

MINUTES OF THE SEPTEMBER 10, 2018 BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING

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

At 7:03 pm Mr. Houghton opened the public meeting of the Board of Selectmen.

MINUTES

Mr. Lovejoy made a motion to accept the minutes of the meetings of 8/20/18 and 8/29/18. Mr. O'Sullivan seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

TREASURER

Town Treasurer Deb Bronson stated that the General Fund balance is \$7,589,114.53. The September school payments have been deducted.

ASSESSING

Town Assessor Andrea Lewy began by requesting denial of two abatements citing lack of information for one. The other is Unitil. There is disagreement over the method used to calculate the assessment. Mr. O'Sullivan made a motion to deny Donovan Trust and Unitil Energy Systems their requested abatements. Mr. Lovejoy seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

Ms. Lewy reported that regarding the BTLA case, SSS Realty (BMW) has withdrawn their appeal. The case is closed.

Ms. Lewy recommended approval of four veteran's credits. Mr. Lovejoy made a motion to approve the veteran's credits as presented. Mr. O'Sullivan seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

Ms. Lewy presented the deeds for 45 and 61 Frying Pan Lane to be signed for the Discretionary Preservation Easement. The selectmen signed the deeds.

Next Ms. Lewy presented, and the Board signed, the Timber Tax Warrant for Lester and Catherine Carbonneau.

Ms. Lewy asked the Board to approve a refund in the amount of \$40 for Joseph Massidda, explaining that we made a mistake when we processed his Land Use Change Tax abatement. The Board signed the document.

Ms. Lewy stated the MS-1 extension has been filed. The Dept. of Revenue hasn't put out utility values yet. She has been talking with DOR utility appraiser who said she would put us on a priority list.

Ms. Lewy said that in October she would email the Board her recommendations for asset limits for the Elderly Exemption. That would give the Board enough time to consider increasing our asset limit for next year and allow for it to be put on the tax warrant.

OLD BUSINESS

Mr. Houghton wanted to continue the discussion regarding the subdivision and sale of the Bartlett-Cushman property. Members of the Heritage Commission were present and expressed deep concerns that the Selectmen were considering not placing a preservation easement on the inside of the Bartlett-Cushman house. Members of the Commission voiced heartfelt arguments in favor of placing a preservation easement on the interior. Dave Canada cited public support for previous preservation easements. Rebecca Mitchell felt strongly that the interior and exterior must both be in place for the home to retain its historic value. The group advocates keeping the property, renovating and renting it. Ms. Mitchell presented a diagram showing where alterations could be allowed noting that historic features are a selling point. Flossie Wiggin and Lucy Cushman believe that the home and its land will be of value to future generations and the Town would regret selling it.

Although the Selectmen support a preservation easement on the outside, they do not support one on the inside. They advocate letting the taxpayers decide what to do. The selectmen asserted that a considerable amount of money has been invested thus far and they do not think it is wise to invest more without hearing from the taxpayers. To make the house rentable or sellable, a considerable amount of additional money would have to be invested in it. Realtors and developers have advised that the property is unmarketable and undesirable if there is a preservation easement on the interior. They suggested the Heritage Commission put together a Warrant Article for Town Meeting to determine if the taxpayers support investing additional money in the house.

Ms. Cushman asked what the Board's plan for the property was. Mr. Houghton said they applied for State Subdivision approval which is pending. It splits the lot in half with the front half parallel to Portsmouth Ave and encompasses the house.

Mr. Houghton advised Mr. Deschaine to obtain a draft contract on a P & S which contains a preservation easement on the building's exterior and a recommended listing price. He'd also like a second draft contract of a Purchase and Sale Agreement with a preservation easement on the exterior and limited interior easements. He is asking the Heritage Commission to formulate a rehabilitation strategy document and pricing that the board could evaluate. He'd also like a timeframe. The Selectmen will revisit this issue at the October 1st meeting.

They discussed a suggestion made by Mr. Canada to put an easement on the septic system on Town property which would go with the house. This would reduce the lot size going with the house and increase the land for the Town. Mr. Canada will look into the matter and report back.

NEW BUSINESS

Marty Wool asked if he was on the agenda a few weeks ago. Mr. Deschaine responded that the Tyler Blood Eagle Scout Project had changed and no longer included the flagpole. Mr. Wool questioned if there were enough flagpoles. Parks & Recreation Director Seth Hickey replied one pole has been temporarily taken down due to the ballfield reconstruction. When it is resurrected, there will be a sufficient number of poles to fly all necessary flags.

Public Works Director Colin Laverty and Parks & Recreation Director Seth Hickey reported on the Stratham Hill Park upper baseball field reconstruction project. There were more stumps and logs than they had anticipated increasing the total cost by \$7500. The project will need a large amount of fill which puts them over the 2018 budgeted amount of \$125,000 by \$13,141. They reviewed the details of what still needs to be done. Mr. Laverty has found a buyer for the ground stumps which will bring in approximately \$3,000 in revenue. Mr. Hickey said that he has money carried over from his budget to cover the additional expenses. They preserved the backstop and the dugouts but the fence will need to be replaced. It cost approximately \$15,000 and will be in his CIP for next year. Mr. Hickey answered Mr. Houghton's questions regarding field orientation. Mr. Laverty has worked closely with Pitkin Construction on the excavation and is confident there will be no issues in the future. They will need to wait for the installation of the fence to fully complete the project. Mr. Laverty explained why the fill they have on hand is the most economical option. Mr. O'Sullivan made a motion to approve the use of \$25,000 from the CIP Parks & Recreation budget. Mr. Lovejoy seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

POLICE DEPT.

