

Monday, January 27, 2025 6:30 PM

Working Session

Dalton Select Board Meeting

Meeting called to order at 6:30 pm by Eric. Select Board members Jo Beth Dudley, Thomas Dubreuil (Tom), and Eric Moore were physically present. Town Admin, Jeanette Charon present and note taking.

Public attendees: Pam Kathan, Robin Pilotte, Mandy Deveno, Paul Deveno, Carol Sheltry, Warren Green, Jen Green, Kris Ennis, Michael Ryan, Cathleen Fountain, Eric Pilotte, Kurt Hall, Shawn St. Cyr, Terri Parks, and videographer Emily Thompson as well as others who chose not to sign in and could not be identified.

Jeanette provided a detailed review of the proposed 2025 budget appropriations. Once complete, she asked if the Board has any questions. Jo Beth asked about salaries and making adjustments for the new year. Jo Beth asked about grants and FEMA funded work and whether or not those are included in the budget or not. Eric asked why the budget is going up with FEMA money coming in. Jeanette explained that revenues are a different section of the budget. Tom asked Jo Beth to explain the FEMA grant work she mentioned. Jo Beth proposed a raise for the Town Administrator due to the increased work she has done in the past year due to the natural disaster in July, and noting that Jeanette is bringing in more than her salary in grant funds, and the town is reliant on her skills to obtain the pending FEMA reimbursements, likely close to \$1million. Eric stated they didn't want to increase the tax base. Jo Beth stated that it's hard to find people who can do the great work and organizing that Jeanette has done. Tom stated that it's all part of the package. He doesn't want an increase this year. Jo Beth stated that this work is benefitting the town right now, this year and as well as in the future. Not a lot of people have the skillset Jeanette has. Jo Beth proposed a 10% increase for the Town Admin.

Revenues were discussed and reviewed. The information presented did not take into account the 50% of LUCT (land use change tax) for the Dalton Conservation Commission or the 25% of PPB (pay-per-bag) revenues for the pay-per-bag fund. Jo Beth asked about the funds we receive from FEMA and how they're going to be reported. Jeanette stated that she would seek guidance from DRA (Department of Revenue Administration). The rough estimate for 2025's anticipated revenues is \$618,268, not including FEMA or grant funds. These FEMA and grant funds will be accepted through a Public Hearing for Unanticipated Funds once the funds have been received. The estimated amount to raise from taxes will be \$572k +/- . Our current estimate of expected unanticipated revenue is \$1M.

Jo Beth motioned for a 10% raise for the Town Administrator. Eric asked about raises for the others. Ron has put in a lot of work due to the disaster, as has Adam. Jo Beth stated that all three employees should get an increase. Increases are already built into the highway department's budget. Jo Beth stated that the work was done in 2024 and is ongoing for 2025. Jo Beth repeated her motion, adding the Road Agent and Fire/EMS Chief. Tom stated not now. Eric agreed with Tom.

In further review of the budget appropriations, Jo Beth asked if \$35k would be enough for legal. In 2024, the town spent over \$26k and November and December bills have not been processed yet due to billing questions. Tom stated that the invoices need to be covered. The proposed legal budget was more than doubled to \$45k for 2025.

Tom asked Jeanette to email the budget documents that were reviewed so they can study them for our meeting on February 3, 2025. Jeanette agreed.

The Board reviewed the Upton & Hatfield invoice for November. Jo Beth asked for the email that Tom sent Nate on 11/30/2024, the review of which cost the town \$414. Tom stated he will send it. Jo Beth

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wasn't sure there was Board authorization for the communication. She also asked about a 12/5 telephone conference with Tom, and a 12/09/25 telephone conference with Tom regarding DCC and Casella. Eric will call Nate to ask about the email sent to the Select Board, with a copy to legal, by Save Forest Lake that Nate spent time reviewing and charged the town \$299 for its review, without authorization from the Board.

Jo Beth, reviewing the invoice again, stated that all board members are not being copied on the emails Tom is sending to legal. Tom accused Jo Beth of trying to make him look bad and stated he would forward her the emails.

