

MINUTES OF THE APRIL 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, Parks & Recreation Director Seth Hickey, Police Chief Anthony King, Fire Chief Jeff Denton, Town Clerk/Tax Collector Deborah Bakie, Lamprey Regional Cooperative Chair (and Stratham representative) Paul Deschaine

At 6:00 p.m. Mr. Houghton opened the meeting and moved to enter into non-public session. The motion was seconded by Ms. Knab. A roll call vote was taken and all voted in favor.

At 7:00 p.m. the Select Board Chair moved to seal the minutes noting that failure to do so would render the propose action ineffective. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. All voted in favor

At 7:00 pm Mr. Houghton opened the regular meeting and requested motions on the March 24th minutes. Ms. Knab had submitted a couple of minor corrections earlier. Ms. McAllister and Mr. Anderson also had corrections. Ms. Knab motioned to approve the March 24, 2023 minutes as amended. Mr. Anderson seconded the motioned. All voted in favor.

Mr. Houghton recognized Paul Deschaine, Stratham's representative (and Chair) to the Lamprey Regional Cooperative Solid Waste District. Waste Management approached the Cooperative about adjusting the financial aspects of the contract for disposal services. This led to a discussion about an extension of the contract. After negotiation, two outcomes were determined: 1. To extend the contract to 2033, as the current one expires in 2026. 2. Attempt to make the disposal rates fixed for the interim period 6/1/23 – 1/1/2033. Mr. Deschaine recommended the Board sign the Joinder Agreement which acknowledges this is an amendment to the agreement and they agree. He noted that although the fees are locked in, it is unlikely they will ever go down. Mr. Anderson motioned to authorize the Town Administrator to sign the Lamprey Regional Cooperative Joinder of Participating Community to Waste Disposal Agreement as presented in the March 22 letter from Mr. Deschaine. Ms. Knab seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Tangentially, Mr. Deschaine informed the group that, as part of permitting requirements of the landfill, routine monitoring and maintenance must be done. Last year's maintenance discovered water was being retained. It has been remedied. The annual walk through is tomorrow. Although measures have been taken to make it as waterproof as possible, seepage might still occur. They are still negotiating with the City of Somersworth to renew the lease of the property on which sits a portion of the closed landfill. He explained the monitoring that is done to maintain compliance with the permits.

Mr. Houghton recognized Chief Denton for his department report. Chief Denton stated he'd like to move forward with executing the contract for the replacement of Engine 1 as approved by the voters at Town Meeting. The price is locked in at \$871,024 until June. Town Counsel has reviewed the contract and there are some items to follow-up on. Payment will be due upon

delivery. They discussed who the appropriate person is to sign the contract. Funding from three sources will be used to pay for the fire truck. All will be deposited into the General Fund to support this purchase. The Board took action on this item later in the meeting.

Next, Chief Denton stated he'd like to move forward with the Fire Inspector position. He is working on the job description and posting. This position has been approved for 16 hours a week, with a flexible schedule. The successful candidate will be tasked with laying the groundwork for the inspection program. The position will be posted through multiple channels. Mr. Anderson, as Select Board representative to the Fire Dept, volunteered his involvement in the process. The new inspector will need a computer and a vehicle. Until something suitable can be found, either the town vehicle or the utility truck will be used. The pay rate will be \$25/hour. They discussed the pay as compared to other towns. Ms. Knab motioned to authorize Chief Denton to move forward with posting the Fire Inspector position for 16 hours a week at a salary not to exceed \$30/hour. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Chief Denton reported that the Recruiting and Retention Committee is off to a strong start. Before moving ahead with some of their ideas, he would like to implement an onboarding process for new members. It would be a three phase program which would provide more predictability for training and clarity on how to move through the ranks. Once that is complete, they will work on events to attract new recruits and retain the current members. A key factor in retention and recruitment will be examining our compensation model to be competitive with other towns. In order to promote succession planning, Chief Denton is hoping to offer leadership training to officers.

