

MINUTES OF THE SELECT BOARD
Monday, April 4, 2016 – 10:00 AM

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

Also present: Pam Cullen, Assistant to the Select Board, Jim Cerny, Town Historian, John Ireland, Joseph Cuetara, Reggie Whitehouse, Joe Cutera, Tom Smith, Treasurer, Priscilla Hodgkins, Town Clerk.

1. Approve Select Board Minutes of March 7, and 21, 2016.

The Select Board minutes from the meetings of March 7 and 21, 2016 were approved as amended.

2. Public Q and A. : None.

3. Items.

a. Letter to State of New Hampshire re: Sailing School.

Selectman Stewart presented his revised draft of a letter from the Select Board in support of the original proposal to establish a Sailing School at Fort Stark (“Portsmouth Maritime”). The Board agreed to sign the letter. Selectman McGuckin asked about the next step. Selectman Stewart explained that the group is working with the State regarding the pier, float and boat ramp and other issues. The group is self-funded and will not require any Town Funds. Their main work is with the State. The group has also established a program at Portsmouth High School

b. Appointment of Geoff Potter to the Planning Board.

The Select Board signed the appointment paper work for Geoff Potter to join the Planning Board. Pam Cullen will contact him to come into Town Hall to execute the appropriate document.

c. Town Auditor/Accountant.

Selectman Stewart asked the Board to consider expediting the hiring of a new Town Auditor as the Town Accountant and the current auditor will be retiring at approximately the same time in 2017. This will present transition issues and getting the Town Auditor on board sooner will help alleviate some of those issues.

Chair Buxton noted there are several problems associated with doing this. The first is that the item is not presently budgeted. Also our current Town Auditor of 25 years gives the Town a very good rate. A new auditor will be more expensive. Additionally, Ken McDonald is in the process of documenting all of the auditor and accountant tasks, so it would make sense to have that completed prior to bringing any one new on board. He stated it is not a good time to put more onto the accountant’s plate at this time. The Town is postponing the implementation of the new payroll system until the end of June, as the change needs to happen on the quarter. He concluded by recommending any new hires wait, and complete the current audit.

Selectman Stewart suggested hiring a new accountant earlier so there would be at least a two-month training/transition period. Selectman McGuckin agreed, stating it was important for a new person to go through a cycle of water/sewer billing. After a brief discussion, Selectman McGuckin agreed to speak with the current accountant about the timing of his departure.

Chair Buxton noted that Deb Knowles, accountant, has the forms (737's) and warrant articles ready for the Budget Committee.

d. Minute taker/Secretary.

This item was placed on the agenda by Selectman Stewart as there has been a lack of minute taking resources for three of the land use boards: Planning, ZBA, and Conservation Commission. One person found that it was just too much for her to do, so she will remain with the HDC. Discussions occurred with the Nagler Group and a temporary person has been hired to cover the three boards for a four -month period. There is no contractual obligation; however, if the person is hired after the four -month period a fee of \$500 is due. The person will be paid \$20.00 per hour during this trial period. This rate includes insurances. The assumption is the person would come on as a regular employee.

Chair Buxton stated persons may be interested in attending the Planning Board hearing tonight at 6:00 PM regarding the proposed wetlands actions. He said there a lot of abutters. Pam Cullen explained that Lynn McCarthy had been in charge of preparing abutter notices for this meeting. That led to discussion of responsibility for the various minute takers, such as whether or not the land use board chairs should be responsible or to somehow work with Pam in making the format for the minutes more consistent, in order to meet requirements. Pam agreed to get examples to Selectman Stewart. Priscilla Hodgkins recommended that the Select Board advertise for these positions and perhaps a local person would be interested and respond. Selectman McGuckin recommended that the Town have a recording device available for use by all of the boards and committees. Selectman Stewart also noted the availability of Audacity and Garage Band to record via computer. However the Town's laptop is too old for such use.

e. Abatements.

Pam Cullen presented Avitar's recommendations for three abatements: 18 Harborview, 10 Neals Lane, and 190 Wentworth Road. Avitar recommended approval of Harborview and Neals Lane, but not 190 Wentworth Road. After discussion, Chair Buxton made a Motion to Approve the recommendations of Avitar. Selectman Stewart seconded, and the Motion carried.

Item f. was postponed until arrival of Jim Cerny.

g. Water/Sewer Investments.

