

HUDSON, NH BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Minutes of the October 19, 2022 Meeting

1. CALL TO ORDER - by Chairperson Roy the meeting of October 19, 2022 at 7:00 p.m. in the Buxton Community Room at Town Hall

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE led by Executive Assistant, Jill Laffin

3. ATTENDANCE

Board of Selectmen: Brett Gagnon, Bob Guessferd, Marilyn McGrath, Kara Roy

Excused Absence: Dave Morin

Staff/Others: Steve Malizia, Town Administrator; Jill Laffin, Executive Assistant; Rick Alpers, Primex Group Facilitator

4. NEW BUSINESS

A. Board of Selectmen Visioning Session

Chairperson Roy introduced Rick Alpers from Primex who will be lead us in our visioning session tonight. All right, so I'll turn it over to you. Mr. Alpers began by saying, thank you. Good evening. It's great to be here tonight and thanks for having me down. Just to, you know, a little bit of an update. Who is Primex? Why do we do this? Why do insurance companies like this get into this line of work? And people ask that sometimes. And, you know, New Hampshire is a public risk pool in New Hampshire. They've been around since 1979, providing nearly every town, city, school and county in New Hampshire, minus Manchester and Nashua, with their insurance services, property liability, workers compensation and all that risk management training that goes along with it claims processing in-house. And we've been pleased to partner with Hudson for many years now along that, long, that line.

And so people like I said at the beginning, why would Primex venture down this road? We love working with elected bodies like yourselves, governing boards. Because what we find is governing boards that work well together it trickles down through the organization. Governing bodies that work well with their administrator, manager, a superintendent, whatever it might be, it usually flows well through the rest of the organization. So what we find from a risk perspective is if we could help assist in any way like that, it's better for you as a member and it's better for the pool. When there's chaos in communities, there's chaos on the risk management side generally is what we see. We can see that correlation. So that's not why we're here tonight, which is good news. We're here to sort of just help you sort of look ahead vision-wise. And so I want to spend a little bit of time tonight. This is a small enough group that we probably won't take a whole ton of time, to be honest with you. Usually we've got much larger groups and there all sorts of voices and it takes a little bit of time.

Mr. Alpers went on to say, but what's different here tonight is that we're not setting goals in a sense. We might come back and do that down the road. But we're really looking at the vision of the community. Just taking a moment, and sometimes if you've been around, you've been doing it long enough that sometimes it's always it's the next fire. We're just putting out the next fire. It's moving to this project, this one's coming down the pike, and sometimes we don't have a lot of time to just sit and reflect and actually think; strategically think about where we want to go as a community. We have an idea, right? We have a little bit of an idea. We have some guidance at times, but sometimes we struggle as maybe as governing boards and elected and just really looking at, all right, how do we drive this ship and how long is it going to take? Because running local government and steering it is something like a battleship at times. You can't do it overnight. We talked about that before it started. Right? It's not immediate, but it takes time and commitment. And you can do it and you can be successful, but you just patience comes along with it as well.

So what I really want to talk about here tonight, I just wanted to sort of. Have you done anything like this before? I think I talked to Steve and I think it's been a number of years since this has happened. The Town Administrator replied I seem to recall once, many years ago. I don't think anybody in this

group participated that would have probably been in the mid 00's. Mr. Alpers then said so maybe just can we go around the room and just let me know how long you've been on the Board and anything like that. How long in the community?

The Board went around the table introducing themselves saying: Brett Gagnon been here about a year and a half, so. Bob Guessferd just over a year. Kara Roy, about three and a half. Marilyn McGrath A lifetime. Mr. Alpers replied, I think you mentioned that to me before. and thank you for doing what you do. and what you all do is just not easy work some days. You know, sometimes you get a room full of people who are a little bit fired up and want answers and have questions. And it's not the easiest thing to do to sit up there and sort of take sometimes that constructive criticism.

So you saw my email. Hopefully, I think that Jill sent out to you about that little paragraph. I'm starting to get the juices flowing, but let's have a conversation first before we start putting things down on paper. Let's talk about what's going well in Hudson right now. Let's just think about that for a second. Look that sit in. Sometimes we don't reflect on some of the accomplishments that maybe you've had as a Board, as a community, and maybe in recent years. What's going well for the community right now? Selectman Guessferd replied, I mean, the way I think... I think the day to day running of the town of the different departments, I think most people would say and I would agree that it runs pretty, pretty well. Maybe not I mean, maybe it could be more efficient, but I think it's going pretty well. I think our citizens get good value for their dollar in terms of the service that they get.

Selectman Gagnon then said top on that, you know, I, I see a lot of good things going. I think a lot of our department heads, although I don't have experience with other towns, from what I hear from senior members and from residents, you know, DPW does a phenomenal job with what they're given. You know, we run a very or Steve certainly runs a very tight ship as far as finances. But the value we get out of it for DPW, roads plowed, maintenance roads, the police station, the fire station, all of our major assets, if you will, are seemingly up to snuff. Very good. Running well, I think that's pretty impressive.

Mr. Alpers, who was listing the Boards responses on a pad of paper said, don't mind my chicken scratch. Took many years to perfect this chicken scratch, but it does help me when I get back to the office and craft reports. What else? Chairperson Roy said so I think that we have a lot of community support. There's a lot of organizations that help the town, I guess, perform the way that it does, if that makes sense. Selectman Guessferd asked, like volunteerism? To which the Chair replied, yeah, like volunteerism. And just kind of like for me, the pandemic really brought forth that it just was just a lot of community there that did amazing things without necessarily the government. You know what I mean? Selectman Guessferd then said yeah, organizations around town pitch in to make this a better place.

The Town Administrator said well we have a nationally accredited police department. It's probably the mid 00's. We are a desirable location for police employees to come work. That's definitely an attraction for getting quality candidates, qualified candidates. And we are very particular. If you get employed here as a police officer and a lot of other positions, you've really made the grade by coming here. We have a very highly trained Fire/EMS service with paramedic level on the ambulance side of things. I think they're very highly trained and highly skilled. We have a pretty good size older population in town, as evidenced by the 55 plus communities that have been built in the last dozen years. And people always speak to and I think you mentioned it when you come across the border from Nashua to Hudson, you know, when you're in Hudson, because the roads are way better off than they are in Nashua, particularly when it comes to winter maintenance. So for the relatively modest sized crew, I think they get a lot done. From a service perspective, I mean, we pick up your trash curbside. We you know, we sweep the roads. We do a lot of infrastructure with our in-house forces. So I think there's a lot of bang for your buck that way. And we typically have one of the better and I say better, lower, tax rates in the general area. So I think citizens appreciate that. Nobody likes paying taxes. We all pay them here. We don't get a discount, but we try to get the most for the money, the best bang for the buck.

The Town Administrator went on to say and I, I generally think people respect the work that everybody does here. I think that's a that's a fair statement. They're not coming in with pitchforks and trying to burn the place down. I think, you know, we do try to do more with less. Just a couple of small other examples. We run two utilities. We run a water utility with 6,500 customers, and we have a sewer utility with over 5,000 customers. We haven't had a rate increase on the water since we bought it 23 years ago. So we're running a very efficient utility. Same could be said for the sewer. So if you are a sewer or water customer, your rates haven't changed in many years. And we've done

infrastructure, capital, a lot of infrastructure through our engineering department, our DPW folks, we just completed some transfer station work, makes it much more efficient for the for the general public who utilizes that facility. It makes it more compliant with the EPA. I mean, I would say that we are trying to stay and keep up with all of the new requirements that are out there, whether they're environmental, safety, efficiency, you know, small but mighty is maybe the way to look at it.

