

MINUTES OF THE FEBRUARY 23, 2009 BOARD OF SELECTMEN'S MEETING

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairman David Canada, Selectman Bruno Federico, and Town Administrator Paul Deschaine.

At 7:06PM, the Chair opened the meeting by motioning to enter into non-public session to discuss a personnel issue with the Police Chief. Mr. Federico seconded the motion, which passed unanimously. At 7:30PM, Mr. Canada moved to come out of non-public session and to seal the minutes due to matters of personnel being discussed. Mr. Federico seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Mr. Canada called the meeting back to order at 7:38PM.

NEW BUSINESS:

Caroline Robinson was present to discuss an application for a pilot program with Unutil for the solar array project. The project would include putting solar panels on top of the Fire House. Mr. Canada asked what would be the funding source for the application. Ms. Robinson said that she was not sure but this application would at least put us on the table to start the process. Once there is more information known about possibly other funding sources to include the Federal Stimulus package, the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative funds, and this pilot grant, a decision can be made whether to move forward. Mr. Canada moved to support the application at no cost to the Town and authorized a letter of support be included. Mr. Federico seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Mr. Deschaine presented for consideration the possibility of appointing a fourth alternate to the Planning Board and recommended consideration of Robert Racine. Mr. Racine is a Town resident, is employed by the University of New Hampshire in the Stormwater Management Program and is seen by the Planning Board to be a desirable candidate. Mr. Canada felt that the Board should wait and see what other applicants for appointment are received in the coming month and consider Mr. Racine with those applicants after Town Meeting. No further action was taken on this appointment.

Mr. Deschaine presented an offer to donate a sign for the building of the Fire Department. The estimated value of the donation is approximately \$4600. Mark Stevens and Susan Conway are the donors. Mr. Canada moved to accept the donation with thanks. Mr. Federico seconded the motion, which passed unanimously. There was a brief discussion regarding the lighting of the freestanding sign. The current estimate to do so is approximately \$2400, but alternatives are being explored.

A discussion regarding a notice from the Department of Labor concerning the lack of an inspection of the Fire House elevator occurred. The Board recommended that the Department of Labor be contacted to inspect the elevator to bring it into compliance.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS:

Parks and Recreation: Tara Barker was present to give a report on her department's activities. She noted that a report on the Recreation Revolving Fund for January is not normally given since Valerie Kemp and Ms. Barker are unable to reconcile for that month since Ms. Kemp is preoccupied with year-end closing duties.

Ms. Barker presented her findings regarding the possibility of licensing a Town employee for the application of pesticides and/or herbicides. She believes we need a commercial non-hire supervisory license. There are at least five exams the person would need to take and pass to reach that level of licensure. Upon issuance of the license, it is good for five years when the license holder will need to be re-certified. The cost would be for the training manuals, which are \$65 apiece. Three manuals are needed to cover the five licensure requirements and the testing involved. Mr. Federico asked if the licenses would cover the application of pesticides or herbicides on the Town's rights-of-way. Ms. Barker said that it would. Mr. Canada asked if Ms. Barker was going to proceed to have Ken Murray pursue these licenses. Ms. Barker recommended not having Mr. Murray do so since he is on a probationary period at this time. Mr. Canada felt that the investment would not be lost in that all the course materials would belong to the Town. The need for poison ivy control and other applications will be coming soon. Ms. Barker also indicated she needs to investigate into the Town's insurance coverage for applying herbicides or pesticides.

Ms. Barker also proceeded to discuss her research into the exclusions under the Town's insurance coverage. The two most disconcerting exclusions include rebounding equipment and aviation activities. Those exclusions would preclude bounce houses and trampolines use by the Town and possibly the helicopter rides at the Fair. Mr. Federico will review the policy in detail and it is exclusions to confirm Ms. Barker's conclusions.

Mr. Canada asked about the electrical issues at the Park as they relate to the lights in the warming hut, the electrical systems in the front electrical hut and the lighting of the Veteran's Garden and the flagpole. Ms. Barker said Mr. Murray is looking into it and will contact Dan Whittier, an electrician, to help.

Mr. Canada announced that the Exeter Garden Club has accepted the responsibility of maintaining the Veteran's Garden. Many members of the Exeter Garden Club are residents of Stratham. Consequently, they were very happy to help out. Mr. Canada thanked them very much for their willingness to maintain these important Town monuments.

Mr. Federico asked if Mr. Murray had checked on the water dam for the ice skating rink. It was reported to him that the water was flowing away from the area and not holding any water. Consequently, the ice was poor. Ms. Barker will have Mr. Murray look into it.

Assessing: Andrea Lewy was present to report on her departmental activities. She presented the proposed contract for assessing services for the statistical update. Mr. Deschaine said that he had reviewed the contract and recommended it with the provision that there was a fiscal funding clause. With that clause, should the Town Meeting not fund the contract, we would still be liable

for the prorated expenses between now and Town meeting. Mr. Canada moved to execute the contract. Mr. Federico seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Discussion turned to the Department of Revenue Administration's determination of the Town's 2008 sales assessment ratio; also known as the equalization ratio. Ms. Lewy recommended not appealing that and that it appears to be accurate. Mr. Canada moved not to appeal the sales assessment ratio. Mr. Federico seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

A discussion continued about publicity concerning the statistical update and noting to the public the private vehicle that was going to be used by the Assessing Contractor. Mr. Canada will look into having a magnetic Town Seal attached to that vehicle. Ms. Lewy is working on a description of the work and notices to appear in the newspapers to inform the public about the assessing activities for the statistical update.

