

MINUTES OF THE MAY 2, 2022 SELECT BOARD MEETING

Meeting held in the Hutton Room at the Stratham Municipal Center

MEMBERS PRESENT: Board Members Chair Mike Houghton, Vice Chair Allison Knab, Joe Anderson

ALSO PRESENT: Town Administrator David Moore, Finance Administrator Christiane McAllister, Police Chief Anthony King

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

Ms. Knab motioned to accept the minutes from the April 18, 2022 Select Board meeting. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Mr. Houghton recognized Police Chief Anthony King to give his department report. Chief King reminded the board that there will be an awards ceremony on May 20th and they are invited. He requested the Board's approval to allow alcohol. Ms. Knab motioned to waive the alcohol prohibition for the Police Dept. event on May 20th. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Chief King gave status updates on several grants. Body worn cameras will be implemented in July. He received a grant for radio equipment and is including the DPW and the Fire Dept. in expending the remainder of those funds. Mr. Moore thanked Chief King for taking the lead on that and for including the other departments.

The Police Dept. is also applying for the Highway Safety Grant. Stratham is earmarked to receive up to \$9,000 to be applied towards safety initiatives. They are also applying for a \$2,000 matching grant from the Bureau of Justice Assistance for two bullet proof vests.

Chief King had wanted dashboard cameras at the time the department was applying for a grant for body worn cameras (which has since been awarded and accepted by the Board), but because it was a matching grant, it was financially out of reach. Chief King discovered an outright grant from a Community Funding program sponsored by Congressman Pappas. He applied and, out of the 90 other agencies that applied, Stratham PD was chosen as one of the 15 finalists. We are awaiting their decision.

Chief King gave an update on trainings. Two officers were trained in Integrated Communications Assessment and Tactics, which is how to handle a mental illness crisis with someone who is armed with something other than a handgun. Those officers, in turn, trained the entire department. The department continues to train in de-escalation / escalation; shoot/don't shoot procedures. Chief King continues to encourage and participate in ethics trainings for himself and his staff. He was selected to serve on the NH State Accreditation Committee.

Chief King reported that lobby updates are now complete. After hours, people can come in to the front foyer, fill out paperwork and leave it in a box for the admin assistant to process the next day. He reported that issues with people going through the rear parking lot have been addressed.

Regarding staffing updates, Chief King said that Officer Poole is in his final phase of training and will be starting his first official full time shift on May 12th. There are three part-time positions that are currently available.

The new motorcycle has arrived with new graphics and new radar. The new vehicle is expected to arrive in June.

Chief King reviewed the 2021 goals that were met: body worn cameras, professional development improved, finalized dept. evaluation forms, community relations kicked off (presentation to cub scouts, family events, after hours in foyer, scheduled upcoming events) Ongoing 2022 goals – ongoing training – firearms, more on mental illness, driver training, homeland security drill at SHP, and individual trainings.

Lastly, Chief King advised the Board that he had been working on options for the Department to offer enhanced response to animal-related call through an animal control officer. Stratham alone has over 1,500 dogs registered. He said that Town Clerk Deborah Bakie supports having an animal control officer. There are 250-300 animal related calls each year. There have been issues with dogs at Stratham Hill Park. There would be much to consider in how the position would be structured, including the potential to provide it via an inter-municipal agreement with other Towns. Discussion ensued and it was agreed there was additional research and information to follow-up on. Mr. Houghton expressed concern about the residents' reaction to another request for additional staffing.

At 7:24pm Mr. Houghton motioned to go into a non-public session in accordance with RSA 91-A:3, II(a) Personnel. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. Roll call: Houghton-Yes; Knab-Yes; Anderson-Yes. At 7:50pm Mr. Houghton motioned to come out of the non-public session and seal the minutes noting that failure to do so would adversely affect the reputation of another. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Mr. Houghton moved next to the Recruitment, Retention and Department Structure item and recognized Chief King, who introduced the item.

Chief King summarized his rational for restructuring, which included the creation of a separate operational lieutenant position to be filled within the current complement of full-time staff (no new staff to be hired). He gave the following five reasons in support of moving forward with the second lieutenant's position.

