

## **MINUTES OF THE FEBRUARY 4, 2019 SELECT BOARD MEETING**

MEMBER'S PRESENT: Board Members Mike Houghton, Joe Lovejoy, Allison Knab and Town Administrator David Moore.

At 7:14 pm Mr. Houghton opened the public meeting of the Select Board.

### **TREASURER**

Town Treasurer Deb Bronson reported that the General Fund balance is \$8,760,721.12.

The Chair recognized Parks and Recreation Director Seth Hickey to provide his regular quarterly report to the Board.

### **PARKS & RECREATION**

Parks & Recreation Director Seth Hickey reported that Exeter Jr. Baseball League is requesting to rent the Babe Ruth field for three months at \$1,000 per month. He confirmed that it wouldn't interfere with our programs. He is still in negotiations with them and will report to Mr. Moore with additional details.

Mr. Hickey reported on Parks & Recreation activities: they held a community bonfire which was coordinated with SMS as a fundraiser for their 5<sup>th</sup> grade activities; the ice skating rink is being used; trails have been continually groomed. There is an electrical issue at the park, which is being addressed by Kramer Electric. Baseball field construction has been ongoing. The area will be useable in time for the Fair. Fencing will be put in in August. Parks & Rec is planning a new event in conjunction with the Exeter Area Chamber of Commerce – a food truck festival on May 4<sup>th</sup>. He hopes this will be a good fundraiser for the Dept.

Mr. Hickey's been working with Owen Gandt on his Eagle Scout project. Because the project pertains to the park, Mr. Hickey has involved the Conservation Commission.

The basketball program has 258 children enrolled. Usage of SMS has gone well. Baseball and softball registration is open. Registration for Summer Camp filled in six hours. Mr. Hickey has included in his budget an increase in staff. To accommodate the children on the wait list, he hopes to open a 4-day program. They discussed the revenue and expenses associated with the program. The Select Board agreed it was appropriate to hire additional camp staff and open the wait list.

The ski programs are going well. He will be taking a closer look at the Pat's Peak program to ensure Stratham residents are served first.

Next, Mr. Hickey reviewed a handout on the Recreation Revolving account. He explained the reasoning for the consolidation of the Reserve Account. Mr. Hickey explained the process for expenditures. They discussed revenue, donations and expenses. This account is used to deposit various registration fees for programs offered through the department and they are in turn used to fund expenses related to the program offerings such as equipment, uniforms and other expenses.

Mr. Hickey presented a detailed memo requesting Select Board support for purchase of a 15 passenger vehicle for transportation. He'd like to suggest utilizing \$20,000 from the Rec Revolving account. Purchase of the van would allow \$5,000 to be removed from the general budget, as that money had been set aside for transportation for community trips. Mr. Hickey outlined the need for a van giving examples of how it could help the department to expand its services to the elderly and youth of our community. He and Mr. Houghton discussed costs associated with hiring drivers, gas and ongoing maintenance of the vehicle.

Mr. Moore asked about usage in the part-time payroll for the Park from year to year. Mr. Hickey noted fluctuations in drawing from that line item was due to the transition from a full-time Park Ranger to part-time staff.

Mr. Hickey is working with residents who have conservation easements on their property to develop trails as part of a PCAC effort to connect trails throughout town.

#### FIRE

Fire Chief Matt Larrabee announced that they have the opportunity to accept a boat from the Seacoast SERT team. There would be no cost to the Town. The Fire Department has seen an increase in calls related to incidents at Chapman's Landing and Squamscott River therefore Chief Larrabee sees a use for it. Mr. Lovejoy made a motion to authorize the Fire Dept. to work with the Town Administrator to accept the donation of a Zodiac boat, 60 hp engine and to do the paperwork necessary to transfer ownership to the Fire Dept. Mr. Houghton seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

#### OLD BUSINESS

Mr. Moore explained that laws require a certain number of days from the Public Hearing before the Board can sign the Bartlett Cushman Purchase and Sale Agreement. The document will be signed Wednesday at a special meeting of the Select Board scheduled for Wednesday.

#### SKATE PARK COMMITTEE

The Skate Park Committee came before the Board seeking their support at Town Meeting for the project. Kerri Vivathana said they have begun a citizen petition to have a Warrant Article. Mr. Houghton expressed uncertainty regarding the numbers. Mike Tallone has spoken to Pillar, the design firm, who assured him that they will have cost line items ready for Town Meeting and a to scale rendering. They also plan to go before the Planning Board. Mr. Moore noted the deadline for petitions is Feb. 5<sup>th</sup>, all potential Warrant Articles must be discussed at the Feb. 11<sup>th</sup> meeting. The Warrant must be posted by Feb. 25<sup>th</sup>, however, in order to get it in the paper it must be done by the 22<sup>nd</sup>. Mr. Tallone clarified that Pillar is the design firm, but the work will be contracted out to Artisan who will build the park. Rob Roseen addressed the drainage concerns raised by Mr. Houghton. Neil Gibb spoke about the committee's fundraising goals. Mr. Roseen addressed Mr. Houghton's concerns regarding the abutters being affected by runoff, saying that it would not exacerbate the current issue and may even improve it. Drainage may be improved further with the addition of parking. Ms. Knab wanted to be sure the Committee was considering the overall layout of the park/the big picture and how it relates to the DPW, in particular. Mr. Houghton doesn't feel the project is ready to be taken to Town Meeting. Ms. Vivathana said they don't want to wait another year and are willing to take any steps necessary

