

MINUTES OF THE SELECT BOARD
Monday, April 18, 2016 – 7:00 PM

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

Also present: Pam Cullen, Assistant to the Select Board, Fire Chief Dave Blanding, Dennis Dinsmore, Bill Cronin, Tom Gross, Rita Fusco, Joanne Arsenault, Peter Rice, John Ireland, Ann McAndrew, Teddy Golter, Nancy Jackson.

Selectman McGuckin stated there would be a short delay to the official opening of the meeting as he noted this was Chairman Lorn Buxton's 216th Select Board meeting, and his last as he leaves the Board after serving for three terms. Those in attendance gave recognition and thanks to Lorn.

1. Approve Select Board Minutes of April 4, and April 11, 2016.

Selectman McGuckin made a motion to approve with changes the Select Board minutes of April 4 and 11, 2016. Selectman Stewart seconded, and the motion carried.

2. Public Q & A: None.

3. Items.

a. Handicap Ramp on rear of Town Hall.

Chair Buxton explained the background of the current recommendation to place the handicap space in the rear of the Town Hall. The space out front is not compliant with ADA requirements. The grade would need to be leveled. Also the space would endanger handicap drivers who would have to exit too close to Rte 1-B. The front door would have to be redone. Many changes were recommended as part of the Town Hall Renovation Project; however that was defeated at last year's Town Meeting. As requested at the last Select Board Meeting the Building Inspector's Office was asked to take another look at what keeping the space in front would entail. A formal response is expected shortly.

Resident Joanne Arsenault stated she was not in favor of placing the space in the rear of the building. She stated it was a longer walk into the building, and if something happened, such as a fall, she feared no one would notice. Further, one would have to back into the space which is difficult to do. The front entrance is easier to access. She noted that currently the front door isn't working and other people often park in the space who are not handicapped. Tom Maher asked if there was a way to make the pace out back easier to use. Selectman McGuckin stated that only widening of the space is allowed. Pam Cullen explained that the ADA book is available for the public to view, noting that currently the front space is not compliant with ADA standards. The door opening is only 32 inches. Selectman Stewart stated he is in favor of having the space out back to achieve compliance with the ADA. He acknowledges that backing out of the space is hard, and would like to find a solution which is safer for the driver.

Ann McAndrew of 27 Steamboat Lane reiterated her prior position in favor of keeping the space out front and making whatever adjustments necessary. She also wondered if the current ramp is actually grandfathered and therefore would not have to meet current requirements.

Chair Buxton thanked the public for their input and continued the matter until such time as the Building Inspector's Office issues its opinion.

b. Fire Boat

Selectman McGuckin stated that the City of Portsmouth has decided to get rid of their fireboat which they had acquired through a federal grant. New Castle's Fire Department considers the boat a valuable resource. He asked Portsmouth if they were interested in considering transferring the boat to consortium of surrounding towns including New Castle, Rye and Newington, who would share in the costs of maintaining and operating the vessel. He noted that Rye probably won't agree and earned that Newington is not interested. That leaves New Castle, and the cost per year is between \$15 and \$20,000. There is also a \$60,000 overhaul due in two years. The town would need to do its due diligence prior to deciding to proceed; however he believes it would be good for the Town. It would be stationed at the Wentworth Marina. Tom Maher stated it might be possible to go back to Rye in another year and see if they would be interested. Selectman McGuckin noted that there is a problem in obtaining a copy of the grant which would outline all of the conditions. Nancy Jackson is of the Fire Task Force is running into roadblocks in obtaining the grant and the award letter. Peter Tarlton asked if there were a land based fire how would having the boat help. Fire Chief Dave Blanding stated it would be a secondary resource, as the hydrants are the primary resource. He explained the timing associated with the hook up procedures. Fire Captain Bill Cronin wanted to make sure that if the Town were to obtain the fireboat, that the Department still needed to keep its small boat. He asked if there was a limit on how much the Town was willing to spend on acquiring the fireboat. Nancy Jackson explained that Portsmouth needed to do an interim deacquisition of the boat in order to transfer it to New Castle. He noted Portsmouth needs a decision right away as they had intended to transfer it to the Town of Guilford. Details of the grant are critical in making a final decision. After further discussion, Selectman McGuckin stated the Town would go forward with its due diligence and report back.

c. Reports for Town Meeting.

