

MINUTES OF THE APRIL 30, 2018 BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING

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

At 7:31 pm Chairman Houghton opened the general meeting of the Board of Selectmen.

MINUTES

Mr. O'Sullivan made a motion to approve the minutes from April 23, 2018 with the amendments of the meeting start time and the non-public session start time. Mr. Lovejoy seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

TREASURER

Town Treasurer Deb Bronson stated that the General Fund balance is \$5,419,182.17.

NEW BUSINESS

Dan Crow, Chair of the Smyk Property Study Committee, handed out reports and gave a background of the Committee. Their task was to evaluate if it was in the best interest of the Town to accept or reject the bequest. After much research, the Committee unanimously agrees that the Town should accept this bequest. Initially there will be a net cost the taxpayers, but it will be reduced thereafter. It will be a wonderful addition to the parks system. Mr. Lovejoy asked what would happen if the Town rejected the bequest. The Committee responded that it would revert back to the Trustees who would likely sell the land to the highest bidder. Mr. Lovejoy motioned to accept the Smyk Property Study Committee's report. Mr. O'Sullivan seconded the motion which passed unanimously. The Board thanked the Committee.

Colleen Lake reviewed last week's meeting where she presented a bid from Joyce Fontain for the Bartlett-Cushman house. The point of discussion was centered on how much land goes with the house. They are aware they will need a survey and a preservation easement site plan. The buyer would like more land. The board suggested she make an offer with additional money. They agreed to work on the details and move the process forward. Resident, Chuck Hayes, asked why the property hasn't been listed. Ms. Lake responded that it was for lease and has only recently been considered for sale. Mr. Deschaine noted the many restrictions and poor condition of the house wouldn't likely produce many interested parties. A survey would need to be done before they can move to an agreement and a public hearing. Mr. O'Sullivan made a motion to conditionally accept the purchase and sale agreement with the contingency of the price of \$200,000 predicated on no more than .5 acres and that a further offer will be added should the acreage go from .5 to no more than .75. Mr. Lovejoy seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

ASSESSING

Town Assessor Andrea Lewy recommended approving the land use change tax warrant for the Breslin subdivision and the 8 Oxbow subdivision. Mr. Lovejoy made a motion to approved Ms. Lewy's recommendation. Mr. O'Sullivan seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

Ms. Lewy recommended approving a solar exemption for 86 Stratham Heights Road, stating that the owner meets the criteria for approval. Mr. O'Sullivan made a motion to approve the solar exemption as recommended. Mr. Houghton seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

Ms. Lewy presented an Intent to Cut for 13 Stratham Lane. Mr. O'Sullivan made a motion to approve the Intent to Cut. Mr. Houghton seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

Ms. Lewy recommended approval of eight Veteran's Credits. Mr. O'Sullivan made a motion to approve the Veteran's Credits as recommended. Mr. Lovejoy seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

Next, Ms. Lewy discussed the 2019 statistical update on assessing services. Because of the large scale of the project, Ms. Lewy is planning to hire an assessing service. To come up with the values, they must visit all sale properties that took place from April 1, 2017 to April 1, 2019. They will interview the buyer, review financing and perform an analysis from the data. Field review, preliminary values will be sent in July. They must have a manual to state by January 1, 2020. O'Sullivan questioned the treatment of properties below market valuation. Ms. Lewy said that outliers are accounted for. Ms. Lewy is requesting the Board to approve and sign the contract hiring the additional assessing firm, noting it is in the budget. Mr. O'Sullivan made a motion to accept the \$45/hour or up to \$50 the Murdough Assessing Services for the 2017 – 2019 Statistical Update. Mr. Lovejoy seconded the motion which passed unanimously. Ms. Lewy noted that the first tax warrant for 2018 is due to Town Clerk/Tax Collector Joyce Charbonneau by May 15th. She will have the tax warrant ready for the Board to sign on May 14th; then it goes to DRA. There are not as many reports in the first half; more will be in the second half.

At 8:24 pm Mr. Lovejoy made a motion to go into a non-public session to discuss two elderly exemption applications. Mr. Houghton seconded the motion which passed unanimously. At 8:27 pm Mr. O'Sullivan made a motion to come out of the non-public session. Mr. Houghton seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

Mr. Houghton asked if we benchmark our practice relative to other communities and elderly exemptions. Ms. Lewy said she does. In general, they discussed state and other towns' criteria and a range where they might like to be. The Board thought it was time to re-evaluate and requested she do an analysis.

