

UNAPPROVED
Candia's Virtual Selectmen's Public Session Minutes
January 27th, 2025, 6:30 pm

Note: Individual roll call has been taken after each motion.

6:30 pm Chair Brien Brock opened the Public Session Meeting followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Attendance: Chair Brien Brock, Selectman Patrick Moran, Selectman Boyd Chivers, Selectman Russ Dann and Selectman Susan Young.

Approval of Minutes: Public session minutes of January 13th, 2025. None noted.

Motion: Selectmen Moran made a motion to approve the January 13th, 2025, Public Session Minutes as presented. Selectman Dann seconded. Motion carried by a vote of (5-0-0).

NEW BUSINESS:

NH DOT – Exit 3 Intersection: Chair Brock said he received an email from Matt Woodrow (resident) asking to attend this upcoming Board meeting. M. Woodrow came before the Board and reported his teenage son was in a serious car accident a few weeks ago when he was driving home when someone hit their vehicle at the Exit 3 Intersection. He is not sure how the accident occurred, if the driver at the stop sign did not see his sons vehicle, or if they were trying to get through quickly before his son. Their vehicle was totaled, but thankfully there were no injuries. The accident has raised some concerns, and they do not want to wait or for it to take a fatality in order for something to be done. They are advocating for something to be implemented, and he is asking the Board what their options are.

Bethany Woodrow (resident) said this is something the Town has talked about for several years. It seems to be more of a problem now as there appears to be more distracted driving. She would like for something to be done to help curb accidents at that location. She does not think anyone would want four-way stop signs or streetlights there and backing up traffic, but if they can do something to prevent less accidents, it would be much appreciated.

Scott Cunan (resident) said they are requesting a flashing light stop sign and it sounds like that is what the Candia residents wanted when the State was present at a previous Board meeting. The State had chosen not to implement a flashing light stop sign and were stuck on having the four-way stop signs. Candia will continue to grow, and we need to be prepared for change. At some point the Town will end up with a traffic light at the Exit 3 Intersection, and in front of the Irving Station. For now, in his perspective he wants a flashing radar-activated four-way stop sign heading east and wants to see how effective it is. We need to remember that change is coming, this town is growing, and people are coming here, and we will need to have a traffic light at some point. Should we do it now or later, that is what the people in town will need to decide. He has put some notes in his document and added in what the State had recommended of a rotary and the four-way stop signs. However, when he had talked to the State, they told him that is not what they are doing, for one reason is that it is costly and secondly there is not enough room because they need to get the tractor trailers around. If anyone wants his feedback or for him to participate he is willing to assist, however he does not want to be part of the government office, but he does love this town and will give his time to help keep it a great place.

Selectman Young said she thinks someone may have made a mistake in saying that the Selectmen did not want to do anything about this issue. It was her understanding that the Board had urged the State to do the “flashing lights stop sign”, and she does not know what happened.

Mr. Cunan said unfortunately on social media there are always people spouting nontruths. People interpret conversations differently of what was said or what transpired. Ultimately decisions should be made by people showing up to an event like this and to post what they will be doing in order to change it.

Chief Shevlin said his department was not available to respond when the car accident occurred, because they were called to another vehicle accident in Town, and the NH State Police had to respond. Mr. Woodrow said he received a copy of the accident report from the NH State Police, and he will send Chief Shevlin a copy. Chief Shevlin said he has noticed that ever since he has started working in Candia, this intersection is a nightmare. It is a State road, therefore it is the State who would be putting up the lights or signs at that location. He indicated that adding a four-way stop sign would only back up traffic during the busy hours of the day. However they could make a suggestion by lowering the speed rate even more in that vicinity. By having flashing stop signs, it would make the drivers to look up and see something bright to alert them. He has noticed there is a stop sign at that location on one side of the road, and then a rectangular sign on the other side, therefore it is not visual to the drivers. He provided stats for the Board in stating there were ten accidents in 2024, in 2023 there were three accidents and in 2022 there were two accidents. Last year they dealt with 377 calls in that area. As a Police Chief, this is definitely a concern of his. He has not had the opportunity to have a conversation with the State, but he is willing to help where we can make it safer. In the meantime he will have additional patrolling placed in that area.

