

## **MINUTES OF THE SEPTEMBER 20, 2021 SELECT BOARD MEETING**

Meeting held in the Hutton Room at the Stratham Municipal Center

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

ALSO PRESENT: Town Administrator David Moore and Public Works Director Nate Mears

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

Mr. Lovejoy motioned to approve the draft minutes of September 7, 2021 as amended. Ms. Knab seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Mr. Houghton recognized Evan Driscoll to present his Eagle Scout project to replace the basketball hoops by the stage at Stratham Hill Park. He described the details of the project. Funds will come from fundraisers, the Basketball Association and the Park Association. Mr. Mears explained the support the DPW would provide. Mr. Driscoll answered questions from the Board. Mr. Lovejoy motioned to approve the project, with the requirement that funding be in place to support the completion of the project. Ms. Knab seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Next Mr. Houghton recognized Town Clerk/Tax Collector Deborah Bakie. Ms. Bakie came before the board to discuss general election preparations in 2022. There was discussion about election location. Ms. Bakie and Mr. Moore will look into options and return to the board with a refined proposal.

Mr. Houghton recognized resident, Kerri Vivathana, who proposed a project she feels would bring the Town together. Her concept is to acquire banners honoring individual Stratham veterans on the poles in Town Center and has identified a fiscal sponsor. She will use the same criteria as the bricks at the Veterans Garden at the park. Military Banner Company does the vetting of the applications. The Board supported the concept and encouraged additional work on the details so they can formally agree at a later date. Mr. Moore indicated he would work as a resource to Ms. Vivathana and ensure the full proposal came back to the Board for review.

Mr. Houghton called upon Mr. Mears to give his department report. Mr. Mears gave a budget update stating that they are on track. The recycling market is on the upswing. Transfer Station revenues have risen over last year. Next, he reported on the grounds keeping at the ball fields. Brandon Blood completed his Eagle Scout project of refinishing the dial at the top of the hill at the park. Internments at the cemetery continue. He'll work with the Cemetery Trustees regarding the budget. Mr. Mears gave an update on culvert reconstruction and paving. Regarding storm water compliance, he is working to provide DES and EPA with our MS4 report which is due Sept. 28. We are awaiting the results of the water sampling. The results may affect the salt program this winter. They will be preparing for winter operations soon. He detailed the steps that have been taken in the Municipal Center roof reconstruction. They have utilized some of the discarded roof materials for other projects. The tree in front of the Historical Society building is dead and must be taken down. Mosquito control has been well received this season,

which has not included automatic roadside spraying and instead spraying as a result of known diseases reported by the state for our area. This has been a good cost savings for the Town. Mr. Houghton noted that less spraying is better for the environment.

At 8:09 pm Mr. Houghton motioned to go into a non-public session in accordance with RSA 91-A:3, II(a), personnel. Mr. Lovejoy seconded the motion. Houghton-Yes; Lovejoy-Yes; Knab-Yes. At 8:50 pm Mr. Houghton motioned to come out of the non-public session and seal the minutes noting that failure to do so may render a proposed action ineffective. Mr. Lovejoy seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

#### NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Moore stated that we received four proposals for the Land Use Building Permit Software. Two firms are scheduled for final interviews on Friday. A recommendation will be brought forward at the October 4 meeting.

Mr. Moore addressed the Cable Franchise Agreement. At the public hearing in August, the Board conditionally approved moving forward with the agreement at that time. Our attorney worked on refinements to the agreement. Mr. Lovejoy motioned to authorize signing the final version of the Cable Television Agreement with Comcast along with the side letters that accompany it. Ms. Knab seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Mr. Moore stated that there was a donation for soccer and softball programs. Mr. Lovejoy motioned to accept the donation and deposit it in the Rec Revolving fund for the purpose of the donation. Ms. Knab seconded the motion. All voted in favor. Mr. Moore noted the Recreation Commission had recommended acceptance of the donation.

