

**TOWN OF WALPOLE
MEETING OF THE SELECTBOARD
JANUARY 27, 2022**

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

CALL TO ORDER: Mr. Dalessio, Walpole Selectboard, called this meeting via Zoom to order at 6:30 PM. He expects Ms. Mayberry, Chair, to arrive shortly. The Selectboard members are in 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 was one member of the public in attendance: Mr. Stanton Scott.

Mr. Dalessio called for a voice roll call of the Selectboard present: Peggy Pschirrer was present at her home and Steven Dalessio was present at his home.

PUBLIC BUSINESS:

BURTCO WASTEWATER BILLING: Mr. Stanton Scott was representing his business, Burtco, Inc. located in Westminster Station, VT. About twenty-two (22) years ago he started a car wash and, at that time, he built a sewer system, extended it under the Connecticut River and connected to the Walpole Sewer System on Route 12; this enabled his sewer water to go to the Village of Bellows Falls Sewer Facility. At that time he signed a contract with the Town of Walpole for the future use of Burtco and they were going to add the Community Feed Store and the Westminster Station Market/Gas which they did. For the last ten years he noticed the sewer rate has more than doubled to the Town of Walpole. In the last year-and-a-half, he has gone from paying not only the bond but an increase of usage in each quarter billing. He is here to see if there is any sort of relief that can be accomplished whether for past or future payments to try to alleviate the cost he is now paying; sometimes it is five figures for four months of usage. This is only for sewer. He does not know what the bond is that he is paying for or who it benefits but he does know that over the past twenty-five (25) years he has had to fix, maintain, up-grade, etc. his own sewer system. He does not know what he is paying extra for to the Town of Walpole.

Mr. Dalessio explained some history and where we are today. The user fee really has not changed that much but what did happen was the bond payment. The Bellows Falls Wastewater Treatment Plant had to do significant improvements as mandated by the EPA and State of Vermont. The users of the plant have to share the cost of those bonds. Originally, they spread it out and charged everybody the same amount of money to pay those bonds. That is where the \$90+ came from but that was not fair to the majority of the users that only used a fraction of the water. Sewer is based on water usage so the people who were paying a base rate were being unfairly hit with the bond payment. What they did was change it to a proportionate usage. That is what led to the large users of the water getting a higher bond allocation. In the first quarter of 2021 there was an anomaly in the data. For some reason he used twice as much as in the last three quarters of 2021. Mr. Scott noted the car wash is seasonal; the first quarter is usually the biggest. Mr. Dalessio mentioned if they can do something about it or not being an extremely high water user is a utility discussion. There will probably be another meeting with the utility people at the end of the first quarter in 2022. They would review the rates and all these details. For sewer, it is Walpole and North Walpole. When the sewer system was put in back in the 1960s, it was written up that only the users pay for the sewer usage. A majority of the Town is not on the system. When they have their utility meeting, they can talk about caps for high users on the bond payments. This discussion would be enough to put that on their agenda. Mr. Dalessio will talk to Mr. Mark Houghton about the contract. There must have been a contract to allow that pipe to go under the Connecticut River as well. Back in the 1960s money should have been put away for the eventual use of maintenance, up-grades, etc. Mr. Dalessio mentioned they change some gallons over to cubic feet for Burtco. Burtco sends the Town gallons. They should do a little more investigation on that as well. Ms. Mayberry said everybody's is converted. She

added that even though North Walpole has a separate water system, everybody is based on the meter reading. The Town of Walpole actually collects the water meter readings so it is all rated for the same usage. The usage is based on the volume running through the pipe. Their percentage of the bond is based on their usage. Mr. Dalessio pointed out that it will be 20-plus years before the bonds all go away. Mrs. Pschirrer said that is assuming no more come along. Mr. Scott advised this comes off his bottom line. Ms. Mayberry noted none of them want to pay the bonds. Mr. Dalessio stated the utilities people will be meeting with Mr. Mark Houghton, Water and Sewer Director, and Mrs. Jodi Daigle in April or early May. They can bring this up as a subject. Maybe something can be done and/or at least it will have been discussed. Mr. Scott will appreciate that. Mrs. Pschirrer noted they might have to ask Mr. Scott for a copy of the original contract if it cannot be found in the Town office. Mr. Dalessio thanked Mr. Scott for bringing this to their attention and they will see where it goes. Mr. Scott will look forward to hearing back from the Selectboard.

Mr. Dalessio reported that Ms. Mayberry came into the meeting during the above discussion. Therefore, he turned the meeting over to Ms. Mayberry, Chair.

ACCOUNTS PAYABLE:

Mrs. Pschirrer moved to accept the Accounts Payable Check Register in the total amount of \$267,490.30 for checks issued January 28, 2022. This includes a payment in the amount of \$188,429.00 to the North Walpole Village District for 2021 taxes collected on the district's behalf. Seconded by Mr. Dalessio. On a voice roll call vote with Mrs. Pschirrer, Mr. Dalessio and Ms. Mayberry in favor, the motion was approved.

