

REVISED

MINUTES OF THE FEBRUARY 26, 2018 BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING

At 7:05 pm the Board of Selectmen opened the meeting. Mr. Lovejoy immediately motioned to go into a non-public session to discuss a personnel matter. Mr. Houghton seconded the motion which passed unanimously. At 7:34 pm Mr. Lovejoy motioned to come out of the non-public session and seal the minutes due to the nature of the conversation. Mr. Houghton seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

MEMBER'S PRESENT: Board Members Bruno Federico, Michael Houghton and Town Administrator Paul Deschaine.

At 7:45 pm Chairman Federico opened the general meeting of the Board of Selectmen.

MINUTES

Mr. Federico made a motion to approve the minutes of 2/12/18 as amended. Mr. Houghton seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

TREASURER

Town Administrator Paul Deschaine stated the general fund balance is \$9,083,784.07.

ASSESSING

Town Assessor Andrea Lewy recommended two veterans credits. Mr. Federico motioned to approve the veteran's credits as recommended. Mr. Houghton seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

Ms. Lewy requested the Board approve the Timber Tax Warrant for Denault Enterprises for \$112.94 for 14-16 Wiggin Way. Mr. Federico motioned to approve the request. Mr. Houghton seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

Mr. Federico asked if we received an Intent to Cut on the property next to the old town hall. Ms. Lewy replied that we had not, but she would look into it.

Ms. Lewy stated she had an Elderly Exemption application that was over the income limit. She then asked to go into a non-public session to discuss the matter. It was decided to wait until later in the evening to go into the non-public session.

CODE ENFORCEMENT / BUILDING INSPECTOR

Code Enforcement Officer/Building Inspector Mark Morong reported that two zoning violations were resolved and, in town, building was progressing as usual.

Mr. Federico asked if we got a permit for the large banner in town center. Mr. Morong responded that he had been talking to the people involved regarding the many issues with the project.

Mr. Morong previously sent the Board a Building Safety Month proclamation and requested they review and sign it if it meets with their approval.

Mr. Federico wanted to follow up with the Porsche dealership's previous interest in modifications to the exterior. There was discussion about the request going before the Planning Board and it being combined with the Audi renovations.

Mr. Federico asked about the cell tower. Mr. Morong said that they received a building permit, but nothing had been started.

PARKS & RECREATION

Parks & Recreation Director Seth Hickey updated the Board on work he hopes to have done on the Front Pavilion. He said remapping of the trails will be done by May 1st including new wording, discussed at a previous meeting. New trails have been added and will include GPS coordinates, as opposed to being hand drawn, as was previously done. He and Public Works Director Colin Laverty are working to secure pricing for the upper fence field reconstruction. He will discuss the project further at a later date. Mr. Hickey is hoping to install a water fountain station near the Scamman Pavilion. He is currently researching the project and will report at a later time with more information. Mr. Deschaine asked about winterization. Mr. Hickey responded that the units he has been looking at are built to withstand the winter. He also said they would be ADA compliant.

Seacoast Velo Kids have requested an expansion of the pump track at the park. Funds from grants and donations will be used for the project. Mr. Deschaine advised Mr. Hickey to involve the Conservation Commission because of the project's proximity to the Town Forest. No trees will be cut.

Mr. Hickey received a few complaints because he closed the Jack Rabbit Lane parking area due to the mud. He is working with Mr. Laverty investigating possible improvements to the area. He is also reviewing Park Ordinances with Police Chief Scippa. Mr. Hickey would like to see enforceable changes that support Park resources and activities.

Mr. Hickey is organizing a disc golf tournament as a fundraiser for a future disc golf course. He informed the Board that he will not be renting Stevens Park this year in order to get the fields in better condition. He has had to say no to several groups already. In other Parks & Recreation activities: Basketball is wrapping up, baseball and softball registration is going well, Coyote Club is ongoing. There will be a baseball tournament during the Stratham Fair. He is working to provide local business an opportunity for sponsorship of Parks & Recreation activities. He hopes to have a skate park flyer ready for Voter Information Night, March 6th. Mr. Houghton asked if the issue regarding not going to bid for the skate park was finalized. Mr. Hickey said it was. He

summarized saying there was a Facebook discussion, accusations were made, which were investigated and proven false. Mr. Hickey will be on vacation the week of April 2 – 6.

NEW BUSINESS

Michael Licata of Liberty Utilities gave a presentation regarding a natural gas infrastructure project called the Granite Bridge project. It has two components: 1. New natural gas pipeline connecting to existing infrastructure. It will be 27 miles along Rt 101 within DOT right of way. 2. New liquefied natural gas storage facility located in Epping. The purpose behind the project is that utilization of the existing pipeline has reached capacity and in order to service new customers, they must create new infrastructure. If it is not created, they will not be able to service new customers which could have a damaging impact on the local economy. They would be setting up a metering station in Stratham (but within the DOT right of way) which is a connection point between the new and existing pipeline. It would be a 50 x 200' fenced in area. Mr. Licata reviewed the process for storing natural gas. Mr. Deschaine noted that this is electrically driven process and inquired about that impact on the Town. They've hired a design engineering firm to address the electrical component of this project. He did not think the project would pose any electrical issues to the Town. Mr. Licata continued his presentation saying that this project would save their customers money. He noted that LNG storage is a very safe technology which has been in use for over 70 years. In its liquid state, the gas is not flammable or explosive. They will exceed the Federal and State requirements, burying the pipe deeper and making it thicker than need be. Benefits to the Town include increased property tax revenues. Mr. Federico and Mr. Deschaine asked about the useful life of the pipes and other components. Mr. Licata replied that they were designing it to be adequate for their needs and that the pipes last a very long time, they have some from the 1900's. If a meter needed to be changed, it would not affect the footprint. There would be a lot of communication with the Town.