Chair Buxton reported that the Trustees of the Trust Funds have asked how much of the money in the water and sewer funds could be available for investment and for how long. Currently there is \$600,000 in the sewer fund, with commitments of \$440,000, leaving approximately \$150,000 available. The commitments involve reports from Underwood

Engineering on the pump stations, as well as for a report on the infrastructure pending the conveyance to Portsmouth. The water fund currently has \$250,000. Normally \$50,000 is kept in the fund, and the Town has asked Underwood Engineering for reports on water and fire flows. He stated that \$100,000 to \$150,000 could be made available for investment. He asked the Board to think about this, and will place this issue on the agenda for April 18th. Selectman McGuckin asked how other towns apportion the funds. Chair Buxton stated each town is really unique. Tom Smith asked about the authority to make a final decision and if the Water and Sewer Commission does this. Chair Buxton replied that the Commission makes a recommendation to the Select Board, which has the final authority. Local resident Joe Cuetera who was present, offered his investment services and assistance, however Chair Buxton stated the Trustees are working with Cambridge Trust.

f. Historic Marker on Ritson Street.

Jim Cerny, representing the New Castle Historical Society, requested the Select Board to consider approving the placement of a tide mills historic marker at the juncture of Ritson and Davidson Streets, within the Town's right of way. The sign would be 2' x 2' and approximately 40" high. After discussion, the Board suggested Jim and NCHS speak with the abutters about possible location, prior to the Board making any decision.

4. Other Old Business.

a. Insurance.

Selectman Stewart reviewed the available information on selecting a new provider for property and liability insurance and with Workers Compensation. Primex's proposal would provide significant savings to the Town who must find a new provider as the current one will no longer be offered. He expects to hear from the other provider shortly and will report back.

b. Fire Safety Committee.

Selectman McGuckin reported that the newly appointed committee is meeting and the members have received their packets and are ready to move forward.

5. Other New Business.

a. Fire Chief resignation.

Selectman Stewart reported that he received an Email Saturday evening (April 2) containing the monthly Fire Report. Item 11 in the report stated the Fire Chief's last day would be April 15, 2016. After attempting to reach the Chief, he finally confirmed with him this morning that the April 15th resignation was firm. Selectman Stewart stated the Board needs to meet with the Deputy Chief, Mark Wooley, Captains, and the Fire Wards as soon as possible to assure a safe smooth transition until a new chief is hired. He noted that Chief Blanding is also the Town's Emergency Management Director so that has to be addressed right away. Job descriptions are on file and need to meet the Workers Compensation audit requirements. The Town Accountant has been notified. Tom Smith brought up the matter of what constitutes "proper notice". Chair Buxton noted there is nothing specific in policy. He stressed that this is not an emergency. Selectman Stewart wants as smooth a transition as possible. Selectman McGuckin asked Reggie Whitehouse if he knew of the resignation,

and Reggie replied this was the first he'd heard of it, and would of course bring this up at a meeting of the Fire Wards.

6. Committee Reports.

a. Police Department.

Selectman McGuckin reported that the Police issued 60 speeding warnings last month.

b. Fire Department.

Selectman Stewart submitted the following monthly report:

New Castle Fire Department Monthly Report – March 2016

1. Calls for service in March: 13. Calls for service, year to Date: 48
2. Types of calls in March: 9 Medical Aid calls, 1 Fire Alarm, 1 Water in Basement, 1 Mutual Aid, 1 un-attended Outside Fire.
3. Average response time in March: 5.42 minutes.
4. Average number of personnel per incident in March: 3.67
5. Apparatus responding to incidents:
Rescue 7 responded to 8 incidents in March and 33 YTD.
Forestry 1 responded to 0 incidents in March and 7 YTD.
Engine 1 responded to 1 incident in March and 6 YTD.
Engine 4 responded to 1 incident in March and 9 YTD.
Hose 1 responded to 0 incidents in March and 1 YTD.
Marine 2 responded to 0 incidents in March and 0 YTD.
6. Training in March: 140 Man Hours of department in-house training plus: 4 members attended “Fireground Leadership Seminar” at Primex in Concord. 4 members attended “Trauma Case Reviews, GCS and Neurological Assessment” at Portsmouth Regional Hospital.
7. Public Outreach Activities in March: Easter Bunny Run.
8. Mutual Aid Given in March: Engine 1 participated in a Shipboard Fire Drill at the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard.
9. Mutual Aid Received in March: Rye Ambulance assisted with a Medical Aid call due to Portsmouth being un-available.
10. Budget remaining on 3/4/16:
Fire Department: \$136,619.17
Emergency Management: \$5,828.36
11. Staffing:
2 Career members and 27 Volunteer members.
Chief retiring, last day 4/15/16.
12. Areas of Concern: None

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 11:30 AM.