

NOTICE
Town of Lowell
SELECT BOARD MEETING
THE LOWELL SELECTBOARD WILL MEET ON
Tuesday September 24, 2024, AT 5:30 P.M.
AT THE TOWN OFFICE BUILDING.

AGENDA:

- Additions & Deletions
- Hay bid renewal
- Hannah Kemerer-Proposed community solar project Mines rd.
- Sign Orders
- Review minutes from September 10, 2024
- Road Commissioner updates
- Other Business

Selectboard:
Wayne Richardson-Chm
Darren Pion
Jennifer Blay

MINUTES
SELECTBOARD MEETING
TOWN OF LOWELL
Meeting held on September 24, 2024.

Board members present:

Wayne Richardson- Chm, Darren Pion, Jennifer Blay
Christy M. Pion -Town Clerk/Selectboard Clerk/Ass't Treasurer
Rebecca DiZazzo-Treasurer/Ass't Clerk
Calvin Allen-Road Commissioner
Marie Busch-Asst.Clerk/Asst. Treasurer

Note: All meetings are recorded on a handheld recording device.

Meeting called to order at 6:30 p.m.

GUEST:

- Hannah Kemerer-All Earth Renewables
- Caleb Elder-All Earth Renewables
- Matthew Geoffroy-Resident
- Jeff Parsons -Zoning Member
- Sam Thurston-Zoning Member
- Troy Adams-Zoning Member
- Audra Pitts- Newport Daily Express

Additions and Deletions:

- Matthew Geoffroy, town resident, joined the meeting to ask the Board if they were planning to put the Town Office plowing out for bid, and if they were he wanted the opportunity to have the job back as his family had done it for over 30 years and it had never been put out to bid before. He stated that he would like a 3 year contract and would be raising the price a little from what he was charging before. The Board told Matthew that they would like to discuss it further and give Matthew an answer during another meeting. Matthew agreed to this decision.
- The Board further discussed the town office plowing. They revisited their reasons for stopping outside hired plowing and decided that they would not be putting the plowing out for bid and keep it as inhouse plowing.
- Christy discussed the notice of site visit and hearing that is coming up on October 15, 2024, on Rte. 100 with the Board. The Board plans to attend.

Hay Bid Renewal:

- Christy Pion, Town Clerk, gave this year's hay bill to Darren and Wayne. She reminded them that we needed to start thinking about when they wanted to post the new hay bid as this is the 3rd year. The Board agreed that the bid would be posted in the spring 2025. They would like the bid to run for 30 days and be posted by the 1st week of April.

Hannah Kemerer-Proposed Community Solar Project Mines Rd.:

- Hannah Kemerer and Caleb Elder, from All Earth Renewables, came before the Board to discuss their solar project that they want to put on Mines road on a residents property. The owner of the property is Craig Bushey, 731 Mines Road. If everything goes well and they are granted all the permits needed to do the project, with the support of the Town, they are hoping to have this project under way by spring/summer of 2025. Jenn asked them how this all works and was wondering if it was similar to the wind towers. Caleb answered no, this would be very different as the voltage is not as high and does not produce any more than normal electrical voltage. Jenn asked when they thought they might have the project completed. Caleb is hoping to have is finished by June of 2025. Wayne asked how Towns are taxing solar panels. Caleb answered that Towns access it as more than 50 kilowatts and cannot be taxed under 50 kilowatts. It would be a solar equipment tax to All Earth Renewables company. Jenn asked what the lifespan was for solar panels. Caleb answered about 25 years and stated that when they do quit working they will try to refurbish them to get further use out of them. Caleb also stated that when agreement is made, and the contract is up they do a total removal of the equipment. After a brief discussion between the Zoning members and the Board members, they were all in agreement that if it's not interfering with other landowners, they feel it would be fine to do. They want to wait until they have received the explanatory packet before discussing it further.
- Jenn talked to the AER about the MERP time sensitive grant agreement and stated our town could be eligible.

Sign Orders:

- Financials for the Treasurer were approved and signed by the Board.

