

**Center Harbor Board of Selectmen  
Meeting Minutes  
Wednesday, August 3, 2022**

**CALL TO ORDER:** At 6:00 p.m. Chairman Richard Drenkhahn called the Board of Selectmen's meeting to order. Selectmen William Ricciardi and Harry Viens were present. Rich Bergeron, Road Agent Jeff Haines, Maureen Criasia, Father John Budke, Roland Garland, Sharon O'Donnell, Janan Hayes, Stephanie Marchant Lavallo, Derek Kline and Gracie Running Fisher were also in attendance.

**AGENDA REVIEW:** - A Non-Public with Chief Chase was added to the agenda.

**MEETING MINUTES:**

- **July 20, 2022 Board of Selectmen's meeting:** Mr. Viens motioned to approve the minutes of the July 20, 2022 Board of Selectmen's meeting as presented electronically. Mr. Drenkhahn seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous.

**APPOINTMENTS:**

**RICH BERGERON:**

- **Immaculate Conception Apostolate School:** Mr. Drenkhahn recognized Mr. Bergeron noting that he had submitted several questions to the Select Board in advance of the meeting which Mr. Drenkhahn would address. Mr. Drenkhahn stated that:
  - The Town Police had, contrary to Mr. Bergeron's accusations, over the years, investigated several complaints regarding the School and that when the investigations were completed the results were referred to the County Attorney's Office for determination and resolution. As the victims of these events were juveniles the records are sealed and can only be released by the victims. If he has any further questions, he should contact the County Attorney.
  - The Town became aware that the School had not filed the required A9 forms for several years in May 2022 due to a clerical oversight. The Town attorney was contacted and a process and timetable were established, which the Town is following on advice of Counsel.
  - The Town revoked the Non-Profit status of the School at the previous Select Board meeting and sent notification to the Officers of the Corporation.
  - The Town is not allowed to impose "back taxes" which were not billed but can only collect taxes going forward from the date that the No-profit status changed.
  - In his correspondence Mr. Bergeron had made comments regarding Planning Board Charley Hanson's intentions which the Select Board will not address, adding that he should contact Mr. Hanson directly.

Mr. Bergeron then read a statement to the Board. A written copy of the statement as read was submitted to the board. A photocopy of the statement is attached to these minutes.

**ROAD AGEND JEFF HAINES:**

- **2022 road repairs:** Mr. Haines submitted road work proposals for the Selectmen’s review. Mr. Drenkhahn motioned to enter into the following agreement with GMI Asphalt:

- Coe Hill Road \$212,974.75
- High Haith Road (Segment #2) \$ 54,269.00

He added that there would be a fund balance exceeding \$100,000 which would be rolled over into the next set of road projects. Mr. Haines will provide copies of the final executed contracts to the Board.

Mr. Viens seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous.

- **Boardwalk repairs:** No discussion at this time, awaiting inspection report.
- **Other Business:** Mr. Haines reported that temporary repairs to a culvert draining onto the property of Janet Stitt had been completed. Mr. Viens reported that Ms. Stitt had contacted him to express her thanks and complete satisfaction with the repairs.

**PUBLIC INPUT:**

- Gracie Running Fisher of 42 Plymouth Street spoke regarding the poor condition of the Town baseball field noting that it was not usable in its current condition. She requested the Town repair/restore the field. Mr. Drenkhahn said the Town will evaluate the condition and determine what is required to restore the field.
- Roland Garland provided an update on the status of the Historical Society. He stated that the COVID shutdown had caused the Society to cease operations and after several attempts to revive membership and reconstitute the Board without success the Society had contacted the Charitable Trust Attorney General’s Office and were given permission to operate with the two remaining Board members (Mr. Garland and Mr. Laffey). The Society has rented space in Senter’s Market on the second floor and will move the collection into that space after it has been thoroughly cleaned of mold, dust etc. The society will operate this space as a museum until repairs to the School house are completed. He noted that the collection has been curated, documented and carefully recorded, providing example of the hard drives, thumb drives, inventory forms and provenance files for each item in the collection, as well as copies of the binders that carried copies of this information. He added that there were some disputes between two individuals that contained misinformation and that anybody with questions about the Society operations should contact him and get both sides of the story.

**SELECTMEN’S REPORTS:** None

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

**BREEZELINE FRANCHISE AGREEMENT:** Awaiting comment on the Attorneys Audit questions from Breezeline.

**UNATTENDED CHILDREN'S POLICY:** A recommendation has been submitted to the Board. The Board has requested information on policies from neighboring Towns before making a final decision.

