

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN**  
**Minutes of February 23, 2015**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Vice-Chairman Al Letizio called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM. Selectmen Bruce Breton and Roger Hohenberger were present; as was Town Administrator David Sullivan. Chairman Ross McLeod and Selectman Joel Desilets were excused. Mr. Letizio opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS/LIAISON REPORTS:** Mr. Breton noted there was legislation pending in the form of SB113 that would restore revenue sharing to communities; which had been discontinued in 2008. He asked that Mr. Sullivan send the last available numbers to the Board. Mr. Sullivan replied in the affirmative and brief discussion ensued in that the Town used to receive approximately \$90-100,000 annually.

*Mr. Letizio* announced that the Regional Economic Development Committee (REDC) and the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Steering Committee would be conducting a series of visioning sessions to gather public and municipal input on the goals, opportunities, and weaknesses of our region. The information gathered will then be used to update the goals and objectives of the CEDS. The Tuscan Kitchen in Salem will host such a session on March 17 at 5:00 PM.

*Community Development Director Laura Scott* reminded all that a free business event has been scheduled at the Village Green on February 26 from 5:30 to 7:00 PM. She asked that anyone planning to attend who had yet to RSVP please do so; adding that refreshments will be provided by Butterfield Hill Bakery.

*Ms. Scott* then noted that a new marketing packet had been compiled, with the donated efforts of 36Creative. Copies are available online at Windham-NH.com, or in the Community Development Office. She noted the materials will also be mailed to the State and various other agencies.

**NATIONAL GRID PRESENTATION:** Ms. Jessica Farrell, Lead Engineer for the Merrimack Valley Reliability Project, approached noting several other team members were also in attendance. She opened the presentation by clarifying that representatives were present strictly from the electricity side; and that they would like to stick to that topic. Ms. Farrell then confirmed that National Grid has signed on as a customer for the Kinder-Morgan gas line. Discussion ensued regarding increased rates with Eversource, and that by signing on with Kinder-Morgan National Grid will accept gas for distribution if the pipeline is built.

Ms. Farrell then conducted a lengthy presentation outlining the MVR Project; highlights of which included:

- The project will entail installation of a new, overhead 345-kV line
- Overall, the project involves a \$123M investment; \$82M in NH and \$41M in MA
- There will be 24.6 miles of new line; 18.1 miles in NH and 6.5 miles in MA
- The project serves to maintain reliable electric service
- The additional structures will provide approximately \$235,800 in tax revenues annually to Windham
- The project will present construction job opportunities in MA & NH; with minimal community impact
- All work will be completed in the existing utility right of way, with no additional land required
- Approximately 2.12 miles of work will be undertaken in Windham to perform the following:
  - Relocate approximately 23 existing structures
  - Add approximately 22 new structures with an average height of 80'-85'; similar to tallest existing structures
- National Grid will undertake proactive community outreach involving key stakeholders such as the local, state and federal elected officials and regulators; property owners and tenants; business and community groups; and community leaders.

- They will also ensure a two-way information exchange including briefings and presentations; one-on-one meetings; public community meetings; maintaining a project website; email updates; a toll-free project hotline; news releases and/or media advisories; customer letters and mailings, and; door to door outreach
- The project engineering and permitting process, which began in November is ongoing. National Grid will file for Federal permits in early spring, and file for NH SEC in late spring.
- Construction would start in 2016 and the new lines would be in service by 2017.

Mr. Hohenberger inquired whether there was any increased danger of cancers with the increased voltage. Ms. Farrell replied there is no conclusive link between cancer and EMP fields; and that National Grid is conducting an analysis now for any impacts from the increased EMP field. She noted the results of same will be posted when available; and a discussion ensued regarding the website.

Mr. Homer Shannon, Autumn Street, sought clarification of the height of the existing towers; which Ms. Farrell noted was approximately 65'-70'.

Ms. Eileen Mashimo, Netherwood Road, approached to inquire what part of this project will fix Windham's power interruption issues; and Ms. Farrell replied none. Ms. Mashimo then went on to express concerns regarding the current circuit serving most of Windham, the high number of outages the Town experiences, and the duration of same. She indicated she did not believe it was reasonable to subject residents to the proposed project without solving the existing power problems in Windham.

Mr. Mark Kovacs, Local Energy Committee Chair, approached seeking clarification as to why energy costs would be higher without the project; and Ms. Farrell noted it would be due to congestion as the electricity will not flow as easily to where it is needed. Discussion ensued.

