

Office of
SELECTMEN
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**BOARD OF SELECTMEN
MONDAY, JANUARY 29, 2024
MEETING MINUTES
FRANCIS FARM - FRANCIS HALL - 27 FRANCIS FARM ROAD**

Present: Selectman Frederick "Skip" Vadnais, Jr., Selectman Leonard Mills, Jr., Selectman George Solas, Sr., Selectman Robert Johnson II and Town Administrator Deborah Arruda

Absent: Selectman Michael P. Deignan

Call to Order at 7:05 PM: The meeting opened with the Board and the public participating in the pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

Consent Agenda

Warrant:

G. Solas- motion to approve Warrant for the week of January 29, 2024: 24-31B Payroll \$127,551.98; 24-30A Withholdings \$148,240.65; 24-30 Warrant \$426,660.20. Second by R. Johnson. Vote 4-0.

Minutes: Regular Minutes: 1/8/2024

G. Solas- Regular Meeting Minutes for January 8, 2024, motion to approve. Second by R. Johnson. Vote 4-0.

Announcements:

Our next scheduled meeting will be on **Monday, February 5, 2024, 7:00 PM**, at Francis Farm, in the Francis Hall Building.

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

The Police Dept IFB (Bid) has been uploaded to Commbuys for quotes on equipment. Bids will be due by 10:00 AM on 2/26/24. This meets the ARPA deadline, which is March 1st.

Continue to work with Mr. Panofsky on Personnel Policies

Request for Proposal on real property, on Martin Street, will be advertised in the Taunton Gazette, starting on February 13th. Beginning on February 14th, bid packets will be available for in person pick up or email. Bids are due in the BOS office by 10:00 AM, on February 27th.

FY25 Budgets are due to the accounting office by February 9th.

NEW BUSINESS:

The Chair requested a hold on item (1) because it's scheduled for a 7:15 Public Hearing, and asked Selectman Solas to proceed with **Action Item (3): Vote to Approve Contract with Atlas Technical Consultants, LLC for the Transfer Station**

The Atlas contract has been reviewed by Town Counsel. Atlas will perform semiannual (April and October) sample collections for 5 underground monitoring wells and 2 irrigation supply wells. They are fully insured.

G. Solas- motion to approve the contract between the Town of Rehoboth and Atlas Technical Consultants, LLC for \$13,200.00 and, further to ask the Chair of the BOH to sign the contract as well. Second by R. Johnson. Vote 4-0.

Action Item (4): Vote to Approve Contracting Services with Linda Correia from Mass DEP for Town Public Water Well Services

G. Solas- motion to approve the 2-year service fee agreement submitted by Linda Correia, from MA DEP for Town Public Water Well systems, and to authorize the BOH Chair to sign the agreement. Second by R. Johnson. Vote 4-0.

Action Item (5): Vote to Approve Town of Rehoboth's Dumpster Policy

R. Johnson- motion to approve and implement the submitted Dumpster Policy by the Board of Health. Second by G. Solas. Vote 4-0.

Discussion:

G. Solas- there was a distance mentioned with respect to the barrel, but there was no mention to the distance in respect to the metal containers.

R. Johnson- it's at the Board of Selectmen's discretion. The Board of Selectmen will have to monitor those that are too close to the road and make sure that they are far enough off the road and the Board has backing with the policy to get that done. Dumpsters have to be in a safe area that trucks can get off the road.

Chair Vadnais- there is a Bylaw which designates the BOS to choose the location of the dumpster, especially on easements etc. This is the reason the Board is named in this document/policy.

R. Johnson- the Board, I especially, will be taking a ride around to see where dumpsters are too close to the road, and we will work with the Health Agent, to make sure dumpsters are kept up - and the Health Agent is communicating with the dumpster companies. All dumpster companies will have copy of the policy.

Action Item (6): Vote to Approve FY23 EMPG Grant from MEMA for \$3500

Chief Barresi requests the Boards' approval and signature for the FY23 EMPG grant award of \$3500. The funds will be used for the purchase of additional charging stations for the Fire Department. Funds must be expended by June 30, 2024.

G. Solas- motion to approve the FY23 EMPG Grant from MEMA for \$3500.00 and, authorize the Chair to sign the state contract. Second by R. Johnson. Vote 4-0.

Chairman Vadnais- this is for the charging stations for the Fire Department.

Action Item (1): 7:15P Public Hearing-Pole Hearing for 225 Brook Street SO Pole and New Midspan Pole 2562

At 7:15 PM Chairman Vadnais confirmed with the Town Administrator that all abutters were noticed and confirmed that a representative for NGRID was present, before requesting a motion to open the Public Hearing.