Selectman Gagnon then said I think the key word is infrastructure. I think I think Hudson, I think yourself, especially in your department heads do a very good job of keeping up infrastructure. The Town Administrator went on to say, it's sometimes it's a battle because, again, people don't like to spend money. We were fortunate to get ARPA, American Rescue Plan funds that were able to tick off some pretty good sized items on the checklist. So I think that's been very helpful. But, you know, generally speaking, once they're educated on it, the residents have been pretty good about...they voted for the police station bond after a couple of years. We're going to be expanding the building where the police station is. When it was built originally 25 years ago, it was probably undersized for the needs and now it's definitely undersized. So we're going to have an expansion after a couple of tries. The voters approved that. So I think there was a lot of sales pitch that went into that. There was a lot of education to the public and it's a need that didn't go away. And I think everybody did a really good job working together to get that infrastructure, that critical infrastructure. Because we know what policing is like nowadays. It's not an easy profession, you know, and again, with the accredited force we have, we just want to make sure we keep it up to the standards. Mr. Alpers replied, being CALEA certified is great! There's a small discount for that. The Town Administrator replied, I think it helps on the insurance.

Chairperson Roy said I think overall we have professional employees. I don't know, I can't speak for my other Board members, but I get very few complaints about how employees conduct themselves when somebody comes into Town Hall. So I think I think that speaks well to the town that, you know, they're professional and. Selectman Guessferd said I'd agree with professionalism too.

Mr. Alpers then asked, what else is going well? Let's look outside regular operations. Look outside regular operations. Department level operations. anything else? Is it development? Is it economic development? Is it conservation? The world goes round and there what else is going well? The Town Administrator replied well, there's been some pretty interesting conservation purchases of recent. I think there's been some flux or some more effort in that area to preserve some of the space that's out there. I can think of Pelham Road and maybe some of the other things we purchased. Selectman Gagnon replied, yeah reasonable. The last two or three years. There has been a thrust in that division and I think that spawned from, as we've said, our vocal residents. So I personally, as someone who really supports that kind of effort, I think that's a great direction that we have a lot of work to do, but it's it's momentum and momentum is everything.

Chairperson Roy added, I think programs that we provide in the Recreation Department and at the Library, they're ever expanding and kind of across the board as far as age and things like that. Selectman Guessferd added, they contribute to our community a great deal. They're very, very important. There's lots for people to do and choose from. The Town Administrator added, from across all ages of the spectrum. We have a Senior Center which was opened now ten years, some number of years we have a dedicated senior center. The library was constructed within a dozen years? The Chair replied, 2009. The Town Administrator went on to say a brand new facility there, which was generously donated to the town. The Chair said yeah, two brothers. The Town Administrator added, two brothers donated the funding for that. For the library. Yeah. Yeah. Pretty significant. So they offer a wealth of programs. As somebody mentioned, the Recreation Department just keeps offering for all different strata, not just sports, other programmatic that I think is very popular in the community.

Selectman Guessferd added in addition to that, we have, although we've lost the newspaper that we had in town, our HCTV is amazing and they do really great work and bring a lot of value again to the community and allow people who have access to it, which is I think almost everyone in one way or the other, the ability to participate one way or the other. If they can't come to meetings, they can stream them like there's people watching tonight. They also have expanded to sports and things like that. They do some sports programming for some of the games at the high school and but they are really contributing factor to this community. I don't think our community would be as, as as great a place if it wasn't for the way that they've grown that. I mean, it's really been a home grown asset that

started very small and has continued to grow. And it's a great way for us to communicate and a great way for people to learn things too.

Selectman Gagnon then said to piggyback on that. Everything is correct. But I think what makes it stand out is most towns have your local cable television. I mean, nobody really watches it. I mean, it's pretty boring dry stuff. Chairperson Roy said people do here, I'm not going to lie. Selectman Gagnon replied, no in Hudson. Yes. Because, I mean, Hudson Cable Television does, I think, a phenomenal job, not just getting the information out, but how they do it. I mean, they have a full broadcast studio, they edit video, they do green screens. I mean, when you walk into their studio, it is highly impressive what they can actually build. And even watching some local television on the other towns comes nowhere close. I mean, they are primetime ready. Honestly, it's very, very impressive what they can do. And it's not just recording meetings. They offer services to the public. So if you are an individual and you're a resident and you want to make a show, we have someone, Flo Nicolas, who just decided to make a show. They helped her make it. It's gone. It's gone kind of crazy. Everyone, you know, it's really important. She's bringing in guests. She's now on NPR News because of her show. So it just goes to show how professional their result is.

After adding these items to the list, Mr. Alpers asked anything else? To which the Town Administrator replied, we're in a great location. Well, that's a double edged sword, though, right? We're in a you know, we're in a certainly in a great location where you can get proximity to the mountains, the proximity to the ocean. You get down to Boston, you get Nashua, you got Manchester. It's great. It's also a negative sometimes. Everybody wants to be here.

Selectman Gagnon said I think that is probably for me, why I'm here tonight. I think Hudson is perfect. It's got beautiful landscapes, hidden gems in the woods, conservation we talked about. But because it's so interesting to live here in low taxes and is drawing in, to me again personally, we're starting to grow without a direction. And that's why I'd like to have your services to figure out how can we keep growing respectfully, but really keep the town with some character and keep those things that bring people here. Cuz if we don't take control of that in a little way, not not governmental overreach, but really having some structure and just kind of saying, oh, let the town do what the town wants to do, capitalism. I think we're gonna, we're gonna squash the benefits of this town.

The Town Administrator said we forgot to mention Benson Park. Selectman Gagnon replied, oh, absolutely. The Town Administrator then explained, so many years ago, there was Benson's Wild Animal Farm. You've probably...maybe you went there. I don't know. But that's been closed for many years. So we we took a basically got a deal from the state. It's a passive recreation area that's enormously popular with Selectman Gagnon said regionally., to which the Town Administrator agreed. It's got a dog park; it's got a Benson. We have a steel from the towers. We have a 9/11 memorial. A couple of legacy buildings there that people can go reminisce and a lot of walking trails. You know, everybody has their prom photos there. I mean, it's just a I mean, I'm not just talking Hudson. I'm talking everybody. Chairperson Roy added if you go there on a nice Saturday you'll probably see a majority of Massachusetts license plates. The Town Administrator went on to say, and you know, the town's maintaining its specifically the DPW guys and a lot of volunteer work has gone into that. So that's a crown jewel and a lot of people come and that's their exposure to Hudson.

Selectman McGrath then said I'll add one thing that everyone else has failed to mention, and that's that with Benson's and the there's a 9/11 memorial there that the selectman that's not here tonight participated and led the effort to have that done. They went down to New York, got steel from the one of the buildings that collapsed, brought it back up here, built this really impressive memorial to 9/11. And I think that that's probably one of the most impressive things that the Town of Hudson has had happen for it. It you know, Benson's was nice to it's a passive aggressive, passive, (laughter) passive aggressive that's probably what I'm thinking. But it's a passive park. It's not there can't be any motorized vehicles in there. It's it's you know, it's just a park walking park and people enjoy it. But I think the 9/11 memorial is probably the most impressive thing about that park and the fact that one of our firefighters who's absent tonight because of family matters, he led the effort and they went like I said, they went down to New York, picked up the beam and brought it back up here and had it had it put in the park. So it's really impressive. And I think that that's that's the one thing that everybody seems to have lost in the discussion about Benson's. You know, that 9/11 happened to the United States, to our government, to I don't know how many people perished in that horrible event. And to think that some of our firefighters went to went about to go and seek that out and bring it back to us so that we could remember that event every year and every year on 9/11. This is an event I think I haven't been able to go for the last couple of years because I'm stuck in this thing. But. I think Alvirne

and the high school, the music department, they've been singing songs there for the last couple of years, patriotic songs. There's a nice remembrance ceremony. So I think that that's probably, for me, the most impressive thing. Mr. Alpers added this to the list.

Selectman Guessferd agreed saying it brings the whole community together. The Town Administrator added, it's typically well attended. And again, I think I don't know what the rest of the state does, but we always do it every year on 9/11 and it always gets a good turnout and a lot of community participation.

