

MINUTES OF THE AUGUST 1, 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, Parks & Recreation Director Seth Hickey, Town Planner Mark Connors, Police Chief Anthony King, Lt. David Pierce, Officer Amanda Bibeau, NH DOT Highway Safety Engineer Mike Dugas

At 7:00 pm Mr. Houghton opened the public session of the Select Board. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Ms. Knab motioned to accept the minutes of the July 18, 2022 as written. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Mr. Houghton recognized Parks and Recreation Director Seth Hickey for his department report. Summerfest was a successful event and will likely return next year. Senior programming will be ramping up in the fall. Soccer, our largest program, will begin soon. Baseball is wrapping up. Parking lot changes at Jack Rabbit are going well. Community response has been good. People have been noticing positive changes. The eco counter system has been gathering data. Summer camps are going well.

Seacoast Velo Kids offered to donate funds raised to renovate the pump track to the Town. The Recreation Commission supports accepting the donation and feels they could bridge the gap with funds out of their account. Mr. Moore advised that the Board would need to have a public hearing to accept the funds. Ms. Knab motioned to authorize the Town Administrator to move forward with a public hearing in September to accept the funds from Seacoast Velo Kids. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Mr. Hickey and Mr. Moore met with Bruce Scamman, civil engineer, to review the overall scope of Stevens Park and how it might better meet our needs. Mr. Scamman was previously involved in designing the park and subsequent modifications. Currently, it is a comprehensive athletic space hosting soccer, softball, and baseball games as well as a playground. In examining the space, Mr. Hickey would like to explore the park's potential to address various programmatic needs, including parking, court sports and a pavilion. Parking is a concern mostly on spring Saturday mornings and he is hoping to better manage those peak times. Court sports, such as pickle ball and tennis, have grown in popularity. To respond to that interest, Mr. Hickey would like to consider expanding court sports. Constructing an open air pavilion should be considered as a means of protecting the children from the sun and rain. Around 15 – 20 years ago, the Soccer Board raised \$25,000 with the hope of building a structure there. Mr. Hickey would like to continue engaging with Mr. Scamman on this project. CIP funds have been set aside for initial planning costs. Ideally, the park would have a pavilion with a bathroom. We have the funds, it's time to put a plan together to expend the funds as they were intended. Mr. Moore said that Mr. Hickey would bring back a scope of work for engineering services, a conceptual design

and identify programs to be added. He would bring it back to board before incurring any costs. They continued to discuss the possibilities as well as potential issues. The Board expressed no concerns and would the staff to move forward with his preparation as proposed.

Mr. Hickey gave an update on Smyk Park noting that Ms. Knab provided language for the plaque. The plaque will be mounted on a rock.

Mr. Houghton recognized NH DOT Highway Safety Engineer, Mike Dugas, to discuss proposed Route 33 safety improvements. McFarland Johnson has been engaged to assist NH DOT with the project. Mr. Dugas's presentation consisted of reviewing the existing conditions, proposed improvements, cost and schedule, longer term possibilities, and next steps beyond the project.

NHDOT believes adding a center lane from the technical college to the intersection in Greenland would provide increased safety. They contend 1. A center lane provides a refuge for anyone stopped, making a left turn. 2. Physically separates the opposing lanes. 3. In the eyes of the driver it makes it less comfortable for the driver to go fast. They will be reducing the shoulders from 10 feet to 5 feet. A center lane will deter high speed traffic from going onto the shoulder to bypass a turning vehicle. It also provides room for vehicle to shy away from someone in the shoulder, provided no one is turning.

They will do a study on before and after measurements. The speed will be posted in line with the expectations of the highway. The cost is covered entirely by federal safety funds. They will advertise for bids in the fall and start construction next summer.

Two possible future activities:

1. A corridor study. Since the last one in 1992, traffic has decreased.
2. Non-motorized users. Recently, there's been a heightened focus on the environment, pedestrians and bicyclists. New laws could facilitate improvements, such as a parallel side path.

Ms. Knab wanted it to be clear that Stratham did not ask for this project. She questioned doing the work prior to doing the corridor study. She inquired about public outreach. Mr. Houghton echoed Ms. Knab's comments. He questioned how this project was prioritized over the Bunker Hill intersection project which has been on the list for decades. Bunker Hill is a safety concern in our opinion. Mr. Dugas explained that DOT bases their metrics on fatalities and serious injuries. As is the case of Rt. 33, if a worthwhile fix can be done quickly and easily, the project will rise to the top with safety funds outside of the ten-year plan process. Mr. Houghton explained that we have been advocating and promoting the adoption of more pedestrian friendly community and this takes a 10 foot wide thorough fare and reduces it in half. The Board believes the public will oppose this project and they feel strongly that they should have a way to voice their opinion. Mr. Dugas contends it increases safety because they are taking the high speed traffic off the shoulder. Mr. Moore asked about his experience in other communities regarding similar projects. Mr. Dugas said that although DOT philosophy about side paths is evolving, such an improvement for this project would be at a later phase. They discussed the many issues that would be involved in creating a side path. Mr. Moore inquired about providing pedestrian safety at the Sandy Point crossing. Mr. Dugas said that, although it was outside the

scope of this project, he would look at the possibility of adding it. DOT has guidelines based on speed and volume.

