

MINUTES OF THE DECEMBER 5, 2022 SELECT BOARD MEETING

MEMBERS PRESENT: Board Members Chair Mike Houghton, Vice Chair Allison Knab, Joe Anderson

ALSO PRESENT: Town Administrator David Moore, Finance Administrator Christiane McAllister, Parks & Recreation Director Seth Hickey

Ms. Knab motioned to approve the Select Board minutes from November 21, 2022. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Mr. Houghton recognized Parks & Recreation Director Seth Hickey who began by talking about the ski program. He gave a handout on Senior Programming and described the planned events. Other programs currently underway are hiking at SHP, Bone Builders, painting class, tai chi, coffee hour, etc. He will continue to expand on programs for seniors.

Mr. Hickey updated the board on youth sports, noting basketball has begun. Parks and Recreation Programming Coordinator Jamie Schaaf has done a great job working with the Basketball Board, coordinating with the Seacoast League and the Town of Exeter. Basketball is one of our largest and most complex programs and there were changes this year due to some volunteers moving on. Facility restrictions have hindered the program in the past but they're doing creative brainstorming to continue to meet the needs. A baseball kick off meeting is planned for January. They are working with resident John Hopping to offer indoor clinics, ensuring the kids will be ready for the season.

Next, Mr. Hickey addressed the parking at Jack Rabbit Lane and the need for additional signage. At a previous meeting, he shared the draft ordinance. The Stratham Hill Park Association has reviewed it. He will share it with the Conservation Commission next. He will include it in an upcoming newsletter to keep the public informed. The Trail Management Advisory Committee will hold another community listening meeting in the near future. The community meetings have been productive in the past. The group hopes to hold another one in May / June at the park.

Mr. Houghton asked what feedback has been received by the residents regarding the change at Jack Rabbit Lane. Mr. Hickey reported that residents understand the need behind it and are in favor of it. Mr. Hickey continued his report saying the Eco-counter installation occurred on Nov. 9th. He will do an analysis of the data and create a report. One more trail work day to repair a bridge is scheduled. He has been guiding the Park Association in an attempt to assist them in setting goals/objectives for coming year. They will be putting together a list of their past accomplishments. Ms. Knab suggested they have a page on the town website if they wish. Mr. Hickey noted that the library story walk at the park has been in disrepair and preparations are being made for its removal after consult with the Youth Librarian and Interim Director. He has reviewed RFPs for the pump track renovation and will report back in January. A plaque has been ordered for Smyk Park and its installation is imminent. He and Mr. Schaaf have been brainstorming some low key programs to introduce people to the Smyk Park. Mr. Hickey was pleased to report good attendance at the community Christmas tree lighting. He will be meeting

with the Lights 4 Lives organizers this week to support their efforts, answer questions, and help them connect with people, ensuring a successful event.

January 7th is the community bonfire in partnership with Stratham Memorial School. Mr. Hickey requested permission to hold the bonfire. Mr. Houghton motioned to authorize Parks & Recreation to proceed in submitting a burn permit request for the community bonfire. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Lastly, Mr. Hickey reported that spring programming planning has begun. He and Mr. Schaaf plan to build the program.

Recalling that Mr. Hickey planned to bring the draft parking ordinance to the Conservation Commission, Ms. Knab informed him that the Conservation Commission has cancelled their December meeting. Mr. Moore will confirm the path for ordinance approval, namely confirming the Select Board is authorized to make these particular contemplated changes. Mr. Moore commended TMAC and Mr. Hickey on outreach and collaboration. Mr. Houghton acknowledged seeing tremendous progress during his time on the Board when it comes to collegiality, cooperation and communication between the entities.

CORRESPONDENCE

Mr. Moore explained that we received the NHMA letter on dues which will be paid in the beginning of the year. We've also received a letter from Comcast regarding pricing changes. They observed that the prices will be raised quite a bit. The Board remarked that the Town has no control over what Comcast charges.