Police Chief John Scippa reported that the detail police car purchased in 2013 is in need of repairs costing \$1200. They reviewed where the money for the Detail Fund money comes from. Chief Scippa said that although it was in his budget, they had unexpected repairs in the beginning of the year which has left him with a lower than anticipated balance currently. Mr. O'Sullivan made a motion to authorize the expenditure of up to \$1,200 from the Detail Fund to repair the detail car. Mr. Lovejoy seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS

The Town of Stratham Board of Selectmen, in a majority vote, accepted the terms of the Pre-Disaster Mitigation (PDM) Program as presented in the amount of \$9,000.00 for the Local Hazard Mitigation Plan Update. Furthermore, the Board acknowledges that the total cost of this project will be \$12,000.00, in which the Town will be responsible for a 25% match (\$3,000.00). Mr. Lovejoy made a motion to accept the grant. Mr. Houghton seconded the motion which passed unanimously. They signed the paperwork.

Mr. Deschaine received an email from the Daughters of the American Revolution noting that Constitution Week is September 17 – 23. They requested this be proclaimed "Constitution Week". Mr. Lovejoy made a motion to accept and sign the proclamation. Mr. O'Sullivan seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

Mr. Deschaine received a raffle permit application from the NH SPCA with the drawing Dec. 15. Mr. O'Sullivan made a motion to approve the request for a raffle permit for the NH SPCA. Mr. Lovejoy seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

September is when all Town vehicles are due to get inspection stickers. Town Planner Tavis Austin reported that the Ford Explorer that the Code Enforcement Officer/Building Inspector uses will not pass inspection. There is \$30,000 in the CIP which was set aside for its replacement. He advocates getting a pick-up truck as it will better suit the department's needs.

The purchase price of the truck is \$30,111 with a \$1,000 trade-in of the Explorer. This is an alternative to the state bid vehicle which would have taken 6-10 weeks for delivery. Mr. Lovejoy made a motion to authorize the purchase of a GM Colorado for \$31,111. Mr. O'Sullivan seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

Mr. Deschaine reported receiving calls from residents inquiring when trick or treating will be held this year. Mr. O'Sullivan made a motion to stay with tradition and hold trick or treat day on Tuesday, October 30, 2018. Mr. Lovejoy seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

Mr. Deschaine asked when Town Meeting would be set for 2019. Elections are the second Tuesday in March and, traditionally, we hold Town Meeting the subsequent Friday. They discussed moving the date or time, but determined that no matter when it is held, there would be difficulties for some people. Mr. O'Sullivan motioned to hold Town Meeting on Friday, March 15, 2019. Mr. Lovejoy seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

Greg Pruitt of the Collector's Eye requested from Mr. Lavery the use of Highway's cones and barricades during an event they will hold this weekend. The Selectmen wanted some compensation for their use. Mr. O'Sullivan made a motion to approve the request contingent upon acceptance of what Mr. Lavery sets as the price for providing and retrieving the cones. Mr. Lovejoy seconded the motion which passed unanimously. The Selectman recognized that this is a difficult piece of road and they have concerns for safety which is the primary reason for allowing this request.

Mr. Canada reported to Mr. Deschaine that Wallace Stuart offered his resignation from the Heritage Commission. Mr. Houghton made a motion to accept Mr. Stuart's resignation. Mr. Lovejoy seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

Mr. Deschaine received a request asking that September be designated as National Suicide Prevention Awareness month. The Board supported the request. Mr. Deschaine will prepare the paperwork.

Mr. Deschaine said that today was the deadline for applicants for his position. Upon Mr. Deschaine's inquiry, MRI reported there are 34 applicants, half from New Hampshire, 5 from Massachusetts. Some applicants look promising.

Mr. Deschaine wanted to bring to the Board's attention that he received a letter from the Dept. of Environmental Services stating there may be PFOA's in their well water. However, we have already tested the wells and they are acceptable. They are due to be retested in the fall.

Mr. Houghton said the selectmen have Elections covered. He proceeded to go over the meetings for the coming week. It was noted the Rt 108 Committee Gateway Survey closed today. Michael Dane will be putting together a report and it will be reviewed at Thursday's meeting. Mr. Houghton inquired about the Building Inspector/Code Enforcement Officer and Building Maintenance Foreman positions. Mr. Deschaine said we are waiting on background checks and physicals.

Mr. Deschaine attended the Exeter Area Chamber of Commerce meeting. Mr. Hickey will be replacing him on the Board of Directors. Mr. O'Sullivan reported discussing conservation easements at the Conservation Commission meeting. At the Rt 108 Committee meeting, preliminary survey results were reviewed. Mr. Deschaine reported taking a representative from Applied Economic Research through the town, explaining the history, the zones, etc. to assist with his report.

Mr. Houghton announced that the Public Hearing for the Smyk property will be next Monday, September 17th. The hearing will be to state that the Town is accepting the property with \$300,000 attached and some conditions that have been mitigated through the agreement. The selectmen had questions regarding who was responsible for some of the items and Mr. Deschaine clarified. Mr. Deschaine described some of the details of RSA 43, the statute that applies to this public hearing. They discussed the importance of making a timely decision.

Mr. Houghton said he hasn't received a response to the Foss Driveway maintenance.

At 9:31 pm Mr. O'Sullivan made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Lovejoy seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

At 9:31 pm Mr. Deschaine re-opened the meeting to discuss a reservation request. He explained that the Parks & Recreation Dept. forgot to book the Front Pavilion for Family Fun Day and a resident booked it for a bridal shower. Mr. Deschaine suggested the fee be waived because it was our error and because of the inconvenience. Mr. O'Sullivan accepted the recommendation to waive the fee. Mr. Lovejoy seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

At 9:33 pm Mr. Houghton adjourned the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Richard
Recording Secretary