Bill Saffie (resident) said he has 5 prior years of working at MA DOT, and by adding in grooved pavement has been very effective, as well as stop-ahead signs and thermal-plastic stop written on the road. He indicated that installing a flashing light stop sign with an electrician would cost approximately \$2,000. The sign operates on solar power and the lights activate when a vehicle approaches it. There were conversations among the residents offering to pay for it.

Judy Szot (resident) said she has travelled that intersection for over 30 years when she was working. When NH DOT was talking about putting up a stop sign where the traffic was turning and all she could think about is how that area would be backed up in the mornings, because it is always a constant stream of traffic. She asked to justify logic in reference to a person who wrote an article, by suggesting that we have people who are running the east bound stop sign so we will put a stop sign on the westbound side, because that will make the person stop in the eastbound traffic side. She has seen vehicles run right through the stop sign several times. There was also an incident with a tractor trailer who was driving over 50 miles per hour and drove right through the stop sign. She said they could have been killed, if she would not have stopped. She also agrees with the flashing light stop sign at the intersection.

Chief Young said this is a State Intersection, would the State allow residents to pay for the flashing light stop sign? Selectman Moran said yes, as that is how their previous conversation went. The State said they would not pay for it, however they would install it. Mr. Cunan said he had a conversation with the State also, and they told him if the Town pays for the flashing light stop sign then the Town will need to maintain it. That is where it gets tricky, and ultimately the State should pay for it and said it is a very small expense. Chair Brock said they did not to that point in the conversation, because they were not very receptive to the Flashing Light stop sign. Mr. Cunan said he had asked the state for two flashing light stop signs and a rumble strip in both directions as they will make the drivers slow down.

Ron Labrador said it is important to add signs on the east bound side of that intersection when heading east, as well as a flashing light sign written "oncoming traffic does not stop". He has seen this type of sign at a few locations, and it is effective. He believes it is important to have it lit up at night. Chair Brock said the return traffic at night is worse, because they are getting off the highway and come to the intersections and that is when it is dangerous. Mr. Labrador said this means the end of the exit would also need a sign written oncoming traffic does not stop as well as at the east bound traffic stop.

Mr. Woodrow said there has been an influx of tractor trailers that go to the First Stoppe near the intersection, that was not there years ago.

Chief Young said he agrees with the flashing light stop signs, and it will help to cut back a few, however there will continue to be accidents there.

Mr. Woodrow said one other thing they are proposing to do with NH DOT, is to place a sign on the west bound side written "do not stop". He has encountered several people stopping there and they should not be.

B. Saffie said the rumble strips, flashing light stop signs and thermal plastic written "stop" on the road will cost the state almost nothing, because the employees that work for the state will do that, and they will not need a contractor to do the work. In his 25 years of experience the negative point of putting up a flashing light stop sign is that drunk drivers usually aim for the bright signs. They have seen this happen with the thousands of accidents and hundreds of fatalities.

Chair Brock said the Exit 3 Intersection location when you are driving east on the right side, the stop sign sets back quite a distance, and it is not in a normal position on the side of the road like most stop signs. This is one reason why he believes a flashing light stop sign would help redirect your eyes, because unless your peripheral is looking there, you will not see the sign. He has noticed that sign is offset quite a bit because of the curved turn. Selectman Dann said having the word stop written on the pavement and everything else could all be of additional help. He has questions about people volunteering to put up the flashing light stop signs. If we install them, will they be responsible if they are not flashing and if there is an accident? Chair Brock said he would not want to be involved with paying for it themselves.

There was a conversation about adding two sets of rumble strips on the east bound lane. S. Cunan said if they are going to ask for the rumble strips, they should ask to do it in the three directions. Selectman Young mentioned that there are other towns also that travel through that intersection.

Selectman Moran said if they are having another meeting with the NH DOT, they should have their State Representative present at their Board meeting as well. They continued the conversation by stating they will tell their state representative that they do not want four-way stop signs and that our town wants two flashing light stop signs.

B. Saffie said the Board could request NH DOT to perform a traffic study by placing cameras on arrow boards, to keep a constant filming of what is going on. S. Cunan said he thinks NH DOT has done a traffic study there before. Chair Brock said the States biggest comment was there were no fatalities there and that is why it was not high on the list. He said he would like to have their State Representative back at one of their meetings. Selectman Moran asked if they could have an oversized stop sign for an immediate resolution and for it to be more visible to the drivers.

