

## **MINUTES OF THE DECEMBER 17, 2018 SELECT BOARD MEETING**

MEMBER'S PRESENT: Board Members Mike Houghton, Joe Lovejoy and Town Administrator Paul Deschaine.

At 7:11 pm Mr. Houghton opened the public meeting of the Select Board.

### **MINUTES**

Mr. Lovejoy made a motion to accept the minutes of 12/3/18 and 12/10/18. Mr. Houghton seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

### **TREASURER**

Town Treasurer Deb Bronson reported that the General Fund Balance \$12,268,139.99. The School and County tax payments have been made.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

Mr. Deschaine presented the road deeds to the extension of Patriot's Road and requested release any performance bonds still held. Mr. Houghton made a motion to accept the road deed to the right of way for Patriot's Road extension. Mr. Lovejoy seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

Mr. Deschaine said that Market Street and Bittersweet Lane, part of Bunker Hill Commons subdivision, have met the criteria and are ready for acceptance of the roads and release of the performance bond. Mr. Houghton made a motion for acceptance of the deed and the right of way and any related easements for Market Street and Bittersweet Lane. Mr. Lovejoy seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

Interim Police Chief David Pierce needs to have a Form B Notice signed by the hiring authority. Mr. Lovejoy made a motion to authorize the Select Board Chair to sign the Standards of Training Council document. Mr. Houghton seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

Library Director Lesley Kimball and Library Trustees Chair Kate Kim came before the board to discuss the Library's budget. Ms. Kimball gave an overview of what they are requesting and why. Costs of doing business have gone up. They continue to use money from fundraisers. Ms. Kimball reported it was a challenging year with three staff members out on medical leave for a large chunk of the year. The remaining staff stepped up so that the library patrons still received the same great service they always do. Ms. Kimball is requesting merit pool for a 2% bonus for certain people. Ms. Kim reminded the board that the library was a finalist for the IMLS award. Mr. Houghton directed attention to the salary portion of the budget. Ms. Kimball responded that over the past few years they have been trying to get the wages for the library staff up to a state average (which is lower than the regional average). She hopes to go beyond average salaries because the staff has been doing exceptional work.

Mr. Deschaine reported Moody's has given us a good report. The revenue could be misinterpreted because three years ago there was an accounting adjustment, which is in the last year of a three year report. Originally, they were recognizing our revenues and not the county's

revenues. They changed that three years ago making it look like there was a big increase, but in actuality it is simply a reporting issue.

#### OLD BUSINESS

Mr. Deschaine revised the Preservation Easement for the Bartlett-Cushman house to include items the Preservation Alliance, the buyers and he and Mr. Houghton suggested. The draft has been distributed to everyone and accepted by the Buyers. The Buyers have submitted a Purchase & Sale Agreement, contingent on the draft. Mr. Deschaine highlighted some of the Buyer's terms and noted that the process would take a minimum of 50 days to transpire; there must be two public hearing notices, two public hearings and the final vote by the Board of Selectmen to sign the Purchase & Sale Agreement. Mr. Lovejoy made a motion to enter into the contract to sell the property subject to the conditions included in the contract document and authorize the Chairman to execute the document. Heritage Commission member Rebecca Mitchell said that she spoke with Jennifer Goodwin of the NH Preservation Alliance who agreed to the revised draft. Mr. Houghton seconded Mr. Lovejoy's motion to move the RSA 41:14A process forward. The motion passed unanimously. Mr. Deschaine clarified the process.

David Emanuel investigated the feasibility of moving the Smyk house. Taking into consideration the multiple challenges that were involved, he determined that it wasn't a viable project.

#### ADMINISTRATION

Mr. Deschaine reported that Allison Knab has taken the Oath of Office. He thanked Fire Chief Matt Larrabee for initiating a letter of recognition for Caren Gallagher who is leaving the Fire Department. He asked the Board to sign the letter, stating Ms. Gallagher's contributions to the Fire Dept and to the Town as a whole have been momentous.

They discussed the tentative Board of Selectmen schedule for the coming year.

The Assessing Department submitted their Sales Assessment Ratio Study where the median ratio is 83.6% for this year's tax year which is down from last year. For the most part, it is in line with what we expected. During next year's re-val, special attention should be paid to multi-family units, residential land and unimproved commercial land.

Mr. Deschaine noted that we received the report from CMA Engineers. Mr. Houghton explained that CMA Engineers was engaged in response to a Steven's Park abutter's complaint to give us an objective assessment of what has transpired with the land over the course of time. The third party has provided their report and we will provide the results of that report to the abutter's attorney. The Town now sees this matter as closed. The report suggests dredging the pond as a general maintenance practice. Mr. Houghton would like the maintenance plan to be documented.

Mr. Deschaine asked if he should continue as Stratham's representative to the Lamprey Cooperative or should the responsibility transfer to David Moore? Being a representative entails managing the cooperative district both as a solid waste district of which we are a member (there are twelve towns) and creating the budget. The two main roles are managing the disposal contract with waste management and managing the ash landfill that they own and had closed in

Somersworth. Mr. Lovejoy made a motion that Mr. Deschaine continue his directorship of the Lamprey Cooperative for the calendar year 2019. Mr. Houghton seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

Mr. Deschaine reminded the selectman that now, when the Highway crew is at a lull, would be a good time to change the office layout. The selectmen said they would like to give the proposed design further review.

Mr. Deschaine noted that this was his last Board of Selectmen meeting and expressed gratitude to the Board for their support, open dialog, collaboration and respect they've given him. In recognition of Paul Deschaine's 30+ years of service to the Town of Stratham, Mr. Lovejoy made a motion to provide him with a post-retirement benefit for one year during the calendar year 2019 of payment in full of a two person health and dental insurance plan equivalent to insurance plan to be provided full time employees of the Town of Stratham during 2019. Mr. Houghton seconded the motion which passed unanimously. Mr. Deschaine thanked them.

#### MEETINGS

Mr. Deschaine reported that the Recycling Forum on Saturday was well attended and the feedback was positive. There will be another presentation on Wednesday. Once people understood the issue, they were in support of moving forward with purchasing the carts.

Mr. Houghton discussed the meetings of the past and coming week. The Planning Board acted on some of the zoning amendments and there was preliminary consultation of Robin Wood Farms. There was a great deal of discussion about signs for home occupied businesses. Mr. Lovejoy reported that the Stratham Hill Park Association attended the Conservation Commission meeting and there was discussion about merging the two groups. The Parks and Recreation Department would like input if there is a re-alignment. Mr. Lovejoy made a motion to appoint Allison Knab as the selectperson representative to the Conservation Commission. Mr. Houghton seconded the motion which passed unanimously. Mr. Deschaine reported that the snow loads on the solar panels at the Police Station continue to be a problem in that it poses a potential hazard to people passing by underneath. He obtained input from the Energy Commission and Chief Scippa regarding solutions and submitted it to the installer. In other Energy Commission news, Mr. Deschaine reported that streetlights will be installed with LED lights in January.

Mr. Houghton and Mr. Lovejoy thanked Mr. Deschaine for his 30+ years of service and expressed gratitude and appreciation for the support and guidance he's given them and the community.

At 8:19 pm Mr. Houghton made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Lovejoy seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Richard  
Recording Secretary