

Atkinson Conservation Commission Minutes
Wednesday, October 25, 2023, 7:00 PM
Atkinson Town Hall

Approved November 29, 2023

Members Present:

Paul Wainwright, Chair
Bill Steele, Vice Chair
John Fournier, Secretary
Scott Kukshtel
Suzie Newman
Jeff Nenart
Charlie Pitts, Alternate
Sandy Cannon, Alternate

Others Present:

Bob Worden, Selectman Liaison

1. Call to Order, and Attendance:

Chair Paul Wainwright called the meeting to order in person at Atkinson Town Hall at 7:00PM on Wednesday, October 25, 2023. Chair Wainwright took attendance and noted that all members are present except for Member Chretien, Alternate Member Pitts will be voting in her stead.

2. Review & Approval of Minutes

a. September 27th, 2023

Discussion: Chair Wainwright stated that, upon arrival this evening, Member Fournier said had a section of the September minutes that he would basically like to rewrite, and Chair Wainwright asked that Member Fournier email the changes to him, and that approval of the September minutes would be deferred until next month.

3. 2023 Expenditures Report and Projected Expenditures Discussion

Chair Wainwright discussed the current 2023 Operating Budget Report (see attached), and stated that the Commission has spent \$5,953.82 to date, which leaves just under \$4,000.00 remaining in the 2023 Operating Budget. Chair Wainwright continued that the following recent expenses have been paid: Recording Clerk, the Northeast Conservation Services to finish the land management plan for Debbie Lang's land, the annual dues to the New Hampshire Association of Conservation Commissions, and five registrations for the NHACC Annual Conference.

Chair Wainwright distributed the current plan (see attached) for how the remaining 2023 funds might be spent. Chair Wainwright asked the Commission if they could think of any other items worth spending money on this year; Member Cannon mentioned the reimbursement for the turtle sign covers which amounted to approximately \$40.00; Chair Wainwright asked Member Cannon to bring in the receipts.

Chair Wainwright reported that we will make final decisions about 2023 spending when we meet in November.

4. Accessible Trail on Slade Town Forest – Progress Report – John

Member Fournier stated that the working team successfully adhered to the NH Fish & Game guidelines by not putting any machines on the trails until after October 15th. Member Fournier continued that there was a big work day on September 30th in which they were cutting smaller trees and dragging brush. Member Fournier continued that over the next two weeks, he and Ted Stewart did some more work cutting trees and getting the area prepared for the equipment work. Member Fournier stated that he will need to write a change order because the Highway Department allowed him to repurpose blasted stone from a cleaned-out swale which will save thousands of dollars. Member Fournier continued that the parking lot portion of the project is a bit over budget but it should not be an issue.

Member Fournier stated that Ted Stewart was able to work for three full days in the woods before he left for his vacation. Member Fournier continued that Ted Stewart will be back at the beginning of November and will be able to resume work with equipment; the volunteer efforts are continuing with the hand-tool work in the meantime. Chair Wainwright asked if the trail will be finished before the winter, Member Fournier stated that there is a good chance – weather permitting. Member Fournier began to break down the costs of the project thus far; Chair Wainwright suggested keeping a spreadsheet of all costs throughout the project to be able to ascertain what was spent on materials versus labor. Chair Wainwright also suggested sending a status update to all donors so they can see their donations at work. Member Fournier liked this idea but was hesitant to publicize anything else while the construction is active and ongoing.

The Commission discussed volunteerism resources that can be utilized for the remaining hand-tool work. The Commission had a brief discussion around potential grant funding resources that can be targeted for Phase 2 funding.

5. Marshall and Stickney Trails Report – Charlie, Sandy, Chris, Bill

Member Cannon stated that all trails in Stickney are now marked and all trails in Marshall have been marked with the exception of the new green trail. Member Cannon continued that the mountain bikers have been working on the trails on

the other side of Hemlock, and this work is now complete; Kevin Arling mentioned that they could begin working on the Town-owned side within the next few weeks. Chair Wainwright stated that the Commission is likely done painting for the season but other trail repairs can be discussed even if not necessarily completed immediately. Chair Wainwright continued that there may be some trail work to do on the Crown Hill section.

Chair Wainwright stated that there is some trail work to be done on the Carolyn-Orr land, as well as a few abandoned tree-stands that should be removed. Chair Wainwright stated that he placed notes on each of the tree stands last year and the notes are still there so it is safe to assume they are abandoned. Chair Wainwright continued that since the tree-stands are on Town-owned property, the Commission is well within their rights to remove them. The Commission discussed that there are many abandoned tree-stands on other conservation lands as well.