PAYROLL:

Mrs. Pschirrer moved to accept the Payroll Check Register for the week ending January 22, 2022, in the amount of \$23,847.60 dated January 28, 2022, and for the 941 Payroll Tax Transfer in the amount of \$6,707.81. 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 – January 20, 2022: Mrs. Pschirrer moved to accept the Minutes of the Selectboard meeting of January 20, 2022, 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 – January 20, 2022: Mrs. Pschirrer moved to accept the Minutes of the Non-Public Selectboard Session of January 20, 2022, 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.

STAFF MEETING – January 20, 2022: Mrs. Pschirrer moved to accept the Minutes of the Staff Meeting of January 20, 2022, 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.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

The Selectboard acknowledged receipt of the following Committee Reports:

- North Walpole Village District Board of Commissioners Meeting – December 21, 2021;
- North Walpole Village District Board of Commissioners Meeting – January 11, 2022;
- Zoning Board of Adjustment Meeting – January 19, 2022.

PROPERTY TAX ABATEMENTS:

MAP and LOT #005-018-001: Mrs. Pschirrer moved to grant the Property Tax Abatement in the amount of \$37.74 for the owner(s) of Map and Lot #005-018-001. This is due to a tax bill being sent to a prior property owner. Seconded by Mr. Dalessio. On a voice roll call vote with Mrs. Pschirrer, Mr. Dalessio and Ms. Mayberry in favor, the motion was approved.

MAP and LOT #008-015-007: Mrs. Pschirrer moved to accept the denial of this Property Tax Abatement for the owner(s) of Map and Lot #008-015-007 as recommended by Avitar Associates. The comparable properties given did not support the abatement as did 2020 sales for comparable properties. Seconded by Mr. Dalessio. On a voice roll call vote with Mrs. Pschirrer, Mr. Dalessio and Ms. Mayberry in favor, the motion was approved.

WARRANTS:

Property Tax Supplemental Warrant for Map and Lot #005-018-001: Mr. Dalessio moved to approve this Property Tax Supplemental Warrant for the owner(s) of Map and Lot #005-018-001. This is to bill the new owner of the property abated under Property Tax Abatements as shown above. This property is in Current Use which is why there is a low amount of taxes due. Seconded by Mrs. Pschirrer. On a voice roll call vote with Mr. Dalessio, Mrs. Pschirrer and Ms. Mayberry in favor, the motion was approved.

Warrant for Walpole Water Fees: Mr. Dalessio moved to accept the Warrant for Walpole Water Fees in the amount of \$43,392.44. Seconded by Mrs. Pschirrer. On a voice roll call vote with Mr. Dalessio, Mrs. Pschirrer and Ms. Mayberry in favor, the motion was approved.

Warrant for Walpole Sewer Fees: Mr. Dalessio moved to accept the Warrant for Walpole Sewer Fees in the amount of \$77,698.91. Seconded by Mrs. Pschirrer. On a voice roll call vote with Mr. Dalessio; Mrs. Pschirrer and Ms. Mayberry in favor, the motion was approved.

Warrant for North Walpole Sewer Fees: Mr. Dalessio moved to accept the Warrant for North Walpole Sewer Fees in the amount of \$64,053.78. Seconded by Mrs. Pschirrer. On a voice roll call vote with Mr. Dalessio, Mrs. Pschirrer and Ms. Mayberry in favor, the motion was approved.

LAND USE CHANGE TAX WARRANT:

MAP and LOT #003-004-000: Mr. Dalessio moved to accept the Warrant for the Land Use Change Tax in the amount of \$720.00 for the owner(s) of Map and Lot #003-004-000. This parcel is no longer connected with a parcel with 10 or more acres. Seconded by Mrs. Pschirrer. On a voice roll call vote with Mr. Dalessio, Mrs. Pschirrer and Ms. Mayberry in favor, the motion was approved.

TIMBER TAX WARRANT and CERTIFICATION OF YIELD TAXES:

MAP and LOT #005-011-000: Mr. Dalessio moved to accept the Timber Tax Warrant in the amount of \$1,492.60 and the Certification of Yield Taxes for the owner(s) of Map and Lot #005-011-000. Seconded by Mrs. Pschirrer. On a voice roll call vote with Mr. Dalessio, Mrs. Pschirrer and Ms. Mayberry in favor, the motion was approved.

OLD BUSINESS:

2022 Budget and Meeting Date: Ms. Mayberry reported they changed the 2022 Budget and Meeting Date to Wednesday, February 9th, 2022, at 5:30 PM. This change was needed as the Fall Mountain Regional School District changed their 2022 Deliberative Budget meeting date to Thursday, February 10th

2022. Mr. Kreissle had sent out a revised budget last week. Ms. Mayberry checked the calculations and they are correct. Mrs. Pschirrer went over the proposed budget line-by-line and came up with some possible changes that were approved. Mr. Dalessio did not want the increase in the budget to go over 5%. He felt they took care of the employees and the most important needs of the Town. Ms. Mayberry will discuss these changes with Mr. Kreissle.

