

MINUTES OF THE SELECT BOARD
Monday, September 17, 2018 - 7PM

Present: Thomas Maher, Chair, Bill Stewart, Selectman, and Damon Frampton, Selectman.

Also present: Christiane McAlister, Accountant, Ken McDonald, TAPC, Normand Houle, Chair, Water & Sewer Commission, Andy Schulte, Jim Cerny, and Chuck Chokel.

1. Approve Minutes.: September 4, 2018: Tabled until next meeting.

2. Public Questions and Answers.

a. Deer population issue.

Chair Maher recognized Chuck Chokel of 81 Little Harbor Road who expressed his concern about the current deer population on the island. Mr. Chokel noted he has lived here for 15 years, and currently the deer herd from the Wild Rose Lane area coming onto their property now numbers 12, and they are consuming many of the plants he and his wife have planted (arborvitaes) in addition to the hasta they were used to yielding. However he feels the increase in the herd and the increase in consumption warrants some attention and a plan to cull the herd. He asked if the Town did an inventory of the number of deer on the island.

Chair Maher stated he was aware of the issue and Ken McDonald who lives nearby stated the situation with the increase in the deer herd is indeed out of control. Chair Maher agreed there needs to be an action plan to address this issue. Ken noted that the police are aware of the problem. Selectman Frampton noted that Police Chief Don White mentioned he has someone from the State of NH who may be able to cull the herd, and he will follow up with him.

Selectman Stewart stated that there is in fact a possible health issue as well as a potential traffic safety issue at stake. The health issue concerns Lyme's Disease, and there is a case to be made to the State to address this matter. Mr. Chokel asked that the Town push back if met with any resistance from the State, as New Castle is an island with no predators. The usual regulations should not apply to an island environment.

After further discussion Selectman Frampton stated he would follow up with a contact from the NH Fish and Game Department.

Chair Maher stated he would get back to Mr. Chokel with the Town's response to the issues he raised.

b. Update from TAPC Ken McDonald:

Ken reported that he has finished making the revisions as authorized to both Water and Sewer and Zoning ordinances and has brought them to the printer. They should be ready very soon.

3. New Business.

a. Water/Sewer Project Updates.

Sewer:

Selectman Stewart reported that the sewer pump project is almost complete with DPW about to sign off on the punch list of items remaining to be done, and payments will be completed, but according to contact there will be a 2% holdback for payments to Northeast Integration.

Water:

Selectman Stewart reported that the surveying work is nearly completed with the exception of the subsurface issues involving the borings and the private loops. He is working to identify landowners who may be asked for utility easements and then the plan is : Underwood Engineering and Bill will meet with the identified household owners to discern their receptiveness to cooperating with the project and the identified needs. He noted that remaining areas to be addressed some sections of the meter pit by Shapleigh Island and surveying the causeway and private loops.

Normand Houle, Chair of the Water and Sewer Commission asked about the payment status to Northeast Integration. It was confirmed that 4 of 5 payments have in fact been made to Northeast Integration. The 5th payment is the 2% holdback pending final approval by Underwood and DPW. Mr. Houle had questioned this as he believed the Town had entered into a lease arrangement, and not the contract which is currently in effect. Chair Maher clarified the matter indicating that the town did in fact enter into a contract and not a lease. Selectman Stewart explained the SCADA "spare parts Pack" for \$3,000 and a \$3,000 miscellaneous spare parts package. There is no "lease" payment. The lease according to him would have cost \$9,000. After further discussion, Selectman Stewart indicated the full cost of \$38,000 would be paid off in 5 years.

b. Sawtelle Bridge - Sewer Line.

Selectman Stewart recapped what transpired over the summer, which included 2 breaks of the sewer line in June on the Sawtelle Bridge. The first incident was on the Portsmouth side of the bridge, and the second, a short time later on the New Castle side. Both problems were repaired by Chris-Co.

Chair Maher discussed the need for an action plan for the bridge raising concerns about what the plans were for replacing the bridge, and whether or not the water pipes will be hung from the bridge. He noted the Town applied for a \$2.5 million Clean Water SRF loan, and was notified the Town was approved for \$124,000. Discussion ensued about whether pursuing the full application for these funds was worthwhile. Perhaps those funds could be used towards resolving the Sawtelle Bridge problem. Chair Maher stated this evening was the beginning of opening a dialogue on the state of the sewer pipes.

At the invitation of the Select Board, Normand Houle, the Chair of the Water and Sewer Commission, read a prepared statement expressing his concerns about the bridge's condition and the need for an engineering analysis. The fiscal situation is also of concern to him. He added that the Town would have to wait for FY 20 or FY21 to conduct this analysis. He stated that the Water Sewer Commission wants to keep a minimum of \$200,000 in the sewer trust fund to cover operating costs.

Chair Maher stated that if there is a third incident (a break) at the bridge, we would very likely be mandated by NH DES to rectify the problem. Chair Maher took issue with the statement that the town was sitting idly by and not doing anything to study potential solutions and solve the problem.

Selectman Stewart recapped exactly what transpired with the first two breaks, pointing out the age and condition of the bridge. He stated that the Town originally began to address the sewer pipes issues, as sewer was supposed to be addressed first, but the Tarbell fire changed the priorities and the Town proceeded with the water project. He explained that the Town does need to assess the sewer pipes to learn more about their condition. He spoke about the Town's exposure points, stressing that conversations are needed, and that the Town needs to look at the whole fixed main. He noted there may be opportunities with Portsmouth and Underwood to get some needed information. After further discussion, Chair Maher stated the Board would look again at the possibility of going forward with the \$124,000 SRF application and will review with the accountant.

c. Safe Path Update (TAP Application, Wentworth Hotel Meeting)

TAPC Ken McDonald updated the Board on the TAP application for funding for Safe Path. The application was submitted and between September 10 and January 18th a number of steps will be taken by the State in reviewing scoring, and ranking the various applicants. Award letters will go out between January 7 through the 18th. Ken explained that the amount of funding applied for was reduced from \$1million to \$403,000 covering Beech Hill to Pit Lane section of the Safe Path. Ken stated that the Safe Path Committee received the Rye Beach Landscaping quote for work to be performed on the Safe Path project. It is \$6,935.00 more, bringing the total estimate to \$82,542.00. This leaves the Committee \$11,782.96 short, so additional fundraising will need to happen. Chair Maher indicated he along with members of the Committee will be meeting with personnel from the Wentworth Hotel to determine the extent of their interest in financially supporting the Safe Path Project. They have expressed a willingness to support the project, so hopefully this meeting will yield some positive results.

d. Auditor visit (recap)

Selectman Stewart reported that the auditors have completed their fieldwork and there will be a workshop with the accountant on October 4, 2018 at 3:0 PM. Christiane reported that overall working with them has been a positive experience and requests for information have been met in a timely and efficient manner. She has just a few remaining tasks to complete, and they will finalize their report.

Committee Reports.

Water & Sewer: Selectman Frampton reported that the Commission met and discussed the Sawtelle Bridge situation, and that they are proceeding to get quotes for repairs on the risers for the River Road area. DPW is also measuring the bleeding test at four locations regarding TTHMs.

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

Meeting adjourned at 8:15 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Bette Jane Riordan