

MINUTES OF THE FEBRUARY 22, 2022 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 Moderator David Emanuel, Town Clerk/Tax Collector Deborah Bakie

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

Mr. Lovejoy motioned to accept the minutes from the February 7, 2022 Select Board meeting as amended. Ms. Knab seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Mr. Houghton turned attention to the Town Meeting preparations and Moderator Emanuel and Town Clerk Bakie joined the discussion. Mr. Moore outlined the presentation. Candidates for committees will be sworn in at the end of the meeting. The Boy Scouts will be asked to lead the Pledge of Allegiance. Ms. Bakie spoke about election preparations. They discussed the accommodations that will be made due to Covid. In an effort to be more transparent, Mr. Lovejoy requested openly announcing throughout the Election Day what is being done mechanically during the election such as counting absentee ballots. As always, Ms. Bakie will announce the testing of the ballot machine. She explained the maintenance process for the voting machines, which is completed through an annual service contract with the State's vendor.

Mr. Houghton recognized Parks and Recreation Director Seth Hickey to present the Trail Management Advisory Committee report. After a brief summary of the effort put forth by the committee, he turned the presentation over to Kevin O'Brien, a member of the group. Mr. O'Brien gave a summary of the TMAC report. The committee examined uses of the park (dog walking, hiking, biking, athletic sports, etc.) and the trail network. He observed that when you are on the trails, you cannot determine the difference between Town owned land, private property, easements, or conservation land. Each has a different set of rules (hunting, on/off leash dogs, etc.). He talked about the damaging effects of people creating their own entrances and/or adding trails. This human activity is detrimental to drainage and to natural habitats. He explained that many people are not aware that neglecting to pick up their dog's waste is harmful to wildlife and plants. They have recommendations for the park and for trail maintenance. The report suggested increasing signage to make people aware of the regulations. Mr. Hickey praised the great work this group has done. Many more conversations need to be had and he would like to see if the group would remain for another year. Ms. Knab expressed concern about signage. Mr. Houghton recalled that the Heritage Commission had funds from Varsity Wireless earmarked for signage at the park. He continued, saying that TMAC did great work which will bring needed focus to the park. He wondered if there might be a means to generate revenue to offset the ongoing maintenance work. Mr. Lovejoy was impressed with the synthesis of materials and past relevant reports and studies such as the Forest Management Plan and Snowhawk reports and said the report is a valuable resource. The group agreed that obtaining public input and engaging as many people as possible in the conversations would be beneficial.

Mr. O'Brien thanked the board for creating the committee and listening to their recommendations.

Mr. Houghton recognized Mr. Moore to give an update on PFAS in Town Center. He said the individual property filtration installations are nearly complete, an effort being led by in part by Jim Marchese and Denise Lemire. We were notified of an exceedance at another address and the State is investigating if there is a link to our site. Water quality issues are a primary concern for the State. They have taken steps to address them. Mr. Moore and Mr. Marchese want to ensure the residents of Stratham have the option of taking advantage of the free water testing that will be coming available. We have contracted with Underwood Engineering for the long term study of managing the PFAS site. The State may reimburse the Town for some of our PFAS related expenses. Mr. Moore indicated the State of NH had assembled a meeting of area towns and water systems to discuss challenges and issues of mutual concern. He summarized regulatory challenges facing a few of the systems and some of the concepts for addressing those issues regionally. After Town Meeting, Mr. Moore will focus on the reimbursement plan for residents who installed filtration systems ahead of the town. Ms. McAllister explained what was done regarding water issues in New Castle.

Mr. Moore called attention to a request from the owners of 20 Portsmouth Avenue to release the Performance Bond. Mr. Lovejoy motioned to release the Performance Bond for 20 Portsmouth Avenue (Starbucks) in the amount of \$162,750. Ms. Knab seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Mr. Houghton called attention to the Large Groundwater Renewal and Annual Report for Golf Club of New England. Mr. Moore explained the process and standards, saying the use is reasonable. Ms. Knab and Mr. Houghton discussed the need for more information. Mr. Moore said he would discuss the report with Mr. Connors and seek a third party review to assist.

Mr. Moore reported that the people that rented Room A over the weekend did a poor job of cleaning up which impacted the groups using the room on Sunday and staff on Monday. Because this has been an ongoing issue, Mr. Moore will meet with staff to discuss the possibility of changes to the policy and will report back to the Board. He reminded the Board that during past related discussions the Board wanted to work to continue to offer this service to the public.

