

Town of Newington, NH  
Board of Selectmen Meeting Minutes  
Tuesday February 20th, 2024

**Present:** Chair Bob Blonigen, Selectman Brandon Arsenault, Selectman Chris Wayss, Dock Master Peter Welch, Planning Board Member Chris Cross, Town Administrator Martha Roy and Eleanor Boy, Recorder.

B. Blonigen called the meeting to order at 5:30pm.

B. Arsenault moved to enter a nonpublic session at 5:30pm per RSA 91-A:3 II (a&e) Personnel & Legal. C. Wayss seconded the motion. B. Blonigen asked for a roll call vote: B. Blonigen-Yes, B. Arsenault-Yes, C. Wayss-Yes. All were in favor.

B. Arsenault moved to return to public session at 6:22pm and to seal the minutes indefinitely, seconded by C. Wayss. B. Blonigen asked for a roll call vote: B. Blonigen-Yes, B. Arsenault-Yes, C. Wayss-Yes. All were in favor.

**Chris Cross-Proposed Trail System:**

C. Cross explained that the Town has saved open space very well over the years, but busy roads connect them, which makes this open space unwalkable. C. Cross would like the Selectmen to consider creating a network of off-road paths for people and bikes by using town owned land, cul-de-sacs and voluntary private property easements.

These paths would be walkable, safe off-road paths for all neighbors to meet and talk to each other. C. Cross is proposing that this project would be built in single increments in the next 2-10 years, by seeking access easements and grants. C. Cross would like the Selectmen to consider offering residents, that would allow these paths to go across a portion of their property, tax credits. Other towns in the area have offered between a 5%-10% tax credit.

The trails would be 6-8 feet wide and would be constructed of crushed stone with stone dust on top. There would be split rail fences near private properties. Usage would be during the day and the Town would need to adopt "path rules" and liability waivers.

B. Arsenault asked if this project could be done without any permanent easements. B. Arsenault thought that this might scare off some people. B. Arsenault is also concerned about offering a tax credit because all other residents would have to pay the difference.

C. Wayss said that he liked this concept, but the Town currently has walking paths which are improperly used by motorized vehicles. It is an issue.

C. Cross said that there would be barriers so that only walkers and bikers could use the paths.

C. Cross said that he would like this project to start with one demonstration project to test residents' interest and costs.

B. Blonigen suggested doing the demonstration project on one of the current paths at Fox Point.

B. Arsenault questioned if the cost of the project would be worth it, but thought a trail system to cross country ski in the winter would be nice to have. Hunting would also have to be addressed.

C. Wayss encouraged C. Cross to try to find a way to do this project without getting easements on private property because these easements could be closed over time. P. Welch said that they would try to avoid private property as much as possible.

C. Cross said that he had talked to the Conservation Commission and they weren't opposed to the project.

P. Welch said that the next step would be to develop a good demonstration trail. B. Blonigen suggested that they work with the Conservation Commission to work on the trails at Fox Point to show what a good trail system would look like.

**Peter Welch- Skiff Fee to Dock at Fox Point:**

The Board discussed charging a fee to have a skiff at the dock. It would be similar to the State registration sticker. The sticker would include the owner's name. If a skiff didn't have a sticker, it would be removed from the dock.

P. Welch said that the underside of the dock needs to be cleaned for \$5,000 and was hoping it could be done in 2024, if there are funds available. M. Roy pointed out that if the Town charged \$250 per skiff, those funds could be used to clean the dock underside.

B. Arsenault said that the dock maintenance and repair can cost a fortune and the burden needs to be put on the residents that use the dock, not on all of the residents.

P. Welch thought that \$250 seemed high, however the marina charges \$400 to dock a skiff.

B. Arsenault said that he is not against the fee. C. Wayss said that the fee makes sense to help offset costs. The Town could increase the level of maintenance that is done on the dock and believes the skiff owners would be willing to pay the fee if the alternative is not to have a dock.

C. Wayss asked P. Welch to find out what other towns in the area are charging for docked skiffs.

**Minutes Approval:** B. Arsenault moved to approve the minutes of February 12, 2024. C. Wayss seconded the motion. All were in favor.

**Manifest Approval:** B. Arsenault moved to approve the manifest for \$673,147.52 dated 2/15/2024. C. Wayss seconded the motion. All were in favor.

**Facility Use Requests:**

B. Arsenault moved to approve the following facility use requests:

Recreation Committee-Dance Class-Town Hall Auditorium-Tuesdays-3/26, 4/2, 4/16, 4/23, 4/30-OTH 4/9-4-9pm

Recreation Committee-Yoga Class-Old Town Hall-Saturdays-3/30, 4/6, 4/13, 4/20, 4/27-7:30-10:30am

C. Wayss seconded the motion. All were in favor.

**2015 Ford Explorer Bid Discussion:**

M. Roy said that she had reached out to the person who sent in the one bid for the explorer with two different amounts in the bid. The bidder confirmed that the amount was supposed to be the lower amount of \$1,088. B. Arsenault moved to reject the bid and relist the 2015 Explorer. C. Wayss seconded the motion. All were in favor.

B. Blonigen said that a resident had reached out to him and said that they would like to buy the Explorer for \$1,000. B. Arsenault asked to get the \$1,000 in writing.

**Non-Public Sealed Minutes:**

The Board reviewed the non-pubic minutes from September 30, 2002 and October 21, 2002.

B. Arsenault moved to unseal the Board of Selectmen non-public minutes from September 30, 2002 and October 21, 2002. C. Wayss seconded the motion. All were in favor.

**Portsmouth Water MOU Water Agreement:**

M. Roy said that Portsmouth Water asked that the Board of Selectmen make a decision about the temporary easement on Fox Point. C. Wayss said that the two sides had not come far enough in the agreement to sign anything. In the proposed agreement, Portsmouth asked for the expanded easement to continue forever, not just for this one project. C. Wayss pointed out that Portsmouth didn't address the basal count of trees, the promise to replace the trees that they remove and the general restoration of Fox Point after the project.

B. Arsenault asked that Newington's legal council get in touch with Portsmouth and try to work out an agreement.

**Portsmouth Waiver Request-CAT Excavator 142,000 lbs-2 Trips in and out of site:**

M. Roy said that Portsmouth would like to start the Fox Point valve replacement project on March 4<sup>th</sup> and will need to bring in large excavator for the project. B. Blonigen said that he would like to see the detailed scope of work for the project at Fox Point.

B. Blonigen asked M. Roy to write up a motion to grant the waiver for the excavator, but then hold on to it until Newington is able to get some answers. After the Board's concerns are addressed, then the Board will sign the waiver.

The Board will grant the waiver for the excavator if Portsmouth;

1. Notice the abutters on Fox Point Road from Little Bay Road to the rental house on Fox Point asap.
2. The hours of operation for the project will be 8-5, Monday-Friday.
3. Block off the trails on Fox Point at both ends.
4. Mark off Portsmouth's permanent easement on Fox Point. B. Arsenault asked that Jeremy Boston join them when they are marking it off.
5. Let Newington know where their crew is going to park during the project.
6. Let Newington know how long the project is going to last.

B. Blonigen asked M. Roy to out the information about the trails on the website .and let the renter at Fox Point know about the project.

**Public Comment:**

There were none.

The next Board of Selectmen's meeting is Thursday March 7<sup>th</sup> at 5:30pm.

**B. Arsenault moved to adjourn at 7:50pm. C. Wayss seconded the motion. All were in favor.**

Respectfully submitted, Eleanor Boy, Recorder