



Town of Hermon
Public Safety Meeting Room
December 9, 2021
Town Council Meeting
7:00 PM
MINUTES

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ALL ITEMS ARE SUBJECT TO APPROPRIATE COUNCIL ACTION

I. CALL TO ORDER BY CHAIRPERSON

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Vice Chair Reynolds led those in attendance in the Pledge of Allegiance

III. ROLL CALL

- Members Present:** Ronald “Ron” Murphy, Charles Lever IV, G. Stephen “Steve” Watson, John Snyder III and Anthony “Tony” Reynolds
- Members Absent:** Steven “Steve” Thomas - Excused
- Others Present:** Town Manager Howard Kroll, Town Clerk Kristen Cushman, Town Attorney Tim Pease and 12 residents/non-residents

IV. REVIEW CONSENT CALENDAR: REGULAR BUSINESS, APPOINTMENTS, SIGNATURES, And APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

- SIGNATURES. –APPROVE**
- MINUTES. - APPROVE** 11/18/2021 minutes, 11/18/2021 Special Town Meeting minutes, 12/7/2021 Workshop minutes
- WARRANTS. – SIGN** 11/26/2021 & 12/10/2021 warrant
- RESOLVES. - SIGN**

Councilor Snyder moved to approve the Consent Calendar as presented. Councilor Murphy seconded the motion. Motion passes 6-0.



V. NEWS, PRESENTATIONS AND RECOGNITIONS:

VI. PUBLIC ITEMS OR COMMENTS: *(Items Not Already on Agenda)*

Tim Pease, Town Attorney:

I was speaking with Chair Thomas today who couldn't be here this evening. And he said they were probably expecting a number of folks who might speak on different issues tonight involving the school. He asked me to address the roles and responsibilities of the town council, school, and so forth. And one of the things I was thinking about as I was sitting here is the mission statement, Hermon's mission talks about being sensitive toward citizens. I know, counsel represents the town as a whole, often entertaining comments and questions from citizens on a variety of topics. And I think that is your prerogative, you should do so. But also remind you that you have an ethics, code of conduct, if you will, governing town council meetings to make sure that they are carried out responsibly and in accordance with professionalism. With respect to school related comments, I want to remind folks that the authority of running the school rests with the school committee and the superintendent. Obviously, when you have one town and the school is part of that town, it feels a little awkward to say how is it possible that a school can be run by a committee and superintendent within that community feels different when you're in Hampden for example, you've got Hampden, Winterport, Frankfort, Newburgh all combined together and that feels separate but it doesn't feel quite so separate when you're in a single district like Hermon, Bangor, Brunswick. But I would just remind you that with respect to the authority of the council over school operations, you have to be sensitive about those comments. So, if you do get questions or comments about the role of the council with respect to the school, I'm going to be here for the remainder of the meeting and happy to entertain questions.

John Carr 67 Timberview Drive:

It feels like close to a year and a half now that the town has made the decision to remove recycling from the community besides cardboard. To remove everything besides cardboard is, I think a poor decision. It's something that's been on my mind and thinking about for quite awhile and I just want to encourage the town to act swiftly with this.

In addition to this town, which is growing very rapidly, which is a wonderful thing, a lot of subdivisions, you see on the warmer days, individuals out walking and running, biking, I am growing concerned with the leash law. We have a lot of great residents that their dogs are leashed, or their dogs do obey their commands. I am an individual that runs on the road, When these dogs are not leashed and are not listening to their owner's commands, I can't run fast enough to get away from these dogs. I would like the council to consider regular updates to our leash law.



Greg Knoll 40 Timberview Drive:

I hope the council moves forward on creating a committee to review the town's comprehensive plan. One thing that did come up in the meeting that sort of surprised me was the lack of space or land for the schools for expansion. I really hope the town council starts looking into that because as we all know, land doesn't go cheaper, always goes more expensive. And I attend a lot of school committee meetings and the principals say they're very close capacities, if not overflowing at times.

