Town of Hartford

Selectmen’s Meeting

**Approved Minutes**

June 15, 2023

7PM@ Hartford Town Hall & via Zoom

Present in person: Selectmen Cathy Lowe, Lee Holman, Susan Goulet, Town Clerk Lianne Bedard, Constable Steven Elsman, Cemetery Committee member Ken Violette, residents Rebecca Elsman, Cindy Violette, Lea Violette, Al Borzelli, Bonny Bishop, Morrill Nason, Jeremy Johnson, Lennie Eichman, Pauline Chasse, James Havlin, Leslie Boness, Daryl Boness, and Cassidy Bedard.

Present via Zoom: residents Richard Dyer, Jessica Brooks, Jeff, Lwinds, Tim Kirwan, Isaac Haylock, Thomas Hamilton, Marla Winship, and Nanci Weed.

Public Hearing-Fee Schedule 2023-24 was held at 6:30pm

Cathy called the hearing to order at 6:35pm.

Cathy read the list of fees to be discussed. Solid waste violations were explained and read from the Solid Waste Ordinance. Lianne suggested revisiting the fees for tires once we receive the current year bulk waste invoice. Alcohol fees in the amount of $50.00 is for businesses obtaining licenses to sell alcohol.

The hearing was adjourned at 7:00pm.

I Cathy called the meeting to order 7:00pm.

II Cathy motioned to approve the minutes of June 1, 2023 Selectmen’s Meeting & June 8, 2023 Public Hearing. Susan second. All in favor=3.

III. Lee motioned to approve Payroll Warrants May 31, 2023. June 14, 2023 & June 14, 2023. Susan second. All in favor=3.

Approve Warrant 24: see motion at end of minutes\*\*

IV Reports

1. RSU 10 Report: A resident stated that Buckfield and Hartford voted to approve the school budget on June 13, 2023. Also a celebration for Jerry Wiley was held recently for his 51 years of service.

2. Road Report: The Board reviewed the report submitted by the Road Commissioner (attached).

 a. Road Contracts 2023-2024: Tabled.

b. Tucker Road Culverts/Borzelli: Al suggested posting photos electronically of road issues to help report them. It was explained that complaints should be submitted on the town approved complaint form and the social media policy accepted by the Board states that electronic social sites are not the place to complain about town issues. The form is available on the hartfordmaine.weebly.com website. It was shared that a resident approached Oxford County E.M. to ask that Hartford do not receive any FEMA funds from the storm damage due to the fact that Hartford does not maintain their roads. The resident stated that was not what he was asking. It was stated that the town places an enormous amount of sand on the roads each year for winter maintenance and it ends up in the ditches.

It was reported that Julia Samson’s attorney has contacted the Town attorney concerning her drainage issue.

3. Constable Report: The Constable reported that he issued five warning letters this week. One person was upset that letters were being placed on cars and relayed this to the clerk while purchasing beach passes.

4. CEO Report: The Board reviewed the report submitted by the CEO (attached).

5. ACO Report: Sue will ask the ACO to submit reports periodically.

6. Planning Board Report: The Board reviewed the approved April minutes.

7. Ordinance Committee: None.

8. Fire Warden Report: None.

9. Treasurer Report

 a. Bank Reconciliations May 2023: The Board reviewed the reconciliations.

b. Bank Proposals-Androscoggin vs Northeast: Currently Androscoggin offers the town .75% interest and will agree to 3% if we decide to continue services with them. North East Bank is offering 4.65%. Northeast Bank offers a free courier service and does not charge for any services. Androscoggin Bank funds are kept in Maine. Lianne does not want to change banks and has ordered checks recently but does not see how we can turn down the higher interest rate. Susan motioned to move our banking services to North East Bank. Cathy second. All in favor=3.

c. Beach, Newsletter, Food Bank funds: In 2017-18 the Town Treasurer kept the newsletter and recreation funds to town accounting. When Lianne returned she returned to the way it was always done (the groups kept their own accounting). The Board of Selectmen voted to keep the Hartford Newsletter and Recreation Group funds in the town accounting recently due to the lack of available information when residents question the amount of revenue or expenses. Lianne asked if the Food Bank funds were to be kept in town accounting also. A check was received recently made out to the Town of Hartford for the food bank and was placed in the food bank reserve until directed how to handle the funds. It was asked how the food bank group accounts for the funds. A representative of the food bank stated that every cent is accounted for. It was requested that the Food Bank submit a quarterly report of accounting from the food bank. Discussion continued concerning whether or not to deposit funds into town accounts or send check directly to the food bank. If newsletter and recreation groups remain in the town books there should be guild lines for each group. Discussion continued concerning how to handle checks that are delivered to the town office for the food bank. It was asked of the selectmen whether or not to keep them in town books and create guide lines for each or change their status once again. It was stated that the recreation group plans to retire soon.

Lee motioned to keep the recreation group as a town entity and keep the newsletter group as an independent group from the town as well as the food bank as an independent group. Cathy second. All in favor=3.

