

TOWN OF TEMPLE, NEW HAMPSHIRE
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
May 10, 2016
MINUTES OF PUBLIC MEETING

Board members present: George Willard, Ken Caisse, Gail Cromwell

Call to order by Willard at 6:30 p.m.

Old Business: Dry Hydrant – Caisse has to speak to Road Agent Tim Fiske, and costs need to be obtained.

Municipal building repairs – Caisse showed samples of flooring, the Board picked a sample and Caisse will obtain a quote.

Doug Guy junkyard permit renewal application – criminal background check has been received. Caisse will contact Guy to make an appointment for inspection by Willard, Caisse and George Clark, Fire Chief.

Town Hall storage – letters have been sent to groups currently storing items at the Town Hall. No responses from any group at this time.

Code of Conduct – needs further review.

Fire Department: Fire Chief George Clark; Fire Engineers Luke Peterson and Will Wildes met with the Board. Clark informed the Board that the gearbox for the pump on the engine needed to be rebuilt after the fire that occurred on West Road. Perkins Pump has completed the repairs and the cost is approximately \$7,000.00, the invoice has not been received yet. The Fire Department requested that this be paid from the Fire Department Vehicle Maintenance and Repair Expendable Trust. Move by Cromwell to use the Fire Department Vehicle Maintenance and Repair Expendable Trust to pay for the repair of the pump gearbox on the engine, second by Caisse and voted in the affirmative.

The Fire Department requested permission to use the 400 NH RT 45 property for a pump relay training. Move by Willard to allow use of 400 NH RT 45 for Fire Department training, second by Cromwell and voted in the affirmative.

Prior Minutes: Move by Cromwell to approve the 4/26/16 minutes as amended, second by Caisse and voted in the affirmative.

Cromwell stated her opinion of the public comments from the 4/26/16 meeting.

Town Hall: Willard spoke about groups in town that are not town boards or committees using the town hall on a regular basis without paying for the use and gave the example of the Temple Democrats. Honey Hastings stated that she is a member of the Temple Democrats and that the group had been given permission by a prior Select Board to use the town hall. Discussion ensued regarding the use by private groups, with Willard stating they should pay for use. Cromwell stated she thinks it is okay for private groups to use the town hall without payment for educational purposes when they do not restrict entry.. C. Kieley stated that she is not sure it would be a good idea to put restrictions on the use of the town hall.

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Jeta Grove: Attorney Tom Hanna, representing Jeta Grove, and Mark Stetson of Avitar Associates, Temple's contract assessors, met with the Board to discuss the Jeta Grove application for exemption from taxation under the religious exemption. Hanna explained the application for exemption from taxation. Stetson thought that the majority of the property qualifies for the religious exemption. Stetson only question was on the 125 acre property. Hanna explained that Jeta Grove is a "forest monastery" and without the forest there would be no monastery.

Ajahn Jayanto explained that the forest is like a temple. In warmer climates the Monks do not even have buildings. In the colder climates the Monks have small building, a Kuti, but seek out opportunities to live in the wilderness. The real monastery is the forest in the Monk's view.

Cromwell asked Stetson if the current use land would be able to stay in current use if the Board acknowledged the property is tax exempt. Stetson informed the Board that there are two land use change tax (LUCT) recommendations in the mail for the area where the kuti was built and the road, the balance of the land will stay in current use even if it is deemed tax exempt. There was discussion about the road being installed by the prior owner for forest management under a federal grant. Under the grant the road needs to stay open for 10 years, but is not used to access the kuti according to Hanna. Stetson stated that he would like to see the road for himself. Stetson also said that the LUCT is minimal for both the kuti and the road. Hanna requested that the LUCT recommendations be sent to him once the town receives them.

Move by Cromwell that the Board of Selectmen acknowledges that the entire properties owned by Jeta Grove Foundation are eligible for the religious exemption from taxation, second by Willard and voted in the affirmative.

Hanna explained to the Board that Jeta Grove is offering a gift to the town. This gift is based upon the town portion of the property tax rate, \$5.73 for the tax year 2015. Hanna also explained that a PILOT is an offer to pay a portion of the property taxes, but the state statutes do not require it to be in writing. Cromwell's understanding about a formal agreement is that if the entity was not able to pay the agreed upon amount the town would be able to be a lien on the property. Cromwell then explained that the values are subject to change and the tax rate changes on an annual basis. Hanna stated that Jeta Grove is aware that changes in the town portion may change the percentage of the gift. Move by Cromwell to accept the gift from the Jeta Grove Foundation for the tax year 2016, starting April 1, 2016, in the amount of \$6,222.00, based upon the 2016 assessed value and the town portion of the 2015 tax rate, second by Caisse and voted in the affirmative.