2022 Warrant Articles: The Selectboard felt the 2022 Warrant Articles were ready to go to the Department of Revenue Administration (DRA) for their approval and/or comments. Mr. Kreissle needed to make one change to Article #13. Mrs. Pschirrer noted the sooner they go in to the DRA, the sooner they will get their reply.

Town Report Cover Samples: Mrs. Downing had sent several Town Report cover samples to the Selectboard for their review. They agreed to use the pool and the map. The Selectboard approved one of the recommendations for the dedication.

Selectboard 2021 Recap Report: Mrs. Pschirrer volunteered to do the Selectboard 2021 Recap Report. When finished she will email a copy to Mr. Dalessio and Ms. Mayberry for their comments.

Five (5)-Town Meeting Agenda: The next meeting is Friday, January 28th, 2022. Superintendent of Schools Lori Landry had offered to speak about the Proposed 2022 School Budget. It is 146 pages long. A few of the 5-Town Meeting members are also members of the FMRSD Board. There was discussion relative to what those attending want to talk about. There needs to be a meeting agenda. Mrs. Downing was asked to contact the Town of Charlestown to let them know the Town of Walpole would prefer not to have the FMRSD 2022 Budget discussed at this meeting. Mrs. Downing said the Great River Hydro had been mentioned as an agenda item. The Walpole Selectboard would like to know what issue on the Great River Hydro they want to discuss. Mr. Dalessio does not mind hosting the meetings but it might be good to rotate the responsibility for organizing the meetings. Mrs. Downing was asked to send out a notice tomorrow about this meeting to be held on Friday, January 28th, 2022, at 4:30 PM.

Pending Further Actions:

Wastewater Line under the Vilas Bridge, Generators, Wooden Chairs in the Town Hall, Trees on the Common, Walpole Players Posters, Reservoir Dam, Houghton Brook Bridge, Parking Ordinance, Three Phase Power for Industrial Park Drive and Bensonwood, E & W Salvage Response Letter.

Brownfields Project: Mrs. Pschirrer is working with the Brownfields Project people. She hopes to have a report next week.

Power Committee: Mrs. Pschirrer had sent the email received from Southwest Region Planning Commission (SWRPC) to the other Power Committee members. Ms. Mayberry reported that SWRPC has some funding available.

NEW BUSINESS:

Utilities Committee: Mr. Dalessio advised that he, Mr. Mark Houghton and Mrs. Jodi Daigle, the Utilities Committee, try to meet once a year. He is concerned about the budget. Water is breaking pretty even, but sewer is generating a small amount. This is operational; no maintenance. Right now, they are waiting for the first quarter to come through and then they will take a look at the numbers. Mrs. Pschirrer is okay with that.

Recreation Revolving Fund Request: The Walpole Recreation group would like to request the use of \$1,031.51 for the use of purchasing T-Shirts for their winter basketball program. They have sponsors lined up and will be reimbursing \$941.51 of the amount.

Mrs. Pschirrer moved to approve the Walpole Recreation’s request to purchase T-Shirts for their winter basketball program from their Revolving Fund. Seconded by Mr. Dalessio. On a voice roll call vote with Mrs. Pschirrer, Mr. Dalessio and Ms. Mayberry in favor, the motion was approved.

Walpole Recreation Group’s Request for a Daddy and Daughter Dance: Mrs. Pschirrer felt this was a premature request. She preferred to wait a month or two. It could be a spring event. Right now she would say “no” based on the Covid numbers. Mr. Dalessio and Ms. Mayberry agreed. Mrs. Pschirrer will talk to Mr. Kraig Harlow about this.

Highway Department: Mr. Dalessio pointed out that the Highway Department will have all their trucks and equipment ready for the weekend storm. They will have some part-time help available.

NON-PUBLIC SELECTBOARD SESSION:

Mr. Dalessio moved to enter into a Non-Public Selectboard Session pursuant to RSA 91-A:3 II to discuss (a) Personnel. Seconded by Mrs. Pschirrer. On a voice roll call vote with Mr. Dalessio, Mrs. Pschirrer and Ms. Mayberry in favor, the motion was approved at 7:34 PM.

The regular Selectboard meeting reconvened at 7:55 PM.

Mr. Dalessio moved that the Minutes of the Non-Public Selectboard Session of January 27, 2022, will be sealed. Seconded by Mrs. Pschirrer. On a voice roll call vote with Mr. Dalessio, Mrs. Pschirrer 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 was adjourned at 7:59 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 February 3, 2022, Selectboard meeting.)