Selectman Gagnon then said we have a long list, but I think the two things that pop up from both those conversations is, one, I think the band in town is a is at least a state, if not a nationally achieved. Selectman Guessferd said know. Known band. I mean the music program at Alvirne High School is amazing. But yeah, they do represent the town well. So we have, you know, they're a visual thing in parades and and around the around they do things around the area, not just for 9/11, but a lot of different events and things like that. Both the choral group the typically the B Naturals and and the band to to kind of piggyback on the memorial I've been kind of thinking about does this is this something that is makes sense or not makes sense but that contributes or is is belongs on this list? But I think it does. As a veteran myself, the one thing I know about this town and that I can always count on, is is the level of patriotism in this town. And the 9/11 memorial is probably the most visible aspect of that. But but even before that, this town has always had a very strong patriotic sort of bend to it. Our veteran's organizations in town, VFW, American Legion, are very, very involved in in making sure that there are ceremonies at appropriate times during the year for different things. And they run typically run the Memorial Day parade and that sort of thing. So, I mean, again, that's another part of I think what makes for me this community an excellent community to live.

Chairperson Roy then said, I would say also probably because it wasn't always this way, but the relationship that exists between the Town and the School District has just seen a vast amount of improvement over the last four or five years. Yeah, so it helps us have a little bit more of a sort of symbiotic community.

Mr. Alpers asked, anything else? Let's flip it around now. We're going to flip it around, which is and I get it. And I'm not saying that you speak negatively or but you have to look at what's good and also take a look at what might be a little stale, what needs a little bit of work. I'll leave it like that. I'm not going to say what's broken and what's not. You know what's a little stale? What needs a little work? And then that can be policies. That can be rules. That can be ordinances, that can be development. That could be whatever you think it is that's affecting this community that, you know, I think what Brett said tonight, how do you how do you control growth the best you can, in his view, so you don't lose a certain part of character that Hudson maybe has? So what what's what needs attention? The Town Administrator said traffic. Mr. Alpers replied, I read that in the last minutes. The Town Administrator replied, yeah, so there are three basically major routes that come through town. Route 102, 3A and 111. And not just Hudson, but everybody in the surrounding towns comes through Hudson to get to where they're going. Or at least that's the way it feels. So you've got folks migrating from Windham, Litchfield, Londonderry, Pelham, trying to get to Nashua, trying to get to Route 3. So you have just a lot of traffic coming through town, particularly at commute times. You go out there now and 10:00pm you won't see anybody, but you. Selectman McGrath spoke up saying, you can add the bridges. The Town Administrator replied we have these two bridges. The next thing you've got to go up to just about Manchester to get across the river. So it just creates a lot of rush hour traffic and the frustration that people feel like we're sitting here in traffic all the time, you know, because not only are we popular, I think the area is popular. So, you know, people are building all around southern New Hampshire, which which, you know is good and bad.

Chairperson Roy said so I think to Brett's point is there's I feel like there's a lack of balance when it comes to development. Right? It kind of swings, you know, and I sort of think that goes to things like zoning ordinances and those kinds of things that that we probably need to clean up If we if we wanna give the town a direction to go in as far as things like development.

Selectman McGrath then said it's not just zoning. You need to have the support from the state to allow us to make changes. This town tried to enact a number of years ago, to stop development. To stop development. And we weren't allowed to do that because the state didn't allow that. You had to have good reason and you'd have to, you know, and I forget now it's so many years ago. But, you know, like everybody is always saying, oh, well, let's, you know, we'll just put a stop to development. Well, that's not so easy because the state doesn't allow it. Our legislators don't allow it. And not only

that, but the the landowners don't want to allow it. They want to be able to. You know, if I wanted to sell my house so I could put it on the market. Right? That was a decision that I wanted to make for myself. All of a sudden, and it didn't apply to me in this case, but I'll use an example. The golf course in Hudson they've wanted to sell for, I don't know how many years. It's owned by three sons. The original owner passed away, left it to his sons and they can't get along and they want to dispose of it. They've been wanting to dispose of it for a long time. They finally found someone that wanted to buy it. And the the neighborhoods surrounding it are having a fit over it. Understandably so. However, they can't...the Friel family wants to sell. Are they expected to hold on to that property for all of eternity because the neighborhood doesn't want them to sell? If those people decided that they wanted to sell. I'm just, I'm devil's advocate here because I have my own thoughts about it that I'm not willing to share. Because if I have to vote on something pertaining to that property, I don't want to prejudge it and I don't want to be held to a standard that I can't vote on it. But I'm trying to play devil's advocate here. So either they're going to be forced to hold on to that property for all of eternity to satisfy a number of people that may end up deciding that they don't like Hudson any longer. And they want to move and they want to sell their house. And all of a sudden it's like, okay, so the Friel's could say, we don't want you to sell and you shouldn't be able to sell, so therefore you can't sell. I mean, it's it's kind of like it's a double edged sword.

And as I've said, not to you, but others have heard it. I've lived here my entire life. I have pictures of when I was a baby in the same neighborhood that I live in now, in the same house that I live in now. So I've been here forever. It seems like forever. And a lot has changed. When I grew up, it was all farmland where Sam's Club is. That was Kerrigan's farm. Across the street was another farm. That's Wal-Mart today. It's just it's, its times change and things change and people change. It's just...it's disturbing. And it's disconcerting. But this this latest development with the Green Meadow has done a lot of damage to this town. To the people that live in this town. And they think that you can stop development when there's a whole lot of other things that are in the way that prevent you from stopping.

Chairperson Roy then said, sidewalks. We need more sidewalks. Selectman McGrath replied, that's Nashua, right? Chairperson Roy asked, what? To which Selectman McGrath replied, isn't that Nashua? I mean are we being annexed as Nashua? I mean, that's at one time.... Chairperson Roy said I don't understand. Selectman McGrath replied, at one time, no one wanted sidewalks. Chairperson Roy replied oh. Selectman McGrath went on to say, no one wanted sidewalks. They wanted country living. Now that's all you're hearing about is sidewalks. So it's, you know, it changes.

Selectman Gagnon said and actually, that's a great point. I'm taking a bunch of notes here that don't make a lot of sense, but I think we're doing better at this, but we can still do better is getting a sense of what the community wants. You know, society changes. And it's very interesting that maybe we didn't want sidewalks in the past. I can understand that. And now we do. And so I think we are certainly taking steps to reach out to the community with cable television and local digital publications. But I think we need to really embrace that much, much more because we're elected officials where we represent the people, we shouldn't get elected and just kind of do what we think is best. But, you know, you'll see what the people want. Society is going to change. You know, generations change and wants and need change. So we can't think that what we needed five years ago is what we need now or even ten or 20 years ago, that we need to keep a constant idea of what the people want. And we need to be aware that their wants are going to change based on how society grows and so forth. So that's one.

Selectman Gagnon went on to say, pivoting off of that. One of my notes here, which we've touched upon a little bit, is I think zoning is is key. We have some very odd zoning. It's there's zoning patches and they don't seem to be, they don't flow very well. So they cause some issues between two zones when they when they touch. That also stems into, you know, where do we develop, where do we save and where do we build. So if we have weird zoning, zoning maps, it makes it tougher to make an overall plan. You know, if you have a G1 all over the place, well, do you want to develop it or do you want to turn it to conservation? Like, that's really not helpful. And I think the crux of why we're having a difficulty fixing our zoning or getting zoning that seems to be more beneficial to our future is because, as we said, we have very vocal residents. We have young residents with young ideas and passions. We have older residents with with great ideas and history that they know of. And it becomes tough for us. I think every selectman gets it tough, but we have so many people coming from two different extremes that is elected leaders we're like, well, what do we do? Let's do nothing because we don't want to piss anybody off. I think that in itself can be very detrimental.

Mr. Alpers then asked, where else might need attention? Chairperson Roy replied, I think some of and I know we talked about it in a positive light, but some of our I think we've outgrown some of our infrastructure, for instance, this building or the Community Center and those kinds of things that are really kind of capital improvement stuff. But at some point we we need to grow with the community, right? We need, we need to have the the facilities to support the community.