Chair Wainwright led a brief discussion regarding maps, and suggested combining the Marshall and Stickney maps into one document, and the Commission agreed. Member Pitts asked if there was a way to mark the parking at the Stickney parking area. Chair Wainwright stated that there is plenty of unmarked parking and if people park properly, four or five cars should be able to fit. Chair Wainwright continued that eventually the Commission may want to do something similar to the canoe launch with berms and signage. Chair Wainwright stated that the Commission should keep this in mind for a potential project this spring. Member Fournier stated that after the Slade project is complete, the Commission should look for smaller \$10,000.00 to \$12,000.00 grants to be put towards re-routes and bog bridges on the Sawyer Town Forest. The Commission discussed that many areas are under water this year and they discussed where bridges would be beneficial.

6. Short Reports & Discussions

a. Policy On Tree Cutting Around Abutters' Land – Suzie?

Chair Wainwright stated that Member Newman has been working on a complaint form, and asked the Commission for comment. Member Nenart stated that his only concern was that, under “timeframe,” an option should be available for “more than one year” since this is the first time the Commission is publishing such a form; the Commission agreed. Member Newman suggested using the Town’s new website which has features that can build a form like this; the Commission agreed. Selectman Liaison Bob Worden suggested contacting Assistant Town Administrator Angela and she can help develop this form. Member Fournier suggested adding an option for “have you reported this before and if so, to whom?” The Commission agreed. Member Kukshtel stated that there should be an introductory paragraph to explain what this form is to be used for. Member Kukshtel continued that the problem description field should be much larger than just a single line for ease of user submission. Member

Newman thanked the Commission for their feedback and she stated that she would do some more work on this form.

Member Kukshel asked if there would be discussion about the cutting that will be happening along Route 121. Chair Wainwright stated that this was discussed last spring when he was contacted by Unittel, who wanted to cut some trees along conservation land and some on conservation land, under the direction of a very knowledgeable forester. Chair Wainwright continued that this forester completed a very detailed study of the area and made note of which trees would need to be cut and why. Chair Wainwright stated that this tree work is necessary to prevent major outages when the winter weather hits; the Commission discussed the outages last winter in this specific area.

b. Maple Avenue Culvert Status Report – Paul

Chair Wainwright stated that he has been speaking with the Director of Public Works about replacing the culvert that goes under Maple Avenue between the two sections of the Sawmill Swamp with something more turtle-friendly. Chair Wainwright continued that there is now a representative from NH Fish & Game who is providing guidance on culverts that are optimal for turtle migration. Chair Wainwright stated that there is a meeting next week at this culvert on Maple Avenue to discuss next steps. Chair Wainwright stated that Maple Avenue is on the paving list for 2025 so there is time to plan this culvert replacement thoughtfully and properly. The Commission had a brief discussion on what would make a culvert “turtle-friendly.”

c. Stewardship Reports (Orr and Williams #4) – Bill, others?

Vice Chair Steele stated that this is planned for mid-November and he will email the Commission ahead of time, in case anyone would like to join him. Vice Chair Steele explained what a stewardship report entailed, including a site walk and an online form to fill out to report the findings and observations.

Chair Wainwright produced a stewardship report for the Sawyer 4H field written by the Rockingham County Conservation District for the Commission’s consideration.

d. 50th Celebration Update, and the Logo – Suzie, Jeff, Monique, and Pete

Member Newman stated that they put out a survey for which logo was best, and they had 101 respondents. Member Newman presented the logo which had the most votes, and the logo which had the second most

votes. The Commission agreed to move forward with the logo that won the most votes.

Member Newman stated that, for the 50th anniversary celebration, the group is still trying to solidify some events for each month although there is nothing yet planned for June or August. Member Newman continued that in September Atkinson Days are returning so she would like to utilize some of those events. Mr. Worden welcomed any contributions from the Commission and suggested reaching out to Chris Pignatiello who is the Chair of the Atkinson Day Committee. The Commission discussed some other ideas of different events that can be held each month.

e. T-Shirt Discussion – Monique

Chair Wainwright stated that this discussion will be postponed until Member Chretien is present.