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Moore requested a non-public session. At 7:29pm Mr. Houghton motioned to go into a non-public session in accordance with RSA 91-A:3, II (b) hiring of a public employee. Ms. Knab seconded the motion. Roll call: Houghton-yes; Knab-yes; Anderson-yes

At 8:48 Houghton motioned to come out of the non-public session and seal the minutes in accordance with RSA 91-A:3, III noting that failure to do so would render a proposed action ineffective. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Moore directed attention to the budget schedule. Mr. Anderson will be the Select Board representative to the Finance Advisory Committee for the School Board. Mr. Moore will present the draft CIP to the Planning Board at an upcoming meeting. He and Ms. McAllister will refine the draft budget and present it at the next Select Board meeting on December 19th. Proposals from department heads to include part-time hours for fire inspection services (by the Fire Chief), and animal control services (by the Chief of Police) will be include.

Ms. McAllister gave an update on the budget, reporting an increase of just under 2%, which is \$30,000 less than the preliminary budget. She explained that payroll costs were carried forward and some changes were made based on open enrollment and positions that were filled. The increase is based on actual costs; not assumptions, allowing this to be a more precise version.

She spoke in general about changes employees have elected regarding insurance plans. She noted legal fees have increased. In response to a question from Mr. Moore regarding encumbrances, Ms. McAllister needs more information from department heads.

BOARDS & COMMISSIONS

Ms. Knab observed that there were many committee members whose appointments' were expiring. Mr. Moore said a record of attendance will be forthcoming. The last ZBA meeting was cancelled due to only four members being available, which is a quorum; however, the applicants elected to delay in hopes of having five members sat.

APPOINTMENTS

Ms. Knab motioned to move Veronique Ludington forward for the Library Trustee vacancy with a term to expire at Town Meeting 2023. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Ms. Knab motioned approval of Dave Canada's reappointment to the Planning Board for a three year term expiring 2026. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Ms. Knab motioned approval of Jessie Hook and Ryan Guerette's appointment to the Recreation Commission to fill open positions for three year terms expiring 2024. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Mr. Houghton motioned approval of Lucy Cushman to the Heritage Commission to the vacant alternate position for a three year term expiring 2025. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

ADMINISTRATION

Mr. Moore reported that we had a chance to apply again to the DES Strategic Planning grant for engineering services regarding PFAS. Mr. Houghton motioned to allow the Town Administrator to submit an application for the sustainability grant application for PFAS long term alternatives analysis. Ms. Knab seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Mr. Moore reminded the Board about the Police Dept. event at which recent departmental promotions will be recognized on Dec. 19th.

Mr. Moore reported that the Conservation Commission requested a change in their representative to the Open Space and Connectivity Steering Committee. Ms. Knab motioned to appoint Kyle Saltonstall to the Open Space and Connectivity Steering Committee to replace Brad Jones who had commitments precluding his participation. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Mr. Moore reported that self-appraisals are underway. The permitting software contract has been executed. The Town Report memo requesting submissions will go out tomorrow. Mr. Moore noted events being planned by a number of community organizations to recognize the Civil Rights Day/Martin Luther King Day holiday. He noted the collaborators included the Stratham Historical Society, the Racial Unity Team, the Boys Scouts pack 185, Wiggin Memorial Library and the Stratham Community Church. Town cooperation was needed in

hosting a valentines for Stratham drop-box at the Municipal Center. The Board agreed to host the box.

Mr. Moore explained that the NH Preservation Alliance is the grantor of funds received from The 1772 Foundation. The Historical Society building is in need of some attention. Mr. Moore, along with the Historical Society, the Heritage Commission, and the Library Trustees (they own the building) are working to determine if they are eligible to apply for this grant. A plan on how to best manage the care of this historical building is needed to move forward. Mr. Moore requested the release of \$450 from the Historical Preservation Trust to have an assessment done by Drew Bedard of Bedard Preservation. The Board was supportive. They discussed the possibility of adjusting the lease to be long-term and Mr. Moore said he would confer with Heritage Commission Chair. The Board agreed that the building should remain as is and kept in good repair. Mr. Bedard also assessed the Gifford Barn in preparation for already budgeted and planned improvements for stabilizing the painted façade of the Gifford Barn..

Mr. Moore called attention to Police Chief King's news release on the deployment of body worn cameras. It is planned to be included in the December 16th newsletter.

Ms. Knab motioned to adjourn. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Richard
Recording Secretary