Selectman Guessferd replied, and to that point and maybe it's a, it's a corollary point, you know, we've said on the plus side that we, people get a great bang for their buck. And and we're we're operating right now to our second default budget in a row. The people of this town have have said, we don't want to spend a lot of money, you know, even though we feel I feel the same way as Mr. Malizia is that the people do get it is a relatively low tax base. When you take a look at us versus communities like us, our taxes are not quite as high as some of the other places around. I think I want to say towns like Merrimack. Londonderry. So we we struggle with and we just recently had a had a a survey done or a town hall survey done about a lot of things that could change, things that could be better. But they all involve spending money. And in the environment that we're in right now, it's people don't want to spend money. So how do we then grow? How do we put these things in place that will help us in the future manage and lead better without having that money to be able to do those things, to implement those things and the communication with, you know, a lot of the citizens, you know, there's there's there's not an and I'm not saying that anybody has a good or bad or there's right or wrong here. It's just the question is how do we then balance those things with having the taxes, the funds to do it at the same time continuing to have. A more efficient lower tax base. And that's that's and so I think that tax situation is a two edged sword.

Selectman Gagnon then replied and if I can, I think we have an example that encompasses that theoretical problem, in a very simple example. We don't really have a code enforcement officer. He we have a gentleman who does supposedly code enforcement and other things too. Chairperson Roy added, he's the Zoning Administrator. Selectman Gagnon went on to say, yeah and I'm not blaming him. I'm just. Chairperson Roy replied, no, I know. I know. There's no there's a zoning administrator but there's no corollary code enforcement officer. It's just one guy. Selectman Gagnon went on to say that's an example of we want to keep taxes low and we don't want to pay for it on the salary. But if you don't pay for code enforcement officer, then you're going to have a lot of people breaking the code or doing things improperly, making the town look ugly, doing things that hurt the environment, and then those cause complaints. So again, we don't want to spend money on a salary for an enforcement, but then the residents and even myself, we get upset when things happen in town that are against the rules or hurt the environment. You can't have it both ways you know. So I think that's a perfect example of what I always say you know, you step over dollars to pick up pennies where and that's our fault. I think leadership, elected leaders need to explain that to to voters that, look, we're not trying to, you know, go out and have a cruise on resident's dime. We're not trying to have a blast. But there are some things that we need to spend the money for because they will affect the town, the town's beauty, the town's character and everything they love about this town. And so I think we need do a better, a better job informing the public, educating the public. And that's that's a pain. People are hard to talk to people. It's tough to educate, but we need to do that tough job if we want to pass a budget, if we want to tell people we need to spend this money because it is going to be beneficial for the town and its future.

Selectman Guessferd then said, well and if you don't and there's the opposite side of that and a couple of us have talked about this in a couple of our meetings, what don't you then get? Our people in town have the benefit of a lot of great services for relatively little money? So if you don't spend the money, if you continue to operate under a default budget and you don't have the bandwidth to be able to do some of those things like a zoning, a code enforcement, then then what happens and what don't the citizens get that they might have gotten before, because let's face it, costs go up. And if you're constantly operating on the same amount of money and costs are going up, something's going to have to give. And nobody wants that to happen, but it's the result. So then how do you then educate so that people understand that they're going to have to spend a little bit if they want to continue to maintain the same level of services? You know, it's a, it's a tough problem.

Chairperson Roy replied, I think that, I think that goes to sort of I would put under the umbrella of community outreach. And we became very reliant, I think, on on a newspaper which which in this day and age sounds a little...Selectman Guessferd said archaic. Chairperson Roy replied, yeah. But without that we, we have yet to kind of bridge the gap to a number of people because that went to every house in the community. And then how do we reach those people? You know? Mr. Alpers replied you lost that medium. Chairperson Roy replied yeah, ya know? Town Administrator said we

tried to do a newsletter, we try HCTV but you know free comes into your mailbox and you know, hey, look at the thumbs up column. Oh, what's going on? You know? People just looked at it, you know, whether they read it. But that's where they got a lot of information. Chairperson Roy replied, cuz it was very local information, right? So I don't think that we've sort of, again, bridged that gap. Selectman Guessferd replied there's still, there's still a hole there. Chairperson Roy replied, yeah. But not for lack of trying, I guess.

Selectman Gagnon then said I guess I'll add this as we talked about this briefly, but I have an inner need to explain a little bit more. But conservation, I think in the last couple of years we've done great. We've saved some properties. A lot of residents have been happy about that. But I know for myself and I believe for residents, they want to see more of that because let's be honest, when you have more protected land in the area, the value of homes go up, the value of town goes up. You know, people want to live here even more because they're they're nestled in nature. I think a lot of people, young and old, like this town because they feel like it's a country town, country roads, you know, you get beautiful scenery. You can have a nice nestled house in the countryside and it's quiet and pristine. And if we don't actually work at keeping it that way and we just say, you know, we stick to the rule of, well, it's their land that can do what they want with absolute fact. But there's some limits to that. If we want to keep this town as attractive as it is, I think we need to not only purchase more conservation land, but but have a a plan, a professional plan. You know, let's pick a piece there or let's pick a piece here or whatever comes up. You know, I think we need a plan of attack, something on a higher professional level than maybe we currently have. I think it's good for the environment, it's good for our town, and I believe it's actually good for our taxes. Thank you.

Mr. Alpers asked, anything else? Chairperson Roy replied we can do better with voter turnout. The Town Administrator replied we have good voter turnout for primaries and presidential elections. We always poll very high for them, but you get to town meeting, i.e., where you have the most impact, direct impact, and you get 3 to 4000 people. You get a presidential election, you get 12,000, 14,000. They all get to go home, watch, watch the cable news. Who's winning? You know, they love that sort of stuff. But this is the stuff that affects them the most. I mean, you can directly affect yourself. They don't vote. Then they complain. Oh, did you vote? Sorry. Mr. Alpers replied, my town never gets past the 180 number. The Town Administrator replied so we're the split. We have the deliberative session, which I think what do we get in? 60 people tops? Of which 30 work here. And then we get then we get to the voting where 3,000 maybe plus or minus show up must show how they got the information that they're basing their decisions on. I mean, we have umpteen budget meetings. We have umpteen hearings. I'm assuming they're watching and paying attention and they're informed. But I don't know that, you know, it's almost like we've gotten too big for the for what we're doing. You know, we're the ninth largest, by population, community in the state. We're bigger than Portsmouth, We're bigger than Keene. People don't realize that. We have more population than those cities do. And people just look at me like what? I'm like, Yeah, and we're still running it sort of the old fashioned way. Chairperson Roy agreed saying like a small town, yeah.

The Town Administrator then said and you know, it's not the farming community anymore. As much as we lament that there's still space, there's still vestiges, maybe we have the Alvirne barn with the cows, but it's not like even I remember some of the corn fields and some of the strawberry patches that's not there anymore. It's really morphed. But, you know, we've become, like I say, closer to a city size. Selectman McGrath replied, because those people have sold their property. The Town Administrator replied, they moved north. Selectman McGrath continued saying, to the dismay of people such as myself that grew up seeing that and, you know, and enjoying that. And all of a sudden you've got a Wal-Mart and you've got a Sam's Club directly across the street from each other. That, that is more disturbing to me than.

The Town Administrator went on to say people are willing to commute further too. Back in the day commuting from here to Boston, what are you, crazy? Nowadays it's a routine commute for people, you know, but the bands keep expanding. It went to 128, went to 495. Now it's southern New Hampshire, that's really where it's at. Mr. Alpers replied especially with hybrid. The Town Administrator especially with hybrid. Selectman Guessferd then said for sure. You're not going in every day, right. Mr. Alpers replied New Hampshire is seeing growth across the state that way for folks who have moved here from away because they wanted that. Selectman Guessferd added, now they can work from home. Mr. Alpers agreed saying they can work from home. The work life balance is a little bit better.

Chairperson Roy then said which presents another challenge cuz, cuz now, you know, you're home and you at lunchtime, I'm going to go I want to go over to Benson's and walk or I want to go out to a conservation, you know? So it prevents presents more usage and therefore a little bit more of a challenge for for...Mr. Alpers said maintenance and all that stuff. Chairperson Roy agreed saying yeah, you know. Selectman Guessferd then said if we're going to prevent things like the Wal-Mart and the Sam's Club and things like that, then we've got to this is part of the whole future thing, right? How do we then and zoning is a big piece of it, you know, those, those parcels were zoned that allowed that to happen. So again, like you were mentioning as well, Brett, I mean, we've got to have some sort of plan for how do we want this town to look, you know, and the zoning is at the very center of that. You know, do we want everything? G1 and you know, and G or not everything? I mean, obviously there's but it's a big portion. Do we want to now take a look at all that and decide we don't want this particular type of a property or of a business here, you know, so then we then have to make those changes to the zoning laws based on what our vision is, what the master plan gives us?

