

MINUTES OF THE MARCH 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. Allison Knab joined the meeting at 7:45 pm.

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 February 3, 2022 and February 22, 2022 Select Board meeting. Mr. Houghton seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Mr. Houghton called attention to the Treasurer's Report. Mr. Moore explained that work is being done to improve the report. Ms. McAllister detailed some of the improvements and reported out on discussions with the Treasurer concerning the timing of statements and that the two are recommending the Board plan on receipt of Treasurer's Report at the second meeting of the month. Mr. Houghton agreed with the suggestion and no other objections were registered.

Mr. Houghton recognized Library Director Lesley Kimball to give her department report. Ms. Kimball reported that Voter Information Night was a success with 90 people logging in and 50 people attending in person. The video recording has gotten 63.5 hours of viewing time. Continuing to offer remote availability is important and beneficial. Ms. Kimball anticipates increasing in person programming. The library has received a grant for civic engagement. The objective is to initiate community conversations regarding voting. She is reaching out to the community and hopes to begin holding meetings the second week in April. The goal is to generate a short term and one or two longer term projects.

Another grant they received is Quality of Place Grant. NH Listens (UNH Survey Center) will be conducting the survey. The library will hold focus groups around what makes this area a great place to live and develop ideas on how we can enhance that. She hopes to take advantage of information that's already been gathered, such as the Master Plan, and develop ideas from that.

Next, Ms. Kimball reported that the Library Trustees are working on the personnel policy. Ms. McAllister has been a resource for them, providing help with Dept. of Labor policy and definitions. A final draft is expected to be submitted in April to Primex for legal review. An effort is being made to conform procedures, using current Town policy as a guide. The Library has its own employment manual. Because the Trustees are the hiring/firing authority for the library, it is recommended they have their own personnel policy.

Ms. Kimball recalled that at a prior meeting, there was conversation regarding library usage. She explained the total (digital and physical) circulation has been the same for years, however the proportion has changed. In 2019, digital use is going up; physical use is going down. They are hoping that keeping the doors open for a full year and expanding the hours will increase the foot traffic.

Ms. Kimball reported on the study being done to reconfigure the library floor plan to enable it to be more beneficial for library patrons. They've narrowed it down to two designs. One is easier to implement, however the other, although more difficult, is more beneficial to overall goals. She listed the benefits including being able to integrate and utilize outdoor space so it feels like one space and incorporating a meeting and gathering space for the community. A cost analysis will be the next step. Demolition and construction is required with both plans.

Ms. Kimball wished Mr. Lovejoy well.

Mr. Houghton moved to public comment section of the agenda and recognized resident and former Town Administrator Paul Deschaine. Mr. Deschaine said he came to the meeting knowing it would be Mr. Lovejoy's last as a Select Board member. He wanted to thank Mr. Lovejoy and expressed appreciation for the time they worked together. Mr. Lovejoy thanked Mr. Deschaine for his kind comments.

Mr. Moore reported that preparations for election and town meeting are going well and final logistical preparations are being made.

Mr. Houghton directed attention to the Police Dept. body worn cameras. Mr. Moore said this was for information only. They are not ready for action on it. We are awaiting the terms of the grant. Mr. Houghton would like to know more about the selection process and the policy regarding legal review when the matter comes back before the Board.

Next Mr. Houghton moved to the park and turf item on the agenda. Mr. Moore recalled the Request for Proposals that Director of Public Works Nate Mears sent out for maintenance of the grounds at the parks and cemeteries. Mr. Mears recommends moving forward with Hillside Landscaping. Mr. Lovejoy motioned to accept the proposal from Hillside Landscaping and authorize the Town Administrator or the Director of Public Works to sign the contract. Mr. Houghton seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Fire Chief Matt Larrabee joined the meeting. Mr. Houghton moved the conversation to the discussion of the Ambulance Contract. Chief Larrabee said that if Article 16 passes, they will be able to purchase a replacement for ambulance 2. The money will come from the ambulance account. He requested authorization to sign the contract, if the article passes, because the price is going up 7% on March 17 and he'd like to get it submitted prior to the price increase. In addition, we can get a discount if we pay the entire bill at once. Discussion ensued about selling it at state auction vs trading it in. It was decided to sell it at auction. Mr. Houghton motioned to authorize the Fire Chief to execute a contract with Greenwood Emergency Vehicles LLV for an ambulance related to warrant article 16 upon its successful passage at Town Meeting on March 12, 2022. Mr. Lovejoy seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

ADMINISTRATION

Mr. Moore reported that Mr. Mears will be at the next meeting for his departmental report and plans to introduce topics for revision to the solid waste ordinance for the Board consideration. Mr. Deschaine, as the Stratham Representative and Chair of Lamprey Regional Cooperative, said

he received an email today regarding unusual cost increases related to the pandemic and personnel affecting the Cooperative's contract with Waste Management. He will coordinate a meeting with the other members of the executive committee to discuss and report back to Town Administrator Moore as necessary.

Mr. Moore reported receiving notification that Officer Chuck Law will be retiring effective April 30, 2022. He anticipates Police Chief Anthony King will attend the next Select Board meeting to discuss the transition and next steps.

Mr. Houghton asked about pending legislation found in the informational items. Mr. Moore noted that we have been engaged with the legislators and sent two letters recently. He stated that House Bill 1033 regarding Municipal Lobbying, is of concern. This bill precludes towns from having their voices heard. It would limit the ability of elected officials to make representatives aware of issues that would directly negatively impact residents in cities and towns in NH. Mr. Deschaine added that he is following the issue for the town of Newington and the coalition communities have taken a stand against this bill. An amendment is pending which softens the rhetoric, but the effect is no less harmful. The Board supports writing a letter opposing the Bill.

APPOINTMENTS

Mr. Houghton noted there were two members up for reappointment to the Conservation Commission - William Kenny and Kyle Saltonstall. Mr. Lovejoy motioned approval of both applications to the Conservation Commission renewing their three year terms. Ms. Knab seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

At 8:30 pm Mr. Lovejoy motioned to adjourn. Ms. Knab seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Richard
Recording Secretary