

## MINUTES OF THE MARCH 3, 2025 SELECT BOARD MEETING

MEMBERS PRESENT: Board Members Chair Mike Houghton, Vice Chair Allison Knab

ABSENT: Joe Anderson

ALSO PRESENT: Town Administrator David Moore, Town Moderator Dave Emanuel, Fire Chief Jeff Denton, Parks & Recreation Director Seth Hickey

At 7:00 pm Mr. Houghton opened the meeting. The minutes were still being reviewed.

Mr. Houghton moved to the Treat Farm bond release. Mr. Wayne Morrill was present to represent the developer. Mr. Moore referred to his memo. Staff confirmed the outstanding items have been completed. Mr. Houghton motioned to release the bond in the amount of \$119,883.74 for the Treat Farm Road acceptance and accept it as a public road. Ms. Knab seconded the motion. Mr. Moore stated that the public hearing on the road was some months ago.

Mr. Houghton recognized Dave Emanuel to discuss Town Meeting preparations. Mr. Moore reviewed the Articles to be voted on at Town Meeting noting Article 15 requires a paper ballot. There is a discrepancy in the Warrant for the amounts for the Stevens Park project. The number should be \$625,000. Mr. Moore will consult with Town Counsel on how best to handle this. Mr. Emanuel said he has been working with the Town Clerk and the Assistant Moderator and feels they are prepared. He will attend Voter Information Night and serve to moderate that event.

Mr. Houghton moved to public comment, inviting the SVFDA group including Dan Crow, President SVFDA, Les Barker, Treasurer, and John Cushing, Special Events Coordinator, and Fire Chief Jeff Denton to come forward. Mr. Crow read the letter from the SVFDA to the Select Board regarding their donation from the golf tournament for the purpose of purchasing Fire Dept. equipment. The new paramedic services required special equipment; this will help with those purchases. Chief Denton spoke to the failure of the camera and the need for a new one. Mr. Moore said he will hold a public hearing on March 17 to accept the donation, if the Board is agreeable. Mr. Houghton and Ms. Knab were in favor of accepting the donation.

Mr. Houghton asked for other public comments. Drew Goddard, Copley Properties, appeared before the board to discuss the naming of the road of his development project at 89 Portsmouth Ave. He addressed his issues with the Road Naming Policy as it concerns his project, noting that he has voluntarily worked with the Heritage Commission to design and build something the Town can be proud of, even though it cost him more. He also provided two free easements to the Town for connection and future planning. He now regrets it. He called attention to an email to Mr. Moore from Nate Merrill supporting the name Nista Way. He feels this name meets the requirement of the Naming Policy. He expressed displeasure about not being on the agenda as he had requested. Mr. Houghton said he wouldn't take action because a Board member is absent. They will deliberate on this matter at a later time. Ms. Knab pointed out that it is in the policy to not name a road after a living person which is what he is requesting. Mr. Moore provided the Board's feedback to him from a previous meeting. This is a request to reconsider a

previous decision. It is the Chair's discretion to put it on a future agenda for reconsideration. Mr. Houghton and Ms. Knab agreed to put it on a future agenda when all three Board members are present, likely April 7<sup>th</sup>.

Mr. Houghton recognized Mr. Hickey for his department report. Mr. Hickey praised Parks & Recreation Assistant Diane Smith who's hosting a Seacoast Group Collaborative. The Field Rental Policy is ready to move forward. The Board was supportive. Referring to his trail usage handout, he called attention to various upcoming events at the park. Mr. Moore asked if he was seeking approval for the events on the schedule. The Board was supportive.

Mr. Hickey's update on the TMAC Committee included informing them of the installation of 3 informational kiosks at various trailheads which will be funded through Rec Revolving. The materials of the kiosks will be discussed further at the next meeting on March 17 with the DPW Director. Mr. Hickey will attend that meeting as well.

Mr. Hickey continued his TMAC report noting that they will put an eco-counter at the bottom of Dead Fish Trail to fund the grant for the Ross property. Town Counsel has the Ordinance to review. TMAC highlighted items in the Ordinance to be addressed but don't feel they should rewrite it. Their next meeting is March 19. Cole Emanuel has requested to replace an existing bridge, which will be reviewed at that meeting. Then it will go to the Conservation Commission, then to the Select Board.

The Food Truck Festival will be held in May. Mr. Hickey requested the Town Administrator be authorized to sign the necessary forms. Ms. Knab motioned support for the Town Administrator moving forward with an off-site catering license for the Great Bay Food Truck Festival on May 10th. Mr. Houghton seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Mr. Hickey said he would be happy to speak to the Stevens Park Article at Town Meeting. He finished his department report saying all aspects of summer camp are going well. He reported on upcoming programs. He will attend Primex Supervisors Academy in mid-March. He's working on a Sewall Room Reservation Policy.