Assessing: Stetson informed the Board that the State has not released updated current use assessments yet. All other "pickup" work has been completed. Stetson recommended processing the first billing tax bills.

Cromwell asked Stetson how Temple's 2015 equalized valuation compares to other towns in the Conval School District. Stetson did not have that information. Cromwell asked Stetson if Temple had any basis to challenge the 2015 equalized valuation as it increased approximately 2%. Stetson said no.

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Stetson spoke to the Board about proposed changes to the rules for the Assessing Standards Board (ASB). The NH-DRA is lobbying for the ASB to adopt the complete USPAP standards (assessing standards). This would lead to increased costs to NH municipalities. Stetson explained how and why the ASB was formed and how the rules are adopted. Avitar is requesting that the towns it deals with sign a statement requesting the ASB complete more studies before voting on the changes proposed by the NH-DRA, including estimating the increased costs these standards would create. The Board signed the document requested by Avitar.

Paperwork: Signed cemetery lot deed for Thorngren (for an additional grave).

Signed a yield tax warrant.

Signed brush fire bills.

Signed vouchers.

Town Clerk: Willard read a letter of resignation from Wendy Drouin resigning from the Town Clerk position, effective May 23, 2016. Move by Cromwell to accept Wendy Drouin's resignation from the Town Clerk position with regrets, second by Caisse and voted in the affirmative. Willard will draft a letter to Drouin. Cromwell commented on Drouin's resignation letter. Caisse asked if Drouin would be allowed to rebut Cromwell's comments.

Willard read a letter from Jeanne Whitcomb resigning as Deputy Town Clerk effective June 3, 2016. Whitcomb has appointed Drouin as her Deputy Tax Collector and also requested that Wendy Drouin remain on the records as a Motor Vehicle Municipal Agent.

Cromwell stated that the town will need to advertise immediately for the Town Clerk position and suggested that Whitcomb's requests be put on hold for the moment. Willard agreed about the need to advertise the position, but stated that the Board also needs to discuss the pay rate for a new Town Clerk. Whitcomb requested a decision on the Deputy Tax Collector position. Move by Willard to approve Wendy Drouin as the Deputy Tax Collector, second by Cromwell and voted in the affirmative.

C. Kieley asked Willard about the Treasurer and Office Assistant positions. Willard informed Kieley that all parties are involved in the mediation process and those resignations have not been accepted by the Board at this time. Caisse stated that the Board is waiting to finish the mediation process to see if things can be worked out. Cromwell stated that the Board should have a non-public meeting with Betsy Perry.

Heidi Jordan said that an assumption had been made that Drouin and Perry were rude and she didn't think they intended to be rude. Ron Pulos stated that he had the impression that there was a perception that Board decisions were perceived to be one person's decision and not the Board as a whole.

Miscellaneous: Ron Pulos informed the Board that the Town Hall painting will be finished on 5/11/16. The Administrative Assistant will process a voucher for LaSalle and the Board will come in to sign the voucher.

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Paul Jordan asked the Board for an updated on the Town Attorney's opinion about the NH Supreme Court case on Right-to-know submitted by Heidi Jordan at the 4/26/16 meeting. The Administrative Assistant had contacted Drescher at Chairman Willard's request. Drescher's opinion was that the case does not pertain to access to the office it pertains to the actual records. During discussion about hours that H. Jordan would be allowed into the office to review records. It was determined that Jordan will be allowed access to the office on Wednesdays and Thursdays from 9 am to 2 pm.

Committee Reports: Willard submitted a report on the 5/4/16 Planning Board meeting.

Caisse reported on the Ambulance Association and informed them that the 501c3 has been completed for the association. The next association meeting is scheduled for May 2017.

Non-public: Move by Cromwell to enter non-public under RSA 91-A:3II(c) at 8:48 pm, second by Caisse and voted Willard – yes; Caisse – yes; Cromwell – yes.

Out of non-public at 9:10 pm.

Motion to adjourn at 9:10 pm by Cromwell, second by Caisse and voted in the affirmative.

Minutes submitted by Debra Harling

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Addendum submitted by Cromwell and added to these minutes at the June 14, 2016 meeting:

Cromwell objected to Drouin's complaint about the office environment and stated her opinion that Drouin is resigning for two reasons: her continued unhappiness with the Board refusal to raise her salary by \$2,500 last February, and her purchase of a restaurant in Milford, undoubtedly requiring considerable time and effort.