Town of Canterbury, NH
Board of Selectmen
Date: 2025 September 8
Location: Meeting House

Selectmen: Scott Doherty (Chair), Beth Blair, Calvin Todd
Town Administrator: Ken Folsom
Budget Committee: Tyson Miller, Bob Steenson, Cheryl Gordon, Kelly Short, Bob Scarponi (via Zoom)
Others Present: Kal McKay (Admin Assistant), Edgar Rivera (Libertad Press NE and CCPC), John O'Connor (Road Agent), Rich Marcou (Planning Board), Al Edelstein (Treasurer), Randi Johnson (Zoning Board)

1. The meeting was called to order at 5:03 p.m.
2. Administration
    a. The Selectboard signed:
        i. Beth made a motion to sign the Accounts Payable Manifest in the amount of $43,972.68. Scott seconded. All in favor by roll call, motion carried.
        ii. Beth made a motion to sign the Payroll Manifest in the amount of $54,473.87. Scott seconded. All in favor by roll call, motion carried.
        iii. 2025 MS-1 form for the DRA.
        iv. Application for Current Use Assessment for Map 237 Lot 18 on Northwest Road.
        v. Intent to Cut Wood or Timber for Map 23 Lot 1 & 2.
        vi. Intent to Cut Wood or Timber for Map 229 Lot 2.
        vii. Interfund transfer from Building Maintenance & Construction Capital Reserve Fund to TDBank Operating A/C in the amount of $3,225.60. This is to reimburse the Town for culvert repairs. The money in this CRF is from the State and may only be used for work on bridges and culverts.
        viii. Letter to Citizens Bank to request the disbursement of interest income from the Sam Lake Trust in the amount of $11,233.87. This money will go into the Sam Lake House Capital Reserve Fund per warrant article 2025-19.
    b. Previous Minutes Approval
        i. Kal read aloud the one suggested non-grammatical change for the 8/18/25 minutes. Line 239 should be changed to specify that Beth talked to Denise Pouliot.
        ii. Scott made a motion to approve the public minutes as amended for the Selectboard meeting on August 18, 2025. Beth seconded. All in favor by roll call, motion carried.
        iii. Scott made a motion to approve the non-public minutes for the Selectboard meeting on August 18, 2025. Beth seconded. All in favor by roll call, motion carried.
3. Traffic Report
    a. See Selectboard minutes 7/21/25 section 5.a. for previous discussion.
    b. Ken received the speed data for the roads in the Center and emailed it to the Selectboard.
    c. The data shows that a majority of people are obeying the speed limit. The Town could still put up signs on the town-owned roads (Hackleboro Road and Old Tilton Road), but those were not the ones showing speed issues.
    d. The Selectboard agreed that more signs wouldn't be helpful.
    e. Ken will contact Mr. Shephard and let him know the results of the study.
4. Sign Placement Request
    a. Traci Ennis submitted a sign placement request this morning.

b. Beth explained that she has talked about signage with Ken before. She would like to have a larger conversation about the sign placement policy. This sign in particular isn't terribly concerning since it is hand lettered, but she is concerned about the preprinted ones that appear and stay up for months.
c. Ken will send the Selectboard the existing sign policy for review. They will discuss the overall issue with signs and this application in particular at the next meeting.
d. At the end of the meeting, Scott asked the Selectboard to keep an eye on the signs in the Center to see how many signs there are, how long they are up, and what they are for.

