

MINUTES OF THE SELECT BOARD
Monday April 2, 2018 – 7:00 PM
Macomber Room, Rec Center, 301 Wentworth Road

Present: Bill Stewart, Chair, Tom Maher, Selectman, Damon Frampton, Selectman, Bette Jane Riordan, Secretary.

Also present: Pam Cullen, Assistant to the Select Board, Christiane McAllister, Town Accountant, Ken McDonald, Town Administrative Projects Coordinator, Normand Houle, Chet Fessenden, Lorn Buxton, Carl Roediger, Ann and Mike McAndrew, Guy Stearns, Andy Schulte, David McGuckin, ally Mallett, Sandra Bisset, Tom Smith, Rebecca Goldberg, Anne Miller, Don Gough.

Public Hearing:

Chair Stewart convened the meeting at 7:00 PM. He explained the purpose of the public hearing was to consider the proposed Warrant Article regarding the expenditure of funds in excess of \$100,000 for the water infrastructure and firefighting capabilities for the Town of New Castle as required by RSA 33:8-a. The amount to be borrowed is \$5.5 million dollars to address critical public safety issues relating to the water infrastructure and firefighting capabilities. He explained that there have been many discussions on the needed improvements to the water infrastructure which began with the Tarbell fire in January 2016. The Town went to Underwood Engineering for studies, tests ,assessment and recommendations and confirmed that the Town does not have sufficient volumes for recommended fire flows. Solutions were looked at including water towers, to tapping into salt water, but the recommended and most cost effective solution was to improve the pipe sizing. He noted there have been many discussions on what this might look like. The project of replacing and increasing the pipe size would begin at Shapleigh Island where we get our Portsmouth water, and run to the corner of Main and Wentworth Road. Additionally, loops in the system would be created to increase flows in those designated areas as well as improve the water quality.

The Warrant Article for 5.5 million is broken down into 3 buckets of money. The first is to replace the water main on Rte 1 B that runs through the center of Town. The second is for costs associated with looping, and the third component is to allow for private roads and entities to upgrade systems they have and have the ability to borrow under the warrant article with mechanisms put in place, (betterment mechanism) which allows money to flow back to the Town from thiose private roads/entities.

Chair Stewart explained that we have an opportunity to borrow the necessary funds now at an extremely low rate. Options include 2.42% for twenty years, including a 2-3 year draw period at 1 % on what we draw. This is possible because of a State revolving loan fund

which the Town pre-applied for in 2016, but did not get; however, we were accepted in 2017. So in addition to the public safety issue, the timing is best to secure the funding at the rates explained. That is why the Select Board is putting forth this Warrant Article at this time. Chair Stewart stated he was willing to continue to discuss in further detail as he is not sure of this audience's level of familiarity or understanding. He noted there have been three prior public information sessions, and he asked if the public present needed more presentation or would prefer to ask questions.

Norm Houle asked for more detail on the looping areas. Selectman Maher put up the Map and explained the areas in green. Areas identified were Spring Hill and Lavengers, Shaws Circle, Quarterdeck and Walton Road, Salamander Lane and Wild Rose Lane. Also Cape Road connecting to Riverview. It was noted that one is private and two are Portsmouth water services. Chair Stewart pointed out that this looping will help with public safety concerns, and gives the Town an opportunity to improve the fire flows and water quality.

Tom Smith asked if the expected improvements to water quality and fire flows within the looping, was actually arrived at by engineering tests? Keith Pratt, from Underwood Engineering answered this question in the affirmative. Getting rid of the dead ends is a standard practice in the industry. The looping will improve the water quality as well as public safety by increasing the fire flows.

Dave McGuckin asked about the downside of not improving the Portsmouth component of the system. Chair Stewart explained his meetings on this subject with Portsmouth. The City has the Wentworth Road area on its CIP as an area of concern. They believe they can do it more cost effectively than New Castle doing it and Portsmouth paying back New Castle. The City wants to coordinate this with the replacement of the Wentworth Bridge in 2020. Portsmouth has already done some improvements which benefit New Castle. There is no definitive commitment, but Bill believes Portsmouth will go forward with the Wentworth Road improvements once the bridge is done. Bill stressed there are a lot of moving parts, but he does believe the timing is lining up.

Keith Pratt from Underwood, in response to a question from Dave McGuckin, noted that fire flows are much better in the south part of the island than in the village, so not doing Wentworth Rd. under this warrant article at this time should not be an issue, if the looping improvements are done. There is a reliability component to this looping in case there is a break, there would still be water available.

