

MINUTES OF THE NOVEMBER 16, 2020 SELECT BOARD MEETING

MEMBERS PARTICIPATING: Board Members Chair Mike Houghton, Vice Chair Joe Lovejoy, Board Member Allison Knab along with Town Administrator David Moore.

The Board Chair opened the meeting at 7:00 p.m.

Mr. Houghton recognized Town Clerk/Tax Collector Joyce Charbonneau. Mr. Houghton acknowledged that when the doors to the building were closed to the public, it was extremely difficult from a logistical and physical standpoint for the town clerks to conduct business. Covid cases in NH are increasing and he wanted to know, if we move in that direction again, what her thoughts were on what could be done differently. Ms. Charbonneau agreed that it was extremely challenging but she feels they did everything possible to make it an efficient process. The addition of the plexi-glass has helped the clerks feel safer. The installation of a distinct phone has helped them to identify when someone was waiting in the parking lot. Thus far, people coming in to the building have been respectful of social distancing. There have been fewer people in the building since the election, but she predicts the number will increase when property taxes become due. An increasing number of people have been utilizing online options. Mr. Houghton thanked her for her input and encouraged her to keep the dialog going.

PARKS & RECREATION

Mr. Houghton recognized Parks and Recreation Director Seth Hickey for his department report. Mr. Hickey reported on programs completed – soccer, cross country and mountain biking. Discussions are continuing regarding basketball, which, if the program is held, will start in January. The Board supports the basketball program as long as the players wear masks and agreed a “skills and drills” based program versus games was appropriate. He is preparing for the spring and outdoor activities. They have been offering painting and tai chi classes at the municipal center. Zoom check-ins will resume soon. The department will join an e-sports organization. They will be doing a ski program without the bus transportation. He had a workshop with the PCAC. They are determining the focus of their work and will come forward with a new direction soon. Mr. Hickey submitted the final draft of the Recreation Revolving Fund Policy and Procedure and Recreation Bylaws. Work continues on the Trail Assessment Plan. He, along with the Conservation Commission and the Park Association are creating next steps that will enable them to prioritize, more accurately track, and identify potential concerns. They are involving larger landowners that have easements and members of the public in the conversation as well. They want as much engagement as possible in the development of the policy. Next Mr. Hickey talked about offering a summer program. Many aspects of the program will have to be reconfigured, but he is committed to offering one.

Mr. Houghton directed attention to the budget. Mr. Moore had previously distributed draft documents for their review. He is preparing to send the documents to the Moderator for his use in appointing a Budget Advisory Committee. He also advised tax bills will be going out soon.

Mr. Houghton called attention to the Lights 4 Lives raffle permit request. Ms. Knab motioned to approve the raffle permit request. Mr. Lovejoy seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Mr. Moore noted that reappointments for the Heritage commission were on the agenda. Mr. Lovejoy motioned to reappoint Nate Merrill and Forest Barker to the Heritage Commission as

regular members. Ms. Knab seconded the motion. All voted in favor. Kate Dardinski has submitted an application to the Recreation Commission, which appeared on the agenda as “for consideration” (to be voted on at the next meeting). Mr. Houghton motioned to re-appoint Dave Canada and Rob Roseen to the Planning Board. Ms. Knab seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

PFAS

Mr. Moore has consulted with a commercial firm that specializes in the installation of filtration systems in response to PFAS contamination. He, along with Code Enforcement Officer Shanti Wolph and Director of Public Works Nate Mears, are gathering information and learning about the technologies used in homes in the remediation process. There will be an ongoing cost for maintenance. Mr. Moore described the process and the various types of systems. He noted some issues and acknowledged that further research and discussion will be required, including the completion of a Remedial Action Plan by the Town’s engineering consultant that should be submitted to the Town shortly.

ADMINISTRATION

Mr. Moore said open enrollment discussions with employees will be held this week.

A resident has requested a mask mandate be instituted in Stratham in an e-mail communication received following completion of the agenda for the meeting. Newmarket, Exeter and Durham have mask mandates. Ms. Knab would like to hear the Police Chief’s views on the issue. Mr. Houghton noted that the towns mentioned all have walkable streets. He doesn’t feel Stratham is comparable to those communities. Discussion ensued. Mr. Moore stated that a public hearing should be held if they decide to move forward with a mandate. He will meet with the Police Chief and Health Officer to create a draft proposal on which to base another conversation [shortly following this meeting Governor Sununu instituted a state-wide “mask mandate”).

Mr. Moore discussed Town Hall operations in light of the increasing incidences of Covid cases in the state. They discussed what other towns are doing and agreed to monitor the situation.

Mr. Moore reported that two employees requested to carry over excess vacation time. The Board decided to defer making a decision until the December 7th meeting.

At 9:16 pm Mr. Houghton motioned to go into a non-public session to discuss a personnel matter in accordance with RSA 91-A:3, II(a). Mr. Lovejoy seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

At 10:15 the Select Board resumed the public session, Mr. Houghton moved to seal the minutes from the non-public session finding that failure to do so would render the proposed action ineffective. Mr. Lovejoy seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Ms. Knab moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Lovejoy seconded; all voted in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Richard, Recording Secretary