

MINUTES OF THE MAY 6, 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. Moore explained the minutes of the March 20, 2019 meeting had been amended in order to provide clarification as to the origination of a cash donation found in the ballot box during the special meeting of the Select Board overseeing the counting of ballots for the Skateboard Park. Mr. Lovejoy made a motion to approve both the minutes of April 15th and March 20th as amended. Ms. Knab seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

TREASURER

Town Treasurer Deb Bronson stated that the General Fund balance is \$3,227,177.62. She stated that this is average for this time of year.

The Chair recognized Nicky Denton who came before the Board to give a brief overview of his proposed Eagle Scout project. He described a grave site in Stratham Hill Park which had fallen in disrepair. He is proposing to clean it up to honor the men and women who fought in the Revolutionary War and to show Stratham's history. Mr. Houghton said the Select Board is supportive of the project and directed him to work with Town Administrator David Moore and Parks & Recreation Director Seth Hickey.

Mr. Moore provided a brief update on the PFAS contamination issue in Town Center and particularly the direction received from NHDES to begin pursuit of a focused site investigation. In addition, DES has sent letters and made phone calls to residences within a certain radius offering free well water testing and some residents are participating. Anyone who received a letter is being encouraged to follow-up and participate in the testing. He noted the Town is awaiting results of additional testing. Mr. Moore is drafting a proposal to send to firms able to complete the investigation in accordance with DES standards; the firm will be helpful in navigating the process ahead.

The Chair recognized Scott Bogle, Transportation Planner with the Rockingham Planning Commission. Mr. Bogle came before the Board to give a summary on the Safe Routes to School Action Plan. The RPC worked with Town staff and PCAC to secure grant funding for the project. Mr. Bogle gave a brief overview of the Safe Routes to School Plan, which has been implemented nationally. The purpose of the Plan is to encourage children to walk/bike to school safely and to reduce traffic congestion around schools. He also described the public outreach that has been done thus far to determine what needs are specific to Stratham. Data collection showed a strong desire for greater speed enforcement. An engineer from TEC, the firm assisting the RPC in this work, said there were a total of 30 infrastructure improvement projects that they recommend. He described a few that were of high priority and low cost. For some of the higher priced items, they've developed lower cost alternatives.

Mr. Bogle noted that the Town received a non-infrastructure grant for \$20,000 to be used to advance educational and programmatic aspects of the project. Tonight, the Safe Routes to School Committee reps are looking for Select Board approval of the plan document, which the Planning Board has already approved. They also suggest the Board support, maintain and grow the Safe Routes to School Committee. The Board asked questions regarding incentives, funding and timing. It was acknowledged that Select Board support of the projects is not endorsement of the funding. They want to do as many projects as possible with the funding that is available. Mr. Houghton made a motion to approve of the plan and move forward with next steps. Mr. Lovejoy seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

The Chair then recognized Mr. Moore in turn asked Tim Roache, Director of the Rockingham Planning Commission for an overview of State Transportation regime as it relates to Town projects. Mr. Roache described the purpose and structure of the RPC. They are a metropolitan planning organization and act as a resource to towns. Among their responsibilities are to assist the planning of transportation improvements on a regional level, with both short and long term goals. He described how they help the state determine which projects are priorities with the limited funding available. He suggests Stratham push for the traffic light at the intersection of Bunker Hill Ave. and Portsmouth Ave. He also advocated that Stratham, Greenland and Portsmouth collaborate on a corridor study for the Route 33 Corridor for which dedicated funds at the state are available. The GACIT hearings will begin soon. They determine how the funds will be distributed and which projects will be prioritized. A 10 year plan is developed; the DOT works on projects slated for the next four years. The group discussed how a potential corridor project would impact the traffic light project. Mr. Roache suggested the RPC would take the lead in forging a collaboration with Stratham and Greenland to advocate for a corridor study.

Ms. Kersten talked about next steps for the Safe Routes to School Committee and the Pedestrian Cyclists Advocacy Committee. The Board stressed the importance of volunteers to move their project forward. Mr. Moore will work with the Committees.

PLANNING

Town Planner Tavis Austin presented a 20 year easement for a 60 foot right-of-way behind Audi at 58 Portsmouth Avenue. The project was reviewed and approved by the Planning Board and this easement and agreement by the Select Board was a condition. Ms. Knab made a motion to approve the easement. Mr. Houghton seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

Mr. Austin speculated on Ms. Kersten's concerns about the Safe Routes to School Committee. He noted the PCAC/SRTS committees are essential to bring in outside help. He explained that even some of the easier projects are more involved than they appear. They continued to discuss projects that may be accomplished easily.

PARKS & RECREATION

Parks & Recreation Director Seth Hickey presented his department report. The electrical issue is being resolved at the park. Mr. Moore advised devising an existing conditions utility plan for the park. The tennis courts will be crack sealed. The water has been turned on at the park. They've set up a temporary baseball field. Some money from the Rec Revolving Fund has been contributed toward the ATV for the Fire Dept. Mr. Hickey's been advising an Eagle Scout on

his project to develop a trail on South East Land Trust Property. Mr. Hickey is also devising a policy for the hiring of summer camp staff under aged 18. A survey seeking input from the residents regarding the Parks & Recreation department will be sent next week. He has presented trail work to the Conservation Commission and Park Association. The Skate Park Committee is still meeting; he continues to be involved with that project.

