

MINUTES OF THE MAY 18, 2009 BOARD OF SELECTMEN'S MEETING

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairman David Canada, Selectmen Bruno Federico and Tim Copeland, and Town Administrator Paul Deschaine.

The meeting opened at 7:07 PM. Mr. Copeland moved and Mr. Canada seconded to go into non-public session to discuss an item, which could affect the reputation of another who is not a member of the Board. The motion passed unanimously. At 7:35 PM, Mr. Canada moved to come out of non-public session and to seal the minutes due to the nature of the discussion having to do with the reputation of another who is not a member of the Board. Mr. Copeland seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

The Board then reconvened and opened the public session at 7:38 PM.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Treasurer Kevin Peck reported that he had \$425,712.45 in the general checking account.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS:

Highway: Fred Hutton gave the monthly report. The reconstruction of the intersection on Marin Way has been completed to the topcoat and striping. Due to the amount of traffic on Marin Way, the topcoat will be done a week from this coming Saturday and the striping will be done soon thereafter. This was to avoid the normal weekday traffic in the area.

Mr. Hutton reported that Smith Farm Road has been ground, graded and paved so this project is almost done for the year.

Mr. Hutton also reported that brush and other debris are still coming in to the Highway Garage area as a result of the ice storm last December. He hopes that in two to three weeks they may be able to close the Highway Garage drop-off area and to resume normal brush collection at the Transfer Station.

There was next a discussion regarding Vanessa Lane. Mr. Hutton said the road has been completed to Town specifications. As a result, Mr. Canada moved to accept the road and to release any performance bond held for it. Mr. Federico seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Otherwise, Mr. Hutton reported that the Highway Department was working on preparations for Memorial Day, which includes mowing all the cemeteries and doing general cleanup and beautification.

Planning: Chuck Grassie was present to give his monthly report. He has been working on the goals and objectives portion of the Master Plan. He has also been working with the Rockingham Planning Commission on the transportation portion of the Master Plan.

The Tax Map project is winding down and he also reported that Lynn Morse has been working on the Fire District legal descriptions. In doing so, Mr. Morse has concluded that the Town needs to find a law firm that is more experienced and concentrates on the formation of utility districts. He will be finishing up legal descriptions on the easement documents but he cannot proceed any further.

The Public Works Commission is working on a request for qualifications for a water supply study and testing with which he has been assisting them. Also in conjunction with that effort, he has been working on the Market Basket development agreement, which is soon to be completed.

Mr. Grassie mentioned he has been approached about a possible redevelopment of the Staples Plaza, which includes a health club. A restaurant is also considering one of the front building sites in front of the new Shaw's. Other interested parties have been exploring various development sites in Town but he cannot comment further until their plans are more developed.

Mr. Grassie reported that the anticipated meeting with the property owners within the Town Center District has been moved to September. This was done because the projected June meeting had too many conflicts for all the property owners to attend.

Otherwise, Mr. Grassie has been exploring training opportunities that have been scheduled during the New Hampshire Planners Association's Annual Conference in the smart growth form based code training with the Rockingham Planning Commission anticipated in June.

Code Enforcement Officer/Building Inspector: Terry Barnes gave his monthly report to include that Lindt Chocolate has been moving into high gear with their construction of the roasting plant. He stated Lindt has offered to provide any Town Official with a tour to see the progress of the construction.

Mr. Barnes reported that the BMW garage has been keeping pace with pumping out their failed septic system. A new replacement system has been designed and is awaiting State approval. They are prepared to implement the plan as soon as possible upon State approval.

Mr. Barnes discussed the lot that is located within Stratham but only accessible from Spring Hill Road in Greenland. They have pulled a permit and are almost ready for their Certificate of Occupancy, so they will be moving in soon. As a consequence, the Town should be prepared to give our public services to the residents of that lot after the CO is issued.

Mr. Barnes reported that signs are the usual problem again this spring, with many of them being put up without permits. He is approaching the homeowner at the corner of Lovell Road and Portsmouth Avenue about an excess number of unregistered cars. He is also chasing pools that have not been fenced per the swimming pool ordinance and other miscellaneous enforcement actions.

Parks and Recreation: Tara Barker presented her monthly report, which included an accounting of the Recreation Revolving Fund.

Ms. Barker reported back on the fertilization and grub control proposals. The cost for grub control is \$2,825 for approximately eleven acres treated at the Stratham Hill Park. Since this is over and above for which they had budgeted, Bio-Spray has suggested doing the inspection and spot treatment approach or pest management program. This has been done before with relatively good success. Mr. Copeland said that the amount budgeted was based on a proposal provided by Pete's Landscaping of \$3,300 for grub and fertilization. Mr. Canada pointed out that we do not know what Pete's Landscaping proposal was treating so it is tough to compare their pricing with Bio-Spray's proposal. Mr. Canada and Mr. Federico asked to obtain additional quotes, which disclose in detail the amount of services being treated. Ms. Barker is still awaiting a response from the Aquatech Irrigation Company on a revised quote for opening the seasonal water systems in the spring. Ms. Barker reported Bio-Spray's quotes consist of the following: fertilization at the Park for \$2,005, fertilization with broad leaf control to be \$2,410, and grub control treatment of \$2,825. Mr. Canada asked Ms. Barker to get a second quote from a similar firm other than the two that have been provided. Hopefully, this will be prepared for this coming Thursday's Project Meeting of the Board.