Mr. Houghton recognized Fire Chief Jeff Denton. Chief Denton said the Seacoast Chiefs have not had a mutual aid agreement with Pease Air National Guard Base Fire Department due to some concern about the use of foam. Chief Denton assured them that there is no PFAS in the foam that is used now. He supports this Agreement. Mr. Houghton motioned to authorize the Fire Chief to sign a mutual aid agreement with Pease Air National Guard and the Stratham Fire Dept. to support community needs. Ms. Knab seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Next, Chief Denton reviewed the Intermunicipal Intercept Services. Exeter ALS will cease services on March 21, which is when the two person fly car out of Brentwood will begin. Within the agreement is a diversion clause with which Chief Denton has some concern. The paramedics before they get to the scene can decide by themselves to divert to another call. Chief Knutson has put together a letter outlining operational policies which will address this. Chief Denton would like to discuss with the other Chiefs, but noted that we need the service and he is supportive of the agreement. Chief Denton would like the agreement to reflect that the

paramedics make contact with our responders who are on scene, or another qualified medical person, who can confirm if they are not needed. Mr. Houghton agreed that all responding parties should work collaboratively in communicating to mutually agree on an outcome.

Chief Denton felt the first year of this program will be a learning experience. Mr. Houghton encouraged him to develop his own policies for his department. The contract will need to be signed by the 21<sup>st</sup>. Ms. Knab motioned to support Chief Denton moving forward with signing the Mutual Aid Agreement with Plaistow on or after March 6<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Houghton seconded the motion. All voted in favor. Chief Denton said that in September we should have more detailed information regarding the funding. Mr. Moore thanked Chief Denton for his advocacy and work to get us here. Chief Denton reported that last Friday they achieved paramedic level certification. Mr. Moore talked about the messaging for Town Meeting. Chief Denton said the paramedics we have hired are high level; some of the best in the State. Stratham is considered one of the top three communities to work for. Chief Denton recognized EMS Captain Peggy Crosby in bringing the EMS department to the high level it is at now. Chief also said that Hearshall VanLuven has been a great addition to the department. He worked with the members previously and helped facilitate moving the contracts along at lightning speed.

Chief Denton spoke to two upcoming Senate bills and a House bill. He does not support any of them, as he believes unintended consequences may result, causing significant impacts to fire departments. One bill calls for municipalities to allow people to use their own fire inspectors. Another allows increased accessory dwelling units. Another allows smaller size lots for single family homes. He urged the Board to make our voice known we are against these bills. They discussed the various bills. Ms. Knab said she would comment on them and would advise them on how to do it. Mr. Moore will learn what is likely to move forward. NHMA will zero us in on pressure points. Ms. Knab asked if there was a fire chiefs association that would speak against the bills, noting groups carry more weight than individuals. Chief Denton said that he is not a member of the State Fire Chiefs so he was unsure.

Mr. Houghton moved to the Drug Policy on the agenda. Mr. Moore explained that we need a new vendor but the vendor has procedures in conflict with our policy. Primex and town counsel are reviewing our policy. He will bring it back to discuss further at another time.

Mr. Houghton moved to the Gifford Barn Roof. Mr. Moore gave them an update on the work being done. They discussed the roof color.

Returning to the discussion on Town Meeting, the group discussed possible readers for the In Memoriam. Ms. Knab suggested someone from the Historical Society might be appropriate.

Mr. Moore said the Town Reports are in. They went through the Town Meeting agenda and decided who was going to motion and second the articles at the Town Meeting. They'd like Mr. Hickey to speak to the article, but Ms. Knab wants to be sure it is clear that the Board is in support of the Stevens Park article.

**RESERVATIONS**

Ms. Knab motioned support for Acorn School to use the Scamman Pavilion on April 25<sup>th</sup> and waiving the fee. Mr. Houghton seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Ms. Knab motioned support for the Spina Bifida Association of New England to use the Front Pavilion on May 18 and waiving the fee. Mr. Houghton seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Ms. Knab motioned support for Rep. Pappas to use the Sewall Room on March 22 for a Town Hall meeting. Mr. Houghton seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

At 8:43pm Mr. Houghton motioned to go into a non-public session in accordance with RSA 91-A:3, II(a) personnel. Ms. Knab seconded the motion. Roll call: Houghton-yes; Knab-yes.

At 9:55pm Mr. Houghton motioned to come out of the non-public session and adjourn. Ms. Knab seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Richard  
Recording Secretary