

MINUTES OF THE MAY 1, 2023 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, Police Chief Anthony King

At 7:00 p.m. Mr. Houghton opened the meeting and requested motions on the April 17th minutes. Mr. Anderson motioned to approve the April 17, 2023 minutes. Ms. Knab seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Mr. Houghton recognized Chief King for his department report. Chief King reported that for the first two weeks of the new Jack Rabbit Lane parking ordinance they will post signs and educate the public. After that, they will begin enforcement. Onboarding the Animal Control Officer is moving forward. Although equipping the ACO vehicle has been delayed due to some items being on backorder, they will proceed.

Chief King reported that he's been doing a lot of work with the NH Accreditation program in his role as Chair of that statewide commission. The new state program will begin on July 1st. It is his plan that Stratham will obtain state accreditation in addition to our national accreditation. Chief King's application for a grant of \$53,000 for critical incident/active threat response equipment and training was approved; however, there are more steps to go through before it is awarded.

Chief King is recommending posting for a full-time police officer in order to respond to the upcoming retirement of Sgt. Call.

Chief King referenced the proposal regarding the detail rate. He suggests gradually increasing the rate to the average of surrounding towns over a three year period. This is an attempt to retain and incentivize officers, which remains difficult across the nation. The proposed detail pay includes holidays, emergency after hours and hazardous duty. Mr. Moore discussed the implications of implementing this change. This is specifically for Stratham officers. After discussion, the group decided to combine the proposed three detail rates to two rates and clarify the start time of each detail and Chief King will circulate a summary of the detail rate policy and new rates reflective of the conversation. It will start with the May 15th pay period.

At 7:22 pm Mr. Houghton motioned to go into a non-public session in accordance with RSA 91-A:3, II(c) on a matter which, if discussed in public, would likely affect adversely the reputation of another. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. Roll call: Houghton-yes; Anderson-yes; Knab-yes. All voted in favor.

At 8:22 p.m. the Select Board re-entered public session. Mr. Houghton moved to seal the minutes; Ms. Knab seconded the motion and all voted in favor.

Mr. Hickey was then recognized to provide some departmental updates and speak to his proposal for supplementing the Parks & Recreation staff resources by returning to the concept of a program assistant focused on senior programming and administrative support. Mr. Hickey provided background on the consideration of the proposal which dates back to 2020 when a similar version of this position was included in the originally proposed 2020 Town Meeting budget, but which was removed following amendment in preparation for the minimizing budgetary increases in the face of the pandemic unknowns. He indicated that the workload of the program coordinator to maintain the youth programming including having a physical presence on weekends has been a significant service enhancement with no offset for other administrative demands and needed attention to the senior program. He had worked closely with the Rec. Commission and the Finance Administrator to ensure that there can be a 1 for 1 offset from the Rec Revolving Fund to fully support the additional staffing costs. The Board discussed the proposal, how it aligned with the previous direction, the current demand and the role of additional revenues to offset the cost. Mr. Moore indicated that the staff had discussed reviewing the current recreation fees to ensure we are competitive and to ensure we are appropriately connecting our costs with our fees.

Mr. Houghton recognized Mr. Hickey. Mr. Hickey reported that applications for the Program Coordinator position has been slow. He has reached out to other communities for candidates that might be a good fit here.

Ms. Knab motioned to accept Jamie Schaaf's resignation with regret. Mr. Houghton seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Moore reported that Library Director Kerry Cronin requested a raised bed planting in the space behind the library. DPW and Mr. Moore have met and discussed the project. Ms. Knab motioned support for the Library Director moving forward with the raised bed project. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

ADMINISTRATION

Mr. Moore reminded the Board that Memorial Day is Monday, May 29th. The Board indicated its desire to continue the funding and serving lunch for the Fire Dept. before the parade and ceremony on Memorial Day as has been tradition in the past.

Mr. Moore reported on the 2023 Drinking Water and Groundwater and Strategic Planning Grant, explaining that we must enter a contract for before we commit and he would bring it back for action if awarded. Doing so will allow us to advance the previous work that has been completed.