Prompted by an inquiry from Ms. Knab, discussion about the disposal of the current fire truck ensued. The vendor from whom we are buying the new engine is seeking to enter into a contract with us in which we will trade in the current engine for a price of \$15,000.

Mr. Houghton recognized Seth Hickey to discuss the Jack Rabbit Lane Parking Ordinance. In 2021 this process began with TMAC doing a year-long evaluation of the Jack Rabbit Lane area. Two issues were identified: Parking and issues with dogs (people not adhering to town ordinances). A 120 day trial period was completed in 2022 which resulted in TMAC recommending an ordinance be adopted to make the changes enforceable. The Conservation Commission, Stratham Hill Park Association and Police Department were consulted with and support the recommendation. Ms. Knab stated her opposition to the \$50 fine.

Mr. Houghton motioned to open the public hearing to discuss parking at the Jack Rabbit Lane and the Jack Rabbit parking area. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. All voted in favor. Mr. Houghton called for comments from the public. Hearing none, he motioned to close the public hearing. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. All voted in favor. Ms. Knab believes the objective is to motivate people to change their behavior as opposed to being punitive. She suggested it be reduced to \$25 in alignment with other parking regulations. Chief King said the lower fine will not deter people from parking there. The Board decided to have the fines increase per incident for repeat offenders. Chief King would like to have a future discussion regarding revising or abolishing some of the other parking ordinances in town. Chief King noted that the Police Dept. does not accept cash; only checks or money orders. They do not have a

device to accept credit cards. Mr. Houghton motioned to adopt the parking on Jack Rabbit Lane and the Jack Rabbit Parking Lot Ordinance with an amendment to include a \$25 penalty for the first offense and a \$50 penalty for the second and subsequent offense within the same season. Ms. Knab seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Mr. Houghton moved the conversation to the upcoming Food Truck Festival. Mr. Hickey reported that the Old Salt has proposed to the Exeter Chamber and the Parks and Recreation Department that they come in as a sponsor and would take full responsibility regarding the liquor license and any liability associated with that. Mr. Houghton wants Town Counsel to review the agreement to ensure the town is not carrying any liability. They discussed the 2019 event. Chief King has no concerns and will provide extra coverage that day.

Mr. Houghton directed attention back to Chief King regarding his purchase of a cruiser. A memo outlining the three funding sources to purchase and outfit the cruiser had been submitted by Chief King. The old vehicle will become the new Animal Control Officer's vehicle. Mr. Anderson observed that he is expanding the fleet. Mr. Houghton motioned to release a total of up to \$33,000 from of the Town's CIP funds for the purchase of the 2023 replacement cruiser, with the remaining funding to be provided through Police Detail fund as described in the Chief's memo of March 22, 2023. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. All voted in favor. Mr. Anderson motioned to expend of the Radio Communications Equipment Capital Reserve fund, to approve the release of up to \$5,100 as requested in in the Chief's memo of March 22, 2023. Ms. Knab seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Mr. Moore reaffirmed that the Chief will move forward with implementing the Animal Control program and begin the search to hire a part-time employee for that purpose. The Board has previously reviewed the policy and job description associated therewith.

At 7:54pm Mr. Houghton motioned to enter into a non-public session to discuss a matter which, if discussed in public, would likely affect adversely the reputation of another, in accordance with RSA 91-A:3, II(c) . Ms. Knab seconded the motion. Roll call: Houghton-yes; Knab-yes; Anderson-yes

At 9:00 p.m. Mr. Houghton motioned to seal the minutes noting failure to do so may render the proposed action ineffective. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

The Board then moved to the Town Planner's memorandum concerning the parcel off of Stratham Height's Road recommended for acquisition by the Conservation Commission. Following a brief discussion, Ms. Knab moved to approve of the purchase of a parcel of land identified in the Stratham Tax Maps as Map 3, Lot 12, owned by the Pace Revocable Trust of 2019, subject to the following condition that the Town shall conduct its due diligence, including a title search, prior to the sale. If any issues are identified which may materially impact this acquisition, this matter shall not proceed and return to the Select Board for additional consideration. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

