

MINUTES OF THE JANUARY 16, 2024 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. Mr. Houghton then asked for a motion on the minutes. Ms. Knab motioned approval of the minutes of January 2nd as written. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

At 7:01 pm Mr. Houghton motioned to go into a non-public session in accordance with RSA to discuss personnel matters. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. Roll call: Houghton-yes; Knab-yes; Anderson-yes

7:42 pm Mr. Houghton motioned to come out of the non-public session.

Mr. Houghton welcomed State Representative Zoe Manos. Rep. Manos informed the group that in her role on the Judiciary Committee she is aware of three Right to Know bills that are currently being voted on. 1. Would allow towns to charge for record production that exceeds 10 hours. The Board supported this as it is clearly targeting voluminous requests which can be costly to municipalities to fulfil. 2. Production of records that are preliminary drafts be circulated to a quorum or a majority of the public body. The Board felt this bill would be logistically difficult. 3. Production of records electronically. Mr. Moore asked for clarification. Rep. Manos will look into it and report back. Mr. Moore recommended accessing NHMA's position on items 2 and 3 and shared that NHMA is supportive of 1.

Next Rep. Manos spoke about condo related legislation that she and Rep. Knab are sponsoring. Resident Dick Swett testified in favor of both bills. One deals with the timing of meeting notices for condo meetings. It also clarifies that meetings of committees (like landscaping) aren't required to be noticed. The other legislation Rep. Manos is sponsoring would allow condo associations as an entity so that they may receive commercial electric rates. The Energy Dept. was not in favor of the bill. It is unlikely to pass. Ms. Knab stated that affordable housing is a priority and many bills are aimed at increasing affordable housing. However, many of the bills remove local control. She supports local control and therefore has a hard time supporting these bills. She recommends the Town keep an eye on these legislative proposals; they could have an impact on Stratham. She would like to have the town's opinion on some of these bills.

They returned to the discussion on condo electric rates. Rep. Manos said they had good legal support.

Mr. Moore brought to their attention HB1479. This bill is targeted at preventing municipalities from working collectively to advocate in front of the legislature as lobbyists. Purpose is to neuter the voice of NHMA, Police Chiefs, etc. The Board signaled they would like to support the NHMA effort defeat this bill and asked Mr. Moore to write a letter opposing this bill.

The Board thanked Rep. Manos for coming in.

Mr. Moore called attention to the correspondence from Bill Kenny. Ms. Knab motioned acceptance of Bill Kenny's resignation from the Conservation Commission with regret and asked for a thank you letter to be sent. Mr. Houghton seconded the motion. All voted in favor. Mr. Moore indicated he would follow-up on the letter.

Mr. Moore then noted the correspondence from Jessica Harrington from the Police Dept. Mr. Anderson motioned to accept the resignation of Jessica Harrington. Mr. Houghton seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Mr. Moore gave an update on Town Meeting preparations. Mr. Moore will draft the Select Board submission for the Town Report. Public Hearing on the Warrant is Feb. 5th. There doesn't appear to be any warrant articles outside of the usual appropriation articles.

Mr. Moore will present the CIP at the last Budget Advisory Committee meeting on the 18th. They discussed staying after the close of the meeting to deliberate. Mr. Moore will ensure the base budget is included for each of the departments on the 18th. A special meeting will be held on Wednesday, Jan. 24th to reflect on the feedback from the BAC and finalize the budget recommendations.

Mr. Houghton directed attention to the Kennebunk performance bond release item on the agenda. Mr. Moore referred to the memo in the packet from Mark Connors. Mr. Anderson motioned to approve the additional release of \$1,000 plus accumulated interest which would formally close out the project. Ms. Knab seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Tim Stevens, the new Public Works Director, will be starting on Monday, January 22nd. Seabrook emergency drills will be Feb. 7 and April 3. The new DPW Director and new Building Inspector will be at the drills.

Mr. Moore received an inquiry from Moody's investor service. Our issuer rating is expiring. We would need to pay \$3,000 annually to maintain it. After conferring with Ms. McAllister, they decided against renewing. Mr. Moore is confirming this decision with bond counsel. The town has no plans to issue new debt, therefore it is unnecessary to maintain. Board agreed to let it expire.

Next Mr. Moore discussed the Fire Station roof. He requested the Board authorize the expenditure of up to \$25,882.50 from the Town Buildings and Grounds Maintenance Trust for roof repairs as described in a January 9, 2024 proposal from True North Management. He continued, explaining that Dan Crow reviewed the roof issues at the station. While doing so, he observed deteriorating architectural detail made of lead that, if not addressed, will create a problem with bricks in the façade of the building. Mr. Moore discussed funding sources. The Board requested copies of the quote which Mr. Moore will provide.

Next Mr. Moore discussed election preparations. He has a meeting tomorrow with Town Clerk Deborah Bakie and Moderator Dave Emanuel to go over logistics. The 76ers will hold a bake sale. We will put Community Power handouts in the area of the bake sale. The board discussed their plan for coverage on that day. Mr. Moore advised them that the Secretary of State authorized the moderator to read party results at different times. They discussed write-ins on the ballot.

Mr. Houghton directed attention to the Informational items. Ms. Knab motioned to authorize the Board Chair to sign the Route 33 Corridor Study request for information. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Mr. Anderson questioned the language of zoning article 5.12.3. Mr. Moore will ask Mr. Connors for clarification.

RESERVATIONS

Mr. Houghton motioned to approve New Life Baptist Church's request to use the Sewall Room on Sundays at half the cost in exchange for mopping/shoveling the room. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Mr. Houghton noted for consideration Lucy Cushman's appointment to the ZBA.

Mr. Moore noted that two employees will receive referral bonuses.

At 8:33 pm Mr. Houghton motioned to adjourn. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Richard
Recording Secretary