5. Boscawen Footbridge
   a. See Selectboard minute 7/21/25 section 6 for previous discussion.
   b. Luke attended a meeting of the Boscawen Economic Development Committee to discuss his footbridge idea with them. They didn't think it was a bad idea, but there currently isn't any money for it. They did think there could be better chances of getting grants if both towns apply together.
   c. Ken suggested agreeing that Luke could seek out grants for this project, but not having office staff help, since budget season has started and they are going to be busy.
   d. The Selectboard discussed the potential problems with getting Boscawen to commit to a maintenance agreement where each town pays for half of any future costs regardless of grant availability.
   e. Ken will let Luke know that the Town isn't interested in taking this project on at this time. If he finds grant money and Boscawen is on board, then the Towns can discuss further.
   f. Later in the meeting Bob Steenson expressed his doubt that this effort would succeed, recalling the difficulty there was in organizing the two towns to agree on how to just tear down the old bridge.
6. Land Acknowledgment
   a. See Selectboard minutes 8/18/25 section 9.a. for previous discussion.
   b. Beth explained that she understands the request enough now. It is a ceremonial acknowledgment and we wouldn't be unintentionally signing on to something more.
   c. Calvin asked what the requested end product is. Is Evan suggesting a plaque or statement?
   d. When asked by Beth and Calvin, neither the Conservation Commission nor the Historic District Commission had any opinions on the topic unless the Selectboard decides to install plaques in the areas they have jurisdiction over.
   e. Ken will contact Evan and ask him to either attend another meeting or send correspondence (since he is away at school) to clarify the remaining questions.
7. Budget Committee
   a. Ken reviewed the Budget Highlights (9/8/25) document and expanded on several of the items.
      i. The solar panel junction boxes at the Municipal Building caught fire and needed replacement.
      ii. The condensate pump in the Fire Station Office AC unit stopped working. There was no water sensor, so the pan under the pump overflowed and leaked on a desk. They had a contractor repair the pump, install a pan under the entire unit, and install a monitor to shut the pump down if it dies again.
      iii. The solar panels at the Sam Lake House didn't work for most of winter. When the snow melted we found out the junction box was full of water and needed replacing.
      iv. The furnace blower in the Town Hall broke. We only had to pay for labor since there is an extra furnace right next to the active one and we were able to use a part from the extra.
      v. Bartlett Tree recommended a costly watering system for the Cushman Elm in the Center. Instead of installing that, the Fire Department has been watering the tree when it is dry.

vi. Ken explained the history of the talks with Penacook Rescue Squad. There will be another meeting in 2 weeks to continue discussions about funding from the County and grants.
vii. Ken will conduct another wage study this fall to see how Canterbury compares to similar/nearby towns.
viii. Ken thanked Road Agent John O'Connor and his crew for their work on the dirt roads.
ix. The highlights document is outdated since a Transfer Station Attendant quit on Friday. We will begin looking for a new person right away.
x. The recyclables expense line is over, but the income from recyclables is also up. Both are due to processing and selling more paper and cardboard than expected.
xi. The cost per ton for waste disposal is going up from $95 to $103.50. $3.50 of that is a new surcharge added by the State to prevent trash coming in from out of state. NH municipalities will be able to get that money back quarterly by submitting invoices.
xii. A letter from Mandy going into detail about the utility assessment was distributed. Eversource will likely request an abatement, so the entire tax increase may not be realized. Kal included a $50K overlay on the MS-434 for 2025. Mandy contacted the person who did the assessment (Brian Fogg) and he said he would help us if/when the abatement request is received.
xiii. Ken has already begun shopping for health insurance in 2026. Some options include staying with SchoolCare, switching back to Health Trust (if they waive the 2-year lockout), or changing to buyouts only. The fast deadline after NHIT announced they were closing didn't leave much time to do thorough evaluations.
xiv. In 2025, the Town started offering a high deductible plan with an HSA alongside the original $0 deductible plan. 3 employees opted for the new option.
xv. Tax collection is looking very good with only $116K in back taxes owed.
xvi. Mary created a document listing additional revenue. Kal was unable to print copies so they will email it out after the meeting.
xvii. Bob Steenson suggested evaluating whether it was time to increase the price of bags at the Transfer Station.
xviii. Ken noted that there was a mistake in the document. The warrant article for the Household Hazardous Waste day was for $10,500 (not $10) and $10,491 was spent.

b. Ken reviewed the proposal from TDBank for investments (which was distributed).
   i. TDBank sent a proposal with different options for laddered CDs that would allow investing some of the money in the general fund. This was looked into previously, but never followed up on. Al Edelstein, the Treasurer, would need to sign off on this since he is responsible for disbursement of Town funds and managing investments.
   ii. Ken confirmed with TDBank that we wouldn't be penalized for having a lower balance than normal or be subject to transfer fees. Based on the balance history in the last 12 months, investing $1.5M wouldn't bring the account low enough for those to be issues.
   iii. Ken also confirmed that the difference between the ~2.8% interest in the checking account vs the ~3.8% for the CD options was worth it. 1% is considered the rule of thumb for investing. In the current account $1.5M gets $3,376 in interest per month. In a CD that same amount would earn $4,930 per month.
   iv. Bob Steenson recommended proceeding, but being sure to tie the cash on hand to the County and School District payments. Ken already sent the payment schedule to TDBank.
   v. Bob Scarponi agreed that it was a good idea.
   vi. Al asked if there was any risk involved. Ken explained that the CDs are full collateralized investments. We are guaranteed to get the money back, at worst we wouldn't earn interest.
   vii. Randi asked if there would be penalties if we needed the money back right away. Ken explained that we can invest a month at a time and we wouldn't invest more than $1.5M.

