

MINUTES OF THE DECEMBER 2, 2019 SELECT BOARD MEETING

MEMBER'S PRESENT: Board Members Chair Mike Houghton, Vice Chair Joe Lovejoy, Board member Allison Knab were in attendance along with Town Administrator David Moore.

At 7:00 p.m. Mr. Houghton opened the meeting.

MINUTES

Mr. Lovejoy made a motion to approve the amended minutes of 10/7/19. Ms. Knab seconded the motion, which passed unanimously. Ms. Knab made a motion to approve the 11/4/19 minutes with an amendment. Mr. Lovejoy seconded the motion, which passed unanimously. Mr. Houghton made a motion to approve the 11/18/19 minutes. Mr. Lovejoy seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Houghton directed attention to the budgets and budget preparations. Mr. Moore presented a draft agenda for the upcoming budget meeting on Thursday. The departments have submitted draft presentations to Mr. Moore and he has been working with them to refine them. Mr. Moore described how he sees the meeting taking shape. He presented an updated draft budget. Per previous direction of the Board, the staff produced "base" budgets representing no new programs, services or added personnel. They compared the difference in the budget from this year to last. Open positions that are now filled are a substantial portion of the year over year increase but that is a reflection of last year's budget and the strategy of not funding full-year salaries for several positions. This year the base budget includes funding a full 12 months for the Finance Administrator position (as opposed to 6 months in 2019) and 12 months for the DPW Director and Police Chief as well as the new compensation model for the fire department. Costs have also risen in the area of health insurance, workers comp, property and liability. Work is taking place on other areas of the budget including CIP and special warrant articles (ex: funding Capital Reserve Funds and Town Trusts).

Mr. Moore indicated the Budget Advisory Committee will review proposed new programs, services and personnel proposed by department heads separately and make a recommendation to the Board. He then invited Department heads including Parks and Recreation Director, Police Chief and the Fire Chief to speak to their proposed new programs/increases specifically, in advance of their department presentations on Thursday. Parks and Recreation Director Seth Hickey spoke to his a la carte items including part-time staff hours in support of additional senior programming and funds for programming for the senior population. The Board was supportive of how Mr. Hickey has responded to the needs of seniors in the community. Moving the maintenance of Town facilities from the Parks & Rec department will allow Mr. Hickey to take a more active role in managing reservations. Next, Police Chief Anthony King was called on to detail the reasons for his request for an additional officer. Chief King cited nationwide statistics, regional comparisons and workload duties. Call volume has increased causing us to rely on mutual aid. The lack of officers effects qualifying for grants. Chief King explained how he plans to manage the fleet of police vehicles. Replacement of the aging vehicles will go in his CIP.

Next, Fire Chief Matt Larrabee explained the new compensation model for the Fire Dept. Stand by coverage has recently been implemented, causing an increase in their payroll. Recruiting and retaining people has always been a challenge according to the Chief. He feels the key to their success lies in the fact that many of the people in the department are from Stratham. Because of this

connection, they are involved in community events – Light for Lives, the Fair, Family Fun Day, etc. They discussed the optimal number of people per shift and the difficulty obtaining coverage.

Following the budget discussion, the Chair recognized resident Mike Desroches. Mr. Desroches is effected by the PFAS issue and is hoping to get a reduction on his assessment because of it. Mr. Moore stated that we are working with the State to determine the extent of the issue. The research is almost finalized. Mitigation strategies will be forthcoming. The Town will most likely be directed by the State on treatment implementation. Mr. Moore referred Mr. Desroches to the abatement process and indicated he would send the resident the information in the morning.

The Chair recognized Code Enforcement Officer/Building Inspector Shanti Wolph. Mr. Wolph is requesting a change in the hours he currently works, summarized in a letter request to the Board. The change will not significantly impact residents or staff; conversely it offers more convenience for residents and contractors looking for inspection appointments earlier in the day or office hours later on some days. Mr. Wolph detailed the hours he currently works, typically well above the 40 hours required. Mr. Lovejoy made a motion to grant Mr. Wolph's request for adjusted work hours. Ms. Knab seconded his request. Mr. Houghton was opposed due to the lack of a guiding policy or strategy for making such a change. The Board thanked Mr. Wolph for his diligent work on behalf of the Town. Motion passed.

The Fire Department is requesting to have beer and wine at their holiday party, requiring permission of the Board in accordance with the Morgera Room Reservation Policy. Ms. Knab made a motion to approve the request. Mr. Lovejoy seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

The Chair then moved on to the All-Staff Meeting discussion on the agenda. Mr. Moore gave an update on the Joint Loss Management Committee. He mentioned the potential to host a training by Primex and potentially speak to a new Emergency Notification System to be rolled out. He indicated procedures that must be followed and he is working with Chief King to implement them. Mr. Moore continued, raising topics that he felt should be presented at the All-Staff meeting. He discussed the goal of engaging with employees and making sure staff have an opportunity to interact with the Board. Another goal of the meeting is to ensure all staff are informed on the major projects currently underway.

Mr. Moore briefly spoke about the Town Report and potential opportunities for adding information or presenting the report. There are statutory requirements for some items that must be included. They discussed ways to make the budget more understandable by providing backup and explanations to provide context. The DRA has requirements that we must abide by but the Board felt improvements could be made to the presentation.

The Board and TA discussed preparations for Town Meeting including strategies for room logistics and a brief discussion about the option for choosing an alternative day to hold the meeting. The discussion will did not result in a determination on any specifics.

In other business, Mr. Moore has reviewed the proposed Clemons park plaque and found it to be acceptable. Mr. Houghton made a motion to have the Town Administrator work with the parties to come up with a suitable sign for the Park at River Landing in substantial conformance with the materials provided to Mr. Moore to date. Mr. Lovejoy seconded the motion which passed unanimously. Next, they discussed the proposed donation of Big Red by the Ladies Auxiliary. The Board felt they needed more information before making a decision. Mr. Moore requested a motion

on Lt. Pierce's vacation pay request. Mr. Houghton made a motion to move forward with the request, which is consistent with the vacation leave policy as written. Ms. Knab seconded the motion which passed unanimously. They talked about improvements to sick and vacation leave benefits in order to respond to concerns raised in the past and agreed it is a discussion the Board should return to.

Mr. Moore received a request to let the employees take a half-day on Christmas Eve. They tried to recall what was done in the past. Ms. Knab made a motion to close the office early on December 24th and pay the hourly employees. Mr. Lovejoy seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

Mr. Moore stated that Mr. Perkins of Jack Rabbit Lane notified him that his property was for sale.

Mr. Moore wanted to check-in with the Board on policies and preferences for managing the Town Office hours during inclement weather and closing the office. Mr. Houghton feels the policy should be that we are open for business and that it is each person's responsibility to make the decision as to their own safety. The Board's consensus reflected Mr. Houghton's summation; with the understanding that major and unusual weather events and other rare circumstances would be handled on a case-by-case basis. Mr. Moore indicated he would follow-up accordingly.

Ms. Knab made a motion to authorize the Town Administrator to enter into a professional services agreement with MAPS for the Hazard Mitigation Project, which is 100% grant funded by the State of NH. Mr. Lovejoy seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

At 9:18 Mr. Houghton made a motion to enter into a non-public session to discuss personnel matters. Mr. Lovejoy seconded the motion which passed unanimously. At 10:17 they voted to come out of the non-public session and seal the minutes indicating that failure to do so would render the discussion or proposed action ineffective.

At 10:17 pm Mr. Houghton made a motion to adjourn. Ms. Knab seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
Karen Richard
Recording Secretary