

**TOWN OF WALPOLE
MEETING OF THE SELECTBOARD
DECEMBER 30, 2021**

Selectboard Present: Cheryl Mayberry (Chair); Steven Dalessio; Peggy L. Pschirrer

CALL TO ORDER: Ms. Mayberry, Chair of the Walpole Selectboard, called this meeting via Zoom to order at 6:30 PM. The Selectboard members are in three separate locations. Also attending this meeting is Mrs. Sarah Downing, Manager of Administration, at the Walpole Town Hall and Mrs. Regina Borden, Recording Secretary, at a separate location. This meeting was being recorded. There were three members of the Power Committee in attendance: Mr. Paul Looney, Mr. Dennis Marcom and Mr. Andrew Dey.

Ms. Mayberry called for a voice roll call of the Selectboard present. Steven Dalessio was present at his home; Peggy Pschirrer was present at her home and Cheryl Mayberry was present at her home.

PUBLIC BUSINESS:

Power Committee Presentation: Mr. Looney presented the following:
“Walpole Community Power Aggregation Plan”
Summary

What is Community Power?

The State of NH has enacted laws that allow towns, cities, and counties to buy power in bulk for their citizens and businesses. A requirement from the state is that a municipal Aggregation Plan be created.

The typical home uses about 10 kilowatt-hours (k Wh) in a year. Collectively our town uses about 2,600 times that or 26,000 megawatt-hours. If we pool our buying power – and potentially pool it with other towns – our buying power grows considerably, as does the potential for lower electrical costs.

The Aggregation Plan asks the Selectboard to find and contract with suppliers/vendors to deliver cheaper power and provide more options for power from more sustainable sources. Additionally, it asks the Selectboard to do this for all residents, including those that produce power at their location (Through net metering often used by solar array owners).

It allows (but doesn't require) the Selectboard to join with other New Hampshire communities to buy electricity together for more buying power, resulting in lower prices for everyone.

Liberty Utilities will continue to deliver power and bill us, but the “Power Service,” the actual charge for the electricity, will be based on a contract entered into by the Selectboard for the town residents.

Residents and businesses can opt out and continue to buy their power directly from Liberty. Residents that already purchase power from a source other than Liberty can continue to do so or opt into Walpole Community Power if and when their agreements allow.

Why Community Power?

- A primary reason to create the Aggregation Plan is to provide less expensive electricity, give Walpole citizens more choice, and potentially allow us to buy power from renewable providers.
- Long-term, it could present opportunities for new options such as time of day use and battery storage. These are just a few options as examples.

What's Next?

1. The Public Utilities Commission (PUC) must issue rules for implementing Community Power.
2. A warrant will be presented at Town Meeting to allow the Selectboard to implement this plan, if and only if they can find an option that provides power at a lower cost or is at least competitive with the Liberty default rate.
3. If approved in the upcoming 2022 Town Meeting, a Request For Proposal (RFP) would be issued for implementing the Walpole Aggregation Plan to vendors for competitive bidding.
4. Review the options and the Selectboard recommended vendors at a public hearing.
5. Execute a contract with the recommended vendor to implement Walpole Community Power.
6. Notify the residents of the expected rate 30 days before implementation, including instructions to opt out if they choose.

What the Walpole Community Aggregation Plan is Not!

It is not a commitment/contract to work with any specific organization/vendor.

It is not a financial burden to taxpayers. It will not incur a financial commitment for the Town or taxpayers other than incidental costs such as the recently completed town survey, minimal office supplies, and a final legal review.

Mr. Looney reviewed the summary as presented above. He asked if anyone had questions about this.

Mr. Dalessio referred to the six steps. How can they present the Warrant if the Public Utilities Commission (PUC) does not publish their rules by that time? Mr. Looney replied that Harrisville has already had their Aggregation Plan approved. It is a good question.

Ms. Mayberry asked for people that do not already have Liberty Utilities is there a cost to switch over. Mr. Looney replied “no”. The Town buys it from a third party. Mrs. Pschirrer noted that Eversource does not deliver in Town. Mr. Looney said there are some third party suppliers for businesses. He displayed a website of New England and explained some information on it. Right now a megawatt of power costs \$38.29. Some lines indicated the power needed yesterday and others what is being used today. We paid \$8.36; \$83 per megawatt. The rates change every fifteen (15) minutes.

Mr. Dalessio said when he read the plan, he felt like we should put a cap on it. Mr. Looney reached out to two contacts about the cost. We would not be involved in that cost at all. Once CPCNH and Walpole had an agreement, any costs would be handled by the vendor that they choose. Mr. Dalessio stated the Town would need a budget for this. Would the cost be \$2,000 or \$20,000? Mrs. Pschirrer mentioned we were never told it would cost that much. Walpole already paid Attorney Hockensmith because he read the contract one time. We would want him to read any new contracts that possibly could come out of the regular legal expenses. They never were led to believe there would be other costs. Mr. Looney thinks there is only one contract. Mr. Dalessio pointed out that in the next year, the Town is going to be faced with many infrastructure projects. In the contract they talk about sustainable and renewable energy. What if community nuclear is one of the best options? Mr. Looney wanted to talk about this. Most of the other towns have a Sustainability Committee and they have goals. Harrisville has green power as a future goal, as does Nashua and Keene. The Walpole Committee had talked about sustainable resources. Mr. Dalessio felt if it was going to be something that affected all the taxpayers in Town, then they need more input. Mr. Dey said the goal is to bring the lowest cost energy into Town. People are putting community nuclear plans in place out west now. Each individual buyer has the option to choose. A lot of groundwork has already been done by other towns.

