

MINUTES OF THE OCTOBER 4, 2021 SELECT BOARD MEETING

Meeting held in the Hutton Room at the Stratham Municipal Center

MEMBERS PRESENT: Board Members Chair Mike Houghton, Vice Chair Joe Lovejoy and Allison Knab.

ALSO PRESENT: Town Administrator David Moore, Code Enforcement Officer/Building Inspector/Health Officer Shanti Wolph and Town Treasurer Tracy Abbott.

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

Mr. Houghton recognized Town Treasurer Tracy Abbott who presented the Treasurer's Report. She has been working on bonds to see if any are eligible for refinancing at a better rate. There is only one that is eligible. She will report back to the board when she receives more information.

Next Mr. Houghton recognized Mr. Wolph who began by giving an update on the pandemic and gave examples of tasks he has performed in his health officer role, including assisting the Town Administrator and department heads navigate issues that arise from time to time with close contacts, etc.

He reported receiving a complaint about a small animal farming operation as well as sign ordinance complaints in the corridor and is following-up on a concern related to a commercial property and change of use. He has removed some signs from various businesses after achieving some success with voluntary removals. He will keep on top of it.

Mr. Wolph issued a temporary stop work order on a home on Bunker Hill. The property owner had begun demolition on a home over 50 years old without submitting it to the Demolition Review Committee. Subsequently, the committee visited the home and documented the structure.

Mr. Wolph gave a PFAS update. Almost all affected properties are scheduled for installation of remediation systems. The process is going well.

Mr. Wolph talked about a couple of projects that the Planning Board is reviewing.

There is an important annual training for the Zoning Board on October 12th. It will be especially beneficial to the new members.

Mr. Wolph reported on completed and ongoing commercial building projects. He gave a comparison on the number of projects and permits from last year to this year thus far. Projects and permits are down but they had skyrocketed during the pandemic. He feels they are "normal" now. After further discussion, Mr. Wolph said he would report back on more historical data trends.

Mr. Wolph then briefly listed the large scale residential projects that are nearing completion.

Regarding the Department's budget, they are on track.

He continues to take Continuing Education Credits via online remote classes.

Mr. Wolph's long term goals include developing a rental property and multi-family inspection ordinance. His focus this winter will be on the commercial business inspection process with the Fire Department to confirm life safety items are in compliance. Once every 3 years he is required to do a Best Mitigation Practices inspection at facilities that use more than household quantities of regulated substances. This ensures businesses are in compliance with best practices to protect local sources of drinking water. After an inspection is complete, a spreadsheet is done and sent to the Dept. of Environmental Services.

Mr. Wolph brought attention to the Building Permit Software update and the various steps to competitively procure this service through an RFP process recently completed. Mr. Moore summarized the requested staff action in the Board packet: that the staff recommends procurement of permit software by SmartGov to be funded by the American Rescue Plan funds. Mr. Moore noted the CIP does include funding for this, however as it is an eligible expense under ARPA he recommends the CIP funds be preserved. We do have a second ranked firm. We have allocated up to \$30K for the acquisition and implementation. It will be approximately \$10-13,000 annually thereafter but this amount is negotiable. There was brief discussion about the various proposals and cost. Ms. Knab motioned to authorize the Town Administrator to move forward with negotiating a contract with SmartGov for the acquisition and implementation of the software with a ceiling of \$30,000 on the negotiation. Mr. Lovejoy seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Mr. Wolph asked for feedback regarding the format of his department reports. Ms. Knab gave suggestions but she, along with the rest of the Board, liked the overall format.

