

MINUTES OF THE JUNE 21, 2021 SELECT BOARD MEETING

MEMBERS PARTICIPATING: Board Members Chair Mike Houghton, Vice Chair Joe Lovejoy, Board Member Allison Knab along with Town Administrator David Moore.

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

Mr. Houghton asked for comments on the June 7th Select Board minutes. Mr. Lovejoy motioned to approve the June 7, 2021 minutes. Ms. Knab seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Parks and Recreation Director reported that SAU16 has dropped their mask requirement for indoor and outdoor activities in accordance with guidance from the State and CDC. The Board supported dropping the mask requirement for the Parks and Recreation programs as well.

Movie night went well with just under 40 people attending. They will offer additional dates in the fall.

Thursday Pizza at the Park nights have been very well attended. Mr. Hickey is bringing in additional food vendors to support the number of people.

Mr. Hickey introduced Kate Dardinski, Vice Chair of the Trail Management Advisory Committee who came before the Board to present the interim update on the Committee's work. After gathering information, three major issues have emerged:

1. Trail maintenance and management
2. Rules and regulations including signage
3. Conservation

Ms. Dardinski reviewed the time line - a public forum in August, propose a comprehensive set of rules and regulations in October and, by December, present findings to public and a report to the Board.

In response to questions from the Board, Ms. Dardinski said that there hasn't been much participation by the public thus far, which is surprising given the initial interest in the committee. The recommended projects will be in phases. Trail maintenance would be in Phase I, with bigger projects in Phase II. There will likely be more than one public forum. There are many groups that use the park; they sometimes have conflicting interests. The Committee is striving to include as many people in the conversation as possible to arrive at a consensus. When necessary, the committee will seek guidance from Mr. Hickey and other staff. Ultimately, the Select Board will be given a set of final recommendations for their review consideration and implementation as warranted.

In general, they discussed planning for financial investments that may be identified over the course of the project. Mr. Hickey expressed appreciation for everyone's engagement.

Mr. Houghton then move to Emergency Management Director David Barr presentation on Emergency Management issues. Mr. Barr explained how his background aligns with being our

town's Emergency Management Director. He then gave an overview of Emergency Management. Stratham has taken measures in an effort to be prepared for a local, regional or state emergency. We are also required by FEMA to have a Hazard Mitigation Plan. Mr. Barr gave details regarding the plan's purpose. In addition, unique to the 17 towns near the Seabrook nuclear power plant, is the Radiological Emergency Response Plan which mandates that there be graded exercises every two years (the even years). Hundreds of people are included in the drills and planning is extremely involved. Lastly, he discussed the Continuity of Operations Plan in case of a seacoast wide evacuation. The Emergency Management team met at the beginning of the pandemic to determine if a response was necessary. It was decided it was not, as the pandemic wasn't a local event. Mr. Barr finished his presentation by saying he hopes younger people get involved and are willing to take over the management of this important function. Mr. Houghton thanked him for his contributions to the Town in this role.

Next, Mr. Houghton recognized Public Works Director Nate Mears for his department report. Mr. Mears reported the Automated Curbside Collection program saw a rise in curbside tonnage at the beginning of the pandemic, but recently, it has started to decline. Opening the Transfer Station on Thursday afternoons has been a success. It places a great deal of work on his staff, but they are managing it. He will continue to work with Casella, educate the public on the way we look at waste and develop good recycling practices.

Mr. Mears continued his report describing the paving and reconstruction projects he has planned. There were no major issues to report regarding cemeteries. Maintenance is ongoing. He is in contact with the Cemetery Trustees regularly. The DPW staff made improvements at the Veteran's memorial garden at Stratham Hill Park. There was a water main break at the 4-H pavilion. It has been repaired. The well houses are due for an inspection soon. Everything is in order, we are ready. They discussed continuing to disinfect the municipal center.

Mr. Mears reported that the municipal center roof is in need of repair. Leaks have been plaguing the facility for some time. Patching the leaks is no longer sufficient. Funding for this project would come from the Building and Grounds Trust and was identified in the list of projects for Town facilities as apt of the Town's facilities planning. We will also need to upgrade the HVAC units in the near future, which have been identified previously in projecting needs for Buildings and Ground Maintenance Trust Funds. Mr. Mears reported that it is difficult to find commercial roofing companies that use the product necessary to do the repairs. He explained why other methods of fixing the issue won't work. He has been talking with a contractor who has proposed \$123,000 for one part and \$21,000 for the other. Ms. Knab requested he look into what would happen to the warranty if the contractor retires or goes out of business. Mr. Mears has no concerns structurally with the building with the weight of the product. Following additional conversation, the Board and staff agreed to obtaining quotes from other contractors prior to moving forward. Mr. Mears agreed to inquire about the warranty and to obtain additional estimates.

Next Mr. Mears addressed the status of the drought in our State and the abnormally dry conditions in our region. Neighboring communities with public water systems as well as some residential community systems have begun restrictions. Mr. Mears encouraged the Board to consider to take the dry conditions seriously. Mr. Moore reminded the group that we cannot

impose restrictions until the state declares a drought condition, although we can advocate for voluntary restrictions. He and Mr. Mears reviewed the past direction of the Board upon entering a formal drought status, namely that the Town will immediately post notice of Level 1 restrictions as soon as the State declares a drought. Three days after noticing the restrictions become effective and enforceable.