Minutes from September 10, 2024

- Minutes from September 10, 2024, were approved and signed by the Board unanimously.

Road Commissioner Updates:

- Calvin wanted to discuss the disappointment of his current check that used most of his vacation pay while he was in the hospital. Marie told Calvin that the Board needed to discuss it before she could have permission to change it as he didn't have any sick time left and had to apply the vacation pay. Jenn also explained to Calvin that this is the 1st time they have had the chance to meet as they cannot discuss business without the Clerk present or warning a meeting. Calvin stated that he would like to keep his vacation time for something else and wanted to know if the Board could do anything for him to compensate for it. He would rather not have to file a comp claim if there is some other route that can be taken. The Board discussed making an extended emergency sick policy to be added to the current sick policy. They decided that the cutoff point would be 15 emergency sick days for hospital time and only allowed use with the Board's permission. Jenn will be writing the additional policy piece during this meeting and sending it to the Clerk to put it in the current policy. The Board were all in agreement that this would be implemented today for Calvin and will be officially signed in the revised policy at the next meeting. The Board also asked Calvin to send a copy of his hospital paperwork to put in his file for backup. Calvin whole heartly thanked the Board for their decision.
- Calvin notified the Board that the sand pile was all finished and ready when snow starts to fly.
- Calvin notified the Board that the power for Newton Rd. and Cheney Rd. needs new conduit.
- Calvin notified the Board that when they were trying the Volvo loader, it had rolled into Donnie Henn's pickup and the Town would be billed for a new rim and tire.
- New Loader Discussion Update: The Board has decided to put the new loader on hold until after budgets have been put together at the end of the year.

Other Business:

- Becky asked the Board what their thoughts were on the switching of the positions between Marie and Becky and when they thought they this should happen. The Board asked Becky when she thought this should happen, Becky stated that she thought November at the one year mark of when Marie started working here. Marie was asked by the Board if she thought she was ready for the switch, she said yes. Becky asked if the pay was going to be changed for the switching of the jobs. Jenn asked what the current pay was for each person. Christy suggested that Marie’s hours get increased to fit the position, but Marie does not want to increase her hours and stay at the hours she is doing now. Marie made a suggestion that Becky help Christy more with her workload as she hasn’t been getting any help from Marie since starting the training to become Treasurer. Becky stated that she has been super busy working on grants especially FEMA and would like to help Christy more but does not have time. Marie would like to get paid what the current treasurer is being paid and Becky would like to maintain her current pay but decrease her hours to 16 rather than 18. The Board asked the office management to put together a job description for Becky’s role in the office.
- Jenn shared some emails that she had received of complaints of people flying up and down Mines Rd. and of dogs running at large.
- Jeremy sent a message to the Board of complaint of his neighbors dogs continuously going onto his property and causing damage not only to his property, but to his Harley Davidson motorcycle as well. Darren stated that he would call the Animal Control officer personally to see what she can do to fix this situation.
- Darren brought to the other board attention that Craig Matten had inquired about renting the opening next past the Clerk’s Office to process firewood. Darren made the suggestion to use the back portion of the Lower Village road Pit instead. Jenn stated that she would like to see a separate lease made for this. Board were all in agreement that the pit would be a better location . Board has agreed to allow use of the space while clearing the top of the pit.
- Jenn asked about the letter from Mary Rising. Jenn will be writing a letter in response to Mary Rising’s letter, and the Board will talk to the lister’s office to see how this can be resolved.
- R O W was signed by the Board for Robtoy Road.

Board Warrants:

➤	General Order # 21	\$ 55,978.54
➤	Payroll Order # 20	\$ <u>13,433.72</u>
		\$ 69,412.26

Signed for the Treasurer to draw checks totaling -

Meeting adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Christy M. Pion

Next meeting date: October 8, 2024, at the Town Office Building.

Wayne Richardson – Chair

Christy M. Pion–Selectboard Clerk

Darren Pion-Select Person

Jennifer Blay-Select Person