

Board of Selectmen
Meeting Minutes
Thursday, September 21, 2023
Approved



1) Open Meeting

Chair Delaney called the meeting to order at 9:20 am. Board members present: Roland Carter, Dana Swenson

Others present included: Town Administrator Kimberley Edelmann, Budget Committee Chair Donna Crisp Duclos, and Police Chief Joe Mahoney and Road Agent Frank Bryson during their budget discussions.

2) Capital Improvements - Town Offices

The Select Board noted that they are responsible for Town buildings, including the Police Department building. However, the Police Chief would have full input to anything regarding PD buildings.

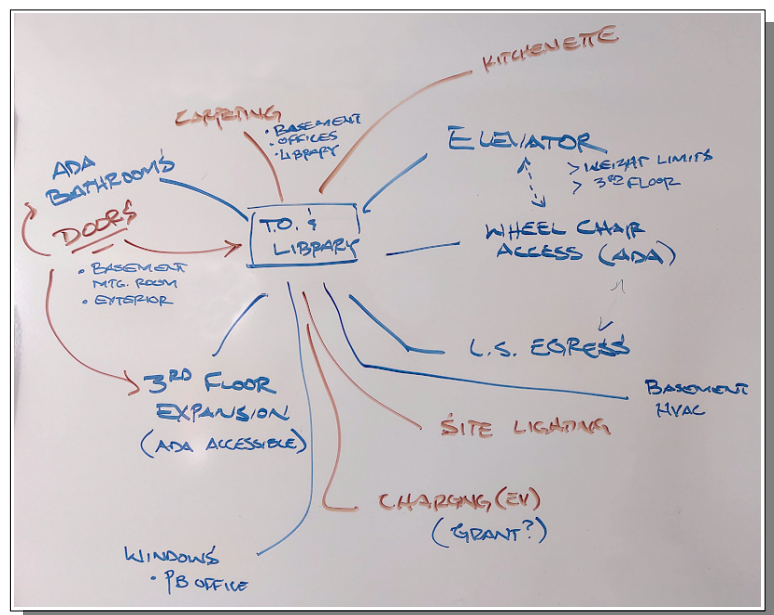
Discussion moved to the Town Offices building, including the Library.

The Select Board had a long open whiteboard discussion about the building. Life safety, safe egress, and ADA compliance were themes throughout the discussion.

Selectman Carter noted that the flow of the office needed to be improved. Chair Delaney added that the emergency egress of the building was insufficient, as exit routes were through the Town Clerk office and the Library. It was agreed that if the upper level were to be opened up for office space, the hydraulic elevator would need to be relocated.

Selectman Swenson envisioned doing modifications in phases, with an eye towards long term goals. He went to the whiteboard and recorded discussion points:

- ◆ Life safety egress routes
- ◆ Wheelchair access to building
- ◆ Doors:
 - ◆ ADA compliant doorways
 - ◆ Meeting room sound barrier door
- ◆ Exterior site lighting
- ◆ Additional toilets
- ◆ Kitchenette
- ◆ Electric vehicle charging station
- ◆ New boiler
- ◆ Window for Planning Board office
- ◆ Carpeting
- ◆ 3rd floor expansion
- ◆ Elevator (3 floors)
- ◆ Basement HVAC / ventilation



It was agreed it would be advantageous to have a professional architect guide the Town through any major building redesign. It was also noted that there were no known architectural drawings of the current structure.

Selectman Swenson then drafted a Gantt chart to support the discussion. He noted life safety has the highest rank.

