

## **MINUTES OF THE AUGUST 16, 2021 SELECT BOARD MEETING**

Meeting held in the Hutton Room at the Stratham Municipal Center

MEMBERS PRESENT: Board Members Vice Chair Joe Lovejoy and Allison Knab.

MEMBERS NOT PRESENT: Chair Mike Houghton

ALSO PRESENT: Town Administrator David Moore and Parks & Recreation Director Seth Hickey, Town Assessor Chris Murdough.

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

Mr. Lovejoy motioned to approve the amended minutes of July 19, 2021 and the draft minutes of August 2, 2021. Mr. Moore noted the changes to the minutes of the 19<sup>th</sup> were clarifications on the history of the discussion of the Lamprey Coop closed landfill in Somersworth. Ms. Knab seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Mr. Lovejoy recognized Parks & Recreation Director Seth Hickey to give his department report. Mr. Hickey reported that Parks & Recreation Programming Assistant Cantrece Forest has been working with outgoing Finance Administrator Dawna Duhamel to develop a plan to reconcile the Rec Revolving account. Mr. Hickey then gave an update on youth sports. Participation is slightly down. The annual golf tournament to benefit the baseball league is sold out. Mr. Hickey and the Recreation Commission has been contemplating the future of youth sports in Stratham. He'd like to obtain resident input on future programming. Summer camp ended last week and was successful. The camp shut down for three days because three campers tested positive for Covid. There was discussion about offering refunds to the parents and paying the counsellors. Mr. Hickey said this decision will be made by the Recreation Commission. Mr. Hickey felt the counselors did an excellent job and would like them to come back next year. Mr. Lovejoy thought it was important to recognize their efforts by compensating them. Mr. Hickey continued his report saying he has been coordinating program offerings with Library Director Lesley Kimball. They are hoping to re-open the Senior Room as soon as early fall. The Summer Race Series has been very successful. He continues to work with Eagle Scouts on their projects. Rental demand for courts for tennis and pickle ball is ongoing. Creativity is needed to accommodate both groups. The pump track renovation is on schedule. They are half way to their fundraising goal. TMAC met this evening. Subcommittees have been formed to tackle topics identified in previous meetings: Data Collection, Signage, Rules and Regulations, Trail Work Planning and Dogs and Regulation of Dogs. On September 15<sup>th</sup> they will convene as a committee. Response to the park survey has been strong. Mr. Hickey continued reporting on fall activities and programs. Ms. Knab asked about mowing the fields. Mr. Hickey explained what had been done in the past. Director of Public Works now handles field maintenance. They discussed best practices for taking care of the field and wildlife.

Mr. Lovejoy recognized Town Assessor Chris Murdough to give her department report. Ms. Murdough began with explaining her reasoning for recommending abatements to four properties. Ms. Knab motioned to approve the abatement as recommended by the Assessor for 145 Portsmouth Ave. (Map 17, Lot 38). Mr. Lovejoy seconded the motion. All voted in favor. Ms. Knab questioned if approving this abatement because of the PFAS issue would set a precedent. Mr. Murdough

explained that after remediation, the assessment will go back to its original value. Ms. Knab then motioned to approve the abatement as recommended by the Assessor for 142 Portsmouth Ave. (Map 17, Lot 119). Mr. Lovejoy seconded the motion. All voted in favor. The 27 Portsmouth Avenue (Map 8, Lot 2) abatement has been settled in court and only requires signatures.

Ms. Murdough reported that her transition to Town Assessor has been going well, noting Assessing Assistant Jim Joseph handles many of the issues before they reach her. The MS1 is being worked on and should be ready on the 7<sup>th</sup>. There are two upcoming Board of Tax & Land Appeals cases.

Mr. Lovejoy commented on a letter from the NH DOT stating how much money the Town can expect.

Town Planner Mark Connors had written a memo recommending that the Board sign the sidewalk agreement for 20 Portsmouth Avenue. The previous agreement expired due to delays at NH DOT. Mr. Lovejoy motioned to authorize the Town Administrator to accept the sidewalk agreement from Chipotle and Starbucks delineating their responsibility and the Town's responsibility for the sidewalk and crosswalk. Ms. Knab seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Next the group addressed the donation of 10 coupons for auto detailing from BMW. Ms. Knab motioned to accept the donation from BMW to the Police Department for detailing the cruisers. Mr. Lovejoy seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Mr. Lovejoy asked for an update on the ARPA funds. Mr. Moore has confirmed that 100% of the funds will be eligible for flexible use. Although a revised approach is not yet ready, it will be in keeping with prioritizing capital projects that were already in the plans. He is waiting for guidance on how to interpret revenue loss eligible uses.

Mr. Lovejoy directed attention to the year to date financials. Ms. Knab asked for clarity surrounding the Fire Dept. salary line item. Mr. Moore explained that we have used that line item to fund the details for vaccine distribution. We have been receiving reimbursement from the state periodically and will need to hold a public hearing to accept the funds. Reimbursement goes to the General Fund. Ms. Knab then asked about lapsing fund balances. Mr. Moore said we are comfortable letting them lapse, as they are projects we are not ready to undertake at this time. Mr. Lovejoy noted that financially we are in a good position.

#### RESERVATIONS

Mr. Lovejoy motioned to approve the request from the NH Nepalese Community, a non-profit organization, to use the Front Pavilion on August 28, 2021 and waive the fee. Ms. Knab seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Mr. Lovejoy motioned to approve the request from The Phoenix, a non-profit organization, to use the Front Pavilion on August 31, 2021 and waive the fee. Ms. Knab seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Mr. Lovejoy approved Lisa Rohr's request to waive the alcohol prohibition for her event in Room A. Ms. Knab seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

They talked about the Select Board meeting schedule.

Mr. Lovejoy noted that Eric Bahr has submitted an application to be a representative to the Exeter Squamscott River Local Advisory Committee. The Select Board nominated candidates for this Board and they are finally appointed by NH DES. Ms. Knab recommended putting Eric Bahr forward for formal nomination to the ESRLAC. Mr. Lovejoy seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

#### ADMINISTRATION

Mr. Moore reported on the new payroll system.

Next, Mr. Moore explained that, with the Finance Administrator leaving, he will be taking on overseeing IT. He met with our IT consultant on open projects: Fire Dept. server replacement due to a failure, network switches at Police Dept. so they can move to our phone system, closure with outstanding library projects, and Fire Dept. upgrade to desktops.

Mr. Moore hopes to schedule an interview for the Finance Administrator position within the week.

The Land Use Department is preparing to release the Permitting Software RFP. Staff will review the proposals and make a recommendation to the Board. We plan to use some of the ARPA funds for this purchase. Doing so will represent a cost avoidance away from the CIP.

Ms. Knab and Mr. Moore will be joining the interviewers at the upcoming oral boards for the candidates for Police Officer positions.

Harassment training for all staff will be held on Wednesday.

Mr. Moore will focus on the budget schedule over the coming weeks. He will work closely with Town Planner Mark Connors on the Capital Plan, which is traditionally a planning function.

The roof work at the Municipal Center is anticipated to take place at the end of the summer.

At 8:38 p.m. Mr. Lovejoy motioned to adjourn. Ms. Knab seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Richard  
Recording Secretary