Currently our cash on hand is over $4M. It peaks twice a year when the taxes come in. In the last year the high was $4.6M and the low was $2.5M.

viii. If an emergency happened, there would still be money available immediately and all of the invested money would be returned quickly. The worst-case scenario of a building burning down would also involve insurance claims, a special Town Meeting to approve the funds, and months to begin construction.

ix. Al requested that the Budget Committee and Selectboard vote on the issue.

x. The Budget Committee did a poll and were all in favor by roll call.

xi. Scott moved to proceed with the plan to invest some of the Town's cash in CDs. Beth seconded. All in favor by roll call, motion carried.

c. Aries Engineering Report

i. The final copy of the report was received today. Some copies were printed for those in attendance, the electronic file will be emailed after the meeting.

ii. In warrant article 2025-15, the town voted to conduct a "feasibility and suitability study" for the Transfer Station. Aries Engineering was hired to do the study.

iii. Ken reviewed some of the main takeaways of the report.

1. New construction would be allowed at the site outside of the areas known to contain trash.
2. A well and septic could be installed for facilities for employees.
3. An electric compactor could be installed using single-phase power, so we wouldn't need to bring 3-phase up the hill from the Center.
4. Aries explored a variety of options including: replace the packer truck with another truck, install a compactor down by the sand pile, put a rear feed compactor where the packer trucker is, buy property and construct a new Transfer Station, contract with Casella for curbside pickup and recycling, contract with Casella for curbside pickup and use the Transfer Station just for recycling.
5. They also tried to option having Casella or WIN Waste run our Transfer Station, but both companies refused.
6. Aries estimates for curbside were based on 1 ton of waste per household and 1000 participating households. We currently don't see that much waste going through the Transfer Station. The difference is likely residents who pay a private contractor to pickup their garbage.
7. Aries did not think that moving the salt shed to the Municipal Complex was feasible, but they did show how it could be moved elsewhere on the Transfer Station property so that recyclables could be stored in that shed.
8. Aries recommended Option 2 based on the cost, but the Selectboard needs to decide which option is best for residents and financially feasible.
9. DES stated that they don't have plans to force towns to cap their landfills. The funds haven't been available for many years and they don't anticipate it becoming a priority.

iv. There was discussion about the PFAs and PFOAs that have been found in the test wells. That is a separate issue from what improvement can be/should be made to the Transfer Station. DES only cares that new construction/renovations not occur on top of landfill material. If the Town wanted to build a new structure they would dig test pits to ensure the trash wasn't more spread out than expected.

v. Stormwater runoff was handled at the site a few years ago and the drainage now channels everything to the burn pit.

vi. The group reviewed the details of some of the options in the report.

vii. There was discussion about how much material could be handled by an electric compactor and how best to transport it to the incinerator.

viii. There was discussion about the likelihood of the Wheelabrator facility shutting down. It doesn't appear to be likely anytime soon, but if it does shut down, our waste would need to be transported much further than it is now and our current packer truck wouldn't be able to make the drive.
ix. The Budget Committee will review these documents and come back to discuss with the Selectboard at a Working Session in November.

d. Randi asked about the firetruck and grant writing.
   i. Ken explained that the $400K bond is for the fire truck approved at the 2023 Town Meeting in warrant article 2. The Fire Dept. had tried for several years to get grant funding and was unsuccessful, so eventually had to rely on money from the Fire Truck Capital Reserve Fund and a bond. The truck was ordered in 2023, but it is not being delivered until June 2026. Payment is due upon receipt so there was no point in taking out the bond ahead of time. Bonds can be bought twice a year, so January 2026 is when the Town will take out the bond.
   ii. The Fire Department has a particular person they work with for writing grants and they have been successful with many. Merrimack County has someone who can help with writing non-fire related grants, but the issue is finding grants to apply for.
   iii. Randi knows someone in town who is a grant writer and has access to a database of grants. She will get in touch with them to see if they could help the Town.

e. Bob Steenson asked about revaluation. Assessor Mandy Irving is planning to do a revaluation in 2026. The equalization ratio is very off kilter right now because of rising housing costs, so a reval should be very helpful with adjusting the tax rate.

f. The School District will begin their budget process tomorrow night. No one present had heard of any big issues that could affect the tax rate. Randi Johnson and Bob Steenson will both try to join the School District's Budget Committee.

