Town of Hartford

Selectmen’s Meeting

Approved Minutes

March 21, 2024

7:00@ Hartford Town Hall & via Zoom

Public Hearing

Opening of Darrington Road to Winter Maintenance

6:30-7:00pm

Present: Selectmen Susan Goulet, Cathy Lowe, Lee Holman, Town Clerk Lianne Bedard, Road Commissioner Bim McNeil, residents Kathleen Theriault, David Theriault, David Stiles, Leslie Boness, Daryl Boness, Ken Lane, Jeff Beaulieu, Kathleen Landry, Ken Violette, Cindy Violette, Dan Brissette, Morrill Nason, David Bowen, Lennie Eichman, Steven Elsman, Kenneth Nye, Dana Dudley, Victoria Wright, Michael Cray, Rebecca Elsman, Ricky Denonville, Bailey Roe-Johnson, and Ryan Roe-Johnson.

Present via Zoom: Residents Raymond, Robin W., Richard Dyer, Dan Riley, and Jaylene Gonyea.

Public Hearing

Susan called the public hearing to order at 6:30pm and asked for phones to be turned off/put away, for residents not to interrupt, be respectful, and direct comments to the Board.

The hearing was scheduled in to allow discussion on the proposed order of the Board of Select: The alteration to the Winter Road Closing of Darrington Road from 298 Darrington Road to the Northern end of the road, which was approved by the legislative body on June 18, 2022, to be altered to open the road to winter plowing from this time forward.

Discussion included: Why do residents not want the road to be plowed, road was never closed to maintenance, moving the plowed section further along the road throughout the years has set precedent and the town should accommodate the residents on the unplowed section, road was not always maintained for travel although it was required, residential density is the same on the portion of Darrington Road as it is for other roads in Hartford that are plowed, last year a figure was included in the town meeting warrant article to raise $70,000.00 to upgrade the road for plowing but since then the road was washed out and a large culvert required replacing, the repairs will be reimbursed by FEMA and there are funds in the upcoming year’s proposed budget for gravel and plowing the section of road, a resident wouldn’t expect taxpayers to pay to upgrade and plow road if they moved there knowing it was not plowed, a resident of the road stated that he has used sleds for several years and depended on neighbors to help while having cancer treatments to get to his home, the resident recently discovered that he is not legally allowed to plow the road since it is a town way and could be held liable, excerpts were read from the Maine Road Manual, the Town is only receiving half of the LRAP funds for this portion of the road since it is not being plowed, a resident is not opposed to plowing but is opposed to raising taxes for this road, Statute 23 MRSA 2953 states: The municipal officers may on their own initiative, or upon petition by 7 legal voters of the municipality, at any time between May 1st and October 1st of any year, set forth that any road or roads, or portion thereof, in the municipality are so located with reference to population, use and travel thereon, that it is unnecessary to keep the road or roads maintained and open for travel during the months of November, December, January, February, March and April or any part of these months, the Selectmen did not show that it was unnecessary to keep the road plowed, all taxpayers should be treated equally for services or should get a discount, an easement will be required for the plow to turnaround, Gracie Darrington passed away in the 1970’s and the Town just stopped plowing, the law to govern discontinuance of roads to winter maintenance for 10 years with town meeting approval was adopted in 1979, the Hartford Road Standard Ordinance requires roads to be built to a certain standard, the road ordinance applies to newly created roads or to roads that have been legally discontinued not our own back roads, the 2024-25 proposed road budget is 6 or 7% higher than the current budget, the Road Commissioner stated that the town meeting warrant may have an article to approve funding to pave portions of Tucker Road, Darrington Road, Church St, and Mahoney Road.

The hearing was adjourned at 7:10pm.

Selectmen’s Meeting

I Susan called the meeting to order at 7:10pm.

II Susan motioned to approve the minutes of March 7, 2024 Selectmen’s Meeting & March 11, 2024 Selectmen’s Budget Workshop. Cathy second. All in favor=3.

III. It was noted that the excise training class which was approved at the last meeting for $55.00, actually cost $85.00 and the payment is included in Warrant 18.

Susan motioned to approve Warrant 18 & Payroll Warrants, March 13, 2024 & March 20, 2024. Cathy second. All in favor=3.

IV Reports

1. RSU 10 Report: March 25th School Board Meeting at 6:00 at BJSHS. RSU 10 is considering cutting some JV sports from the budget and plans to create an onsite gym to prevent risk to students from walking to Jesse’s Gym.

2. Road Report: None.

3. Constable Report: None.

4. CEO Report: None.

5. ACO Report: None. A resident asked what to do with stray cats since the ACO has not responded in the past. Susan will contact the ACO.

6. Planning Board Report: None.

7. Ordinance Committee: The Board reviewed the agenda for the April 3rd meeting.

8. Fire Warden Report: None.

9. Treasurer Report

a. 2021 Tax Foreclosure/Nye: The 2021 Tax Lien automatically foreclosed on March 16, 2024. The Town Clerk was able to reach out on Facebook to family members of the property owner. The property owner contacted the town office on Monday. Mr. Nye was present to pay the entire amount of taxes due if the Board would agree to quitclaim the property back to him.

Lee motioned to approve the sale of Map R05 Lot 22-B to the prior owner by quitclaim deed. Susan second. All in favor=3. The quit claim deed will be on the agenda for the next scheduled Board meeting.

