

## **MINUTES OF THE FEBRUARY 7, 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, Finance Administrator Christiane McAllister

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

Mr. Lovejoy motioned to accept the minutes from the January 18, 2022 Select Board meeting. Ms. Knab seconded the motion. All voted in favor. Ms. Knab motioned to accept the minutes from the February 1, 2022 Select Board meeting. Mr. Lovejoy seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Mr. Houghton deferred talking about the Treasurer's Report until the Finance Administrator arrived.

Mr. Houghton recognized resident Colin Laverty. Mr. & Mrs. Laverty, 121 Stratham Heights Road, appeared before the Board to address a lack in timeliness of snow removal during snow events. Mr. Laverty provided documentation and description of several motor vehicle accidents on Stratham Heights Road within the past 2 – 3 years. He felt that the snow removal and subsequent cleanup has been an ongoing issue. He asked the Board to address why response to winter storm events is so poor; 2. Why the DPW Director takes the Town's vehicle to his home on a daily basis. What can be done in the way of roadway improvements to make Stratham Heights Road safer? He described the five accidents on that road in the last 2 – 3 years, saying some of them came very close to people's houses.

Mr. Laverty thanked the Board for their time and consideration.

Mr. Houghton thanked Mr. Laverty for bringing this matter to his attention. He will pursue the issue and convene the department heads involved and will report back. He said that he takes his complaint seriously but he has not heard any other complaints from residents about winter road maintenance throughout Town or on this roadway.

Mr. Anderson, a member of the public in attendance asked for reasons behind the crashes. Mr. Laverty said two were related to ice on the road, two were distracted drivers, and one was under the influence.

### **PARKS & RECREATION**

Mr. Houghton recognized Parks & Recreation Director Seth Hickey to give his department report. Referring to his previously distributed report, Mr. Hickey updated the Board on his recommendations for the Smyk Park. The baseball and softball programs are moving forward. They are in the process of recruiting coaches. He drafted a write up of the Youth Sports Coordinator position as proposed by the Recreation Commission. Mr. Hickey explained what

youth sports looks like these days, based on engagement of volunteers the past few years. Ms. Knab recognized the many details and knowledge that would be required of a person in that position. She had questions about oversight and how it would fit into the Parks & Rec department. Mr. Lovejoy asked about overlap of programs. Mr. Houghton asked about recruitment efforts for volunteers. Mr. Hickey described what's been done this far. Ms. Knab felt the job description contained a lot of responsibilities. She described her experience on the basketball board. Ms. McAllister had payroll questions for the new position. She and Mr. Hickey will need to meet to discuss further.

Mr. Hickey explained that they are in the planning stages for the Great Bay Food Truck Festival on May 7, from noon to 5pm. He provided an overview of the event. They are coordinating with the DPW director on placement of trucks, meeting with the Police Dept. on safety and parking concerns. There will be only food this year; no beer or wine. Tickets will be sold in advance. This event is in coordination with the Exeter Area Chamber of Commerce. They are working on the marketing plan which will lay out clear expectations for the event.

Mr. Hickey reported that the Trail Management Advisory Committee is moving forward with their final report with a deadline of Feb 18<sup>th</sup> in mind. The committee would like consideration to continue into the future to be able to carry out their recommendations.

Mr. Hickey continues to work with the Park Association on counter devices at SHP. He stated that the Summer Camp program is sold out with just over 500 participants. The Counselor in Training program has been very successful. The Community Bonfire on January 8<sup>th</sup> went well. Because of the snow that day, they added a snowshoe hike. The Ski programs are wrapping up. He will have more information in the future regarding the master plan for Steven's Park.

Mr. Houghton was happy to see the engagement returning and programming taking place. There is a stronger comfort level with outdoor programming. Mr. Hickey said that reservations for the pavilions are coming in. The Next TMAC meeting is Feb. 16<sup>th</sup> but is dependent on progress of the draft report.

Mr. Hickey told Mr. Lovejoy it was a pleasure to work with him these past six years and that he will be missed. Mr. Lovejoy reciprocated the sentiment and expressed appreciation for the work Mr. Hickey and his department has done.

