

**Board of Selectmen
Regular Meeting Minutes
Monday, March 4, 2024**

Members

Beth Cacciotti, Chair
William Baldwin, Vice Chair

David Paquette
Robert Worden
Gregory Spero

Others Present

John Apple, Town Administrator
Paul Wainwright, Chair, Conservation
Commission
Sue Killam, Chair, Planning Board
Sue Coppeta, Planning and Zoning
Administrator
Duane Hyde, SELT

6:00 PM Open Public Meeting:

Chair Cacciotti opened the March 4, 2024 public meeting of the Atkinson Board of Selectmen at 6:00 PM.

➤ Pledge of Allegiance

Mr. Paul Wainwright led the Pledge of Allegiance.

➤ Attendance

Selectman Spero, Selectman Worden, Vice Chair Baldwin, Selectman Paquette and Chair Cacciotti are present.

Appearances:

➤ Planning and Zoning State Legislature Update- Sue Killam, Planning Chair

Chair Killam informed the Select Board that it is important to discuss where Atkinson is and how these new legislations get done and why. She would also like to discuss the role of the Planning Board and some unique situations in Atkinson.

The challenge being discussed in Concord for a couple of years is not enough housing to accommodate the workforce that the State would like to have. The issue is housing in general but particularly what is called inclusionary housing or workforce housing that can be targeted towards low income people but also anyone that is shopping for a house or an apartment. This year the legislature has been discussing changes, adjustments and enhancements to State law that might help move things in the direction of being able to create more housing.

Chair Killam explained that once a legislative initiative is on the docket and being discussed in Concord, it does not always go anywhere. This is very early in the process. She does not wish to discuss the status of any bills because they are in Committee and are likely to change, sometimes they get labeled inexpedient to legislate, go nowhere and sit on the table. In general, there are House bills and Senate bills. Chair Killam would like to give the Board a short synopsis.

House Bill 1053: has a suggestion in it about allowing conversion of commercial spaces to residential spaces. It is possible to think of it in terms of what would happen in different communities, for example, Manchester, Salem or Atkinson and the answers are very different. The Bill also includes suggestions for tax relief for converting property from commercial to residential use.

House Bill 1281: is regarding restrictions on residential rental properties and will probably not affect Atkinson very much. It may affect Hampton, Portsmouth or Seabrook. They have different issues than Atkinson.

House Bill 1483: discusses subdivisions regulations and changes that could be made to them with regard to water supply. If a community has a public water system, then it is possible to scale down to very small lot sizes, even for single family housing and not necessarily multifamily. It is possible to bring water to them from elsewhere. It does not apply to a town that does not have a public water supply and is reliant upon clean water coming out of the ground for each individual home. Atkinson has a mixed situation, it has a water company that serves less than half of the residences and serves just land that has already been used up.

House Bill 1399: will allow 2 residences per lot in some zones.

House Bill 1291: will allow accessory dwelling units (“ADU’s”) as a right. At present, an accessory dwelling unit in Atkinson and still in the State must apply for a conditional use permit with the Planning Board. There is a process, the Board looks at the septic to make sure that it can accommodate an extra set of people living on the property. Up until now, accessory dwelling units were also limited by size. If the House decides to allow ADUs by right, then a resident would just have to apply to the building inspector and he could write a permit for it. Hopefully, the same process of overview regarding the septic and water would be done.

House Bill 1635: has to do with definitions of short term rental and does not impact Atkinson very much.

Senate Bill 538: has several pieces. It is in Committee at present. It will affect zoning procedures regarding residential development. It has one section about parking requirements for additional dwellings, which probably will not impact Atkinson very much. Adjusting lot sizes related to sewer infrastructure may affect Atkinson. The part that would be the most concern would allow the governing body to adopt zoning ordinances at any point in time rather than the process used now. The process now is for the Planning Board to bring up Zoning Amendment suggestions, according to Planning Board discretion or to the Master Plan. The second way zoning comes to the

Planning Board is through citizens petition. This bill would change that to allow the Board of Selectmen to make zoning changes.

