

**Spring Hill Farm Advisory Committee**  
**January 18, 2021**  
**7:00 PM**  
**Approved Minutes**

**Present (Remotely):**

Beth Sautter, Chair  
Corinna Reishus  
Chuck Myette  
Kristina Snyder  
Cindy LeBlanc  
Maria Oakley (joined at 7:03)  
Colin Costine, Alternate

**Members of the Public Present (Remotely):**

Gerald (Buddy) Menard  
Alex Bartels  
Richard LeBlanc  
Nancy Myette

**Members absent:**

Stephen O. Landau

**I. Call to Order**

Chair Sautter called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

**II. Approval of minutes**

Chair Sautter said line 76, "Chair Sautter noted that obtaining the list of things to be done would cost..." The evaluation would cost \$2,850, not the changes. Mr. Myette noted it should say the proposal was received from Cowan and Goudreau Architects PLLC.

Ms. Reishus suggested striking line 88, "It would realistically really be used." It's out of context and not attributed to anyone. Ms. Snyder said it related to her asking whether the building will ever be inhabited, and expressing that townspeople are concerned about the expense of an additional town building. Ms. Reishus will reword it to say, "There is concern for how much the buildings would be used." She will also add, "Ms. Snyder has heard a few townspeople remark that they're leery of taking on another town building."

Ms. Reishus said on line 112, the minute taker left out the budget status and treasurer's report. She has notes from the meeting, so will add that section to the minutes. On line 117, she will add the number three before alternates, for clarification.

46 *Ms. Reishus moved to accept the minutes as amended. Chair Sautter seconded the motion.*  
48 *A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed unanimously.*

### 50 **III. Old Business**

#### 52 **A. Barn restoration project update – Trust grant application status**

54 Chair Sautter said the Trust is moving forward with the application. The letter of intent  
56 has been accepted, and they are applying for a 1:1 match of \$10,000, totaling \$20,000.  
The repair will include foundation work, stone and sill repair. The grant is due February  
12<sup>th</sup>.

58 Mr. Myette said the grant is through the New Hampshire Preservation Alliance, 1772  
60 grant. \$10,000 will come from the Alliance. The Trust will match with funds raised  
through the fall festival, donations, selling hay, etc. The grant requires that the Trust  
62 owns or leases the building, so the selectmen are putting together a lease for the Trust  
to lease the buildings.

64 On the Trust fiscal management side, Rich LeBlanc is putting together financials. The  
committee received an assessment from the New Hampshire Preservation Alliance a  
66 couple of years ago. Mr. Myette contacted JR Groton of Northfield, who is putting  
together a proposal for the work that needs to be done. If the proposal is less than  
68 \$20,000, the committee can stretch it to get as much work done as possible. Mr. Groton  
will have the proposal ready by February 12<sup>th</sup>.

70 Mr. LeBlanc will obtain the final figure from the bank regarding the 501(c)3 account.  
72 He thinks it's in excess of \$5,000.

### 74 **IV. New Business**

#### 76 **A. Leases for 2021**

78 Chair Sautter said the lease for High Tunnel is signed, sealed, and delivered for 2021.  
The committee rewrote Christy and Nick's contract, which runs from December to  
80 December. The committee needs to think about hay for the coming year.

82 Mr. Bartels and Mr. Menard made a presentation, asking the committee to consider  
allowing them to graze cows on the farm. Mr. Bartels said their short-term goal is to  
84 raise cattle; the long-term goal is to sell processed or live animals and provide an  
opportunity to educate the public. They plan to improve the pasture and fence lines.

86 Mr. Menard said they will move the animals between the farm property and other  
88 properties they already own. Chair Sautter asked if they were hoping for a lease and Mr.  
Bartels said yes, for the fields, the barn and the three lean-tos. The number of cows will  
90 be between 10-20. Chair Sautter said they have to consider the loss of hay revenue. Ms.

92 LeBlanc said the Trust has been selling hay for the last two years and has steady  
customers. They would have to figure out how to share the fields.

94 Mr. Myette said the Trust has a fiduciary responsibility to raise revenues to care for the  
buildings and activities at the farm. Without the fall festival, there was a loss of revenue.  
96 The only revenue was the hay Mr. LeBlanc and Mr. Myette obtained and sold from the  
fields. The funds gotten from High Tunnel went into the general fund. The committee  
98 needs to look at the entire plan to see how it could work.

100 Mr. Menard offered to help to get fields back that are leased. The cows can rotate from  
the property they already have and provide fertilizer instead of having to purchase it. Mr.  
102 Bartels could bring back maple syrup to the farm. Mr. Menard owns an excavation  
company and they could work out an arrangement that would benefit the farm. They  
104 would have calves on the farm that families could bottle-feed on a donation basis, with  
the proceeds going to the Trust. They are willing to help with the general upkeep in  
106 place of or as part of a financial benefit from the lease. The farm could possibly provide  
opportunities for community service hours.

108 Mr. Costine said only the fields near the barn have water, but Mr. Menard said they're  
110 willing to run water tanks off of trucks. Mr. Menard suggested taking a cutting off the  
field early in the summer, and then putting animals into pasture. He said perhaps they  
112 could buy hay from the Trust.