In his general Administrative report, Mr. Moore stated that he and Mr. Connors went to the Chamber Economic Outlook meeting last week. The Emergency Planning Drill is set for April 6th. As a result of much work, the last drill went very well. The Age Friendly Steering Committee will meet for the first time tomorrow. Our Building Inspector met with the Chair of the Heritage Commission, Nate Merrill, to perform the annual monitoring of the old Town Hall, in keeping with the preservation easement. The Heritage Commission will review the report, then it will come to the Select Board. The auditors will be in the week of April 18. Mr. Connors has done a great job following up with our legislative delegation on the 10 year plan. Although we have a verbal commitment from the commissioner to move our project, we don't have DOT support, therefore, it is unlikely it will be successful. Ms. Knab witnessed many people riding and walking along the shoulder of Rt. 33 and expressed concern for DOT's upcoming project and that the details were scarce about the goals and approach. Mr. Moore said there was an

option to meet with DOT. It was agreed that there is a lack of transparency in the Rt. 33 project. Mr. Houghton supported meeting with the DOT.

Mr. Moore forwarded to the Board a communication from Glengarry Condominiums regarding their trash collection. During past snowstorms, their contractors have not made the roads passable for the Casella trucks. One has gotten stuck. Although Mr. Mears has communicated with the property management, their property management hasn't communicated with the condo residents. In an effort to improve communication, Mr. Mears will include Association presidents when he talks to the property managers. If the trucks cannot complete the collection due to impassable roads, they are under no obligation to return. Mr. Moore explained Turnkey makes the decision about whether collections will occur during a snowstorm or not. The decision is not made by Casella or the Town.

We as a staff are following the housing announcements by the governor. There appears to be some possibilities for Stratham.

Mr. Moore presented an updated short term rentals advocacy letter to be signed by the Board.

Mr. Moore requested guidance on changing the mask requirement in the Municipal Center. It was decided to change from masks being "strongly urged" to being "recommended". Mr. Moore has allowed the Police and Fire Chiefs and the DPW Director to make the decision regarding requirements in their buildings.

RESERVATIONS

Mr. Moore read the reservation requests and requests to waive the fee. Mr. Houghton motioned to allow the Great Bay Stewards use the Front Pavilion for their annual Great Bay 5K 10/29/22 and to waive the fee and to allow the Acorn School to use the Scamman Pavilion for their annual Earth Day celebration on 4/22/22 and to waive the fee. Mr. Lovejoy seconded the motion. Ms. Knab abstained because of her involvement with the Great Bay Stewards. Motions passed.

Next, Mr. Moore received correspondence from Mark LeBlanc, Cadence Sports, requesting approval of a permit to hold a Ride to End Alzheimer's bicycle event that travels through Stratham. Chief King has reviewed and sees no issues with this event. Mr. Houghton motioned to approve. Mr. Lovejoy seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Mr. Moore reported receiving recommendations from the Town Assessor. Ms. Knab motioned to approve the two veterans' credits, the two land use changes and the two elderly exemptions as recommended by the Assessor. Mr. Lovejoy seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Mr. Moore updated the Board on preparations for Town Meeting. They discussed who might read the dedication and the memoriam at Town Meeting. They decided who would speak to each of the Articles.

At 9:05 pm Mr. Houghton motioned to go into a non-public session in accordance with RSA 91-A:3, II (a) Personnel. Mr. Lovejoy seconded the motion. Roll Call: Houghton – Yes, Lovejoy – Yes, Knab - Yes

At 10:15 pm Mr. Houghton motioned to come out of the non-public session and seal the minutes noting that divulgence of the information likely would affect adversely the reputation of a person other than a member of this board. Mr. Lovejoy seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Mr. Houghton motioned to move forward with an employment agreement with David Moore effective January 1 for a term of five years to be executed by the Select Board. Mr. Lovejoy seconded the motion. All voted in favor. Mr. Houghton motioned to execute an employment agreement with Police Chief Anthony King effective April 1 with a term of 5 years. Mr. Lovejoy seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Mr. Moore said that he would attend Candidate Night at the Library on Tuesday, March 1st and, on behalf of the Board, present the Town Meeting warrant articles.

At 10:17 pm Mr. Lovejoy motioned to adjourn. Ms. Knab seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Richard