Chair Killam again stated that what specifically makes Atkinson unique is that it has never had public sewer or public water and it has never been the intention of the community to invest in public sewer or public water. This opinion is something that has come up frequently especially during master plan reviews going as far back as the 1970's and 1980's. The citizens have always stated that they own a lot of land and do not want to invest in these infrastructures. If the Town was required to invest in them, it would no longer be a question of choice, the State would force the Town to build it. It would be expensive; there would have to be a place to put these infrastructures; they would have to be built and then operated. It would take many millions of dollars of investment and continuing expense to have a sewer system. This has never been desired by the residents of Atkinson and the Planning Board has never brought it forward. Similarly, with a water company, if one were desired. A water company would have to be created, there would have to be a source of water and water lines would have to be run throughout the Town. There has been an issue with questionable water in Atkinson, so a source would have to be determined. These are two hefty barriers to changing residential density and adding residential units, single family or multifamily.

Chair Killam then stated that the third barrier in Atkinson is limited land availability. Ms. Coppeta can speak to that, she has been looking at current use parcels. Current use parcels are available land that could be developed. Chair Killam stated that she believes that there are 200-400 acres left rated in current use. There are open lands not in current use but these are small parcels and no willingness on the part of landowners to change the status of the land that they own.

The last barrier is public opinion. Working with polls, master plan focus groups and general commentary, the Planning Board believes that the citizens of Atkinson do not want to see multi-family high rises. Ms. Killam believes that the above reasons are why the Planning Board will not make the State happy by changing everything. There is little likelihood of something regarding the Board of Selectmen getting something changing that authority.

The master plan is nearly complete and is currently in review. It will be presented to the Planning Board in March. The Planning Board has a draft, but the master plan is still in the hands of the committee.

Beyond that, the Planning Board received two grants from the State last year for two reports. One is the Housing Needs Assessment. This is almost complete and the consultant will present it to the Planning Board on Wednesday. Then, the consultant will move onto the other piece, the Regulatory Audit. This will examine some of the issues Chair Killam has brought forward at this meeting together with regulations to see if they can be changed, enhanced or tweaked to provide incentives to get a developer to come forward to create housing in Atkinson. The Planning Board does not force developers to build housing if there is no profit and developing land in Atkinson is very expensive due to the price and value of land. To build inclusionary housing, have all the issues regarding water and sewer taken care of and still make a profit is very difficult.

Chair Killam asked how funding opportunities could be provided to any developers who wanted to build, found a piece of land, or had a water source and had the right soils for a septic. A septic would need to be added because there is no sewer system. A septic could not be allowed on a wet parcel.

There are a couple of provisions in the RSA's for Housing Authorities and Housing Commissions. These would be groups enacted by the voters and appointed by the Board of Selectmen to find individuals to look into financing opportunities, government funding or federal grants because a lot of money would be needed to allow further development.

Chair Killam asked for questions.

Vice Chair Baldwin asked about Senate Bill 538. He stated that it has a lot of pieces but the gist is to establish a tax relief program for office conversion to residence and to allow town governing bodies to adopt certain ordinance changes. It also adds an additional authority in zoning for lot size requirements related to sewer infrastructure. This bill is in Committee at present and Vice Chair Baldwin asked when it will come out of Committee. Ms. Killam replied that she checked on March 1, 2024 and it was still in Committee. As a resident of Atkinson, Vice Chair Baldwin is very worried about this bill because the State is trying to change the dynamics of the community. Chair Killam responded that she is aware that this is a concern. Vice Chair Baldwin stated that each community should be allowed their right to keep things the way they are. He understands that housing is an issue, but the State should provide funding to support it, not force it on communities.

Chair Killam responded that she did not get that sense. House Bill 538 is still in Committee and still being discussed. Vice Chair Baldwin is concerned that the Committee will slip something in. Chair Killam stated that the communities the State would focus on are those that do not have the barriers Atkinson has and would want a lot of housing, for example, the larger cities like Derry and Salem. Vice Chair Baldwin is also concerned about the ordinance process. Chair Killam is also concerned but stated that the capacity of soils to hold septic is science. It is possible to spend money to build something to overcome science, but she doubts it would happen in Atkinson.

Chair Cacciotti requested any further questions regarding upcoming legislation be directed to Atkinson State Representatives and Senators because they will be voting on these issues before they come to the Town.

Chair Cacciotti closed questioning. She stated that the other reason the Board of Selectmen asked Chair Killam to appear at this meeting was to inform her that it was their honor and pleasure to dedicate the 2023 Town Report to her. Chair Cacciotti feels it is important to read part of the dedication into the minutes so that people will understand more about Ms. Killam and to let Ms. Killam know personally how much she has influenced Chair Cacciotti's efforts.