Selectman Mills, so moved. Second by Selectman G. Solas. **Roll call:** Johnson, aye; Solas, aye; Vadnais, aye; Mills, aye. Vote 4-0.

Abutter present: Mr. Steven Hattoy, 241 Brook Street. Mr. Hattoy expressed concern about the placement of the pole and wants more clarification. In response, Chairman Vadnais asked Mr. Hattoy to show the Board, on the map, what he is referring to and where his property lies, in relation to the easement and the placement of the new pole.

Selectman Solas asked Mr. Hattoy's to confirm his concern was regarding the placement of the pole and the depiction of the pole on the map.

National Grid representative, Ms. Rebecca Custadio, was present and explained that the pole is to go on the easement. The map is not accurate as to where the pole will go and that the stake placed, however, is accurate. It is all mapped out in the field; the easement being used is very narrow but the new homeowner will not be using the road to drive and will use another access/driveway. The easement is just for the telephone poles; it's just a utility pole. The only way for NGRID to serve the customer is to use the easement.

Selectman Johnson asked if Mr. Hattoy wants to make sure the pole is going in the easement.

Mr. Steve Hattoy stated that the easement should not be used as the new owner wants or as a means of access, and instead the pole should be either in the center or more to the right side, where there is more room. As long as the pole stays within the 15ft easement.

Selectman Mills asked if NGRID can accommodate the gentleman and about time constraint- is it possible for the plan to go back to engineering?

Chairman Vadnais- this is a utility access only and not a driveway or cart road, etc. so utilize the easement for the purpose it's meant to serve.

Ms. Custadio, the engineer, stated that it's the same situation, whether the pole goes to the left or the right and suggested that if anyone takes a ride out to the site it will be obvious that the whole right side is tight. NGRID must think about every angle, of every pole. By placing the pole right down the middle, NGRID will not always have access.

Chairman Vadnais asked Mr. Hattoy if he has a compelling reason for why he would like the poles moved, other than preference. Mr. Hattoy had none.

Ms. Custadio stated she would try to move the pole a little more.

Selectman Johnson suggested moving the pole one or two feet.

Selectman Solas-placing one pole going straight and adding a second pole to take the angle so that it would not infringe upon Mr. Hattoy's thoughts. Selectman Solas also suggested that a second pole should have been considered in the cost structure.

Ms. Custadio added that by adding a second pole it adds to the cost for the owner of the property needing connection. It would be costly.

Ms. Custadio responded by pointing out that the left side works best; wires need to go in properly and be anchored properly and by placing the pole/wiring on the right side there's very little room and, NGRID needs to be able to get utility trucks on the easement. The pole, if placed at any other angle results in aerial trespassing.

Selectman Mills, point of order- the vote is for the poles brought before the Board and any other issue is private matter. The Board has no authority over private matter. The suggestion made by Selectman Mills was for Ms. Custadio and Mr. Hattoy to meet at the site and Ms. Custadio can tell Mr. Hattoy how far NGRID can go.

Chairman Vadnais stated that a discussion was allowed but the pole on the street and the point of origin – placement of the poles. The Chair asked R. Johnson what he had to say. Selectman Johnson has reviewed the placement of the pole and has no problem with the location. The Chair opened the floor to other abutters. Hearing none, the Chair requested a motion to close the public hearing.

G. Solas- motion to close the public hearing. Second by R. Johnson. **Roll call:** Johnson, aye; Solas, aye; Vadnais, aye; Mills, aye. Vote 4-0.

Selectman Mills stated that, with respect to the citizen, the engineer and her qualifications, the only item being voted on is the pole on the street. Selectman Mills urged Mr. Hattoy and the engineer to revisit the site one more time to hopefully come to a satisfactory solution. Selectman Mills, understanding both sides, hopes that the parties come to some resolution.

R. Johnson- motion to approve the new SO Pole and Midspan Pole 2562 at 225 Brook Street. Second by L. Mills. Vote 4-0.

Chairman Vadnais thanked Mr. Hattoy for coming forth and expressing his concerns.

Action Item (2): Discussion with the Town Clerk Re: Term for Elected Constable, with possible action

Selectman Johnson explained to the Board that in 2023, there was an election for Constable for four precincts; instead of doing 3 Constables and 1 Constable at 2-years terms, have 2 and 2 to stagger the terms. So, it would be 4 Constables, with 2 Constables running one year and 2 Constables the second year and no race the third year.

