

MINUTES OF THE MARCH 21, 2022 SELECT BOARD MEETING

Meeting held in the Hutton Room at the Stratham Municipal Center

MEMBERS PRESENT: Board Members Chair Mike Houghton, Allison Knab, Joe Anderson

ALSO PRESENT: Town Administrator David Moore, Finance Administrator Christiane McAllister, and Director of Public Works Nate Mears.

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

Ms. Knab motioned to accept the minutes from the March 7, 2022 Select Board meeting. Mr. Houghton seconded the motion. Mr. Anderson abstained because he was not present at that meeting. Motion passed.

Mr. Houghton directed attention to Correspondence. Mr. Moore stated he received a request to resume bake sales at elections. The board generally expressed support but will discuss and make a decision as the election gets closer.

Mr. Moore stated receiving retirement resignations from Officer Chuck Law and Public Works Foreman Alan Williams, which were provided to the Board in their packet. Mr. Anderson motioned to accept the retirement resignations. Ms. Knab seconded, with regret, the motion.

Mr. Moore received notification from Unutil that they will use an herbicide treatment in the right of way of their electric lines. They will notify residents, allowing people to opt out if they choose. The Board recommended forwarding the information to the Conservation Commission and to put it in the Select Board Newsletter.

Mr. Houghton recognized Director of Public Works Nate Mears for his department report. He noted that reports were submitted to DES this month. They met compliance for 2021 operations at the Transfer Station and closed landfill annual report which was collaborated on with CMA.

Transfer station will begin opening every Saturday beginning April 1. Thursday evenings will also begin. We've received great feedback from last year on the Thursday opening.

Mr. Mears is coordinating with Bell & Flynn to finalize the paving schedule. We receive state pricing on the work and Mr. Bell provides us with a deduction with mileage. Mr. Mears said he is aware that SMS has been taking steps to evaluate their building needs. The extent of changes to the SMS site in the future should be factored into the decision to make improvements to Gifford Farm in the near term and he is working to learn more about their schedule and plans. Mr. Mears feels that making traffic calming improvements on Long Hill and other roads leading to the school will be beneficial. He explained other intended improvements.

In response to a comment from a resident at Town Meeting, Mr. Mears along with Fire Captain Tim Slager, reviewed the cabinets that house the traffic light signals that indicate when an emergency vehicle is approaching. Mr. Mears believes that responsibility for maintaining this lies with the DPW because we own that small part of the infrastructure. He is gathering costs to

put in the capital plan and will follow up. Mr. Moore talked about funding options going forward. Mr. Houghton thanked Mr. Mears for the work he's doing to keep the public safe.

Mr. Mears reported that streets will be swept throughout the month of April. He will make the public aware.

Work at the park is ongoing. Mr. Mears is moving forward with contracting with Hillside for turf maintenance and NH Blacktop Sealers for the work at Maple Lane Cemetery. Spring cleanup is underway. Elevators at Fire and Police stations are in compliance with State regulations. Heating / cooling preventative maintenance is done. Mandated upgrades at the fueling station have been completed.

Mr. Houghton then recognized Fire Department leadership for an introduction. Former Fire Chief Larrabee introduced the new Fire Chief, Jeff Denton. The group congratulated Chief Denton on his recent election by the department membership. Chief Denton said he was honored to be elected and thanked former Fire Chief Matt Larrabee for his leadership especially through the pandemic. The Board thanked Chief Larrabee for his service. Chief Larrabee thanked the board for their support over the years. Chief Denton said that former Chief Larrabee and Lt. Josh Crow are willing to assist him with the transition to his new role and he noted he met late in the previous week with Mr. Moore.

Mr. Houghton moved the conversation to the Heritage Commission District Rt. 33 item on the agenda. Mr. Moore stated that this project was a goal of the Master Plan. He commended Heritage Commission Chair Nate Merrill, the Planning Board, and Town Planner Mark Connors, saying this was a great accomplishment for the Town. Mr. Connors explained that an advisory subcommittee of three representatives is to be created in accordance with the new zoning ordinance. He gave a general explanation of the expectations and make-up of the committee. Mr. Houghton also praised the efforts of all who worked on the project saying it was a balance between preserving the character of the area while allowing commercial uses. Mr. Merrill also thanked Mr. Connors for his work on the project, noting communication between the HC and other committees and staff has been greatly improved over recent years. Mr. Merrill complimented Mr. Connors on the outstanding effort he put forth in reaching out to the community about this project. Mr. Merrill believes this is the first Heritage District in the state that's been implemented. Ms. Knab suggested putting an article in Stratham Magazine highlighting this accomplishment.