10. Cemetery Committee Report: None.

11. Solid Waste Committee Report: None.

V Calendar Reminders

1. March 27, 2024 7pm Budget Meeting

2. April 1, 2024 7pm Planning Board Meeting

3. April 3, 2024 Ordinance Committee Meeting 7pm

VI Unfinished Business:

1. Bulky Collection June 20, 2024 proposal & guidelines: A resident presented a proposal for an onsite collection of bulky waste to be scheduled for two Saturday’s in June with a savings of approximately $13,620.00. Each of two sections of Hartford (North half and South half) would have a Saturday dedicated to them to bring bulky items to the RR Bed parking lot location where 12 roll offs, a loader, trash truck, and an employee would be located.

Discussion: Hartford has provided curbside collection since 2000, there have been five warrant articles found in the old town reports on the subject of curbside collection, most people have someone to help them haul items from their homes, we could go back to curbside collection if it is not cost effective, we would need guidelines, a loader with no driver has been offered at no cost, roll offs would be hauled off at the end of the day, four residents submitted statements against the proposed change, only employees can ask for proof of residence such as MV registration since the documents are confidential, send passes to residents in a mailing, include an article in the Hartford Newsletter, might take up to two years to evaluate the effectiveness of an onsite collection, and residents are already placing items by the roadside. The Town Clerk was asked to post a notice on social media to notify residents of the 2 week time frame to place items at curbside. Tabled.

2. Budget 2024-2025 Selectmen recommendations: The Board reviewed the changes made from the March 11th budget workshop and directed the Town Clerk to remove the social service Board recommendations for now.

3. Town Report cover, dedication, Spirit of America, Moderator: The Board agreed to schedule Terry Hayes as Moderator for the June 15, 2024 town meeting. Discussion: Ideas for the town report included Thompson and Fuller cemeteries on the cover, names of all volunteers/committee members in the dedication, Nancy Sullivan on the cover, and dedicate to Bim McNeil.

Susan motioned to place photos of the Thompson and Fuller cemeteries on the cover of the town report, dedicate the town report to all volunteers and list names, add a note to please volunteer, and Pauline Chasse as the 2024 Spirit of American nominee. Cathy second. All in favor=3.

4. Administrative Ordinance Part II amendments: The Board agreed to remove the wording “and the Recreation Committee” in the paragraph excepting members to be residents of Hartford.

Lee motioned to authorize the Town Clerk to forward the proposed Administrative Ordinance Part II as amended to the attorney for review. Susan second. All in favor=3.

VII Open Session:

1. A resident asked what the next step is concerning the alteration of winter maintenance of Darrington Road and it was answered that the Board would vote whether or not to sign an order of alteration at the next meeting.

2. A resident asked to place the topic of a kiosk at the RR Bed entrance for the ATV Club on the agenda of the next meeting.

VIII New Business:

1. Free Sale May 31, 2024 permission: Susan motioned to allow the buy nothing day to be held at the town hall on May 31-6/2/2024 and to be a town sponsored event with no requirement for insurance or fees with Lennie Eichman as the chairman of the event. Cathy second. All in favor=3.

2. Ordinance Committee members/employees: A resident had stated that during a training event she was told that it is recommended not to appoint employees as members of committees. It was suggested that members abstain from any topic that may be a conflict of interest and in small towns it is hard to find committee members.

Susan motioned to add to the previous motion concerning the administrative ordinance part II to add “and ask for attorney advice on the employee/committee member provision”. Cathy second. All in favor=3.

3. Generator Repair: The generator is not in working order and three technicians have been contacted to give estimates for repair or replacement. Three estimates are required if the town applies for the Homeland Security Grant. One technician determined the engine needed to be replaced and another determined the oil pump needed to be replaced. Grant deadline is April 15th and the Emergency Management Director has been contacted to begin the grant process. If a new generator is obtained we will have to alter the building due to new guidelines. Tabled.

4. Public Hearing Zoning-Building Permit Ordinance Amendments: Susan motioned to schedule a public hearing on April 18, 2024 6:30pm in regards to the building permit ordinance zoning amendments. Cathy second. All in favor=3.

5. AVCOG ballot-slate of officers: Ballot has not been received as of this date. Tabled.

6. Hartford Food Bank: The Board thanked the food bank for the great financial detail provided.

**7. Susan motioned to enter into Executive Session pursuant to MRS 1 Title 1 Chapter 13 §405 (f)**

Tax Abatement application at 8:55pm. Cathy second. All in favor=3.

Susan motioned to exit executive session at 9:08pm. Cathy second. All in favor=3.

Susan motioned to abate the real estate tax amount of $824.62 on property described as Map R12 Lot 5. Cathy second. All in favor=3.

IX Appointments/Resignations

a. Ordinance Committee resignation/Violette-alternate: Lee motioned to accept the resignation of Cynthia Violette as alternate of the ordinance committee. Cathy second. All in favor=3.

b. Susan motioned to appoint Cynthia Violette as ordinance committee member with a term to expire in June of 2025. Cathy second. All in favor=3.

X Training

XI Review Correspondence: The Board reviewed correspondence which included a request for donations to the Sumner Mothers Club for the Easter egg hunt. Money was not included in the budget for this request in current year but officials present made personal donations to the club.

XII Susan adjourned the meeting at 9:15pm.

Minute approved by:

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Cathy Lowe Date

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Lee Holman Date

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Susan Goulet Date