Mr. Kovacs then sought clarification that the approval for the project will come at the State and Federal levels, with no Town say; and Attorney Mark Riley from National Grid replied in the affirmative. Mr. Kovacs then inquired, as it pertained to relocating the existing towers, whether any means to maintain the existing boundary between them and the abutting properties had been considered. Ms. Farrell noted they had gone through an intense engineering process to both relocate the towers while maintaining the separation and meeting codes. Discussion ensued, and Mr. Breton noted that Windham's zoning requires a 30' separation, to which he hoped National Grid would adhere. Ms. Scott approached to clarify that this does not involve a property line as National Grid has an easement, however, she is checking into whether a Watershed Permit is needed. She went on to note that the project involves only new poles, with no new buildings; adding that the easements have been in place and abutting owners were aware as such. Discussion ensued as to the time National Grid has spent toward optimizing use of the right of way.

Mr. Breton sought clarification as to how residents weigh in on the project. Atty. Riley replied that, prior to the formal process, National Grid will have open meetings and during the actual process a certain number of meetings are required. He noted that anyone who was so inclined can submit a motion to intervene, and Mr. Kovacs inquired whether doing so would provide access to all project documents. Atty. Riley noted that all documents are already available.

Mr. Wayne Morris, Jordan Road, approached inquiring whether there was any coordination between this and the Kinder-Morgan project and whether moving of the existing towers to the West meant that the Kinder-Morgan project would go to the East. Ms. Farrell indicated that she could not speak to the pipeline project, but that National Grid would coordinate with Kinder-Morgan. Mr. Morris noted he would hope both companies would coordinate to minimize impacts to the wetlands. Discussion ensued in that there are recommended distances between pipelines and power lines.

Mr. Kovacs sought clarification as to whether there was currently an agreement between Kinder-Morgan and National Grid regarding use of the easement. Ms. Farrell replied in the negative, adding that the pipeline will not actually be in the electric corridor. Mr. Shannon approached and added that Kinder-Morgan has been very clear that the pipeline will not be installed within the electrical right of way but they have not given a clear answer, as yet, as to how far outside it will be. He added that Kinder-Morgan is still evaluating the location, and it is not known yet whether it will be to the east or west.

Mr. Letizio inquired, as it pertained to Ms. Mashimo's concerns, whether outages in Town are related to the transmission lines. Ms. Farrell indicated they were not; rather they were related to the distribution feeders and the new lines will not fix that. Ms. Mashimo approached and reiterated that issues with the grid are constant; adding that the system needs a full overhaul and additional circuits.

Atty. Riley clarified that National Grid does not own those poles or wires, and thus cannot fix the issues Ms. Mashimo is citing. He also noted that PSNH/Eversource owns the distribution to the homes and thus is responsible to handle outages. Discussion ensued in that the MVR project is a joint project with PSNH/Eversource.

Representative Charlie McMahon approached and noted that, as this comes under the Public Utilities Commission, the parties should endeavor to vet out a solution at National Grid's upcoming meeting in March. Discussion ensued, and Atty. Riley reiterated that National Grid has no ability to fix the distribution issues. Mr. Letizio inquired how changes can be effectuated in the distribution, and a discussion ensued in which it was noted that the Town could go to PSNH/Eversource directly or to the PUC.

Further discussion ensued as to whether others should be invited to the March meeting. Ms. Shannon Baxevanis, National Grid Stakeholder Relations, approached and advised that the purpose of the March meeting is to engage the community and so they may learn more about this project. She indicated she would recommend a separate forum be held for other issues in order to not detract from the MVR project. Representative McMahon noted he was not suggesting competing presentations, but one after another. Ms. Baxevanis explained that National Grid would be setting up trade-show style, with various booths for engineering questions, etc., so that residents may get one on one responses. Discussion ensued.

Mr. Breton suggested that National Grid issue a series of articles about the project, which Ms. Scott can assist in publishing. Ms. Scott approached noting that she would advise PSNH/Eversource of the Town's concerns; adding that she agreed the project discussions should not be mixed.

Mr. Letizio then inquired whether the Board wished to take any action on the presentation. Discussion ensued, and it was the consensus that the information be posted on the Town website in a similar fashion as the Kinder-Morgan project. Mr. Letizio then sought the members' input relative to the distribution issues raised by Ms. Mashimo. Ms. Scott confirmed that she will advise PSNH/Eversource, and Mr. Letizio suggested that the LEC be asked to vet out some comparative outage information between Windham and other towns. Mr. Breton noted that a comprehensive study had been done regarding outages in Windham, and Mr. Sullivan advised he will provide same to the LEC.

Mr. Shannon approached and noted that, until 5 or 6 years ago when his area of Town had been switched to Liberty, he had experienced the same issues with outages. He noted that Liberty had done much work and now, when most of Windham was out, he had power. Mr. Sullivan noted that PSNH/Eversource had undertaken much work after completion of the aforementioned study, and that they could be invited in to a meeting to update the Board. He noted that Liberty is a very small player in Town, with PSNH/Eversource having 98% of the service.