f. NHACC Board of Director's Report – Paul

Chair Wainwright stated that the NHACC Annual Conference is coming up this weekend, and he is excited to present the winners of the 163 photographs which were submitted for the photography contest. Chair Wainwright continued that there will likely be a photography contest held next year as well, even if only in digital format.

g. Turtle Sign Report – Monique and Sandy

Chair Wainwright stated that Member Chretien has been gathering information on other areas of Town where turtles have been spotted crossing the road; one such area is Oak Ridge Drive.

h. Troop 9 News? - Bill

Vice Chair Steele stated that there is no Troop 9 news but he continues to mention to the Troop Leader that the Commission has a lot of opportunity for Scouts to earn volunteerism hours. Member Pitts stated that in the middle of November, he will be bringing the Cub Scouts to the Marshall Town Forest to help clean up after the logging activity, and to work on some of the trails, as previously discussed. Chair Wainwright stated that he would like to close down the middle trail sooner rather than later, Member Pitts stated that he has covered that trail many times but somehow it continues to reappear. Chair Wainwright encouraged the Commission to save the date of this work on Marshall and participate if able.

i. Trail Map Status Report from Hannah

Chair Wainwright stated that Member Rizzo reports that all map stations and kiosks are currently well-stocked.

j. SELT Acquisition Public Hearing Expected in Early 2024

Chair Wainwright stated that there is a pledge agreement signed between the South East Land Trust (SELT) and Rick Schafer; however, SELT has asked that this is not advertised on social media outlets yet as they are still trying to raise funds for the deal which will take about \$155,000.00. Chair Wainwright continued that he is thrilled that this deal is finally occurring. Chair Wainwright stated that the fundraising will occur before the end of 2023 and then in early 2024 they will let the Commission know how much more funding is required to move forward with the deal. Chair Wainwright stated that, ever since he joined the Commission in 1998, they've been trying to find a way to protect this land in perpetuity. Chair Wainwright continued that this piece of land is the last contiguous 141 acres of privately-owned, unprotected land in Town.

k. Other Business

Chair Wainwright stated that he reached out to Arianna Spear at the Rockingham County Conservation District to let her know that the Commission may want to create a warrant article to spend some of the funds from the Forest Maintenance Fund to do another round of invasive plant mitigation. Chair Wainwright continued that he asked Arianna to put together a proposal for this work.

Member Newman stated that she contacted the Carriage Town News about the 50th anniversary celebrations next year and they said they would be happy to include feature articles to help advertise. Member Newman continued that she would need help with the actual writing portion of this effort.

7. Next Meetings: November 29, 2023 (5th Wednesday) and December 27 (only if necessary)

8. Hold the Date: NHACC Annual Conference will be Saturday, November 4, 2023

9. Adjournment

Member Nenart made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Vice Chair Steele seconded the motion. Vote: 7/0/0

The meeting adjourned at 8:30PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Zachary Gilberti, Recording Clerk

Attachments:

- 2023 Operating Budget Report – expenses paid to date
- Current plan for spending the remaining 2023 funds

