

## **MINUTES OF THE SEPTEMBER 21, 2020 SELECT BOARD MEETING**

**MEMBERS PARTICIPATING:** Board Members Chair Mike Houghton, Vice Chair Joe Lovejoy, Board Member Allison Knab along with Town Administrator David Moore and Library Director Lesley Kimball.

The Board Chair opened the meeting at 7:01 p.m.

Mr. Lovejoy made a motion to approve the August 31, 2020 minutes. Ms. Knab seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

Mr. Houghton recognized Paul Pandelena, brother to Donna Frost owner of property off of Boat Club Drive. He previously submitted a letter but wanted to come before the Board to further emphasize their desire to come to an amicable resolution regarding the use of Town property surrounding Ms. Frost's land and Ms. Frost's access to her property. They are primarily concerned with liability on the access way and would like a clear delineation of what is town owned land and what is their private property. It was decided that Mr. Moore would gather more information for a report back to the Board.

Next, Mr. Houghton moved to the correspondence from Mr. Helfrich regarding International Dark Sky. Mr. Moore sees two issues: lighting at the municipal center and, in general, to evaluate the Town's site plan regulations for compliance with "Dark Sky" practices. Mr. Lovejoy recalled a resident raising this issue at previous Board meetings. Discussion ensued regarding lighting regulations. Mr. Houghton sees it as a Planning Board issue. The Board agreed to refer the item to the Planning Board with a suggestion that they reach out to the public to come to a meeting to share information. Mr. Moore will also follow up with the DPW director to assess the Town's municipal center parking lot and its compliance with the Town's regulations.

Mr. Houghton called attention to the HealthTrust letter. Mr. Moore explained that as a result of year end fiscal analysis, HealthTrust will be distributing premiums back to communities based on their policy. The Board asked Mr. Moore to inquire of how distributions resulting from this return of premium were distributed in the past. Mr. Moore said he will report back and that the formal notice of premium return and amount is due in mid-October.

Mr. Houghton recognized Jeff Gallagher calling in to the meeting. Mr. Gallagher called regarding a solar project at Stratham Green. Mr. Houghton informed the group that this project has been reviewed by the Planning Board. Given the nature of this project, the board agreed to do a cash surety as recommended and prepared in coordination with the Planning Director. The Board members agreed and signed the document.

Ms. Knab asked if Mr. Gallagher would be organizing the Veteran's Day celebration. He said he would if that was welcomed by the Board. The Board indicated it was and they expressed appreciation for his efforts at organizing observances for both Veterans' Day and Memorial Day in Stratham.

Mr. Houghton directed attention to New Business. Mr. Moore stated that election of officers was disrupted earlier in the year because of Covid and the delay in completing Town Meeting. Mr. Lovejoy motioned to appoint Mr. Houghton as Chair of the Select Board. Ms. Knab seconded the motion. All voted in favor. Ms. Knab motioned to appoint Mr. Lovejoy as Vice Chair. Mr. Houghton seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Next, Mr. Houghton addressed the Select Board Procedures Manual. Mr. Moore submitted a draft with their packet. Mr. Moore also presented a Boards and Commissions appointment process and is recommending adopting it as an administrative order and procedure of the Town. He also suggested the Board consider creating a compendium of Select Board adopted Administrative Orders and Procedures and ensure annual adoption (through a procedural requirement in the Select Board Manual). He suggests reviewing and adopting it annually to facilitate awareness of the policies and as a means of keeping them fresh and updating them. Mr. Moore clarified how the documents would be accessed. This manual will provide consistency for the Board as well as staff and can be added to over time by committing to writing many existing standing administrative directions of the Board and procedures. Mr. Lovejoy motioned to adopt the 2020 Select Board Manual with revisions. Mr. Houghton seconded the motion. All voted in favor. Mr. Moore called attention to items 24 and 25, concerning Boards and Commissions. Lengthy discussion ensued regarding appointments procedures. Although the new process is lengthier, it ensures public awareness and facilitates committee input. A provision for expectations, particularly regarding attendance, was suggested for inclusion. All Boards and Committees have a staff member assigned to support it and roles are spelled out. The Board approved including Rule 24 and 25 in the adopted manual. The Board asked Mr. Moore to make changes to the Boards and Commissions Administrative Orders & Procedure and bring back for consideration. Mr. Moore indicated he would bring that back for the October 5<sup>th</sup> meeting.

