

MINUTES OF THE SEPTEMBER 27, 2010 BOARD OF SELECTMEN'S MEETING

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

At 7:40 pm, the Chair opened the general meeting of the Board of Selectmen.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Kevin Peck reported that he had \$2,089,287.40 in the general checking account.

SECRETARY'S REPORT: Mr. Canada moved to approve the amended minutes for 9/20/10. Mr. Copeland seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT: Mr. Canada stated the Household Hazardous Waste Collection is scheduled for October 2, 2010 from 8:30-11:30 am at the Exeter Public Works Garage on Newfields Road.

Mr. Canada reminded everyone that the West Nile virus is still considered a threat. He urged people to take the usual precautions against mosquitoes.

Mr. Canada announced the Stratham Fire Department is holding their Annual Pancake Breakfast Fundraiser on Sunday, October 3, 2010, which will kick off Fire Prevention Week. There is no charge to the public for the breakfast. There will be a fireman's boot on display and people can donate what they can for a worthy cause.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS:

Parks & Recreation: Recreation Director Seth Hickey was present to update the Board on the progress of the new softball field at Stevens Park. He stated work was slated to start this week, however, has been postponed until next week due to the weather. Mr. Hickey stated he has met with two fencing contractors and received a quote from one for the backstop and surrounding space. He is waiting on a reply on the second quote, which he should have very soon. Mr. Hickey stated he received one price quote on the hydro seeding for the field. At this time, he is waiting for confirmation in writing from the second vendor for a second quote. Mr. Canada asked Mr. Hickey to talk to Hillside Landscaping and get a price quote from them since they came in as the lowest price for the work previously done at the Babe Ruth Field. Mr. Hickey will do that.

Mr. Hickey stated he has received a request from the Park Association to use the "Snack Shack" at Stratham Hill Park at their Fire Tower 5K and the Gordon Barker Bike Race on October 17th. He also received a request from the Boy Scouts to use the "Snack Shack" for this weekend. Mr. Canada stated if the request includes the use of gas for cooking, there is a \$50.00 fee assessed on behalf of the Fair Association since they purchased the propane. Mr. Federico explained that the snack shack did not have propane. Only the Sausage Shack uses it. Mr. Deschaine stated the Boy Scouts had previously requested the use of the Park and the Snack Shack in their request, which had been approved by the Board. Mr. Canada moved to approve the use of the "Snack

Shack" at the lower ball field for the Fire Tower 5K race and the Gordon Barker Bike Race on October 17th. Mr. Copeland seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Mr. Canada moved to approve the Recreation Department using the "Snack Shack" at the Stratham Hill Park on October 24th for their Fall Festival activities. Mr. Copeland seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Assessing: Town Assessor Andrea Lewy was present to give her monthly report. Two residents were present to discuss their abatement applications with Ms. Lewy and the Board.

Present at the meeting was resident Kaye Bentley from 9 Stratham Green in reference to an abatement filed with the Town, which was denied. Mr. Canada gave Ms. Bentley the opportunity to respond. She inquired as to 11 Stratham Green being very similar to her residence and she asked what the criteria were to determine the difference in assessments. