

MINUTES OF THE FEBRUARY 20, 2024 SELECT BOARD MEETING

MEMBERS PRESENT: Board Members Chair Mike Houghton, Joe Anderson

ABSENT: Vice Chair Allison Knab

ALSO PRESENT: Town Administrator David Moore, Finance Administrator Christiane McAllister

At 7:00 pm Mr. Houghton opened the meeting and requested a motion on the minutes. Mr. Anderson motioned to approve the minutes of February 5, 2024. Mr. Houghton seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Mr. Houghton moved on to Finance. Ms. McAllister is looking forward to evaluating candidates for the Finance Assistant position and beginning the interview process.

Mr. Houghton asked for comments on Correspondence. Mr. Moore said that would be covered under Action items. Mr. Houghton motioned to open the Public Hearing to discuss the acceptance of funds in the amount of \$91,950 for a 2024 Local Source Water Protection Program Grant from the NH Dept. of Environmental Services. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. All voted in favor. Mr. Moore explained that the funds would be used towards a portion of the Ross property which is adjacent to the park. He expects an April closing. This, and another grant, with the balance coming from Conservation Fund will make up the full amount. Mr. Houghton asked for comments from the public. Ray Breslin former resident, now residing in Londonderry, spoke in support of the use of the funds in this land acquisition. The board thanked him for his comment. Hearing no further public comments, Mr. Anderson motioned to close the public hearing. Mr. Houghton seconded the motion. All voted in favor. Mr. Anderson motioned to accept the grant funds and to authorize the Town Administrator to execute the grant agreement between the State of NH for a Source Water Protection Grant for the acquisition of the Ross brothers' property for an amount totaling \$91,950. Mr. Houghton seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Mr. Houghton moved to the mutual aid agreement between Portsmouth Naval Shipyard and the Seacoast Fire Chief Officers Mutual Aid District. Mr. Moore explained that Chief Denton recommends this. Town Counsel has reviewed. Mr. Anderson motioned to approve the mutual aid agreement between the Department of the Navy Commander and navy region mid-Atlantic operations and public safety the Seacoast Fire Chiefs Association Mutual Aid District as presented. Mr. Houghton seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Mr. Houghton moved to the SMS Wellness Walk road closure request. Mr. Moore explained that this is an annual event. Police and EMS have been notified. Mr. Houghton motioned to approve the road closure from 39 Gifford Farm Road to Long Hill between 1:15 – 2:15pm on Friday, May 10th. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Mr. Houghton moved to the decommissioning of Public Works rolling stock. Mr. Moore noted that there are two vehicles being recommended to be put out to bid, 2005 Ford Escape and 1995 International. They discussed the administrative process. The summary of the bid results will go

to the Select Board. Mr. Houghton motioned to authorize the Town Administrator to enter into a public bidding process for the disposition of the Town's 1995 International and 2005 Ford Escape via public bid process to be administered by the Finance office. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Mr. Houghton suggested the discussion on the independent auditors be deferred until Ms. Knab could be in attendance. Mr. Moore will put it on the March 4th agenda.

Mr. Houghton moved to the Town Administrator's Report. Mr. Moore reported receiving correspondence from Lucy Cushman, Cemetery Trustee and Heritage Commission member asserting that the upkeep of the cemetery on River Rd is the responsibility of the town. Mr. Moore will investigate and report back.

Mr. Moore continued, reporting that the CIP is in the contract stage for three projects – Fire Tower painting, Gifford barn stabilization project, Fire Dept. roof. Met with DPW Director Tim Stevens on the HVAC project and rolling stock replacement.

Mr. Moore reported on the 2023 reimbursement for PFAS expenses that are eligible under the \$350,000 State grant. We should be able to make another request in 2024 for the total balance of the \$350,000. The grant covers installation costs and one year maintenance of all installations in Town Center GMP. As time goes on, the town will be responsible for maintenance. This should begin in 2025.

Mr. Moore reported meeting with the contract assessor and Assessing Assistant Jim Joseph bi-weekly. They are focusing on updating the website with information about the re-valuation. Mr. Moore described a newspaper article about regional assessing issues in the North Hampton community. He felt the take away from that article was that residents appreciate being forewarned about potential increases so they may better plan for them. Mr. Houghton felt that educating the residents on the drivers would help them better determine if they will be in the 1/3 that will go up. Notifications to taxpayers will go out in July. Informal hearings will be held the first week in August.

Open Space and Connectivity meeting was last week. Mr. Moore will work with Mr. Connors on following up. Though he felt the group did good work, Mr. Houghton noted there was more work to be done.

Mr. Moore updated the Board on emergency response preparations. The Feb. drill went smoothly; next drill is in April. Three new staff members participated in the Feb. drill. Building/Planning Office Coordinator Michael Lamb has volunteered to obtain additional radiation officer training, as has Fire Department member Greta Nudd.

Mr. Moore informed the group that he would be out the week of February 26th. He explained that materials for Town Meeting and Voter Information Night are being prepared and will be ready soon.

Mr. Houghton said he would attend the DRA meeting at 11:00 am on Tuesday, Feb. 27th.

Mr. Anderson motioned to approve the request from Katherine Nichols to use the Sewall Room on March 16th and to have the alcohol prohibition waived. Mr. Houghton seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Mr. Anderson motioned to approve the Collie Rescue League of New England's use of the Front Pavilion on Sept. 7 and waive the fee. Mr. Houghton seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Mr. Anderson motioned to approve the Spina Bifida Association's use of the Front Pavilion on May 18, 2024 and waive the fee. Mr. Houghton seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Mr. Houghton asked Mr. Moore if there were policies in place to protect the town for the events in which the alcohol fee is waived. There was a brief discussion about the current protocol and Mr. Moore the staff would revisit to ensure the practices are up to date.

Mr. Houghton motioned to re-appoint Joe Van Gombos to a full member seat on the Energy Commission for a three year term to expire in 2025. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Mr. Houghton motioned to re-appoint Matt O'Keefe to a full member seat on the Energy Commission for a three year term to expire in 2026. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Mr. Houghton motioned to re-appoint William McCarthy to a full member seat on the Conservation Commission for a three year term to expire in 2027. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Mr. Moore asked for feedback on a previously submitted draft of his presentation for Voter Information Night.

At 7:45 pm Mr. Houghton motioned to go into a non-public meeting to discuss personnel matters. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

At 8:49 pm Mr. Houghton motioned to come out of the non-public session and adjourn. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion and seal the minutes noting that failure to do so would render a proposed action ineffective. All voted in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Richard
Recording Secretary