

**TOWN OF SANGERVILLE  
SELECT BOARD  
MEETING MINUTES  
Beginning @ 4:00pm  
Wednesday, March 20, 2024**

**Item 1: Open Meeting: Chair called meeting to order at 4:00 pm, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.**

- A. Selectpersons Present: Mike Wark (Chair), Dale Gray, and Jody Cabot**
- B. Employees Present: Jeff Libby, Michelle Nichols**
- C. Public Present: Tom Warren, Wilson Nuite**

**Item 2: Open Session: Limited to 2 Minutes – Extension per Chair:**

**Item 3: Approval of the Minutes: Emergency Select Board Meeting 03/06/2024**

The board signed the minutes. Selectperson Cabot made a motion to approve those minutes, Chair Wark 2<sup>nd</sup>. All in favor.

**Item 4: Review of Treasurer's Warrants**

- A. Payroll: #16, #17, #18**
- B. Accounts Payable: #19**

Selectperson Gray made a motion to approve a and b as read, Selectperson Cabot 2<sup>nd</sup>. All in favor.

**Item 5: Old Business:**

**A. Property Management Ordinance:**

Once the board has signed the updated property management ordinance, we can take that off the to do list. In regards to the lawyer who has gone over the property management ordinance for us, the CEO will need to be spoken to regarding said ordinance and the Rudman-Winchell lawyer.

**Item 6: New Business:**

**A. Article Meeting:**

Chair Wark wants to make sure that Diane McCarthy Clark and her group is aware that if they want to put a letter in the town report they need to get it to us asap. We're still waiting on the Select Board letter for the town report. The article meeting still needs to take place, and they're trying to decide when to have it. Petition items and seeking congressional funds again should be at the end of the warrant. The board agrees that they want to get the town's official business taken care of first before touching on those items. When Michelle is ready she'll contact the board to go over the warrant articles.

**B. Fire Department Petition:**

The board wants to officially review the petition brought in for the fire department. Each of the board members was given a copy of the petition to review and go over. Chair Wark said that the petition is in good order for signatures. The board doesn't like the idea of the fire department picking their own committee, and run their own sequence of repairs. The committee would have total oversight over the money their seeking. The board hasn't heard of anything like this before. Chair Wark wants to send the petition to the town's attorney before they approve it for the warrant for the annual town meeting. They want a written analysis on what they should do about this petition.

**C. Employee Rates:**

The board isn't sure what to do about this matter. Michelle sent the board letters about the cost of living increase, and in the personnel policy it's listed as 2%. Michelle said that she assumed May is when something like this would take place because it was after town meeting. Selectperson Cabot thinks this discussion should be tabled until May. Selectperson Gray is fine with it so far. Selectperson Cabot asked if it was reflected in the budget line. Michelle answered yes. Selectperson Gray said they would approve it after the annual town meeting and when the budget was approved.

**D. Town Meeting Date:**

Chair Wark has had a considerable amount of interest regarding the first petition involving the old town hall building. He is starting to think that this is such a weighty decision regarding money and who is handling it that a workshop and informational meeting should be held a week or a few days before the actual town meeting. The board



is also waiting to hear back from the town attorney on related matters. The board has agreed that the town meeting will take place near the end of April.

**E. IRS:**

Michelle received a letter in the mail from the IRS about an issue from the March 2022 quarterly report. She spoke to someone at the IRS about the issue until they were cut off. She found another IRS letter, to Lorna, dated July 22, 2022 about the March 31, 2020 quarterly reports. The IRS person said that they do not have anything for those reporting times. Michelle needs to go into the old building and track down the 2020 and 2021 9-41s. Lorna had written a letter, stating that she hadn't filed an amendment, but that wasn't what they were asking for. She was supposed to send them the actual form. You can get some big fines for filing some of these forms late. The IRS is looking for 2 quarters worth of forms. Michelle is going to look for them, and send them off to the IRS as soon as she can.

