

MINUTES OF THE MAY 19, 2025 SELECT BOARD MEETING

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

ALSO PRESENT: Town Administrator David Moore, Parks & Recreation Director Seth Hickey

At 7:00 pm Mr. Houghton opened the meeting and asked for a motion on the minutes. Mr. Anderson motioned approval of the Select Board minutes of May 5, 2025. Ms. Knab seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Mr. Houghton recognized William Roy for the Finance Report. Mr. Roy stated he's been reviewing the Fire and DPW accounts, ensuring expenses are being charged to the proper accounts. He is also working on compensation accounts and on reconciliation for the electronic accounts.

Mr. Houghton turned to Correspondence and noted the thank you from Exeter Area Chamber of Commerce for Stratham's cooperation with the Food Truck Festival.

Mr. Houghton moved to Public Hearings. Ms. Knab motioned to open the three public hearings regarding the acceptance of donations. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. All voted in favor. Mr. Moore gave a brief description of the three public hearing items. Mr. Houghton referred to the Stevens family donation. Mr. Anderson motioned to accept the donation in the amount of \$11,592 from the Stevens family for a sign to be erected at the entrance to Stevens Park. Ms. Knab seconded the motion. All voted in favor. Ms. Knab motioned to accept the donation in the amount of \$12,509 from the SVFDA to the Fire Dept. for ambulance equipment with gratitude. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. All voted in favor. Mr. Houghton motioned to accept the Clean Diesel Grant in the amount of up to \$53,350 for a wheeled loader using funds available from the New Hampshire Clean Diesel Grant Program funded by the US Environmental Protection Agency. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. All voted in favor. Mr. Houghton motioned to authorize the Town Administrator to execute the grant for Clean Diesel in the amount up to \$53,350 for a wheeled loader using funds available from the New Hampshire Clean Diesel Grant Program funded by the US Environmental Protection Agency. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. All voted in favor. Ms. Knab motioned to close the public hearing. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Houghton moved to the Fire Chief Denton request for the release of funds from the Radio Communications CRF for base station radio. Mr. Moore suggested moving this to the June 2nd meeting as he did not have time to sufficiently review the request.

Mr. Houghton moved to Chief King's request for \$3,535 from the First Responder Golf Donation Fund. Referring to Chief King's memo, Mr. Moore explained that after researching and discussing with Block 5, it has been determined that FirstNet can provide a better backup service at a lower cost than Comcast. Mr. Anderson motioned the authorize the release of

\$3,535 from the Golf Donation Fund for Block 5 to set up FirstNet Cellular as our Police Department back up internet provider. Ms. Knab seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Mr. Houghton moved to the Sewall Room policy. Mr. Hickey asked for questions and comments from the Board on the policy that had been previously shared. Ms. Knab wanted the waiver to be clearer. She was also not in favor of requiring insurance riders for individuals renting the room. Mr. Anderson wondered if allowing the use of alcohol should change the requirement. Mr. Moore added that he called his own insurance company and could obtain a waiver for a reasonable cost of only \$50. It would take up to 30 days to obtain though. Mr. Houghton summarized that Primex is suggesting we require the insurance waiver, but others say it's onerous. The Board discussed requiring renters to sign a release to relieve the town of any responsibilities due to negligence. They speculated if this would stand up in court and asked to have Town Counsel's opinion. Mr. Hickey said he prepared an indemnification clause which has been reviewed by Town Counsel. The Board agreed that, at a minimum, we should require a signed release and if the party wants alcohol, we should require proof of insurance.

Ms. Knab called into question the wording beginning at #2 and Mr. Hickey said he would review it again with Town Counsel.

The group returned to the discussion of whether an indemnification would hold up in court. They discussed what would be considered a town sponsored group.

Mr. Hickey continued with his department report. Spring sports are underway. Youth sports groups will continue to discuss by-laws and get feedback from other groups in town. The van has been getting a lot of use. They have partnered with the library on a gardening/cooking workshop which was very popular.

Mr. Hickey reported that last month's TMAC meeting was cancelled due to illness. They will meet this week to review Town Counsel guidance regarding revision to the dog ordinance at SHP. He talked to Ryan Guerette who will be onboarding in the community service role. The Board asked to see Town Counsel's revisions to the dog ordinance. Mr. Hickey said they will likely keep status quo for this season which would allow for more opportunity for public outreach.

Mr. Hickey commended the town departments for their response to the weather at the food truck festival. A considerable number of people showed up despite the bad weather. Because of the amount of rain, we qualified for an insurance payout. Using the barn at the festival worked well. Using it for the ice rink this past winter was a big success too.

Mr. Hickey moved the discussion to Stevens Park, reporting that he met with Tim Stevens, Dan Crow, Greg Blood, and Bruce Scamman to apply each of their expertise to determine the best location for the pavilion and courts. After taking into consideration the test pits, septic, etc., it was felt an adjustment needed to be made. Mr. Moore noted electrical factors. Mr. Hickey was approached by a resident requesting we make the playground more ADA compliant. He felt this could be done with just a few modifications. This resident was a good source of knowledge; he may ask for her input when the time comes to upgrade the playground at SHP.

Mr. Hickey mentioned his new intern, Beau Riley, has begun and is doing well. Camp summer staff are returning. Mr. Cherry is doing a great job training the counselors.

APPOINTMENTS

Ms. Knab motioned to appoint Ryan Olsen to the Conservation Commission to fulfill the expired full member position for a three year term to expire at Town Meeting 2028. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Mr. Houghton motioned to appoint Colleen Jarvela, Ellen Johanson, Mark Whiting, Gale Lyons and Chris West to the Stratham Community Garden for a one year term. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion and asked about term expiration. It was decided the terms should expire at Town Meeting in March 2026. All voted in favor. The Board asked if Ms. Moore would be continuing with the group. Mr. Moore said she would be and will submit an application.

Mr. Moore said that agenda items for the next meeting will include the Whitney Consulting proposal and an update on the Stratham Community Garden. Mr. Anderson asked to have the charge amended to include electing a chair and a treasurer annually. Ms. Knab asked if their financial policy was flexible enough so as not to hinder their progress. Mr. Roy confirmed that it was. However, he continues to work on the donation process. The Board discussed possibly funding the committee from Town funds in the future.

ADMINISTRATION

Mr. Moore called attention to a PFAS document from NH DES. A representative from Stratham will need to be appointed to the Seacoast Drinking Water Legislative Commission. It is beneficial to participate in this committee to be aware of developments.

Mr. Anderson read the DPW proclamation.

Mr. Moore addressed the request from Chief Denton regarding radio communications. Chief Denton received an estimate of \$38,328.35 to replace two base station radios. We need to order by June to avoid increase in cost. Mr. Houghton motioned to release funds from the Radio Communications CRF for base station radios for the Fire Dept. up to \$40,000. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Mr. Anderson motioned to approve the raffle permit application for K9 Kaos Destination for a drawing on June 1 at NHSPCA at the Paws Walk event. Mr. Houghton seconded the motion. All voted in favor. Mr. Anderson motioned to approve the raffle permit application for Page Turner Books for a drawing on June 1 at NHSPCA at the Paws Walk event. Mr. Houghton seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

At 8:01pm Mr. Houghton motioned to go into a non-public session in accordance with RSA 91-A:3, II (a) employee matters. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. Roll call: Houghton-yes; Knab-yes; Anderson-yes

At 8:45pm Ms Knab motioned to come out of the non-public session and adjourn. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Richard
Recording Secretary