1. Operational effectiveness -Delegation of duties will be more streamlined. The PD has two major areas of responsibility: administrative services and patrol services – this will allow for a lieutenant to be in charge of each of those two divisions.
2. Retention –working to keep good employees longer by providing them with more internal opportunity
3. Recruitment – create a structure that attracts quality applicants in the future when we do lose staff to retirement
4. Succession planning – strategy to identify and develop our future leaders at all levels of the PD

5. Improvement in overall morale – opportunity for improvement and change is beneficial to morale.

Chief King stated that this reorganization will not require hiring additional staff. The lieutenant and sergeant positions will be filled internally.

The Board discussed the proposal and asked clarifying questions of the Chief.

Mr. Houghton moved to approve of the proposed department restructuring presented by the Police Chief as presented. Ms. Knab seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

ADMINISTRATION

Mr. Moore reported that the first quarterly report of the expended ARPA funds has been submitted in accordance with the guidelines and previously outlined projects. Road projects and online software permitting will be in next report.

The Town Assessor is working on the MS-1, which sets the values for the tax bills. Mr. Moore reported out on the logistics of including a message to residents on the tax bill. Based on the limited options, the Board preferred to look at other options.

Mr. Moore reported on the Memorial Day preparations. Jeff Gallagher and Geri Denton are volunteering, once again, to organize the event on behalf of the Board. The Board discussed their participation in the event.

Mr. Moore plans to attend a Climate Change Symposium the Town was invited to by the City of Portsmouth. Regional Towns were invited to participate via zoom.

May 16th will be the Naming Facilities Public Hearing as well as the public hearing on barn easements.

Mr. Moore reported that the SHP signage meeting was held this week. There was good attendance with representatives from various committees being present. Consensus regarding overall goals was easily reached. Mr. Moore will send the summary of the meeting to the Board (a summary is being circulated to attendees). The meeting was valuable in that it allowed for a discussion of how SHP fits into the Master Plan and how the an Open Space Plan will be helpful in defining how the Park fits into the Town's overall open space and park lands. The Trail Management Advisory Committee is poised to move forward with phase I, trail signage and as a result will have a role in thinking through signage details for the entire park.

Mr. Moore reported that the Rt. 108 corridor and traffic light preemption system had been addressed and were functioning. He advised the issue was one more of maintenance than a need for a deep investment in new equipment. He will ask DPW Director Mears to provide more details in his dept. report. The Board discussed how it would be good to update the Town on this issue via the newsletter as it was raised at the Town Meeting.

Mr. Houghton moved to the informational items. Mr. Moore advised that he updated the Goals sheet to include status updates through to April 29th, which he presented to the board for feedback. He will update it and bring to the board monthly.

APPOINTMENTS

Mr. Houghton noted the following appointments for consideration: John Kunowski for the Planning Board and Alex Dardinski to the Heritage District Advisory Committee.

Ms. Knab motioned to move forward with Nate Merrill as our nominee to the Exeter Squamscott River Local Advisory Committee. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Mr. Moore presented a Forest Fire Warden Appointment form from Fire Chief Jeff Denton. We need to change our warden from former Chief Matt Larrabee to Chief Denton and to nominate Deputy Wardens. Chief Denton put forth Christopher Heal and Benjamin Hochschwender as Deputy Wardens. Mr. Anderson moved to designate Chief Jeff Denton as Forest Fire Warden and his recommendations for Deputy Wardens, Christopher Heal and Benjamin Hochschwender. Ms. Knab seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Mr. Moore noted that he received a proclamation request from the town clerks. Mr. Houghton motioned to proceed in publishing a proclamation of the 53rd Annual Professional Municipal Clerk's week to be effective May 1 – 7. Ms. Knab seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Mr. Houghton recognized Ms. McAllister. Ms. McAllister reported on the progress the auditors made last week. She will have the updated financial reports available for them at their next meeting.

At 8:33 pm Mr. Houghton motioned to go into a non-public session in accordance with RSA 91-A:3, II(a) Personnel. Ms. Knab seconded the motion. Roll call: Houghton-yes; Knab-yes; Anderson-yes.

At 9:56 p.m. Mr. Houghton moved to seal the minutes noting failure to do so may adversely may render a proposed action ineffective. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

At 9:56 pm Mr. Houghton motioned to adjourn. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Richard
Recording Secretary