

MINUTES OF THE SEPTEMBER 19, 2022 SELECT BOARD MEETING

Meeting held in the Hutton Room at the Stratham Municipal Center

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

ALSO PRESENT: Town Administrator David Moore, Finance Administrator Christiane McAllister

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

It was noted that the draft minutes of the Sept. 6 Select Board meeting weren't included in the packet. Mr. Moore asked to return to this item later in the meeting after he had a chance to gather them for the Board.

Mr. Houghton recognized Tyler Denton to describe his Eagle Scout Service project. Mr. Denton proposes installing two 8-foot granite posts with lights, to simulate the ground zero memorial with a plaque dedicated to the first responders who died in 9/11 and for those who still suffer from the effects of that day today. Ms. Knab asked about the plaque's language and maintenance. Mr. Moore said that he would put Mr. Denton in touch with the appropriate staff and requested Mr. Denton return to the Board for final approval. Mr. Anderson motioned to approve the Eagle Scout project as described by Tyler Denton subject to consultation with DPW, coordination with Fire and DPW on final location, and approval of plaque language. Ms. Knab seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

CORRESPONDENCE

Mr. Moore summarized that the letter from One Sky was to promote an awareness of the need for long-term, supportive housing for people with disabilities. The Select Board ask Mr. Moore to share the letter with the Planning Board.

PUBLIC HEARING

Mr. Moore explained that two public hearings are required for a land donation in accordance with RSA 41-14a and that this would be the first of two required public hearings. He noted the other required consultations had also been completed and were noted in the meeting packet. Mr. Houghton opened the public hearing for the 18 Jana Lane land donation. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. All voted in favor. Mr. Houghton motioned to close the public hearing. Ms. Knab seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Mr. Moore noted that he received a request for a proclamation to promote awareness of childhood cancer. Ms. Knab motioned to adopt the Childhood Cancer Awareness proclamation as drafted by staff. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Referring to the Fire Dept. Monthly Reports, Ms. Knab inquired about the replacement of Engine 1. Mr. Moore confirmed that it has been in spreadsheets that back-up the yearly CIP requests. We were on target as of the last review; however, inflation and availability may play a role. Mr. Moore will follow up. Mr. Anderson said that the department has been actively working on an

engine replacement but they are in the beginning stages. Mr. Houghton said other sources of funding could be explored.

Mr. Houghton directed attention to the 2023 budget topics and schedule. Mr. Moore gave an overview. Last year's schedule worked well; he proposed a schedule for 2023 Town Meeting preparation that was similar.

Mr. Moore had a conversation with the middle school principal regarding use of the auditorium at CMS for future Town Meetings. It is likely that there will consistently be a conflict with reserving the CMS auditorium for Town Meeting, the Saturday after town election. After discussion, they decided that Stratham Memorial School would be suitable for Town Meeting in 2023.

The Board requested Mr. Moore reach out to the Moderator to appoint the Budget Advisory Committee. Some of the preliminary budget drivers are: information technology; increasing energy costs; Police Dept. reorganization (wage impacts), and PFAS costs. Decreasing costs include retirement rates and interest costs for our bonds. Health insurance costs will be revealed in Oct. At one of the Age Friendly community discussions, a senior advocate raised the possibility in which a municipality could add a fee to car registrations which would go toward a Transportation Improvement Fund. Ms. Knab believes that support for such a fee should come from the residents or a group/committee. Mr. Houghton believes that because the Board supports the Master Plan of which transportation improvements are a part, the Board could support this fee. The money in the fund could remain until it was expended for its intended purpose. Mr. Moore noted that there are CIP contributions which have been made, which could be covered by the fund contemplated. The Board will take the idea under consideration. They continued to discuss the many ways in which the funds could be used. If it were to move forward, it would be a Warrant Article. They continued to discuss the merits of the initiative.

Referring to the handout, Mr. Moore gave an update on ARPA funds. We received a \$783,000 grant. We spent \$284,000 on the first four projects. In 2022, we intended to spend some of the funds on online permitting software, salt shed roof, and roadway capital investments. We unexpectedly received \$151,000 in a one-time grant for highway improvements from NH DOT. We plan to use that money first and retain ARPA funds that had been identified to support our annual pavement program investment. In addition, the salt shed roof bids came in lower than expected. We have \$384,000 left in ARPA funds which could be used for items such as an historic marker program, police ventilation upgrade, PFAS costs, etc. The funds must be committed by 2024 and expended by 2026. Ms. Knab asked about using some of the funds for the library renovation. Mr. Moore didn't think there was momentum around any particular approach at this time, but that it would be eligible.

Mr. Moore created a chart with five (3.59%) and ten (2.54%) year averages of the CPI. July was at 7%. He noted that the Board has not determined how to move forward with compensation adjustments for next year.