There was a discussion of Kim Woods' scheduling of work at the Stratham Hill Park. Ms. Barker reported that things appear to be working out with a flex schedule for her.

Ms. Barker also reported that at the Park Association meeting prior to this meeting a vote was taken to replace a piece of playground equipment at the Park. The Park Association also voted to match any donation up to the total cost of the replacement equipment, which is \$11,000.

John Pierce from the audience explained in detail an incident that occurred at Stratham Hill Park when the Boy Scout Troop had reserved a pavilion at the Park, but when they arrived, another party was using that pavilion that the Scouts had reserved. The other party did not want to move or share the pavilion the Scouts had reserved. The disagreement was finally resolved with the assistance of Ms. Wood.

Administration: Mr. Deschaine submitted for the Board of Selectmen's signature the warrant for the first half property tax billing. He also distributed a letter drafted by Town Assessor Andrea Lewy for the Board's review and comment by tomorrow. She intends to include the letter with the tax billing explaining the Town's statistical update proposed to be effective with the second tax billing.

The Board then discussed the disposition of Engine 2. Mr. Canada had done some research in order to ascertain what an appropriate price might be when selling the engine. The research indicated to him that prices for similar vehicles were all over the place. As a result, he was inclined to accept an offer to purchase by the Interstate Emergency Unit, or IEU, if it were enhanced to some degree. Mr. Copeland agreed but would like to add additional members to the offer of training. Mr. Canada said that was a good idea but it was hard to put a value on that since there is a State subsidy involved which changes the value of the training. He moved to accept an offer by the IEU that would be structured to be valued at \$20,000 in total for how many years of training it would take to equal \$20,000 with a minimum of four trainees from Stratham per year. Mr. Copeland seconded the motion, which passed unanimously. This counter offer will be provided to the IEU for their response.

Mr. Deschaine reported on the progress by East Coast Signals on the proposed preemption light at the intersection of Winnicutt Road and Portsmouth Avenue. It became apparent in reviewing the proposal more closely, that various design features had been overlooked by the contractor so he had to revise the quote. In doing so, he came up with four options. Option A was to have the contractor add underground conduit to connect additional warning lights as you approach the intersection to the original proposal at new total cost of \$66,000. Option B was the same as Option A, but with the Town's forces installing all the underground conduit at a revised cost of \$30,265. Option C was to install the additional warning lights but not use any underground conduit. Instead, all the wiring would be overhead on the existing telephone poles along the highways if there were room on the pole. This revised the proposal to \$33,526. The final option, Option D, was to add the additional warning lights but to use a wireless system to connect all the signals and warning lights at a cost of \$48,000. The original proposal previously accepted by the Board was for \$32,000. The Board took this new information under advisement with interest leaning towards Option C if it were possible.

The Board then reviewed the pending minutes for approval. Mr. Federico moved to approve the minutes of April 15th, 16th and 22nd as written. Mr. Canada seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS:

Colleen Lake and Lissa Ham were present to discuss their combined efforts to fundraise for a new Library. Ms. Lake read excerpts from an email from David Canada dated April 19th. The main point of Mr. Canada's email was that Ms. Lake and Ms. Ham would need to validate their proposal and get the explicit approval of the Library Trustees before proceeding further. Ms. Lake reflected on her efforts to relocate and expand the Library in the Town Center District. These efforts assume no taxpayer money or bonding would be required. She said using the 12,000 square feet of space needed by the Library would cost close to \$2,400,000 based on a square foot cost basis. She has been talking with a number of people about fundraising for the new Library. This included a company called My Green Cottage from Virginia. They help set up projects, which are centered on green construction. There is a whole set of grants available, Ms. Lake said, for energy efficiencies and the My Green Cottage company can get many different green items at wholesale pricing. They are also very well connected at the Federal Government level. They can also arrange for celebrity endorsements like Ed Begley, Jr. Ms. Lake had also been talking with an events planner to host something like Riverfest.

Mr. Copeland asked if the My Green Cottage group was also interested in Ms. Lake's proposed development. Ms. Lake said yes, they were. Ms. Ham said this green company could make this development their national demonstration project. Ms. Lake also felt that there were preservation grants available since many of the buildings in Town Center have historic value. She agreed that many of the grants do require the benefit of the project go to low and moderate income people. As a result, Stratham rarely qualifies for these types of grants. In summation, she felt she could get the cost of construction down to \$2,200,000 and that she has gained donated services from a number of companies to include THA Architects, Jones & Beach Engineering, Emanuel Engineering, and Advanced Communications Services.

