ATTENDING: Richard Poelaert, Justin Lyons & Robert Nigrello.

Others Attending: Abbey Mills; Don Sveen; Matthew Kiman, Fire Chief Ed Warren; Police Chief Michael LePage; Road Agent Mark Brinkerhoff; Conservation Commission Chair Dennis Quintal, Becky Merrow, Town Administrator.

Richard Poelaert called the Meeting to order at 6:37


Richard Poelaert made a motion to approve the nonpublic minutes of November 4, 2019 and to seal them. Robert Nigrello made a second. Motion carries unanimously.

Robert Nigrello made a motion to approve the manifest of November 5-7 in the amount of $18,377.47; and manifest of November 12-15 in the amount of $17,565.27. Motion carries unanimously.

Richard Poelaert made a motion to approve the Payroll Manifest for the week ending 11/10/2019 in the amount of $22,208.16. Robert Nigrello made a second. Motion carries unanimously.

Dennis Quintal passed around a spreadsheet of new plow rates. He has worked with Mark Brinkerhoff to evaluate and prepare a cost analysis of the cost to plow snow and remove snow. He feels mark does a good job and makes good decisions. This saves the Town money and keeps his drivers safe. As a result of many factors, plowing prices need to go up. There have been increases in the cost of insurance, fuel, etc. It was 2010-2011 the last time there was a price adjustment. The old rate for the one ton was $85 per hour. East Kingston pays an hourly rate. There is no standby or on-call pay. Mark feels he is trying to find the tipping point to entice people to plow for East Kingston. There is no padding of hours in East Kingston. The Town has high insurance requirements. The required insurance discourages most people. There are no days off in the winter and that also discourages people. East Kingston could purchase equipment like other towns. If they do that, then they need a place to keep or store the equipment. If we have equipment and a place to store it, we would need employees to operate the equipment. It’s a slippery slope. East Kingston does need the 6-wheeler which is a $225,000 piece of equipment.

People who plow for the State get a minimum number of work hour’s, snow or no snow. A discussion of how Portsmouth plows ensued with Abby Mills. In East Kingston there are 7 one-ton; 1-6 Wheeler and 1 backhoe under contract. Existing rates are $125 for the 6-wheeler; $95 for the backhoe. Per the Road Agent, for the 2020 budget, $160,000 has been budgeted for snow removal. In 2018 it was $180,000. The frequency of rain and ice storms was discussed. These are particularly troublesome because these storms require sand and salt treatments potentially multiple times. Per the Road Agent, the average winter is a 100-150 hour season. No action was taken on proposed rates.

Abby Mills appeared to discuss the revaluation process that took place this year. The process was rough this year. In the future, the Town Website should be utilized for information on process. There should be two sessions where the assessors meet with the tax payers—one should be on a Saturday or definitely after hours.
There are some towns who are doing their revaluations on a 2 year cycle to prevent such sudden spikes in valuations. Portsmouth may be assessing every 2 years but they have their own in-house assessor and do not contract it out. The website should have the abatement forms and taxpayer rights and other pertinent information. When the Selectmen are considering the new assessing contract, they should require a better line of communication. The Board of Selectmen felt they should find a way to avail themselves of the offered 1 time a month meeting with the assessors during business hours. Abby feels that Avatar's public relation skills are still lacking. She commented that the Fire Department website is pretty good. The Town should consider using Facebook or a Twitter account to push out information to the public.

Next appeared Mr. Sween. He is present for a variety of issues. There is a thicket of trees on a town owned parcel across the road from his house. Mr. Sween feels that trees die. There is a great deal of liability to the Town from these trees. There are power lines in the vicinity. There is also the road which is a narrow dirt road. He feels the Town needs a coherent plan on how that road will be maintained annually. The road looked medieval—yes it is a private road but it must be maintained none-the-less. There are also two families with handicapped children living in the area. Mr. Sween claims he received two voicemails from Paul Deschaïne indicating that the trees would be taken down before the end of the month. He kept the messages.