Shawn McBreairty Hampden resident, but I'm a Hermon School District State taxpayer:

I wanted to speak to the facts brought forth to me recently by alarmed Hermon residents concerned for bringing it forward themselves due to cancel culture in the town. Hermon High School a government, run taxpayer funded learning institution allowed for multiple transgender displays in their library a few weeks ago. The first was some 30 to 40 transgender and LGBTQ books, pushing 63 different genders, gender dysphoria, and attempting to make emotional and psychological sexual deviance normal and acceptable. Titles like "Life Isn't Binary", Queer, The Ultimate LGBTQ Guide For Teens" and "Sexual Fairytales" to name several others. Then there was a display of non-binary Cathy, a human size stuffed doll, and what I understand to be hundreds of flyers placed all over the school, essentially looking for payment to remove the life size doll. I then reported this back and I spoke up for residents who didn't feel comfortable doing so. 3500 people have seen the video on YouTube. I made a Freedom of Access Act request on 11/26/2021 to Hermon superintendent Jim Chasse, 1. Who approved this display? 2. What is the gender and sexuality alliance inside Hermon High School? 3. Who allowed the non-binary Cathy display? 4. Any written correspondence with a specific Hermon school board member between October 22 to date, he said it would take him seven hours and a month and a half to come up with that information. Something that would take any competent person probably 10 or 20 minutes to do. He has a meeting with the Maine Assistant Attorney General tomorrow to go over the follow up. We see government run schools in Maine don't want to provide transparency. They don't want taxpayers and parents to see the evil that is being gaslighted on impressionable young kids every single day. This is because of the Democrat run teachers' unions and overpaid legal team of Drummond Woodsum, who want to protect their clients, the teachers, not the constituents and not the children. Did Hermon residents know that there's a transgender policy at Hermon schools that if a biological male asserts themselves female, they can change and shower with your young daughters? The mission statement of Hermon High School says to prepare students for personal success in college, work and community. Yet 65% of all students in Hermon High School are below, or well below the state average in math. Two thirds of the students in Hermon High School don't know basic math 42% in English and 48% in science, all failing grades this administration, yet the woke nonsense continues. First, it was BLM. Now it's masking and now LGBTQ efforts. I'm standing up for folks that are not comfortable enough to stand up for themselves. Cancel culture is something that's permeated towns just like Hermon, Hampden, Maine, in my previous town, Cumberland, Maine, until school



boards and town councils step up and talk about solving the issue. This division in these towns will intensify. Your town was divided before I reported on this. I tell every parent I meet based on my findings, the last year and a half in research done to a level that no one else has done in this state. Pull your kids out of these government run totalitarian schools as fast as you can. They're the worst run businesses in town, bar none. Your kids are at risk. So, if this town council who does approve the school budget, believes that providing sexual content to underage children without their parents being aware of it, that purveying child pornography and sexual deviancy, is a sound rationale for a taxpayer funded system, then great. Next week, maybe the town council, the school can provide free subscriptions to Pornhub to all Hermon students, let them decide on what they want to view online. That probably doesn't fit the narrative. However, if we think that making 99% of students less comfortable, comfortable to make 1% of students who identify as LGBTQ comfortable, That's simply bad math. But that's apparently what's taught in Hermon, bad math. Your school system can't even teach the basics. Not one taxpayer dollar or one more minute of the teacher's day should be spent on an effort that doesn't improve these Maine state assessments. Again, two thirds of your students in Hermon don't know basic math. That's what you're paying for. This is a culture war that conservatives have been on were unaware of or unwilling to fight, and I'm simply willing to stand up for my first amendment rights. Now it's time for you to take one step forward. For the children of Hermon and your tax dollars. So, I'm asking you as the town council to simply ask questions. You control the school budget, and based on my assessment, you shouldn't be approving any budget increases until there's a solid plan to improve these child's lives. Back to teaching the basics; education, not indoctrination. If you have any questions of me from what I have reported on, I will certainly take questions. Most of those, however, should be posed to the school board chair and the superintendent who currently is unwilling to provide transparency on how this occurred. Thank you.

Ben Nichols 531 Ridge Drive:

So, I want to take a few minutes tonight to go through recent events involving inclusion materials at Hermon High School. I graduated in May 2017. And I've had the opportunity to work with my former principal and teachers on multiple occasions. Through former peers and community members to be able to watch the progress of school has accomplished in recent years with respect to becoming a safer, more supportive learning environment for all students, and better prepares them for personal success in college, career, and community. That is the primary school mission statement. I spent my entire life here and I've been involved with the school system, wonderful people that make it so special. Since before I was taught by those very people how to read my first book. Everything I am today is a direct result of the care, passion and dedication demonstrated by the teachers and staff that work here. Recently we experienced pushback involving some of the inclusion materials specifically regarding the LGBTQ+ representation display in the library. We've heard claims that the materials like it, have not only a correlative. If not causative relationship with the mathematic general academic performance of the students. A claim to which we have no credible evidence. We've been told that the LGBTQ+ educational