Ms. Lewy also reported that the digital tax mapping project was about 80% done. They are doing reviews of the maps for quality control and correcting any errors.

At 8:19PM, Mr. Canada moved to go into non-public session to discuss a topic with Ms. Lewy that could be detrimental to the reputation of another who is not a member of the Board. Mr. Federico seconded the motion, which passed unanimously. At 8:41PM, Mr. Canada moved to come out of non-public session and to seal the minutes due to the discussion potentially affecting the reputation of another who is not a member of the Board. Mr. Federico seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Ms. Lewy presented a public information guide regarding the statistical update. The Board reviewed and critiqued it.

Administration: Mr. Deschaine reviewed the CED's Project List. There were no additions noted by the Board to include. Mr. Deschaine then reviewed the Transportation Improvement Program Project List. No other projects were added to that list either.

Mr. Deschaine brought forward the request by the Richie MacFarland Center to use the Fire House for a staff and board retreat. Mr. Deschaine read an email of the request. Mr. Federico said this was not quite what he envisioned for the uses of the building. Mr. Canada did not want to reject out of hand the request and asked to consider it for a week. He wanted to be able to discuss the possible use with the leadership of the Fire Department.

Mr. Deschaine then discussed the New Hampshire Municipal Association meeting scheduled for March 2, 2009. The meeting of the membership is to discuss positions the Association will take in regards to the State's budget problems. There are only three possibilities to respond to those statewide budget problems. You can either cut services or raise taxes or some combination of the two to fill the deficit that is predicted for the State budget. Mr. Canada felt that the Board and/or Town should not enter into the political discussions associated with the State budget. He also stated though, that the State should not walk away from the longstanding commitments to programs like revenue sharing and subsidies of the employer contributions to the retirement system. Neither of these obligations should result in tax increases. The Board confirmed that

it's position was that the State should live up to its longstanding obligations without having to increase taxes in doing so and that other newer programs need to be scaled back. Mr. Deschaine asked if there were any specific actions he would like to have the Departments do because of the potential loss of revenue sharing in the rooms and meals tax revenues. Mr. Federico advocated creating a contingency plan in case the revenue cuts happened. Mr. Canada felt that it was way too early to react to such circumstances given that it was very early on in the State budgeting process. Mr. Deschaine pointed out that after Town Meeting, no matter what cuts we would make, the Town would still have to raise the appropriations authorized unless there was legislative change to permit cutbacks after the fact.

Mr. Deschaine discussed with the Board a request by Accounting Supervisor, Valerie Kemp, to potentially increase the credit line on the Town's credit card. It is currently at \$5,000. On occasion, based on circumstances, the Town has exceeded that \$5,000 limit prior to being able to make payment on it. Mr. Federico moved to allow the increase of the credit limit to \$10,000. Mr. Canada seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Mr. Canada asked about the status of the idea of converting the apartment at Stratham Hill Park into an office for the Parks and Recreation Department to be used during the summer. The cost of any conversion was discussed, as there is no money currently in the budget to do so. Mr. Deschaine described the layout of the building as he recalled. Mr. Federico thought there was a need for an office at the Park since the Park Ranger does not live near or onsite. Mr. Canada was not sure of the need, but it was an issue of fairness to the current tenant to give him proper notice if we were to convert the apartment to an office. Mr. Federico will review the proposal and report back to the Board with the potential cost and timeframe.

Mr. Canada suggested that annual water tests be conducted at all Town properties including the Police Department, the Fire Department, and the Highway Department. Currently the water systems at Stratham Hill Park and the Municipal Center are tested to meet state requirements. Those departments are not required to do so. Mr. Federico did not object to the idea. Mr. Canada moved to begin annual testing of all Town water systems for at least bacteria levels. Mr. Federico seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

There was a brief discussion on the effects of Senate Bill 99, which would authorize auto dealers to issue car registrations and the effect that may have on the Town of Stratham and its revenues. The hearing on that bill is scheduled for next week.

OTHER:

Mr. Canada reviewed the meetings scheduled for the coming week and the meetings held during the past two weeks.

PARK PERMITS/MUNICIPAL CENTER RENTALS:

A review of Park permits and Municipal Center rentals occurred.

A request by the Pease Greeters for use of Stratham Hill Park on September 20, 2009 was approved.

A request by Jody Barrett for an eighth-grade class 20th reunion on July 12, 2009 was approved.

A request by Joanne Schottler to hold a Geocaching event at the Park on September 28, 2009 was approved.

A request by the Stratham Democratic Committee to use the Municipal Center for a yard sale on April 4, 2009 was approved.

Stephanie Ilbert-Lamm's request to use the Municipal Center for a birthday party on May 2, 2009 was approved.

Josh Jennings, of the Seacoast Growers Association, requested use of the Municipal Center for their annual meeting on March 20, 2009, which was approved.

Renee Estey requested the use of Stratham Hill Park for a Breast Cancer Survivors Rally. This request was postponed pending an inquiry about a request to waive the fee.

Mr. Canada again reported that the Chapman Family Reunion at the Park scheduled for August 2, 2009 was approved at the Project Meeting by the Board.

A request by the Greenland Veterans to use Stratham Hill Park on September 13, 2009 was approved.

At 10:07PM, Mr. Federico moved to go into non-public session to discuss potential contract negotiations with the Town's solid waste collection company. Mr. Canada seconded the motion, which passed unanimously. At 10:17PM, Mr. Federico moved to come out of non-public session, due to the discussion of contract negotiations to seal the minutes and to adjourn. Mr. Canada seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Reviewed By,

Norma Corrow
Recording Secretary

Paul Deschaine
Town Administrator