Mr. Moore volunteered to host a DOT session for outreach to the community regarding the project. Ms. Knab asked how the project would be funded if costs continue to rise. Mr. Dugas admitted inflation will play a role. When asked for input, Chief King advocated for a consistent speed limit and speed deterring devices or markings, especially by SHP.

Mr. Moore moved the conversation to the Transportation Advisory Committee meeting regarding the 10 year plan. Mr. Connors explained that Rockingham Planning Commission has 99 projects that they scored and came up with 15 finalists. Two of our projects made it in - improvements to the Stratham circle which has been in the plan for a long time and is based on a study done 10 years ago and our newly introduced Portsmouth Avenue bicycle/pedestrian improvements project. Six of the top finalists will definitely receive funding; two more additional projects will be funded if they have extra money. Stratham circle was one of the six finalists to receive funding. The Planning Board decided they would rather the Portsmouth Avenue bike/ped project get funded. They requested to flip the projects. TAC agreed but they are only an advisory committee; the Commission makes the final decision. Mr. Anderson asked for details surrounding the circle project. Mr. Connors explained that the circle study was done years ago and things have changed. Additionally, the circle project is more expensive, making it less likely to advance on the list. Mr. Houghton noted the Portsmouth Avenue project is consistent with our master plan, but that we should have a clear rationale informed by accident data or lack thereof as part of making this decision. Mr. Connors pointed out that in the transportation survey, the residents prioritized pedestrian/bicycle paths.

Mr. Moore asked about Bunker Hill project which has been on the 10 year plan. Mr. Dugas believes that in 2023 the funds should be released for design work. The project manager is taking steps to move forward when funds become available. Project should begin in 2027. Mr. Dugas advised we stay in touch with the project manager and ask for frequent updates. The Board thanked Mr. Dugas for coming in this evening.

Mr. Houghton recognized Police Chief King for his department report who gave an update on his department's budget. The new vehicle is being delivered at the end of August. Body worn cameras are expected to arrive by the end of the summer. He has been working with the DPW Director on the HVAC system. It is 15 years old; needs maintenance. Funds are in the CIP for replacement of HVAC / heating. Prior estimates will need to be revised. Looking to replace the system in 2023.

Chief King reported that Lt. Pierce has been researching different types of vehicles (hybrid, electric, etc.). Lt. Pierce gave a synopsis of his research. He found that the biggest issue with the hybrid vehicles is the lack of mechanics to repair it if something goes wrong. Wolfeboro has an electric vehicle and would not recommend purchasing one until its many issues are resolved. All agreed the gas savings would be a significant benefit. Lt. Pierce recommended waiting and monitoring new developments. The Board agreed.

Chief King talked about the upcoming Homeland Security exercise. He, along with the Fire Department, is creating a new rescue task force policy on how they work together to respond to a critical incident. He gave a general update on how they would respond to a critical incident. They have several upcoming trainings planned. Lt. Pierce and Finance Administrator Christiane McAllister worked together to complete the Homeland Security grant for \$79,515.95. They continued to discuss the upcoming drill and agreed to hold a public hearing at an upcoming meeting in accordance with RSA 31:95b.

Chief King introduced Officer Amanda Bibeau, saying that she is doing an outstanding job with community outreach regarding Civilian Response to Active Shooter Events (CRASE) training. Officer Bibeau described the training which was developed by Texas State University. She's received a lot of positive feedback and interest. The program involves giving a presentation, breaking down past events and what we've learned from them. She talks about human response; what worked, what didn't. She also talks about human stress response and how to combat that. She reviews options if you are in the event. A public presentation will be held on August 25th for the public, not just businesses. The Board commended Officer Bibeau on bringing this very important training to the community. Mr. Anderson asked about this type of training at the schools. Officer Bibeau described the protocol the schools follow.

Chief King reported that a lieutenant will be chosen soon. He has five internal candidates for the sergeant position. That process is going well. He requested a non-public session to discuss employee updates.

