

## **MINUTES OF THE JUNE 17, 2024 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, Town Clerk/Tax Collector Deborah Bakie, Director of Public Works Tim Stevens, Director of Planning and Community Development Mark Connors.

Mr. Houghton asked for a motion on the minutes. Ms. Knab motioned to approve the Select Board minutes from May 20, 2024 and June 3, 2024 as written. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Mr. Houghton asked if there were any notable items from the Financial Reports. Ms. McAllister called attention to the Conservation Fund which appears as a new fund in the Summary Report. Expenditures from that fund would require a majority vote of the Conservation Commission (as well as other procedural requirements) this development is in follow-up to the movement of the Fund from the Trustees of Trust Funds to the Treasurer to comport with the RSA. Ms. McAllister continued her report saying expenditures and revenues were on track.

Mr. Houghton recognized Mr. Stevens for his department report. He thanked them for attending the DPW Open House. He reported the crew are taking training classes. UNH requested he host a snow plow training and mandatory green snow pro training here. Equipment from CIP purchases have arrived and they are using them. The DPW roof project will begin soon. The RFP for HVAC is out; he will return with a recommendation after bids close. He's been working with Planning Project Assistant Susan Connors to inspect outfalls. Roadside swale maintenance and catch basin clean-up has begun.

Mr. Stevens continued, saying the Marin Way project was completed Saturday. The crew is building a structure at the Gifford Farm Road fire pond to improve access to the fire pump. Not only will it provide a stable place for firefighters, it will also stop erosion into pond.

Mr. Stevens reported there was much damage to the former farm fields at SHP during the bike race which will require a lot of work. He and Mr. Hickey are working together to address the issue. Mr. Hickey advised Mr. Moore that the group is understanding of the need to reimburse the town for costs of these repairs. Mr. Hickey recognized that this event will force us to be more purposeful in our policies surrounding events we allow and the impact of wet weather that is apparent following scheduling. The Recreation Commission will discuss at their next meeting.

Mr. Stevens stated that the Jack Rabbit parking lot will be reclaimed and regraded by Summerfest on July 20<sup>th</sup>.

Mr. Stevens reported out on research he has been doing on some drainage and aesthetic improvements at Smyk Park along the entrance drive. He has received input from a landscape architect who lives in Town and is currently quoting the costs. Mr. Moore confirmed that we would be able to fund the project with the Smyk Trust Funds. The Board supported his moving

forward while adhering to the intention of the Trust. Mr. Moore clarified the final scope and request for use of Smyk Funds will come back to the Board for approval.

Mr. Stevens is researching building plans and costs to create safer spreader hanger structures at the DPW. He knows this will be a more expensive project than initially projected a few years back and he has been working to come up to speed on the history. The Board expressed its interest in the project and asked when more detail would be known about his recommended approach and costs. This will enable the project to be included in upcoming budget preparations and deliberations along with other projects.

Mr. Stevens reported storm damage to the Gifford Barn roof. Primex offered to pay \$9,000; half the cost of the entire roof. That doesn't include the deductible. The Heritage Commission recommended a standing seam metal roof. Mr. Moore discussed funding sources. Mr. Houghton, on behalf of the Heritage Commission, spoke strongly in support of the standing seam metal roof as opposed to replacement of asphalt shingles on the historic barn. Mr. Houghton motioned to authorize the Town Administrator to pursue a roof replacement that does not exceed \$50,000 and to coordinate with Heritage and the Park Association to discover other possible sources of funds. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

There were no comments on correspondence items.

Mr. Houghton asked for public comment. Hearing none, Mr. Houghton moved to the public hearing on Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination. Mr. Connors stated that this ordinance is required to comply with the MS4. It regulates illicit discharge into the storm water. The intent is to address clearly negligent behavior. Mr. Houghton motioned to open the public hearing. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. All voted in favor. Mr. Houghton asked for questions or comments. Hearing none, Mr. Houghton motioned to close the public hearing. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. All voted in favor. Mr. Connors asked them to approve the ordinance and take it to Town Meeting for adoption. It would be a Warrant Article. Mr. Moore wanted consistency regarding the adoption of the ordinance. Mr. Connors consulted town counsel who recommends both Select Board adoption and bringing it to Town Meeting. They will bring it back for a third reading on July 8<sup>th</sup>.