Selectman McGrath replied, but you're missing a piece of that. We don't make that decision. Selectman Guessferd replied, we don't. Selectman McGrath replied, we can suggest it. We can put it on the ballot for the voters to vote on it. Selectman Guessferd said absolutely. Selectman McGrath went on to say but it's the voters that make the decision. Selectman Guessferd replied, absolutely. That is that is exactly right. I mean, it's the voter's right. Chairperson Roy added, right, but I think we, we have an obligation to to make sure that we're looking at things like the master plan and those surveys that we do and put forward the right questions on the ballot. So that. Selectman McGrath replied and I agree. But I didn't go because again, I'm stuck in this thing. But there was a visioning session just this past weekend, right? Selectman Guessferd replied yes. Selectman McGrath went on to say they had visioning sessions a couple of years ago. This last, I heard from someone that attended, there were about 21 people that showed up. Selectman Guessferd replied exactly. Chairperson Roy said yeah, that's... Selectman McGrath continued saying no, but we had there were a group of people that showed up at the Board of Selectmen meeting at the last Board meeting, and they were all worked up. They wanted to go to the visioning sessions that were going to try and get everybody to go, and only 21 people showed up. And so it shows a lack of interest. Selectman Guessferd added the online one wasn't any better. Chairperson Roy replied, no it was about 20 people. Selectman Guessferd replied, yeah, exactly.

Selectman McGrath replied so that's like how much interest is there really? Chairperson Roy then said but on the other side of that were something there was over 700 responses to the online survey. Selectman McGrath replied but you don't I mean, that's kind of that's a. That's a different venue. So it's a whole lot it's a whole lot easier to sit at your computer and write out an answer or you don't even know if it's the person that you think that it is. Right? It's all of these people that are...you don't know if it's one person that's filling out a dozen surveys under a dozen different names. You just don't, you don't know that. And the and the visioning sessions, both sets of them. The first one in particular, there were four of them, and they were set up for Wednesday, two Wednesday evenings and two Saturday mornings so that people would be able to attend if they were working all day and they wanted to just go on a Saturday morning. They could do that. They wanted to go after work at night, they could do that. And I don't think that the attendance at those were was any better than this past one that was just held. Chairperson Roy replied I think they were. I think they were much better. Selectman Guessferd replied I was one of the Wednesday night sessions back then. I mean, we had like 50, 60, 70. Chairperson Roy added I want to say there was 40 in one of the Saturday sessions. Selectman McGrath went on to say, but, you know, and so again, I go back to Green Meadow and and the the neighborhood being the neighborhoods, I should say. It's not just one, it's it's several neighborhoods that are all worked up over that. And here they have an opportunity to really get their message out and get, you know, get other people to buy into it, because those zoning changes, if there are going to be any, it's going to have to be a majority vote. And if they don't show up. Then nothing is going to happen, right?

Selectman Guessferd replied, because of people I know myself from experience, when I first moved into town, I didn't know a lot about, but I went, I'm going to vote, right? So I go to vote. And at the time it seemed like every time I came up in March to vote, there was 20, 25 zoning, you know, zoning. And I had no idea at the time, you know, about what all these things were. So what did I do? I just said, okay, recommended, recommended. I mean, that's all I had to go by. And that's what people unfortunately tend to do, because a lot of these people, 3000, 4000 people, you know, they're not showing up at these sessions. So what are they doing? They're just saying, well, okay, fine. If they think it's good enough, it's good enough for me. And it's and some things have passed, right? Some

zoning ordinances have passed that probably shouldn't have because of that, because people just went, okay, you know, just check it off.

Selectman Gagnon replied the underlying issue here is figuring out a communication style. You know, the in person styles don't seem to work. The Chairperson said it kind of becomes a community outreach. Selectman Guessferd added, so I don't I don't disagree with you at all. I mean. Chairperson Roy interjected saying cuz it's the same with the budget, right? Like, umm...Selectman Gagnon interjected saying we need to figure out what people want. We have a new society, you know, they they don't want to show up at the meeting, so be it. You know, maybe they have reason, they have families and so forth. They seem to respond to online surveys. That's a good, good avenue. But I think that that's the crux of a lot of what we just talked about for the last half hour is how do you reach voters, how do you get their input and not just from one one group, but from a collective all over town? What is every age bracket want? What does every area of town want so that we can get a good review? Because sometimes we'll have a development that comes up and of course the people in the development get up in arms and then they'll talk and they make great points. But with all due respect, that is only one area of town. What about other areas of town? I mean, I may not agree with the whole town if I want to hear everyone's point of view so I can collectively see what the organization is. So I think the number one issue is communication, is how do you get two-way communication so that government can run properly?

Mr. Alpers replied, engagement. Selectman Guessferd then said the public input we've been getting over the last year since I've been on the Board has been from a particular group of people and they show up a lot. Does that mean that there's other people in town that don't feel differently? They're just not showing up. But I mean, and so how do we then gauge that and say, you know, do we just simply say, okay, well, 20 people showed up and they all liked this. So that's what the town wants. That's a little myopic, right? I mean, so how do you find out what the other people want? And quite frankly, you know, I get it. If they don't show up, well, guess what? They don't get a say. But unfortunately, that's you know, there are people out there that that we need to try to continue to reach. And I think that's exactly right. How do we reach them so that we get a balanced view of what the town really wants to be?

At this point Mr. Alpers said, okay, let's do this. So we've gone a little granular. And so what I want to do is sort of pull back a little bit, if that's okay, in the sense that I think, look, it's not often that Boards get to talk like this as well. And so, you know, I'm always more willing to let the conversations go because I think at times it's not a structured meeting. You don't have this, you know, 12 item agenda where you got to make decisions one after another. And so it's good conversation. I did that, too, just to get the juices rolling. And I think I already I see some things, you know my brains move in a million miles an hour right now on sort of recommendations for you and that it's a good thing. And I think that coming here tonight, I was like, they just want a vision session. And I'm like, well, what about goals? And I think you're ready for goals. I think I'm going to have to come back at a later date and we can talk goals if you if you want to. Not and not a strategic plan. I don't do those, but I do goal settings and goal reports and I can show you examples of things I've done if you'd like, because I think what you're talking about here tonight is goals in a sense. You're talking about how do we how do we improve communication and engagement with our citizens? How do we find out more from them and what they actually want us to do? Not necessarily from a couple of voices from here and there. That's a goal.

Mr. Alpers continued saying, oftentimes in a community, when I go in and work with boards like yourselves, communication is an overarching goal and then, you know, six bullets and how are we going to achieve improving communication in each one? And so I think my recommendation after we've had is that we convene again and talk some of these, you know, some of these goals. Another one is like zoning. You know, I can't tell you how many boards I've worked at where they're like, Look, we can have a conversation with the Planning Board. We're going to have a, you know, a combined meeting with them and talk about growth and what can be done. What do they think? What could be going up on the ballot in March that could stabilize zoning in this area and improve it over here? And so there are some options out there goal wise that maybe you've already done it. I don't know. I'm just spit balling, but I'm just listening tonight, you know, on what your struggles are and they're real. And how do I get you to that spot where you can finally, you know, I don't want you to leave here tonight. Like, we didn't get anything done. It takes time. You know, so tonight we're going to pull back a little bit. We're going to go a little bit more. 10,000 feet, 20,000 feet. Talk about vision of the community. My recommendation is to the Town Administrator and yourselves is that I come back

at a future date and talk goals on some of that more granular stuff that we just heard over the last half hour or so, if that makes sense. Is that okay? The Board agreed.

