

MINUTES OF THE SELECT BOARD
Monday, December 19, 2016- 7:00 PM

Present: David McGuckin, Chair, Bill Stewart, Tom Maher Selectman, and Bette Jane Riordan, Secretary.

Also present: Michael McAndrew, Clint Springer, John Ireland, Dick Spaulding, Peter Tarlton, Richard Marcks, Jim Rini, Andy Schulte, Teddy Golter, Richard White, Jeff Reilly.

1. Approve Select Board Minutes November 21, 2016 and December 5 2016.

Selectman Stewart made a Motion to Approve the minutes as amended of the November 21, 2016 Select Board meeting, which was seconded by Selectman Maher. Motion carried. Approval of the December 5th minutes was postponed until the next meeting.

2. Public Question and Answer: None.

3. Items.

a. Comcast Cablevision Franchise Agreement – 6-month agreement extension.

Selectman Maher reported that in reviewing the agreement renewal he discovered some issues that need to be addressed and remedied prior to signing the five-year extension agreement. One of these issues concerned alleged “free” internet at the School which in reality was costing over \$2000. He will continue to negotiate with Comcast and its representatives, but in the meantime he recommended the Town proceed with executing a six-month extension.

Local resident Mike McAndrew reiterated his request that Selectman Maher ask Comcast to swap one of the several Spanish station for a French station. Selectman Maher stated he would follow up on this request and report back.

Chair McGuckin asked to revise the order of Items and proceeded to:

d. Congregational Church signage for parking lot.

Richard White, representing the church, stated that there were expressed concerns with the amount of overnight parkers or long term parkers using the lot, and wished to notify the Select Board of their intent to erect signage prohibiting such use. He also mentioned usage by parkers during snowstorms. He stressed that people need to know it is not a municipal lot, but acknowledged usage by Town employees, such as Police and Fire, etc. were not included as prohibited users. Chair McGuckin indicated he would like to see the wording of the sign which Mr. White agreed to, but indicated he was not asking permission of the Town, but simply notifying the Board of the intended signage.

e. Select date for BOS Meeting to replace January 2 (holiday).

After discussion, the Select Board agreed to hold meetings on Tuesday, January 3, 2017 and Tuesday January 17th at 7PM in lieu of Monday, January 16th which is Martin Luther King Day. In February, the Select Board will meet as scheduled on Monday, February 6th at

10:00 AM, but changed the next meeting from February 20th at 7:00 PM to Tuesday, February 21st at 7:00 PM.

b. Underwood Engineering Study – update.

Selectman Stewart reported that the Town is a good place from a data standpoint. They have had a chance to go through the studies and have talked Portsmouth officials. He stated its time to set up a special meeting to go through the data points and get input from the Town, and hoped this could happen the first week of January. He indicated it could be a work session to go over options. Chair McGuckin said they are looking to put a proposal together to go before Town Meeting.

VJ Strehl asked the Board to sum up the objectives of the Portsmouth meeting and questioned if the only objective had to do with flows. Other than flows, she wanted to know how they framed what was delivered in the Executive summary.

Chair McGuckin stated the question was does the Town convey the utility or keep it, and what is our inventory. Determining our needs and how much that will cost are priority issues to be resolved. Ms. Strehl was surprised at the 5-year time frame, but Selectman Maher responded that the 5-year had something to do with the Wentworth Bridge issue and noted the Town may need a tighter time frame.

In response to Ms. Strehl's question about the Portsmouth meeting, Chair McGuckin stated they met with Portsmouth's City Manager, Public Works Director and higher levels of the Water and Sewer Department and attorneys. The Portsmouth City Manager is interested in working with New Castle on a solution that may include conveyance or the on-going purchase of water from Portsmouth for the New Castle System. Chair McGuckin noted that both New Castle and Portsmouth have a lot of work to do.

Peter Tarlton asked if Portsmouth would collaborate and coordinate in project management. Selectman Maher stated that Portsmouth would help with the bidding process. Mr. Tarlton asked if given the amount of expenditures, could New Castle do bonding by itself or does that require Portsmouth's help. Bonding can be done by the Town or in joint effort with Portsmouth. The solution to the problems will drive the financing discussion. Mr. Tarlton stated that given the expected rise in rates, it would be important to get the financing set early.

Jim Cerny questioned the conveyance asking what the cost to the Town would be if we did not convey and kept the infrastructure. Chair McGuckin indicated that solution hasn't been fully looked at to date but will be part of the discussion. He pointed out the probable need to add additional staff to support the management and upkeep, including training costs and clerical support. Selectman Maher stressed that conveyance is down the road and the Town needs to develop action steps.

Clint Springer stated there is a need to convince the Town that there is a need as pointed out by the study and we should set aside the money now. He noted people will complain but we need to do it.

Richard Marcks expressed his concern about New Castle being a “customer” and how that would play out. Selectman Maher agreed with Mr. Springer that it is up to people to convince others about improving the infrastructure.

Chair McGuckin summed up the discussion, indicating that April needs to be the deadline for a proposal for Town meeting.

Richard White summed the discussion as follows: “Big water, big pipe, big money”. How do we get people to get on board? We can keep the engineering simple, but how to pay for it is the question. Does the burden fall on the taxpayer or the ratepayer? The bottom line is we have to get water onto the island. Andy Schulte questioned when Wentworth Road would be fixed and noting the delay expressed the need to take over that line. Other comments included the suggestion to start a financial committee using local expertise to come up with reasonable financial options. Selectman Stewart asked for names to be submitted to him. Jim Rini asked about whether or not there was a Plan B if Portsmouth does not perform. Chair McGuckin said there is no answer to this at this point in the process, and concluded the public comment on this matter.

c. Woodward and Curran Sewer Study.

Chair McGuckin gave a summary of the background of this matter. In 2015 the Town had an agreement with Woodward and Curran through Underwood to do a sewer study. Portsmouth would pay initially for the study, and New Castle would reimburse Portsmouth. The total bill apportioned to New Castle is approximately \$101,000. The Select Board reviewed options to expend money from the Sewer Operating Account or the Sewer Trust Fund. It determined to expend funds from the Sewer Trust Fund to pay for the study, as it is viewed as a capital expenditure. The purpose of the study was to understand the existing system, the largest inputs to the system (private systems which contribute approximately 2/3rds of the inputs), and at possibilities to either expanding the system by taking those systems into ours or conveyance of the entire system including those private systems to Portsmouth.

Richard White stated he does not want to pay this bill. Chair McGuckin said that at the time the Board made the decision to discern the status of the sewer system it agreed to fund the study. The bill needs to be paid, although the Board will review the expenditure to determine if any further action is required regarding authorization or payment. After further comments both pro and con, Selectman Maher made a Motion to pay the bill in full from the City of Portsmouth for the Woodward and Curran Study, with the funds from the Sewer Trust Fund. Selectman Stewart seconded and the Motion carried.

4. Old Business.

a. Computer bids.

Computer bids have been received from Justin Maynard, for the Town Accountant’s laptop and the Town is moving forward with the purchase.

5. New Business.

a. Abatement.

The Select Board agreed to refer to the requested abatement of 76 Duck's head to Avitar.

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

Meeting adjourned at 8:30 PM.