Robert Nigrello said that he spoke with Mr. Brinkerhoff to obtain quotes. Mr. Brinkerhoff did talk to some vendors. Some of the vendors did not feel the matter was imminent. Mr. Sween remarked that one solution would be for the Town to give him the land and he would take care of the tree issue. Mr. Sween feels he is getting the run around and is feeling neglected. The private contractors that the Town spoke with were not that concerned. Bob Nigrello said the town is thinking of auctioning off several lots. Mr. Sween said he feels the lot does not have enough land there to build. If Mr. Sween were considering this lot for a building lot it would need to be surveyed. Dick said there are perhaps 6 narrow trees that may need to be removed. The Board asked for some time to come up with a solution.

The Special Counsel Conflict of Interest Waiver for DTC Lawyers was signed.

Recreation Department Appointments were signed.

Personnel Action—the form was signed but the evaluation of the Police Chief needs to be completed.

Permission for Camp Lincoln to use Old Town Hall Bus Stop was signed.

Chief LePage was present with two purchase orders for signature. He is purchasing computers through the school at very competitive rates. So far he has replaced two desktops with windows 10 compliant machines. He plans to do 2 machines a year. The first purchase order is for $2,100 for two machines. Two years out it will be time to replace the server. One of the purchase orders to be signed tonight is out of the police detail line item as this computer goes in the cruiser. Richard Poelaert made a motion to purchase two computers for the police station and one computer from the special detail fund. Second by Robert Nigrello. Motion carries unanimously.

Fire Chief Ed Warren is present to request permission to purchase 10 new tires for the 2011 Tanker. It was recently learned that tires must be replaced more frequently after two tires were found flat. These tires should last 10 years. It will only take one day to get all the tires installed. Motion by Richard Poelaert and second by Bob Nigrello to purchase the 10 new tires for $5,000. They will purchase Michelin tires because they have the highest allowable weight limit. Motion carries unanimously.

Chief Warren said he is working on the new accounts payable process. He is hoping for monthly reports on account payable balances. Library has been sent their reports today but now it's time to do police and fire.
Chief Warren noticed the board signing appointments for the Recreation Committee so he will be sending his appointments to the Town Office soon. There will be fewer appointments this year. He feels they have lost a dozen or so personnel this year. They will have a table set up at the first deliberative session for recruiting new members. The WEX cards are still not in for the Fire Department. Where are they?

Next on the agenda is Matthew Kiman. He has lived in Town since 1961 and he never has felt the need to go to a Selectman’s Meeting. He would like a copy of his property assessment card. He asked for the details on elderly exemptions. What are the asset and income limits? Becky explained that the income limit to qualify is very low and that perhaps the Selectmen should think about an upward adjustment here.

A person has been located by Paul to type in the information for the Town Report. She will do it for $25 per hour.

There is a court date set for December 16 for Bob’s Septic. Richard Poelaert intends to attend.

Richard Poelaert made a motion to sign the five-year waste management contract with the current vendor Waste Management. Second by Justin Lyons. Motion carries unanimously.

The Board looked at the renewal contract provided by Avitar. Consensus is that the board should avail themselves of the one-time-a-month meeting. Bob would like to look through the contract one final time and possibly red-line the agreement in places.

The Financial Software packages were discussed. The benefits to the Accufund proposal is that the Town would own the program for all time (not just a year-to-year lease like the BMSI cloud based program). Consensus is to pay for the program from 2019 if funds are available. Justin Lyons made a motion to purchase Accufund software. Second by Bob Nigrello. Motion carries unanimously.

Does the library have the information it needs to do their Treasurer’s Report? Becky feels they do. If they cannot break out the janitor’s time, perhaps the Town Office should just pay that for the remainder of the year?

Robert Nigrello made a motion to adjourn at 8:50 PM. Justin Lyons seconded. Motion carries unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 8:50 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Becky Merrow
Town Administrator

Richard S. Poelaert ___________________ Justin B. Lyons ___________________ Robert L. Nigrello ___________________