Mr. Alpers went on to say I'm hearing it. I'm seeing it. You're not unlike any other community that I've worked with where there's that struggle over it. And because, you know, Steve said the ninth largest community in the state. That's big. It's 234 towns in the state. You're the ninth. And it is funny to see and I think lots of towns are struggling like Hudson in the sense that you're operating on a form of government that was once for many years ago and you're seeing these towns start talking about, well, I'm not necessarily ready to take the jump to a city form of government, but what's that charter form of government look like? Why is it successful in Newmarket? Why is it successful in other communities? So those again, that can be goal sort of oriented things that we can talk about when I come back down the road, you know?

Selectman Gagnon asked can you give me an example of what a vision would be? Mr. Alpers replied, I was heading right there. So when you think about a mission statement, a mission statement is who you are at your core. I sort of said that in my what I said in my paragraph you last week, the email was, you know what your mission is. Your job is to provide a certain level of services every single day. You know, you have your departments that you have. You know, what the needs out of those departments like you describe as only one zoning administrator that could use other things. So you know what your mission is at your core. What communities... do you kind of stay in your lane. You know, when some residents come to you and they ask you to do something like that's really not what towns do, right? You know, when that happens and you get asked those things probably quite often they always everyone wants to a lot of people throw the spaghetti against the wall, right? If they can, they can get someone to bite they'll get some help. What a vision is. Where do you want to go? What do you want to be? And this might be difficult tonight because I don't think you've fully had the conversation yet of where some of these particular goals, which is we're unsure where we want to go. That's what I'm kind of hearing right now tonight from you all, which is we have this demand for growth and it's not necessarily about banging on doors to get them here. They're knocking on your door. You're the ninth largest community. You have a captured audience. I want to put a Walgreens right there because I can get business. I want to put my such and such right there. The Town Administrator said or my gas station operation. Mr. Alpers said or my Aroma Joe's from the seacoast right in southern Maine. Chairperson Roy said we got one. To which Mr. Alpers replied, you know, so you're seeing that and that's not because you're saying please come. It's just naturally happening. It's organically happen. I really like that word organic, but it's just it's happening. Right. You were a targeted on against.

Mr. Alpers went on to say, but I'm also caring when is enough, enough. How do we how do we retain our rural character of who we are? So that small, big town, without giving it up to anyone just to sort of take over? What is that threshold, that line? Selectman Gagnon added and what's our authority. I think it's a great point. But also what to our authority, we also want to be you know, we'd like to do our job and do it well and to solidify a vision of where they want the town to go. But obviously, you want to be delicate about government overreach. That certainly can push a lot of the wrong buttons in town. So, you know, I want to know even for a lot of stuff, what is my authority? How far can I go respectfully to get the job done without going too far? The Town Administrator replied well anything has to be a great decision. To which Selectman Gagnon replied of course. The Town Administrator went on to say there is no individual authority, so it is a Board of Selectmen, truly. So it's certainly that's key. Selectman Gagnon replied yeah but as a board, you know, how what can we change, you know, to to to push the town in the right direction or do we just let it happen organically? The Town Administrator replied, well that's the questions. What's the right direction? Everybody has a different view of what the right direction might be. Chairperson Roy added, right. Right. Because I think that it goes to first figuring out the right direction. and then we as as the real, really the leadership body of how do we sort of make that happen is is it always sending suggestions to the Planning Board? Is it community outreach? Is it you know, it's it's kind of all of those things.

Selectman Gagnon asked but can we do that? You know, the Planning Board runs on their own. Can we actually give them direction and tell them what to do? Chairperson Roy replied it's not giving them directions, but I don't think.... Selectman Guessferd said suggesting. Chairperson Roy replied, right. Like like, you know, we as a body decide, hey, you know, we've heard from a number of citizens that we think this portion of town should be zoned whatever, you know? Is that something that you guys would consider putting on the ballot in March? I don't think I don't think there's anything that prohibits us from doing that. We're not saying you need to put this on the ballot. We're just saying, hey, you know, from our point of view, as an elected body, this is what we're hearing. Mr. Alpers added and

that Select Board rep can also share at their meetings, is the thought. So, yeah, there's no overreach there, I don't think. Chairperson Roy added yeah cuz it's not like we're directing them to do anything. I don't know that we have the authority to direct an independent board to.

Selectman Gagnon then said so let me maybe make an example now that the juices are flowing and stuff, you know, having our boards work together, I guess, towards a vision, you know, having the Planning Board allow certain things and having the Conservation Commission purchase some land, but not having them step on each other's toes, which has happened one or two times, you know, Oh, we want to develop that property. We want to save that property. What the heck, Aren't we on the same team? So I think that's, hopefully where you come in. Mr. Alpers added that's a little bit of those are some goals as well as we get those teams, those those departments, for lack of a better term, rowing in the right direction together. That's what you're hoping for. Selectman Guessferd replied, again, it's collective. It's collective here because some of us, as you know, whether it's the elephant in the room right now or not, we have people on this, on this board that have different views of things. And so we have and that's the hard part, is getting us all kind of moving in the same overall direction, this vision. And then and we can't overly influence these boards at the same time because we don't want to be coming across like, you know, the 500-pound gorilla. At the same time, you know, we say we say this is what we've developed as our vision, as our collective vision, and we think these things might support that. Something to that effect, you know what I mean? And whether it's going to the Conservation Commission or the Planning Board or the Zoning Board, that's that's kind of what I see. Kind of where where we end up is is going there and saying this is what we've collectively looked at. Now we think maybe this, maybe we have a joint meeting with them or something at some other point.

Chairperson Roy then said I have a vision that sometime hopefully I'll be able to execute that we do have like a meeting with with all of our boards, just we're all in the same room and we talk about these kinds of things. You know?

Mr. Alpers asked the Town Administrator his view and he replied, I'm just I'm just listening because obviously they're the elected. But, you know, the vision, something like, you know, provide first class service by having a highly trained police department, a highly trained fire and EMS department, and, you know, a well-equipped DPW department that can provide that level of service that makes the residents life fulfilling, easy or better, whatever word you want in there.

Mr. Alpers then said and you have phones and it's okay to use them. And I don't say I'll take anything, but you can. Absolutely. That's sort of a vision. It is. It's what you want to strive for. It's what what level of service do you want to have be delivered on a daily basis? So what I want to do next is I want you to give me. Words. Just words. Don't worry about a sentence. Don't get paralyzed. Don't get sort of defeated by how am I going to thread this sentence or two? Right. Let's talk about words. Let's talk about how do I what words might you want in your vision statement that talk positively? Sorry, the microphone. Talk positively about the Town of Hudson. Right? That's really what we're doing here. You have some concerns. Let's take those concerns away for a second and look from that 10,000 to 20,000-foot view in a positive tone about where do you want this community to go?

Mr. Alpers went on to ask what words do you want in that vision statement that best describe who Hudson is and where you want to go? Again, a mission statement is who you are at your core. A vision statement is where you want to go. What are some words? I just want words. Chairperson Roy said balance, to which Selectman Guessferd agreed. Selectman Gagnon said charm. Chairperson Roy replied I think there's enough charm in this room. The Town Administrator said desirable. I mean, folks that have a desire to live and perhaps work here. Chairperson Roy said sustainable. To which Selectman Gagnon replied, mmm, thank you. Selectman Gagnon said balance. Do we have it? We already have it. Sorry. Chairperson Roy added, continued professionalism cuz I would like to accentuate the positive that we already have, right? The Town Administrator added you know, we're trying to do things in an efficient, economical, you know, well balanced, we already said balance. That one keeps coming up. Chairperson Roy replied, maybe there's a reason for that. Selectman Gagnon asked, is innovative too much of a stretch for local government? Chairperson Roy replied, I don't believe it is.

Mr. Alpers then said look, Steve can tell you more than anyone. Local government has changed more in the last ten years than it has the previous 50 years before that. Good, right, wrong or indifferent, good, bad or ugly. It has changed. And so you're starting to see a whole lot of innovation come out of local government. Chairperson Roy added, and I think if you look around that there's

many communities here in Hudson that have done some very innovative things. I think that that we that we as a board and this probably isn't part of the vision, but really have to be cognizant at the at what pace the community wants to change at. Right? Like we can't we can't be running a four-minute mile if they're all running a ten-minute mile. You know? So but I do believe there is there is room there for innovation.