**Item 7: Town Manager Report:**

- A. Jeff Libby had Steve Lawson go around an patch all the paved roads and potholes. He contacted Warren as well on patching and grading on gravel roads. We've got 20 plus ton of calcium in the town garage that will need to be spread on the dirt roads to help maintain them.
- B. Had a complaint on the West Road, same place with an issue where it's always been. It's a dirt road, and you can't put any equipment on it without making more of a mess than there already is. The board said they already put a bunch of money into those roads, crushed ledge. The potato field up there has moved into the road. A lot of these dirt and gravel roads are camp roads that are meant to be seasonal, and aren't built for year round use. We're going to have to wait for the roads to dry before doing anything to them. Warren said he will start grading as soon as it's dry enough.
- C. All of the town properties have been secured. There's been a lot of changes and so many people that it was time to install new locks. The contractor was happy about that, so now he doesn't have to worry about who is in the new building. The contractor has a key. The town office has four sets of keys, so if a spare is required it's available. The buildings have been secured as there is stuff of value in them, and this provides an extra level of security.
- D. Jeff got a hold of the auditors today. Roland Smith is supposed to be calling Michelle and or Jeff to set something up and get started on the audit.

**Item 8: Road Commissioner Report:**

- A. Jeff has the winter plowing contract. The board wants to make sure that any changes made are ok with the contractors. Selectperson Cabot made a motion to approve C&W Nuite's plowing bid for the year of 2024 to 2025 in the amount of \$181,366.30. Selectperson Gray, 2<sup>nd</sup>. All in favor. Michelle and Jeff have "built into the contract, hydrant cleanout when asked for \$2,000.00" That \$2,000 will be a separate line item in the budget.

**Item 9: Select Board Concerns:**

- Selectperson Cabot had something to discuss. She has had people come to her about listening to the recordings of the meetings about the ad-hoc committee. There is concern about there being a conflict with our moderator being part of the ad-hoc committee and moderating the town meeting. Selectperson Cabot read up on the Maine legislature and it stated that if there is even a perception of a conflict of interest then there is a conflict of interest. Selectperson Cabot suggested that we speak to the town's attorney to be on the safe side.
- Chair Wark has a concern about the fire department's budget. He said it looks like there are more Sunday meetings than trainings. Selectperson Gray said there are more trainings than meetings. Chair Wark needed clarification that Sunday meetings and Sunday duty are two separate entities and not the same thing. There's one Sunday meetings a month, and two trainings a month. Selectperson Gray said that officers are not supposed to be paid for Sunday duty. Selectperson Gray doesn't know why they aren't paid for Sunday duty, but he thinks it's something to do with responsibility and that's why they're already getting a stipend. He said that the officers are basically double dipping by getting paid for Sunday duty and getting stipends. Selectperson Gray said that when Chad Burgess was still chief he agreed that the officers shouldn't be paid for Sunday duty. Selectperson Gray said that the officers are on Sunday duty to perform tasks that they're already supposed to be doing as officers. The town manager appoints the fire chief. This is stated in the fire department ordinance. The chief and town manager choose the officers. All