Mr. Houghton moved on to the legal and policy summary Mr. Moore prepared relative to political advertising. Mr. Moore reviewed the document summarizing state law, state policy and the Town's zoning ordinance; he also confirmed past practices and expectations of the current Board relative to locations for political advertising. The Board noted the policy conformed to current and past expectations and agreed the Code Enforcement Officer Shanti Wolph would be appropriate staff lead to ensure compliance. The policy reiterated that signs removed due to safety or non-compliance should still be held at the DPW facility at 70 Bunker Hill Avenue. The Board adopted the policy unanimously. Mr. Moore indicated he would include it as part of the addendum for the Town.

Mr. Houghton brought up the subject of Halloween. Mr. Moore said that he and several staff members has conferred on the issue and are planning to avail themselves of upcoming conversations with state health and municipal officials. He recommended he report back to the Board with a staff recommendation based on anticipated guidance.

Ms. Kimball was then recognized for her departmental report. She's taking lessons learned and applying that information to future programs. Responding to the needs of the community is her priority. She sees the current environment as an opportunity for redesigning library services. They've implemented safety precautions. Community building is a key component of their

mission. She is continually striving to discover new ways to engage the public. Digital services were hugely successful during the pandemic. Communications with the public have been ongoing. They've begun inviting people into the building by appointment. She described some hybrid program options. A Candidate Night Zoom session is being planned for October 8<sup>th</sup>. Curbside pick-up has been going well, but they will need to rethink that with the upcoming inclement weather. Bringing programs or services into the community to places that would allow for better social distancing is something they're considering. They continue to uphold their core values of equal access, lifelong learning, reading and literacy and community building. She emphasized the value in facilitating connections within the community. She is excited about new directions the library might take.

Conversation returned to Halloween. Whether or not to hold a trick or treating night, safety, which night it should be, etc. People can choose not to participate by shutting off their porch light. They wanted to continue the conversation at their special meeting on October 1<sup>st</sup>. Mr. Moore will draft a document stating they plan to move forward and will offer guidance and best practices.

#### TOWN ADMINISTRATION

Town Planner Tavis Austin submitted a memo stating that Betty Lane is complete. He recommends the Board release the bond and accept the deed. Ms. Knab motioned to accept the improvements made to date and approve the final bond reduction of \$23,777.10 along with any accrued interest to date and further authorize Finance to issue a check for that amount in accordance with the Performance Agreement on file and accept and sign the Deed as submitted. Mr. Lovejoy seconded. All voted in favor.

Mr. Austin also recommends the Board accept the partial bond reduction for Treat Farm Road. Ms. Knab made a motion to accept the improvements made to date and approve the performance reduction of \$65,837.58 and further authorize Finance to issue a check for that amount in accordance with the Performance Agreement on file. Mr. Lovejoy seconded. All voted in favor.

Mr. Moore updated the Board on the PFAS Remedial Plan. Wilcox and Barton have completed their outreach to affected property owners. Funds to address remediation will be included in the capital planning preparations for next year.

Mr. Moore gave an update on the budget process. Finance Administrator Dawna Duhamel has been conducting budget meetings with each department head.

Mr. Moore is putting together a legislative delegation for an October meeting. Chief King may wish to discuss body worn cameras with the group. The Board expressed a desire to have ongoing communication with the delegation.