Mr. Dalessio read through the document and it looks like the Power Committee has to maintain this program somehow. He has concerns with longevity and changes of people on the Boards. If three Select Board members no longer feel this is worthwhile, they can turn the key and that is the end of it. Mr. Looney felt the Joint Powers Agreement was set up so it would survive changes in Selectboards. The final contract they would sign has to take this into consideration. Our community felt it important to reach out to other vendors when they get down to implementing this. Mrs. Pschirrer said that is what they talked about. Mr. Looney displayed a powerpoint he had on his computer. There was information about a coalition and how a great deal of money was saved in Ohio. There is other information on a cooperative going up \$17.05 on December 1st. One of the pros of the CPCNH models is that Walpole would be able to calculate their reserves.

Mr. Looney said since he got involved in this committee, he also became interested in climate change. Going after sustainable energy is a good idea. Mr. Dalessio feels options are good. Walpole's water and sewer users' biggest cost is electricity. Locally we are using old technology. They should be looking at newer technology going forward. Mr. Looney said Peterborough has a solar field and works with a company. Right now most of our power is generated by natural gas.

Mrs. Pschirrer moved that the Walpole Selectboard approve the Warrant for the Walpole Power Committee to bring the Walpole Community Power Aggregation Plan to Town Meeting in March 2022. Seconded by Mr. Dalessio. On a voice roll call vote with Mrs. Pschirrer, Mr. Dalessio and Ms. Mayberry in favor, the motion was approved.

Mrs. Pschirrer asked Mrs. Downing to save the Meeting Room for a Public Hearing on Monday, January 10, 2022. Mr. Looney, Mr. Marcom and Mr. Dey left the meeting.

PAYROLL:

Mrs. Pschirrer moved to accept the Payroll Check Register for the week ending December 25, 2021, in the amount of \$33,572.50 for checks dated December 31, 2021, and for the 941 Payroll Tax Transfer in the amount of \$7,659.18. Seconded by Mr. Dalessio. On a voice roll call vote with Mrs. Pschirrer, Mr. Dalessio and Ms. Mayberry in favor, the motion was approved.

SELECTBOARD MEETING MINUTES:

SELECTBOARD MEETING – December 23, 2021: Mrs. Pschirrer moved to accept the Minutes of the Selectboard meeting of December 23, 2021, as submitted. Seconded by Mr. Dalessio. On a voice roll call vote with Mrs. Pschirrer, Mr. Dalessio and Ms. Mayberry in favor, the Minutes were approved.

NON-PUBLIC SELECTBOARD SESSION MINUTES – December 23, 2021: Mrs. Pschirrer moved to accept the Minutes of the Non-Public Selectboard Session Minutes of December 23, 2021, as submitted. These Minutes will remain sealed. Seconded by Mr. Dalessio. On a voice roll call vote with Mrs. Pschirrer, Mr. Dalessio and Ms. Mayberry in favor, the Minutes were approved.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

The Selectboard acknowledged receipt of the following Committee Reports:

- North Walpole Village District Board of Commissioners Meeting – November 23, 2021;
- North Walpole Village District Board of Commissioners Meeting – November 30, 2021;
- North Walpole Village District Board of Commissioners Meeting – December 7, 2021;
- North Walpole Village District Board of Commissioners Meeting – December 14, 2021;
- Planning Board Meeting – December 14, 2021.

PROPERTY TAX REFUND:

MAP and LOT #019-063-000: Mrs. Pschirrer moved to grant the Property Tax Refund in the amount of \$41.21 for the owner(s) of Map and Lot #019-063-000. This is due to the property being sold in the last year. Seconded by Mr. Dalessio. On a voice roll call vote with Mrs. Pschirrer, Mr. Dalessio and Ms. Mayberry in favor, the motion was approved.

PROPERTY TAX ABATEMENT:

MAP and LOT #003-034-001: Mrs. Pschirrer moved to deny this Property Tax Abatement as recommended for the owner(s) of Map and Lot #003-034-001. The record data was correct for the 2021 tax year. Seconded by Mr. Dalessio. On a voice roll call vote with Mrs. Pschirrer, Mr. Dalessio and Ms. Mayberry in favor, the motion was approved.

OLD BUSINESS:

Purchase Order for MRI Wage and Classification Study: Mrs. Pschirrer moved to approve the Purchase Order dated January 1, 2022, to MRI for the Wage and Classification Study, for a down payment in the amount of \$5,000. Seconded by Mr. Dalessio. On a voice roll call vote with Mrs. Pschirrer, Mr. Dalessio and Ms. Mayberry in favor, the motion was approved.