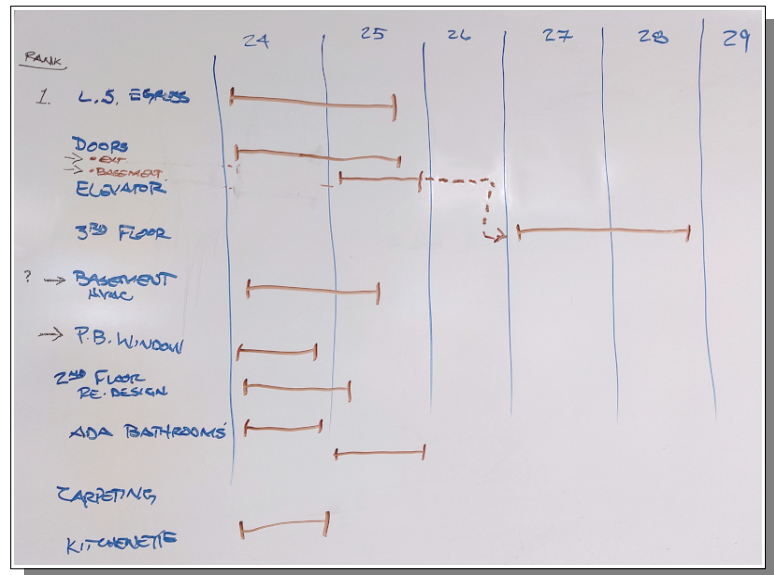
It was agreed that the elevator would need to be moved. Discussion about providing access to both the Town Office area and the Library followed, areas with different open hours.

Selectman Carter suggested putting the elevator on the exterior of the building, which everyone supported. A handicapped parking spot could be placed near the elevator.

The Select Board estimated a total redesign would cost between \$200,000 and \$400,000. The elevator would cost a lot.

The third floor would need two ways in and out.

Selectman Carter said design work would need to be done first because everything was going to be relocated.



Discussion about Capital Reserve Funds versus a bond followed. A bond would allow for modification in the near future.

Chair Delaney said he had a call into Bob Norander to figure out the cabling in the old Andover Beacon office. He added that the Town Clerk / Tax Collector was being pressured by the State of NH to start bringing in supplies going to 2025 that she was going to have to store.

Selectman Swenson noted that anything involving the flow of the office would require a full redesign. He did not believe there would be a local architect; a professional firm should be hired. Stakeholders should be engaged. Public hearings should be held. A focus group would be good, talking to citizens who use the building.

Chair Delaney said he wanted to stop kicking things down the road.

During the discussion, it was agreed there were some feasible short term improvements, including:

- ◆ Repair the current entrance door.
- ◆ Add a door to the meeting room to reduce the amount of sound traveling up the stairs during meetings.
- ◆ Provide a window looking to the outside for the Planning & Zoning office. Chair Delaney said he had a new window ready to go.
- ◆ Providing a mini-split for the meeting room which has no ventilation.

Selectman Swenson painted a scenario of having an architect and advisory committee comprised of members of the public, like the Highway Department Advisory Committee, with the goal of finding the highest and best use of the building.

Chair Delaney suggested putting out a survey, asking the public for their ideas about the building.

Selectman Swenson said it was important to stress the life safety issues and ADA compliance. He did not want to see a long wait on the life safety issues.

3) Paving Update

Road Agent Frank Bryson informed the Select Board that Porter Paving would be able to work on Depot Street. 12 loads would be needed and would cost about \$38,000. They would be able to do that work that day. Flaghole Road was going to need additional material in the bad spots.

The Select Board gave RA Bryson the okay to proceed. TA Edelmann asked he confirm available funds with Finance.

4) Capital Improvements - Transfer Station

Chair Delaney said he spoke with Randy Sirard about the gutter on the barn at the Transfer Station. A quote would be provided to the Town.

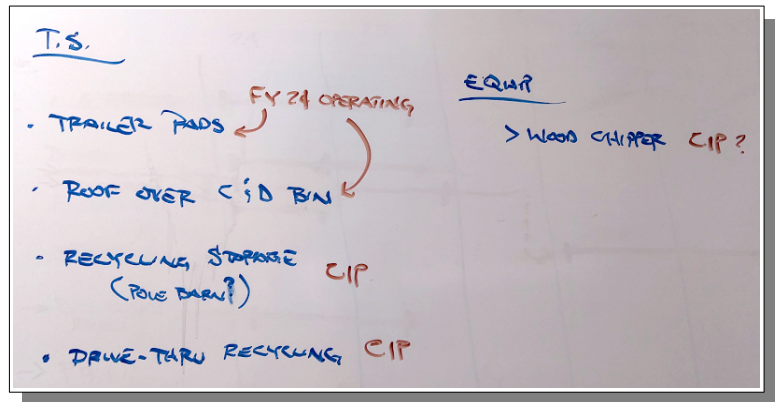
Chair Delaney said a 6" chipper for the Transfer Station might be a good purchase. He believed the Town would not be allowed to continue burning brush in the future.

