

**MINUTES OF THE SELECT BOARD**  
**Monday, December 7, 2015 – 10:00AM**

Present: Chair, Lorn Buxton, David McGuckin, Selectman, William Stewart, Selectman, and Bette Jane Riordan, Secretary.

Also present: Pam Cullen, Priscilla Hodgkins, Steve Tabbutt, Chris Puhfal, Chief Don White, Tom Smith, and Jim Cerny.

Chair Buxton convened the meeting at 10:00 AM.

**1. Approve Select Board minutes of November 16, 2015 and November 20, 2016.**

Approved as amended.

**2. Public Q & A. – None.**

**3. Items.**

**a. Health Trust Agreement.**

Chair Buxton stated that the Town has committed to provide health insurance to its employees and that the Board met and selected a plan.

Selectman Stewart explained the selection process, stating the Board took into consideration transition issues, sustainability for the Town, and the well-being of its employees. In prior meetings and discussion with the employees, the goal was to get feedback, synthesize it and make the best choice. The Board reached out to everybody to get as much input as possible. He apologized if during the process there was any miscommunication or confusion. Selectman Stewart indicated that the Board had selected an HMO plan which is a change from the current POS plan. The intent was to announce the change and roll it out along with an educational meeting to make the transition as smooth as possible for the employees. Unfortunately, however the information was disseminated prior to the rollout being scheduled.

Pam Cullen, Assistant to the Select Board, spoke about the rollout and the confusion it caused. Employees believed they were given a choice of plans. Five out of the 8, given a choice, selected a POS plan and yet the board still chose the HMO plan.. Employees selected plans based upon their needs believing their choices would be honored. She asked the Board to reconsider their selection and go with the POS.

Tom Smith, speaking in his capacity as Treasurer, indicated there was sufficient funding for the Board to go with the current POS for one more year.

Chris Puhfal stated that the Board should consider the combined 85 years of public service represented by the employees and that it was their choice to determine what is best for their families.

Selectman Stewart stated it was not just a money issue. The selected HMO was a good sustainable plan with a larger provider network, excellent benefits and with a quality service provider (Anthem).

Chair Buxton explained it was his intention and understanding with respect to employees input that he was looking for input that might preclude one plan or another as a choice. He noted that while the Board received preferences, there was nothing specific about plans not providing more than adequate benefits. They met to consider what plan is best for the employees. He stated that he felt it is important for the Town to maintain the 90/10 cost split, and concluded the best way was to select the HMO.

Selectman McGuckin stated that both the HMO and POS are good plans. He stated that the employees, however, perceived there was a choice. Either plan will save the Town money. He stated the Board should honor the choice of the employees. He thought the new POS may be the best choice for this year. After further discussion regarding when to make the change, Selectman McGuckin asked if the Town could go with the existing plan for another year which would provide more time for planning the eventual change to a new plan. While Selectman Stewart felt the change should be done now, he agreed to check to see if staying with the current plan is feasible. Chair Buxton stated it was a mistake to stay with the current plan. Discussion continued over the pros and cons of plan selection.

Priscilla Hodgkins, Town Clerk, (not a participant in the health insurance plan) characterized the process as an errant parent problem with the result being the Board's credibility had been damaged. She suggested setting a meeting with the employees to go over all aspects of the plans.

After further discussion, the Board agreed to wait for Selectman Stewart's updated information, prior to making a final determination. There will be a noticed meeting.

**b. Property Liability Trust.**

The Town's Workers Compensation and property and casualty liability policies expire at the end of June 2016. Selectman Stewart suggested putting out a Request for Proposals. He will report back to the Board.

**c. Point person for USS Providence.**

Chair Buxton stated that the USS Providence is a nuclear submarine which will be based at PNSY for a 15 month overhaul. New Castle is the host town, and will need a designee to coordinate activities with the sub's command and crew. The Board agreed to postpone appointment until after the December 15, 2015 meet and greet at PNSY Captain's Quarters.

**d. Annual Town donations.**

Chair Buxton reported that in addition to last year's list of non-profit agencies seeking financial assistance from the Town, there are four new requests. (Seacoast Science Center, NAMI, American Red Cross and Seacoast Family Pantry) Also A Safe Place and SASS have combined into one agency HAVEN. After discussion the Board referred the requests to former Select Board member Patty Cohen for review and recommendations.