of them are treated like employees, so they all report to the town manager. Chair Wark said that the Fire Chief's stipend is set by the select board. Chair Wark says that he's looked at how a few town fire departments operate, and he says it's about 50/50. Some appoint a stipend to only the chief. Some appoint stipends to the chief and the officers. Selectperson Gray made a suggestion for getting rid of the Sunday duty rules, and correlate an officer a position with duties. They get paid a stipend for doing those duties. Chair Wark said that Matt agreed with the idea of a cutoff on pay to encourage people to show up to calls more. Chair Wark made some assumptions and estimates based on the number of calls, 162, and \$12 per call. He said that the maximum stipend any one person could get goes to \$1944.00. He said he made some assumptions. "Assuming you had 12 firefighters with 100% participation, the working budget should be \$23,338. He said the likelihood of 12 and 100% is 0. It's not going to happen." He said that if you get more realistic and have 12 firefighters with a 75% participation rate then you're at \$15,500, and that's at a \$12.00 comp. He made some more assumptions and estimates, this time with the comp per call at \$10, and they came closer to Matt's number at 75% participation. Chair Wark was encouraged because Matt came up with \$15,000, and Chair Wark believes that \$15,000 could work. He asked what happens if we go to 200 calls? The maximum per person would be \$2,000.00 and 100% attendance. Even at 75% participation that's \$18,000. Chair Wark said we could survive that if that happens. Chair Wark and Selectperson Cabot said that it's not gonna happen. Selectperson Gray said that the reality is 12 firefighters. Chair Wark said that this was a 100 call window. He said that more than 50% of the time, 7 firefighters consistently attended. If you go with 33% participation or higher there were 9 firefighters who participated. Chair Wark said that that tells him that a participation of 12 more than 50% of the time wasn't going to happen. Selectperson Cabot agreed with him. Michelle asked how many firefighters are on the department now. The answer was 29. The chief isn't included in these numbers because his attendance on calls is virtually 100%. Selectperson Gray did it that way, assuming that the chief showed up to nearly 100% of the calls. Chair Wark said that we spent \$1,000 on people with less than 10% participation. Matt agreed that he doesn't want that. Matt said that he hasn't missed a single call in two years. There are about 6 individuals who attend meetings and trainings, but don't go to calls. Selectperson Gray said that 29 is a great number to have, but only about 12 can be depended on to show up to calls then that's really who we can count on to attend calls is those 12 attend. It's not trying to pick on anybody because life happens, but it doesn't make sense to staff, equip, and train 29 when only 12 show up. He said that he thinks that some stipend structure and SOPs in place that if you miss so many calls then you can no longer be on the fire department. Chair Wark said that what drove this discussion at the budget meeting last night was the discussion of the labor last year approached \$30,000. He said that he's found neighboring towns with budgets of \$30,000. We need to address this, and it puts us on the right track. Selectperson Cabot had a question about insurance as far as the fire fighters. If we have 10 active firefighters, and there's X number that show up for Sunday duty and meetings are they all insured as full firefighters. There's a firefighter insurance policy that covers a number. Is the number of inactive firefighters driving up the firefighter coverage insurance? Selectperson Gray said that Matt is putting a lot of effort in, and a few other members who are also putting effort in to train people. He said it's a waste of their time to train people who are never going to respond to calls. What's the point of it? Why should those guys waste their time and effort on people who aren't going to participate in calls? The firefighters who actively participate and train these people aren't getting anything back and neither is the community. Chair Wark brought up that during the budget meeting they talked about a biannual payment of the stipend. That way they won't be paying stipends for a full year, especially if there are people who consistently don't participate in calls. Chair Wark and Selectperson Cabot mistakenly said that the firefighters are paid monthly. They are actually paid quarterly, so every few months. Chair Wark thinks that cut off for participation should be 20% or you're not going to get the stipend. Jeff said that cost wise and time wise it makes sense to pay every six months. The town attorney has suggested the biannual payment system for the fire department as well. She did caution Chair Wark that this change if it occurs could be upsetting and controversial. People are used to a certain way, and might not be happy with the change. Michelle had a question about the payroll that was brought in for January and February. They usually get paid in March, so do we wait until after town meeting or do they still get paid in March? The board has the authority to change the policy without the town meeting. The board would like to speak with Matt about this because he's worked so hard on this. Michelle asked if we're pushing out the pay time from March to June, and push it to two times a year? They are still trying to decide on that one.



