

MINUTES OF THE MAY 20, 2019 SELECT BOARD MEETING

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

At 7:00p.m. Mr. Houghton opened the public meeting of the Select Board.

MINUTES

Mr. Lovejoy made a motion to approve the minutes of 5/6/19. Ms. Knab made a motion to accept the 5/6/19 minutes as amended. Mr. Lovejoy seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

TREASURER

Mr. Houghton stated that the General Fund balance is \$3,126,000.00.

APPOINTMENTS

Mr. Lovejoy made a motion to approve Sean Kotkowski to the Recreation Commission. Ms. Knab seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS

The Chair then moved to old business and updates were provided from Mr. Moore. The Town is awaiting on a response from the latest submittal to the property owners for the Bunker Hill shared driveway agreement. Mr. Moore stated that there is one open position for Laborer/Truck Driver for the Dept. of Public Works. Mr. Houghton made a motion to accept the resignation of Bryan French. Ms. Knab seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

Town Center pole replacement is in progress.

POLICE

Police Chief Anthony King presented his Department Report and a review of short and long term goals. After meeting with members of his department, he is targeting communication, inclusion and IT issues as his initial priorities. Regarding the IT issues, they have a plan and are on track. Reviewing the budget, he noted a lack of an overtime approval process, which has been instituted. Chief King would like to see the department become accredited or, at least, have its policies and operations match accreditation standards if formal accreditation is not pursued. To reach that goal, he is the process of reviewing the policies. Their evidence room has been cleaned out and is ready for use. Chief King plans to utilize a surplus equipment and evidence disposal service to clean out the attic storage. There was an issue with static on the Town channel on the police car radios but it has been resolved. He is working on ensuring access to the Cooperative Middle School for the Town channel so that they may communicate with officers and other officials in the school. Stratham Memorial School has portable radios. They plan to work on the communication issues with the schools over the summer.

Chief King continued his report announcing that Larry Foss, Foss Motors and President of Exeter Area New Car Dealer Association donated a medical box. This will enable them to

collect discarded prescription drugs, including sharps. Mr. Lovejoy made a motion to allow the Police Chief to accept the donation of a medical box. Ms. Knab seconded the motion which passed unanimously. Chief King gave credit to Lieutenant Pierce for seeking and obtaining the donation. They discussed different methods of letting the public know about the box.

Chief King said they are looking for part-time officers. Mr. Moore clarified that this is already in the budget for 2019. The Chief indicated that, typically, part-time officers pay for their own gear. They would receive a competitive rate of pay and have the same duties as a full-time officer.

Next, Chief King made a Drug Forfeiture Fund request. He explained that when evidence is brought in, it is stored in a room. Currently, that room isn't monitored. He is requesting a video camera be installed. Mr. Lovejoy made a motion to spend \$900 from the Drug Forfeiture account to install the video monitoring camera in the evidence room. Ms. Knab seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

Chief King briefly reviewed his future goals for his department: expanding the evidence room, repairing the second floor hallway and a patrol room renovation to increase storage and working space for the officers. The Board and Mr. Moore noted that money has already been appropriated for some of these items in the CIP. The Board determined it was appropriate for the Chief and Mr. Moore to work together to implement the recommended projects.

Chief King invited the Board to ride along with one of the officers.

Lastly, Chief King said that his initial studies into the Department needs point to the need for adding at least one full-time officer and potentially an additional one in the near future. He indicated there is much work to be done to show the need for the additional staffing and significant research and documentation will be part of the discussions.

Chief King requested funds from various police accounts be used to outfit the Tahoe with necessary items. The Board agreed that this had been previously agreed on. Mr. Lovejoy made a motion to authorize Chief King to equip the Tahoe for service with the MDT, the radar and radio from the sources of funds enumerated in his presentation. Ms. Knab seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Lovejoy noted that although he is on the Route 108 Corridor Study Committee who will be presenting their findings tonight, he has chosen to act in his Select Board capacity.

