

## **MINUTES OF THE JULY 30, 2018 BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING**

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

At 7:00 pm Mr. Houghton opened the public meeting of the Board of Selectmen.

### **MINUTES**

Mr. O'Sullivan made a motion to approve the minutes of July 16, 2018. Mr. Lovejoy seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

### **TREASURER**

Town Treasurer Deb Bronson stated that the General Fund balance is \$12,080,490.89.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

Town Clerk/Tax Collector Joyce Charbonneau is requesting to raise the fees for dog licensing, as allowed by the State. The process for dog licensing is time consuming and includes sending letters, emails, making phone calls, etc. As it is now, the Town is losing money. Mr. Lovejoy made a motion to support Ms. Charbonneau's request to raise the fees starting January 1, 2019. Mr. O'Sullivan seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

### **ASSESSING**

Town Assessor Andrea Lewy presented discretionary barn preservation easements for Mr. and Mrs. Bartell, 58 Winnicutt Rd, Greg Pruitt, 132 Portsmouth Ave., and Georgiana Law, 45 and 61 Frying Pan Lane (renewal). The purpose of the preservation easement would be to provide a tax incentive to preserve historic barns and the rural character of the area. They must meet certain criteria: be scenic, at least 75 years old, be able to be viewed from a public area, unchanged exterior.

At 7:13 pm Mr. Houghton made a motion to open the Public Hearing for the Barn Preservation Easements. Mr. Lovejoy seconded the motion which passed unanimously. Mr. Bartel presented his reasons for requesting the easement. They've been working with the NH Preservation Alliance who pronounced his barn structurally sound. The money saved would be put back into restoring the original character of his barn. They are doing much of the work themselves.

Ms. Lewy explained that the board decides the percentage, between 25 – 75%, off the assessment. The minimum length of time is 10 years. During this timeframe, the assessment wouldn't increase based on improvements. The only time there can be a change in the assessment would be at 5 years to see what the value would be, but still apply the percentage the board decides. During the year, Ms. Lewy would monitor and ensure improvements were being made to the barn. Mr. Bartel gave a brief history of the barn saying it was built between 1830-1839 and is one of the last examples of its architectural type. Mr. Houghton asked if there were any questions or comments from the public. Hearing none, at 7:22 pm Mr. Houghton made a motion to close the Public Hearing for the barn easement for the Bartel property. Mr. Lovejoy seconded the motion which passed unanimously. Mr. Lovejoy made a motion to accept the request for a barn preservation easement for the Bartel's barn at 58 Winnicutt Rd at 75%

reduction on the assessment for 10 years. Mr. O'Sullivan seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

At 7:26 pm Mr. Houghton made a motion to open the Public Hearing for a proposed Barn Preservation Easement for Gregory Pruitt and Lionel Loveless, 132 Portsmouth Ave, Stratham. Mr. Lovejoy seconded the motion which passed unanimously. Ms. Lewy stated that there are two structures on the property.

Mr. Deschaine wanted it noted that he received an email from Nate Merrill, who, personally, as a member of the Heritage Commission and the State Historic Agriculture Structures Committee, strongly supports all three easements being proposed this evening.

Mr. Pruitt said that his property is currently under a Federal Preservation Easement so they are unable to change the structures. He described the five structures on their property. Today they are asking for the easements on the barn and corn storage house. Mr. Houghton asked for any comments or questions from the public. Ms. Lewy said that there was a small alteration on the main barn that might disqualify it. There was discussion about the alterations and when they were made. Mr. Pruitt was told it was the earliest Yankee barn the Preservation Alliance had seen in the area. There was discussion about the term "barn". It was clarified that these are historic agricultural structures, not necessarily barns, so the cobble house (one of the five structures on the property) wouldn't qualify under this provision. At 7:40pm Mr. Houghton made a motion to close the Public Hearing. Mr. O'Sullivan seconded the motion which passed unanimously. Mr. O'Sullivan made a motion to accept the request for a barn preservation easement for the Yankee Barn at 132 Portsmouth Ave at a 75% reduction on the assessment for 10 years effective January 1, 2019. Mr. Lovejoy seconded the motion which passed unanimously. Mr. O'Sullivan made a motion to accept the request for a barn preservation easement for the 1740s Grain Storage Building at a 75% reduction on the assessment for 10 years effective January 1, 2019. Mr. Lovejoy seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

At 7:43 pm Mr. Houghton opened the Public Hearing on two barn preservation easements for Georgiana Law at 45 and 61 Frying Pan Lane. Mr. Lovejoy seconded the motion which passed unanimously. Ms. Lewy spoke on Ms. Law's behalf, requesting to renew the two preservation easements on her barns. Ms. Lewy read letters describing each of the barn's historical features and stating that the Law's maintain the barns and have a strong commitment to preserving them. 45 Frying Pan Lane suffered a fire in 1902 but is still used for agricultural purposes. Ms. Lewy attested to the fact that they've maintained the barns. Mr. O'Sullivan said that 45 Frying Pan Lane appears to be in disrepair. Mr. Houghton requested that, going forward, applications for renewal of easements provide a list of maintenance done to the structure during the timeframe of the easement. Mr. Deschaine noted factors that might cause the board to grant a lower percentage. Ms. Lewy said she would ask Ms. Law for a list of repairs done to the barns. Mr. Houghton made a motion to continue the Public Hearing on the Frying Pan Lane easement applications until August 6, 2018. Mr. Lovejoy seconded the motion which passed unanimously. Mr. Deschaine instructed Ms. Lewy to show the easement document to the applicants so they are aware of the terms of the agreement. She will have them ready for August 6<sup>th</sup>.