The building still required work. The upstairs needed to be finished off.

Concrete pads under the trailers was something to consider.

A roof over the construction & demolition bins was another capital improvement which would be good to have.

Chair Delaney said there was no news from Wilmot regarding recycling. He believed any planning should be with Andover only in mind.



Chair Delaney noted that a Transfer Station Supervisor was needed. Training was needed for everyone.

A recycling storage area, such as an open-faced pole barn, might be good to have.

A drive-through recycling center might be good to have. It could be two lanes to help with traffic flow. It was acknowledged that citizens

Paving might want to be considered.

The new trailer was purchased with a grant.

Trailers are dumped on Wednesday morning, bringing them back as late as 9:30 am, waiting in line with the public. It would make more sense to have Naughton and Sons pickup on Monday or Friday.

It was agreed that the concrete pads and roof over the C&B bins could come from the operating budget, with other work done via Capital Reserve Funds.

5) 2024 Operating Budgets

a. **Police Department**

Chief Mahoney presented his proposed 2024 budget and CIP which the Board discussed for 50 minutes.

In the PD operating budget, the Chief expected his wages lines to increase, assuming the hiring of a third full time officer and 3% increases across the board. The Select Board agreed 3% would be a good starting point and asked TA Edelmann to look into 2024 Federal and State COLA levels.

Dispatch services would be increasing to \$15,650 in 2024 and to \$19,225 in 2025. It was expected to level off after that.

The Chief discussed plans to purchase new equipment which would require an annual data & software license fee. The subscription line would need to increase for that.

Overall the department anticipated an operating budget increase of \$47,971.

Regarding the CIP, the Chief explained that he would like to continue purchasing a replacement cruiser every 2 years at an estimated cost of \$52,000. He'd also like to continue using the current vehicle model.

Chief Mahoney noted that he had been contacted by Jim Danforth about the Lion's Den on Poplar Street. The Lion's Club is dissolving. Mr. Danforth asked if the Police Department wanted the building. On separate occasions, Chair Delaney and Chief Mahoney had been over to see the building. The building did not have heat or water but both believed it would be useful for storage and garage space.

Selectman Carter shared that Fire Chief Barton was putting together a plan to migrate to one centralized fire station located at White Oak next to the new Highway Department facility. They would probably sell the East Andover station, but the center station could be retained.

Chair Delaney explained that when he was a selectman the first time, the plan was for everything, except the Transfer Station, to be located at White Oak Pit as it was at the geographic center of the Town. Police Chief Glenn Laramie was not in support of that idea.

Chief Mahoney stated that in his opinion the current location of the PD was ideal being near the schools and Town Offices. The Select Board agreed the location was good and that the Main Street fire station offered possibilities.

TA Edelmann asked the Board who would be presenting CIP information about the PD building. Chair Delaney said department heads present the CIP, with support of the Select Board. Another CIP request would need to be submitted for the PD facility.

b. Highway Department

Road Agent Bryson presented his proposed 2024 budget. In his spreadsheet, he had not yet made any changes to wages. Overall, he suggested reducing some lines while increasing others.

Discussion about the maintenance line resulted in an agreement to keep it at the same level of \$40,000, not lowered to \$30,000 as presented, especially with a new building coming.

The Select Board also recommended that the training line be increased from \$500 to \$10,000. This would include funding for CDL-B training. Donna Duclos commented that investing in personnel was good.

The equipment rental line was set to \$26,000, but only half had been used. It was agreed that could be reduced to \$15,000 for 2024.

TA Edelmann commented that so far in 2023 the office supplies line covered Beach House supplies, a background check, mailbox damage and signs.

The Select Board recommended a 3% increase for all wages as a placeholder, as done by the Police Department, then had a long discussion about wages in general.

Selectman Swenson wanted to keep wages in line with inflation.

Chair Delaney felt that those who received recent wage increases given should not given additional increases, but otherwise supported COLA increases. Also, vacant positions filled in the next few months should be such that a COLA would not be applied in 2024.

Selectman Carter suggested providing raises on anniversaries, with pay increases given on an individual level. That was not the method used by Andover. Chair Delaney stated that a program needed to be implemented in order to give merit raises based on performance evaluations. It would need to be discussed by the Board.