Mr. Houghton motioned to open a public hearing on the Acceptance by the Town of Treat Farm Road. Ms. Knab seconded the motion. All voted in favor. Mr. Connors gave background on the site. Construction has been completed for a year. Mr. Connors detailed some minor requests from the homeowners. One request was regarding a trail which was created across the open space causing disturbance to the wetlands. Homeowners want confirmation that permission was obtained or want permit approval after the fact. Ms. Knab supported ensuring this was done. Mr. Houghton asked for public comments. Susan Connors, 3 Treat Farm Road, noted that one of the MS4 requirements is that they receive as built drawings for all storm water infrastructure which haven't been submitted for this development. Mr. Houghton motioned to close the public hearing. Ms. Knab seconded the motion. All voted in favor. Ms. Knab motioned to continue the public hearing until the outstanding items are addressed. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

The Board noted they would like to be responsive to the note in the Police Department monthly report indicating their staffing challenges given the summer vacations and certified officers. Mr. Moore will ask Chief King for suggestions on how best to do this.

Mr. Houghton turned the discussion to the Bunker Hill 6 lot subdivision that the Planning Board approved. The Select Board must decide on a road name. The developer proposed Windsong Place. They deliberated on a name acknowledging and hearing from Mr. Houghton that the Heritage Commission had discussed the topic, but did not have a name to recommend at the time. They decided to defer their decision to the next meeting on July 8<sup>th</sup>.

Ms. Knab asked about the Ross Property. Mr. Moore said that we are working with SELT on closing date. Mr. Connors said we will receive the grant imminently.

Mr. Houghton recognized John and Karen Cushing who spoke about Summerfest being held July 20<sup>th</sup>. The program will be similar to past events. They and the other Summerfest volunteers have cleaned the Big Mac Shack at SHP so it can be used as a non-cook serving location for ice cream and Boy Scouts lemonade. In conjunction with the Stratham Hill Park Association, they plan to retire the old Fair trailers. Mr. Cushing noted they submitted a raffle permit application. Mr. Houghton motioned to approve the raffle permit request for Summerfest. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. All voted in favor. Mr. Moore thanked him for his work on the event.

Mr. Houghton recognized Deborah Bakie, Town Clerk / Tax Collector who reported 53 unlicensed dogs and the warrant for their Signature. Twelve of the dogs do not have a current rabies certificate. Several attempts have been made to contact the owners. The list will be turned over to the Police Department.

Mr. Houghton moved to the draft policy on use of equipment by volunteers. Mr. Moore had updated the policy to include types of equipment. Ms. Knab suggested adding a time limit and specifically adding all Fire Dept. Association members. The policy is to include all appointed members of Stratham Boards and Committees. Mr. Moore indicated there is enough additional changes emanating from the conversation to warrant him bringing it back for further discussion.

Mr. Houghton turned the discussion to signage at Stratham Hill Park. Parks & Recreation Director Seth Hickey brought forth in a previous meeting a draft RFP that the Trail Management Advisory Committee proposed for advancing design services for signage at the park. A small group of people representing the Town will meet to learn more about the scope of work. The entire project will be done with consultation and collaboration with all interested parties. A sign template or "style guide" has been recommended as an initial product to maintain a consistent look throughout the park. This will come back to the Board when more information is obtained.

At the Heritage Commission meeting, Mr. Houghton had a conversation with Skip Stearns of the Historical Society regarding a gravestone at Gifford Barn. It was thought to be in the tenant's garage. The group would like to see if the gravestone has any significance from a historical perspective. Mr. Moore will coordinate with Mr. Stearns and the tenants to gain access.

Mr. Houghton also had a discussion with Drew Bedard who had provided an estimate for work on the Gifford barn. He wanted an update on the status. Mr. Moore acknowledged this stabilization project has not moved forward and will report back.

Mr. Moore reported on several Energy Commission items. The CPCNH rate setting is being closely followed. A lighting audit was done at the municipal center. They are interested in starting a solar project in Stratham to reduce costs in town operations. Mr. Anderson noted that discussion surrounding solar options has been ongoing for months. He reported on the various locations that have or are being considered. Mr. Moore said that in accordance with our contract with Revision Energy, we have the potential to acquire the solar panel at the Police Station this year. The Energy Commission will gather data and make a recommendation to the Select Board. Mr. Anderson said the topic of municipal EV charging has been raised at Energy Commission meetings. Some of them feel we should have one available to the public. Mr. Moore said that the money and grant assistance available is only for a level 1 charging station. It was felt this was not something to prioritize at this time given what he understands is the limited usefulness of a level 1 charger in the municipal parking lot setting.

