

MINUTES OF THE JANUARY 3, 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 went to the New Business item on the agenda. Mr. Moore called attention to the proposed holiday schedule. Mr. Anderson motioned to adopt the 2023 holidays as stated. Ms. Knab seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Mr. Houghton asked about the ZBA case. Mr. Moore referred to the memo submitted by the Planning Board recommending a rehearing regarding the granting of a variance by the ZBA. Mr. Connors designed a flow chart outlining various paths. Mr. Moore reviewed the options delineated in the flow chart. Mr. Moore described what would be involved in requesting a rehearing. Mr. Marchese is the staffing liaison for the ZBA, Mr. Connors is the liaison for the Planning Board. The Planning Board letter believes the ZBA had incorrect and inaccurate information. Mr. Anderson motioned to authorize the Select Board Chair to request a Zoning Board rehearing before January 12th regarding 23 Portsmouth Avenue. Ms. Knab seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Mr. Moore moved to the status of 2022 goals and a look forward to 2023 goals. He would also like to discuss Town Meeting preparations and the budget. At 7:09 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, would likely affect adversely the reputation of another. Roll call: Houghton-yes; Knab-yes; Anderson-yes

At 8:51 pm Mr. Houghton motioned to come out of the non-public session and seal the minutes noting that failure to do so would render a proposed action ineffective. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Mr. Moore gave a year-end update on his goals noting achievements with the finance function and various other accomplishments across departments as well as some still in progress.

Mr. Moore and Ms. McAllister continue to work on the Employee Manual with a goal of completing it by June 2023. Mr. McAllister added that it is a two part project: reorganizing the manual and updating required language and reviewing and potentially changing some policies that are currently in place.

Mr. Moore observed that there was a smooth transition to the new Fire Chief which he attributed to the character and work ethic of Chief Denton. They discussed their understanding of the succession plan for the department. Strategic planning for the Fire Dept. will continue to be a topic for discussion over the coming months. All agreed that Chief Denton has done an outstanding job this far.

Next, Mr. Moore reported that we have submitted our reimbursement for \$200,000 in PFAS funds. The next step is to distribute the initial PFAS alternatives analysis to potential partners and advance as interest warrants. He has also submitted a grant application to take the PFAS alternatives study to further engineering detail.

Mr. Moore moved the discussion to a need to advance our policies. He feels the best way to do this is to identify one or two, and make a specific achievable goal. Ms. McAllister's articulated a goal she would recommend which is to create a set of basic financial policies and a procedural manual for the finance office.

Mr. Moore stated that installing permit software is a priority. He would like to be able to offer it to the public in June.

Mr. Moore reported that Planning Project Coordinator Susan Connors is organizing a free water testing workshop on Feb 22 (snow date 23) in coordination with the DES.

Reviewing department accomplishments, Mr. Moore credited Mr. Connors with the Rt. 33 rezoning project. Open Space Plan is a priority for 2023. Site ordinance revision will be a Warrant Article. Performance bond legacy issues remain and must be cleaned up. The Planning Board may recommend zoning amendments for source water protection. Although there is no plan for SHP, there is an improved approach for issues that arise there. Solid Waste Ordinance has been updated; fee updates will come later. Parks & Recreation participated in two initiatives associated with focusing on residents' desires: NH Listens and Age Friendly Community. TMAC is moving forward with implementation, planning outreach this year. The Police Dept. completed restructuring, deployment of body worn cameras, completion of SHP active shooter event, CALEA outreach. Mr. Anderson praised the Police Dept., observing that they set high goals for themselves and achieved them all.

In 2023, Mr. Moore would like to offer more opportunities to the community to get involved with the town's boards and commissions. He would like to foster a collaboration between residents willing to apply their skills to town or committee projects. To facilitate communication, he suggested distributing an e-newsletter which would contain information from various groups in the community. As an alternative, Ms. Knab suggested highlighting a different group in each Select Board newsletter.

Continuing with his goals for 2023, Mr. Moore would like an updated emergency operations plan. Regarding PFAS, he is aware that staff will need to be more involved with managing sites overall, including potential expansions.

He asked for feedback from the Board in the coming meetings and the Board agreed to reconvene on the goals in February.

Mr. Moore referred to his handout regarding Town Meeting. He then asked for a non-public session to discuss the compensation of employees. He gave a brief overview of the materials he'll be sending to the Budget Advisory Committee later this week and how he envisions the meeting unfolding. He presented a list of Town Warrant Articles; Articles 12 – 16 (numbers are

placeholders) are familiar. There are three additional Articles. Mr. Moore recommends moving forward with the adoption of fees per 41:9A. He recalled that the Age Friendly discussions supported a small additional fee be added to vehicle registrations to support transportation projects as allowed for in a relatively recent state law. He outlined the steps needed to implement this fee. The Board supported investing more time in a discussion at their next meeting. They discussed the lack of transportation options currently available and possible ways the additional money could be used.

Mr. Moore will proceed with the adoption of the State revised veteran's credit at the current level.

Next, Mr. Moore gave an overview of the budget and an estimate for the tax rate impact for 2023. The operating budget is increasing 2.23% (\$8,229,000). We plan to use ARPA funds for buildings and grounds maintenance again this year, allowing us to retain those CRF funds. He continued, reflecting on the impacts to the budget. Currently, the tax rate is \$3.21 but that doesn't include adjustments to the CIP or budget that could come about through teaks and input from the Board and BAC. Mr. Moore discussed the overall Town valuation and the impact on the tax rate including the net effect of recent assessment appeals. This will be reviewed and part of the projections going forward.

Mr. Moore continued, saying that this is the draft budget that will be presented to the BAC. They discussed use of the ARPA funds. The remainder could be spent next year. The group is eager to hear from the Budget Advisory Committee.

Mr. Anderson recalled that he wanted to see all payroll items in the budget collapsed. It has been done for 2023. Ms. McAllister was reluctant to do so because the history would be lost. In addition, she heard from some department heads who wanted to keep it separate. Mr. Moore wanted to learn more about the impact of this change and offered to return to this matter in preparation for town meeting presentation materials.

Mr. Moore discussed waste collection and sees opportunity there. He also explained that he would like to move EMS costs from the Operating Budget to the Special Revenue Fund. However, there are already changes being made to the payroll line item so perhaps this change could wait.

Mr. Moore stated that we can get to a 2% increase if that is the consensus.

ADMINISTRATION

Mr. Moore requested a motion to allow him to execute the contract with the Assessor through 2023. Ms. Knab motioned to authorize the Town Administrator to move forward with the contract with the Assessor through Dec. 31, 2023 with the current terms. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Mr. Moore reported that the Jana Lane property is closed. Deed is in hand.

Mr. Moore said he may bring forward another potential warrant article for their consideration. He proposed lapsing CIP items that we are certain will have no use prior to 5 years. This would benefit the unassigned fund balance.

The Energy Aggregation Committee will be meeting next week.

At 9:52 Mr. Houghton motioned to go into a non-public session in accordance with RSA 91-A:3, II(a) to discuss compensation of public employees. Ms. Knab seconded the motion. Roll call: Houghton-yes; Knab-yes; Anderson-yes

At 10:32 pm Mr. Houghton motioned to come out of the non-public session and seal the minutes noting that failure to do so would render a proposed action ineffective. Ms. Knab seconded the motion. All voted in favor. At 10:32 pm Mr. Houghton motioned to adjourn. Ms. Knab seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Richard
Recording Secretary