be turned off by the board.

Curtis Slayton spoke about the water main that goes to the beach and if something were to happen the town would be turning to Hampton or Salisbury for support. He would like this discussed during the conversations if they were to have it.

QUESTIONS/COMMENTS

Mrs. Kyle attended the stuff a cruiser event at Market Basket. She also attended the planning board meeting on behalf of Mr. Khan.

Ravi attended the RPC meeting and will give a report at the next meeting.

Mr. Manzi said a local warming center was opened this past weekend during the frigid cold and he thanked both Joe Titone and Bonnie Armentrout. He mentioned some of the local organizations that helped with this including the Community Table, Police Department, Fire Department and school who opened for this shelter.

Mr. Khan stated the deliberative session is tomorrow evening at the community center at 7PM. The school deliberative session is tonight.

MOTION:	Theresa A. Kyle	To adjourn the meeting
Second:	Ravi	at 2:09PM.
Unanimous		

Meeting adjourned at 2:09PM.

Minutes taken by Kelly J. O'Connor.

Approved and endorsed:

Srinivasan "Ravi" Ravikumar,
Clerk

Date: _____

TOWN OF SEABROOK BOARD OF SELECTMEN

AGENDA

February 6, 2023

Open Meeting at 10:30 A.M.

TURN CELL PHONES TO VIBRATE OR OFF PLEASE PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

MEETING

- 1.) Monthly Meeting – Police Chief
- 2.) Meeting – Town Manager – Financial Report

NEW BUSINESS

- 1.) Question of approving tax abatement for B33 Seabrook Commons II – 700 Lafayette Road #2 - \$46,407.
- 2.) Question of approving current use lien release tax – 219 Lower Collins Street - \$17,500.
- 3.) Question of approving refund for 177 Lafayette Road - \$300.
- 4.) Question of approving auctions for two deeded properties – 202 South Main Street and 141 South Main Street.
- 5.) Question of approving 3 elderly exemptions.
- 6.) Question of approving veteran exemption for Donna Hashem – 34 Brooks Road Ext.
- 7.) Question of approving sewer service application for John Reynolds – 11 Elephant Rock Road.
- 8.) Question of approving the Emergency Management Performance Grant agreement.
- 9.) Question of accepting land donation – Map16-5-1.
- 10.) Question of request by the Town of Hampton/Aquarion Water.

QUESTIONS/COMMENTS

Board of Selectmen on any boards and/or committee meetings they have attended

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION