

MINUTES OF THE OCTOBER 3, 2022 SELECT BOARD MEETING

Meeting held in the Hutton Room at the Stratham Municipal Center

MEMBERS PRESENT: Board Members Chair Mike Houghton, Vice Chair Allison Knab, Joe Anderson

ALSO PRESENT: Town Administrator David Moore, Finance Administrator Christiane McAllister

At 7:00 pm Mr. Houghton opened the meeting.

Mr. Anderson motioned to approve the minutes of Sept. 19, 2022. Knab seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Mr. Houghton recognized Tyler Denton to give an update on his Eagle Scout project. Mr. Denton met with DPW Director Nate Mears who provided input and indicated its feasibility. The Board thanked him for the update. He has applied to incorporate a piece of steel from the twin towers into his project.

Mr. Houghton recognized Parks & Recreation Director Seth Hickey to report on the Seacoast Velo Kids pump track project. Mr. Hickey created an RFP to engage outside firms to complete the renovation of the pump track; the Town would be the sponsor of the project in lieu of the SVK. The Recreation Commission has offered to use fund raised monies to supplement the SVK donation to complete the renovation as originally envisioned. Ms. Knab motioned to authorize Mr. Hickey to move forward with the RFP. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Next Mr. Hickey reported on the installation of the eco-counter at Stratham Hill Park. It would give us important quantifiable data, such as how many people are using the park, what hours and days are busiest, etc. We would have a better understanding of who is using the facility. It differentiates between pedestrians and cyclists. The Recreation Commission will contribute half of the funds needed; the Stratham Hill Park Association will contribute the other half. It will be virtually unnoticeable; a significant portion of the eco-counter is underground. Mr. Houghton inquired about how we would use the information. Mr. Hickey said he's already used some of the information to inform the Police Dept. of peak usage enabling them to utilize their patrol resources effectively. Mr. Hickey went on to explain that we need quantitative data when applying for grants. This information will inform future decisions on how to better manage the park. Ms. Knab motioned to move forward with the installation of the eco-counter. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Mr. Hickey reported on the Lowes Hometown Community Impact project. The store manager of Greenland Lowe's has offered to donate materials for trail projects at Stratham Hill Park. The store manager has an appreciation for the park and wants to give back in an impactful way. The Trail Management Advisory Committee has identified a bridge project for which they would use the supplies. Mr. Houghton motioned to authorize the Recreation Department to accept up to

\$2,500 worth of supplies to support the Trail Management Advisory Committee's project. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Next, Mr. Hickey addressed the Scout's request for a campout at Stratham Hill Park. He introduced Matt Sturtevant, Scout Master. Mr. Sturtevant requested use of the back field for approximately 250 scouts on May 12–14, 2023. He described some of the activities that would take place during the campout. Mr. Anderson motioned to approve the campout for May 12–14, 2023 as described in the Scout's Sept. 28th memo. Ms. Knab seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

CORRESPONDENCE

Mr. Houghton called attention to the NH DOT letter regarding culvert replacements. The Conservation Commission, Planning Board and the subcommittee on pedestrian/cyclists will be made aware of the meeting. Mr. Moore said that staff will be present at the informational meeting. Mr. Anderson confirmed with Mr. Moore that the abutters were notified.

PUBLIC HEARING

Mr. Houghton motioned to open the public hearing to discuss the acceptance of funds for three items listed on the agenda. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Mr. Moore explained that the first is a one-time highway payment in the amount of \$151,428.12 which is unanticipated revenue and will be used for paving. This will allow us to retain the ARPA funds we had previously designated for this purpose.

Next, Mr. Moore called attention to the memo from Police Administrative Assistant Kate Drago regarding the Highway Safety grant. These funds, in the amount of \$25,727.50, are to be used for the purchase of traffic control equipment. This is a matching grant. We have funds set aside in our CIP to cover the match.

Mr. Moore stated that this was the second of two public hearings required in RSA 41:14a regarding the donation of land, 18 Jana Lane, from Richard and Marilyn Young. We have received the comments/support from all the statutory committees required. Mr. Moore will coordinate with Town Counsel regarding the closing documents and will come back at the October 17th meeting to obtain authorization from the Select Board to allow the Chair to sign the closing documents.

Mr. Houghton asked for comments from the public. Hearing none, Mr. Anderson motioned to close the public hearing. Ms. Knab seconded the motion. All voted in favor. Mr. Houghton asked for comments from the Board. No comments were made.

Ms. Knab motioned to accept the one-time highway payment in the amount of \$151,428.12 from Senate Bill 401 for highway maintenance. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Ms. Knab motioned acceptance of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, Office of Highway Safety Grant in the amount of \$25,727.50 for traffic enforcement. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Mr. Anderson motioned to accept the land donation from Richard and Marilyn Young of a .84 tract of land at 18 Jana Lane, Tax Map 24; Lot 31. Ms. Knab seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Moore gave a brief update on the selection process for the Open Space Plan RFP. We received six proposals. After the Parks & Recreation Director and Town Planner reviewed, four firms were interviewed and Select Board member Knab joined the interviews. Following the interviews, two firms were identified to move forward. The interview team is continuing to vet these two proposals in preparation for a recommendation to the Select Board.

As part of the process, Mr. Moore reminded the Board a Steering Committee is to be formed to act as an advisory sounding board and provide guidance on this project. He envisions a group of 10 – 12 members who would meet from this fall into late next year. Mr. Moore suggests recruiting users of the trails to be on the committee in addition to representatives from the various boards and commissions who helped shape the scope of work in the RFP. He has suggestions for potential committee members. Ms. Knab would like to get feedback from the selected firm on what would be the most beneficial role of an advisory committee. Although Mr. Houghton believes the focus group would be worthwhile, he felt 10 - 12 members is too large a group for decision making. They agreed to allow for flexibility in appointing the group and will discuss potential appointees further in a non-public session.

