

## **MINUTES OF THE JANUARY 21, 2025 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, Lamprey Regional Cooperative Board of Director Chair Paul Deschaine

At 7:00 pm Mr. Houghton opened the meeting and noted the minutes from January 6<sup>th</sup> were not available. He then recognized Paul Deschaine, Stratham's representative on the Lamprey Regional Cooperative Board of Directors, who reported on the Cooperative's budget. He gave a brief history of the Cooperative. The two main purposes of the Cooperative are to (1) maintain and operate the closed landfill ensuring compliance with the permit requirements and (2) manage the disposal contract that is offered to the membership via Waste Management at Turnkey which Stratham avails itself to. He has been re-named as Chair of the Cooperative. The Cooperative's budget was approved with little change from the previous year. The Board consolidated their two Operating accounts into one. Referring to his handout, Mr. Deschaine distinguished the landfill expenses and the general operating expenses. The landfill expenses are a portion based on the amount of material each community brought to the landfill. The balance of the landfill costs and reserves are distributed among the twelve communities in the membership, with the exception of Durham and UNH who withdrew from the Cooperative but continue to maintain their fiscal responsibility for the landfill operations. They don't pay anything relative to operations. The closure and operations assessment becomes the total assessment for the coming year.

Mr. Deschaine reported that the Cooperative received a letter in December from the Department of Environmental Services informing them that the rules for operating and maintaining active and closed landfills have changed. With this change came a different level of financial assurances to make sure that whomever owns and operates a landfill, whether open or closed, can close it (which we've done). Once it is closed, permit requirements must be maintained. Mr. Deschaine reviewed the annual estimated expenses. There is an allowance for municipalities that can attest to their financial stability. He reviewed some minor maintenance issues they've encountered over the past year.

Mr. Houghton asked what the risk was on the \$300 deficit. Mr. Deschaine responded that his interpretation is that we have excellent debt ratio (we have no debt) based on the audit, it should minimize the risk to nil. He wanted to be clear that this is his opinion. We have a 29-year track record. He felt that DES will put more of their focus on private landfills.

The Board thanked him for representing the town recognizing that it is a lot of work and is much appreciated. Mr. Deschaine added that because of our membership in the Cooperative, we are also now considered part of a solid waste district with statutory requirements. He explained the implications of this. He will share any notices he receives. The board thanked him.

Mr. Houghton moved to the correspondence item regarding the Blain property. Mr. Moore reported that he has referred this to Town Counsel and will report back. Mr. Deschaine asked

what Mr. Blain's request is. Mr. Moore said Mr. Blain has a small portion of his front lot that he claims the state of NH abandoned (from the old highway) and that the town needs to take an action in order for him to claim it. Mr. Deschaine recalled a similar issue from years ago in which a proposal to revert land back to the individual lot owners went to Town Meeting. Mr. Moore thanked him for the background and said he would follow up.

Next Mr. Houghton called attention to the Correspondence from Broadband requesting support of their application for a grant to expand broadband in NH. There were specific Statham addresses that were effected. We are confirming the addresses. The Board had questions on the Broadband request. Having had some knowledge and experience in this subject, Mr. Deschaine offered that this is the second half of a grant that is being rolled out. In his own personal experience, after having been approached by a Fidium representative, he had it installed at no charge in his condo. He had no plans to change providers, but it worked well, so he ended his cable service. He suspects that Comcast will want to take advantage of the grant and do it before the infrastructure bill expires in 2026. Mr. Moore will review in more detail and get back to the Board on Feb. 3.

Mr. Houghton moved to road naming policies. Referring to draft 3 of the Road Naming Policy in the packet, Mr. Moore requested they either amend or approve the Policy and make a decision on the roadway name proposed by Copley Properties. Ms. Knab spoke against naming roads after a person. Mr. Anderson agreed. Mr. Anderson felt that this draft of the policy still did not reflect their intention. He recalled that recommendations for names were to be submitted for the Board's consideration, but the final decision shall be the Boards'.

Specifically, he wanted it to be amended as follows: "the applicant or developer may provide a list of up to three unique preferred names which fit the criteria described in this policy to the Select Board for its consideration. Strike #2 in entirety. 3 (which shall become #2). The Select Board shall select the road name from either the list provided by the developer or a name the Board has created of their own accord at a public meeting."