materials are damaging, and hyper sexualized to our children. This is why the people who framed their argument as for our kids, in the same breath is transphobic and homophobic slurs and jokes in reference to minors, such as referring to LGBTQ+ plus identities as a perversion or sexual deviance. This type of rhetoric does nothing but sow hate and division in our town and promotes acts like homophobic messages into Jackson beach. Something we rarely if ever have seen until recently. So on that note, I'd like to discuss the importance of these materials for those who might be unfamiliar with the LGBTQ+ community. And the associated struggles faced by this demographic with youth, mostly high school students. At the age high school students reach when starting high school, they face challenges like no other. I'm sure anyone listening to this remembers exactly what that was like, and how overwhelming and turbulent that time was. Questions like "who am I?" "What do I stand for?" "Who is everyone else?" "Am I like them?" "Are they like me?" "Is that something?" "Is that a good thing?" "Or is that something fear?" Those are some heavy questions, but one that we've all faced. Early adulthood is essentially a mad race grasping open air trying to understand the world in which you've just as of recently been immersed in, the world isn't black and white. And there are people and things that you may not understand or have things in common with. That's precisely what makes us so beautiful as a species. In order for any student to learn, they must first feel safe. Physical and emotional safety and support are the foundation of learning and growth, both academic and personal. I realized that many of us were fortunate to feel relatively safe during our years in primary education. And that's an amazing thing, and very likely allowed us to take full advantage of the resources and opportunities at our disposal during that period. Unfortunately, that is not the case for most for all students. There's hatred and bigotry in this world. That fear of what is different, unfamiliar. That hatred seeps into schools, locker rooms, from family members, society, social media, etc. Before kids even realize what it is. While the school system has accomplished incredible strides in recent years, it is and always will be an uphill battle against those who have grown up with hate. So now they know no other way. According to the National Survey on LGBTQ+ youth mental health in 2020, from the Trevor project.org 48% of LGBTQ+ youth reported engaging in self harm in the past 12 months, including over 60%, transgender and non-binary youth and 40% of LGBTQ+ respondents seriously considered attempting suicide in the past 12 months. Those are horrific numbers. And it's well documented that minority populations in schools are at a higher risk for mental health disorders and substance abuse. Because they feel different, abnormal, or defective, especially when they may not have been exposed to content, which they identify with the bookshelf in question. School represents more than the pages that sit on shelves. It represents a beacon of support safety and representation for youth who may not get that in any other place in their lives. For youth who are not part of the community, it represents an opportunity for students to learn about people who are not like them, better understand who they are, what they might be going through and how to support their struggling peers. I can't speak for the current students, but I know materials like this would have been game changing for myself and others. These materials aren't meant to enforce political agendas, rather teach kids that someone may not share your sex, gender, language, skin color, or religion, but they will always share the bond of humanity regardless of what sits above it. It's perfectly acceptable to disagree and not understand.



But the incredible part of that process is that while it has the potential for division, it also has the greater opportunity for discussion, discourse, and learning. And both parties have the chance to leave that situation with a wider horizon and more understanding of each other and themselves. It's essential that we teach our kids this one truth because in it rests the future, their future and the future of their children. There exists the capacity to learn from our past mistakes and give the next generation a chance to embrace diversity and use it to learn and grow, rather than to enslave by oppress discriminate. To prepare students for personal success in the realm of higher education, workplace and community, students need to learn about themselves, other people, their countries, other countries in the world in its entirety. There's a lot to cover and it might seem a daunting task. But it's imperative that students learn about the world that they live in because they will inevitably be released into and work among other people who come from different walks of life and backgrounds. And to work together to tackle the challenge of creating a better world for tomorrow. They must understand that difference in diversity is what makes us human and makes us strong. These inclusion materials are hugely impactful, not only of the LGBTQ+ students, they also provide a learning opportunity for other students and members of the Hermon and greater community to learn about the LGBTQ+ experience. They promote an environment where misunderstanding can grow into the discussion rather than bullying and fear. As a member of the LGBTQ plus and Hermon community, I ask that you stand in support of the staff and students and join us in making it unmistakably clear that Hermon school system supports all its students and does not back down in the face of hatred. Hermon is a safe place for all types of youth, especially the ones most impacted by the damaging flames of hatred, bigotry, and fear. It's tragic that they already must know there are people out there who hate them for who they are. But now is the time to stand by them. No matter how much hatred is yelled and posted we will be louder. We have a louder volume and greater numbers at the end of the day, because we'll know that they're accepted, seen, loved, and supported and they have an entire community behind them.

