

MINUTES OF THE JANUARY 17, 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, Town Clerk/Tax Collector Deborah Bakie

At 7:00 pm Mr. Houghton opened the meeting.

Mr. Houghton called attention to the minutes of Dec 19 and January 3. Ms. Knab wasn't in attendance on Dec 19 and therefore abstained. Mr. Anderson motioned to approve the minutes of Dec. 19 and Jan 3. Mr. Houghton seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Mr. Houghton recognized resident Richard (Dick) Swett. Mr. Swett spoke in favor of the New Business agenda item RSA 261:153 Transportation Local Fee Option. As a member of the Age Friendly Committee, he reported that a major concern of seniors is the need for transportation services. He referred to the success neighboring communities have had with projects funded by the fee. Transportation Assistance for Seacoast Citizens (TASC) provides good service, but additional options are needed. He recommends this being on the Warrant for consideration. The Board thanked him for coming in. Mr. Moore noted that town staff has reviewed the implications of this fee. Mr. Houghton recognized Town Clerk/Tax Collector Deborah Bakie. Ms. Bakie determined that the estimated revenue would be close to \$50,000, based on a \$5 fee. She felt the residents have expressed support for pedestrian/bicycle improvements and would support this nominal fee. Ms. Knab noted it could also support pedestrian improvements. The group discussed the many projects that could be funded by the additional fee

Mr. Moore gave next steps to move this to become a Warrant Article. Mr. Houghton motioned to move this forward to a Warrant Article with a fee of \$5. Ms. Knab seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Ms. Bakie gave a demonstration of a sample voting booth she is proposing to purchase. She noted that the booths we have are in relative disrepair. The proposed booths comply with NH RSAs and are being used by most communities throughout the state. The new booths are sturdier and should serve the town for many years. Mr. Moore noted that funds for replacement booth are included in the draft CIP. A decision on what and when to purchase the replacements would be made separately after the Town Meeting.

Mr. Houghton recognized Jim Marchese, Building Inspector/Code Enforcement Officer to give his department report. Mr. Marchese is updating the residential permit application as well as the third party review application. Plans will go to third party review who will estimate their fee for their services for the project. The funds from the application will be held in an escrow account which will be refunded upon completion of the project. Mr. Moore called attention to the additional language included on the building permit and demolition permit application, which had been requested by the Board.

Mr. Marchese reported that the department is working with Brightly to get the new permit software up and running by June. They are ensuring compliance with RSAs. The project is going smoothly.

Mr. Marchese reported that department revenue from permitting is down 18% from last year.

He identified several ongoing and upcoming projects including 23 Portsmouth Ave. (Optima); Planet Fitness, Outpatient Surgery Center and Lindt.

Mr. Anderson inquired if the fees were current. Mr. Moore noted the last update was in 2019.

Mr. Moore recognized Mark Connors, Town Planner for his department report who began by reviewing some of the zoning amendments. The Planning Board will hold the second Public Hearing on these zoning amendments tomorrow night.

- Amendments 1 and 2 would increase the setback for developments in the corridor. It would also clarify how we measure building height.
- Amendment 3 allows for reduced setbacks in the Professional Residential district between Bunker Hill to the traffic circle. This allows for less of a setback in the front.
- Amendment 4 would establish standards for driveways, sidewalks, charging stations in the Gateway District. This is in alignment with our goal of getting pedestrian improvements in the DOT 10 Year Plan.
- Amendment 5 is a housekeeping amendment to correct inconsistencies in uses in the Gateway.
- Amendment 6 addresses a new state law which limits ability of towns to regulate religious uses. The Planning Board made an amendment to the site regulations so that if we get an application from a church, there is some review by the Planning Board. The church would also have to be certified as a legitimate use.
- Amendment 7 would establish some maximum residential densities in the commercial district.
- Amendment 8 would replace our existing sign ordinance with a new sign ordinance.
- Amendment 9 is a signage-related change. If the Town supports this, it would eliminate illuminated commercial signage and would bring us in alignment with our surrounding communities.
- Amendment 10 was requested by Stratham Green Condo Association. Currently, the town requires we hold a performance guarantee in the amount of \$4,000 for the life of their solar panel system which could be decades. The Association would like flexibility to use that money. The Planning Board is supportive of an agreement recorded at the Registry of Deeds that the Association is aware of this requirement to remove the panel if it is no longer being used.

Ms. McAllister explained the accounting issues involved with holding this bond. She is fully in support of this amendment.