He asked that Mr. Moore amend the policy. Mr. Moore suggested the Select Board create a list of desirable names and that the Planning Board maintain that list and offer it to developers as a reference resource. Mr. Houghton said the Planning Board discusses road names. Ms. Knab wanted the Select Board to maintain its ability to make the final decision. Mr. Houghton agreed with the amendment that the applicant may provide 3 names and seek out guidance from the Planning Board resulting in a recommendation to the Select Board who will make the final decision. Mr. Deschaine had a comment on public roads. He applauded the Board for formalizing the process. He explained past practice, noting the main impetus behind road naming is to maintain a public safety response to the appropriate address. Road names that are too similar causes confusion. Private roads also need emergency response. The Board assured him that private roads were addressed in the policy, but were in a subset in a different section.

Mr. Anderson suggested to add into the policy under A #1, the Applicant/Developer may provide a list of up to 3 preferred names "which fit the criteria described in this policy to the Board for its consideration". He wanted clarification about what was in red. Mr. Moore said it referred to his suggestion about providing a resource list of names. Mr. Moore confirmed the changes. Ms.

Knab favors a collaborative approach to naming the private roads. Discussion ensued about whether or not to name roads after a person. Mr. Houghton suggested proper names with historical significance to the location will be vetted through the Heritage Commission. Mr. Moore will make the changes and bring the policy back for approval on February 3.

Next the Board discussed what to do with the retiring ambulance. Chief Denton had mentioned one option that was raised was to donate it to an organization supporting the Ukraine. Though the Board felt this was a noble cause, they agreed it was too substantial of an amount of money to donate. It was decided to pursue the usual means of disposal, at auction or for sale.

Mr. Moore updated the board on legislative issues. He will forward the Legislative Bulletins when they come out.

Mr. Moore reviewed the department head meeting schedule.

Ms. Knab motioned support for Port City Amateur Radio Club using the top of the hill at Stratham Hill Park from June 27 to June 29. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Ms. Knab motioned support for the Greenland Vets to use the 4-H Pavilion on Sept 6 and 7, 2025 and to waive the fee. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Mr. Moore explained that we missed some term expirations, but are catching up on them. Mr. Houghton motioned to re-appoint Chris Zaremba to the Planning Board for a 3 year term ending in 2026 and Ryan Guerette to the Recreation Commission for a three year term ending in 2026. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Mr. Houghton motioned to re-appoint Mike Welty to the Energy Commission for a three year term ending in 2027, Charles Case to the Energy Commission for a three year term ending in 2027, Kate Dardinski to the Recreation Commission for a three year term ending in 2027, Rebecca Waltz, to the Recreation Commission for a three year term ending in 2027, Jessie Hook to the Recreation Commission for a three year term ending in 2027. Ms. Knab seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Mr. Houghton moved to the Budget. Mr. Moore reminded them that tonight they wanted to discuss the Budget Advisory Committee's guidance and to provide direction to staff. February 3 is the Public Hearing on the Warrant. Ms. McAllister has made the recommended changes to the budget which he reviewed. He discussed personnel, road paving and maintenance, building and grounds maintenance. With the new numbers, the tax rate would be \$2.12 or a .03 cent increase which is 1.6% increase in the tax rate. They felt they needed to resolve personnel issues in a non-public session before they could make any changes to the budget. At 8:16 pm Mr. Houghton motioned to go into a non-public session in accordance with RSA 91-A:3, II(a) to discuss personnel matters. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. Roll call: Houghton-yes; Knab-yes; Anderson-yes

At 9:19 Mr. Houghton motioned to come out of the non-public session and seal the minutes noting failure to do so may render a proposed action ineffective. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Mr. Anderson recommended they read the Q&A that Chief Knutsen had distributed about the SE NH Regional Paramedic Intercept program. He, Ms. McAllister and Chief Denton attended the meeting and all are in full support of joining the regional collaborative. Ms. McAllister felt the logistics for the operations are superb but wanted more information about the administrative portion.

Mr. Moore has lined up a back-up Town Counsel for Town Meeting if the meeting goes later than 1:00 pm. Ms. Knab asked when they would decide on the Elderly Exemptions. They talked about the potential tax impact. Our Assessing contractor supports the changes and believes the impact would be minor. Mr. Moore will bring it back to them.

At 9:28 pm Mr. Houghton motioned to adjourn. Ms. Knab seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Richard  
Recording Secretary