PARKS & RECREATION

Parks & Recreation Director Seth Hickey reported that they have been working on expanding the pump track at Stratham Hill Park. The work has been done using donations and volunteers. The Front and Scamman bathrooms are essentially complete. A water bubbler is being installed at the park. Water is going to be turned on within the next few days. A couple of companies,

Liberty Mutual and Comcast, will be doing volunteer work at the park. Seacoast Tree Care did some volunteer work also.

Mr. O'Sullivan asked about the installation of the flagpole as part of the Eagle Scout project. Mr. Hickey said he hadn't gotten any updates. Mr. Houghton asked that, when he does, if he would keep Marty Wool in the loop.

Mr. O'Sullivan asked about cooperation from Stratham Memorial School. Mr. Hickey said he enjoys working with them and they have coordinated on some projects.

Mr. Hickey was just made aware that some work is being done surrounding the power lines by the corridor by the school. He will post on social media to make the public aware.

Regarding the skate park, Bruce Scamman and Rob Roseen have said that they will work together to do some preliminary work. Fundraising has begun for the project. A location for the park has not been definitively set. Parking is Mr. Hickey's main concern. Past parking issues and what has been done to address them was reviewed.

Baseball/softball underway and going well. Mr. Hickey requested hiring Robert Nelson to work at Stratham Hill Park over the weekends. It is in the budget. Mr. O'Sullivan made a motion to hire Mr. Nelson at \$12.75/hour for 20 hours a week average conditioned on background screening. Mr. Houghton seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

Trail running series will begin on Thursday nights at the park. Take a Kid Mountain Biking Day is May 20th. Bike rodeos will be starting in June. There is a bus trip to a museum in Wolfeboro scheduled. Mr. Hickey foresees the Recreation Department purchasing a 15 passenger vehicle in the future. He is making plans for that purchase. It will allow him to plan more trips, especially for the senior population. Other departments could also use it.

Mr. Hickey had a question regarding raise changes beginning in April and if they could be retroactive to January. It was explained that employees receive the full amount because the pay cycle goes from April 1 to March 31. They discussed the wage practice and budgets. The discrepancy lies in the budget cycle and the wage cycle not being in sync. Debate centered on changing the payroll cycle to match the budget cycle. The board questioned the reasoning for a change and the difficulties of implementing it. Mr. O'Sullivan suggested looking into making changes. The discussion will be continued at a later date.

RESERVATIONS

Bettina Kersten is requesting use of the Front and Scamman Pavilion on June 10, 2018 for Coyote Club. This group offers wilderness based programming to youths of all ages. Historically, they've paid 30% of their revenue to the Parks & Recreation Department. Mr. O'Sullivan made a motion to allow the requested use of the pavilions and waive the fee. Mr. Lovejoy seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

Mukti Rai is requesting use of the Front Pavilion for the Nepalese Community Event on August 26, 2018. Mr. O'Sullivan made a motion to allow the request and waive the fee. Mr. Lovejoy seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

ADMINISTRATION

Mr. Deschaine brought forth a request by Town Clerk Joyce Charbonneau for a Proclamation to recognize Municipal Clerks Week May 6th – 12th, 2018. Mr. O'Sullivan made a motion to grant the request. Mr. Lovejoy seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

Mr. O'Sullivan asked about the process to accept the Smyk property. He expressed concerns about what to do with the home on the property. He wants to ensure all options are considered. They will proceed to the next step, a public hearing.

Mr. Houghton restated the decisions made earlier in the evening about the Bartlett-Cushman house and urged any other potential buyers to submit an offer. The Selectmen will notify the Heritage Commission to move forward with the items the potential buyer has requested.

MEETINGS

Mr. Houghton reported that the Whittaker subdivision is the only thing on the Planning Board agenda. Mr. O'Sullivan encouraged Mr. Houghton to make the Planning Board aware of issues they may need to address regarding the Bartlett-Cushman house.

Mr. Deschaine reported that the Lamprey Regional Cooperative has an emergency meeting of the Board of Directors. He explained that one of the divisions of the cooperative wanted to sell their truck and close. They still owed money to the cooperative for the truck. The meeting was to open the bids and discuss the unpaid amounts.

Mr. Lovejoy reported that the Thursday Rt 108 Committee will debrief what happened at the public meeting and discuss next steps.

The Selectmen decided to have the All Employee meeting on May 23rd from 8:30am - 10:30. They are trying to combine the Employee Meeting and Mr. Federico's recognition event the same day.

At 9:53 pm Mr. O'Sullivan made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Houghton seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Richard
Recording Secretary