Liberty Utilities is not looking to impinge on Unutil's franchise territory. They are open and willing to work with them, should a need arise. They've filed with the NH Public Utilities Commission who will review the economics and needs of the project. Later this year they will file with the Site Evaluation Committee who will review, among other things, the environmental impact. Lastly, Mr. Licata outlined next steps. The hope is that they can begin service in 2022. He encouraged anyone interested in additional information to go to the project's website: www.granitebridgenh.com

Mr. Deschaine questioned if they incorporated Planning Board Site Plan Review in their timeline. He said that yes, they have, and are very willing to work with the Planning Board and are open to any comments they have. If there was disagreement, the legislature has determined that the NHSEC's decision supersedes the local Planning Board. Liberty Utilities' goal is to do everything possible to avoid any conflict.

ASSESSING, continued

At 9:01 pm Mr. Federico made a motion to go into a non-public session. Mr. Houghton seconded the motion which passed unanimously. At 9:07 pm Mr. Houghton made a motion to come out of the non-public session and seal the minutes. Mr. Federico seconded the motion which passed

unanimously. The Board acted upon the Elderly Exemption and denied it based on the recommendation of Ms. Lewy.

Referring back to the tax revenue portion of the Granite Bridge presentation, general discussion ensued regarding the tax rate of public utilities.

MEETINGS

Mr. Federico reviewed the meetings of the past and coming week. It was noted that the Emergency drill went very well. Mr. Houghton said he will attend the graded exercise on April 4th. The Smyk Committee's minutes are on the website. Inclination of the Committee at this point seems to be to demolish the buildings on the property. The committee is continuing to meet and discuss. Their final report should be finished by the end of March. Mr. Deschaine has learned that Swasey Park in Exeter will be booking for events soon and, as such, we will not need to host the Beer & Chili Fest in the fall as was previously discussed.

ADMINISTRATION

Request from the 76ers to be allowed to do their annual bake sale at the Municipal Center on election day. Mr. Federico made a motion to allow the request. Mr. Houghton seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

Keri Vivathana on behalf of the Skate Park group sent an email requesting they be allowed to sell items at the Municipal Center on election day and at Stratham Memorial School on Town Meeting night to raise funds and awareness of the project. Questions about who holds and manages the funds were raised. The request was put on hold until they could get some answers.

Mr. Federico made a motion that should any group representing the Cooperative Middle School Renewal Project make a request for display space on election day, that they be allowed to do so. Mr. Houghton seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

The Heritage Commission made a request to distribute a flyer at Town Meeting to provide information on their warrant article regarding the preservation fund. Mr. Houghton made a motion to approve the request. Mr. Federico seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

Mr. Deschaine reported that Town Planner Tavis Austin received 4 proposals for the Master Plan. After evaluating them, he determined that Horsley Whitten Group is the most preferred. Proposed price is \$49,825. Mr. Federico made a motion to award Horsley Whitten Group the bid and authorize Mr. Deschaine to negotiate and execute a suitable contract agreement. Mr. Houghton seconded the motion which passed unanimously. Mr. Houghton suggested an attorney review the contract to expedite the matter.

Mr. Deschaine had two recommendations for appointments. Mr. Houghton made a motion to proceed with appointing Shaun Burke to the Recreation Commission for the 2017 alternate position and Frank Swift to the Public Works Commission for the 2016 alternate position. Mr. Federico seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

Mr. Deschaine wanted to begin work on this year's Town Meeting presentation. The selectmen decided who will present each Article. A brief, general discussion about budgets ensued. The need for transparency was affirmed. Mr. Houghton suggested presenting a slide that speaks to the tax rate impact to the average household. Mr. Deschaine described the difficulty in determining the tax impact to individual households because of potential legislative changes, both positive and negative, effecting revenue. Mr. Houghton feels they should present the impact of the expenses that are under the Town's control, such as the Operating Budget and CIP. Mr. Federico said that the residents need to understand that that tax impact might be mitigated by revenue. Mr. Houghton said his goal is to better inform the residents. He noted the Town's history of being frugal and conservative. He went on to say that a good part of the Operating Budget is wages and that the methodology for the calculations needs to be explained at Town Meeting so the residents understand the basis for the numbers.

Mr. Deschaine gave the printer the go ahead to print the Town Report.

At 10:14 pm Mr. Houghton made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Federico seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Richard
Recording Secretary