**SALE OF FIRE DEPARTMENT SKID UNIT:** The Selectmen previously opened, and reviewed, the following bid:

Northwood Fire Department. Northwood would like to trade 8 lengths NSPH year 2018 of 1-3/4 fire attack hose totaling 400 feet. The proposal reported the hose is in good condition, just passed the annual testing and was valued \$1,600 when new. They would also include two used 1-1/2 125 combination nozzles valued new at \$1,030.

The Selectmen had requested input from Fire Chief Tyler Driscoll. Chief Driscoll recommended, via email, trading the skid unit for the hose and nozzles; he feels it would be a smart move. Mr. Drenkhahn motioned to approve the transfer of the skid unit to the Northwood Fire Department in exchange for hose and nozzles per Chief Driscoll's recommendation. Mr. Ricciardi seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous.

**2021 AUDIT:**

- **Management letter:** Mr. Drenkhahn motioned to approve the management letter for the 2021 audit. Mr. Viens seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous.

**LC CENTER HARBOR:**

- **Inspection of Camp Eagle's Cliff:** Mr. Doucette has inspected the site and is currently going back through the records to match permits with the work done on the site. He will file a report as soon as is practical. A short health report was submitted by the Health Officer.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**LIBRARY:**

- **Repairs:** The Selectmen were notified of a broken window at the Library.
- **Disposition of stored Town ledgers/reports:** Mr. Viens reported he would help box up the various materials and would contact Mr. Garland prior to let him know when he would be able to do so.
- **Library roof:** The repairs to the Library's roof have begun.

**JOINT MEETING WITH LOCAL SELECT BOARD AND FIRE CHIEFS:** All the Selectmen are available (at this moment) for all the proposed dates and times. Chief Driscoll should proceed with scheduling a meeting.

**ACCEPTANCE OF UNANTICIPATED FUNDS PER RSA 31:95:** Mr. Viens motioned to accept the following unanticipated Primex Insurance Premium Holiday distributions:

- Property & Liability \$3,342.23
- Workers' Compensation \$2,109.16
- Unemployment Compensation \$ 294.42

Mr. Ricciardi seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous.

**TOWN BEACH PARKING VIOLATIONS:** Parks & Recreation Director Sandy Frost submitted information on repeat offenders of the Town Beach parking regulations. The Board would like to discuss the repetitive parking violations with Ms. Frost and Police Chief Mark Chase,

**ADDITIONAL BUSINESS:**

**FIRE DEPARTMENT:**

- **Membership:** Mr. Drenkhahn motioned to appoint Alex Markarian as a member of the Fire Department on the recommendation of Chief Driscoll. Mr. Viens seconded and the vote was unanimous.

**Conservation Commission:** Mr. Drenkhahn motioned to appoint Mark Hildebrand to the Conservation Commission. Mr. Ricciardi seconded and the vote was unanimous.

**MUNICIPAL BUILDING ADDITIONS/RENOVATIONS LOAN:** The Selectmen received notification from Meredith Village Savings Bank that the loan, in the amount of \$860,000 for the additions and renovations to the Municipal Building was paid in full on July 11, 2022.

**GOFERR FUNDS:** The Selectmen received notification that the Town will receive the second GOFERR installment of \$57,422.27. A public hearing to accept the funds is scheduled for August 31, 2022.

**PAYROLL AND CURRENT BILLS PAYABLE:** Mr. Drenkhahn motioned to approve the payroll and accounts payable manifests as presented. Mr. Viens seconded the motion and the motion passed.

**GENERAL JOURNAL ENTRIES:** Mr. Drenkhahn motioned to approve the general journal entries as presented. Mr. Viens seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous.

**CORRESPONDENCE:**

**SHEILA BURKE:**

- **High Haith Boat Launch:** Ms. Burke requested, now that the High Haith Boat Launch has been designated a “resident’s only” area, the Selectmen consider implementing a “Paddler’s Pass” for Meredith residents to use in accessing that site for human-powered craft. She suggested there could be an annual, reasonable fee.

Ms. Burke reported she feels, from a safety perspective, the closing of the parking area to non-residents is a loss for area paddlers and rowers; there are now only three points of public access to Squam Lake, two of those require paddling through the major power boat traffic channels and the third requires driving to the other side of the lake – an additional 40 minutes of travel for Meredith residents.

Ms. Burke referenced the high degree of cooperation between the two towns:

- A cooperative agreement involving the Meredith Transfer Station (note: the Town of Center Harbor pays over \$200,000 to use the Meredith Transfer Station).
- Center Harbor residents have free and open access to Lake Waukegan Town Beach, Meredith launches at Lake Waukegan, Meredith Bay, and he believes the public launch at Meredith Neck (note: non-Meredith residents pay a \$20 launch fee).
- We share access to the Inter-Lakes Schools (note: the Town of Center Harbor pays over \$3.4 million dollars for Center Harbor children to attend school in the Inter-Lakes School District).

