

MINUTES OF THE JUNE 5, 2023 SELECT BOARD MEETING

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

ALSO PRESENT: Town Administrator David Moore, Finance Administrator Christiane McAllister

At 7:00 p.m. Ms. Knab opened the meeting and asked for motions on the minutes. Mr. Anderson motioned to approve the minutes from May 1, May 15 and May 30, 2023. Ms. Knab seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

At 7:01 p.m. Ms. Knab 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: Knab-yes; Anderson-yes.

At 7:28 p.m. Ms. Knab motioned to come out of the non-public session and seal the minutes. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

CORRESPONDENCE

Mr. Moore called attention to a letter requesting a memorial bench at Stratham Hill Park. Ms. Knab noted she was not aware of any precedence. She, along with Mr. Anderson, questioned the durability of a wooden bench vs a granite bench. Ms. Knab wanted input from the Parks & Recreation Director Seth Hickey, the Park Association and Public Works Director Nate Mears. Ms. Knab observed that much more thought and discussion is needed to ensure the bench would fit within the overall plans for the park and align with what the donor envisions. Mr. Moore will gather more information and report back.

Mr. Moore reported that no action was needed regarding the State assessing monitoring referred to in correspondence.

NEW BUSINESS

Ms. Knab referred to the statistical reval RFP. Mr. Moore informed them that it was developed with Town Assessor Chris Murdough. Mr. Moore discussed the dates in the RFP and reviewed how the reval was done during the last cycle. The consensus was to release the RFP.

Ms. Knab addressed the agenda item regarding dredging. After having a conversation with a member of the DES Coastal Program, and receiving input from ESRLAC, she wasn't in favor of the board supporting the request from Michael Sununu, Chair, Newfields Select Board at this time. It was felt that the rise in tide was due to sea level changes and that dredging would be detrimental to sea life. In addition, infrastructure is not being impacted. Mr. Moore will draft a letter informing Mr. Sununu of the decision but also letting him know that the Board would welcome additional information about the issue. The Board looks forward to hearing Exeter's feedback.

Ms. Knab moved to Chief King's request for the release of funds from the golf event. Mr. Anderson motioned to release \$1,500 from the Stratham First Responder Golf Tournament for

the purpose of purchasing uniforms, softball equipment and gift giveaways during community events and for children who our officers may encounter during their normal shifts. Ms. Knab seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Ms. Knab called attention to the Stratham Historical Society request. Mr. Moore recognized the great work the SHS volunteers put forth on a continual basis. Mr. Anderson motioned to authorize expenditure up to \$6,250 for exterior capital improvements at the Historical Society building from the Buildings & Grounds Maintenance Trust. Ms. Knab seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Ms. Knab recognized Ms. McAllister for her Finance and Budget Report. Ms. McAllister stated that expenditures and revenue are on target. We've received an increase in interest from TD Bank; twice as much as budgeted. Payroll is where it should be. The auditors will be here on the 19th.

ADMINISTRATION

Mr. Moore gave an update on the Fire Tower RFP. Proposals far exceeded our budget. It was determined that the scope should be broken up in order to proceed in phases. Mr. Moore will bring a proposal to the next meeting. Expending the ARPA funds on this project is a possibility. It was noted there is no structural concern regarding the tower, we are simply doing our due diligence before a bridge-grade painting is done.

Mr. Moore reported on the roads pavement management program. The work on Marin Way will not move forward because we don't have the State driveway permit in place. The June 2nd SB Newsletter informed residents of upcoming roadwork. Impacted residents will receive more information.

Mr. Moore reported that the Community Power public hearing on May 25th was well attended. Questions generally centered on solar panels and net metering. There was much positivity in the group of attendees. EAC will come back to the SB in July with a recommendation. The legal notice has been sent to the newspaper for the June 22nd public hearing.

Mr. Moore expects to receive the signage for Room A and will work with the Chair and the sponsor of the proposal on a small dedication ceremony. The event will be similar to what the Board is doing with the NH Preservation award winner.

Mr. Moore said that the temporary BI/CEO and Planning & Development Coordinator positions remain open. Conditional offers have been made to candidates for the DPW and Parks & Recreation positions.

Mr. Moore briefly described the Library's volunteer fair. He will contact the boards and committee chairs to offer them space at the event.

Ms. Knab welcomed the legislative delegation: Rep. Deb Altschiller began by informing the Board about various bills that were being funded, such as the Housing Champions initiative, L-

CHIP program, and the Dept. of State online election information portal. Of particular interest to Stratham is that the State increased its aid for environmental grants for waste water. In addition, funding will be given for PFAS remediation and loan funds. She reviewed the bills the Governor vetoed. Rep. Altschiller proposed to meet again in August or September. Rep. Altschiller informed them about a proposed bill for a non-lapsing drought relief fund for farmers but thought the scope might need to be broadened to include other factors detrimental to farming such as frost. She also noted that many Stratham residents participated in the Wear Orange event in Exeter which focused on children that have been killed by gun violence.

Rep. Alexis Simpson echoed Rep. Altschiller saying it was important that damage from frost gets reported to the FSA to ensure farmers get as much government funds as possible. She gave the contact info for our county's Farm Service Agency. The group will put the information in a future Select Board Newsletter. Crop damage should be reported to Kelsey Hamilton 603-679-4656 x2 and Rockingham/Strafford County FSA Office at Knightly Plaza, Suite 203, 629 Calef Highway, Epping, NH 03042

The delegation informed the group that budget discussions are continuing. The public may view budget discussions on YouTube.

In response to a question from Mr. Moore, the group felt that, overall, relations between the parties were becoming more collegial. There is more collaboration between parties than there has been in the past.

The delegation encouraged the board to let them know that if there was anything they want to support, to let them know.

One last item Rep. Altschiller wanted to bring to their attention was regarding the Exeter Adult Education Program – ESL. A change was made to the formula by which adult education got their funding. As a result, the ESL class was taken out of the budget. Many students, including several impacted families from Stratham, wrote to them about the importance of the program and to request funding be returned to the budget. Because of the students' letters, funding was returned to the adult-ed program.

The board thanked them for coming in.

APPOINTMENTS

Mr. Anderson motioned to appoint Nate Allison for re-appointment to the Planning Board for a three year term to expire in 2026. Ms. Knab seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Ms. Knab motioned to appoint Chris West to the Conservation Commission to fill the vacant position for a three year term to expire at Town Meeting 2026. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

At 8:32 pm Mr. Anderson motioned to adjourn. Ms. Knab seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Richard, Recording Secretary