Route 108 Corridor Study Committee member Lucy Cushman began the presentation with the history of the zoning; she was joined by Town Planner Tavis Austin who staffed the Committee along with Mr. Moore. In 1958 three zones were designated – residential, industrial and commercial. Portsmouth Ave, the main route, just opened 1957. She recalled how Stratham changed over the years and her memories of how things were. The strip malls came in early 70's. Changes to the commercial zoning didn't go over well. In the 80's a new town center was developed. Residents were dissatisfied with the disappearance of older homes and believed any

rezoning would threaten rural agriculture. To enhance the Commercial zoning that was already in place, the Gateway was created. From the beginning it was determined that water and sewer would be necessary only in this zone. People were dissatisfied with the car dealerships and excited to have control over the architecture. When it was first presented at Town Meeting, it wasn't explained well. There were many misconceptions. There were many studies, a lot of discussions and debates. Development of the Gateway district has an economic basis. She compared Stratham to Brentwood who has no commercial development. If we do nothing to enhance our commercial district, Stratham's taxes will increase. If we can get information out to the residents about the Tax Increment Finance District, people will have a better understanding and be able to make an informed decision. She praised the survey done by Michael Dane and the Master Plan Committee for providing a better understanding of the issue. Town Planner Tavis Austin explained that the Master Plan forces a decision to be made about the Gateway District. Policies must be developed and implemented. All the data suggests water/sewer is needed to support the density being proposed in the Master Plan and by the Route 108 Committee. Infrastructure to enable and support some sort of density growth in the commercial district called for in past plans is in lockstep with the Rt. 108 Committee recommendations. Both advocate the same thing. We now have third party validation that supports the notion of the long term vision. One of the frequently asked questions is what would happen if we do nothing? Mr. Lovejoy noted that there will be a doubling of the tax rate. Commercial development will ease the burden on the taxpayers. This is a proactive approach to the future of Stratham; it is making a long-term commitment to the Town. Previous proactive actions have proven beneficial.

One recommendation from the Route 108 Committee is that the Select Board develop a new charge consistent with the recommendations and constitute a new committee. During the discussion it was noted that many projects, which have redeveloped but not been captured as part of the TIF are missed opportunities. Conversations with Exeter officials are needed for the water and sewer connection. Mr. Austin noted the Weston & Sampson report and the AER report are in phases. They discussed next steps including creating a TIF district and Bonds. Communication and public outreach are critical. Mr. Houghton made a motion to accept the report and adopt the recommendations and work towards reconstituting a committee to further pursue this initiative and potentially create parallel paths with multiple committees working toward a convergence. Ms. Knab seconded the motion which passed unanimously. Mr. Lovejoy re-iterated that there are three parallel paths – education of the public with the data on hand, discussions with Exeter to discuss feasibility of making a deal, and discussions with the people that own that property. Further discussion ensued regarding next steps and a reformation of the Route 108 committee. Mr. Lovejoy thanked Ms. Cushman. Mr. Moore thanked Mr. Austin for his work.

PLANNING

Mr. Austin was pleased at the attendance of the Master Plan Public forum. He reviewed a proposed timetable for the Master Plan. He will make the document available to the public in as many ways as possible. They discussed various methods of communication and the misconceptions residents originally had about the Master Plan. Mr. Moore summarized and spoke about next steps. They discussed ensuring the residents are aware and involved in the Plan. The Master Plan, development of the gateway, the Safe Routes to School Plan all must be weaved into the Master Plan. Mr. Houghton called for an innovative approach to reaching out to

the community. They talked about videotaping the June 19th or July 15th meeting and posting and emailing the link. They want every resident to know what the Master Plan is.

Ms. Knab made a motion to go into a non-public session at 8:47 pm to discuss an acquisition of an interest in land (RSA 91A:3, II (d) and meeting with counsel. Mr. Lovejoy seconded the motion which passed unanimously. At 9:45 p.m. Ms. Knab made a motion to come out of the non-public session and seal the minutes noting that failing to do so would render a proposed action ineffective. Mr. Lovejoy seconded the motion which passed unanimously. Ms. Knab moved to adopt the easements (Front portion easement and back portion easement) as negotiated for the Barker Property as approved by Town meeting in 2017. Mr. Lovejoy seconded the motion which passed unanimously. Mr. Houghton made a motion to authorize Ms. Knab to sign the baseline documentation for both easements and any other ancillary documents related to the closing. Mr. Lovejoy seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

PARKS & RECREATION

Parks & Recreation Director Seth Hickey reported receipting more than 600 responses to the survey.