8. Old Business
   a. Vote to transfer CPCNH adder funds
      i. See Selectboard minutes 8/18/25 section 10.d. for previous discussion.
      ii. Edgar has connected with Andrew Hatch of CPCNH about getting the adder money transferred to the Town's account. First the Selectboard need to approve the transfer in a public meeting.
      iii. These funds will be deposited into the newly created Renewable Energy Capital Reserve Fund which was created by warrant article 2025-14. The funds will be available for "purchasing renewable energy systems".
      iv. Scott made a motion to direct the CPCNH to transfer $5,200 from the Canterbury Community Power discretionary reserves to the Town of Canterbury." Beth seconded. All in favor by roll call, motion carried.
      v. This transfer amount will leave a little bit of money leftover in the account as a way to guarantee payment in case a customer defaults on their bill.
   b. Magoon Purchase of Map 226 Lot 2
      i. See Selectboard minutes 7/7/25 section 3.a.v. for previous discussion.
      ii. Brian's legal representative has told him that it will cost $4-5K to quiet the title.
      iii. The Selectboard previously indicated that they would be open to reducing the accepted price for the cost of quieting. Ken has an addendum that would change the price to $115K.
      iv. If this is approved, the transaction would take place right away, but it might still be a little close to the 9/30/25 deadline. If needed, the Selectboard can make another extension at the next meeting.
      v. Scott moved to accept $115K from Brian Magoon to purchase Map 226 Lot 2 from the Town. Beth seconded. All in favor by roll call, motion carried.
      vi. Scott signed the addendum.

   c. Custodian Vacancy
      i. See Selectboard minutes 7/21/25 section 7.c. and 8/18/25 section 11 for previous discussion.
      ii. Beth and Ken interviewed the two remaining candidates and decided that Jennifer Chase would be the best fit.
      iii. The Selectboard agreed to hire Jennifer Chase in the position of custodian/janitor.

9. Veterans Tax Credit
   a. Calvin discussed a change from the State legislature (HB 99, effective 7/13/25) regarding the Veterans Tax Credits. This bill prevents claiming both the disability credit and the overseas credit at the same time, and it raises the cap for the total disability credit to $5K. There are 17 people in town who would be negatively affected by this change.
   b. Canterbury renewed approval of the two Veterans Tax Credits in 2023 with warrant articles 16 and 17.
   c. The Selectboard decided to discuss this with the Budget Committee at their next meeting.
   d. Calvin will find out what other towns are doing about this, calculate what the cost would be if we raised the credit, and provide suggested language for the warrant articles.
10. Vehicle List
   a. Beth asked why the Vehicle List wasn't reviewed during the Budget Committee discussion. Kal explained that they ran out of printer ink and weren't able to make copies in time for the meeting.
   b. Ken reviewed a few lines in the list.
   c. The water truck has failed. John would rather get a slide in water tank than a new vehicle. He and Ken are trying to find a manufacturer and get pricing.
   d. The highlighted pick-up truck is also out of service and not repairable. It needs to be replaced.
   e. Chief Crotty would like to replace one of the cruisers that has high mileage. The cost for a hybrid cruiser with the needed signage and equipment would be $67K. There are currently 3 hybrid vehicles in the department.
11. All Boards Meeting
   a. See All Boards Meeting minutes 9/4/25 for previous discussion.
   b. The Selectboard discussed whether it would be useful to have the board Chairs meet like this quarterly.
   c. Scott was reluctant to schedule another mandatory meeting without assurance the time spent would have real value.
   d. Beth suggested trying to make the event more social to encourage participation.
   e. Calvin thought at least the land use board chairs should meet twice a year to discuss zoning changes.
   f. Ken will poll the Chairs to see if they agree that a meeting would be useful. It could be mandatory(ish) for the land use Chairs and optional for the rest.
12. Event Sign in the Center
   a. See Selectboard minutes 8/4/25 section 5 and 8/18/25 section 10.e.ii. for previous discussion.
   b. Calvin and Kevin Bragg discussed this idea with the Historic District Commission. They think they have found a good location, but need to write up a formal proposal that solidifies the intent, who would be responsible for updating the sign, and a design.
   c. The location they are looking at is the existing Elkins Memorial Building sign. That could be combined with an informational sign below it. It wouldn't be lit, but since it is already below a street light, it would still be visible at night.
   d. There is a lot that still needs to be worked out, but it has promise.
13. Scott made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:25 p.m. Beth seconded. All in favor by roll call, motion carried.

Minutes submitted by Kal McKay, Administrative Assistant