The Board moved to action items on the agenda. The Board Chair noted and thanked the Treasurer for being in attendance prior to the non-public. Mr. Moore passed on comments from

the Treasurer at her request including that she was highly supportive and appreciative of the Finance Administrator for all of her work on the bank transition and that they went through a period of needing to reconcile 40 to 50 accounts during the transition and it was a great challenge. She shared that she herself is nearly caught up on the reconciliations to date. Further, she added that she believes Ms. McAllister may need additional assistance so she can continue with her great work.

The Chair then moved to consideration of the proposed 2023 investment policy and Ms. McAllister summarized the policy. Mr. Anderson moved to adopt the proposed policy as the Town's investment policy for the year 2023. Ms. Knab seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

The Chair then moved to the policy on reconciliation procedures is also enclosed. It also has been a collaborative work of our Finance Administrator and Town Treasurer and developed in accordance with guidance for carrying out internal controls and other recommended best practices.

Mr. Anderson moved to adopt the proposed policy on reconciliation procedures. Ms. Knab seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

The Board then moved to the formal release of funds for the Engine #1 Replacement Purchase.

Mr. Moore summarized that in its role as agents to expend from the Fire Department Capital Reserve Fund, the Select Board must vote to expend funds for eligible purposes. In addition, to approving the release of funds the Fire Chief is requesting the authority to execute an agreement for the purchase and the sale of the existing vehicle.

The 2023 Town Meeting authorized the gross appropriation of \$950,000 with \$250,000 authorized from the Special Revenue Fund; the use of \$80,000 from the Fire Department Fair Trust; and \$620,000 coming from the Fire Department Capital Reserve Fund. The final cost of the vehicle (in contract is executed prior to June 2023) is \$871,024.00.

A copy of the proposed contract was included in the Board's packet, which has been reviewed by Counsel along with an addendum reflecting the sale of the current vehicle.

Ms. Knab moved to authorize the Fire Chief to enter into a contract for the purchase of the Fire Truck as presented following review of the contract by the Town Administration (Legal and Finance Office review coordinated by the Town Administrator). Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Ms. Knab moved to authorize the Fire Chief to enter into an agreement to sell the current E-1 to the firm providing the engine replacement. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Mr. Anderson moved to release funds totaling \$541,024 (\$871,024 - \$250,000 in EMS SRF funding - \$80,000 in SVFD Fair Trust Funds) from the Fire Department Capital Reserve fund for

the purchase of a replacement Engine 1 from Greenwood Emergency Vehicles, LLC. Ms. Knab seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Mr. Moore briefly reviewed the informational items. He noted that he made contact with the State of NH regarding the free COVID clinics who advised that while Stratham has high rates of vaccination, many are still needing reminding about boosters. Mr. Moore said he planned to follow-up to invite the location of a free one-day clinic at the municipal center in accordance with the DHHS offer.

Mr. Moore drafted a letter to the Stratham Memorial School Board for the Select Board Chair to sign regarding a request to use Stratham Memorial School for the 2024 election dates and ask to hold the presidential primary, as yet unscheduled, at SMS as well. The Board was supportive.

Mr. Moore advised he would bring back to their next meeting some clarification about the charge and membership of the phase 2 of the Age Friendly Communities work which has begun.

APPOINTMENTS

Ms. Knab motioned to consider John “Jock” Dyer for nomination to the Trail Management Advisory Committee. Mr. Houghton seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Ms. Knab motioned to re-appoint Bob Keating to the Conservation Commission for a three year term to expire in 2026. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Mr. Anderson motioned to appoint Tracy Abbott as Town Treasurer for a three year term ending in 2026 at a \$6,500 annual stipend. Ms. Knab seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

At 9:30 pm Mr. Anderson motioned to adjourn. Mr. Houghton seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Richard
Recording Secretary