Mr. Moore informed the group that, in accordance with previous actions taken by the Board, signage for the room at the municipal center and the livestock barns is progressing. He is hoping to have a brief recognition ceremony at the opening of Summerfest on July 15th.

Mr. Moore said he'd like to hold a staff appreciation picnic at Stratham Hill Park on a weekday in early June. He is working on an internal staff newsletter.

Mr. Moore reported that the Local School District approved our request to use the Stratham Memorial School on the election dates in 2024. We still do not have a date for the presidential primary. In the previous Select Board meeting, Ms. Knab requested a return to the discussion of the location for elections. In an attempt to address Ms. Knab's concerns, Mr. Moore emphasized that he would work closely with the school on any concerns that arise.

The Energy Aggregation Committee is working to put together Public Hearing dates. As per the Board's direction, Mr. Moore will meet with the EAC Chair Charlie Case to review the new rates coming out tomorrow. The Town has already saved a significant amount of money as a result of participating in the energy aggregation.

Mr. Moore called attention to the Select Board meeting schedule, specifically the July 3rd meeting. After discussion, consensus was to reschedule the July meetings to July 10 and 31.

Referring back to the discussion on energy aggregation, Mr. Anderson reported that we are the 33rd member to join the CPCNH. Currently, 22% of the State's population is a part of CPCNH. Public Hearings will be held at the end of May and end of June. The committee is taking steps to allow the town flexibility to implement the program as soon as possible.

Mr. Houghton asked for a motion to formalize the temporary position of Code Enforcement Officer. Mr. Anderson motioned to formalize the temporary position of Code Enforcement Officer. Ms. Knab seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Mr. Anderson recalled Mr. Houghton's previous request on department linkage report outs. Mr. Houghton sees this as a recommitment to engage. Mr. Moore said he would include it on the agendas going forward.

RESERVATIONS

Ms. Knab motioned to approve the use of the Front Pavilion for the NH Dept. of Child, Youth and Family Services on June 13th and waive the fee. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

APPOINTMENTS

Ms. Knab motioned to appoint Rebecca Waltz to the Recreation Commission to fill the remainder of a 3 year term to expire at Town Meeting 2024. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Ms. Knab motioned to appoint Geri Denton to the Age Friendly Committee for a term to expire with the termination of the committee. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Mr. Anderson motioned to re-appoint Frank MacMillan to the Zoning Board of Adjustment for a 3 year term to expire at Town Meeting 2026. Ms. Knab seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Mr. Houghton asked if the warrant was available. Mr. Moore confirmed it was ready for their signatures.

Mr. Moore gave an update on goals, calling attention to the assessing re-val. This is a priority and preparation should begin later this year to ensure we have adequate professional services secured. Mr. Houghton asked the status of the DPW item regarding operating procedures and training program. Mr. Moore felt that with the new DPW Admin's help, they would have at least one portion complete. Noting that a majority of the financial goals had been achieved, Mr. Houghton inquired about the auditors' opinion on the new dual reconciliation procedure. Ms. McAllister said that it has received their stamp of approval.

Ms. McAllister reported on the status of the Personnel Policy Manual update and a compendium of Finance Policies. Mr. Houghton recalled that updating the Employee Manual was a request that arose from the employee meeting last year. Even if the manual is not complete, he would like to communicate at least a portion of it.

Ms. McAllister commented on the unusually high amount of Human Resource activity this year. In addition, HealthTrust has changed the way they administer their FSA. It is now the Towns' responsibility to track, causing additional work for her department.

Mr. Houghton wanted to add recruiting and retention to the Goal Sheet: He would like to see leadership training implemented as soon as possible, but definitely included in the budget for next year. Discussion ensued regarding training programs. Mr. Houghton prefers programs that focus on encouraging a collaborative team environment.

At 9:40 pm Mr. Houghton motioned to adjourn. Ms. Knab seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Richard
Recording Secretary