

MINUTES OF THE JANUARY 19, 2021 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. Lovejoy motioned to approve the minutes from December 21, 2020 as presented and the January 4, 2021 minutes as amended. Ms. Knab seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Mr. Houghton recognized Police Chief Anthony King to give his department report. Chief King stated that his officers have begun receiving the first round of vaccinations in response to Covid. Chief King recently reviewed his budget proposal at the Budget Advisory Committee meeting and welcomed further questions. As part of the CALEA certification, Chief King advised the Board that his department will receive a mock assessment in a couple of weeks. The actual assessment will be in early June. He invited the Board and Town Administrator to attend the beginning of the day to greet the visitors. He talked about other upcoming events.

Chief King then brought up the issue of dogs at SHP. Mr. Lovejoy talked about a letter the Parks & Recreation Director Seth Hickey received from a resident complaining about unleashed dogs at the park. Chief King said that he is working with Mr. Hickey on the issue. He understood that staff was working on a proposal for a committee will be formed to discuss this and related trail issues in the Park and he was supportive. Mr. Houghton asked Mr. Hickey respond to the resident. Mr. Moore said he will work with Mr. Hickey and bring forth a charge of the committee to the Board for the Board's next meeting.

The Board thanked Chief King for his report. The Chair then moved on to correspondence and referenced a letter concerning upgrades to the Pump Track at Stratham Hill Park. He invited the letter writer and Mr. Hickey to discuss the letter. Mr. Hickey introduced Rich Matthes, President of Seacoast VeloKids who had written a letter to the Board in which he offers funding to support the renovation. Ms. Knab expressed concern. Mr. Hickey clarified that this is not an expansion of the pump track. Mr. Matthes detailed the benefits of an improved track. He emphasized a partnership with a Town in which they would also lend help to fixing the trails. Mr. Hickey said it will take time to fundraise and would go beyond helping the bikers; it would fit into the bigger, long term vision for the park. Mr. Moore outlined the concerns and issues involved in committing to a long term project without a broader plan for the Park in place. Ms. Knab opposes the addition of man-made structures but recognizes the popularity of the track. Mr. Lovejoy expressed support for the project. Mr. Houghton is excited about this joint project as long as it is within the existing footprint and Mr. Matthes collaborates with Mr. Hickey. The Board's consensus was that the work on renovating the pump track within the existing footprint is worth of advancing however more detailed information including a design proposal would be required prior to final Board sign off. Mr. Matthes will move the project forward and bring a design to the Board.

ACTION ITEMS

Mr. Moore reported that preparations for the Town Report have been progressing nicely.

Mr. Moore then reviewed the draft of the public notice for February 8th public hearing for the warrant, noting that there were no citizens petitions as of the current date

Mr. Moore also previewed drafted warrant articles. Regarding the EMS funds, he explained that they are typically kept separate, one for training and ALS funds and one for equipment. Also included will be an article for body worn cameras for the Police Department, the lapsed curbside collection, and the accrued benefits & liability trust. Discussion ensued about items that are warrant articles and items that are funded by the Capital Improvements Program. Mr. Moore raised the issue of determining a date, time and location for the business session (Town Meeting). A date of May 15th was suggested. Deliberative sessions for various other government entities will be held before then. Ms. Knab feels that holding indoor gatherings should be avoided and supported waiting until May 15th for the Town Meeting. Mr. Lovejoy shared her concern, but is also concerned with operating under 2020 budget constraints. Paving, additional positions and Capital Projects are the items that would be effected. Mr. Moore will talk to SMS regarding dates, research the options and continue the discussion at the February 1st meeting.

Mr. Moore said that the Town has been gifted a Red Cross flag by a resident of Newmarket to be flown in honor of the frontline medical workers sacrificing so much throughout the country. The Fire Dept. has agreed to fly it at the Fire Station. Mr. Houghton motioned to authorize the Fire Department to fly the Red Cross flag under the American flag. Mr. Lovejoy seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Mr. Moore stated that there was one request for a reservation for the Scamman Pavilion for the Acorn School for their annual Earth Day celebration. Mr. Houghton motioned to approve the request and waive the fee. Mr. Lovejoy seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Mr. Moore noted that at the Planning Board meeting this week there will be Public Hearings on 6 or 7 potential warrant articles. Mr. Moore indicated the new planner was off to a great start, then briefly spoke about a couple of planning projects and the work of the department.

Lately, Conservation has been meeting once a month. Mr. Moore discussed the work of the Planning Board's subcommittee to advance the Master Plan's vision for the Portsmouth Avenue corridor from the town center to Greenland. More discussions are necessary before it can become a warrant article. Some zoning amendments will be moving forward. The subcommittee's work is complete; town staff will be taking the feedback to date on the vision and beginning zoning concepts and work to develop a next step plan and outline some outreach strategies for property owners, residents, and abutters to the area identified.

Next, Mr. Moore raised the issue of PFAS in the town center. At the Board's next meeting in February, he suggests the Board hear directly from the engineering consultants on the Remedial Action Plan and discuss remediation procedures. Policy decisions will need to be made and the State will continue to give guidance or make comments on the remediation plan.

Mr. Houghton wanted to address some inaccurate comments he had heard from a resident regarding the Automated Curbside Collection program. He wanted it noted that he did not direct any particular outcome or preference to the Curbside Collection Advisory Committee and his

intention in supporting the group was to ask them to review options and provide feedback and recommendations to the Board. Mr. Moore explained the rollout of the program going forward.

The Budget Advisory Committee will hold at least two more meetings. Mr. Moore hopes to have the budget finalized by February 1st. The Library is working on holding an Information Night, likely via Zoom. Addressing other budget items, Mr. Moore advocated reducing the Welfare budget. He described the history of the usage and the consistent level of remaining unexpended funds. The Board discussed the percentage of unassigned fund balance available and projected to be retained this year. Mr. Houghton advocated maintaining a 5% fund balance and targeting 4% unspent appropriations to provide a buffer and security position for the town. Mr. Moore briefly reviewed the Public Service Agency funding. The Board would like the Budget Advisory Committee's input before making a final conclusion on the budget. Discussion ensued regarding the a la carte budget items, such as an additional DPW person and an additional police officer. They talked about other large expenses, such as payroll and paving. They expressed concerns about upcoming Fire Dept. expenses. Mr. Moore made adjustments to the CIP with PFAS remediation and road reconstruction being the drivers. They discussed the Heritage Commission's Preservation Fund. Mr. Moore will look further into the Library and Fire Departments request for funds. The Board asked for more detail regarding back-up for the recommended compensation adjustment line item. The Board will meet with the Budget Committee on January 25th at 6:00 pm. They will meet in a non-public session concerning personnel on February 4th at 4:00 pm.

At 9:36pm Mr. Houghton motioned to go into a non-public session to discuss a personnel matter. Ms. Knab seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Mr. Houghton motioned to come out of the non-public session at 10:30 p.m. Ms. Knab seconded the motion and moved to seal the minutes determining that failure to do so might render a proposed action ineffective. All voted in favor.

At 10:31 p.m. Mr. Lovejoy motioned to adjourn. Ms. Knab seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Richard
Recording Secretary