

## **MINUTES OF THE NOVEMBER 27, 2017 BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING**

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

At 7:37 pm Chairman Federico opened the general meeting of the Board of Selectmen.

### **MINUTES**

Mr. Houghton made a motion to approve the 11/20/17 minutes as amended. Mr. Federico seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

### **TREASURER'S REPORT**

Town Treasurer Deb Bronson stated the General Fund balance is \$9,860,618.04

### **NEW BUSINESS**

A joint meeting with the Pedestrian & Cyclist Advocacy Committee opened. Members Parks & Recreation Director Seth Hickey, co-chair Melissa Gahr, co-chair Bettina Kersten, member Pamela Hollasch, and Safe Routes to Schools SMS representative Stefanie Bergeron were present. Executive Director of Rockingham Planning Commission Tim Roach talked about the Safe Routes to Schools grant applications – one being a start-up grant for just under \$10,000 and the other is a travel grant for just under \$30,000. SRtS is a federal program that encompasses not only building sidewalks, but teaching safety and encouraging children to walk or bike to school. The Town would only have to pay for advertising per the administrative requirements of the rfq. No other costs would be incurred. The Town would have to budget for it, but then would be reimbursed. There is a possibility of a third grant to cover such items as a crossing guard, bike rodeos and speed enforcement. Mr. Federico made a motion to allow Town Administrator Paul Deschaine to act on behalf of the Town and sign the documents related to the grant application. Mr. Houghton seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

A resident, Jeremy Ricks wanted further explanation of last weeks' minutes, specifically regarding the lights on the bridge to Newmarket. Mr. Federico gave a recount of the request from Roger Barczak to have the lights turned on. Mr. Ricks is adamantly opposed to having the lights turned on citing cost savings and reducing night sky pollution as the reasons. He feels keeping the lights off is not a safety concern and there is simply no need for turning them on. Mr. Ricks went on to question what he believes are additional lights at Stratham Hill Park and leaving the lights at the Town Center on all night. In the 11/6 minutes, Mr. Ricks questioned the necessity and cost of lighting the Police station sign. He is advocating being more mindful when illuminating areas (such as lighting from the top, shining down to the ground) and doing more comparison shopping when buying items. Mr. Deschaine went over the chronology of events regarding lighting the Newmarket Bridge. Mr. Ricks talked about how older people's eyes don't adjust quickly to a change in lighting, making lighting the bridge more dangerous for walkers and bikers.

## ASSESSING

Town Assessor Andrea Lewy recommended five veteran's for approval of the Veteran's Credit. All meet the criteria to receive the credit in 2018. Mr. Lovejoy motioned to approve the Veteran's Credit for the tax year 2018 for the five individuals Ms. Lewy recommended. Mr. Houghton seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

Ms. Lewy did an inspection of the interior and exterior of the old Town Hall. As a result, the assessment on the property was lowered from \$523,000 to \$329,100. Mr. Deschaine asked if the new owner would be filing an abatement. Ms. Lewy wasn't sure, as he has not taken ownership of the property yet. She will contact him.

## MEETINGS

Mr. Federico went over the scheduled meetings for the coming week. Mr. Deschaine recommended the selectmen attend the Emergency Operations Center training.

## PARKS & RECREATION

Parks & Recreation Director Seth Hickey reported on activities at Stratham Hill Park: repairs have been made to the upper field fence; the water has been shut off for the season; the ice rink is being installed. He reported that use of the trails has been growing. As a result, he will be asking for funding in 2018 to attend to them.

Mr. Hickey reported that he performed an energy audit to reduce heating costs at the Gifford House. He worked with the Heritage Commission in replacing the storm door. Mr. Deschaine noted that the winterization program can be a 50/50 grant for improvements up to a maximum of \$8,800. The Energy Commission will budget \$4,400 to cover potential improvements to the energy efficiency of the house.

Mr. Hickey continued his report on Stratham Hill Park saying the work on the Front and Scamman bathroom floors has been completed. The stall dividers were completely rotted and have been removed. He is doing comparison shopping for their replacement. He is also obtaining contractor quotes for painting the Front Pavilion in the spring of 2018.

Mr. Hickey met with the directors of the Fair Committee who inquired about using the upper fenced field for 2018. The concern is the safety of using the field because of sink holes. He said he would defer that decision to the selectmen.

Stevens Park is closed for the season.

Regarding youth sports activities: soccer has concluded; basketball is well underway; they are preparing for spring baseball.

Mr. Hickey said that neither he nor Cantrece can attend the community trip to see the Portland Symphony Orchestra. The three Town Clerks volunteered to go in their place.

Mr. Hickey reported that 200 kids have signed up for the Pats Peak ski program. They've added a Gunstock program, in addition to the McIntyre program that they have always done. Ten years ago they had 30 kids in the program; the goal is to have 300 kids participate this year.