10. Cemetery Committee Report: Ken reported that a meeting will be held Saturday, June 17th at 8am. There will be demonstrations on cleaning and repairing stones. Joel Laclaire whose term is about to expire is interested in serving another term on the committee. Morrill suggested using a granite stone for the proposed new veteran’s monument.

V Calendar Reminders

 a. Cemetery Meeting June 17, 2023 8am

 b. Town Office closed Monday, June 19, 2023 for the Holiday

 c. Town Meeting June 24, 2023 9am

 d. Hartford Heritage Society yard sale July 1, 2023

 e. Town Office closed Monday, July 3, 2023 for the Holiday

 f. Planning Board meeting July 3, 2023 7pm

VI Unfinished Business:

1. Cemetery Inspections: Cathy, Susan, Steve, and Ken have inspected some of the cemeteries to see if they have been cleaned of debris and mowed before Memorial Day. Meeting House Hill Cemetery has not been maintained. Trees are growing up among the crosses. A 16” tree is growing in Swan Pond Cemetery and a few others have also not been maintained as well as they should be. The new mowing contract requires all cemeteries be returned to the original perimeters.

2. Junkyard deadline June 11, 2023 Harlow 2 lots: It was reported that at least 10 pieces of equipment have been removed from the Town Farm Road property (not the licensed property). Cathy and Susan will inspect the two sites once again.

Lee motioned to allow the Constable and or the CEO to attend with the Board to make such inspections. Cathy second. All in favor=3.

3. ATV’s on town roads: Discussion included: Sumner is trying out ATV access on town roads temporarily and has only received one complaint, complaints go to game wardens, how many miles to be opened, should have a committee to look at everything, contact State, group of people from both sides, already talked to other towns, already have done research, want it to be done right, the request came from a citizen of Hartford several months ago and was not a member of the Board’s idea, letter from 21 people, plan which roads to be opened, permit process, trailhead to trailhead, what expense would there be of ATV’s running the roads, is there a map of all trails, game warden, sheriffs, state police would enforce, vote on it now and then plan the details, for people to get to their home to a trailhead, speed limits enforces, dangerous to drive on roads, accidents, a section of Church St. that was opened in 2018 was supposed to have signage but does not, a lot of interest, private property is all shut down to trails by landowners, same people who break rules on trails also break laws on roads, open roads would drive up ATV registrations, 1 dollar goes to town for each ATV registered, deadline of two months for committee to report back to the Board on the issue, approve it tonight, other towns with police departments have more stringent rules and more signs, all legwork has been done, town people want this, the Board should do the research since they are the deciding factor, email was sent from the Hartford newsletter editor to selective recipients concerning the ATV issue and the personal agenda of a Board member, Hartford news is supported by the Town of Hartford, their email is not, email is used on the Nason's internet, residents are not clear that the Hartford news does not come from the town office, if the town stopped funding the Hartford news would it still printed, answer was no, Sue will check with State to see what information is needed. Lennie Eichman stated that she is resigning as Hartford Newsletter Editor.

 Lee motioned to form a committee to study the idea of opening of town roads to ATV’s. Cathy second. All in favor=2. Abstained=1. Adhoc Committee will include: Jessica Brooks, Morrill Nason, James Havlin, David Theriault, Christine Mumua, Rebecca Elsman, and Debra Salisbury and will get back to Board in two months (mid-August).

VII Open Session:

1. A resident asked why town meeting is not held during the same week of the election this year. The answer was that we had to wait one full year to vote on the winter road closing issue.

2. A resident missed the fee hearing and asked what it was about.

3. A resident stated that the town does not have a real Facebook page and people have to ask to be a friend of Hartford. Lianne stated that it is a real Facebook page that has 800 followers and friend requests are always accepted and is for town meeting information. A Board member stated that she does not see a need for an interactive Facebook page; it is used for publishing town notices.

4. A resident stated that they cannot find in the junkyard law where a Board member’s property is not considered a junkyard. If we don’t have a Board who complies with the laws then we can’t move on and make others comply.

VIII New Business:

1. Wages 2023-2024: Lianne asked whether or not to approve the ACO wages since she missed two scheduled employee reviews. The Board was advised to make notes on the evaluation form even though it was required in the past to hold an evaluation and base raises on performance of employees. The first payroll in July is considered to be a part of the new fiscal year by the Auditors. Lee will contact the ACO to reschedule.

Cathy motioned to accept the Hartford wage sheet 2023-24 pending town meeting approval. Susan second. All in favor=3.

2. Fee Schedule Approval: Lee motioned to approve the fee schedule as discussed during the hearing. Cathy second. All in favor=3.

3. Town Meeting preparations: The Moderator has received the town meeting warrant. The Board discussed the presentation of the Spirit of America awardee that was approved by the Board. Susan and Barbara are working on the presentation of the award.

4. Town Office Damage Claim: The Board should be planning how to award the contract whether by bid or accept the estimate that was received. Tabled.