“Sue Killam’s selection for this dedication was an easy decision for me. She exemplifies the epitome of civic engagement and unwavering dedication to our community. Her tireless efforts and commitment serve as a beacon of inspiration for all who aspire to make a positive impact in our Town. After relocating to Atkinson, Sue became involved with the Atkinson Planning Board in 1997, initially serving as an alternate member.

Within a year, she assumed the roles of Vice Chair and Chair of the Master Plan Sub-Committee, leveraging her educational background, professional experience and prior involvement with planning boards to become an indispensable asset. Sue’s deep understanding of land use laws and property rights greatly enhanced the Board’s effectiveness.

In 2001, Sue was elected Chairman by her peers on the Planning Board, a position she has held continuously since then. Throughout her tenure, she has played a central role in shaping the community’s vision and development. Sue’s dedication is evident in her exhaustive research into the Town’s regulatory history and her efforts to strike a balance between accommodating growth and preserving the Town’s rural character. In addition to her role on the Planning Board, Sue has served on the Highway Safety Committee from 2012 to 2020, held the position of elected fence viewer since 2003, and been elected Cemetery Trustee since 2016.

Sue has played a vital role in orienting our new employees, ensuring that they quickly acclimate. Her willingness to offer assistance at any time coupled with her extensive knowledge makes her an indispensable resource. Moreover, her unique perspective adds invaluable depth and insight to our discussions in reaching our understanding of various issues.

In addition to her extensive civic involvement, Sue and her family have made a significant contribution to the preservation of Atkinson’s natural landscape. They donated a conservation easement to the Southeast Land Trust for a 37 acre parcel of pristine woodland. This land, featuring Hog Hill Brook flowing through it, will serve to safeguard a vital wildlife corridor along the brook. The Killam’s generosity not only enhances the Town’s environmental sustainability but also underscores their commitment to preserving Atkinson’s natural heritage for future generations. Please join me in thanking Sue for extraordinary efforts on our behalf and congratulating her on this well-deserved dedication.”

Chair Cacciotti gave Sue the first copy of the Town Report.

Selectman Spero recalls when he joined the Cemetery Trustee Committee, he called and asked Ms. Killam to update him on what was needed for the cemetery. They met at the cemetery, she took him all over it in her pickup truck and explained everything. The passion she showed and the love she showed for this community is unbelievable and he couldn’t go to anyone better than Ms. Killam. He appreciates the service she has given to this Town and she has taught everyone what they need to do.

Selectman Worden stated that when he was first elected to the Board of Selectmen, he knew nothing about the Planning Board. He met Ms. Killam at the Town Garage and she explained everything he needed to know and to do.

Vice Chair Baldwin stated that he and Ms. Killam are long acquaintances. One of the things that he so enjoys is not only her wealth of knowledge but her friendship. They can have a debate, disagree and still be friends. He thinks that people still need to go

to her and absorb the information and wealth of knowledge that she has. He appreciates her as a friend, a colleague on the Planning Board and a professional in Atkinson. He thanks her from the bottom of his heart.

Mr. Apple stated that Ms. Killam and Ms. Coppeta are a wealth of knowledge. Going to them for advice has helped in every aspect of his position and every aspect of knowing the Town.

Ms. Killam thanked everyone.

Chair Cacciotti requested to move to the Southeast Land Trust Act. Mr. Wainwright requested that Ms. Janet Stevens, District III Executive Counselor come forward.

➤ South East Land Trust Land

Selectman Worden introduced Representative Stevens to the audience. He explained that she has a large district with 166,000 people and 32 towns and cities. He recalled that in his first year as Chair of the Board of Selectmen, the first person he called was Representative Stevens every time he needed help. Representative Stevens was an enormous help in solving the Town PFAS problems. She also helped the Town get a \$50,000 grant that they nearly missed. He is personally indebted as a Selectman and he and his fellow colleagues will thank her for her assistance.

He would also like to commend the 50th Anniversary Commemoration of the Atkinson Conservation Commission. 193 acres of land has been acquired. He introduced Mr. Paul Wainwright and congratulated him on the proclamation from the Governor.

Chair Wainwright stated that the proclamation is not just for him. He has a great team of people behind him that have pulled this off.

Representative Stevens stated that it was a pleasure to be here and read the proclamation.