to do the project correctly. Ms. Knab supports the project, but feels she doesn't have enough details to advocate a Warrant Article for it. Mr. Lovejoy also supports the project and thinks that the Skate Park Committee members are the best people to advocate for it at Town Meeting. Resident Carla Bretton asked the Board how they would respond if asked if they support the project. Mr. Houghton noted that it would be a Citizen's Petition, so it is the will of the people; the Board will remain neutral. Mr. Moore will research the law to determine if they are allowed to remain neutral. They briefly discussed putting a fence around the DPW.

#### NEW BUSINESS

Acting Police Chief David Pierce presented paperwork to gift former Police Chief John Scippa's revolver to him. Mr. Houghton made a motion to authorize the Town Administrator to execute the agreement for the sale of former Chief Scippa's service revolver for the sum of \$1.00. Ms. Knab seconded the motion which passed unanimously. Chief Pierce also gave an updated job description for the Police Admin Assistant.

#### ADMINISTRATION

The Select Board approved Mr. Moore's draft of the e-newsletter pending Ms. Knab's review. They will discuss alternative methods of distribution at a later date.

Mr. Moore gave an update on the status of the Town Report.

Mr. Moore met with representatives of Casella to learn more about the automated collection program. The Board is in support of the rollout but has questions. Mr. Moore presented a Question & Answer sheet. Casella has implemented this program successfully in other communities. They discussed the size of the totes. Mr. Moore said there is a lot of work to be done and some significant staff time will be required to champion the rollout. They discussed the length of time a new contract with Casella Waste Management should be for. They will request Mr. Groshon of Casella come to next week's meeting to answer questions.

Mr. Moore presented a modified recommendation regarding Elderly Exemptions changes from Town Assessor Andrea Lewy maintain existing income levels and change the asset limits to \$125 to bring Stratham closer to the median of other Rockingham county communities. They questioned keeping the existing income levels and wondered if they were doing enough to benefit the elderly. Mr. Moore recommended achieving consensus to move forward with this recommendation for the Warrant, pending any additional recommendation that might come forward from staff based on the evening's comments. The Board noted its consensus to move forward in this way.

Mr. Moore presented and recommended accepting the Performance Bond Agreement and the related letter of credit for Whittaker Road. Ms. Knab made a motion to accept the Performance Bond Agreement and Letter of Credit for Whittaker Road. Mr. Lovejoy seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Lastly, Mr. Moore wanted to review the budget. He discussed the strategy used last year to budget for a Human Resources Director. Mr. Houghton wanted money set aside for the Casella rollout. Mr. Moore talked about department budget requests and IT services. The IT budget

allows for adding scope and services to the IT contract. Mr. Moore continued to discuss other budget items in detail, including benefits, general government buildings (Smyk, Bartlett-Cushman, rental properties, etc.), Assessing Dept.'s reval, the Police Dept. salaries and another vehicle for that department. This led to a discussion about the expectation of the department's budget requests and their being a need for more validation for those requests in the future.

They continued to discuss budget requests and the accounts they should come from. Even if the money has been allocated for a purchase, if it involves a significant amount of money, they want department heads to come before them to discuss it, as has been the practice. Mr. Moore recommended a level at which capital purchases were reviewed prior to moving forward, such reviews would include a review of the procurement plan.

The Board briefly reviewed the Fire Department, Highway Department and Parks & Recreation budgets. Public Service Provider and Public Assistance requests have remained the same. They discussed projects at Stratham Hill Park and whether items should come from Building Maintenance or CIP. Questions about income and the balance in the Recreation Revolving Fund were raised. The Library and other committee budgets were briefly reviewed. After making some cuts, they are half a percent over last year. They continued to review budgets looking for ways to make cuts. Conservation and Heritage Commission Reserve Fund contributions were discussed.

At 10:25 Mr. Houghton made a motion to enter into a non-public session to discuss personnel matters. Ms. Knab seconded the motion which passed unanimously. At 11:00 pm made a motion to come out of the non-public session and seal the minutes. Mr. Lovejoy seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

At 11:00 pm Mr. Lovejoy made a motion to adjourn. Ms. Knab seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Richard  
Recording Secretary