5. Mowing Contract: The Board and the Contractor signed the contract with changes to the payment schedule.

6. Electronic Communication Policy-or if needed an Executive Session pursuant to 1MRSA Chapter 13 Section 405(6)(1): A Board member and the Town Clerk received several complaints about a Hartford News email was sent by the editor to selective recipients concerning ATV’s on roads and another email sent from the same person on her own email with several names listed. Our electronic communications policy restricts these activities. It is unethical. She is using her position as editor to push her personal view. It was asked if the mailing list was public information from the town office. The answer was no, the list is not at the town office. If not stopped now, political views will be sent in the future. The editor has resigned so what do we do about it now? Make sure policy is abided by. The Board just voted to have the newsletter as a social service so the Board cannot regulate the group. The voters could not approve funds at town meeting. Too bad to have issues now since the town report is dedicated to the group but it has been stated that the mailing of the newsletter may end anyway and be available online and at the office. The Town could possibly take over if necessary. The editor arrived back at the meeting and complained that she was being discussed during a meeting without her being present. She is resigning and discussion can stop now. The Newsletter has been unbiased and is a great service. The editor will submit a letter of resignation. A Board member suggested that everyone sign the electronic communications policy and sign the code of ethics. All present signed the code of ethics at the meeting.

IX Appointments/Resignation: Appointments for 2023-24:

Lee motioned to appoint **Lianne Bedard as Town Clerk, Treasurer, Tax Collector, Assistant to the Board of Selectmen, E911 Addressing Agent, Public Access Officer, Election Warden, MV agent, IF&W agent** with a term to expire in June of 2024. Cathy second. All in favor=3.

Lee motioned to appoint **Scott Mills as CEO** with a term to expire in June of 2024. Cathy second. All in favor=3.

Lee motioned to appoint **Scott Mills as LPI** with a term to expire in June of 2024. Cathy second. All in favor=3.

Lee motioned to appoint **Baxter Tardiff as Fire Warden** with a term to expire in June of 2024. Cathy second. All in favor=3.

Lee motioned to appoint **Tucker Tardiff as alternate Fire Warden** with a term to expire in June of 2024. Cathy second. All in favor=3.

Lee motioned to appoint **Steven Elsman as Constable** with a term to expire in June of 2024. Cathy second. All in favor=3.

Lee motioned to appoint **Daniel Larochelle as E.M. Director** with a term to expire in June of 2024. Cathy second. All in favor=3.

Lee motioned to appoint **Margaret Matthews as Planning Board member** with a term to expire in June of 2028. Cathy second. All in favor=3.

Lee motioned to appoint **Christine Mumau as Appeals Board member** with a term to expire in June of 2028. Cathy second. All in favor=3.

Lee motioned to appoint **Anthony Pirrucello as Appeals Board alternate member** with a term to expire in June of 2024. Cathy second. All in favor=3.

Cathy motioned to appoint **Loando Brann as Ordinance Committee member** with a term to expire in June of 2028. Susan second. All in favor=3. Abstained=1.

Lee motioned to appoint **Joel LaClaire as Cemetery Committee member** with a term to expire in June of 2028. Cathy second. All in favor=3.

Lee motioned to appoint **David Bowen as Laura Fogg Irish Trustee** with a term to expire in June of 2024. Cathy second. All in favor=3.

Lee motioned to appoint **Teresa Hinkley as Laura Fogg Irish Trustee** with a term to expire in June of 2024. Cathy second. All in favor=3.

Lee motioned to appoint **Marguerite Dudley as Laura Fogg Irish Trustee** with a term to expire in June of 2024. Cathy second. All in favor=3.

Lee motioned to appoint **Keith Larochelle as Laura Fogg Irish Trustee** with a term to expire in June of 2024. Cathy second. All in favor=3.

Lee motioned to appoint **Mark Mumua as Laura Fogg Irish Trustee** with a term to expire in June of 2024. Cathy second. All in favor=3.

Susan motioned to appoint **Loando Brann as Solid Waste Committee member** with a term to expire in June of 2028. Cathy second. All in favor=3.

Lee motioned to appoint **Lorraine Parsons** as Evelyn Hutchinson Trustee with a term to expire in June of 2024. Cathy second. All in favor=3.

Lee motioned to appoint **Lee Fernald as Evelyn Hutchinson Trustee** with a term to expire in June of 2024. Cathy second. All in favor=3.

Lee motioned to appoint **Arthur Harvey as Evelyn Hutchinson Trustee** with a term to expire in June of 2024. Cathy second. All in favor=3.

Lee motioned to appoint **Lianne Bedard as Ministerial and School Trustee** with a term to expire in June of 2024. Cathy second. All in favor=3.

Lee motioned to appoint **Lee Fernald as Ministerial and School Trustee** with a term to expire in June of 2024. Cathy second. All in favor=3.

Lee motioned to appoint **Conrad Ray as Ministerial and School Trustee** with a term to expire in June of 2024. Cathy second. All in favor=3.

\*\*Susan motioned to approve Warrant 24 and hold the mowing check until inspections are complete. Cathy second. All in favor=3.

X Training: No interest.

XI Review Correspondence: The Board reviewed the correspondence.

XII Cathy adjourned the meeting at 10:35pm.

Minutes approved by:

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Cathy Lowe Date

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Lee Holman Date

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Susan Goulet Date