

MINUTES OF THE OCTOBER 7, 2019 SELECT BOARD MEETING

MEMBER'S PRESENT: Board Members Chair Mike Houghton, Vice Chair Joe Lovejoy and Allison Knab were in attendance along with Town Administrator David Moore.

At 7:02 p.m. Mr. Houghton opened the meeting.

MINUTES

Ms. Knab made a motion to approve the minutes of 9/23/19 as amended. Mr. Lovejoy seconded the motion, which passed.

TREASURER

In Town Treasurer Deb Bronson's absence, Mr. Moore reported out on the General Fund balance of \$5,564,459.18 he was provided by Ms. Bronson.

NEW BUSINESS

The Chair recognized Bruno Federico who came before the Board to raise awareness of the 2020 Census. He has been hired by the Census and is recruiting for workers. Having all residents complete the census is important because it determines our representation at the federal and state level. It also determines the amount of money that is allocated to the town. Mr. Lovejoy made a motion to accommodate the request that Mr. Federico has asked to help with in order to expedite the taking of the census here in Stratham. Ms. Knab seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

PUBLIC HEARING

Mr. Moore reviewed the new naming policy. Mr. Houghton made a motion to open the Public Hearing to discuss Dorothy Clemons River Road Park. Mr. Lovejoy seconded the motion, which passed unanimously. There was one written public response supporting the request. The Chair recognized Daniel Coffey, the initiator of the request, who stated that he doesn't want to rename the town landing, he simply wants to acknowledge longtime resident Dorothy Clemons. They do not want any money from the Town but they may do a fundraiser to buy a plaque. The Chair then recognized Phil Malone, 72 River Road, wanted to ensure that the reference to the Town Landing would remain, as it is referenced in historic publications. To clarify, Mr. Moore summarized the request by restating the proposal as he understood it from the petitioners as Dorothy Clemons River Road Park at Stratham Town Landing. Mr. Houghton made a motion to close the Public Hearing. Ms. Knab seconded the motion, which passed unanimously. According to the policy, the final vote on the proposal should follow one meeting after the hearing, as a result Mr. Moore indicated he would ensure it appears on the next meeting agenda.

FIRE

Fire Chief Matt Larrabee and Deputy Fire Chief Josh Crow presented the quarterly report on the Fire Department. Chief Larrabee noted a consistent 3% - 4% increase in volume over last year. State inspections of the department vehicles are complete. They have installed the new printers/copiers in collaboration with the vendor switchover. Chief Larrabee wanted clarification as to allocations in his budget for the PFOA issue. Mr. Moore acknowledged Chief Larrabee's

support with the issue. It is still not clear what will need to be done or how much money will be necessary but it was agreed that any funds needed should come from the general Town fund.

Chief Larrabee update the Board on upcoming events, including a vehicle extrication program, EMT relicensing, and a joint exercise with the Police Department and the schools. October is Fire Prevention month so they will be promoting that in the schools. He continues to work with Director of Public Works Nate Mears and Mr. Moore regarding the capital reserve fund planning for 2020.

Chief Larrabee reported the stipend program isn't working as hoped. They've received 578 calls to date; but couldn't get a crew for 30 of the calls. He explained how mutual aid works. At an Operational Meeting in August, it was indicated an alternative model of "stand by coverage" has been effectively implemented at several communities in the area. A survey to the department members was favorable for this type of coverage. There would be a slight increase in the payroll line item, but they have enough money in its 2019 budget to cover it. Chief Larrabee will monitor to determine its effectiveness. Mr. Lovejoy noted that hours would have to be monitored to ensure no one goes beyond the 30 hours in a week. They further discussed mutual aid between the surrounding towns. Mr. Houghton talked about monitoring the demands on the department, keeping an eye on triggers that will move them to a next step. Chief Larrabee said that they strive to encourage department participation and welcome new members.

Regarding succession planning, Chief Larrabee gave a history on how the leadership of the department has been determined and questioned if this was a suitable way to continue if they have a staffing change. He indicated a work group had been established in the Department to review the issue.