“The State of New Hampshire by His Excellency, Christopher Thomas Sununu, Governor Accommodation to the Atkinson Conservation Commission. Whereas, the Conservation Commission Enabling Act was passed in 1963 by the New Hampshire General Court and signed by Governor John King to become Chapter 36A of the New Hampshire Revised Statutes Annotated. And, whereas the Town of Atkinson, recognizing the vital importance of its environment voted at Town Meeting on March 5, 1974 to form a Conservation Commission pursuant to the statutes. And, whereas for the past 50 years the Atkinson Conservation Commission has served as dedicated steward of the Town’s natural resources, working tirelessly to preserve its cherished open spaces, woodlands and wetlands.

And, whereas, through their exemplary efforts, the Commission has safeguarded over 600 acres of ecologically significant land, creating a living legacy for future generations.

And, whereas, the Commission’s commitment extends beyond land protection as they strive to cultivate a deep appreciation for nature through educational programs, public

outreach initiatives and the development of accessible trails for passive recreation, allowing all residents to experience the peace and tranquility found in the embrace of nature.

And, whereas, the countless volunteer hours invested by the Commission members are a testament to the unwavering dedication to the wellbeing of Atkinson, ensuring its environmental health and enhancing its character as a desirable place to live, work and raise a family.

Now, therefore, I, representing Governor Thomas Sununu, Governor of the State of New Hampshire do hereby commend the Atkinson Conservation Commission for their profound commitment and exceptional contributions to the preservation and enrichment of the Town of Atkinson. Your unwavering dedication and passion for environmental stewardship serves as an inspiration to communities around the State and your tireless efforts have ensured a brighter future for Atkinson and its natural wonders.”

Chair Wainwright thanked Representative Stevens.

Representative Stevens followed up to say that in the early stages of the pandemic, New Hampshire had quite a bit of money going out in local federal relief funds to municipalities that was formula based and Atkinson was an outlier, they were not in the portal. Representative Stevens called the municipal office and informed the Town that that there was a quarter of a million dollars and that Atkinson had to get into the portal by a certain date. She finally connected with Selectman Worden. She explained the eligible uses of these funds. As they were talking, they began talking about PFAS. Selectman Worden informed her that children were on bottled water. They immediately called the Commissioner and DES to start the process to get funding to address PFAS matters. She knows that if she lets Selectman Worden know about any available funds, the Town will apply for it.

Mr. Wainwright stated that the Conservation Commission is towards the end of a marvelous land preservation project in Atkinson. Mr. Rick Schafer has been collecting land and building trails on it. It is the desire of his family that this land be left as open land, accessible by the public in perpetuity. This has been the dream of the Conservation Commission since before Mr. Wainwright joined in 1998. It is only recently come together with the help of the South East Land Trust.

Mr. Wainwright introduced Mr. Duane Hyde and stated Mr. Hyde would describe the South East Land Trust (“SELT”). The method the Conservation Commission is using of working with a partner organization was spelled out in the Land Conservation Plan of 2022 and is one of the most cost effective ways of conserving land. In this case, the land will be owned by SELT, it will be open to the public, and the Commission will not have to take care of it.

Mr. Hyde stated that he is the Land Conservation Director for SELT. It is a regional non-profit land conservation organization. They are based in Epping. They cover from Seabrook as far north as Wakefield and west as far as Salem. They cover 52 towns, a significant area of the State and a significant population. To date, they have conserved around 25,000 acres of land. SELT owns and manages around 11,000 acres. Some

places are for people to go for hiking and recreation and others are purely for wildlife. The Land Trust has about 17 people on staff and are hiring. Their staff includes a full time trail manager that manages their trails and works with volunteers who work with local communities. SELT also has a forester who is focused on wildlife management and forest management. Mr. Hyde is responsible for land acquisition, working with landowners and conservation commissions. It is a pleasure to work on a project like this in a community like this. This is his third project in Atkinson.

➤ Acquisition Overview- Paul Wainwright, Conservation Chair

This is the second project where the Conservation Commission has partnered with SELT. The first project was the land donation by Sue Killam and her family.

Mr. Wainwright requested the map of the proposed land acquisition be put on the screen and reviewed it for the Board of Selectmen. From Route 111 in the area by Freshwater Farms south to Oakridge Lane Road is all open space and all owned by Mr. Rick Schafer and his family. There are already many existing trails on the land. They are done with pressed stone and are very walkable. They have not washed out with the rain. The land is being donated to SELT.