**e. Green Waste -costs.**

Chair Buxton reported that costs/session have increased this year from \$2600 to \$7000. Selectman McGuckin will check with JDL Trucking and report back to the Board regarding the increase.

Selectman McGuckin also reported on Hazardous Waste issues.

He stated that the Town of Hampton has offered 1 day in June for New Castle residents to drop off waste at a cost of \$38.00 per car. There is a \$500 participation fee which may end up being split among the user towns. He stated New Castle usually averages only 20 cars. There are ample funds for this in the budget.

**F. Mosquito Control for 2016.**

Chair Buxton reported that Municipal Pest Management Services is managing mosquito control for the Town. They test throughout the season. Selectman McGuckin asked about the role of the Conservation Commission. Selectman Stewart reported that the Commission weighs in intermittently, and asked if Health Officer Zuckerman is also involved in monitoring. The Select Board agreed to sign the contract with Municipal Pest Management Services.

**4. Other Old Business- None.**

**5. Other New Business.**

**a. Frost Cemetery.**

Town Historian Jim Cerny reported that a trust administered by Historic New England has provided funds for signage for the Frost Cemetery, similar to the Walbach Tower sign and historic signage around Portsmouth.

**b. Fire Department Report.**

**Selectman Stewart provided the following report:**

**New Castle Fire Department Monthly Report – November 2015**

1. Calls for service in November: 18 Calls for service, year to date: 188
2. Types of calls in November: 9 Medical Aid calls, 1 Mutual Aid call to Newington, 4 Fire Alarms, 3 Odor Investigations, 1 Suspicious Package
3. Average response time: 6.07 minutes.
4. Average # personnel per incident in November: 4.00 and 3.73 YTD.
5. Apparatus responding to incidents:
  - Rescue 7 responded to 9 incidents in November and 110 YTD.
  - Forestry 1 responded to 4 incidents in November and 42 YTD.
  - Engine 1 responded to 0 incidents in November and 3 YTD.
  - Engine 4 responded to 5 incidents in November and 31 YTD.
  - Hose 1 responded to 0 incidents in November and 1 YTD.

Marine 2 responded to 0 incidents in November and 4 YTD.

6. Training in November: 185 Man Hours. Year to date: 1470 Man Hours.  
1 member attended the NH State Trauma Conference in North Conway.  
12 members participated in a Combined Functional Exercise for the Seabrook Station Power Plant.
7. Public Outreach Activities in November: None
8. Mutual Aid Given in November:  
Station Coverage in Newington during 2 structure fires.
9. Budget remaining on 12/02/15:  
Fire Department: \$230,346.32 63.95% remaining  
Emergency Management: \$6,056.81 80.57% remaining
10. Staffing:  
2 Career members and 29 Volunteer members.  
Firefighter 2/Paramedic Vito Favaloro moved to Arizona.
11. Areas of Concern: None

Selectman Stewart stated that the December Fire Wards meeting had been cancelled. He reported that there has been no communication regarding the Fire Chief's annual review.

#### **c. Police Department.**

Chief Don White reported that the Town is feeling the effects of winter season as there is less traffic. Motor vehicle stops are up but there have been no reported break-ins. The weekends are still fairly busy. Chief White noted the recent good public relations news about the department's motor vehicle stops. Selectman McGuckin asked about the personnel profiles in the Islander, and Chief reported there will be another one in the next issue. Selectman Stewart and Selectman McGuckin commended the Chief on the crossing guard program, and Chair Buxton thanked him with assisting with remote access for the Town Accountant during her recent illness.

#### **d. Planning Board.**

Chair Buxton reported that the Planning Board is considering a number of proposed ordinance changes. He distributed a copy of the changes and briefly explained each one and which members were researching the particular topic.

#### **e. Bond payments.**

Chair Buxton stated that he had spoken with Jane Lannon, School Treasurer, regarding the schedule of school bond payments, and after discussion with the School Board she will negotiate with the banks. Chair Buxton is in favor of the a Principal and Interest payment in August and an interest payment in January, stating it was better to pay ahead and minimize costs.

There being no further business to come before the Board, Selectman Stewart made a Motion to Adjourn, which was seconded by Selectman McGuckin. Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 11:54 AM.