Mr. Alpers said I'm going to put the word paced down for now, and I'll find another word later. What else? Other words that positively that you want to see? Selectman Gagnon replied, collaboration. Leadership collaboration. Mr. Alpers asked, what else? Chairperson Roy replied, controlled growth. Selectman Gagnon added outreach. Mr. Alpers then said, okay, I'll give you some 2022 words. Does diversity and inclusion matter to you? Chairperson Roy replied, yes. Selectman Gagnon said DEI. Mr. Alpers said they are the words of today. And we can put them on there and we can always find other ones, you know. Selectman Gagnon then said before you put them on there. Just just soak in that. How do we apply that to Hudson? I mean, I hear it at work all the time and I know what it is, but how do we apply that to Hudson? Chairperson Roy replied, well, I think it goes to who who we try to attract as employees, particularly outward facing employees. Selectman Gagnon replied employees, okay you're looking at the employee side. Chairperson Roy replied well but also, how do we get a more diverse community? Selectman Gagnon asked, does the community want that? Just ask question. Chairperson Roy replied, don't let's. Selectman Guessferd said you can't force it on them. The Town Administrator said well, no economic strata. Are we in that position, too? I mean, I you know, it's not cheap to live here. It's gotten expensive, you know, do you attract the same diversity at those price points? We're not trying to be exclusionary, but we're not a city where maybe you have more of a hodgepodge of housing types different and attracts different levels of community.

Selectman Guessferd said right now it's very difficult for a lot of people to live in this town. Mr. Alpers replied, and southern New Hampshire. The Town Administrator added, younger people in particular. Mr. Alpers added in Rockingham and Strafford County it's wild. The Town Administrator added, it's crazy.

Selectman Gagnon asked, can I put the word inclusion as separate? I think that can that can be interpreted in multiple different ways. The Town Administrator added, welcoming, tolerant. Those are other values or words that maybe, you know, sometimes don't get thought about. Selectman Gagnon said tolerant. Yeah. Yeah, I like that. Mr. Alpers added, it's a nice word. To which the Town Administrator added, we all got to live together. We might as well try to get along out in the big world. Mr. Alpers then said when we deliver harassment training, and I'm not sure we ever done it here for you folks, but I usually say, Look, you don't have to have Thanksgiving dinner with the people you work with, but you have to be tolerant, you have to be respectful and you have to be professional. You're not going to like you're not going to like everyone you work with. The Town Administrator added you don't got to be best friends. You don't have to go hang out after work. I really don't care about them. but you've got to work together. Selectman Guessferd said yeah, put that word down. You just said respectful. That's not there yet.

Selectman Gagnon then said and sorry I interrupted you, sir. You were saying 2022 keywords. Mr. Alpers replied, that was it. like diversity and inclusion, I'm just, you know, I just throw them out there. I'm thinking as well as you're thinking, too. Yeah. At the same time. Any other words? Because this is actually believe it or not, we're going to I'm going to throw out a sentence out of this. So just give it to me like a snow blower. You know, I'm going to I'm going to thread a sentence for you. The hard work belongs to me is to go back and use this and thread a sentence out of this. and send it back to you when we do goals. I promise it won't take me as long as it did this time to get here

Chairperson Roy said attractive. So the community is remains attractive to to people, to citizens, to businesses. The Town Administrator added, well, livable. The Chairperson agreed saying Attractive. Livable. Yeah. Selectman Gagnon then said I think that's good. Those are some strong, good words that mean something in this town. What do you think? The Town Administrator asked Mr. Alpers, can you think of anyone we're missing?

The Town Administrator added, community spirit, saying I mean, obviously, that's certainly something that we talked about steering, you know. Selectman Gagnon added camaraderie. Mr. Alpers said I just botch the spelling, but I got it. You know, it's just. It's. I think keep talking a little bit in the sense that maybe more will come, because I think when I come back, you know, what I want you to be prepared to do is. Think through some of these topics we talked about here tonight. I feel like there's there's not a stalemate, but there's certainly erratic. You had a juncture I wouldn't call it a

crossroads, but you're at a juncture, whereas as a community, we need to figure out where we need to go because we could take many different paths. And maybe we're having different groups of people in the community tell us to take those different paths. But is that really in the best interest of the whole community? What's the population here? The Town Administrator replied, 25,000 plus or minus people? Mr. Alpers replied, yeah, that's a lot of people.

Selectman Gagnon then said that's why we kind of get to a stalemate, as you correctly picked up on tonight. Chairperson Roy said but we should be able to be able to not only attract but but maintain the whole diversity that we have. And I think with with community, with Hudson, it's it's probably an age thing. You know, we need to have as many services for young families as we do for elderly, you know, and seniors. Right. So how do we how do we get that go back to that word balance? You know, so that we're servicing all of our population. We're not, we're not focusing on one.

Selectman Gagnon then said even to expand on that a little bit. it's kind of easy or it's easier to see who we have and what they need. That's fairly apparent. But to be innovative and future minded to see who do we want to attract to the town and what do the people who don't live here would like to see and balance that? You know, what is the next generation who may not live here in a large population, but, you know, I can see people my age wanting to come to Hudson in the next ten years. There's only a few of me. What would what would younger generation want to see in Hudson so that we can attract those young workforce here and balance the people who do live here and what they need. That's the balance I want to see. Mr. Alpers replied, yeah, I mean, that's what I'm kind of seeing in the vision statement already just standing here, which is how do you achieve that, that that balanced life here in the community from a from a services standpoint, you know, from a growth standpoint. Selectman Guessferd replied and services our entire demographic. I like that word. Forgive me, but I know we've been kind of we focus on town, but our town is more than just town. It's school as well. Yeah, so are we think are we are we focused here just on the things that we can control, essentially? or I mean, because part of the attractiveness of this town to folks, one of the biggest things that people will we can have all these all the wonderful things we have here. But if our but if the school side isn't robust, you're going to lose a lot of those young people that I mean, so all I'm saying is that are we just focus we're kind of focused on the things that that we can kind of.

Chairperson Roy replied, I think that brings up a good point is like how do we tie it in so that we're one community? We're not a school district and in a town we're a community. Selectman Guessferd then said because what if we have one? You do this with us and then you go over to the School Board and you do it with them and their vision is here and our vision is here. That's one of the problems I've had over the years, is is developing a joint vision as well so that everyone is kind of on the same page and we're not fighting against each other.

Mr. Alpers replied, I would say that would be unique across the state if that happened. And I'm not trying to push back, but. Right. Steve, I mean, it's not. I had a board I worked with once and I can't remember who it was. They had plans to take this report and they they went to a school board meeting and shared it with them, you know, to just to have that conversation. Like, look, this is where we're at. We want to show you what we think our vision is. These are some goals we're thinking about working on and and just at least shared it in person, not just, you know, Steve sending over an email with an attachment to the superintendent of the Alvirne School district. It was more a little more personal. It had some meeting and then they had some good back and forth and discussion and I think it sparked interest. So I think Robert, I think that's a goal, you know, you know, like if we come back and overarching goal is communication, then that can certainly be an objective underneath it. You know, and I think that's what when I do come back, when we talk goals, because I think I saw a lot of them here tonight, there's a lot of goals here potentially. I think what I'm going to ask you for is each member of the team here, all six of you, I know we're down one person right now, but all six of you is to supply us with your top four goals that you would like to see the community achieve. What you would like to see the community achieve over the next 12 to 18 months. You know, and I'm talking this is not a strategic plan. Some of the stuff is low hanging fruit. And so you're going to give me the goals. We're going to put them up here. I'm going to find overarching themes like infrastructure and economic development and in communication and whatever it might be. And we're going to take a bunch of those goals and stick them underneath those overarching themes, if that makes sense, with objectives and timelines underneath it. Like, okay, you really want this achieved over the next 12 months? A.) who's going to do it? Steve can't do it, all. He's not a superman. How are we going to get it done? And then what's the timeline on that and how are we going to fund it? So it becomes even more I wouldn't say stressful, but it definitely has drilling down in saying, you know what?