Mr. Moore reported that we are planning for health insurance open enrollment in 2022. Rates are decreasing and HealthTrust is not making any changes to their plans. This is very good news. The health insurance study committee will be meeting for a second time this week.

Mr. Moore called attention to the tax abatement forms for Soft Draw. The abatement is reflective of the settlement agreement and recommended by Assessor Christine Murdough. Mr. Lovejoy motioned to execute the tax abatement for Soft Draw. Ms. Knab seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Next, Mr. Moore described the engineering services grant for PFAS mediation. This would be a 100% reimbursable grant from the State of NH for PFAS planning expenses; distinct from existing efforts of implementing the remedial action plan. This grant would allow us to plan for a long term solution to this issue. Mr. Lovejoy motioned to authorize the Town Administrator to pursue the grant opportunity for PFAS which allows us to assess options for the long term future related to PFAS. Ms. Knab seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Mr. Moore reviewed the quarterly goals. He touched upon the following subjects: ARPA funds; the future of the fire service; restructure of Assessing is complete; 2022 budget discussions; town clerk/tax collector transition complete; the newsletter is being distributed to ensure transparency and engagement; the health insurance committee study committee; several

workplace trainings have taken place; importance of recognition for volunteers and staff; introducing team task forces.

Mr. Moore continued his goals report saying that software roll out is almost complete. Finance is still working on iSolve for payroll. He reviewed the Finance and HR positions. Permit software will be rolled out by the end of the year. He touched upon IT service; centralizing Municipal Center supplies; Master Plan implementation; and Trail Management Committee meetings. Legacy zoning is on target to advance to Town Meeting. The PFAS RAP implementation is ongoing.

Mr. Houghton commented that this was a good summation of activities. Mr. Moore will report again on goals at the end of the year.

#### TOWN ADMINISTRATION

Mr. Moore advised that we are constantly evaluating Covid protocols and following CDC guidance. He talked to a retiree regarding the health insurance committee. He received positive, unsolicited feedback on the active shooter training. Mr. Moore has identified a staff development opportunity for Mark Connors – the Seacoast Leadership Program. Funding for his attendance will come from the Town Administrator's conference line item. The program runs for 12 weeks, once a month.

Mr. Lovejoy motioned to accept the resignation of Matt Callahan from the Police Department. Ms. Knab seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Mr. Moore noted there was an article about Stratham in the newspaper regarding a proposed development project, which had been to the Planning Board for preliminary concept discussion only.

Regarding Lovell Road, Mr. Moore has been working with Police Chief King and Mr. Mears to identify issues and determine what the policy should be. The 3 way stop is an issue, but separate from the speeding issue. The intersection issue will be addressed with next year's reconstruction of Gifford Farm Road. We will look into flashing speed limit signs in an attempt to address the speeding concerns and improve visibility of the 20 mph speed limit signage already in place along Lovell Road. These signs are generally impactful in making people slow down.

Mr. Moore provided a memo detailing the acceptance process for Police donations. Both Chief King and the Fire Association are in agreement and have a clear understanding of the process.

#### RESERVATIONS

Ms. Knab motioned to approve the SAU16 Cross Country Meet for October 13. Mr. Lovejoy seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Mr. Lovejoy motioned to approve the SVFD raffle request for the October 4<sup>th</sup> First Responder fundraiser. Ms. Knab seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Mr. Moore said that there was a Crestview road closure request, but he had no additional details. Mr. Lovejoy motioned to approve. Ms. Knab seconded the motion with the condition that all involved approve. Mr. Lovejoy agreed and restated Mr. Mear's request that nothing heavy be put on the road as it was just repaved.

At 9:06 pm Mr. Houghton motioned to go into a non-public session in accordance with RSA 91-A:3, II(c), on a matter that would likely affect adversely the reputation of another. Mr. Lovejoy seconded the motion. Houghton-Yes; Lovejoy-Yes; Knab-Yes. At 9:58 pm Mr. Houghton motioned to come out of the non-public session and seal the minutes noting that failure to do so may render a proposed action ineffective. Ms. Knab seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Richard  
Recording Secretary