Lorn Buxton noted that one half the island is serviced by Portsmouth, and the other half is New Castle water. The ratepayers have been contributing to Portsmouth for a number of

years. He wondered why the ratepayers are being asked as taxpayers under the warrant to pay? This is a ratepayers versus taxpayers issue, and he expressed that water and sewer should be treated equitably. Lorn suggested that the Town should consider establishing a separate water district. Chair Stewart stated the Board reviewed this issue and came down in favor of public safety concerns. He believes the matter is a community obligation, and therefore a taxpayer obligation, not a ratepayer obligation.

Don Gough reframed the issue in discussing how each section of New Castle, including the south end of the island, and the looping participants, actually benefits from having the proposed plan as outlined in the warrant article passed and implemented. Guy Stearns also pointed out the benefits to various entities such as the school.

Other comments from the public included questions about the extent of Portsmouth's planned participation in assisting with this project and the TTHM water quality issue. There appeared to be agreement among some of the attendees that it was important to continue to work with Portsmouth given our dependency upon their water, and their ability to respond to identified emergency problems.

Carl Roediger summed up his view that it is New Castle's responsibility to provide compliant fire flows as ratepayers for the Portsmouth water district. He then went on to talk about the ambiguous state of the ownership of the Spring Hill road, which he described as an enigma. He wanted to be sure that the area gets the benefit of participating in looping. He advocated that Spring Hill Road should become a Town road, but obviously there are title and deed issues which need to be clarified. Pam Cullen, Assistant to the Select Board reported on her findings about this LaRose property, and the failure to have a deed done for the road. All agreed a legal opinion was required in order to clear up the confusion. Chair Stewart pointed out that the proposed warrant article contains provisions for legal issues, such as easements to effectuate needed pipe replacement and improvements.

Other issues raised:

Anne Miller was concerned about the timing of the project, which Chair Stewart explained, the project would go out to bid in January 2019, after additional engineering studies, formulations and projections, assuming the warrant article passes.

Pam Cullen asked about the potential of improving our water quality by reduction of TTHMS, by having the pipes replaced. Keith Pratt from Underwood indicated there would be some improvements.

Rebecca Goldberg got clarification on water flow in the area of Morgan's Way.

Micke McAndrew asked if the project would help New Castle meet the ISO standards for fire flows. While there was some discussion that it would help, Lorn Buxton disagreed that it would end up helping with the insurance rates.

Andy Schulte got clarification on exactly what the \$5.5 million warrant articles pay for.

Dave McGuckin asked for a straw poll of those present, to assess support for the warrant article. Due to the turnout, it was determined to defer a straw poll at this time.

There being no further public comment, Chair Stewart read the exact language of the Warrant Article, and then called for a Motion to close the Public Hearing. Selectman Maher made the Motion, which was seconded by Selectman Frampton. Motion carried.

The Select Board proceeded to the regular Agenda:

1. Approve Select Board Minutes of March 5th and March 19th, 2018.

Selectman Maher made a Motion to Approve both sets of minutes as amended. Selectman Frampton seconded. Motion carried.

2. Public Questions and Answers: None.

3. Items: None

4. New Business:

i. Update on on Safepath-Ken McDonald:

- As of today 04/02/18 Private Donations received towards the Safe Path fund is at \$56,670.00
- This phase of the Project will go from the corner of Wild Rose Lane to Rogers Blvd which is the entrance to the library where our green waste is collected – the dirt parking lot.
- The agreed upon recommendation on this phase of the project is:
 - Four (4) foot paved shoulder from the white line (Fog Line) to a curbed Four (4) foot sidewalk that will abut Wentworth Road. This also includes moving a two-sided stone wall.

- Final site survey work is scheduled for Wednesday April 4, 2018 - Within 21 days of completing the survey, the Town will receive a final design that can be submitted to Vendors to bid upon.
- In preparation, I have met with Rye Beach Landscaping on 03.28.18 and Piscataqua Landscaping is scheduled for tomorrow.
- Rye Beach Landscaping is approximately Two (2) months out in scheduling.

Potential Timeline:

04.04.18	Survey work to be done
04.25.18	Final Drawings/Plans from CMA
04.26.18	Send Drawings/Plans to Rye Beach Landscaping and Piscataqua Landscaping
05.10.18	Two (2) weeks – should have received bids for the project

Concurrently, CMA and I will be meeting with the following:

New Castle Public Works Department
 Portsmouth Public Works Department
 New Hampshire Department of Transportation
 Rockingham Planning Commission

ii. Vote on Cemetery Land

Selectman Frampton made a Motion to Accept the gift of 161 square feet of land from Mark Hughes of Laurel Lane to be added to the Riverside Cemetery as described in the submitted documents, pursuant to NHRSA 41-14:a. Selectman Maher seconded and the Motion carried. As required, two public hearings were held within the required time frame prior to the Select Board's vote.

5. Committee Reports: Deferred until next meeting

6. Adjourn:

Selectman Frampton made a Motion to Adjourn, which was seconded by Selectman Maher. Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 8:20 PM.