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Moore suggested closing the Municipal Offices on Friday, July 5th. He noted most employees are planning to take that day as vacation time. For those who wish to save their time, they will be able to work in the building but the Offices would be closed to the public. He understands this is consistent with past practices. The Select Board agreed.

ADMINISTRATION

Mr. Moore reported that the RFP for assistance with dealing with the PFAS issue is out.

A resident has requested that the small park at the end of River Road be named after a long-time resident who is turning 100 years old this year and lives near the Town landing property. Mr. Moore noted there are two Town-owned parcels at the end of River Road. Mr. Moore stated he has confirmed there is currently no policy regarding naming or dedicating facilities after people. The Select Board agreed a policy should be created. They discussed requirements and a potential process, including a public hearing. Mr. Moore will work on the details and bring it to a future meeting to be implemented.

Mr. Moore reported on Foreman Al Williams suggestion for offering a DPW vehicle for public bid. Mr. Houghton made a motion to authorize the Town Administrator to proceed with the disposition of Truck 6 as recommended. Ms. Knab seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

Mr. Moore made the Board aware that we have the opportunity to join NH E911 free of charge; something he is pursuing in coordination with Emergency Management Director David Barr and the public safety chiefs.

Mr. Moore reported that Annual Road-side Clean-Up Day went well. There will be a Memorial Day Parade on Monday. The Board discussed their role on this Memorial Day and Veteran's

Day and how past board members participated. The Board noted the tremendous amount of work that goes into these events by volunteers and sought clarification on the Board's role in the preparations. Mr. Moore indicated he would follow-up.

Mr. Moore received a letter from Sue Hunter regarding a Community Center and shared initial conversations he had had with staff about the needs of the senior community. Ms. Knab and Mr. Houghton noted many questions need to be answered before any steps could be considered, including the outcome of the Parks and Recreation Survey. The Board indicated their desire to ensure the seniors' needs are attended to.

Mr. Moore stated that the Skate Park Committee is continuing with fundraising and plans to go before the Planning Board. They are considering locating the Skate Park to the area behind the Municipal Center. The Board was very supportive of that location and tried to recall why it wasn't one of the preferred locations to begin with. Mr. Houghton was adamant that additional parking be created if the location remains at Steven's Park.

In follow-up to a request from the Board, Mr. Moore has reached out to potential Curbside Collection Advisory Committee members and hopes to have them meet in early June to collect input on the rollout of a new curbside collection strategy and making recommendations to the Board. Mr. Moore talked briefly about the issues the committee will review.

Mr. Moore met with the Trustees of the Trust Funds. They've done an RFP and decided on a firm to provide professional assistance to manage and disburse the funds in accordance with the law. A contract will be forthcoming.

At 10:26 pm Ms. Knab made a motion to go into a non-public session to discuss a personnel issue (RSA 91 A:3, II (a)). Mr. Lovejoy seconded the motion which passed unanimously. At 10:40 pm Ms. Knab made a motion to come out of the non-public session and seal the minutes noting that failing to do so would render a proposed action ineffective. Mr. Lovejoy seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

Mr. Lovejoy raised the prospect of forming an advisory group to advise on how best to use the Smyk property. Mr. Moore believes the Master Plan will provide some guidance on how to think about the open space asset in the system of other Park assets/community facilities. Another idea would be to have the Parks & Recreation Director form advisory committee and shepherd them through the process. The Board favors leaving it as a park, perhaps adding a pavilion and some benches. They will wait to see the results of the Parks & Recreation survey to see what the needs of the community are. The Board acknowledged that there is lots of room for discussion.

At 10:45 Mr. Houghton made a motion to adjourn. Ms. Knab seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
Karen Richard, Recording Secretary