Mr. Hickey comes before the Board seeking approval for Convenient MD for banners at the park. There are five banners for \$6,000. Ms. Knab made a motion to enter into the sponsorship agreement with Convenient MD and authorize Mr. Hickey to sign the associated documents. Mr. Lovejoy seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

Mr. Hickey said that Serve with Liberty Day is scheduled for Tuesday and Wednesday. They get a tremendous amount of work done during those two days. He hopes that next year they can do some work on the Smyk property.

Mr. Hickey said he, Mr. Lovejoy and Mr. Moore attended a meeting to discuss the use of the new repaired baseball field at SHP and its uses for 2019. Mr. Hickey noted that alternative plans might be needed because the grounds may not be ready for rides in July during the fair. They discussed who's responsibility it is to manage the slope of the ball field as it impacts the natural skating rink. The Board would like to see documentation as to the resolution and prior to any work being completed. Ms. Knab and Mr. Houghton tried to recall what had been decided in past meetings and how to address the issue going forward. Mr. Moore summarized the conversation by saying he and Mr. Hickey would be sure to make clear and document the next steps related to any work in the Park going forward.

As part of the Parks & Recreation CIP, the 4-H Bathrooms are being renovated. Work has begun on the Gifford Barn as planned. Mr. Hickey will work with the Heritage Commission and Historical Society as the barn was built in the 1800's. The space is currently being utilized for Town storage. Mr. Moore had given him a quote from Bell and Flynn to repave the parking lot, roadways and basketball court at SHP. He doesn't want to move forward with work until we hire a DPW director. He would like to develop the utility plan before doing any paving in the park. He believes it would be ok to repave the front parking lot.

Several groups are renting Stevens field. They've had some unauthorized use but have addressed the issue. Mr. Hickey gave an update on the status of the Rec Revolving account, noting they will need funds to pay for summer camp staff and other, larger expenditures are coming. Mr. Hickey reported that pavilion rentals brought in almost \$33,000. He is requesting expenditure to replace some of the picnic tables. They tried to fix some of the current tables, but they were too badly damaged. Maintenance on them has been increasing. Mr. Hickey will research options. They continued to discuss pros and cons of the various options – recycled plastic, wood, metal, etc.

Mr. Hickey noted several upcoming items - dept. staffing, dept. vehicle purchase, evaluation of town owned residential properties managed by his department.

Events: people reported a terrific time on the King Arthur Flour trip, the Food Truck Festival held in conjunction with Exeter Chamber of Commerce was a huge success with an estimated 5,000 people attending. They will meet to discuss what worked/what didn't to better plan for next year. They need to find a balance between it being a good fundraiser and being able to manage the crowds. Trail running series has begun. Pizza at the Park nights will begin. They are considering adding another vendor.

Baseball and softball are underway but the overall participation in softball continues to dwindle. Mr. Hickey noted that Stratham is the only SAU town that has youth sports as their own. He stressed that they offer recreation programs; they are not a competitive program. He has had ongoing conversations with Recreation Commission and sports boards regarding this.

Mr. Houghton complimented Mr. Hickey on his monthly report. He went on to say that upkeep of the residential buildings that the Town owns should not be the responsibility of the Parks & Recreation department. When Mr. Hickey presents his next report in the early fall, he was asked to give thought to the roles and responsibilities of his staff as it relates to the programs they offer. Regarding Mr. Hickey's request for a van, Ms. Knab would like to see the need for such a vehicle and how it relates to the survey. Need should be driven by the community; what are their wishes? Requests need to be data driven.

OTHER BUSINESS

Ms. Knab made a motion to accept the proclamation that the week of May 5-10 be National Clerks Week. Mr. Lovejoy seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

Mr. Moore presented a raffle permit request. Mr. Houghton made a motion to approve the request from the Cara Rince Irish Dancers. Mr. Lovejoy seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

The Board signed documents of previously approved appointments for Susan Wilbur (Library Trustee) and Anthony King (Police Chief).

Mr. Moore presented three requests for rentals and fee waivers – one for Easter Seals, one for the Girl Scouts and one for a police officer. Ms. Knab made a motion to approve. Mr. Lovejoy seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

Library Trustees requesting three alternates for one year terms. John Dozet, Kathy Bower and Beth Rohloff Ms. Knab made a motion to accept the appointments. Mr. Houghton seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS

The Town has received a request from Eversource to utilize a Town owned piece of property in order to do maintenance work. The property is off of Stevens Drive and has an advantageous access point for work they must do. They have promised to return the land to a condition we approve of and, at the request of staff, agreed to leave a four foot walking path constructed in accordance with Town specifications. The Board discussed and reviewed the land and the work to be done. Mr. Lovejoy made a motion to authorize the Town Administrator to negotiate with

Eversource the utilization of our property at Stevens Drive. Mr. Houghton seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

Mr. Moore reported that the draft easement for 30 Bunker Hill Ave is still with the owners. We are waiting to hear back from them.