Ms. Lewy recommended an abatement in the amount of \$523.74 for 21 Vineyard Drive. Their assessment was \$20,000 higher than other comparable units based on the determination that their quality grade was higher. Ms. Lewy feels that a 10% higher assessment is unwarranted. Mr. O'Sullivan made a motion to accept Ms. Lewy's recommendation on the property in the Vineyards to bring the quality grade lower to be in line with the other structures in the neighborhood. Mr. Lovejoy seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

Next, Ms. Lewy recommended an abatement for MASS Realty LLC, stating there was a discrepancy between our commercial appraiser's valuation and their appraiser's valuation. Upon review, we discovered the third floor was not a full upper floor as we had originally appraised, making the square footage less. Mr. O'Sullivan made a motion to accept Ms. Lewy's recommendation for the refund of \$2,693.81. Mr. Lovejoy seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

Ms. Lewy stated that there is a BTLA hearing for 71 Portsmouth Ave (BMW) on August 14<sup>th</sup>.

Ms. Lewy recommended a Veteran's Tax Credit for Ryan Grochmal. Mr. Lovejoy made a motion to approve the tax credit as recommended. Mr. Houghton seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

Ms. Lewy presented an Intent to Cut at Rollins Hill. The Selectmen signed the document.

Lastly, Ms. Lewy presented five properties at Breslin Farm for the Land Use Change Tax. Mr. O'Sullivan made a motion to approve the five properties for the Land Use Change Tax as recommended by Ms. Lewy. Mr. Lovejoy seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

In consideration of changing the asset limits on the elderly exemption, Ms. Lewy acquired a report from the state listing communities and their limits. She is putting together a report of comparable communities for the Board's review for next year.

#### ADMINISTRATION

Regarding the old town hall, Mr. Deschaine recalled that the Board signed a Memorandum of Understanding which referenced a Purchase and Sale Agreement that gave further detail to the terms. The terms have finally been negotiated between the Heritage Commission and Mark Perlowski. Mr. Houghton made a motion to execute the Purchase and Sale Agreement as presented for the Town of Stratham old Town Hall and Perlowski Properties, LLC. Mr. O'Sullivan seconded the motion which passed unanimously. Mr. Deschaine noted that the 79E application will be coming shortly, requiring a Public Hearing. This is an enabling statute that allows applicants that meet certain criteria be granted tax relief for any improvements they do. There will also be easement deeds.

The Fire Department is requesting an increase in the rate of pay for EMS details. Mr. O'Sullivan made a motion retroactive to June 2, 2018 that the Fire Dept. rate for EMS details increase their rate from \$17/hour to \$25/hour and maintain that rate going forward. Mr. Lovejoy seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

Mr. Deschaine forwarded emails relative to the recycling grant that the Planning Commission brought to the Board's attention. He is confirming the Board's support in pursuing that grant application. The Town is researching using a larger container cart oriented recycling curbside collection program versus the bin one we have now. This grant would offset the cost of the carts to the residents. There are pros and cons to each program. The selectmen agreed that there is much research and discussion to be done.

Library Trustees requested Geri Denton be appointed as their representative to the Master Plan Steering Committee. Mr. Lovejoy moved to appoint Geri Denton to the Master Plan Steering Committee effective immediately. Mr. O'Sullivan seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

Lastly, Mr. Deschaine reported that Planning Board member Tom House has requested a six month leave of absence. Mr. Houghton said that Mr. House is a highly valued and actively involved member of the Planning Board and the Technical Review Committee. Mr. Lovejoy made a motion to grant Mr. House's request for a leave of absence effective immediately. Mr. Houghton seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

Mr. Deschaine said that the Pedestrian & Cyclists Advocacy Committee's proposal for bicyclist signs is being deferred to a future meeting. Mr. Lovejoy questioned which budget the cost of the signs would be coming out of. They discussed what the signs may say. Mr. Houghton asked what was being done with the Safe Routes to Schools grant money. Mr. Deschaine said that projects have been identified, but the committee has yet to work on them. In addition to the sign proposal, there will also be a request for reappointment. Mr. Houghton is asking for an accounting of accomplishments in terms of its work from the Committee and its task groups in consideration of reappointment. He also would like to see the committee's goals for the next 12 months.

Mr. Deschaine said that he has been keeping track of the tasks that the Board wanted to accomplish and has delegated responsibility to department heads where appropriate. He reviewed the tasks listed on the Meeting Outline. Mr. Houghton and Mr. Lovejoy also had put together lists, some of which has already been accomplished. On Mr. Houghton's list, he'd like each selectman to champion an item on the list and have a date due. It will be a "living document" with items constantly being updated. Mr. O'Sullivan and Mr. Lovejoy will email Mr. Houghton with items to add during the week and next week they will decide who will champion what. Mr. Deschaine continued to review the items on his list, including the Bartlett-Cushman house, old Town Hall public hearing, Smyk Property modifications.

## MEETINGS

Mr. Houghton reviewed the meetings of the past and coming week. It was noted that the Heritage Commission and Recreation Commission have the summer off. The Rt 108 Corridor Study Committee cancelled their last meeting but will meet August 9<sup>th</sup>. They discussed the urgency of getting the survey out to the public.

Mr. Deschaine brought to the Board's attention the annual report on the landfill results. Overall it was a good report, but some items will need monitoring.

The contract with Municipal Resources Inc. was sent today; reference checks are being done for the Truck Driver position; the Maintenance and Building Inspector/Code Enforcement Officer position close on August 6<sup>th</sup>.

At 8:59 pm Mr. Lovejoy made a motion to go into a non-public session to discuss a personnel matter. Mr. Houghton seconded the motion which passed unanimously. At 9:19 pm Mr. Lovejoy motioned to come out of the non-public session and seal the minutes. Mr. O'Sullivan seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

At 9:19 pm Mr. Lovejoy made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Houghton seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Richard  
Recording Secretary