Mr. Houghton moved to the topic of imposing fines for unauthorized demolition of historic buildings. Mr. Moore referred to a memo in the packet from Building Inspector Jim Marchese. The state defines the penalties and processes for implementing fines. The Select Board may adopt a policy and decide on the extent of follow through in the event of violations. Educating the public and preventing this from happening is the most desirable outcome. Mr. Houghton suggests adding to the building permit a warning of a fine for unauthorized demolition. Mr. Moore indicated that he would ensure violations of this particular zoning ordinance would be brought to the Board's attention.

ADMINISTRATION

Mr. Houghton asked Mr. Moore for his Administration report. Mr. Moore stated he received a request in accordance with the Facility Naming Policy from Mr. Merrill. Mr. Moore outlined the policy. The request is to rename Room A at the Municipal Center and to name the barns at the park. The Board requested Mr. Merrill inform the nominee of the Room A submission of his recommendation. Ms. Knab noted that many people have an interest in the park and felt strongly about doing more outreach to any interested parties. They decided to reach out to boards and commissions and to put it in the newsletter. They will revisit the topic at the April 18th meeting.

Mr. Merrill said he would be happy to answer any questions related to the old Town Hall Preservation Easement Monitoring Report, an informational item on the agenda. Mr. Moore explained that the Heritage Commission developed a procedure for an obligation the town has for monitoring the easement on the old town hall and he thanked Mr. Merrill for the initiative in creating the form. There were no issues with the report.

Mr. Moore is moving forward with the DES funded long term study that looks at the various ways the town might respond to PFAS over the long term. Mitigation and maintenance of point of entry systems is our responsibility, as is the possible addition of more affected properties if warranted by water quality testing. We are assessing our options and developing cost proposals for alternative approaches to managing the contamination in the large term. Alternatives identified include maintaining the current treatment systems across the many affected properties in perpetuity, standing up a new public water system in Town Center to centrally treat and distribute water, and connections to regional water supplies in order to meet our needs. Final report should be done in 2-3 weeks.

Mr. Moore reported that water quality in general will be a significant issue for the town. Specifically, concerns around manganese, arsenic, and further scrutiny of PFAS. The Seacoast Private Well Water Commission is planning an effort to encourage people to test their well water, learn about it and take advantage of initiatives. There is also a water quantity issue – climate change, salt water inundation all effect water quantity.

Conversation continued regarding arsenic. The State lowered the standard, pushing more people over the acceptable limit affecting the homeowner associations managing their own supply. Mr. Connors added that as part of the Source Water Protection Plan (done in collaboration with the Rockingham Planning Commission) we have received an implementation grant. This is a larger problem than people realize. RPC is working with us on local ordinance changes for source water protection.

Next, Mr. Moore directed attention to the third party review of the Large Groundwater Withdrawal Renewal Permit for Golf Club of New England. We received feedback last Friday. Next step is for us to submit comments to DES. That Board asked that Mr. Moore follow-up in submitting comments to include the observations and conclusions in the third-party report.

Mr. Moore redistributed public meeting information and reviewed the policies. New legislature is requiring a more active role in assessing non-public minutes and either keep sealed or unseal

the minutes. Mr. Anderson will be meeting with Mr. Moore this week for a general sit-down meeting about Select Board business and an orientation to processes in place for Board business.

APPOINTMENTS

Ms. Knab motioned to move forward Nancy Hunter for consideration to the Recreation Commission for a three year term. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Mr. Houghton noted receipt of the Treasurer's report.

Mr. Houghton recognized Ms. McAllister for a general Finance Office update. Ms. McAllister advised the Board of several updates on her efforts to improve the Town's accounting function and processes. She reported on her work with the Town's bank vendors to explore streamlining and simplifying several of the legacy banking relationships that have presented challenges. Ms. McAllister is preparing for the audit at the end of April. Mr. Houghton expressed the Board's appreciation for her extensive efforts to address many longstanding challenges.