At 8:41 pm Mr. Houghton made a motion to enter into a non-public session to discuss personnel matters in accordance with RSA 91-A:3, II(a). Mr. Lovejoy seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

At 9:13 pm Mr. Houghton moved to come out of the non-public session and seal the minutes noting that failure to do so might render a proposed action ineffective. Ms. Knab seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

TOWN ADMINISTRATION

Mr. Moore reviewed a list of annual goals and their status at the end of the second quarter. He is scheduling with Primex a Harassment Training for staff. Mr. Moore noted that permit software for the land use department will be on the agenda for July 19th. He will present a budget schedule at the July 6th or 19th Select Board meeting. In reviewing the goals, Ms. Knab said she would like to see centralizing supplies and/or expansion of credit card payment capacity be advanced prior to going into the budget process. PFAS remediation is on track.

The Portsmouth Avenue zoning re-look project is going well. Mr. Connors, Mr. Wolph and the Planning Board are working on potential zoning changes in coordination with the Planning Board.

Mr. Houghton turned the conversation to the 108 corridor and its potential for redevelopment in accordance with the Master Plan. We must look at ways to bring water to realize the corridor potential to meet the needs of residents and manage the future burden of taxation on the residential property valuation. From an economic point of view, that is one of the highest priorities. He advocated identifying the hurdles and moving forward. Mr. Lovejoy inquired if we could use some of the American Rescue Plan monies for this issue. Mr. Moore thought that would be a possibility depending on the specifics of the approach.

Ms. Knab motioned to authorize the Town Administrator to apply for the American Rescue Plan funds from the State of NH. Mr. Lovejoy seconded the motion. All voted in favor. Mr. Moore has participated in two trainings regarding the use of funds and reporting process. He reviewed the requirements. Finance Administrator Dawna Duhamel is tasked with applying the formula in the Interim Final Rule to calculate revenue loss. Premium pay, similar to hazard pay, is available under the program. He noted that storm water improvements such as culvert replacements are an immediate shovel ready project, estimated to be about \$60,000 of work in Stratham right now. By using these funds, we could avoid use of previously appropriated CIP funds. We could show immediate impact on financial recovery, which is the Act's intention and spend the rest in the time available prior to December 31, 2024. Mr. Houghton supports further investigation.

Mr. Houghton moved to the status of the franchise renewal with Comcast. Mr. Moore advised that we are negotiating terms with Comcast. The changes are minor. The Agreement is for cable TV, not internet. There will be a public hearing after our Counsel hears back from Comcast in response to our changes.

As Mr. Houghton requested at the last meeting, Mr. Moore and Planning staff are looking into the tree bank, but has found nothing yet.

Eagle Scout Blood has streamlined his project and now has a more defined scope of work. He is engaged with Public Works on the project.

Mr. Moore reported no news on the generator project at SHP. However, we still need a timeline, plan for safety at site and a construction timeline. The Town DPW Director will be assigned as the liaison during construction.

Mr. Moore reported that the owner of the shared driveway at 30 Bunker Hill Ave has moved forward with resurfacing the driveway as coordinated previously with staff. The Town has an easement over part of the driveway. In accordance with a previous agreement memorialized in 2018, the owner is requesting reimbursement for the portion of the resurfacing that the Town would receive benefit. Our DPW Director has reviewed the reasonableness of cost and confirmed the work has been completed. In accordance with the invoice (after applying the 2018 cost sharing methodology) the Town is responsible for \$7,775. Mr. Houghton motioned to authorize the Town Administrator to make payment for the invoice submitted for driveway improvements at 30 Bunker Hill Ave. in accordance with previous cost sharing agreement from 2018. Mr. Lovejoy seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Regarding the Department of Revenue Administration regarding feedback into the Town's draft contract with Murdough Assessing Service, Mr. Moore indicated the feedback was incorporated in the contract.

Next Select Board meeting is Tuesday, July 6th. Ms. Knab said she will not be able to attend.

Ms. Knab motioned to allow Port City Amateur Radio Club to use the top of the hill at Stratham Hill Park beginning Friday, June 25 until Sunday, June 27, 2021. Mr. Lovejoy seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Mr. Moore reported receiving two fireworks permit applications. The fire and police chiefs' only comment was that the applicants be mindful of fire danger on the day of their displays. Only on days designated as low or moderate (green or blue) will it be acceptable for them to have displays. Mr. Lovejoy motioned to approve the fireworks permit applications. Ms. Knab seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Mr. Moore addressed the Board of Adjustment nominations. In accordance with the policy, the applicants were submitted to the Board chair for review. Ms. Knab motioned to accept the resignation of Phil Caparso as a regular member and appoint him to the ZBA as an alternate to fulfill a three year term which expires in 2023, to appoint Richard Goulet to the ZBA as a regular

member to fulfill the remaining term which expired in 2020. The new term will expire in 2023. She also motioned to appoint Brent Eastwood to the ZBA as an alternate for a one year term which expires in 2022 and Charles "Erik" Herring to the ZBA as a regular member to fulfill a remaining three year term which expires in 2022. Mr. Lovejoy seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Mr. Moore stated that legislation passed making the PFAS Remediation Fund a grant and not a loan to municipalities. He is in touch with the State's staff person charged with the rule making and creating application materials.

Mr. Moore said the Assessor has presented two abatements and recommended denying each. They are 100 Domain Drive LLC and SSS Realty, 71 Portsmouth Ave. (BMW). Ms. Knab motioned to deny the abatement request as recommended by the Assessor. Mr. Lovejoy seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Mr. Moore presented the requests for reservations and fee waivers. Rockingham Planning Commission requested to use Room A for meetings on two consecutive days. The Vineyard Condo Association requested Room A for its annual meeting. Port City Amateur Radio Club requested use of the top of the hill at SHP. Ms. Knab motioned to approve the use and waive the fees for the three organizations. Mr. Lovejoy seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

The Board signed the 2021 Warrant for unlicensed dogs.

At 10:02 pm Mr. Houghton motioned to adjourn. Mr. Lovejoy seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Richard
Recording Secretary