Ms. Burke reported she feels it makes sense for the historic cooperation to extend to the High Haith Boat Launch for the sake of good will between the towns. She feels canoeists and kayakers are typically very respectful of the natural environments in which they paddle and, in many cases, gather and dispose of trash when they find it on the water's edge and in the launch and parking areas they utilize to help maintain a clean and enjoyable space for all. Ms. Burke reported she has never experienced an incident of overcrowding at the High Haith Boat Launch.

**SHARON O'DONNELL:**

- **The State of the Loon presentation:** Ms. O'Donnell submitted, via email, a flyer on The State of the Loon presentation scheduled for August 10, 2022 at the Meredith Community Center from 6:00 to 7:30 PM. The event is free and open to the public.

**CONSTRUCTION PERMITS:** The Selectmen reviewed the following approved construction permits:

Stefano	TML 103-10
Earl	TML 104-19, Lot 19
Martin	TML 105-5
Rich	TML 209-7
Hornkohl	TML 212-27
White	TML 224-19

**PUBLIC INPUT:** Ms. Criasia requested that Mr. Doucette's report on the Camp property include the Health Officer's report. She also requested that there be an inspection regarding the disposal of wastewater on the property.

**Non-Public # 1:** At 7:18 Mr. Drenkhahn motioned to go into Non-Public session per RSA 91-A:3, II(b) to discuss the hiring of any person as a public employee. Mr. Ricciardi seconded the motion. Roll call: Mr. Drenkhahn – aye, Mr. Ricciardi – aye, Mr. Viens – aye. There was a discussion with Chief Chase regarding a hiring opportunity. At 7:38 Mr. Drenkhahn motioned to come out of Non-Public. Mr. Ricciardi seconded the motion. Roll call: Mr. Drenkhahn – aye, Mr. Ricciardi – aye, Mr. Viens-aye.

**Non-Public #2:** At 7:39 Mr. Drenkhahn motioned to go into Non-Public session per RSA 91-A:3, II(e) to discuss pending litigation. Mr. Ricciardi seconded the motion. Roll Call: Mr. Drenkhahn – aye, Mr. Ricciardi – aye, Mr. Viens – aye. There was a discussion regarding pending litigation. At 7:58 Mr. Drenkhahn motioned to come out of Non-Public. Mr. Ricciardi seconded the motion. Roll call: Mr. Drenkhahn – aye, Mr. Ricciardi – aye, Mr. Viens-aye.

**ADJOURNMENT:** At 8:00 PM Mr. Viens motioned to Adjourn. Mr. Ricciardi seconded and the vote was unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,

Harry Viens,  
Selectman

I want to start by thanking the board for allowing me to speak with you tonight on this issue. I have some remarks to share and would like to follow that up with a few questions for the board members if I may.

This all started out for me as a simple property tax investigation. Since my early digging on that subject it became a deep dive into a much more serious matter. The Immaculate Conception Apostolate School on Doane Road represents a stain on this community that cannot be washed away. It is basically a crime scene. However, the decades of child abuse that happened there do not get nearly as much attention as the abuses perpetrated at state-operated institutions garnered in recent months. You can't open Facebook these days without seeing an ad asking victims to come forward to tell their harrowing stories on that front. Yet, there are no such efforts to locate victims and abusers related to the Immaculate Conception Apostolate School abuses. The Legionaries of Christ who ran the school have also been implicated in abuses at multiple other schools across the nation and the world. They have admittedly "begun pathways of healing with around 56 victims of the approximately 170 victims who are known to it throughout the world."

To put this whole debacle in perspective, the Legionaries of Christ was founded by an evil man who pretended to be Godly. They were built and cultivated into a powerful and influential sect by a deviant and disturbed person who abused his own children along with countless other innocent victims. My investigation so far reveals that the same kind of duplicity that protected the founder from prosecution is still a factor in the current administration of the group.

The protection and insulation of offending members goes up the chain all the way to at least two popes who waited too long to act on reports of abuse by the founder. Pope John Paul II and Pope Benedict both had extensive knowledge of crimes committed within the legionaries ranks. The Catholic Church even took the entire order over at one point to clean up their image.

There are two mantras I follow in my investigative reporting career that apply here. The first is follow the money. I only heard about this story thanks to the work of the International Consortium ~~on~~ <sup>of</sup> Investigative Journalists. I am coordinating directly with them to hopefully inspire arrests of individuals named as abusers who are currently based out of the country. The ICJ is responsible for some of the best groundbreaking collaborative reporting on the Panama Papers, which details massive amounts of offshore holdings designed to defer taxes. The Legionaries of Christ had access to some major financing which reports claim was in excess of \$1 billion at one point. Most of it was held in tax havens offshore in the names of nominee members so that the order could publicly state that it had no direct control over the funds. ~~Clearing~~ One of the methods of insulating themselves from accountability was the sect's habit of providing very expensive gifts to higher ups in the Catholic Church as well as serving as prolific fund raisers for the church. They are still effectively using the same tactics now to silence victims, except the money is not all going to the church now. Some of it is flowing to victims to guarantee they will never report their abuse.