114 Mr. Myette said they have worked out situations like this in the past with tenants.  
There's a benefit to the farmer and to the town. He said they've gotten up to 2,000 bales  
116 from the fields, though it's generally less because they haven't always seen a second cut.  
They've only gotten two cuts from Lane Road because they had to wait until after July 1  
118 to avoid the nesting bobolinks. Chair Sautter said the naturalist said they're not an  
endangered bird, and the habitat was not conducive to them, so they don't come there.

120 Mr. Costine asked if there were animals pastured on hill behind Wason Road field and  
122 Mr. Myette said yes, there have been cows and horses. The field has started to overgrow,  
so it needs to be cut back, and grazing would be the right way to do it. He said there was  
124 a question on Facebook about 4H clubs in Chester. Ms. Reishus said there is one club  
that uses the community center and other town buildings, but not the farm. She thought  
126 older children in the summer program would be able to help on the farm, but they have  
to consider safety issues.

128 Mr. LeBlanc was asked to speak to the haying operation at the farm. He and Mr. Myette  
130 pulled in and sold 300 bales of hay. There are problems with the equipment. He  
proposes taking back Wason Field and the field on the hill behind the farm in order to  
132 raise more money for farm and barn restoration. He wasn't planning to hay on Lane  
Road; he and Mr. Myette are the only ones haying and it's a big job. They could use  
134 help. He believes they'll get around 600 bales next year. In the past, someone had beef  
cows on the farm, but they trampled the hay around the farm. The manure was too fresh  
136 to mow the grass, so there was no benefit to the farm.

The selectmen want the farm to be productive. Several people have made donations to the fund. Mr. LeBlanc hopes that by this summer, they will break \$10,000 in funds for barn work. The lean-tos are currently being used to store equipment.

Mr. Myette said they have to try to put the pieces together. They have to find a way to return funds to the farm to be able to care for the buildings and the upkeep. The committee has to figure out a combination that works for the benefit of the town, the farm and the townspeople. He thanked Mr. Bartels and Mr. Menard for their presentation, and will notify them of the committee's decision.

Ms. Reishus would like to see a written proposal. Mr. Menard said everything is fluid, and they would work out an arrangement that would fit everyone. It would be ideal for them to use the field behind the barn since it's near the barn, and has water and electric, but they aren't opposed to anything. Ms. LeBlanc said they need to figure out how to share the property so the Trust can benefit from the hay production, and Mr. Bartels and Mr. Menard can benefit from their plan.

Chair Sautter said the concept sounded good, but was quite large. She suggested starting with baby steps: create a relationship, try it for a year, and see how it works. Mr. Menard said they hope to join the Trust and offer their help around the farm.

Chair Sautter said one-year leases are difficult when dealing with agriculture, since people need to plan ahead. Mr. Myette said it's a state regulation, if money is involved. If there are no monies involved, they can have a longer lease, or a lease that automatically extends beyond one year. If the lease is for more than a year, it has to go to a warrant article for the town to approve. Ms. Reishus will get the information on this regulation to Mr. Myette tomorrow to bring to the next meeting.

## **B. Fun Day at the Farm – joint venture with Recreation Department**

Chair Sautter said at the November meeting, the committee discussed having a fun day at the farm this winter, a joint venture with the recreation department. Mr. Myette suggested hay rides, sleigh rides, a bonfire, skating on the pond. The back hill has briar brush growing up that would not be a good landing spot for sledding, so they will need to work on that next year. They could sled on Lane Road.

Ms. Reishus said since we're still dealing with COVID, this may not be the best year for it. She suggested a March leprechaun pot of gold hunt at the farm, like the scavenger hunt at Wason Pond. She will bring it up at the next meeting. She will contact the Rockingham Herb Society to see if they'd be willing to do something at the farm to bring in some energy. Ms. LeBlanc hopes to do food-scaping this year.

## **C. Membership**

Chair Sautter said there are three slots available on the committee, and they should look at bringing in at least two more people. Ms. Reishus said they are down two from regular membership and one alternate.

#### **D. Treasurer's Report**

Ms. Reishus said the total expenditures as of December 31st were \$933.61, which includes the monthly electricity, heating oil and the two trust insurance fees charges. The insurance payment covers through September 17, 2021, so there will be no additional charges for this current fiscal year. It's not coming out of committee's budget, but out of the general insurance budget. January expenses have not been posted as of yet.

The total budget remaining is \$3,316.39 out of the \$4,250.00 – 21.97% budget used to date. The committee should be able to do some kind of event this winter or spring in lieu of the fall festival, since they do have those monies.

*Ms. Snyder moved to accept the treasurer's report. Ms. LeBlanc second the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed unanimously.*

#### **E. February meeting**

Chair Sautter said the February meeting is on President's Day and asked if the committee wanted to move it. They said no, they could meet on that day.

Ms. Reishus asked for an update on the Lane Road brush clearing. Chair Sautter spoke with Bob, who has piled and separated the wood-burning wood and the brush. The trees have been cleaned up and the wood cut, but not removed. Mr. Costine said if there's snow on the ground, they can have a bonfire to burn the brush. They don't need a permit just have to notify the fire department. Chair Sautter said they could also burn the tattered flags.

*Chair Sautter moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:21 PM. Ms. Snyder seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed unanimously.*

*Respectfully submitted,  
Beth Haggeli, Recording Secretary*