

MINUTES OF THE OCTOBER 16, 2023 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 asked for a motion on the minutes. Mr. Anderson motioned approval of the October 2, 2023 minutes. Mr. Houghton seconded the motion. Ms. Knab was absent from the meeting and therefore abstained. Motion passed.

Mr. Houghton recognized Rebecca Tremblay and Tracy Abbott. Ms. Abbott reported that the account reconciliations, except Rec Revolving, are complete. She recommended Ms. Tremblay for the position saying that she is well qualified and has picked it up quickly. The Board thanked Ms. Abbott for her time and work she has done during her time as Treasurer. Mr. Anderson motioned to accept the resignation of Tracy Abbott as the Treasurer. Ms. Knab seconded the motion. All voted in favor. Mr. Anderson motioned to appoint Rebecca Tremblay to fill the unexpired term of the Treasurer terminating in 2026. Ms. Knab seconded the motion. All voted in favor. Mr. Anderson motioned to approve the Treasurer's appointment of Tracy Abbott as the Town's Deputy Treasurer on the nomination of Treasurer Tremblay. Ms. Knab seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Mr. Houghton recognized Mr. Merrill who announced that today, the Richard Scammon Farm National Historic District was listed by the National Register of Historic Places. He would like to have some signage placed in the future to recognize this distinction. Mr. Merrill continued, stating the reason for his appearance tonight is regarding the Lane highway marker and the Gifford Farm. The Lane highway marker is a project the Heritage Commission has been working on for many years. As part of the application process, he is requesting an endorsement letter from the Select Board. He described the process for approval. Gregg Pruitt, owner of the Lane Homestead added that he gave permission for the sign five years ago. Mr. Pruitt expressed concern about the language on the sign and where it would be placed. Mr. Merrill agreed that they have been working on this project for a long time; the state put a temporary hold for a while. The Lane Homestead was chosen because it is a premier landmark in town. The State Historic Register has strict guidelines as to what qualifies. The Lane Homestead is a good candidate because of the historic documentation and the Lane artifacts held at the Historical Society. Mr. Merrill offered to continue the conversation outside of this meeting. Ms. Knab asked about funding for the sign. Mr. Merrill said there were two options. The State chooses ten a year, but it could take years for them to move forward. He prefers to move ahead and fund the project through fundraisers or use Capital Reserve to pay the balance. They have already received funds from a now deceased member of the Lane family. The Stratham Historical Society agreed to fund \$1000 of cost of sign. He anticipates the sign will cost approximately \$1,500. DOT will install the sign. Mr. Anderson asked about placement. Mr. Merrill would like it to be in the most visible place but not a traffic hazard. He speculated that DOT will have a strong say as to placement. If the topic and language are approved, then we can discuss placement. It will continue to be discussed at Heritage Commission meetings and if approved by the State, will

come back to Select Board. Mr. Pruitt reiterated that he is not opposed but concerned. Mr. Houghton motioned to support the Heritage Commission in their application for the historic marker for the Lane Homestead. Ms. Knab seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Recalling the success the Heritage Commission has had with identifying potential properties to be recognized on the National or State Register, Mr. Merrill said the commission is looking for their next nomination. They have decided that the Gifford Farm, aka Josiah Brown House, will be their next nomination. It is owned by the Town. Mr. Merrill asked if this is something they would support? The project would entail historical research by a consultant and submitting it to the state for eligibility. If the state approves, then it goes to the National Registry. The National Register listing doesn't protect property; it is simply a form of recognition that the property is of historical value which hopefully will build awareness. Ms. Knab asked about signage at the park as was raised by the Heritage Commission in the past. Mr. Merrill said it is still under consideration but other projects jumped ahead. Mr. Houghton supports the Gifford Farm property being placed on the National Register. Mr. Houghton recognized Paul Deschaine to speak as a member of the public. Mr. Deschaine recalled an action being taken regarding the sign at the cell tower and noted that the Planning Board has a time limit of six years. He recalled it took years for DOT to move forward with signs at the bridge to Newmarket. Mr. Deschaine added that another advantage of doing historical research on the Gifford Farm is that if we decide to apply for a federal grant, the research will have already been done to meet Section 106 requirements. Mr. Merrill told the group he would share with them his annotated copy of the diary that describes building the house. Maintenance issues in 2017/2018, led to the creation of two documents. 1. Specific advice on work to be done on the house at that time. 2. General guiding document on involving the Heritage Commission if maintenance is done on buildings more than 50 years old. Mr. Merrill redistributed the guidance. Ms. Knab motioned that the Select Board provide support for the application to the National Register of Historic Places nomination for Gifford Farm. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Mr. Houghton called attention to the correspondence item from the Piscataqua Region Estuaries Partnership regarding the Monitoring Collaborative. Mr. Moore recommended the Board refer the communication to the Conservation Commission and ESRLAC and ask for a report back noting he would ask Mark Connors to ensure the referral. Ms. Knab recalled that years ago, the Budget Advisory Committee was opposed. The Board agreed to refer as recommended.

Mr. Houghton called attention to the documents for Community Power. Mr. Moore recalled that at its previous meeting, the Select Board voted to select Community Power of New Hampshire as the Town of Stratham Competitive Energy Supplier subject to a favorable vote of the Town Meeting on October 26, 2023. The Energy Commission has been working hard to take steps to ensure we make the Nov. 1 deadline to take advantage of the earliest possible kickoff for our Community Power Plan. Mr. Anderson motioned that the Stratham Select Board, subject to and following favorable action by the Town Meeting at the Special Meeting on October 26, 2023, hereby approves CPCNH's Data Security and Privacy, Energy Portfolio Risk Management, Rates, and Financial Reserves Policies and authorizes Mike Houghton to enter into the Cost Sharing Agreement and Member Services Contract for the Complete Service Bundle (marked version 1, October 11, 2023) with the Community Power Coalition of New Hampshire (CPCNH) with Joe Anderson as the Authorized Officer and with elections in Exhibit C Article VIII Section

2 of the Agreement being a) “YES”, b) “NO”, and c) “NO”. Ms. Knab seconded the motion. All voted in favor. Ms. Knab noted Veto Day was set as Oct. 26 but she hopes to make the special Town Meeting.

