

Selectmen's Update May 20, 2024

The Selectmen spent the beginning of the work session finalizing contract details with Sergeant Koch due to his **upcoming promotion to the position of Police Chief** (effective May 30th). We look forward to supporting him in this transition and **welcoming the newest Police Department member Andrew Lipson** to the team. Mr. Lipson comes most recently from the Carroll County Sherriff's Office and has more than 20 years in law enforcement. **Sergeant Koch and Mr. Lipson will be sworn in Monday, May 27th (11 AM)** following the conclusion of our Memorial Day Ceremony at the town's honor roll.

Please join us in **celebrating Chief Varney's retirement this Thursday, May 23rd from 4 PM – 6 PM** at Town Hall; light appetizers and refreshments will be provided but attendees are invited to bring apps/plates to share!

Also in the work session, Parks & Rec Director Ole Anderson provided a **proposal to purchase playground equipment for Remick Park**. 2024 funding approved at Town Meeting is dedicated to purchase of new playground equipment for children ages 5 – 12 and needed improvements to existing access/equipment. Pending legal counsel's contract review, the Board approved the purchase as proposed. We are grateful to the Quimby Fund and other generous donors who have contributed to this initiative to date! The Remick Park Revitalization Committee has been working for more than a year now with the mission of developing a cohesive, actionable plan for revitalizing and maintaining Remick Park so it can better serve as a widely utilized community resource.

Town Clerk/Tax Collector Alison Gage also presented an update on outstanding property taxes and property tax liens; **2023 property taxes are now subject to liening** per state statute. More information regarding property taxes can be found [here](#). The first 2024 property tax bills are in the mail this week and will be viewable online tomorrow [here](#). Tax bills are due Tuesday, July 2nd.

We are also thrilled to announce our **online GIS system will be live next week!** While our new GIS maps are available [here](#), the online tool provides an interactive viewer to search, view, and print property maps and many other GIS data layers.

The Board held **public hearings for four discretionary preservation easement applications**; these easements are governed by RSA 79-D. More information can be found [here](#).

The Board discussed a property with passed deadlines for building permit activity per a court-ordered stipulation agreement due to zoning issues; the Board agreed to move forward with **filing for contempt due to the property owner's noncompliance**. The Board also agreed to move forward in pursuit of collecting an outstanding Land Use Change Tax (more than \$10K) via civil court.

The Board discussed options for the town's upcoming **health insurance policy renewal**. The town currently operates on a renewal year of July 1 – June 30th. The Board is considering a six-month policy that would allow the town to transition to a January 1 – December 31st policy period; such a transition would align with the town's budget cycle. The Board is also considering ways to assist employees in absorbing the proposed cost increases (10%) in light of 2024 wage increases ranging from 2-3%.

The Board **signed and approved several documents:**

- Accounts Payable and payroll manifests.
- Timber tax warrants.
- A timber intent to cut form.
- A property tax warrant for the first issue tax bill (2024).

The Board discussed a previous **proposal to gift the town's Alfred Quimby painting to the Sandwich Historical Society** for display at the Quimby house; a previous Selectboard had prompted the conversation while the Quimby house reconstruction was underway. The Board would like to further discuss the proposal with all stakeholders in a future Selectmen's meeting.

In other business, the Board discussed several topics:

- The Board is working to schedule a **town cleanup day for Sunday, August 4th**. More details will be coming as we finalize plans!
- The town is **kicking off its organizational assessment and pay/classification study** with Municipal Resources Inc.
- Per the Police Chief's recommendation, the Board approved an **increase in the special detail rate**; this rate is for special details which are paid by private parties that request/require police staff (weddings, etc.)
- The Board discussed whether to grant a blanket one-year permission to the Road Agent to address nuisance trees as allowed per state statute (see [here](#)). **The Road Agent may, only with the written permission of the selectmen, remove trees or portions of trees which have been declared a public nuisance** pursuant to RSA 231:145 and 231:146. The Board agreed to address permission on a case-by-case basis.

The Board will reconvene on Monday, May 27th for the Memorial Day ceremony and police officers' oaths of office. The Board's next regularly scheduled meetings are Monday, June 3rd at 4 PM (work session) and 5 PM (regular meeting). **Please note, Town offices will be closed Monday, May 27th.**

Board of Selectmen