According to Ms. Laura Schwall, the Bylaws states that after the third term, the Constables need to run another 3-year term. After checking with State Elections and along with Deb Arruda, spoke with Town Counsel, to learn that the Town cannot change a term, mid-term; therefore, this matter is mute. Per Atty

Kate Feodoroff, the Town can (replace Mr. Abrams) for this year and elect another Constable next year, but this will not help the situation because the Town will still end up with 3 Constables whose terms will begin in 2025. Laura Schwall suggested relooking at this item down the road and, perhaps, make a Bylaw change.

Chairman Vadnais was in agreement and noted that a Bylaw change is needed. All members of the Board were in agreement. The Chair requested a motion to table.

R. Johnson- motion to table. Second by G. Solas. All in favor.

OLD BUSINESS:

Selectmen's Reports:

Johnson: Project worked on at Almeida Road and the dumping. With the help of conservation and Board of Health, we have it under control.

The Girl Scout project of the drop off shed at the ACO has been working. This has been used and residents are dropping off and picking up donations.

172 Summer St-another project that was under way was disposal clean up. Began in the summer of 2023 and has been cleaned up.

The Dumpster Policy started just a few months ago. I've worked with the Board of Health in putting this together; this policy will help get dumpsters out of the road, make sure they are kept clean, picked up at proper times. This was accepted tonight.

The Pickle Ball Court, behind Francis Hall, was dedicated to a teen that was in an auto accident last year (2023). Along with a tree planted in his memory, a ceremony was held with special attendance by our State Representative Steven Howitt, along with the community.

The Fair Committee was formed, and the committee is moving ahead with plans for a fair in Town.

Another project being worked on is a playground project. ARPA funds could not be used. I've spoken with members of CPC, the committee is looking into a new playground. Although it'll take a large sum of money, plans have been drawn up and everyone's looking forward to working on this project. Note: The BOS is lead on this project.

Solas: One of the things that had been noted before is the fact that the public knows what the Board does in the background. The public just see the members on Mondays or if there's an event.

The way the members are set up is that different responsibilities throughout the Town, for different groups; we act like a Board of Directors; we don't direct or manage; however, as on the Board of a company, you influence and help to director. But you don't own it! It's the Department Heads that run it.

What I was given was the schools, IT, media, COA and things that just come up.

With respect to the schools- I'm responsible for working with the Bristol-Plymouth Regional Technical School, Bristol-Aggie and D-R, our district. I have to work alongside them and help them be an advocate for us and us for them. The new administration works very well with us and we work as a team.

IT/Media, Schools, COA. I work directly with BP and Dighton. Working with their staffing, and Sue P. We work as a team.

IT/Media was split. I have been working with CMIT and working with the State on cyber security training for anyone with a town email address. We just received another grant opportunity, 3 days ago, to help with additional cyber training. On the media side, we brought on more individuals to help with filming and covering events in the Town. Currently working with Sue Pimental and Debbie Arruda on the renewal of Comcast contract.

COA- you all know how I feel about the COA- I always talk about the COA. I talk about the growth; I talk about the people that come to the COA; I talk about how there are people from other towns coming to the COA. What we've done in the Town, with our COA, has spread to the perimeter of our Town. This has become our center! I have mentioned many times if there are any seniors that cannot get to the COA, call Linna. We have grown so much!

Lastly, people perceive Rehoboth as being a wealthy town. We have been very fortunate to have the base we have and, that doesn't mean that we don't have seniors that have it tough. We're not excluded from that... what I've talk with Skip about, is going directly to those decision makers, as a Selectman, and campaign for what we need. We are a right to farm, approx. 13,000 people which is approx. for every square mile there's about 276 people. We are a rural community, and we need to support those going through hardship. That's the advocacy role that I want to play moving forward- having these people understand that Rehoboth is a rural community.

Vadnais: Lenny and I have been working on restructuring the police department and will be prepared to bring everyone up to date at the next meeting.

Mills: none.

Deignan: Absent.

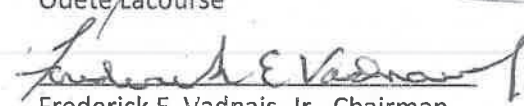
Other Business:

ADJOURNMENT:

Selectman G. Solas motion to adjourn the Regular Session at 8:09 PM. Second by Selectman R. Johnson. Vote 4-0.

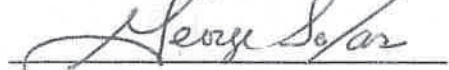
Respectfully Submitted,


Odete Lacourse


Frederick E. Vadnais, Jr., Chairman

Absent

Leonard Mills, Jr., Vice Chairman



George M. Solas, Sr., Clerk

Absent

Michael P. Deignan, Member



Robert Johnson II, Member

BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Approve: 2/12/2024