

MINUTES OF THE JUNE 3, 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

At 7:00 pm Mr. Houghton opened the meeting and welcomed the legislative delegation. State Senator Deb Altschiller, State Representative Alexis Simpson, State Representative Allison Knab. Senator Altschiller reported improvements to the LCHIP program are now in place as are new protections and penalties for child sex abuse image sharing and selling so that the use of AI cannot be incorporated. The age of marriage has been raised to 18. New protections have been added that firm up tenant's rights in cases of domestic violence.

Sen. Altschiller also reported that the Conference Committee couldn't come to a conclusion regarding HB 1069, Right To Know requests, therefore the bill will not move forward. Senator Carson will very likely bring the bill back next year to address some of the issues the bill was attempting to resolve. Rep. Simpson requested input from municipalities regarding challenges or concerns on the bill so they may address them and make amendments sooner. Mr. Moore noted it was the combination of the changes that made the bill problematic. He will redistribute the letter he had written previously. The delegation gave background on how the changes originated.

Sen. Altschiller is sponsoring SB538 to address the housing crisis in NH. The bill would establish a tax credit that Stratham could adopt, through Town Meeting, for people who own businesses that want to convert to residential housing and have flexibility with parking. This would also require changes to zoning.

Mr. Moore noted the only other bills on the radar was Public Deposit Investment Pool SB553 which requires the investment advisors for PDIP to maintain funds in a particular manner. The driver of this bill was to reinvest in NH. It's been amended and referred for interim study. The other bill was concerning the state contribution to retirement accounts.

Sen Altschiller reported much disagreement between the Senate and House on the bill regarding legalization of marijuana. It is unlikely to pass.

Rep. Simpson sponsored the Farm to School program, which reimburses public schools that purchase food from NH farms. This supports local farms and keeps federal money in state.

Sen. Altschiller discussed National Instant Criminal Background Check System, which didn't pass but will be brought back next year. She also talked about building Critical Incidents Training into the Dept. of Safety budget to cover the absence of officers who need to take the training.

The delegates asked the Board to let them know if they could help with any legislation. The Board thanked them for the update.

Mr. Moore reported that we received 8 proposals for the DPW roof project. A bid summary was included in the packet. The project is estimated at \$120,000. Although it was not included in the CIP, it should have been. The roof is approaching 18 years and there are problems with leaks and insulation. Mr. Moore proposed funding come from the Town Buildings & Grounds Maintenance Trust. Mr. Anderson asked about using ARPA funds. Mr. Moore recalled a balance of approximately \$300,000 and said he recommended the group return to this discussion and action later in the meeting after he had a chance to locate some notes.

Mr. Moore stated there was an open Trustees of the Trust Funds seat applications for the position are due June 12th.

Discussion ensued regarding the recognition of police and fire personnel. Chief King had suggested a small ceremony at the beginning of the softball game at Summerfest. There will be a dedication of the John Hopping dugout at that time. The Board felt this was a great event at which to recognize them and asked Mr. Moore to follow-up.

Mr. Moore reported that CivicPlus will be doing an organizational demo for staff.

Mr. Moore reviewed big picture items for the preliminary budget, such as updating the website, upgrading software programs, and complying with MS4 requirements. Mr. Houghton asked about options for software upgrades.

Ms. McAllister requested Mr. Moore add Fire Dept. water source maintenance to the budget items for 2025.

Mr. Moore stated there will be two Public Hearings at the next meeting on June 17th - the Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination Ordinance and the Treat Farm road acceptance and bond release.

Mr. Moore is developing a policy regarding volunteers using town equipment. Primex has been consulted. There will be a preapproval process and waivers will be signed. They discussed what constitutes a "volunteer" and limitations on equipment use. The Board will take a closer look at the draft and Mr. Moore will refine it further.

Mr. Moore reviewed the cost for our generator maintenance service. No change this year.

Mr. Houghton was surprised the HVAC RFP was sent. He noted some corrections.

Mr. Moore turned to Fire Dept. staffing and the Board discussed potential alterations to current shift-coverage based on documentation created by the staff team including Chief Denton and EMS Captain Peggy Crosby. The Board decided more information was needed including call volume by time of day, incident type, and response times. Ms. McAllister discussed how changes in shift coverage would affect the total costs. Mr. Houghton requested a report showing

when peak volume is in order to adjust our staffing to provide optimal coverage. The Board discussed the need to return to refining the goals for potential changes and to return to the topic following more consultation with the Fire Chief.

RESERVATIONS

Ms. Knab approved the Fireworks Permit Application for 13 Rollins Farm provided they communicate with the Fire Dept. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Mr. Moore explained that Seacoast Village Project supports aging in place. They have submitted their 401c3 letter. Ms. Knab motioned approval Seacoast Village Project request to use the 4-H Pavilion on 6/25 and waive the fee as a non-profit. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Mr. Houghton approved the Exeter Area Garden Club use of the Morgera Room for their once a month meetings for 8 months as requested. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Discussion ensued regarding the Easter Seals request to use the Morgera Room for an additional program to the three that are already in place. It was felt that this was a heavy use for any one user. Mr. Houghton motioned to deny the Easter Seals request to use the Morgera Room for an additional day. Ms. Knab seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

APPOINTMENTS

Mr. Houghton noted that Donna Jensen was being considered for an alternate position on the Zoning Board of Adjustment.

Ms. Knab motioned to appoint Brent Eastwood to the Zoning Board of Adjustment for a three year term to end at Town Meeting 2027. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Mr. Anderson motioned to appoint Lucy Cushman, currently an alternate, to a full member position on the Zoning Board of Adjustment for a three year term to end at Town Meeting 2027.

Ms. Knab commented that she received support for the Boards denial of baiting of deer. It is seen as a negative practice because it changes migratory patterns. Also, it was decided to leave the beavers at Stratham Hill Park alone after a walk through was done with Mr. Hickey, Rachel Stevens, Stewardship Coordinator with Great Bay National Estuary Research Reserve, Chris West, Vice Chair of the Conservation Commission, Mr. Moore and Mr. Stevens DPW Director. Staff will monitor the activity in the future.

At 8:20 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, if discussed in public, may affect the reputation of another. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. Roll call: Houghton-yes; Knab-yes; Anderson-yes.

The public session reconvened at 9:55 p.m. Mr. Houghton motioned to seal the minutes noting failure to do so may render a proposed action invalid. Ms. Knab seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

At 9:55 pm Ms. Knab motioned to adjourn. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Richard
Recording Secretary