Purchase Order for MRI Professional Consulting Services: Mrs. Pschirrer moved to approve the Purchase Order dated January 1, 2022, to MRI for Professional Consulting Services in the amount of \$50,000. This will be in the Emergency Management 2022 budget. Seconded by Mr. Dalessio. On a voice roll call vote with Mrs. Pschirrer, Mr. Dalessio and Ms. Mayberry in favor, motion was approved.

Town Hall Use re: Covid-19: A private group, Tai Chi, asked if the Selectboard would be keeping the Town Hall open for use considering Covid-19. Mrs. Pschirrer felt this was a good question given the increased number of cases. Mr. Dalessio stated if they shut it down, it would be for everybody. Zoom meetings could be a hardship as some boards/committees which do not have a technician to run them. The Tai Chi class is a small group. Therefore, there was a consensus to let it continue as is for now. Mrs. Pschirrer noted they would have to continue wearing masks and keep a distance.

Pending Further Actions:

Vilas Bridge, Generators, Three Phase Power for Industrial Park Drive and Bensonwood, Wooden Chairs in the Town Hall, Trees on the Common, Walpole Players Posters, Home Away from Home Day Care Parking and Dumpster Complaint Letter:

Home Away from Home Day Care Parking and Dumpster Complaint Letter: Mr. Dalessio spoke with Mr. Jeff Miller about this complaint that was brought before the Selectboard. At this time, Ms. Plante is writing a letter to the Selectboard. Mr. Miller plans to discuss scheduling a Site Plan Review with Ms. Plante.

Houghton Brook Bridge: Mr. Dalessio reported that the five packages the Town had were sent back to the Department of Environmental Services (DES). Now they are waiting to hear from the NH DES.

Reservoir Dam: Mr. Dalessio noted they are still trying to put together a meeting to discuss what the DES will approve and not approve. They do not want to do the engineering work and then not have the DES approve it.

FEMA: February 10th, 2022 is the FEMA cut-off date for everything that has to be submitted.

NEW BUSINESS:

Appointment Notice for Library Trustee: A notice was received from the Library Trustees recommending the appointment of Sarah Mann.

Mrs. Pschirrer moved to appoint Sarah Mann to fill the vacancy on the Library Trustees Board for a period of three (3) months, January 1, 2021 through Town Meeting, March 2022. She will run for the remainder of the term in March 2022. Seconded by Mr. Dalessio. On a voice roll call vote with Mrs. Pschirrer, Mr. Dalessio and Ms. Mayberry in favor, the motion was approved.

Appointment Notice for Recreation Committee: A notice was received from the Recreation Committee recommending the appointment of Marilou Blaine.

Mrs. Pschirrer moved to appoint Marilou Blaine to the Recreation Committee for a period of three (3) years, December 2021 through Town Meeting, March 2024. Seconded by Mr. Dalessio. On a voice roll call vote with Mrs. Pschirrer, Mr. Dalessio and Ms. Mayberry in favor, the motion was approved.

Treasurer Resignation Notice: The Selectboard acknowledged receipt of the resignation of Mr. Thomas Goins as the Town Treasurer as he is planning to move. Mrs. Pschirrer advised he was a terrific Treasurer and extra-ordinarily helpful to the Selectboard. They will miss him. It will be an open position in March 2022. They would consider appointing someone for three months. There was a consensus of the Selectboard to have Mrs. Downing put a vacancy notice in the February issue of the Clarion.

NON-PUBLIC SELECTBOARD SESSION:

Mrs. Pschirrer moved to enter into a Non-Public Selectboard Session pursuant to RSA 91-A:3 II to discuss (a) Personnel. Seconded by Mr. Dalessio. On a voice roll call vote with Mrs. Pschirrer, Mr. Dalessio and Ms. Mayberry in favor, the motion was approved at 7:32 PM.

The regular Selectboard meeting resumed at 8:03 PM.

Mrs. Pschirrer moved that the Minutes of the Non-Public Selectboard Session of December 30, 2021, will be sealed. Seconded by Mr. Dalessio. On a voice roll call vote with Mrs. Pschirrer, Mr. Dalessio and Ms. Mayberry in favor, the motion was approved.

NEW BUSINESS (Continued):

HealthTrust: Mrs. Pschirrer moved to add a Domestic Partner rider to the Town's HealthTrust agreement. Seconded by Mr. Dalessio. On a voice roll call vote with Mrs. Pschirrer, Mr. Dalessio and Ms. Mayberry in favor, the motion was approved.

ADJOURNMENT:

Mrs. Pschirrer moved to adjourn this Selectboard meeting. Seconded by Mr. Dalessio. Ms. Mayberry asked if there was any additional discussion. There was none. On a voice roll call vote with Mrs. Pschirrer, Mr. Dalessio and Ms. Mayberry in favor, the meeting adjourned at 8:06 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Regina Borden, Recording Secretary


Cheryl Mayberry, Chair


Steven Dalessio


Peggy L. Pschirrer

(Note: These are unapproved Minutes. Corrections will be found in the Minutes of the January 6, 2022, Selectboard meeting.)