Mr. Alpers went on to say, because the last thing I want to do is leave here and then I just give you this daunting report and it's unachievable and it just collects dust. So let's pick three four goals over all. You'll supply me right here in this room, just like we had tonight with four individual goals. And then what you'll get back is only like a four goal report. Not every goal makes it to the top because...Selectman Guessferd asked, and that's a future thing? Mr. Alpers replied, yeah it's a future thing. I want you to, I'm here. We're talking because what's going to happen is I need to go back. I've listened a lot tonight. I've got to make sense of these words. And I heard you loud and clear about where you're at juncture wise as a community. And then but while I'm working on that, I want you to start thinking about what do you want Hudson to achieve. Get away from the fires. We're going to fill this pothole. This ditch line, this culverts broken. We're not in a CIP mode. We're not in this parking lots messed up. Okay, maybe that's a goal. but think about goals like, let's get back to the communication piece. Let's get back to the zoning piece. I can't tell you how many towns have had a time and time again. They want to meet with the land use boards constantly. Historic district, if you have one, zoning and planning happened. It's a common theme in every town I go in and out of because they some towns want more growth, so they want to spur that conversation and then some towns like ourselves are going, Oh, we just need to find that balance. It's really on fire out there. How do we have a community conversation with the planning board now because March is coming. And you're an SB2 so everything speeds up a little bit. So I want you to just be thinking about what are those goals you want to see the community achieve over the next 12 to 18 months? They have to be can't be this overwhelming. You know, we're going to build a public safety. building that's not a 12 to 18-month goal. It could be policy driven. It could be ordinance driven. Communication driven. We talk a lot tonight about zoning. I'm just trying to think outside the box here from a community standpoint.

Mr. Alpers asked the Board, does that make sense? Chairperson Roy replied, yeah. Mr. Alpers went on to say I just want make sure you felt like that was fruitful. And what we're going to be doing going forward is gonna be fruitful as well. And I sort of invited myself back when I was talking to Steve. Chairperson Roy replied, but I'm okay with that. Selectman Guessferd added, I'm fully in support of that. Chairperson Roy added, yeah cuz I think that what we did here today was for me anyway, really useful. Just kind of hearing what, like you said, we're usually just we have this agenda and we have to do these things and we don't have just open conversation about things.

Selectman Gagnon then said I think this is a baby step, a step in the direction I believe a board of directors should be focusing on. We are not a CEO. We shouldn't be buried in the day to day. Steve does a phenomenal job at that. He needs two of him. But we are a board of directors. We need to be future thinking. To me, that is our only goal. So I think this is a good step.

Chairperson Roy added, and I also think it provides some the indications of where the town wants to go, to other to other boards, to the planning and zoning board to to the Budget Committee, you know, all of those things. You know, they can look at that and say, oh, that's something they came up with it we could support. You know? Mr. Alpers added, there's another goal. Citizen engagement that we want that to be one of your goals. How do you do it? 25,000 people, it's not easy. We're I live in Bristol where we have 3,200 year round residents and say 10,000 in the summer. You know, it's much easier to reach 3,200 people on the on the tax rolls than it is on the voting rolls, essentially, than it is to reach 25,000. It's a lot. So you kind of have to you have to baby step it, but you also need to think big. And what tools are you using now? What other mediums are out there? You know, you have the TV, you've lost your newspaper, you might have newsletters, but what else is out there, even technology wise, to help you improve that, that the town could make investments in that might have you reap the benefit even just 12 to 18 months down the road, that you have just further good engagement there.

Mr. Alpers went on to say, also, if you went out to ICMA Steve knows what ICMA is, but if you go out to a conference like that, all those companies live out there, those vendors, those tech, to help you with that citizen engagement. Maybe that's maybe that's where you're at. I'm not trying to push you there. I'm just trying to start the thinking process since you've never really set goals before as a board. And so this is new in a sense. You might have done it in other nonprofits or other boards, but just really, really thinking about how are we going to do this? Because it's not an easy task for you being the size of the town that you are. Right? Some Board members replied with mmhmm. Mr. Alpers went on to say, okay. So that's the plan. We'll get the juices flowing. Talked about what's going pretty well. We talked about what still needs attention. We got a little granular, but that was okay because you had a good conversation, a robust conversation about what's happening here in the community. We talked about what the vision, Certain words in a vision statement could be for the

Town of Hudson. It's now my responsibility to thread that sentence for you. And lastly, we've talked about goals, and I've asked you to think about four goals each, when I come back, on what you want to see the town achieve over the next 12 to 18 months and we spitball a ton of ideas about what those goals might be. Everyone happy with that? We'll make sure we're clear, concise. We'll sort of step together on this and I'll get with Steve, if not tomorrow or Friday, to set another date. My apologies for me canceling twice. I got two kids in high school sports and life messy in the fast lane right now sometimes. So I think I told Jill, I said, I'm coming tonight if I have to walk here is what I said. And I said, That's my better half the other night, too. I was in Berlin Monday night and. And she said, You out two nights? I said, I'm out tonight. Said, I'm going, Hudson. I said, I am walking to Hudson if I have to. It was actually yeah, it's a much easier ride home tonight than it is, you know, traversing the notch and down Route 3 through Twin Mountain and all that the other night you know.

So hopefully you find this beneficial and we'll keep doing more. Chairperson Roy replied, I absolutely do. I think it was a great first step. Again, I think we had some conversations that we don't usually have the luxury of having because we're confined to an agenda and a time limit and all those things. So I appreciate you coming. Thank you. Mr. Alpers added, and they're very transparent. You're doing it live on TV. So everything's recorded. The Town Administrator added, we are very transparent community. Chairperson Roy replied, yeah. The Town Administrator went on saying seriously. I mean, all the meetings, all the all the material that gets out there. Chairperson Roy added, literally every meeting of every committee and every board is televised. The Town Administrator covered his eyes and said you'd have to be like this to not see what's going on. Mr. Alpers replied, I do about a dozen of these a year, and that's really regular ones that have gone back to community after year after year. This is only the second community where we're live. Kudos to you. That's a good transparency. Any other questions or anything before?

Selectman Gagnon said I guess you've talked about a second meeting. And so this is we've got some basics here, some some meat on the bone. The next meeting we're going to combine our vision with our goals. Mr. Alpers added, you'll have the vision before you set your goals. So at least give you something about, okay, here's the vision. Now, what are some goals I want to see achieved in and around that vision? Selectman Gagnon replied okay and if there were to be a sales pitch for a third meeting, what would that third meeting be? The capstone of that vision, goals and then what?

Mr. Alpers replied, implementation, further implementation. You know, we'll put some if we're struggling to put some time, if we get deep in there and we've been at it a couple of hours and I'm going to say time out because it's tiring, then I might come back for a third meeting and say, all right, when do you want this achieved by who's going to do it? That's when it gets difficult. It's easy to say what you want to do. who's gonna do it? How are you going to do it and who's going to pay for it?

Selectman Gagnon then said and what should we expect from you, sir? A final report on tonight, and then seemingly.... Mr. Alpers replied, you'll have a multilayered report. So I go home, I write it up. I gave it to Vicki, who's the grand wizard at Primex, and she makes it look delightful and attractive and in an actual report. And we just keep adding to that report. So right now, like Somersworth School District I've been doing it for about a year with the administrative team, it's probably no lie about 25 pages long. Selectman Gagnon replied ah that's not bad. Mr. Alpers went on to say, so we just kept adding to it for a year and they have an incredible working document and that's what you're going to get. So when we're done, you know, you have something with you at every Selectmen's meeting that is a livable working document. You have something to show the public, you have something to take to civic groups, you have something to take to the school board if you so choose to do. Selectman Gagnon replied, excellent. Thank you, sir. Thank you for your time.

5. ADJOURNMENT

*Motion to adjourn at 7:57 p.m. by Selectman Guessferd seconded by Selectman Gagnon.
Carried 4-0.*

Recorded by HCTV and transcribed by Jill Laffin, Executive Assistant.

Kara Roy, Chairperson

Bob Guessferd, Vice Chairman

ABSENT
David Morin, Selectman

Marilyn McGrath, Selectman

Brett Gagnon, Selectmen