Chief Shevlin said they received their electronic speed sign back, and maybe they can place it at the Exit 3 intersection for the time being. He would like to look into the Highway Safety for a DWI or Speed Grant. That would mean the State would pay a certain amount of money for speed trailers. He does not know if that includes all traffic, such as radars for the cars and those type of things, as these Grants can help when they try to do that, but he will need to look into it.

Chair Brock said he agrees with Selectman Young's suggestion of asking our State Representative and NH DOT at their next meeting. If it is something Candia wants, they can push for the things they have discussed today with the luminated sign is a good start. Discussion ensued.

Memorial – Reggie Henshaw: Chair Brock read the article Selectman Chivers wrote about past resident Reggie Henshaw for the Town Report. See attached.

Chair Brock indicated that an article has been written about former town employee and resident Donna Becker, and it will be included in the Town Report.

OLD BUSINESS:

Job Positions: Chair Brock said they will be discussing the open job positions in their nonpublic meeting following. He informed the public that Andria Hansen the Town Administrator resigned, and her last day was Thursday, January 29, 2025. She will be coming in a few hours at the end of the week to work along with Land Use Coordinator Amy Spencer on the Town Report and the Deliberative Session. Payroll & Accounting Specialist Kim Hughes has also resigned, and February 5th, 2025, will be her last day of working.

Chair Brock stated that A. Hansen had revealed that many other towns offer NH Retirement System to their employees. This service plan covers full-time employees other than the Police or Fire Department, and five people in the Town Hall Office would be eligible for NH Retirement System.

Chair Brock pointed out that part-time Assistant Melissa will be assisting for a portion of K. Hughes duties. They have received resumes for the Accounting & Payroll position for the Board to look over located in the Office.

NHRS: Chair Brock said he would like the Board to look into NH Retirement System this year and find out if that could help in retaining their employees. Selectman Young said, it is hard to compete with other towns.

- The Town Deliberative Session will be held Saturday, February 1st, 2025 @ 9:00am at Moore School
- The snow date for the Deliberative Session is Tuesday, February 4th, 2025 @ 9:00am at Moore School
- The next Board of Selectman Meeting is scheduled for Monday, February 10th, 2025 @ 6:30pm

Reappointment: The Board received a letter from Betty Sabeau to be reappointed to the Smyth Memorial Building Board of Trustees. See Attached.

Selectman Young made a motion to approve reappointing Betty Sabeau to the Smyth Memorial Build Board of Trustees. Seconded by Chair Brock. All in favor. Motion carried by a vote of (5-0-0).

Public Input: Selectman Young asked how they plan to handle the abatements, as there might be quite a few of them. Would it be discussed at a Board meeting, or do they have an abatement day? Chair Brock said the abatements are resolved in the office, unless there is a dispute between the two parties, if that is the case then the Board would need to be involved. The resident would come into the office to complete a form, then have a conversation with the Assessor to go through the abatement process. Selectman Chivers said afterwards the Assessor would make a recommendation to the Board. Selectman Young said the Abatement forms are also available on the Towns website and the deadline is March 1st, 2025. Chair Brock said he encourages anyone that believes they were over-taxed, to apply for an abatement.

There was a question from a resident about the recent assessment, and if has been looked into? Chair Brock said, if it was the properties that were over-assessed, that is part of the process, and what he has been told is that most of them have been resolved or dealt with through the tax office, and there is no back charge to other taxpayers. Any money that needs to be adjusted comes out of the Overlay Fund, therefore we do not go back and send tax bills out again to the public for additional money because they are short. Selectman Young asked Chair Brock if he found out the name of the assessing company when Tammy was working in the Town Office prior, and Chair Brock said he did not find out. Selectman Young said she is very disappointed this year, on the timing.

Town Hall - main entrance door: Selectman Moran said the Board received additional quotes for replacing the Town Hall main entrance door. The quotes are from LFC Doors in Hancock, NH and expressed that they are priced considerably lower than from a previous quote they received from Lang Door. This company offers three door options to choose from, including two doors that have a window, and they are about half the cost of the quotes they received before. He thanked Administrative Assistant Linda Chandonnet for the additional research, and in getting the Board better prices, now the Board can decide on which one they want. The Board verbally agreed on Door #1. Administrative Assistant L. Chandonnet said door #1 they have chosen is ADA compliant. See attached quotes.

7:35 pm – Chair Brock made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Selectman Young. All in favor. Motion carried by a vote of (5-0-0).