Mr. Houghton moved to a follow up discussion on the Police Department’s request for Tasers. Mr. Moore reported that Chief King asked to withdraw the request. Mr. Moore reported out that it was brought to the staff’s attention that there is a class action lawsuit related to anti-trust practices was filed against the company. Chief King will come back in the future with another recommendation.

Mr. Moore reported on MS4 storm water compliance and reporting. The last of a 5 year plan for MS4 compliance report was recently submitted. In the future, additional assistance will be needed. CIP funding will be requested. Mr. Deschaine supported this statement, noting we are now in Phase II, which is a higher level of reporting. Mr. Moore will follow up.

Next, Mr. Houghton moved to the service provider item on the agenda. Mr. Moore recommended a simplification to the signature process by having him be authorized to sign the agreements. Ms. Knab confirmed that funds have already been allocated for this year. Mr. Anderson motioned to authorize the Town Administrator to execute the service provider contracts as outlined in the packet. Ms. Knab seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Mr. Houghton asked Mr. Moore for other input. Mr. Moore called attention to the Nov. 20th ceremony dedicating Room A as the Joan Sewall Room and confirmed their attendance.

ADMINISTRATION

Mr. Moore reported that there will be a Seabrook Drill on Wednesday. Mr. Barr has agreed to continue to serve as Emergency Management Director; Dave Emanuel is still serving as Deputy. They discussed the need for more volunteers for the team.

Next, Mr. Moore reported on a presentation by the Drinking Water Ground Water Bureau regarding their attempt to change legislation in order to facilitate connections from private water utilities to contaminated community water systems. Extension of existing water lines is a preferred solution by the State of NH for addressing contamination in community water systems but it comes with tax consequences for the private utilities. Mr. Moore will continue to follow the issue.

Mr. Moore informed the Board that our contract with the State of NH for a solution to PFAS in Town Center is now in Phase II. It has passed the G&C. We expect Underwood to submit a contract to continue on after their Phase I work. Mr. Moore will have them present options to the Board in a future meeting.

Mr. Moore noted that a new DPW operator/laborer will be starting Oct. 26. The Town is putting together options on other ways of supporting the crew through fall clean up. Mr. Anderson reminded him that another DPW new hire will start Nov. 1. A meeting will be held next week with DPW, Fire and Police to plan for snow emergencies.

In response to an earlier suggestion from the Board, Mr. Moore indicated he is following up with an informal new employee get together. He is also mentioned that the coalition that partnered in 2023 for Martin Luther King Day holiday recognition events is preparing for 2024 and has added new partners.

Mr. Houghton called attention to Ms. McAllister who reported on the finances for the end of Sept. The budget continues to track well. Referring to the Summary and Individual Financial Reports, she explained that the revenues and expenditures are appropriate for this time period. In preparation for a new budget year, she will be meeting with department heads individually to discuss their budget. Mr. Anderson asked if we were exploring new auditors. Ms. McAllister replied that is not something recommended for this year.

Mr. Houghton recognized Rocky Buchanan, a new resident who lives by the circle. Mr. Buchanan said that the circle was dangerous and asked if there was anything that could be done to make it safer. He's taken it upon himself to cut down brush to increase visibility for motorists. He asked who is responsible for maintenance? The state hasn't answered or responded to calls. Mr. Moore said that it is a state road so District 6 is responsible. He asked him to call the town with maintenance issues and we will also call District 6 on his behalf. The town does maintain some of the area to enable access to the fire pond. Ms. Knab said that she or Zoe Manos as State Reps are willing to help. Mr. Houghton added that many people have complained about the circle. Mr. Pruitt asked what the laws were regarding placement of political signs. He took two Republican signs off his land this week. Mr. Moore informed him that the Select Board has an adopted policy for political signage. It is based on State law, DOT policy and Town ordinances. He offered to meet with him after the meeting. Mr. Pruitt said he learned the Town Planner gave out maps of where signs may be placed. He would like a copy of that map.

At 8:06 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. Houghton-yes; Knab-yes; Anderson-yes.

At 9:21pm 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.

APPOINTMENT

Mr. Houghton motioned to appoint Jeff Hyland to fill Becky Mitchell's unexpired term to expire in 2025. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Mr. Moore noted that clarification was needed on a recent Heritage Commission appointment. Ms. Knab motioned to appoint Drew Bedard to the Heritage Commission as an Alternate to expire at Town Meeting 2024. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion.

Ms. Knab motioned approval of the SMS PTO raffle permit request with the drawing to be held 10/20. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Mr. Anderson motioned to approve the request to waive the alcohol prohibition for a private event in Room A on 11/11. Ms. Knab seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Mr. Houghton motioned to accept the resignation of the Finance Assistant, Shandy Supit. Ms. Knab seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Mr. Moore noted that there was Veterans' credit paperwork to be signed.

Mr. Moore said that the Library Director wishes to apply for a grant to the Rye Driftwood Garden Club to replicate the raised garden in back of library to be placed in an area that housed the previous above ground tanks. Ms. Knab motioned to support the application by the Library Director for a grant to support raised beds. Mr. Houghton seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Mr. Moore stated that the Library Trustees have prioritized renovations to the restrooms. He explained the scope of work.

At 9:29 pm Mr. Houghton motioned to adjourn. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Richard
Recording Secretary