Town of Atkinson Conservation Commission 2023 Expenditure Tracking

Account Number	Description	TM Approved 2023 Budget	What	Amount	Date Prepared	Date Submitted	Amount Submitted	YTD Total	YTD Unspent
			Rounding				\$ -		
			Minutes - Sep 27, 2023	4.5	\$96.75	10/10/2023	10/10/2023	\$96.75	
			Minutes - Aug 23, 2023	5.5	\$118.25	9/21/2023	9/21/2023	\$118.25	
			Minutes - Aug 8, 2023	4.5	\$96.75	8/31/2023	8/31/2023	\$96.75	
			Minutes - July 26, 2023	6	\$129.00	8/21/2023	8/21/2023	\$129.00	
			Minutes - June 28, 2023	4	\$86.00	6/16/2023	6/16/2023	\$86.00	
			Minutes - May 24, 2023	5.5	\$118.25	6/16/2023	6/16/2023	\$118.25	
			Minutes - April 26, 2923	4	\$86.00	5/11/2023	5/11/2023	\$86.00	
			Minutes - March 29, 2023	4	\$86.00	4/10/2023	4/10/2023	\$86.00	
			Minutes - March 9, 2023 (Public Hearing)	2.0	\$38.00	3/27/2023	3/27/2023	\$38.00	
			Minutes - February 22, 2023	4.0	\$76.00	3/23/2023	3/23/2023	\$76.00	
			Minutes - January 26, 2023	5.0	\$95.00	2/20/2023	2/20/2023	\$95.00	\$ 1,026.00
			Budget Adjustment - removed			00/00/2020		\$ -	
40.46111.110.00	RECORDING CLERK	\$ 1,200.00	Budget Adjustment - removed				\$ -	\$ -	\$ 174.00
			Rounding				\$ (0.01)		
			Minutes - Sep 27, 2023		\$6.00	10/10/2023	10/10/2023	\$6.00	
			Minutes - Aug 23, 2023		\$7.33	9/21/2023	9/21/2023	\$7.33	
			Minutes - Aug 8, 2023		\$6.00	8/31/2023	8/31/2023	\$6.00	
			Minutes - July 26, 2023		\$8.00	8/21/2023	8/21/2023	\$8.00	
			Minutes - June 28, 2023		\$5.33	6/16/2023	6/16/2023	\$5.33	
			Minutes - May 24, 2023		\$7.33	6/16/2023	6/16/2023	\$7.33	
			Minutes - April 26, 2923		\$5.33	5/11/2023	5/11/2023	\$5.33	
			Minutes - March 29, 2023		\$5.33	4/10/2023	4/10/2023	\$5.33	
			Minutes - March 9, 2023 (Public Hearing)		\$2.36	3/27/2023	3/27/2023	\$2.36	
			Minutes - February 22, 2023		\$4.71	3/23/2023	3/23/2023	\$4.71	
			Minutes - January 26, 2023		\$5.89	2/20/2023	2/20/2023	\$5.89	\$ 63.60
			Budget Adjustment - removed			12/17/2019		\$ -	
40.46111.220.00	FICA .062	\$ 75.00	Budget Adjustment - removed				\$ -	\$ -	\$ 11.40
			Rounding				\$ -		
			Minutes - Sep 27, 2023		\$1.40	10/10/2023	10/10/2023	\$1.40	
			Minutes - Aug 23, 2023		\$1.71	9/21/2023	9/21/2023	\$1.71	
			Minutes - Aug 8, 2023		\$1.40	8/31/2023	8/31/2023	\$1.40	
			Minutes - July 26, 2023		\$1.87	8/21/2023	8/21/2023	\$1.87	
			Minutes - June 28, 2023		\$1.25	6/16/2023	6/16/2023	\$1.25	
			Minutes - May 24, 2023		\$1.71	6/16/2023	6/16/2023	\$1.71	
			Minutes - April 26, 2923		\$1.25	5/11/2023	5/11/2023	\$1.25	
			Minutes - March 29, 2023		\$1.25	4/10/2023	4/10/2023	\$1.25	
			Minutes - March 9, 2023 (Public Hearing)		\$0.55	3/27/2023	3/27/2023	\$0.55	
			Minutes - February 22, 2023		\$1.10	3/23/2023	3/23/2023	\$1.10	
			Minutes - January 26, 2023		\$1.38	2/20/2023	2/20/2023	\$1.38	\$ 14.88
			Budget Adjustment - removed			12/17/2019		\$ -	
40.46111.225.00	Medicare .0145	\$ 20.00	Budget Adjustment - removed				\$ -	\$ -	\$ 5.12
			Northeast Conservation Services - Lang Mgmt Plan		\$437.50	10/3/2023	10/3/2023	\$437.50	
			Northeast Conservation Services - Lang Mgmt Plan		\$1,500.00	5/1/2023	5/1/2023	\$1,500.00	\$ 1,937.50
			Budget Adjustment - added			12/16/2019		\$ -	
40.46111.390.00	OTHER PROF SERVICES	\$ 2,548.00	Budget Adjustment - added				\$ -	\$ -	\$ 610.50
			Hampstead Print & Copy - ARM Mgmt Plan		\$58.90	10/3/2023	10/3/2023	\$58.90	
			Hampstead Print & Copy - Woodlock trail maps		\$145.29	9/26/2023	9/26/2023	\$145.29	
			Staples (John Reimb) - Slade engineering drawings		\$51.99	6/30/2023	6/30/2023	\$51.99	
			Hampstead Print & Copy - Brochures & Posters		\$121.14	6/12/2023	6/12/2023	\$121.14	