Parks & Recreation is working with the SMS PTO on a Christmas Tree Pick up fundraiser. Mr. Hickey requested the Board's endorsement to make it a community event with a bonfire at the park. Mr. Federico made a motion to allow the bonfire on January 6, 2018 and support the overall initiative of the Christmas tree pickup fundraiser. Mr. Houghton seconded the request which passed unanimously.

Mr. Hickey said he is having difficulty finding space for his programs. Mr. Deschaine said that although we do have a few rooms, they are all being used frequently. Possible options for additional space, including the old Town Hall or the Smyk property were reviewed. Mr. Hickey volunteered to be on the committee to look into the feasibility of the Smyk property. Mr. Houghton asked him to recruit people for the committee so that we may hear opinions from a wider group of people.

Mr. Hickey recommends staying with the current part-time person as Park Ranger. He felt that they were able to maintain the park at its usual level during this past season. Mr. Deschaine added that he believes the success in getting everything done was due to the specific individuals involved, however, he doesn't think it can be maintained in the long run. Mr. Houghton feels the park ranger position should be re-evaluated. He also asked Mr. Hickey if he had given thought to a long range plan for the department. Mr. Hickey responded that he hasn't formulated a long range plan, but he tries to add new programs every year. He prefers to see what the needs of the community are and respond to them as they arise.

At 9:05 pm Mr. Federico made a motion to go into a non-public session to discuss a personnel issue. Mr. Lovejoy seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

At 9:13 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.

#### ADMINISTRATION

Chris McKinnon of the Bean Group is evaluating the proposal for the lease of the Bartlett-Cushman house that Colleen Lake had previously submitted. Mr. Deschaine reviewed the fees on the Keller Williams proposal. Mr. Houghton wants to make a decision at next Monday's meeting. Mr. Lovejoy said he will not be able to attend next Monday's meeting but he does want closure on this subject. Whether we are contracting with the agent or the agency was debated.

Mr. Deschaine reminded the Board that we still need a representative for the House Bill 431 Commission.

It was noted that June Sawyer will be missing part of the Budget Advisory Committee meetings. David Emanuel has asked the Board for recommendations for a fill in for Ms. Sawyer. Mr.

Emanuel has contacted someone to see if they are interested in filling in the position left vacant by Tracey McGrail. Mr. Deschaine said we also need a representative from the School Board that will be able to attend the meetings. The necessity of having the meetings during the third week of January was affirmed.

#### NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Deschaine presented for the Board's signature a Homeland Security Protective grant for EMS Warm Zone Equipment in the amount of \$6,000. As Fire Chief Matt Larrabee reported last week, he will collaborate with the Seacoast Police Chiefs to purchase the equipment. As suggested by Mr. Deschaine, Mr. Federico made a motion to accept the grant and authorize Fire Chief Matt Larrabee to be the Program Officer, Accounting Supervisor Valerie Kemp to be the Financial Officer and Mr. Deschaine to be the Authorized Officer. Mr. Lovejoy seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

Mr. Deschaine introduced the subject of employing a third party inspector as previously recommended by Code Enforcement Officer/Building Inspector Mark Morong. Questions were raised regarding potential costs. Mr. Deschaine requested a non-public session. At 9:45 pm Mr. Lovejoy motioned to go into a non-public session to discuss a personnel issue. Mr. Federico seconded the motion which passed unanimously. At 10:08 pm Mr. Lovejoy motioned to come out of the non-public session and seal the minutes. Mr. Houghton seconded the motion which passed unanimously. There was discussion about if and/or how we would bill for the inspector's services. The Board agreed it didn't want this position to negatively impact the budget. They would like to define what the indicators would be for special third party review in order to justify billing for it. Mr. Deschaine will get more information from Mr. Morong.

Mr. Lovejoy gave the selectmen and Mr. Deschaine a list of who he would like to be considered to be on the Study Committee for the Smyk Property. Mr. Houghton felt it was important to get a cross-section of the community, which he thought Mr. Lovejoy captured, with perhaps the addition of a few more people with younger children. They would like to have a minimum of 7 people; no more than 9.

Mr. Deschaine mentioned that, in doing research in connection with the Smyk property, he read the part of the Town Report where it was voted on at Town Meeting that the old Town Hall was to be sold in order to pay for the renovations on our current Municipal Building.

Getting back to the subject of the Smyk property, Mr. Deschaine said that legal counsel was still reviewing the governance of the Trust and other legal issues. The Committee's objective will be to evaluate the property offered within the parameters given, determine what the use might be, offer a best guess as to what the cost to the Town on an annual basis is likely to be in the near term and generate a fee schedule that would deliver at least \$50,000 in revenue. Mr. Lovejoy will give the list to Mr. Hickey and Library Director Lesley Kimball for their suggestions and Mr. Houghton will reach out to Pedestrian & Cyclist Advocacy Committee Chairs Melissa Gahr and Bettina Kiersten for their suggestions.

At 10:35 pm Mr. Federico made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Lovejoy seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Richard  
Recording Secretary