Mr. Wainwright explained that the reason funding is required is because of due diligence, a survey and title search. Then there are environmental issues, such as hazardous searches. So far nothing has been found. Also, very frequently, a wildlife expert will do an inventory of the land to know what is there from an environmental point of view. There are many administrative things. In addition, in order to take care of the land in perpetuity, there is an endowment, SELT will work off the interest of the endowment so they can afford to care for the land. There is a formula to work the funds out for this project and that is where the figure of \$187, 000 comes from. The method the Conservation Commission is proposing to fund this comes partly from State law adopted in 2021 that enables the Town to fund directly from the Conservation Fund to a Qualified Organization by IRS definition. The Commission is proposing to spend the Conservation Fund to fund this acquisition.

There will be a public hearing on March 14, 2024. A much more detailed presentation will be made then. He wanted to make sure the Board of Selectmen is aware of what the Conservation Commission is doing and hopes that they are agreeable.

Mr. Hyde added that Mr. Wainwright did a great job of overviewing the costs. He said that there are also costs for infrastructure improvements. There are wonderful recreational trails, about 2.4 miles. SELT would like to set up a parking area for 2-4 cars with a map and a kiosk so people can safely use the property. SELT is planning to close on the project in June or July. The stewardship staff is already getting ready to complete the improvements and working on the trail signs. They will try to preserve some of the old trail names and signs.

Mr. Hyde explained that SELT is a membership based organization and people make donations to them. They also get private grants from foundations and corporations. They also get funding from State and Federal grant programs.

There will be a SELT sign on the property. SELT will work with the Town regarding parking. Chair Wainwright has offered to be in the interface. He is concerned that parking be in view of the street so as not to create a teenage hangout. There will be some additional traffic to the neighborhood. The neighbors have been notified regarding the public hearing next week. He explained that this is one of the least impactful things that could happen to the neighborhood.

Mr. Wainwright explained that there is also frontage at the end of Commerce Way but it is not easy to navigate. There is a piece with frontage on Kip Cam Road as well but Mr. Wainwright does not believe it is passable anymore. In addition, there has always been access for the neighbors through Mr. Schafer's yard to the covered bridge. The Conservation Commission will request the Schafer family grant an access easement to SELT for the neighbors to legally access the land when the home is sold as residential property.

There was no more discussion. Chair Wainwright invited everyone to the public hearing on March 14, 2024 at 7:00 PM. There is a site walk Saturday for SELT. The Town site walk will be at 1:00 PM on Sunday rain or shine. It will be posted on Facebook. The legal notice for the hearing, including the walk is on the Town website.

Chair Cacciotti requested to move to new business.

New Business:

- Police Officer Resignation

Chair Cacciotti requested Mr. Apple speak. He explained that there is a letter from Officer Eric McDonald regretfully turning in his resignation with the police department. Since then, he has filled out an exit interview form.

Vice Chair Baldwin made a motion to accept the resignation of Officer Eric McDonald from the Atkinson Police Department with great regret and send him a letter thanking him for his services. Selectman Spero seconded the motion.

Vote: 5/0/0. All in favor.

- Fire Department Hire – not discussed.

Chair Cacciotti requested the Board turn to old business.

Old Business:

- Policy Review

Chair Cacciotti requested Mr. Apple speak.

- Wage Scale and Pay Policy

Mr. Apple requested this be tabled because he needs more time. Vice Chair Baldwin agreed and requested the Board discuss the next item.

- Title VI Notice of Non-Discrimination

This is a new policy. Mr. Apple explained that recently the Town was pursuing a grant through the Federal Transportation Authority and New Hampshire Department of Transportation. Since this is a federally funded program a policy and procedure must be in place with regard to equal opportunity and non-discrimination, Title VI within Federal law pertaining to discrimination.

The first draft distributed by Primex is in the packet. It was reviewed by the Town Attorney. Mr. Apple explained that what is before the Board is a preliminary statement, more of a procedure is needed than what is in the current draft. Many towns have this in place in order to apply for Federal funding, but they have an entire procedure including a form that is clearly laid out. Mr. Apple gave the program manager of this grant program more information and they realize now that seeking Federal funding is a big task for municipalities. The agency can give more time for approval and approval can be contingent upon something being established. This would be very helpful for the Town since this is new to them. The agency has sent some more forms and templates for the Town to review. He is presenting the first draft for the Board to look at and give feedback. The policy would be posted on the website so people would be aware that Atkinson has Federally funded programs and that Atkinson prohibits discrimination to anyone within the operation of the Town.