Donna Duclos asked if everyone would get COLA raises then also receive additional merit increases based on performance. Selectman Swenson confirmed that was an approach that could be used. Chair Delaney answered that the State provided step raises, but also merit raises. TA Bryson commented that in the State, step raises were associated with job level changes.

Selectman Swenson agreed with Selectman Carter that anniversaries made more sense. No two employees were equal and therefore should not receive equal increases. It was agreed a policy needed to be made.

TA Edelmann commented that a fixed COLA increase benefited the employees making the most money, not the ones at the lower end of the pay scale. Cost of living was based on things everyone had to purchase, such as milk, gasoline and fuel. She did not feel that she should get a COLA increase of over \$2,000 when a coworker would only get \$600. Everyone had to buy milk and fuel no matter what they earned.

TA Edelmann said if the Town wanted to give merit raises, they would need to do performance reviews. To do performance reviews, they would first need to establish who was managing whom. Selectman Carter agreed, adding that they needed to review job descriptions. Chair Delaney added that the Town never had a step program.

TA Edelmann shared that when she was a Selectman in Warner, the Board increased all of the Town wages by 50 cents per hour to bring the whole wage program up. Chair Delaney said Andover did that recently, bringing people up to the same level.

Discussion moved to step programs. Chair Delaney recommended putting a step program in place for the Highway Department. He noted that the Highway Department was established in 2016. All they had back then was an elected Road Agent and a grader. They purchased a 450 truck. Now, the Town was getting a garage, purchasing more equipment and hiring employees qualified to do different jobs. RA Bryson said he felt the Town needed 6 full time HW Department employees, possibly with additional help in the winter.

Chair Delaney said the school budget was always presented before the Town Meeting. He'd like to see the two meetings take turns being first on the calendar.

Chair Delaney felt the tax base was stagnant, not growing. There were no places to build commercial properties. He felt it was time to start opening up some of the Class VI roads to expand the tax base.

Donna Duclos said she heard that culvert pipes were getting more expensive. It was confirmed prices had increased. RA Bryson said he had culvert pipes in stock, so he did not need to increase the culvert budget line for 2024.

Regarding White Oak, Selectman Carter recommended having the overhead power line put underground and doing something with the salt shed. It was noted that the line goes on to the next property owned by the Heaton's and was going to feed the new building. RA Bryson recommended routing the line around the back of the sand shed so that it wasn't a risk overhead nor underground. Chair Delaney recommended having John Anderson take a look at it.

Selectman Carter suggested that the equipment rental line should be increased. If the grader needed to be updated, a rental may be needed. In 2023, a 1-ton truck was rented for 7.5 hours for \$562. TA Edelmann showed TA Bryson the list of charges against the equipment rental line. Most of them involved work by a contractor and likely could have been posted against projects instead.

(Selectman Carter left the meeting due to go to a training course for the Town.)

TA Edelmann noted that in budget discussions with RA Bryson, it became apparent he did not realize he could specify which budget lines invoices would be posted against. RA Bryson added that he did not see every invoice that came in. Coding was often done by the finance office.

Chair Delaney said that RA Bryson should see all of his invoices, sit down with the Board of Selectman at every meeting and go over everything at the Select Board meeting, making copies of invoices as needed. He added that RA Bryson should be at every Select Board meeting.

Selectman Swenson said that RA Bryson should see all of the invoices and that the Select Board should not be signing off on any of them until RA Bryson had already signed off on them.

Donna Duclos asked if RA Bryson could go into the finance office to review his invoices. Chair Delaney said absolutely that could be done, adding that he appreciated it was a challenge to get to every meeting.

Regarding calcium, RA Bryson shared that he was spraying it himself instead of using an outside firm. A tank sits in the 1-ton truck. The bulk calcium was being stored in one of J&B's unused big tanks as the calcium company took the tank the Town was using from Thompson's before RA Bryson could retrieve it. When tanks become available again, another tank would be provided. RA Bryson was reducing the calcium budget line.

The mowing lines, all set to \$1 each, were having HD staff wages posted against them. Chair Delaney explained that in the past, outside mowing services were paid through those lines. Now, the Town was providing the mowing. He and Selectman Swenson agreed the wages should be put back into HD wages, not separated out. The only time the lines should be used was for outside mowing services.

