

MINUTES OF THE NOVEMBER 1, 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, Town Planner Mark Connors and Finance Administrator Christiane McAllister

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

Mr. Lovejoy motioned to approve the draft minutes of October 18, 2021. Ms. Knab seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Mr. Houghton called attention to the Treasurer's Report. Mr. Lovejoy noted that some accounts haven't been reconciled. They discussed a timeline for the resolution.

FIRE

Mr. Houghton called upon Fire Chief Matt Larrabee to present his department report. Call responses are elevated from 2019 numbers. He reported on the status of call coverage. There is 100% coverage weekdays; weeknights are at 40-50% with two EMTs on; 80% of the time there is one person on. Weekend's average one person per day but oftentimes staff will respond to calls even though they aren't doing a shift. It's working well but we still rely on mutual aid, as all towns do. We're consistent with prior years with number of incidences and number responders, with only call volume increasing.

Chief Larrabee continued his report stating that EMT recertification is coming up for most of them. A survey has been sent to residents to gain input which will determine the future of the Fair. The Fire Department Christmas party is Dec. 4th. He is requesting permission to serve alcohol at the party. Dec. 18 is the annual Lights 4 Lives fundraiser. As in the past, they would like to do a parade. Christmas tree lighting is on Dec. 5th in conjunction with Parks & Rec. Mr. Lovejoy motioned to waive the alcohol prohibition for the Fire Dept. Christmas party on Dec. 4th. Ms. Knab seconded the motion. All voted in favor. Mr. Lovejoy then motioned to authorize the Lights 4 Lives parade as outlined by Chief Larrabee and endorsed by Police Chief King. Ms. Knab seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Lastly, Chief Larrabee reported that the first annual golf tournament was a great success. Multiple golfers and sponsors expressed interest in participating next year. The funds raised will be split between the Fire and Police departments. Because of the amount raised, a public hearing will be held to accept the donations.

Chief Larrabee will be meeting with Ms. McAllister regarding the Fire Dept. budget. They will also work on getting the department to do online timesheets. The board thanked him for his report.

POLICE

Chief King requested a non-public session to address the hiring of a part-time officer. At 7:19 pm Mr. Houghton motioned to enter into a non-public session to discuss the hiring of an employee in accordance with RSA 91-A:3 II (b) hiring of an employee. Houghton – yes; Lovejoy – yes; Knab – yes.

At 7:32 pm, the public session resumed. Mr. Lovejoy moved to seal the minutes noting that failure to do so may render a decision ineffective. Ms. Knab seconded the motion. All voted in favor. Houghton – yes; Lovejoy – yes; Knab – yes.

Chief King then referred to his memorandum regarding a request to purchase radios from capital reserve fund. The base radios in the station are at the end of their life. Mr. Lovejoy motioned to authorize the Police Dept. to purchase Motorola radios using the Radio Communications Capital Reserve Fund to replace the current radios which are at end of life. Mr. Houghton questioned why this wasn't in a CIP budget and noted that it should have been included for planning purposes. Mr. Houghton seconded the motion. All voted in favor. Chief King responded that they have been on the radar, but it was only in the last few months that they started to go down.

Chief King reported that painting work is finished on their building. They will be fitting the sally port floor with a non-slip surface and are currently waiting on another quote. The cost will come out of the operating budget.

Next Chief King reported working on two Federal grants for body worn cameras, noting that if we receive the grants, we will need to match (50%). Matching funds could come from the Police Detail Revolving Fund, or donations from the golf tournament. The legislature is contemplating creating a fund for body worn cameras, possibly by 2022-2023, but much of this legislation is uncertain at this point. The cost of the cameras is \$26,000. We have confirmed the sizing of our current servers is sufficient to store information from the cameras.

Chief King reported on several trainings in which the officers have participated. Officer Ken Gauthier has agreed to be the new peer support officer. He will undergo training and possibly be a member of the Granite State Critical Response team. A tabletop exercise using an active shooting scenario in a Town building will take place on Nov. 10. The department will receive the Police Accreditation CLEA award virtually on November 19. He and the Board agreed a public event in Stratham following the 19th would be appropriate. He then reported on several community events – a 76ers presentation, DEA take back, End 68 Hours of Hunger and Trick or Treat Night. All events were well received and successful.

Next, Chief King reported on a T-Mobile program which would enable the Department to have three mobile phone plans free of charge for 10 years after the purchase of a phone. Chief King defined the parameters for which the phone would be used as it would be treated as a piece of equipment. Until now, the officers have been using their personal cell phones, which poses challenges in managing photographic evidence and making phone calls while on duty. Mr. Houghton asked about cell phone coverage. Chief King is going to confirm coverage is adequate. Mr. Houghton stated the need for a policy governing their use. These are considered equipment, which will be left at the station when not in use.

Lastly, Chief King reported that his department's budget is mostly complete. Personnel and salaries will be a 4.5 – 4.8 percent overall increase. The reason for the increase is because last year was half salary for an officer which will be full time this year as well as step increases built in. In addition, we will be relying on part-time officers to additionally support the goal of two officers on duty per shift.