Mr. Deschaine pointed out that this is all very good work, but without the Library Trustees endorsing the project, it is not going to go very far. Ms. Lake and Ms. Ham understood this point but needed to know if the Board of Selectmen was moving forward with the land acquisition, which was key to the project also moving forward. The Board said they were working appropriately to see if the land acquisition was even feasible. Ms. Lake then explained her efforts to create a bookstore in the Library staffed by UNH interns. She also thought other development grants were available through non-profits like the Rockingham Economic Development Corp. and The Hampshire Charitable Trust along with conservation grants, historic preservation grants, technology grants and library grants.

Ms. Lake wanted to establish a trust to hold the funds from the fundraising done for the benefit of the acquisition and development of the site and ultimately, the buildings associated with this development. This trust would be independent from the Library Trustees and the Town. They only wanted the Town to underwrite the costs associated with establishing the trust and the performance bonding necessary to have a non-profit trust. The Town, via this trust established to assist in the relocation of the Library to the Town Center, would then hire My Green Cottage. Ms. Ham and Ms. Lake would also solicit grants, discounts, and fundraising for this project, along with My Green Cottage, and they would be paid a consulting fee for managing any monies received by the Trust for the project.

Lastly, Ms. Lake and Ms. Ham wanted the endorsement of the Board of Selectmen to proceed on behalf of the Town of Stratham to create the trust, act on behalf of the Town for grants and/or donations, access all the data applications and underwrite all the start-up costs, and finally to effectuate the land swap necessary for the development to take place at the site. All these efforts would be related to the public interest in "returning the Wiggin Memorial Library to Stratham's Town Center." Ms. Lake then read from a 2008 email from Lesley Kimball, Library Director, which supported their continued efforts. Mr. Deschaine pointed out that if the proposed sources of these fundings are being assumed to come from the Library renovation appropriation that that was not possible since that was not a stated purpose of that appropriation. The Board took all that was discussed by Ms. Ham and Ms. Lake under consideration to be discussed further at a later date.

The Chair reviewed the meetings scheduled in the coming week and held during the past week. There is a project meeting scheduled for this Thursday, May 21st. The focus of that meeting will be getting public input on the qualifications desired for a new Police Chief. Mr. Deschaine finished by noting the meetings scheduled during the next two weeks since there will be no meeting next week because of Memorial Day.

Mr. Canada brought up the logistics related to the Memorial Day Observances. The Selectmen usually host a cookout at the Fire House for those involved in the ceremonies. It is anticipated this year that a dedication of the public meeting room at the Fire House in honor of Peter Morgera will occur before the Memorial Day Parade as part of the Firemen's observances. This event will also be mentioned as part of the Memorial Day event at Stratham Hill Park.

Mr. Canada reported on discussions during the construction meeting for the Library renovations. It is anticipated the project will be completed sometime mid to late summer.

Mr. Canada discussed the tri-town Republican Committee's request to cancel their scheduled use of Stratham Hill Park. The current reservation policy states that there are no refunds unless there is a hardship involved in the cancellation. After much discussion, the Board agreed to amend the ordinance to refund the fee plus the \$20 cancellation fee if it occurs sixty days prior to an event. It was agreed this type of amendment would have to occur when the Board considered future changes to the reservation fee ordinance.

Mr. Canada opened the public hearing for a potential \$10,000 donation from the Stratham Volunteer Fire Department Association by reading the public notice. Afterwards, there were no comments from the public. Mr. Canada moved to accept the donation contingent on it being spent before December 31, 2009. The purpose of the funds was to finish the upstairs kitchen in the new Fire House. If this were not spent by the date specified, the money would be delivered to the Trustees of the Trust Fund in trust for the benefit of the Fire Department. Mr. Copeland seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

The Board of Selectmen next deliberated on an offer by the Stratham Police Association to donate a printer to the Police Department. The Board reviewed the letter making the offer from the Association. Mr. Copeland explained that the Officer in charge, Lieutenant Dick Gendron, had not requested the donation and had some concerns with it. The Board decided to pass over the offer of the donation until such time a recommendation from the department head could be obtained.

The Board next reviewed a draft of a press release for the May 21, 2009 project meeting. Included in the press release was a demonstration on the use of tasers Mr. Copeland explained.

At 10:42 PM, Mr. Canada moved to go into non-public session to discuss the possible acquisition of property. Mr. Federico seconded the motion, which passed unanimously. At 11:13 PM, Mr. Copeland moved to come out of non-public session, to seal the minutes due to the personnel matters discussed and potential for acquisition of property, and also to adjourn. Mr. Canada seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Reviewed By,

Norma Corrow
Recording Secretary

Paul Deschaine
Town Administrator