Mr. Houghton made a motion to adopt the stand by coverage recommendation presented this evening by Chief Larrabee for EMT response. Mr. Lovejoy seconded the motion, which passed unanimously. Mr. Moore indicated he would work with Chief Larrabee and the new Finance Administrator to ensure compliance with labor laws.

At 7:38 pm Mr. Lovejoy made a motion to go into a non-public session to discuss a possible land acquisition. Ms. Knab seconded the motion, which passed unanimously. At 8:36 pm Mr. Houghton made a motion to come out of the non-public session and seal the minutes noting that failure to do so would render a proposed action ineffective. Ms. Knab seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

The Chair then moved to a discussion of leaf blowing on the trails in Stratham Hill Park; an issue raised by the Conservation Commission via a letter to the Select Board recommending against continuing the leaf blowing practice on the trails. Mr. Moore indicated the staff needed guidance on this policy decision from the Board.

Mr. Moore described the issue briefly and feedback was sought from the Conservation Commission Chair who present at the meeting along with Dan McAuliffe of the CC. They spoke to the Commission's recommendation noting a discussion of leaf blowing was a topic at each of the last two CC meetings. Mr. Moore summarized the concern of the proponents of blowing

leaves from the trails noting he received an e-mail communication for the practice and another recognizing there is merit in blowing and not blowing the leaves. He noted proponents feel blowing the trail of leaves promoted use of the trails for bike riding and according to advocates makes the trails safer for bike riding. The Board members acknowledged the question raised is one that really should be part of an overall maintenance and series of practices and that making a decision in the absence of an overall strategy for park operations was challenging. In other words, when there are conflicts in the experience of the trails (natural walking paths vs. bike trail usage) which experience is prioritized. Some discussion of approaches to leaf blowing at other sites were discussed, noting that similar sites (parks/forests) referenced do not allow leaf blowing, and that there is not a consensus in the research literature on the best approach. The fact that the terms of the Barker easement also preclude the blowing of leaves from the trail system was discussed. The Board agreed with the Conservation Commission that seeking to maintain the natural setting and experience of being in a natural area is important to maintain. The Board provided guidance to the staff to discontinue the leaf blowing practice until further notice.

Mr. Houghton then moved on to 61 Stratham Heights Road barn easement. Mr. Moore explained that the owner would like to make modifications to the barn windows and inquiring about the process. The State and the Heritage Commission have approved the requested modifications. Mr. Moore found the easement document to be unclear regarding modifications. Currently, there is no process for approving such requests. They discussed the intention of the easement. Mr. Houghton made a motion that the proposed improvements at the site are in keeping with the intent of the easement. Ms. Knab seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Mr. Moore indicated he would like to attend the ICMA conference which conflicts with the October 21st Select Board meeting. After discussion, the Board decided to meet on October 28th instead. There is a GACIT meeting that evening. Mr. Moore urged representation from the Town at the GACIT meeting and indicated he planned to attend; therefore, they decided to begin the Select Board meeting at 7:30 pm on the 28th.

RESERVATIONS

Mr. Moore indicated there was one request from a Condo Association for rental of Room A and a waiver of the fee. As in accordance with our policy of waiving the fee for the first meeting of the year for Condo Associations, Mr. Houghton approved the request. Mr. Lovejoy seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

APPOINTMENTS

They discussed, in general, the expiring terms of members of the Committees and Commissions and reappointments. Mr. Moore continues to work to institute a consistent practice.

OLD BUSINESS

There is an interview scheduled for Thursday to fill the Accounting & Benefits Coordinator position. The replacement pole (and "extra" pole) for town center are on a truck to be delivered by the end of the week. The Master Plan Public Hearing will be on October 16th. Regarding the PFAS issue, Mr. Moore is working on the change order for the focused site investigation contract

as discussed previously with the Board. We cannot move forward with any mitigation measures until this initial assessment work is complete. Looking toward the future, they talked about raising the issue at Town Meeting, perhaps creating a Capital Reserve Fund to respond to environmental issues. It was agreed that a contingency fund should be allowed for in setting up the budget.