Ms. McAllister created a comprehensive cost worksheet to facilitate updates to the budget. She explained the worksheet which includes calculations for payroll taxes, NHRS contributions,

health insurance, disability, holiday pay, etc.). The spreadsheet can be easily updated by entering different percentages which will calculate the cost. She is working to incorporate the relevant detail for the Fire Department into the sheet. The Board expressed appreciation for the work and noted how helpful it will be in policy making and budget making and thanked Ms. McAllister.

Next, Mr. Moore provided a follow up from the Employee Meeting. Major topics from the meeting included Information Technology, the Employee Manual, and Compensation and Benefits. There was a staff group roundtable regarding IT. He is working on the employee manual with Ms. McAllister. Mr. Houghton asked for next steps. The IT RFP will be released in early October. During budget discussions a strategy for compensation adjustments for 2023 (approximately Nov./Dec. timeframe) will be decided. Ms. McAllister asked about possible changes to the compensation strategy. He and Ms. McAllister will write a memo to the Board for its consideration on October 3rd. The draft Employee Manual will include updates from HealthTrust and others. There is a list of policy issues on which the Board must decide. Ms. McAllister felt the manual needed reorganizing, which she has begun in coordination with Mr. Moore. Mr. Houghton asked to see the list of policies as soon as possible. Mr. Moore will have it to the Board at their Oct. 3rd meeting.

For his update on monthly goals, Mr. Moore referred to the updated Excel spreadsheet in the packet.

ADMINISTRATION

Director of Public Works Nate Mears was not available for this meeting. Mr. Moore will schedule him for October 3rd or October 17th for his departmental report.

Eight firms submitted proposals for the Open Space and Connectivity plan. Mr. Moore will meet with Mr. Connors and Mr. Hickey to make a staff recommendation for a firm. Representatives from interested boards and commissions will be on the steering committee to work with the selected firm.

Next Mr. Moore referred to the Aug 2022 budget report.

He and Ms. McAllister recommend moving forward with extending the agreement with Primex for the Contribution Assurance Plan program for both workers compensation and property liability. Seeing no downside, the Board agreed to move forward with the agreements.

Mr. Moore reported that the Rt. 33 Greenland NH DOT meeting on Sept. 14 was well attended, with 75 people in attendance, primarily Greenland residents who are very engaged with that roadway. Attendees spoke for and against the project. There was support for a corridor study. Ms. Knab also attended the meeting. She didn't feel Greenland was any more supportive of the project than Stratham. Mr. Moore would like to advocate for the most robust crossing point signage at Sandy Point that DOT can offer; the Board agreed to sign a letter to NH DOT including with this message, which Mr. Moore forwarded earlier in the day.

Mr. Moore reported on the Stevens Park conceptual design including parking lot improvements, court expansion and a pavilion. Bruce Scamman has offered to do pro bono work on the conceptual design. Ms. Knab motioned to move forward with design work at Stevens Park using up to \$3,000 in funding from the Town wide Recreation Improvements fund, if necessary. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. All voted in favor. Mr. Houghton recalled past design issues had identified drainage issues. Abutters have in the past expressed concern about the issues.

INFORMATIONAL

Household Hazardous Waste Collection Day is on October 15th at the Exeter Public Works Garage.

NH Municipal Association is holding a Right to Know Workshop. We have received Right to Know requests. All requests go through Town Administration.

We are hosting a NH DOT meeting on October 13th regarding performance from an environmental perspective of the culverts under Squamscott Road. The Nature Conservancy is involved with this project. We identified two issues: not taking choice limiting action (accommodate bike and pedestrians) and to maintain the aesthetics of the area.

Ms. Knab motioned approval of the raffle permit request from the Stratham Volunteer Fire Dept. Association as a fundraiser for the First Responder Golf Tournament. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Mr. Moore called attention to items requiring Board signatures including two veterans' credits and two thank you letters

Mr. Moore recalled that it was observed at the start of the meeting that the minutes were inadvertently missing from the packet. He offered to print copies so the Board could review.

Ms. McAllister explained that the Treasurer's report had been reformatted to facilitate the banking transition process. Mr. Houghton expressed appreciation for the progress Ms. McAllister has been able to make. The group talked about performance bonds that should've been released. Ms. McAllister is working with Mr. Connors on them. Mr. Houghton suggested adopting a formal process for releasing the bonds. They discussed if there was a possible reason the funds were withheld. The Planning Board approves that the developer has met the requirements. The Select Board then approves release of the funds.

Ms. Knab motioned to accept the September 6, 2022 minutes as written. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

At 8:56 pm Mr. Houghton motioned to go into a non-public session in accordance with RSA 91-A:3, II(a) and (c) . Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. Roll call: Houghton – yes; Knab – yes; Anderson - yes

At 9:25 pm Mr. Houghton motioned to come out of the non-public session and seal the minutes noting failure to do so may render a proposed action ineffective. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

9:25 pm Ms. Knab motioned to adjourn. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Richard
Recording Secretary