Mr. Houghton addressed the correspondence from NH DOT. Mr. Moore explained that the first document was an invitation to the upcoming hearings for the GACIT process; the second one is a draft of the 10 year plan. The Bunker Hill Project continues to be funded in the plan, after having been moved up in the last two-year cycle. Staff will use the results of the transportation survey to communicate preferred prioritization of Town projects at the hearings. Anyone who is interested is encouraged to attend the hearings. Town Planner Mark Connors believes it is possible to move the Bunker Hill project up through advocacy. Mr. Lovejoy observed that the Transportation Survey gave residents an opportunity to voice their opinion on areas they feel should be priorities. The Board discussed the traffic circle. Mr. Moore reported that we are just learning of a new project in the 10 year plan entitled Stratham/Greenland Route 33. It involves the potential creation of a continuous center turning lane from the former technical school to the Winnicut intersection in Greenland. The concept would potentially improve intersections at Dearborn and Willowbrook Roads in Greenland and Lovell Road and Route 33/Portsmouth Avenue. This project was added to the ten-year plan as a result of recent traffic fatalities and accidents in Greenland. This project was not on the radar at the drafting of our survey.

Mr. Moore reported receiving a letter from Marshall Law Office regarding 353 Portsmouth Ave. We have reached out to them for more information.

Mr. Houghton turned attention to the public hearing. Mr. Moore explained that the Town agreed to participate in a Department of Health and Human Services program in which our staff facilitated vaccine distribution at various sites. As part of the agreement, we pay our staff, then request reimbursement. Because of how the Municipal Budget Act works, a public hearing is required. Mr. Houghton motioned to open the public hearing to discuss the acceptance of grant funds of up to \$135,000 from the State of NH DHHS for vaccine distribution assistance. Mr. Lovejoy seconded the motion. All voted in favor. Mr. Houghton asked for comment from the public. Hearing none, Mr. Houghton closed the Public Hearing. Mr. Lovejoy seconded the motion. All voted in favor. Mr. Houghton motioned to accept the funds conveyed in the grant in the amount of up to \$135,000 from the Dept. of Health and Human Services for vaccine administration. Mr. Lovejoy seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

ACTION ITEMS

Mr. Moore presented a Veteran's Credit and a Timber Tax Warrant as recommended by Town Assessor Chris Murdough. Ms. Knab motioned to approve the Veteran's Credit as recommended in Ms. Murdough's 9/29/21 memo. Mr. Lovejoy seconded the motion. All voted in favor. Ms. Knab motioned to approve the Timber Tax Warrant as recommended by the Town Assessor in her 9/29 memo. Mr. Lovejoy seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Mr. Moore said the RFP to address long term PFAS response has been sent by invitation to three firms and proposals are due back on October 13th.

Mr. Moore requested to push the budget schedule discussion to the next meeting. The new Finance Administrator started employment today.

ADMINISTRATION

Health Insurance Study Group will be meeting for the third time this week. They've been focusing on Flexible Spending Accounts and will likely have a recommendation to add this item to our health benefit offerings.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

The Board discussed the enormous economic impact the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard has on this area. They wanted to ensure the residents were aware of its importance. It was decided to put information about it in the Select Board Newsletter.

Mr. Moore called attention to Park & Recreation Director Seth Hickey's memo detailing two upcoming trail work days sponsored by the Trail Management Advisory Committee. The intent of this work is to engage residents and draw upon their interest in maintaining the trails at the park and build on the momentum and expressions of interest in helping out that was gained through the recent survey tool.

RESERVATIONS

Ms. Knab motioned to waive the fee for EHS Soccer for use of the Front Pavilion on October 6, 2021. Mr. Lovejoy seconded the motion. All voted in favor. Mr. Lovejoy motioned to approve the NH SPCA raffle permit request. Ms. Knab seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

At 8:13 pm Mr. Houghton motioned to go into a non-public session in accordance with RSA 91-A:3, II(a) and (c) to discuss personnel matters. Mr. Lovejoy seconded the motion. Houghton – Yes; Lovejoy - Yes; Knab – Yes

At 9:25 pm Mr. Houghton motioned to come out of the non-public session and seal the minutes because it is determined that divulgence of this information likely would affect adversely the reputation of a person other than a member of this board. Mr. Lovejoy seconded the motion. Houghton – Yes; Lovejoy - Yes; Knab – Yes

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Richard
Recording Secretary