TA Edelmann acknowledged that sometimes Budget Committees and / or Select Boards would request new budget line items in order to collect more detail about expenditures. Donna Duclos commented that mowing was a hot topic a couple years back.

The Select Board asked to move the mowing charges back to HD labor.

TA Edelmann asked Chair Delaney and Donna Duclos if there was history for the HD equipment line which was budgeted for \$1. There were budget lines for HD equipment, HD equipment rental, and HD equipment leasing. The HD leasing line was for the long term lease payments. Shop tools & equipment were all posted under the HD small tools line. It was agreed to continue that approach and not use the HD equipment line.

Selectman Swenson said that at some point they would need to discuss fixtures, furnishings and equipment for the new building.

RA Bryson wanted to take inventory and mark everything owned by the Town.

Discussion moved on the Highway Department's CIP request. The Highway Department equipment inventory was shown as follows:

- 2006 - Caterpillar grader
- 2015 - Ford F550 truck
- 2020 - International CV truck
- 2020 - Backhoe
- 2021 - Ford F250 truck
- 2023 / 2024 - International CV truck
- Plows for Ford Trucks
- Plow wings for International CV trucks
- Sanders for Ford Trucks

Selectman Swenson commented that the current inventory looked good. Chair Delaney agreed.

The expected useful lifespan of the Ford and International trucks with daily use was between 7 and 10 years. Maintenance of the vehicles increased with age. A planned vehicle replacement program was recommended.

The HW Department would also like to get:

- 10,000 pound excavator (approx \$76,000, without municipality discount)
- 10 wheel dump truck (or 6 wheeler) to replace 2015 Ford F550 truck, allowing for bigger loads and less trips
- Trailer - 12 inch diesel powered chipper (approx \$71,000, without discount)
- Trailer - Asphalt hot box
- Small SUV vehicle for light duty (retired PD cruiser might be good option.)

RA Bryson said other equipment that would be good to have included:

- Spare snow plow
- Spare plow wing
- Spare conveyor chains for each sander
- A 30x40 foot Quonset hut for sand storage

It was also agreed that keeping the HD fleet the same allowed for interchanging plows and wings.

Price estimates were forthcoming.

TA Edelmann commented that on the timeline of the next several years, the Town would need to replace a vehicle every year or two.

Chair Delaney said he believed use of Capital Reserve Funds was the approach to use.

Chair Delaney noted that the Town auctioned off a Police cruiser in the past. He agreed that it would be better to sell a cruiser to the HW Department for a dollar.

RA Bryson explained that he would like a 30×40 foot metal Quonset hut attached to the two 40 foot storage containers. That would provide covered storage for sand, reducing hard chunks that develop in winter. Chair Delaney said he'd contact Mr. Danforth who deals in fiber buildings that Massachusetts uses. They last 25 to 30 years.

c. Highway Road Projects

\$85,000 was budgeted for HD projects. Only \$7,455 had been expended to date. Also, \$150,000 was approved at Town Meeting for the Highway Projects Capital Reserve Fund. Chair Delaney noted that the Select Board already approved work on Depot Street.

Chair Delaney made a **motion** to give RA Bryson the authority to expend projects funds for paving without coming to the Select Board for approval for amounts under \$100,000. Selectman Swenson **seconded**. The **motion passed** with both in favor. Chair Delaney said Selectman Carter was in agreement, as they had discussed it earlier.

The Select Board agreed the end of Cilleyville Road to Rt 11 should be addressed. RA Bryson said the paving company might not have time, but he would ask. He capped them at 12 loads on Flaghole Road, focusing on the really bad spots.

Estimates for Flaghole Road and Maple Street were received last fall, but were missing.

6) Next Meetings

The Select Board planned to meet at 4pm at White Oak on Wednesday, September 27 for a groundbreaking ceremony

The Select Board would decide when they could meet to discuss the Transfer Station budget. They also would decide how to approach the Transfer Station Supervisor position, whether to appoint or open post. Chair Delaney said he had a job description which could be used for a posting, received from another Town.

7) Adjournment

There being no further discussion, Chair Delaney made a **motion** to adjourn at 12:30 pm. Selectman Swenson **seconded**. The **motion passed** with both in favor. Donna Duclos said she appreciated the discussions.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kimberley Edelmann
Recording Secretary

These minutes were approved at the
Select Board meeting of September 28, 2023.