Police Chief King has submitted a memo detailing a request for body worn cameras. Total cost would be \$22,000. There seems to be a consensus towards body worn cameras among law enforcement and government agencies. The Board discussed various ways of funding the request, including bringing it to Town Meeting as a Warrant Article. Policies regarding the video recordings have been evaluated for use in Stratham and the Board would like more

conversation with the Chief on this aspect. Mr. Moore suggested that be a topic for the November 2<sup>nd</sup> departmental report by Chief King.

Mr. Moore continues to hold meetings regarding election logistics.

He then made the Board aware of SAU16's inquiry about available remaining CARES Act money. We've put our third request in, totaling approximately \$65,000. Requests for reimbursement of costs must be specific and within a certain timeframe. NHMA is weighing in because we are the grant recipients and have a role in certifying the eligibility of the costs. Schools across the state are seeking funding support from this grant money because of a change in an administrative rule change at FEMA disallowing certain costs for PPE in the schools. Department heads have been tracking COVID expenses and Ms. Duhamel has been responsible for submitting the regular reimbursements in accordance with the State's requirements. The schools did receive some grant money. We will receive a separate grant for election costs through the Secretary of State. Ms. Knab asked if Ms. Kimball's request for a trailer to use as a book mobile could be a COVID expense. They discussed that and other potential issues involved in Ms. Kimball's request. Mr. Moore indicated he will confer with the Library Director, offer assistance and report back if she would like to pursue further.

Next, Mr. Moore said that the State is requesting that Chipotle be added to the sidewalk maintenance agreement that is already in place for Starbucks. The property owner is the same. All terms agreed to previously are the same, but a new agreement would address both businesses. Zoning in that area and the Master Plan support inclusion of sidewalks. The Board agreed to comply with the State's request.

Mr. Moore reported that Mr. Mears has requested changes to the Solid Waste Ordinance. We are currently in negotiations for a new solid waste contract. Conversation ensued regarding the general process of changing ordinances. They decided to hold off on changing the ordinance until contract negotiations are settled. Mr. Moore will draft a change to the ordinance.

Finance Administrator Dawna Duhamel has suggested moving forward with a temporary employee noting there were few candidates for the part-time accounting and benefits coordinator position. After confirming the expenses can be covered within the existing budget, the Board agreed to move forward with a temporary employee.

Mr. Moore requested the board's feedback on posting the documents that support the agenda items. These packets have been consistently posted on the website. The Board was in favor of continuing the postings as is.

The group had a discussion about the usefulness of mission and values of the organization and revisiting goals and objectives for the year.

Mr. Moore reported that there's been an admirable degree of cooperation from the residents in response to the drought. There have been a few requests for guidance or waivers regarding new construction projects and repair projects that were started prior to September 12<sup>th</sup>. After conferring with staff, Mr. Moore would like to offer clarification on the lawn watering restriction

to say that it doesn't include construction or repair projects. Chief King and Nate Mears helped shape this clarification and are supportive of providing it where necessary. The Board supported the clarification but recognized that it is a difficult situation with no easy answers.

Mr. Moore provided the Hawkers & Peddler's Ordinance for the Board's consideration. There have been some calls regarding the vendor that has set up on Portsmouth Ave. The Ordinance has been followed. The Police Department has not received any complaints with actionable offenses.

Mr. Moore received a letter from the Chair of the Energy Commission Mike Welty regarding the Community Power Coalition. The Board supported Mr. Welty signing the letter.

Big Brothers/Big Sisters submitted a raffle request. Ms. Knab motioned to approve their request. Mr. Lovejoy seconded. All voted in favor.

The Exeter Area Garden Club requested use of Room A on the third Thursday of each month and a fee waiver. Mr. Lovejoy motioned to approve the use of Room A and waive the fee. Ms. Knab seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

At 10:26 pm Mr. Houghton motioned to go into a non-public session in accordance with RSA 91A, II (d). Mr. Lovejoy seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

At 11:20 p.m. Ms. Knab 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. Vice Chair Lovejoy seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

At 11:21 p.m. Ms. Knab moved to adjourn. Vice Chair Lovejoy seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Richard  
Recording Secretary