Mr. Houghton recognized State Representative Pat Abrami who came before the Board to inform them on how Rockingham County intends to use the ARPA money. A majority will be spent on a building for the Registry of Deeds, courthouse and additional buildings for the prison. Upgrades will be made to the nursing home facility. Incentives and retraining, scholarship programs, new hiring and referral incentives will be given to address the staffing shortages at the nursing home. Some money will be directed toward non-profits. Stipends will be given to some, such as direct caregivers and corrections workers. Money will be spent on infrastructure for the Registry building. The County has submitted its request to the Treasury and are awaiting a response.

Budget Goals & Guidance

Mr. Moore sought input from the Board on goals they hoped to achieve in order to guide department heads with their budgets. Future staffing and headcount is a priority. Mr. Moore predicts that an initial draft of the budget will be ready by Nov. 15. Rising fuel costs will impact the DPW and Police budgets, a full year of the new NH Retirement rates will also impact the budget, whereas last year, the rates were only in effect for six months. DPW is planning to propose adding a full-time position and eliminate a part-time position in order to help manage workload and to support succession planning. Open enrollment begins this week, Mr. Moore indicated the Town will benefit from an 8.1% decrease in health insurance premiums across all three plans and we will also learn if we see more migration to the deductible plans. They discussed NH Retirement. Mr. Houghton asked about year-end expenses. Ms. McAllister said that we will incur some large expenses before year end. The county payment will be due as well as the payment to NH Retirement. The group discussed the budget in general. The conversation turned to use of the ARPA funds and their potential use, primarily for capital items. For example, using the funds for the Union Road culvert replacement project and repairing the Municipal Center roof will preserve funding for road reconstruction monies already raised for future projects; the same would be true of the Buildings and Grounds Maintenance Trust wherefrom the roof project funds would have otherwise been expended. He reminded the Board that it has previously discussed the use of ARPA funds for a Hazard Pay stipend for the DPW staff, who were not included in a CARES Act program. Mr. Houghton noted that although economic growth is predicted, we must consider that inflation may stall that growth. The Board agreed that some increase is necessary; it's not feasible to construct a budget less than the one we are operating on. Mr. Houghton called for a comprehensive examination of all the fund balances. Ms. McAllister supports condensing some accounts, noting there are laws governing revolving funds which dictate how they are used.

Mr. Houghton directed attention to the request for a bond release from Breslin Farm Rd. Director of Public Works Nate Mears provided a memo clarifying and endorsing release of the

Breslin Farm Rd bond. Ms. Knab motioned to release the bond in the amount of \$124,674.50 for Breslin Farm Rd. Mr. Lovejoy seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Next Mr. Houghton called attention to the communication from a NH resident requesting Stratham become a Purple Heart Community. The board discussed the request. Consensus was to move forward with the designation of being a Purple Heart Community. Mr. Moore will take the necessary steps.

Mr. Moore presented a request from a Stratham firefighter to waive the alcohol prohibition in the Morgera Room for his wedding reception in September 2022. Ms. Knab motioned to waive the alcohol prohibition for the September 2022 wedding. Mr. Lovejoy seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Next, Mr. Moore presented a request for a fee waiver from the Seacoast Growers to use Room A on December 13, 2021. Mr. Lovejoy motioned to waive the fee in accordance with the Town's room reservation policy. Ms. Knab seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Mr. Houghton asked for comment regarding the Informational items. Mr. Moore said included in the packet the letter sent to NHDOT regarding the 10 year plan. Other items included the PFAS Groundwater Management Permit received in mid-October as well as correspondence from the Town to the affected property owners that transmitted Notice of Recording of the GMP filing.

Ms. Houghton called attention to the application from Michele McCann-Conti to be an alternate Library Trustee. Mr. Moore noted that this is for consideration; the next meeting will be for approval.

ADMINISTRATION

Mr. Moore heard back from Attorney Marshall regarding 353 Portsmouth Avenue, but it is still not clear on what property or portion of property is requested to be quitclaimed; he has formally sought clarification. Mr. Moore and Mr. Lovejoy will attend the November 9th Community Power discussion at the Energy Commission meeting at 6:00pm. Mr. Moore met with Town Clerk Deborah Bakie to discuss a policy for election locations and they both plan to jointly report back at the next meeting. Pamela Hollasch requested she be a Planning Board representative on the PCAC. Because the PCAC charge is due for renewal, this will be revisited at the next meeting when Mr. Hickey gives his departmental report.

Mr. Moore presented the Timber Tax Warrant for NHSPCA, 104 Portsmouth Ave., Map 13 Lot 85 for the Board's signatures.

At 9:04 pm Mr. Houghton motioned to go into a non-public session in accordance with RSA 91-A:3, II (c) to discuss items that could impact the reputation of another. Mr. Lovejoy seconded the motion. All voted in favor. Houghton – yes; Lovejoy – yes; Knab – yes.

At 10:01 pm Mr. Lovejoy moved to seal the non-public minutes. Ms. Knab seconded the motion. All voted in favor. Houghton – yes; Lovejoy – yes; Knab – yes.

At 10:01 p.m. Mr. Houghton motioned to adjourn. Mr. Lovejoy seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Richard
Recording Secretary