Interviews have been scheduled to fill the open position for a DPW director.

Master plan public forum will be on May 13th.

Regarding road reconstruction, Mr. Moore reviewed with interim Public Works Director Al Williams and John Bell of Bell & Flynn the 2019 list of recommended streets for repaving. Mr. Moore recommends moving forward with Bell & Flynn to do the scope of work outlined in the memo. Ms. Kersten asked to see the list of streets being recommended and offered that perhaps they could incorporate some of the Safe Routes to Schools recommendations. She also asked the status of the signs that had been previously approved, but not yet installed. Mr. Lovejoy said that they were simply repaving. Ms. Kersten asked if they could reallocate the space within the striping already within the roadway. Mr. Moore indicated he would work with staff and Ms. Kersten's suggestions to make sure no choice limiting actions were taken with the repaving project that would preclude advancement on PCAC-related recommendations. He indicated he would also look for opportunities to implement recommendations as part of the project and the subsequent striping.

Ms. Knab asked about the status of the Barker Easement. Mr. Moore said the two easements were progressing in reviews and that recently the issue of Ms. Barker's liability related to the activities that have been taking place on her property has arisen. These activities include both the town-sponsored public events that traverse across the property and liability for the Town's work performed on the trails. As a result, Mr. Moore is exploring the possibility of a separate agreement for the public events and maintenance in order to formalize the arrangement of this this longstanding cooperation. Ms. Barker's request is to be informed about larger events being held on her land. Mr. Moore said that, as a Town, we would have liability coverage and certain immunity statutes apply to both the Town and Ms. Barker. Ms. Knab noted how there are many benefits associated with this easement and she agrees with the approach of a separate agreement. She noted there are many benefits to obtaining the easement, such as a dedicated right to using the trails on the property, maintaining them and linking it to our park trail system, keeping a farm in a farming town, keeping open space, wildlife habitat, etc. Mr. Moore is continuing to work out the details and report back.

Accounting Supervisor Valarie Kemp provided Mr. Moore with a list of lapsed CIP allocations which he presented to the Board. He also called attention to the funds that are due to expire this year and noted the funds don't go away, but the ability to use them for the project expires. Mr. Houghton would like to discuss at a later time the two funds that have grants/fund matches attached.

Mr. Moore reviewed a proposed schedule for the 2020 budget process. According to law, the Planning Board is charged with developing the CIP. In the past, the Planning Board has been

engaged at the end of the process and minimally so. Going forward, the Select Board is looking to comply with regulations by engaging them earlier in the process. The concept behind this is to ensure the Planning Board funds are being expended in alignment with the Master Plan. Mr. Moore noted the proposal for CIP dovetails with the budget process. The Planning Board's adopted CIP would be a product given to the Budget Advisory Committee for their deliberations. Mr. Moore continued to review the timeline. The changes to the budget process would allow the Budget Advisory Committee to be able to guide the Select Board to what should be brought to Town Meeting. The Schedule attempts to be responsive to feedback received from the Select Board and Budget Advisory Committee the need to focus the questions and the overall context for budget decisions in preparation for Budget Advisory Committee. The Board agreed that the Budget Advisory Committee is valuable in that they provide an outside look at the budgets and show that the process is transparent.

The process for employee evaluations and wages was reviewed. Allowances for salary increases associated with cost-of-living adjustments must be considered when department budgets are formulated. The Select Board sees the need for a clear compensation policy, which, among other things would communicate clearly what the Board's approach to cost-of-living increases, salary adjustments, and merit/bonus pay for example. Mr. Moore has had meetings regarding the performance appraisal process with two department heads and more are scheduled. Discussion regarding expectations and the change in the process ensued.

Mr. Moore briefly reviewed meetings he has scheduled during the week including for Emergency Management and Information Technology upgrades for computers, wiring upgrades, and telephone system replacement. Mr. Moore is working with IT consultant Lee Todis to devise a plan for some computer replacements. They have ranked them according to need and will be replacing them 6 or 7 at a time.

Next, Mr. Moore reported significant issues with the roof at the Municipal Center but there is no money set aside for repair in the CIP. Maintenance Foreman Jason Pond has gotten quotes for replacement. The possibility of replacing a portion has been investigated and Mr. Moore projects the need for a potential disbursement from the Trust for Building and Grounds to fund roof related replacement/repairs.

At 10:40 pm Ms. Knab made a motion to go into a non-public session to discuss personnel issues according to RSA 91-A:3, II (a) and II (b). Mr. Lovejoy seconded the motion which passed unanimously. At 11:00 pm Ms. Knab made a motion to leave the non-public session and seal the minutes after finding failure to do so would render the action taken ineffective. Mr. Lovejoy seconded the motion which passed unanimously. At 11:01p.m. Ms. Knab motioned to adjourn. Mr. Lovejoy seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Richard
Recording Secretary