Selectperson Cabot said that she wanted to talk about the air packs, which is the reason for the petition. The petition hasn't been validated yet, but Michelle is going to do that tomorrow. Chair Wark said that he's had citizen's call him and ask about the air packs, and he's said that he doesn't know anything about it at this point. There are 116 signatures on the fire department air pack petition total. Selectperson Cabot said that she was under the impression that you could repair the air packs. Jeff said that you can get parts for them, but he's asked around and no one can tell them how long the parts are going to last. You've got the salesman on the other end who's pushing you to buy new packs. Chair Wark said that Jeff said that the fire department was in good shape for 4 to 5 years with the air packs. Jeff said that up to 10 is what IPS told him, and then he verified it before the meeting. Now he's being told before they run out of parts to fix the packs, he doesn't have a timeframe. What Jeff told them about the ten years is what the salesman told him before he changed it to he doesn't have a set timeline. Matt had said that the parts were running out, so Jeff called the salesman up again. He said that those parts will be manufactured to the end of the year before they discontinue it. Selectperson Gray said there are a lot of other towns doing the same thing with their air packs. He said that the air packs can be traded in to get something out of it. He said that there will be a lot more parts that become available when fire departments do that. Jeff said that IPS and Fire Tech isn't going to take used packs. They don't want used stuff. Matt got in touch with Greenville Fire Department, who is buying new air packs, and selling some of their old ones to Rockwood Fire Department. Depending on what's left, it may be worth looking into. Charleston also has some, but they don't know what year they are. Chair Wark said that "new is nice, but if we can make ours last because Sangerville isn't Greenville." Selectperson Cabot agreed. Selectperson Gray said that Matt has said that he needs 12 packs, and that they're talking about buying that's going to last 15 to 20 years. He doesn't see why they should buy two packs for such a big expense or four packs, which is what their petition is all about. All they're doing is committing the town to buy four more later. If they know there is a 15 to 20 year cycle, and again it was brought up at the budget meeting. Selectperson Gray said that no one has come to the board, and really they should've been buying one air pack a year, and they could get into this rotation. Jeff said that's why you don't want to buy them all at once. This all hinges on the NFPA regulation. Selectperson Cabot asked if it was ill conceived to find out about buying 12 at once. Jeff said that he doesn't like the idea of buying 12 at once because then you'd have to take out a loan and then in 15 to 20 years they'd need replace the bottles again. He said that if you buy two, you can buy them staggered. Selectperson Gray said that they should buy one air pack a year. Chair Wark said that they rarely have more than seven firefighters on a scene. He said, "Every major town around has a quite an armory full of bottles." Jeff said that it's not the bottles, but the air pack themselves. Chair Wark brought up Dover, which Jeff said has all new air packs. Chair Wark and Selectperson Gray said that if we have our air packs on a scene for a structure fire we have other towns around us that have air packs and if they called in for mutual aid it comes out to about 40 air packs on scene. Jeff said you need a minimum of five air packs on scene, 2 in, 2 out, and one for the pump operator. Jeff said that he supports newer equipment to get us moving in the right direction. The board said that they also support it. Matt said that he and the rest of the firefighters don't care if they get paid or not. Chair Wark said he read the petition as that they were in noncompliance, so you need to sign it to go into compliance. He said he looked to Jeff who was a firefighter for 20 years, and he said that the air packs were good for 5 more years. Jeff said that if they were non compliant they would've had verbiage in there that said something needed to be done. Jeff said that he believes that there are still some good 4.5 packs. Jeff thinks that if they could get some halfway decent used air packs and gear that they could down the line buy new air packs. Selectperson Gray said that Matt told them that if a person is trained to use an air pack then they are required to have an air pack. The board said they should limit how many people are allowed to train to use an air pack. They said that they can't have 29 packs for 29 people if all are trained for air pack usage. The board said that's mismanagement. Jeff said that he's never heard of it. The board said that they're good with that. Jeff said that he's going to call the Department of Labor and ask them for clarification. Chair Wark said that he's concerned that with the way the petition is written that someone could've thought that the fire department was noncompliant. Selectperson Gray said that's not accurate. Chair Wark said they may want to run this by the attorney as well. Chair Wark said that if Matt were there he would like to talk to Matt because at the budget meeting last night when they asked if he was good with all this and Matt said what could he do about it? Chair Wark said that Matt should've told them that he had a petition that he was going to submit the next morning. He didn't say it to the budget committee, nor the board. Selectperson Gray said that