Mr. Apple explained that there is something in Town policies for staff to follow. He thought it would suffice but there is no statement and process laid out for the general public. This could be incorporated and updated in employee policy. The policy is needed for a transportation program offered by the Town. The customer could file suit with the Town saying they were discriminated against if a Town employee refused to pick them up. A process would have to be gone through.

Chair Cacciotti asked if this would be putting the Town in a position of liability in exchange for a handicap van. Mr. Apple agreed for this particular situation, if there were more Federally funded opportunities for the Town this would still need to be in place. This is a lot of work, but it sets the Town up for future Federally funded programs. Vice Chair Baldwin stated a lawsuit could be incurred, even without it. Mr. Apple stated that this gives some procedures and structure in the case of a lawsuit. He is asking for permission to go forward and develop some policies and procedures or else table it. A more robust process for filing a complaint is needed. There are forms with specific language as pertains to Title VI that need to be filed out.

Mr. Apple explained that there would have to be Federal or State recognized disability. The Board discussed whether someone could sue the Town through the State or

Federal government. Mr. Apple stated that the State is the subrecipient of the Federal funds in this case. The Town is working through the State but Mr. Apple believes it is a mandate from the Federal government that a policy has to be in place.

The Board discussed Federal and State definitions for disabilities and how they would apply. Vice Chair Baldwin stated that the State can take the definition of disabilities from the Federal government and make it more restrictive. Chair Cacciotti questioned whether the Town should go by Federal guidelines because they are broader.

The Board gave its assent to allow Mr. Apple to move forward with developing policies and procedures regarding Title VI non-discrimination in order to apply for Federal funding.

Chair Cacciotti requested the Board move to assessing.

Assessing:

➤ 2024 Veterans Tax Credit

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|--------------------|-------------|
| ○ Map 11 Lot 3-11 | Grant \$750 |
| ○ Map 17 Lot 86-33 | Grant \$750 |
| ○ Map 23 Lot 18 | Grant \$750 |

Selectman Spero made a motion to approve Veteran's tax credits to Map 3, Lot 3-11, grant for \$750, Map 17 Lot 86-33, grant for \$750 and Map 23 Lot 18, grant for \$750. The motion was seconded by Selectman Worden. Vote: 4/0/0. All present in favor.

Vice Chair Baldwin requested the Board turn to the Elderly Exemption.

➤ 2024 Elderly Exemption

- | | |
|---------------------|---------------------|
| ○ Map 10, Lot 7-69B | Grant for \$300,000 |
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Selectman Spero made a motion to approve the 2024 Elderly Exemption to Map 10, Lot 7-69B, in the amount of \$300,000. The motion was seconded by Selectman Worden. Vote: 4/0/0. All present in favor.

Vice Chair Baldwin requested the Board turn to donations.

Donations:

➤ Elder Services Transportation Fund - \$160.00

Selectman Spero made a motion to accept donations for the Elder Services Transportation Fund in the amount of \$160.00 and thanked everyone for their contributions. Selectman Worden seconded the motion. Vote: 4/0/0. All present in favor.

The Board turned to liaison reports.

Liaison Reports:

Chair Cacciotti asked for reports. Mr. Worden stated that the Conservation Commission appeared earlier and he had nothing more to report. Selectman Paquette had nothing to report.

Department of Public Works: Chair Cacciotti reported that there has been no snow. She thanked the DPW Director, Matt Sullivan, for using his judgment and not giving plow contractors a guaranteed minimum amount. This saved the Town hundreds of thousands of dollars. Any snow was handled internally by DPW employees and they did an excellent job.

Police Station Steering Committee: Vice Chair Baldwin reported that there was an open house on Saturday. Committee members attended and gave attendees the facts on the new police station, its location and how the concept of the police station came about. All agreed that a new police station is needed and that people are aware of it. The committee members helped clarify information regarding the tax impact. It would depend on the value of the home and could be between \$10 - \$30 per month. Vice Chair Baldwin believes the new police station is a necessity, the Town needs a good police station and a great police force. Vice Chair Baldwin invited people to come to Town Hall, there are poster boards and brochures in the lobby explaining the need. There is also the Atkinson Police Department existing facility evaluation for people to look at.