Discussion ensued, and it was the consensus of the Board that Mr. Sullivan invite PSNH/Eversource to attend an upcoming meeting; and an invitation was extended to Ms. Mashimo to present her concerns again at that time. Further, brief discussion ensued, however no further action was taken.

**OLD/NEW BUSINESS:** Mr. Morris, Conservation Chairman, approached to express concerns regarding proposed legislation (Senate Bill 83), which would prevent Conservation Commissions from entering onto any publicly-owned lands not purchased by them. He indicated that he spoken to Senator Birdsell regarding his concerns, and that the proposed bill relates to a specific issue which occurred in Milford. Mr. Morris advised that the New Hampshire Municipal Association opposes the bill, as well, and requested that the Board forward a letter to the Senator asking that she vote in opposition to same.

Mr. Breton noted that, prior to sending such a letter, the Board should see the full bill. Discussion ensued in that the language being added relates to restrictions on public property and that, despite being specific to Milford, it impacts 239 communities in the State.

Mr. Sullivan noted that the proposed bill was also amended at the hearing, to allow the Commissions access provided they provide 30-days advance notice. Mr. Breton suggested that Representative Griffin, who was in attendance, be asked to look into this further. Representative Griffin concurred.

After further discussion, Mr. Hohenberger moved that a letter be sent to Senator Birdsell requesting that she not support SB83. Mr. Breton reiterated that he would like to see the back-up data and a legal opinion regarding same, and a further discussion ensued regarding the bill and that if it were amended it would give Commissions less rights than the general public.

Mr. Breton then seconded the motion for discussion, which ensued regarding the number of communities who had submitted similar letters in opposition. Mr. Letizio noted he believed sending a letter as requested shows a confidence in the Conservation Commission. Motion passed 3-0.

*Mr. Breton* updated the Board on the revenue sharing and the Casino Bill; adding that the latter would provide for neighboring communities to receive a percentage of the revenue. Brief discussion ensued.

*Mr. Sullivan* advised that an error had been made at the last meeting relative to the Historic District/Heritage Commission appointment; in that there was an Alternate available to move up. Mr. Breton moved and Mr. Hohenberger seconded to reconsider the motion to appoint Ms. Joan Normington as a regular member. Passed 3-0.

Mr. Breton then moved and Mr. Hohenberger seconded to move Ms. Wendy Williams from Alternate to Regular, and to appoint Ms. Normington as an Alternate. Passed 3-0.

Discussion then ensued regarding the various historic groups, and how to collaborate their efforts. Mr. Letizio indicated he would like this to be scheduled as an agenda item. Further discussion ensued as to the divergence/overlap of the groups' efforts, and the recently established 275<sup>th</sup> anniversary committee. Mr. Sullivan indicated that he would have the Historic District Commission in to update the Board on the latter.

Lengthy, further discussion ensued regarding streamlining of the efforts, the differences between the groups, and website availability of information. Ms. Scott approached and noted the HDC's information is available online; adding that this group is very distinct in that they serve as a land use Board. After further discussion, no decisions were made. Mr. Sullivan will arrange this to be a future agenda item.

*Mr. Sullivan* advised that there had a minor accident between a Town cruiser and Engine at a recent emergency scene. Also, a plow had clipped a vehicle parked on a roadway; estimated damage was \$2,500. Brief discussion ensued.

*Mr. Breton* advised he had received a complaint regarding the emergency exit in the building; and that the maintenance pickup needs to be moved to the Highway Garage rather than being parked within 2-3' of the stairway. Mr. Sullivan noted that the required distance is 4', and that the vehicle in question is a diesel that must be plugged in. Discussion ensued, and Mr. Breton noted that the Highway garage yard is gated, and reiterated the truck should be parked there. Further, brief discussion ensued.

*Mr. Shannon* approached to inquire whether there was any update on the follow-up Kinder-Morgan meeting. Mr. Sullivan advised that the Board wished to hold the meeting at the High School due to the anticipated attendance; and that the auditorium had been booked for March 30<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 PM. He noted that the Kinder-Morgan project would be the only agenda item, and that representatives of the company had been invited along with our State and Congressional delegation. Brief discussion ensued.

**CORRESPONDENCE/MINUTES:** None.

*Mr. Breton* moved Mr. Hohenberger seconded to adjourn. Passed 3-0. Meeting was adjourned at 8:50 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Wendi Devlin, Administrative Assistant

*Note: These minutes are in draft form and have not been submitted to the Board for approval.*