

MINUTES OF THE OCTOBER 5, 2020 SELECT BOARD MEETING

MEMBERS PARTICIPATING: Board Members Chair Mike Houghton, Vice Chair Joe Lovejoy, Board Member Allison Knab along with Town Administrator David Moore and Fire Chief Matt Larrabee.

The meeting was held in the Hutton Room at the Stratham Municipal Center, 10 Bunker Hill Avenue Stratham, NH.

The Board Chair opened the meeting at 7:01 p.m.

Mr. Lovejoy made a motion to approve the September 21, 2020 minutes. Ms. Knab seconded the motion. All voted in favor. Ms. Knab made a motion to approve the October 1, 2020 (3:00 pm meeting) and October 1, 2020 (6:30 p.m. meeting) minutes. Mr. Lovejoy seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Mr. Houghton called attention to the Treasurer's Report. Vice Chair Lovejoy requested comparative data to the prior year in reports going forward. Mr. Moore will work with Town Treasurer and Finance Administrator to provide the information in future reports.

At 7:05 p.m., Mr. Houghton made a motion to enter into a non-public in accordance with RSA 91-A:3, II(d) to discuss contract negotiations. Mr. Lovejoy seconded. All voted in favor.

At 7:56 p.m., Vice Chair Lovejoy moved to seal the minutes of the non-public session noting that failure to do so would render a proposed action ineffective. Ms. Knab seconded the motion; all voted in favor.

Mr. Houghton welcomed and recognized legislative delegation member Representative Patty Lovejoy Representative Pat Abrami, Representative Deb Altschiller and Senator Tom Sherman to provide an update on legislative business. Mr. Houghton thanked Patty Lovejoy for her commitment and service to the Town over the years in the NH House of Representatives. Representative Abrami spoke about the budget and Covid 19's impact on government finances. Senator Sherman added that the House passed an additional assistance bill which should help restaurants and the economy however, funding as in the past for municipalities and schools is unlikely at this time. Mr. Moore stated that we have received at least one reimbursement from the CARES Act and we will be receiving reimbursement for COVID expenses of approximately \$85,000 – \$90,000. Collection of property taxes in Stratham was normal for the June bill. Senator Sherman said he is looking into using Rainy Day funds to help provide one time relief to property tax payers. He also recognizes the schools are seeing unanticipated increased costs due to Covid and is seeking ways to provide them with relief. Representative Altschiller updated the Board on NHMA initiated legislation that was passed and invited the Board and staff to reach out to her on any legislative need. Conversation turned to safety improvements being made to Rt. 33. Senator Sherman raised the issue of PFAS and what he's doing to ensure towns have safe drinking water. He then talked about various other issues he is involved in and offered his assistance in advocating for anything Stratham should need. The conversation turned back to PFAS issues. Mr. Moore said we are working with DES on remedial action plans for affected

properties. The group discussed regional infrastructure initiatives. Dr. Sherman talked about the possibility of a Covid 19 vaccine. He talked about the likelihood of a surge in cases this winter and urged people to continue to wear masks and practice social distancing. Contact tracing is being done in NH. He noted that individuals and small business that are struggling financially should reach out to the state for assistance.

Mr. Houghton then recognized Fire Chief Matt Larrabee who presented his department report. Chief Larrabee said that although payroll is higher this year because of the staffing model change, they are well within the budget for this year. Calls have been down. He suspects this is due to people avoiding hospitals, staying home, and businesses being closed. Surrounding towns also have lower call volume. Trainings have been ongoing. Al's Automotive donated a couple of automobiles to allow the firefighters to practice using the new Jaws of Life. Chief Larrabee noted that there continues to be restrictions on burn permits. Next, he addressed budget items. The fire station will need a point of entry treatment system to address the PFAS issue. A Covid line item has been added to the budget for general PPE, masks, gloves, etc. These items may be able to be reimbursed from grants from the State. He explained the scheduling of trainees and the possibility of staffing the station 7 days a week or putting 3 people on a shift. He is looking at leasing fire gear, which would be a lot less expensive than purchasing it. He is planning to add two items (thermal image cameras and portable radios) to the capital reserve fund, but push two items out a year, thereby maintaining the same number.

Many years ago Fire Chief Bob Law worked with the Planning Board to ensure that new developments set aside money for general fire protection improvements. Chief Larrabee believes that this is a good practice to maintain through the Planning Board. He talked about which developments now need work and the funding for those projects. He believes the Town Planner has this on his radar. Mr. Moore will look into the matter further with the Town Planner.

Mr. Houghton next addressed correspondence. Mr. Moore stated that we received a response from the State regarding safety issues on Rt 33. A meeting is scheduled for tomorrow with all the involved parties.

NEW BUSINESS AND ACTION ITEMS

Mr. Moore gave an over view of the changes made to the Appointments to Boards & Commissions Policy recommended by the Board. With this draft prepared, the Board asked Mr. Moore to solicit input from Board and Commission Chairs.

Mr. Moore reported that budget preparations are on track. A brief discussion took place about budget schedule moving forward.

Election preparations have consumed a great deal of time. Multiple people have been involved. The elections team including the Town Administrator (representing the Select Board), the Moderator, Assistant Moderator, Town Clerk, Health Officer and a representative of the Supervisors of the Checklist have been meeting regularly.

The Board discussed their meeting schedule. Mr. Lovejoy suggested an increased level of police presence on Election Day over general elections noting that this election is not taking place directly across from the Police Department. They discussed staffing for the event.

Mr. Moore stated that Kyle Saltonstall has submitted an application to be on the Conservation Commission. Ms. Knab motioned to appoint Kyle Saltonstall to the Conservation Commission as an alternate. Mr. Lovejoy seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Mr. Lovejoy had received a request from a resident for a crosswalk at the intersection of Barker Rd and High St. The DPW Department followed-up with placement of roadway signs to advise traffic of the pedestrian activity; a crosswalk in the proposed location is not advisable due to visibility. Someone took the sign. With schools opening, many children cross at that location. Mr. Mears is following-up to replace the sign and the police have been contacted.

Mr. Moore made the Board aware of his intent to take some days off during the week of the 12th (as vacation time).

At 9:35 pm Vice Chair Houghton moved to go into a non-public session in accordance with RSA 91-A, II (a). Mr. Lovejoy seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

At 10:24 p.m. Vice Chair Lovejoy moved to seal the minutes finding that failure to do so would render a proposed action ineffective. Ms. Knab seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

The Board resumed the public session. Mr. Lovejoy motioned to accept the resignation of Mel McGrail. Ms. Knab seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

At 10:25 p.m. Vice Chair Lovejoy moved to adjourn the meeting; Ms. Knab seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Richard
Recording Secretary