Matt has never brought up the need for four air packs, and never mentioned it before. Chair Wark said that if last night at the budget meeting had they told the budget committee that they were in noncompliance and needed four air packs that they would've begrudgingly agreed because they'd need to do it. He said that they were all under the impression that they were all in compliance for the next few years. Selectperson Gray said he'd wished Matt were there tonight, so they could speak to him. Selectperson Cabot said that Matt wasn't able to be there tonight. He'd said he could make the budget meeting, but was unable to attend the select board meeting. He'd told her that beforehand. Jeff said that they could always have another conversation with him. He doesn't know if it will go anywhere, but if we could find some used stuff to get us by, something in decent shape and not junk. Selectperson Gray said he doesn't want junk. Chair Wark said no one was asking for junk. Selectperson Gray said they don't want to bring in something that's the same caliber that they have, but a happy medium it's worth bringing in. Chair Wark said that Greenville has packs that they stopped using last week because they got a shipment of new ones in. He said they're probably pretty good packs. He said that if this ends up on the warrant, and it goes to a vote we're going to need Jeff who has 20 years of experience to stand up to say that we're in compliance. Jeff said that he's not going to favor one side or the other. Chair Wark said that there's no real side to this, and that if we're in noncompliance then we need to get into compliance. If we're compliant then we've got some time to work through it. Selectperson Gray said that if the call volume and mutual aid keeps going the way it is then we need to maintain the Sangerville fire department, and we'll need to get used stuff. Chair Wark said that Dexter just sold a used fire truck to the town of Aurora and Aurora is thrilled. Selectperson Gray said that doing that will allow them to save money for new turnout gear. Chair Wark said that Matt mentioned last night that the Friends of Sangerville Fire Department have spent \$6,000 on equipment for the fire department. Chair Wark said that it was very nice of them, but there should've been some notice and if these bottles were a priority then maybe that \$6,000 should've gone to bottles if we're not compliant. All of it is just kind of discouraging. Selectperson Cabot said that this all boils down to perception and people believing that they're against the fire department, which their not. She said they have a budget they need to maintain. Jeff said that that's what the Department of Labor inspections are for. They look at turnout gear, equipment, air packs, etc. There are monthly inspections on the air packs. Firefighters inspect the air packs after every use. Jeff said that there are packs out there, but they just have to find them. Selectperson Gray said that the town needs to be made aware that we are in compliance, and that there are air packs out there, but we don't need to buy new. The board said that this is essentially people seeking other people's money. They didn't use the Friends of Sangerville money to buy the bottles. They bought what they wanted. They don't really want any oversight. They want to spend the town's money, and spend it their way. The board said that many people are under the impression that there is no impact on using this money. Soon there won't be any money. There is an impact, especially if you're not spending it on essential things.

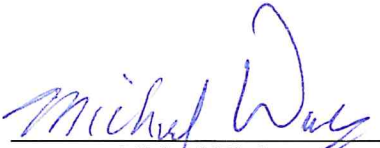
**Adjourn.**

Chair Wark a motion to adjourn at 5:16pm, Selectperson Gray, 2<sup>nd</sup>. All in favor.

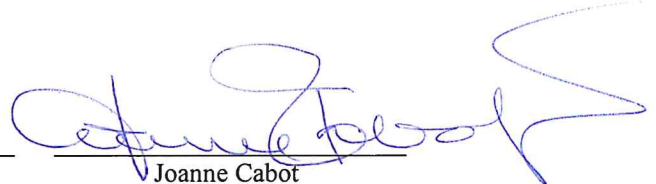
**THE NEXT MEETING IS APRIL 3, 2024, at the Fire Station (*Agenda subject to change without notice*)**

Respectfully submitted,

Town Manager

  
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Michael Wark

  
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Dale Gray

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Joanne Cabot