Jeanette needs guidance in order to get the rest of the 2024 bills paid and allocated to the proper year in our accounting system. Eric is going to check on the \$299 charge and get back to Jeanette tomorrow.

Veroff CPA sent their letter of engagement for the 2024 audit. Jo Beth motioned to sign the letter. Eric provided a second with approval via roll call vote.

Jo Beth motioned to sign the Certificate of Authority for the EMT Training grant package signed by Ron Sheltry, Fire Chief. Eric provided a second with approval via roll call vote.

The Board reviewed the proposed CRF (Capital Reserve Funds) special warrant articles for the 2025 Town Meeting. They are as follows: Town Building \$15,000; Sewer Pump \$2,000; Highway Dept. \$25,000; Paving \$75,000; Fire Dept. Vehicle Equipment \$10,000; Fire/EMS Equipment \$10,000; Legal \$10,000. These special warrants equal \$147,000.

The Town Report dedication was discussed and Jo Beth stated the report should be dedicated to those who rebuilt the town's infrastructure after the July floods. Tom and Eric stated that Vic St. Cyr should have the dedication. Jeanette stated that we have done more than one in the past and we could certainly do that again this year.

Jo Beth asked Eric and Tom what they would be doing to assist with the Town Report. She provided a list of items that are required by the state. Tom stated he would get the dedication for Vic St. Cyr. Jo Beth asked Eric to write the dedication for those who rebuilt the town's roads. He agreed. Jo Beth stated she would be happy to handle the Select Board's report. Jeanette asked to have all the items on February 3, 2025, so she can continue assembling the book.

The next meeting on February 17, 2025, falls on President's Day, which is a town observed holiday. Jeanette asked for an alternate meeting date. Jo Beth requested Thursday, February 20, 2025 at 6:30pm. All agreed. Jeanette asked one of the board members to come sign payroll on Tuesday or Wednesday before the meeting since they must be available on Thursday. Tom said he would check to see if he's available. If he isn't available, Jo Beth confirmed she can come sign the checks on behalf of the Board.

At the suggestion of residents in our last meeting, Jo Beth reached out to NHMA (New Hampshire Municipal Association) for free legal advice on RSA 149-M regarding legislative body approval (at town meeting) being required prior to the Board signing a contract for solid waste services with a commercial landfill. NHMA provided legal advice confirming that this is a requirement of the Board prior to executing any contract with a new landfill. She was further informed that the contract could be considered null and void without fulfilling this requirement. Tom asked if Jo Beth knew this when he and

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Eric signed the contract. She replied by stating they all knew since it was presented prior to the contract signing. He also stated that this wasn't done 6 years ago when the change was made from Casella to Mt. Carberry. Jo Beth stated they didn't know at the time, as the board was new. Tom blamed Jo Beth for the error stating she was the one who asked for the contract. She continued to state that it's a little hard to ignore the RSA when two separate residents brought it to the attention of the Board prior to the contract being signed and she voted against signing the agreement for that and other reasons. She asked the other board members how they were going to address the issue. Tom stated that it looked like they would have to contact legal, again. Jennifer Green asked what the liability of the town or board is for something like this. Eric Pilotte loudly said "Point of Order". Jo Beth stated that the contract can be void or voidable. The Board does not have the authority. Jeanette mentioned the importance of due diligence.

Jo Beth motioned to go into nonpublic session at 8:36pm for legal, A-2I. Eric provided a second with approval via roll call vote. Jeanette confirmed there would be only one nonpublic session. The Board confirmed. Jeanette left the room.

Jo Beth motioned to return to public at 8:56pm. Eric provided a second. Approval via roll call vote.

Eric motioned to seal the minutes. Jo Beth provided a second with approval via roll call vote.

Eric motioned to adjourn the meeting at 8:57pm. Jo Beth provided a second with approval via roll call.

Minutes Respectfully submitted by Jeanette Charon.

Minutes Approved On: 2/10/25 (date)

Jo Beth Dudley

Jo Beth Dudley

Thomas Dubreuil

Eric Moore

Eric Moore