Chair Buxton stated that the Fire Safety Committee report is due. The Town is sending out a letter to the public in conjunction with the Committee, prior to Town Meeting, explaining what happened at the Tarbell fire, information on the current water supply and plans going forward.

Selectman McGuckin stated that the public should be aware that on May 15th, speed reduction signs will be posted showing the lowering from 25mph to 20, in a specified area (beginning at end of Causeway and ending near Spring Hill Road). The 20 mph limit will be in effect for 4 months.

d. Annual Application for flags-renewal.

Teddy Golter indicated that she has provided the Select Board with the request, which they agreed to review, sign, and approve.

e. Water Rates.

Chair Buxton explained the history of the two separate water rate systems (Portsmouth water area and New Castle water area). Portsmouth had been charging based on a wholesale rate of 81 cents, which has not been changed in many years, to New Castle ratepayers' advantage. Now, Portsmouth has decided their wholesale rate cost is \$3.50 per unit, so effective July 1, Portsmouth will charge a higher rate. Selectman McGuckin is in the process of negotiations with Portsmouth to achieve a gradual increase in the rate as opposed to a major spike. Chair Buxton noted the Town has little leverage, and that Portsmouth has been subsidizing New Castle for many years.

f. Banner for Common entrance-Garden Club.

The Select Board approved the annual request of the Garden Club to hang a banner publicizing the May 14th garden sale at the Rec Building.

4. OTHER OLD BUSINESS: None

5. OTHER NEW BUSINESS:

a. Parking ordinance:

The Board discussed the need for public hearings on proposed parking ordinances. Chair Buxton stated the Town could act in this matter and then hold public hearings subsequent to the enactment.

b. Next Select Board Meeting.

Selectman McGuckin stated the next Select Board meeting is scheduled for Tuesday May 17th at 7:00 PM.

6. Committee Reports.

a. Planning Board.

Chair Buxton stated a Planning Board member has resigned so a new member is needs to be appointed to the CIP Committee.

b. Fire Department

Selectman Stewart submitted the following report:

New Castle Fire Department Monthly Report – April 2016

1. Calls for service in April: 15. Calls for service, year to Date: 63
2. Types of calls in April: 6 Medical Aid, 2 Fire Alarms, 1 Smoke Investigation, 1 Smell of Electrical Burning, 4 Mutual Aid, 1 Event Standby.
3. Average response time in April: 7.22 minutes.

4. Average number of personnel per incident in April: 4.60
5. Apparatus responding to incidents:
 - Rescue 7 responded to 7 incidents in April and 40 YTD.
 - Forestry 1 responded to 4 incidents in April and 11 YTD.
 - Engine 1 responded to 2 incidents in April and 8 YTD.
 - Engine 4 responded to 2 incidents in April and 11 YTD.
 - Hose 1 responded to 0 incidents in April and 1 YTD.
 - Marine 2 responded to 0 incidents in April and 0 YTD.
6. Training in April: 144 Man Hours of department in-house training plus: 3 members attended “Chief Fire Officer’s Academy” in Dover. 2 members attended annual “Forest Fire Warden” training in Brentwood. 5 members attended a class on “Obstetrical Emergencies” at Portsmouth Regional Hospital.
7. Public Outreach Activities in April: Rescue and Swimmers standby at Polar Bear Plunge for Portsmouth High School Swim Team. Pancake Breakfast. New Castle Prepare Anthon.
8. Mutual Aid Given in April: Engine 1 participated in a Shipboard Graded Exercise at the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard. Forestry 1 assisted Rye with a Medical Aid call located about a half mile into the woods on a horse trail. Engine 4 provided station coverage for Kittery during a large brush fire. Engine 4 provided station coverage for Kittery during a structure fire.
9. Mutual Aid Received in April: None
10. Budget remaining on 4/29/16:
 - Fire Department: \$94,085.57
 - Emergency Management: \$596.35
11. Staffing:
 - 2 Career members and 27 Volunteer members.
12. Other Activities: Seabrook Station Graded Exercise. Shelter in Place drill at the School.
13. Areas of Concern: None.

c. Parking on Piscataqua St.

Pam Cullen brought up the problem of congestion and blockage of the street by contractors landscaping services which impede traffic flow, and which she believes would not allow enough room for a fire truck to get through. She asked for stricter patrol of the area. Selectman McGuckin will follow up with the Police Chief.

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

Meeting adjourned at 8:15 PM.