The Steering Committee members are still meeting and available for questions. There will be a meeting Thursday at 6:00 PM at Town Hall and it will be televised.

Chair Cacciotti stated that she attended the meeting last Thursday and she got a lot of answers to her questions about the new facility. She also had a chance to listen in on some of the questions other people had. She is concerned that people think the Town has offered alternatives to the police station proposed by the Steering Committee. She stated the Warrant Article to purchase the house across the street from Town Hall was not proposed by the Town. The Town has never had a conversation with the property owner. Chair Cacciotti is also concerned about incorrect information about the new police station being posted on social media and stated that residents should rely on information presented by the Town. She thanked the members of the steering committee and stated that they are having to spend a great deal of time refuting the information posted on social media.

Chair Cacciotti requested the Board move to approval of minutes.

Approval of Minutes:

February 26, 2024 Regular Meeting Minutes

Selectman Worden had the following corrections:

- Line 44 – Ms. Kari Bodycote swore in the members
- Line 72 – should state that they have received money in 2024 from the New Hampshire Casino Society and will be eligible in 2025
- Line 121-122 – Selectman Ex-Officio
- Line 145 – Carriage Towne News
- Line 224 – ability to bid on quality and value

Selectman Paquette made the following corrections:

- Line 138 – was a 4/0/0 vote with Vice Chair Baldwin recused.
- Line 406 – omnibus should be Homenibus
- Line 447 – move to line 458

Selectman Worden made a motion to accept the regular meeting minutes of Monday, February 26, 2024 as amended. The motion was seconded by Vice Chair Baldwin. Vote: 5/0/0. All in favor.

February 26, 2024 Non-Public Meeting Minutes – Topic One

Vice Chair Baldwin made a motion to seal the non-public meeting minutes - Topic One, for February 26, 2024 for 30 days. Selectman Worden seconded the motion. Vote: 5/0/0. All in favor.

February 26, 2024 Non-Public Meeting Minutes – Topic Two

Vice Chair Baldwin made a motion to seal the non-public meeting minutes for February 26, 2024 – Topic Two for ten years. Selectman Spero seconded the motion. Vote: 5/0/0. All in favor.

Chair Cacciotti requested to read something for the Board and the public.

“Ladies and Gentlemen:

As I sit before you tonight I am filled with a mix of emotions. It is with a sense of pride, gratitude and a touch of nostalgia that I address you for my last meeting as Chairman of the Atkinson Board of Selectmen. Serving as Chairman has been an immense honor and a privilege. Over these last three years we have faced challenges, celebrated successes and worked tirelessly to better our community. Through it all this Board’s unwavering support and dedication have been the driving force behind our achievements. Together we have tackled issues big and small, always with the best interests of Atkinson at heart. Whether it was advocating for infrastructure improvements, supporting local

organizations or enhancing public services, our collective efforts have made a tangible difference in the lives of our residents. I have every faith that the Board of Selectmen will continue to lead with integrity, passion and a commitment to excellence.

I want to express my deepest gratitude to my fellow selectmen, town officials, staff, volunteers and most importantly, the residents of Atkinson. Your dedication to our community is what makes it truly special and I am forever grateful for the opportunity to have served alongside you. Atkinson is a remarkable town and I have no doubt that its brightest days lie ahead. Thank you for your trust, your support and your friendship. To my Board, it has been an honor to serve as your chairman.

Selectman Spero would also like to thank the Board and the residents. He has served for six years, this is his second term. It has been an unbelievable pleasure to serve with his colleagues, connect with the residents, to work with the Fire Department, the Kimball Library, the Cemetery Trustees. The Board has accomplished so much in the past six years. All town administration, the board members, department heads and staff, present and previous, have been wonderful to work with. He feels privileged to finish his second term. It is a lot of work but it is very gratifying. He would like to thank everyone, and thank the Board members for being so great to work with.

Selectman Worden congratulated Selectman Spero for his service to the community and Chair Cacciotti for her outstanding job chairing the Board. It is a hard job. Atkinson has an excellent board and it is well supported by Mr. Apple who has done a spectacular job as Town Administrator. He wishes all the candidates good luck in the election.

FYI: Town Election will be held on Tuesday, March 12, 2024 at the Atkinson Community Center located at 4 Main Street. The polls will be open from 7:00 AM to 8:00 PM.

Future Agenda: The Next Board of Selectmen Meeting will be held on Monday, March 18, 2024, at 6:00 PM.