Mr. Houghton turned the conversation to the memo request from Parks & Recreation Director Seth Hickey for a cell phone for the summer camp director. Mr. Moore summarized the issue saying parents have, in the past, contacted the director of the camp on that staff person's personal cell phone. Ms. Knab expressed support for the acquisition of one cell phone for Parks and Rec. Mr. Moore suggested it be specifically for the Parks & Rec counselor and not reassigned after the summer until the Board settles on a policy for the phones. Ms. McAllister provided a summary of the cell phone reimbursement program at current and noted it needs work and further discussion. Mr. Moore raised the possibility that the new VOIP system can forward business calls to personal cell phones without the need to carry two phones. He indicated he would research this with Parks & Recreation and Block 5 as a first preference over acquiring a phone. The Board agreed that was a good idea and approved acquiring a phone if that cannot be arranged, but that, following this year's summer camp it be returned to Mr. Moore until the Board can come up with a broader policy for assigning it elsewhere.

#### ADMINISTRATION

Mr. Moore discussed sending out a revaluation communication in keeping with the Board's interest in keeping the public informed and up to date. He reminded the Board that in 2019 a public outreach event was held, but it wasn't well attended. Mr. Moore recommends sending a mailing to all the residents and this is supported by the Whitney Consulting Group. Mr. Moore indicated there was staff input about the strategy of the content of the letter and that a simple update was the most preferred. Mr. Houghton wants to be seen as being pro-active, and therefore supports the letter. Discussion ensued about what should be included in the letter. Mr. Moore indicated he is working on developing an explainer video (a sample of which he forwarded to the Board previously) as a tool to help explain the revaluation process in New Hampshire and its effects and advised the estimated cost would be in the area of \$1,500-\$2,000. The Board agreed the investment was appropriate given the need to emphasize communications and various modes of getting information to the public in our society with the various tools and methods people have of receiving messages. Mr. Moore said that Whitney Consulting has a

service to mail the letters to the public to ease the burden on the clerk's office, but was not yet aware of the cost yet or how it relates to what our costs would be.

Mr. Moore returned to the CPCNH rate setting. Mr. Deschaine recommended it be a standing order of the Select Board. Ms. Knab motioned to agree to maintain the basic rate as the default setting for Stratham Community Power Program administered by CPCNH and further that this decision be the default decision for the Select Board for each successive rate setting period absent a further vote to the contrary. If the rate set as of June 24 results in a lower cost option under the new basic rate option, the Board agrees to revisit this decision in a special meeting. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Mr. Anderson added that as part of the CPCNH program, a percentage of the reserves could be put aside to fund a designated energy saving project, such as possibly a field of solar arrays. Mr. Houghton felt the Energy Commission should bring this forward a recommendation if it sees fit.

As raised in a previous meeting, Mr. Moore is facilitating a meeting with TMAC to discuss dogs at the park.

Staff outing will be the afternoon of Thursday, August 1<sup>st</sup> at 12:30 p.m. Like last year, the municipal center will close for the afternoon.

Mr. Moore summarized research he and Karen Richard had completed on Pfc. Stevens memorial bench at the library.

In accordance with previous discussions, Mr. Moore reported the chiefs are working on a brief recognition presentation to be held at the beginning of Summerfest baseball game to highlight the special relationship between our Police and Fire departments and recognize the contributions these first responders make.

Department head meeting tomorrow.

Mr. Moore had a conversation with Jane Dyer who is the Regent for the local chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution, who also submitted a letter for him for his use. On behalf of the DHR, she is asking to make American flags with personalized labels on garden stakes available for \$5 to honor any member of the service for any conflict and to display all the flags I honor of Veterans Day (November 9 – 16). There is a \$5 donation to fund veteran related causes, such as assisted housing developments, Rolling Thunder, the Manchester VA and others. She hopes to do it annually. It would include seven surrounding towns, which is the catchment area for the local DAR chapter. In a previous conversation, she indicated she would be partnering with the Fire Association. Ms. Knab thought they should consider using Smyk Park. The Board supported the program.

#### RESERVATIONS

Ms. Knab motioned to authorize the Brain Injury Association of NH to use the 4-H Pavilion on August 6 and to waive the fee. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

**APPOINTMENTS**

Ms. Knab motioned to appoint Donna Jensen to the Zoning Board of Adjustment to the alternate position to fill the unexpired three year term to end at Town Meeting 2025. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

At 9:19pm Mr. Houghton motioned to go into a non-public session in accordance with RSA 91 A to discuss Personnel matters. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. Roll call: Houghton-yes; Knab-yes; Anderson-yes.

At 10:17pm the public meeting resumed. At 10:17 p.m. Mr. Houghton motioned seal the minutes noting failure to do so may render a proposed action invalid. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Upon hearing of no further business, at 10:17pm Mr. Houghton motioned to adjourn. Ms. Knab seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Richard  
Recording Secretary