			Hampstead Print & Copy - Trail maps - Sawyer		\$145.29	5/31/2023	5/31/2023	\$145.29	
			Hampstead Print & Copy - Brochures		\$74.51	5/19/2023	5/19/2023	\$74.51	
			Hampstead Print & Copy - Trail maps		\$159.84	5/19/2023	5/19/2023	\$159.84	\$ 756.96
			Budget Adjustment - Added			12/17/2019		\$ -	
40.46111.550.00	PRINTING AND BINDING	\$ 1,000.00	Budget Adjustment - added				\$ -	\$ -	\$ 243.04
			2024 NHACC Dues		\$475.00	10/13/2023	10/13/2023	\$475.00	\$ 475.00
			Budget Adjustment - removed			12/16/2019		\$ -	
40.46111.560.00	DUES/SUBS/MEMBERSHIPS	\$ 500.00	Budget Adjustment - removed				\$ -	\$ -	\$ 25.00
			Budget Adjustment - removed			12/16/2019		\$ -	
40.46111.620.00	OFFICE SUPPLIES	\$ 1.00	Budget Adjustment - added				\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1.00
			Budget Adjustment - Added			12/17/2019		\$ -	
40.46111.625.00	POSTAGE	\$ 1.00	Budget Adjustment - added				\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1.00
			Paint & supplies for blazing trails - PW reimb.		\$161.94	9/12/2023	9/12/2023	\$161.94	
			Stone etc. for culvert washouts - Sawyer and Orr		\$610.19	9/7/2023	9/7/2023	\$610.19	
			Seed spreader - selective harvesting recovery - PW		\$41.25	6/30/2023	6/30/2023	\$41.25	
			Raised stamp embosser - Bow Hunting permits - PW		\$56.90	6/30/2023	6/30/2023	\$56.90	\$ 870.28
			Budget Adjustment - removed			12/15/2019		\$ -	
40.46111.650.00	CARE OF GROUNDS	\$ 2,500.00	Budget Adjustment - removed				\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1,629.72
			Budget Adjustment - removed			12/15/2019		\$ -	
40.46111.740.00	NEW EQUIPMENT	\$ 300.00	Budget Adjustment - removed				\$ -	\$ -	\$ 300.00
			2022 rate per mile: 0.625			12/15/2019		\$ -	
40.46111.820.00	MILEAGE	\$ 39.00	Budget Adjustment - removed				\$ -	\$ -	\$ 39.00
			Budget Adjustment - removed			12/15/2019		\$ -	
40.46111.840.00	SPECIAL PROGRAMS	\$ 1,000.00	Budget Adjustment - removed				\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1,000.00
			NHACC Conference Registrations (5)		\$300.00	10/19/2023	10/19/2023	\$300.00	
			NHACC - 3 Conservation Handbooks		\$60.00	4/11/2023	4/11/2023	\$60.00	\$ 360.00
			Budget Adjustment - Added			12/17/2019		\$ -	
40.46111.850.00	EDUCATION & CONFERENCES	\$ 250.00	Budget Adjustment - added				\$ -	\$ -	\$ (110.00)
			Compliance Signs - "Trail Closed" - 12 - metal - PW		\$171.60	6/30/2023	6/30/2023	\$171.60	
			HP&C - "Trail Relocated" signs		\$270.00	6/23/2023	6/23/2023	\$270.00	
			Reimburse Monique for sign bolts		\$8.00	5/3/2023	5/3/2023	\$8.00	\$ 449.60
			Budget Adjustment			12/17/2019		\$ -	
40.46111.875.00	SIGNS	\$ 500.00	Budget Adjustment - added				\$ -	\$ -	\$ 50.40
	TOTALS	\$ 9,934.00					\$ 5,953.82	\$ 5,953.82	\$ 3,980.18

Atkinson Conservation Commission - Projected Expenditures as of October 25, 2023

Budget remaining on October 25, 2023	\$ 3,980.18
Anticipated expenses in 4Q 2023 (see below)	\$ 3,750.00
"Yet to Spend"	\$ 230.18

Anticipated expenses include:

Peter Steckler - consulting on the Maple Avenue culvert design - for discussion this evening	\$ 2,000.00
Minutes - Sep, Oct, Nov plus a Public Hearing - we have been running about \$100 per meeting	\$ 300.00
Matt Sullivan - materials for repair of washout on Sawyer - committed but not yet done or invoiced	\$ 250.00
More paint and supplies for trail blazing - already spent but not yet reimbursed	\$ 100.00
? Turtle signs and posts	
Mowing of fields - committed but not yet scheduled or invoiced	\$ 1,100.00
? Re-desogn and printing of Stickney and Marshall maps	
? Printing of large "kiosk maps" for Stickney & Marshall	