

MINUTES OF THE JUNE 19, 2023 SELECT BOARD MEETING

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

ALSO PRESENT: Finance Administrator Christiane McAllister, Director of Public Works Nate Mears, Police Chief Anthony King, Town Clerk/Tax Collector Deborah Bakie

At 7:00 p.m. Mr. Houghton opened the meeting and asked for motions on the minutes. Mr. Anderson motioned to approve the minutes from June 5, 2023. Ms. Knab seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Mr. Houghton recognized Chris Murdough who referred to the two abatements previously sent to the Board. The owner of Map 21 Lot 61 discovered that a piece of land that they've been paying taxes on since 1993 was not owned by them; it belongs to the Town. Mr. Houghton motioned to abate the taxes in the amount of \$2,298 for Robert V. Hartson, Tax Map 21 Lot 61. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Ms. Murdough's second abatement request was regarding Map 13 Lot 1, SSS Realty LLC (BMW dealership). They've submitted their version of an appraisal. Ms. Murdough did not find evidence to substantiate their request and recommends denial of the request. Mr. Houghton motioned to deny the abatement request for SSS Realty, Tax Map 13, Lot 1. Ms. Knab seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Ms. Murdough requested a non-public to discuss the appeal of OSJ Stratham. At 7:08 pm Mr. Houghton motioned to go into a non-public session in accordance with RSA 91-A:3, II (c) to discuss a matter which may affect adversely the reputation of another. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. Roll call: Houghton-yes; Knab-yes; Anderson-yes.

At 7:23 pm Mr. Houghton motioned to come out of the non-public session and seal the minutes. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Mr. Houghton asked if there were any other non-public issues to discuss. Chief King and Ms. McAllister called attention to several non-public items involving personnel. At 7:25 pm Ms. Knab motioned to go into a non-public session in accordance with RSA 91-A:3, II (a) Personnel. Mr. Houghton seconded the motion. Roll call: Houghton-yes; Knab-yes; Anderson-yes.

At 8:50 pm Mr. Houghton motioned to come out of the non-public session and seal the minutes. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Mr. Houghton recognized Nate Mears for his department report. The DPW sander rack is still in progress with drawings awaiting stamp by a structural engineer. Jack Rabbit parking lot will be regraded and drainage issues addressed. Work on the Gifford barn is focused on preventative maintenance work (carpentry, painting).

Next Mr. Mears discussed the reconstruction of Fire and Police Department parking lots. Currently, they are funded lower than reconstruction costs. Mr. Mears recommends combining the Police and Fire Lot Reconstruction funds, completing the Police Dept. lot this year and encumbering the remaining funds to put towards reconstruction of the Fire Dept. lot next year. Ms. McAllister indicated there may be a few options but needed to look in more detail. Mr. Mears feels it would be best to reconstruct the lots in separate years, so we are not having to redo both in the same year. If the funds cannot be retained, Mr. Mears will do a partial of the Fire Station lot. Mr. Houghton suggested Mr. Mears move forward with reconstruction of the Police Dept. lot and asked Ms. McAllister to report back on a manner for moving forward with funding at the next meeting.

Mr. Mears continued his report saying Jason Darcy has been hired. He has assimilated well with the crew. He will work with him to obtain his CDL license. They've also hired a seasonal employee.

Mr. Mears feels the contracting the park work has gone well. The Board has not heard anything negative.

Mr. Mears is working with Greg Blood on catch basin cleaning. Mr. Blood has invested in a specialized tool for the work. It has been a good collaboration.

Mr. Mears described the roadwork that has been and is being done.

Solid waste is going well; he rarely receives calls regarding this subject. We are within budget.

Discussion moved to the stand-by generator at the Municipal Center. Mr. Mears reported that Room A has its own generator and is maintained separately by Seabrook Power Plant because the Municipal Center is designated as an emergency center. During a power outage this past March the generator malfunctioned (a switch failed). Mr. Mears has no contract agreement for the generators. He was able to get it repaired. He thinks the generator can meet the demand if there is an emergency and doesn't foresee any issues with it failing again.

Mr. Mears reported that the reduced funding on mosquito control is sufficient.

Mr. Anderson thanked him for doing the career fairs at the high school and elementary school. Mr. Mears said he enjoyed doing them and plans to do more.

Mr. Houghton asked Ms. McAllister about the scope of services audit letter. They briefly discussed the cost of services, as there is no specific amount given. The Board discussed issuing an RFP for next year.

Ms. McAllister reported that the budget reports look great. Revenue is above projected amounts. Regarding the Treasurer vacancy, we have a couple of good candidates. Ms. Abbott has agreed to stay until the transition is made.

Ms. McAllister reported that the Transportation Improvement Fund has collected \$3,880 through May, the first month (partial) it was in effect following the 2023 Town Meeting vote.

Ms. McAllister reported that regarding the general fund cash flow, May has the lowest balance of cash in the general fund. She urged them to keep this number in mind when we look at the fund balance policy in the early fall. This number will be significant when we talk about fund balance.

The group discussed the request made by a woman to have a memorial bench at the park honoring three former Stratham residents who were involved in Town activities. Conversations between the Town Administrator and the woman donating the bench are ongoing. This issue will be brought up again at a later meeting.

Mr. Anderson referred to the Informational Item on Comcast and said that he's been receiving a lot of complaints regarding them. Mr. Houghton recalled this issue coming up during previous renewals of the agreement. He thinks our agreement with them provides only for broadcast rights to the Town, but we have no control over their quality of service. The Board would like to review the contract again and will request the Town Administrator bring the contract to the next meeting.

Ms. Knab motioned to accept Bill Hart's resignation with regret and wish him luck with his future endeavors. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Mr. Houghton briefly reviewed the Informational Items. Ms. Knab talked about the Library's Volunteer Fair. Mr. Anderson reported on Summerfest. The RFP for the reval has been posted.

DEPARTMENT LINKAGE REPORT OUTS

Mr. Anderson reminded the group that the second public hearing on energy aggregation is Thursday. He reviewed the EAC's timeline saying they will come before the Board the last meeting in July. They may request a special town meeting for the fall. Ms. Knab met with Town Clerk Tax Collector Deborah Bakie who made a good suggestion of having the Town offer leadership training to department heads. Mr. Houghton reported that there is good progress with staffing at the Police Dept. Mr. Houghton met with Mr. Connors who spoke about navigating transitions in his department but overall everything is on a good track. Ms. McAllister noted that it has been particularly busy with all the turnover (off boarding and on boarding).

RESERVATIONS

Mr. Anderson motioned to allow Pastor John Bell to use the Scamman Pavilion on 6/25/23 and 8/16/23 and to waive the fee. Ms. Knab seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Ms. Knab motioned to allow UNH to use the Front Pavilion on 8/10/23 and to waive the fee. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

The Board signed paperwork.

Seeing an item in the signature folder that hadn't been addressed earlier, Mr. Houghton motioned to approve the Veteran's Tax Exemption for John Leary. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

At 9:49 pm Mr. Houghton motioned to go into a non-public session in accordance with RSA 91-A:3, II (c) to discuss a matter which may affect adversely the reputation of another. Ms. Knab seconded the motion. Roll call: Houghton-yes; Knab-yes; Anderson-yes.

At 9:59 pm Ms. Knab motioned to come out of the non-public session. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

At 10:00 pm Mr. Houghton motioned to adjourn. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Richard
Recording Secretary