

## **MINUTES OF THE MARCH 6, 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, Parks & Recreation Director Seth Hickey, Town Clerk/Tax Collector Deborah Bakie

At 7:00 pm Mr. Houghton opened the meeting and requested motions on the minutes. Ms. Knab noted that there was no time noted in the draft minutes from February 21, 2023. Mr. Anderson motioned approval of the minutes with a time added. Ms. Knab seconded the motion. All voted in favor. Mr. Houghton recognized Mr. Hickey who began by explaining why the summer camp registration system crashed and how it was rectified. The next challenge will be recruiting summer camp counselors.

Trail Management Advisory Committee held a community engagement on Jan. 26 which was well attended. Mr. Hickey reported on the eco-counter data gathered at Stratham Hill Park. This data will be used to determine if park use is increasing or decreasing over the years; identify peak times for the Animal Control Officer to be on site based on volume; the data will be used to apply for grants; it can be used to inform trail maintenance decisions and other operational planning (like when to schedule maintenance or projects).

Mr. Hickey reported that the Recreation Commission supports the purchase of pickle ball nets for the courts at Stevens Park and installing a wind screen.

The pump track contract has been executed and the work is moving forward. Basketball tournament play is wrapping up. He reported on senior events for the upcoming month. Due to demand, they are adding an additional Bone Builders program. Coffee Socials will be on a weekly basis. There has been an increase in new attendees and engagement at the socials.

Mr. Hickey reflected on the growth of his department. They rely on volunteers to keep programs running. The current Programming Coordinator position has changed to be more focused on youth sports and providing services during programming days, including Saturdays. Because much of this programming occurs on the weekend, it takes Programming Coordinator Jamie Schaaf out of the office during the week. Mr. Hickey stated that they are continually trying to offer the community more while meeting the demand for existing programs. They are at capacity which makes him concerned about the services they'll be able to provide. Mr. Hickey feels they need assistance with senior programming and administration. Ms. Knab spoke about being proud that Stratham has continued to offer strong youth programs. Mr. Hickey said that the trend is that youth are moving to private programs. Mr. Houghton requested an overview of the programming budget and confirmed that fees for programs are deposited in the Rec. Revolving Fund. Ms. McAllister explained that she created a spreadsheet which tracks revenue and expenses by program. This information will enable us to create a more accurate budget which will allow us to better meet program needs. Mr. Moore added that, except for senior community trips and non-residents, we don't collect fees for senior programming. Mr. Houghton feels that Parks and Recreation has done a phenomenal job over the years. Ms. McAllister

reminded them that the Recreation Commission has authority to spend from Rec. Revolving Fund. Recent changes in financial reporting should make it easy for the Select Board to view the detailed finances of the department. Mr. Moore noted that because of upcoming changes in the Recreation Commission due to term expirations, it will be a good time to review the duties and policies regarding the Rec Revolving Fund. The Board was supportive of the staff exploring solutions to workload demands in the administrative area of Parks & Rec in order to maintain the current programming and meet goals for new services for seniors, youth and teens. The Board explored reviewing program fees to ensure the costs of providing these programs are met. Ms. McAllister, Mr. Hickey and Mr. Moore indicated they will keep working on this.

Mr. Houghton moved to Town Meeting preparations. Mr. Moore reviewed Voter Information Night. He and Town Planner Mark Connors videotaped their explanation of the warrant articles in advance and posted them online. The Voter Information Night will be videotaped and posted online in its entirety. He stated that Town Clerk/Tax Collector Deborah Bakie has the logistics for the election well under control. Mr. Houghton wondered if he should attend given the fact that he is a candidate. It was suggested former Select Board member Joe Lovejoy stand in as a replacement. Ms. Bakie spoke with the Secretary of State's office who said Mr. Houghton may attend, but suggested he hand out Town Reports or stickers. Mr. Moore reviewed the annotated agenda for Town Meeting. They discussed who might do the readings for the In Memoriam. The group continued to discuss the Town Meeting presentation, making suggestions and revisions.

#### NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Moore briefly reviewed upcoming committee term expirations and those members who are seeking re-appointment.

Mr. Moore reviewed the meeting agenda format. He talked about what he feels is helpful to retain. Mr. Houghton noted he appreciates receiving meeting content in advance and knowing what the deliverables and requested actions for the meetings are. Ms. Knab prefers to have non-public sessions earlier in the night as she feels it leads to deeper, important conversations. She also likes to have some meetings without dept. heads so that they can get directly into the agenda topics. The Board reiterated their preference for Department heads to concentrate their appearances on issues of strategic importance that they need help from the Board on. They do not need to review their monthly reports, but are encouraged to bring forward the new ideas, challenges, and needs so the Board can provide guidance and assist. Mr. Moore felt it was important to show the emphasis on financial management by including the treasurer report, financial status report and budgetary report.

#### ADMINISTRATION

The next Select Board meeting will be Friday, March 24, 8:00am.

Mr. Moore reported that the Energy Aggregation Committee recommends the Town enter into the Joint Powers Agreement. This is a moderate step and little to no risk for the town. Joining will allow us to benefit from the technical assistance they can provide. The cost sharing agreement is the next step and is where residents will see a reduction in cost. Surrounding

communities are at different stages in this process. Mr. Anderson added that the Energy Aggregation Committee plans to do outreach to the community in the next few months.

Mr. Moore informed the Board that laws have changed regarding Right to Know requests and recordkeeping. This has implications for management of recording non-public minutes. We can take strategic steps to minimize our risk. He will gather more details and bring more information back to the Board.

The well water testing event went well. Testing has begun.

Jenn Schaaff, DPW Admin Coordinator, started today.

Mark Connors will begin the Primex Supervisor training on March 21 – 23.

Mr. Moore indicated that he and Ms. McAllister have arranged for the auditors to come and meet with the Board. Ms. McAllister said the audit work for 2022 has been set for the week of June 19<sup>th</sup>. The Board agreed that an annual audit review with the auditors is important. They discussed the timing of the meeting and the importance of keeping it as a consistent calendar item.

Mr. Moore informed the Board that we received a subpoena as part of the State of New Hampshire's lawsuit against 3M Corp. for PFAS. Many NH communities received the subpoena which pertains, mostly, to landfills. The amount of info requested is extremely extensive and represents a severe hardship on the municipalities. NH Municipal lawyers, along with our Town Counsel, are objecting to the scope of the subpoena.

#### RESERVATIONS

Ms. Knab motioned approval of the Exeter Area Garden Club's use of Room A on April 22 for their indoor yard sale and to waive the fee. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

#### APPOINTMENTS

John Singleton is up for consideration for a member position on the Trail Management Advisory Committee.

Mr. Anderson motioned to appoint Nicholas Garcia to the Zoning Board of Adjustment to fill the vacant Alternate position for a three year term expiring 2025. Ms. Knab seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Ms. Knab motioned to appoint Paul Deschaine to the Energy Commission for a three year term expiring in 2026 and the Energy Aggregation Committee for a term to expire 2024.

At 8:52pm Mr. Houghton motioned to go into a non-public session in accordance with RSA 91-A:3, II (c ) on a matter which, if discussed in public, would likely affect adversely the reputation of another. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. Roll call: Houghton-yes; Knab-yes; Anderson-yes

At 9:45 pm Mr. Houghton motioned to seal the minutes noting that failure to do so may render a proposed action ineffective. Ms. Knab seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

At 9:46 pm Ms. Knab motioned to adjourn. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Richard  
Recording Secretary