Mr. Moore briefly reviewed the presentation for the Gateway Vision meeting being held on Wednesday. Mr. Houghton enumerated the many reasons why this project is vital for the future of the town. The Town will need to expand its commercial base to meet the needs of our growing community. Businesses will help offset the increase in cost of services. They want the presentation to clearly explain a TIF district. He said Stu Arnett from Arnett Development Group will be there to help answer questions. Mr. Moore reflected that the Town will need to provide opportunities and make it attractive to investors. They talked about how forward thinking the development of the Emanuel property has been.

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR REPORT

Mr. Moore informed the Board regarding his research on the genesis of the Budget Advisory Committee. Mr. Houghton suggested meeting with Town Moderator Dave Emanuel to discuss a change in process. Mr. Moore will set up the meeting.

Mr. Moore reviewed the process for funding the Public Service Agencies.

Mr. Moore met with Dan Crow of the Stratham Hill Park Association to discuss that organizations' role in the governance of the park. There are issues that need to be addressed and Mr. Moore feels developing a policy would create needed structure. Ms. Knab noted that the Town Forest is under the jurisdiction of the Conservation Commission and suggested Parks & Recreation Director be involved in conversations. They discussed the history, purpose and role of the Park Association. Ms. Knab and Mr. Houghton spoke about the value the group brings to the governance of the park.

Mr. Moore will be meeting with Parks & Recreation Director Seth Hickey and Public Works Director Nate Mears regarding reorganization logistics. The reorganization of duties between DPW and Parks and Rec will have implications for the budget work.

A resident, Ms. Hodgson, and Representative Pat Abrami are serving on a Committee to investigate the effects of 5G. Mr. Moore indicated he plans to follow the progress of the Committee and report back.

A survey regarding the Stratham Fair was sent out. Appointment of Fair Directors is scheduled for this fall.

The Town's contract with Casella expires on December 31st. Work needs to be done to extend the contract by one year and these conversations have begun.

Curbside Collection Advisory Committee wanted to broaden their outreach to the community by doing a survey. Mr. Moore feels this is a good opportunity to frame the issues we are being confronted with. They will be meeting in October.

At Mr. Houghton's suggestion, Mr. Moore developed and distributed a draft Open Issues list. Following are some items on the list:

- Skate Park group continues to pursue their project and hopes to go before the Planning Board on Nov. 4th. Because they will be using Town property, staff members, through Mr. Hickey, are serving as resources.
- At the November 4th Select Board meeting, Parks & Recreation Director Seth Hickey will review his department's purpose and goals, and services the residents expect from them.
- A 4 page Communications Policy has been developed by a resident with communications experience and Ms. Knab. Some staff have reviewed it. Mr. Moore will review it.
- Mr. Moore and Ms. Duhamel will be working to set the tax rate over the next few weeks.
- Fire Department issues are also on the Open Issues list – service delivery expectations and staffing requirements. They discussed the various ways in which the officers might be appointed or elected in the future.

Mr. Houghton noted this Open Issues list is to prioritize the many issues.

Mr. Moore reported on a brainstorming session with senior residents at which their desires were listed and prioritized. Library Director Lesley Kimball is working on communication outreach. A gathering space was high on the list of requests. Room B at the Municipal Center has been designated as a possible space. Parks & Recreation is developing programming targeted at seniors. Addressing the needs of the seniors will be an ongoing discussion. The Board was very supportive of the approach to utilize meeting room B in this manner and encouraged Mr. Moore to keep moving forward with this direction.

At 10:21 pm Mr. Houghton made a motion to go into a non-public session to discuss a personnel issue. Ms. Knab seconded the motion which passed unanimously. At 10:52 pm Mr. Houghton made a motion to come out of the non-public session and seal the minutes noting that failure to do so would render a proposed action ineffective. Ms. Knab seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

At 10:53 pm Ms. Knab made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Lovejoy seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Richard, Recording Secretary