At 8:40 pm Mr. Houghton motioned to go into a non-public session in accordance with RSA 91-A:3, II (a) Personnel. Seconded by Ms. Knab. Roll Call: Houghton – Yes, Knab – Yes, Anderson – Yes

At 8:59 pm Mr. Houghton motioned to exit the non-public session and seal the minutes noting that failure to do so may adversely affect the reputation of another or render the proposed action ineffective. Ms. Knab seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Mr. Houghton motioned to authorize Chief King to post for an officer to replace an upcoming vacancy in the department. Ms. Knab seconded the motioned. All voted in favor.

Mr. Houghton commented on the success of Summerfest. Mr. Anderson suggested we send a letter to the Summerfest Committee thanking them. The Board agreed that was a great idea.

The Board briefly discussed Chief Denton's request for temporary signage to be erected at the Fire Department in support of a fundraising effort on behalf of a recent past firefighter, Chief Sabine of Newington. All supported the request.

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Houghton more to the update on the electricity aggregation. Mr. Moore reported we are on target for August 9th. The group has decided on a 36 month contract. It must be signed on August 9th. They discussed the rates and the likelihood that they will increase. Ms. Knab

motioned to authorize Mr. Moore to move forward with signing the aggregation agreement. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Mr. Houghton directed attention to the Jana Lane agenda item. Mr. Moore referred to Town Planner Mark Connors' memo on the subject saying the Planning Board and Conservation Commission both support the acquisition, other consultation with the Heritage Commission is needed in accordance with the RSA for accepting and disposing of property. Mr. Moore described the process if the Board chooses to accept the land. Mr. Houghton motioned to move forward with a public hearing to accept the transfer of the 18 Jana Lane property to the Town. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Mr. Moore said he will do a public notice and include all 3 upcoming public hearings: Seacoast Velo Kids donation; grant from Homeland Security; and 18 Jana Lane.

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR

Mr. Moore reported on the September election preparations at the Stratham Memorial School. Students will be in school that day. Town Clerk Deborah Bakie suggested a compelling change to the pedestrian circulation, which improves a number of previous issues. More study will take place in coordination with the Moderator.

Mr. Moore recalled a previous Select Board discussion regarding the location and date of Town meeting in March 2023. The Board concurred that CMS was a better venue than SMS, but expressed concern regarding not being able to consistently secure the auditorium on the Saturday after the election. They requested Mr. Moore have further conversations with CMS.

Next, Mr. Moore talked about the lawn watering restrictions. We have received some calls from residents wanting to be compliant with the regulations. Mr. Moore expressed appreciation for how the police have worked to follow-up on complaints and increase awareness.

Mr. Moore has met with Nate Merrill to discuss an event regarding naming the livestock barns. Mr. Merrill thought doing this at the beginning of Summerfest next year, would be a good approach. Meanwhile, Mr. Moore will move forward with signage in coordination with Mr. Merrill. Mr. Merrill offered to do a write up. Mr. Moore proposed doing the same for Room A - a plaque that would be on side of the door with the name and a brief explanation of the significance.

As discussed in the Employee meeting, staff are participating in an IT discussion tomorrow.

Mr. Moore reported that the Library Director search is in the beginning stages. He has been invited to serve on a selection committee by the Trustees; he indicate he is pleased to be involved so long as the Board has no objection.

Mr. Moore described how the staff is following up on funding opportunities in particular with regard to Drinking Water SRF Funds and other funds to respond to PFAS contamination over the long term. The State of NH has encouraged the Town in this work and he indicated he is meeting with DES on August 9th as part of finalizing the long-term PFAS approach study.

Mr. Moore referred to a memo sent by Mr. Mears previously regarding the salt shed roof and the paving program. Mr. Moore recommend moving forward with Mr. Mears's two requests. We will be using the ARPA funds for the salt shed roof and a portion of the paving project. Mr. Houghton motioned to approve both town salt shed roof replacement and repaving proposal consistent with DPW Nate Mears' recommendations and authorize the Town Administrator to sign. Ms. Knab seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Mr. Moore recalled that when the Select Board originally approved their schedule for this year, they decided the meeting for the second meeting in August would be for signatures only. Since that time, every Wednesday has been designated as signature day. All agreed to continue with the Wednesday signatures and skip the second meeting in August meeting.

Mr. Houghton briefly mentioned the remaining agenda items.

At 9:24 pm Mr. Houghton motioned to go into a non-public session in accordance with RSA 91-A:3, II (a) Personnel. Seconded by Mr. Anderson. Roll Call: Houghton – Yes, Anderson – Yes, Knab -Yes

At 10:15 pm Ms. Knab motioned to exit the non-public session and seal the minutes noting that failure to do so may adversely affect the reputation of another or render the proposed action ineffective. Mr. Houghton seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

At 10:16 pm Ms. Knab motioned to adjourn. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Richard
Recording Secretary