Next, Mr. Connors described the Private Well Water Testing Workshop being held at the Cooperative Middle School on February 22. It is a big effort to ensure the samples are collected

and taken to the lab within the proper timeframe. The State will be sending mailings directly to eligible households. PFAS is included as part of this test.

There will be a ZBA meeting next Tuesday to consider the Select Board request for a re-hearing. A new bank is preparing to submit a site plan application. He will have more information on that next week. We are waiting on two grant applications – CMAC for electric charging stations at schools and public facilities as well as another CMAC grant to coordinate Portsmouth Ave. traffic signals and Age Friendly Community Grant to help with a communication plan for the Town. The Aberdeen appeal goes before the Planning Board on Feb 15. The State has asked us to participate in the State Planning and Zoning Conference in April to talk about the Rt 33 Heritage District re-zoning.

Mr. Connors explained that the RPC has funding to do a regional housing plan. Part of that is to do an assessment of affordable housing in the region. They have a formula to establish each town's fair share. This project is still in the early stages of development.

Mr. Houghton welcomed the legislative delegation. Sen. Debra Altschiller gave an update on the bills she filed that might affect Stratham. They discussed NHMA's involvement in legislative lobbying and municipalities' contributions to the NH Retirement System. Alexis Simpson talked about bills she is sponsoring including one on remote meetings. Rep. Zoe Manos discussed a bill adding police officers as eligible to serve in civil processes. Rep. Knab discussed a bill that would exempt agriculture operations from noise ordinances. Mr. Moore explained the policy regarding the Town advocating positions on legislation. He continued discussing, in general, DOT's 10 year plan and the Corridor study and PFAS. The responsibility for PFAS mitigation is costly and ongoing. Fortunately, we have received State grant funds to assist with that. He continued, discussing drinking water infrastructure and how it impacts housing. Mr. Houghton agreed, noting that water quality standards are increasing but small towns can't afford the infrastructure to address the issue. The solution lies in creating regional water solutions. Sen. Altschiller talked about coordinating future Board appearances with deadlines for legislative actions. The Board thanked them for coming in.

Mr. Houghton moved to Town Meeting details. They discussed the location and the date. It was agreed that Town Meeting will be held at Stratham Memorial School on Saturday, March 18th at 9:00 am.

Mr. Moore invited the Board to attend an Exeter Area Chamber of Commerce presentation on the 2023 Economic Forecast.

He will have an updated set of goals at the next meeting. We are working with the Historical Society on a grant to support improvements to that building. He discussed the last upcoming Budget Advisory Committee meeting. In response to Mr. Anderson's question about updated budget numbers, Ms. McAllister explained we received unexpected expenses from DPW. We have now expended 94.5% of the appropriated budget (\$7,608,931).

Mr. Moore continued, explained that he could decrease the solid waste line item, thereby getting to a 2% increase in the budget. The group discussed the use of ARPA funds to reduce the CIP

and the tax rate impact based on the operating budget. The Public Hearing on the Warrant will be on Feb. 6th.

RESERVATIONS

Ms. Knab motioned approval to move forward with the 5K road race on Sunday, May 7th. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Ms. Knab motioned to approve the requested road closure for the Stratham Memorial School Wellness Walk provided the Police Dept. is aware and approves. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Ms. Knab motioned approval of the Greenland Vets use of the 4-H Pavilion, 9/10, and to waive the fee. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Ms. Knab motioned approval of the Acorn School's use of the Scamman Pavilion, 4/21, and to waive the fee. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Ms. Knab motioned approval of the Collie Rescue League's use of the Front Pavilion, 9/9, and to waive the fee. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Mr. Houghton motioned to appoint John Kunowski, current alternate member, to fill the unexpired term of Pamela Hollasch to the Planning Board for a term to expire in 2025. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Mr. Moore called attention to the open elected positions.

Ms. Knab wanted it to be clear that the Select Board should be made aware if a group plans to advocate for a particular legislature, but they should not in any way hinder them. .

At 9:22pm Mr. Houghton motioned to go into a non-public session in accordance with RSA 91-A3, II(c) to discuss items that may affect the reputation of another. Roll Call: Houghton-Yes; Knab-Yes; Anderson –yes.

At 9:24pm Mr. Houghton motioned to seal the minutes noting that failure to do so may render a proposed action ineffective. Roll Call: Houghton-Yes; Knab-Yes; Anderson –yes.

At 9:42pm Mr. Anderson motioned to adjourn. Ms. Knab seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Respectfully submitted
Karen Richard, Recording Secretary