Mr. Moore gave an update on PFAS. Sampling is underway for regular groundwater management. We will have new results soon for submission to DES. As part of his participation on the Drinking Water Legislative Commission, Mr. Moore explained that the State is focused on water quality issues and the management of emerging contaminants and referenced a recent presentation the State gave to EPA and included in the Board's packet. Mr. Moore said that we are ready to execute on reimbursements for PFAS design reimbursement for Underwood. This is 100% DES funded. The PFAS grant agreement has been submitted to the State for the 100% reimbursement for eligible mitigation work. He anticipates this grant agreement with the State of NH will be on the Governor & Council agenda for Nov. 2nd; the grant is for funds up to \$350,000. Mr. Moore will go through the receipts for eligible costs then submit the reimbursement forms.

Mr. Moore called attention to the ongoing Employment Manual work that he and Ms. McAllister have been working on. He included a list of policy related items to work through with the Board. Mr. Moore requested a non-public session to discuss employee compensation adjustments. Other topics to discuss include benefit eligibility and content related to paid time off, holidays, vacation, sick and personal time, legacy issues, mileage and cell phone policies. They used policy input from Primex to update the manual. Ms. McAllister modeled it after the Primex document and eliminated redundancies.

Mr. Moore provided an update on the budget process. The Moderator has been given the schedule. Mr. Moore offered him assistance with the school board appointment. Mr. Moore is focusing on some of the larger expenses. HealthTrust has notified us of an 11.7% increase which equates to an increase of \$40,000 over last year. This week he will be talking to dept. heads about personnel evaluations, the budget schedule, and projecting milestones for open enrollment. Energy costs are up \$16,000 over the previous year. Propane and oil for heating has increased. The various town buildings have been reviewed and any inefficiencies in heating have been addressed. Everything is in order for the fire truck purchase slated for 2023. A backhoe is also slated to be replaced next year. Mr. Houghton urged that while these purchases are included on our CIP schedules, we should approach moving forward following an updated review of their performance and condition (out of service time, repair costs, and overall performance) prior to concluding that these vehicles be purchased on schedule.

DPW Director Nate Mears has identified a project for which we may be able to use ARPA funds. Mr. Mears will present it at the Oct. 17th meeting.

ADMINISTRATION

Mr. Moore presented the updated Safety Plan for Board approval. He updated the manual using Dept. of Labor safety guidelines. The Joint Loss Management Committee will increase staff awareness about safety policies. The manual will be distributed to staff and an acknowledgement of receipt will be obtained. Ms. Knab motioned acceptance of the updated Safety Manual of Sept. 28th. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. All voted in favor. Mr. Houghton recalled that a Joint Loss Committee had been active a few years ago but it failed to sustain itself. They discussed the guidelines and makeup of a Joint Loss committee. Mr. Houghton would like to identify ways to keep the committee robust and visible. Ms. McAllister emphasized that we need consistency within the group. She proposed having each department nominate someone to represent them on the committee.

Mr. Moore called attention to the drought status and current restriction level. Drought status has been dropped to moderate. The Board recognized that with winter coming, irrigation systems are being shut down. They questioned the need to make a change. To show that they are actively monitoring the situation, they decided it best to change the restriction level. Mr. Anderson motioned to reduce the drought status to level 1 and move forward with the appropriate steps. Ms. Knab seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

The State of NH recently passed a paid Family Medical Leave law. The Board discussed our status as a large vs small employer and the need for us to obtain additional insurance. The Board agreed it would be beneficial to wait and monitor this.

Mr. Moore reported that we have had comments from the public regarding political signage. He and Town Planner Mark Connors have been following up in coordination with the interim building inspector. The traffic island by the circle is state owned property and is managed by the state. Ms. Knab noticed that signs had been inappropriately placed during the September election.

Mr. Moore reported that an IT phone project at the Fire Station has been completed. IT Consultant Lee Todis has been keeping regular Wednesday in person hours, which have been well received.

Mr. Moore informed the Board that Greenland has a new Town Administrator.

Regarding the Smyk property, Mr. Moore stated the plaque is being fabricated. Our DPW has provided some stabilization of the stone foundation but are requesting to have an outside company finish it. Mr. Anderson motioned authorize Mr. Moore to request from the Trustees of the Trust Funds to expend up to \$4,000 from the Smyk Trust for stabilization of the stone wall project. Ms. Knab seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

INFORMATIONAL

Mr. Moore said that we will need the outcome of the BTLA case before deciding how to move forward with Lindt. He, Christiane and Accounting Benefits Coordinator Shandy Supit attended a Municipal Budget training last week.

RESERVATIONS

Mr. Houghton motioned to allow Easter Seals to use the Front Pavilion on Oct. 17 and to waive the fee. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Mr. Moore noted we have been trying to recruit members to the Planning Board, Conservation Commission and Recreation Commission. He hopes to have some applications for appointments by the next meeting. We will soon be looking at expiring terms on each of the boards/commissions.

At 8:31 pm Mr. Houghton motioned to enter into a non-public session in accordance with RSA 91-A:3, II (c) to discuss a matter which, if discussed in public, would likely affect adversely the reputation of another. Ms. Knab seconded the motion. All voted in favor. Roll call: Houghton-yes; Knab-yes; Anderson-yes.

At 10:16 pm Mr. Anderson moved to seal the minutes noting that failure to do so would render a proposed action ineffective. Ms. Knab seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

At 10:17 pm Mr. Anderson moved to adjourn. Ms. Knab seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Respectfully submitted

Karen Richard
Recording Secretary