

## **MINUTES OF THE SEPTEMBER 6, 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, Interim Library Director Steve Butzel, Town Clerk/Tax Collector Deborah Bakie

At 7:01 pm Mr. Houghton opened the Select Board meeting.

Ms. Knab motioned acceptance of the August 1, 2022 Select Board minutes with the stipulation that the adjournment be added. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Mr. Houghton directed attention to Interim Library Director, Steve Butzel. He began his department report by giving a summary of his background. He praised the staff and programs currently in place and described some of the projects that were begun just prior to his start. He gave an update on the library's budget, which is on track. Circulation of materials post Covid is almost where they were pre Covid. He said that this speaks well of our library; some communities haven't rebounded. In response to Mr. Houghton's question about his priority, Mr. Butzel said that it is to assess and utilize the current library space. He would like to see more space for the community to gather.

Mr. Houghton recognized Town Clerk/Tax Collector Deborah Bakie for her report on election preparations. Ms. Bakie described the room set up. She has been closely following the election protocols set by the State. She talked about inspectors and the role they play. Ms. Bakie reviewed the logistics for outside the building. Because school will be in session on Election Day, our use of the building is based on separation from the school operations. Referring to the Election Manual, Ms. Bakie reviewed the changes regarding ballots that have over votes. She advised that the Secretary of State will be auditing some communities. Because Ms. Knab is on the ballot, Ms. Bakie informed her of the State guidelines as a Select Board member on the ballot.

Mr. Houghton inquired about correspondence. Mr. Moore said he will discuss the Highway Block Grant in his TA report. Next, he reviewed the letter from the Coopers and asked for guidance from the Board. After discussion, the group agreed the issue warrants further investigation. Mr. Moore will pursue the matter and bring his findings back to the Board.

Mr. Moore stated he received a letter of resignation from Ana Egana of the Conservation Commission. Mr. Anderson motioned to accept. Ms. Knab seconded the motion to accept with regret.

Mr. Moore explained that because the Seacoast Velo Kids' donation is over \$10,000, a public hearing is required. The Recreation Commission has recommended acceptance of the donation. Mr. Houghton motioned to open the public hearing regarding acceptance of a \$14,740.51 donation from Seacoast Velo Kids. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. All voted in favor. Mr.

Houghton asked for comments or questions. Hearing none, Mr. Houghton motioned to close the public hearing. Ms. Knab seconded the motion. All voted in favor. Ms. Knab motioned to accept the \$14,740.51 from Seacoast Velo Kids for the pump track improvements with gratitude for their fundraising. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Mr. Houghton moved to the Homeland Security Emergency Management Active Threat Exercise. Mr. Moore recalled the previous discussions with Police Chief King and Lt. Pierce outlining the event. Mr. Houghton motioned to open the public hearing relative to the Homeland Security Emergency Management Active Threat Exercise grant. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. All voted in favor. Mr. Houghton asked for comments or input from the public. Hearing none, Mr. Houghton motioned to close the public hearing. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. All voted in favor. In accordance with RSA 31:95-b, Ms. Knab motioned acceptance the grant in the amount of \$79,515.95 from the State of New Hampshire Homeland Security and Emergency Management. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

#### NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Moore reported that he has the grant agreement for PFAS reimbursement from the State of New Hampshire. He referred to his memo for additional background on it. He felt that the Board's early advocacy and engagement placed the Town in a position to receive these State funds in the form of a grant. The State has provided a great deal of support and assistance. The Town will have ongoing responsibility; this includes funding future costs for water testing and reporting on our groundwater management permit as well as maintenance of systems deployed. Not all the costs are covered by the grant. We have set aside money in the Capital Improvement Plan to offset future costs. Mr. Anderson motioned to enter into a grant agreement with the State of New Hampshire for an amount of up to \$350,000 in PFAS remediation grant funds. Ms. Knab seconded the motion. All voted in favor. Mr. Anderson motioned to authorize the Town Administrator to sign the grant agreement with the State of New Hampshire. Ms. Knab seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Mr. Moore requested the Board's input regarding when trick or treat night would be held this year. Mr. Houghton motioned to hold Trick or Treat Night on October 31<sup>st</sup>. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. All voted in favor. They decided to keep the same hours as in the past - 5:00 – 7:30 pm.