Stephanie Oiler 35 Kayden's Way:

I'm a proud parent of two kids in the Hermon system as well as a proud member of the school board. I did some homework when I saw there was some posts on Facebook. And I had a great conversation with Brian Walsh. And I want to ensure everybody that we have a process for people to be heard. And I'd encourage them to reach out to Brian Walsh or any of the principals and our school system, because they are very open and will explain everything to you. So, there's that process as well as we have a forum that folks can fill out if they would like to have us, the school board address it. And I would encourage people fill that form out. I've got a copy here if you'd like to have one. And make sure to include all of us in that email on the school board and we will address it for you. So just thank you very much. I look forward to continuing to collaborate with the town and make Hermon a great place to live. Thank you, guys.

VII. PUBLIC HEARINGS:



VIII. COMMITTEE REPORTS:

IX. SCHEDULED AGENDA ITEMS:

A. OLD BUSINESS:

B. NEW BUSINESS:

FR21-22-02 Consider accepting the Child Care Stabilization Grant award from the State of Maine in the amount of \$ 5,500.

Councilor Snyder moved to approve FR21-22-02. Councilor Lever seconded the motion. The motion was accepted. Motion passes 6-0.

C. WORKSHOPS:

D. OTHER ITEMS: (from Table Package)

Councilor Snyder moved to waive council rules and accept the table packet. Councilor Murphy seconded the motion. The motion was accepted. Motion passes 6-0.

IX. SCHEDULED AGENDA ITEMS:

A. OLD BUSINESS:

B. NEW BUSINESS:

FR21-22-03 Consider transferring \$20,000 from Reserve account # G3-30-017 (Public Safety Building) to the Public Safety Maintenance account #12-06-12-02 (Public Safety Building Maintenance)

Councilor Snyder moved to approve FR21-22-03. Councilor Murphy seconded the motion. The motion was accepted. Motion passes 6-0.

X. APPOINTMENTS:

Appoint personnel to various positions as required by Charter and State Statute.

**Appointed to Zoning Board of Appeals: Donald Shepley
Douglas Sinclair Sr. – Alternate**



X. APPOINTMENTS:

XI. MANAGER STATUS REPORT:

Howard Kroll: I want to thank everyone that came and spoke this evening. I want to thank the Council for giving the opportunity for people to speak. I know we have a three-minute rule that's in the council's bylaws and rules. I've been here five and a half years. And I think that's one part of our policy that we really haven't observed greatly. But I'm just a strong believer in letting people speak. Regardless of if you want to hear it or not. I want to thank you for giving everyone an opportunity to speak this year. Finally, I know we're in the month of December. And our next meeting is January 6. So, on that note, I want to wish everyone Happy Holidays. Be safe and see you in 2022

XII. FINAL PUBLIC ITEMS OR COMMENT: (*Items Not Already on Agenda*)

XIII. COUNCIL ITEMS:

Ron Murphy: I'd like to confer with Howard, I want to thank everybody. It's not always easy to stand up here and speak and say exactly how you feel and whatnot and I know it's not easy, and I'm not speaking for the rest of the council, but I sure appreciate it.

Charles Lever: Same echo the same as Ron and it's not easy to sit up here and speak.

XIV. EXECUTIVE SESSION:

XV. ADJOURNMENT:

Councilor Murphy made a motion to adjourn the council meeting at 7:37 pm. Councilor Snyder seconded. With no objection the council meeting was adjourned at 7:37 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kristen Cushman, Town Clerk

Explanatory note #1: All items in the CONSENT CALENDAR are considered routine and are proposed for adoption by the Town Council with one motion without DISCUSSION or deliberation. If DISCUSSION on any item is desired, any member of the Council or public may request the removal of an item for it to be placed in the regular agenda prior to the motion to approve the Consent Agenda.

Explanatory Note #2: In the interest of effect decision-making: At 10:00 p.m., the Chairman shall poll the Council and Town Manager to identify remaining items which shall be carried forward to the next Regular Meeting.

Explanatory Note #3: A Councilor who feels the need for the Council excusing his/her absence will make the request to the Town Manager or the Town Clerk prior to the meeting.