The Legionaries of Christ are currently selling the former school property for \$8 million. Follow the money, and you will see the "reckoning" they say they are volunteering to face is just a sick joke. The only thing they are reconciling is the coverup.

That brings me to my second mantra: The coverup is always worse than the crime. My articles for Planbjustice.com on this story will be called The Sins of Omission Series. I honestly believe the most offensive aspect of this scandal is happening right now right under all of your noses. This town and this state, and perhaps even the federal government are all continuing to enable this religious sect to get away with what amounts to delayed-payment prostitution. And the Legionaries are getting tax breaks throughout the entirety of this effort to help facilitate this blatant obstruction of justice. They pretend to be an open book when it comes to publishing the details of what they call "credible" allegations. Yet they have not provided the measure of support and help necessary to prosecute a single abuser. One abuser from Center Harbor already died before any conviction against him could be sought. Time is running out. More pressure needs to be applied on this group to walk the walk instead of just talking the talk on reconciliation and atonement. Nobody who rapes and abuses children should ever be told to go home and pray as the founder of this sect was after he was caught. Tears and apologies are a good start, but it's a hollow gesture that only serves to pour salt on the wounds of those most damaged by this scandal.

If you really want to know the true story behind how the founder of this sect perpetrated his crimes, there is actually a feature film called "Perfect Obedience" that you can watch on Prime Video. It is an inside look at how the founder groomed his victims by claiming he suffered from great pain that could only be relieved by way of sexual gratification. He brainwashed young boys into performing these acts, claiming he had permission from Pope Pius himself to request their help in alleviating his so called pain.

The bottom line is you are all being lied to. This order can tell you up and down that they encourage victims to cooperate with authorities, but the reality is they are doing the opposite. They are preaching far and wide about how much they are doing to address the abuse, but they are not backing up their words with any concrete actions to assist law enforcement. On top of this, the fact that they have not filed the right paperwork every year to retain their tax exempt status means they can have that status revoked just due to that lack of paperwork alone. The town should coordinate with the state to exercise the right to revoke that tax exempt status under the circumstances.

The young victims who suffered such unspeakable abuse under the direction and supervision of this sect deserve a greater measure of justice than they've been getting thus far from the Legionaries of Christ. The town should make a more solid effort to demand that justice is served and arrests are facilitated through full cooperation from the Legionaries, not just empty promises they have broken time and again. Just think about all the traditional punishments for criminally convicted pedophiles who aren't protected by a cabal of clergy like this one. They must at a bare minimum register as sex offenders anywhere they go. Some states even allow for chemical castration of repeat violators. I am pretty sure there has never been a convicted child abuser sentenced to go home to rest and pray in any jurisdiction in this country. That should never happen in any country, but that is the historical approach these sect members used to address monumental abuses by their founder.



I will conclude with the words of that founder's son Raul Gonzalez, who was severely abused along with his younger brother by their own father:

"You can cry, the guys of the church can cry. Like Pope Benedict cried when he went to Malta. Tears dry. They dry. Your heart and your soul is affected all your life...

"The pain you feel. The rage you have inside your soul," Gonzales continued. "[Maciel] stole my soul. I'm the soul that pushes on my brother. I want to help him. Even if I die, I want to help my brother first.

"Pope Benedict in 2006 moved my father, ~~my daddy, or Marcial Maciel~~ to rest. To pray. Why didn't he bring him to jail?

"And Benedict, he tries to start to make it clean. He said, months ago, that he's going to start looking out for victims. Okay. Maybe it's not his job specifically -- that's the job of the Legion. But the pope has to tell those guys to start doing something," ~~Gonzalez said.~~

"Six million dollars was my inheritance that my dad promised us," ~~he said.~~ "And I will ask a question. If I offer you ten million dollars, would you let yourself be raped for nine years?"

I should also note for the record before I close my remarks that I formally asked the spokeswoman from The Legionaries of Christ to send a representative of their own to this meeting. She declined that offer. I have also asked to speak with administrators and legal representatives, but thus far I have only been receiving answers to questions from their PR department.

Questions: What is the status of your inquiry into the Legionaries absence of paperwork to justify their tax exempt status?

How long has this matter been left to the selectmen of this town to address?

Has any paperwork been submitted by the Legionaries since I first addressed this tax exempt issue with the Planning Board?

How long will you wait for that paperwork to arrive before you act on this issue and consider revoking their tax exempt status?