#### RESERVATIONS

Mr. Houghton motioned to allow Seacoast Mental Health Center to use the Front Pavilion on Sept. 30<sup>th</sup> for a staff outing and to waive the fee. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Ms. Knab motioned to allow Newmarket Public School 8<sup>th</sup> grade field trip to use the Front Pavilion on Sept. 23 and waive the fee. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

#### TOWN ADMINISTRATION (continued)

Mr. Moore returned to the discussion of the elections. He reminded the Board about the testing of the ballot machines tomorrow. Mr. Moore turned the conversation over to Mr. Houghton to discuss Select Board attendance and timing at the election.

Mr. Moore reported on the status of the open space RFP conference reporting that 8 firms participated.

Mr. Moore and Ms. McAllister are updating the Employment Manual. He will report back with policies that may need review.

Mr. Moore presented a draft of the Select Board Meeting schedule for 2023. He advocated for holding the Public Hearing on the Warrant, as it was last year. Mr. Moore has been having discussions with the CMS principal to discuss holding Town Meetings there. The group discussed, in general, the format for Voter Info Night, hosted by the library. Because of library staff turnover, there will likely be changes to the program this year.

Next Mr. Moore addressed Information Technology and next steps for exploring options in service delivery. The Board had no concerns with soliciting proposals.

Mr. Moore is planning for a public hearing for the 18 Jana Lane land donation at the next Select Board meeting on Sept. 19. The Heritage Commission will discuss at their meeting next week.

Mr. Moore stated that we have received an unanticipated Highway Block Grant for 2022. This is a significant one time grant of approximately \$151,000. At the meeting on the 19<sup>th</sup>, he and Ms. McAllister plan to discuss a preliminary budget schedule at which time they will discuss this grant and ARPA funds.

Town Planner Mark Connors and Public Works Director Nate Mears met with District 6 engineers regarding Marin Way roadway improvements. DOT is holding up our driveway permit in an attempt to compel the Town to fund a more significant improvement in Rt 111. Our permit was for an in kind replacement for the driveway and Marin Way. NH DOT believes the Town made a commitment in the past to adding a turn lane on Rt. 111 but we cannot find any evidence supporting that claim. We are awaiting a letter from NH DOT supporting their assertion.

The State has followed up with our request to hold a public informational meeting about the Route 33 project. They set the meeting for Wednesday, Sept. 14<sup>th</sup> at the Greenland Central School at 6pm. We've forwarded the information to interested committees and the public. The state is exploring adding a pedestrian safety improvement (rapid flashing beacon) at Sandy Point and Route 33. Though DOT will install it, maintenance will be the Town's responsibility. The Board indicated that it would agree to that.

Mr. Moore was pleased to announce that we have a MS-1 well before the due date. Town Assessor Chris Murdough has conservatively estimated the utility values for two of the assessments. It is likely that we'll be doing a supplemental tax bill when the DRA values are set. We are on target to get the tax rate earlier than in the past. Ms. McAllister put together a calendar to manage the process. We are at about the same projection as we were in February. Ms. McAllister noted that the Rooms & Meals would be the only item that could cause an impact to the projected tax rate.

Ms. McAllister reported on the bank transition. It has been a long process but she is making great progress.

Mr. Anderson questioned the DRA review letter. Mr. Moore referred to two conversations he had regarding the issue, including with DRA. He learned the explained that it was a standard letter.

At 8:24 Mr. Houghton motioned to go into a non-public session in accordance with RSA 91-A:3, II(c) to discuss a matter that may adversely affect the reputation of another. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. Roll call: Houghton – yes; Knab – yes; Anderson - yes.

At 10:19 pm Mr. Houghton motioned to come out of the non-public session and, in accordance with RSA 91-A:3, III, seal the minutes noting that divulgence of the information likely would affect adversely the reputation of another. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

At 10:19 pm Mr. Houghton motioned to adjourn. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Richard  
Recording Secretary