Mr. Houghton moved the conversation to the Select Board signing of necessary documents. In a response to a staff suggestion at improving the work flow and turnaround times for accounts payable it was decided that the Board would alter its schedule for signing payroll and accounts payable manifests. Beginning on the 23rd of March, Finance staff would make documents available each Wednesday starting at 4:00 pm until 8:00 a.m. Thursday morning for Select Board signature.

Ms. McAllister raised the need to replace Mr. Lovejoy's authority as a second legal signatory on some bank documents. Mr. Anderson volunteered to be the second signatory.

Mr. Houghton gave his thoughts on Town Meeting, which were positive overall. Ms. Knab would like feedback from the residents on their preference for Friday night or Saturday morning.

ADMINISTRATION

Mr. Moore recognized a need to develop a policy for disposing of surplus property. The Board authorized him to dispose of a baseball backstop that was the subject of a memo he provided to the Board.

Mr. Moore stated that the Building Inspector was following-up on resident complaints regarding a Lovell Road property and that was not meeting with satisfactory responses of the owner, which could require further involvement by the Board.

Mr. Moore noted that he is working with Parks & Recreation Director Seth Hickey on a new charge for the Trail Management Advisory Committee. Mr. Houghton recalled a previous conversation that involved the Heritage Commission and signage and hoped the staff would follow-up on this.

Mr. Moore would like to revive the Public Works Commission and highlight this volunteer opportunity in the newsletter.

Regarding a request for an easement to access a landlocked parcel at the rear of the park, Mr. Moore reported the school district determined not to move forward with that request.

Mr. Moore received a request from a resident on Christie Lane to close the road for a private party and to host a food truck. Mr. Moore will reach out to Police, Fire and Highway for their guidance.

Mr. Moore reported that the Parks & Recreation Dept. is scheduling events in an attempt to draw more people to the Senior Room.

The group discussed rescheduling the event for Joe Lovejoy.

NEW BUSINESS

Ms. Knab motioned to elect Mike Houghton as Chair of the Select Board. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. Mr. Houghton accepted. All voted in favor.

Mr. Houghton motioned to elect Allison Knab as Vice Chair of the Select Board. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. Ms. Knab accepted. All voted in favor.

Mr. Houghton moved to the adoption of the Select Board Rules and Procedures. There was a brief discussion of item 9 regarding media. Mr. Moore expressed concern about the written procedure on changing an ordinance. He anticipates refining the policy and will come back to the Board with it.

Mr. Moore called attention to the compendium of policies which is added to each year as more past policies are found and incorporated. This year an existing winter maintenance policy was added. The Board discussed a need for a media policy. Mr. Houghton suggested having a deeper discussion on policies at a future meeting.

Mr. Houghton explained that there is a Select Board Rep on each boards & commission and one that acts as a liaison to each department.

At 9:30 pm Mr. Houghton motioned to go into a non-public session in accordance with RSA 91-A:3, III (a) Personnel. Seconded by Mr. Anderson. Roll call: Houghton – Yes; Knab – Yes; Anderson – Yes.

At 10:00 p.m. the Board remerged in public session. Mr. Houghton moved to seal the minutes noting that failure to do so would render the proposed actions ineffective. Ms. Knab seconded the motion. Roll call: Houghton – Yes; Knab – Yes; Anderson – Yes.

The Board made agreed on assignments to Boards and Commission seats. The following was agreed to.

Boards/Commissions

Conservation Commission	Allison Knab
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Planning Board	Mike Houghton
Heritage Commission	Mike Houghton
Recreation Commission	Allison Knab
Public Works Commission	Joe Anderson

Committee/Association

Fire Association	Joe Anderson
Energy Commission	Joe Anderson

Select Board - Department Linkages

Fire	Joe Anderson
DPW	Joe Anderson
Finance	Joe Anderson
Parks & Recreation	Allison Knab
Town Clerk/Tax Collector	Allison Knab
Library	Allison Knab
Police	Mike Houghton
Planning	Mike Houghton
Building/Code Enforcement	Mike Houghton
Assessing	Mike Houghton

At 10:05 p.m. Ms. Knab moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Anderson seconded. All voted in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Richard
Recording Secretary