#### FIRE DEPARTMENT

Mr. Houghton recognized Fire Chief Matt Larrabee. Chief Larrabee has had conversations with his officers and a subcommittee of the department membership about possibly revisiting the 1993 Town Meeting vote that defines the structure of the department to include the election of Fire Chief by department members. They reviewed and discussed the issue in depth. Consensus among the membership was to keep the current model at this time. Chief Larrabee referred to a change in his work schedule which will affect his ability to remain as Chief. He feels he can commit for the next year, but would welcome it if someone would step up. He suggested that, if they couldn't find a volunteer, perhaps a compensation model could be offered. The officers would like the opportunity to perform a search, first from within, then widening it, then bringing a recommendation to the Board. Mr. Lovejoy commented on the cohesion and pride among the

department. Chief Larrabee affirmed that they had discussed some potential issues. Mr. Houghton noted the RSA is 30 years old; it might need updating. He felt a need to have a contingency plan in place to ensure public safety. Chief Larrabee suggested that in order to maintain the good relationship, with Mr. Lovejoy's departure, perhaps another Board member would attend Fire Dept. meetings and other events.

At 8:00 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 8:09 pm Mr. Houghton motioned to come out of the non-public session and seal the minutes noting failure to do so may render the proposed action of the board ineffective. Mr. Lovejoy seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

#### APPOINTMENTS

Mr. Houghton directed attention to the Age Friendly Committee and listed the applicants. Mr. Lovejoy motioned to appoint Tracy-Lynn Abbott, Lucy Cushman, Richard Swett, Roberta Febo, Christopher Zaremba, Mark Connors and Allison Knab to the Age-Friendly Committee. Ms. Knab seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Mr. Houghton said we received a letter from Robert Roseen resigning from the Planning Board. Mr. Lovejoy motioned to accept Mr. Roseen's resignation. Ms. Knab seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Mr. Houghton returned to the Treasurer's report, which Mr. Moore handed out noting that it was unintentionally not included in their packet. Mr. Moore and Ms. McAllister provided general updates about the Finance Office and noticed the 2020 audit was completed. Mr. Houghton thanked Ms. McAllister for her efforts to get the audit complete a feat accomplished following the transition of Finance Administrators. He acknowledged the challenges she faced in coming on Board at a challenging time of the year when there are so many demands and he is deeply appreciative of the work she's done.

Mr. Houghton asked about the correspondence regarding private well owners on the Seacoast. Mr. Moore spoke briefly about his involvement in the legislative committee which addresses this issue.

Mr. Houghton brought attention to the Select Board meeting schedule. The second meeting of the month was inadvertently omitted from the schedule. Because of the holiday, the board will hold its regular meeting on Tuesday, February 22.

Mr. Moore met with the Moderator and discussed election preparations. The Town Clerk is taking the reins of the facility set up. The Board, Town Administrator and Town Clerk briefly discussed COVID protocols for the first session (election) and second session of Town Meeting. Mr. Lovejoy went to the school deliberative session and was impressed with the logistics. Conversation ensued about the level of accommodations for the upcoming elections and Mr.

Moore indicated he would confer with the Clerk and Moderator prior revisiting the issue with the Board.

Ms. McAllister gave an update on the status of the Warrant articles. The warrant articles and the proposed budget are in for pre-review with DRA. Once finalized, the Board will need to sign. Mr. Moore said the Town Report is being finalized and is due to the printer on Friday.

Mr. Houghton moved on to the open positions on boards and commissions. Mr. Moore will call attention to the vacant boards and commission openings in an upcoming Select Board Newsletter. No one has filed as a candidate for the vacant position on the Trustees of Trust Funds. They discussed how the vacancy might be filled. Ms. McAllister asked if consideration has been given to alternates, which she has found to be effective in helping to manage future vacancies. Mr. Moore will look at the RSA governing the matter. Mr. Moore noted terms expire at Town Meeting. It was decided to swear in candidates who were in attendance at the end of town meeting.

At 8:43 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 10:10 pm Ms. Knab motioned to come out of the non-public session and seal the minutes noting failure to do so may render the proposed action of the board ineffective. Mr. Lovejoy seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

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

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Richard  
Recording Secretary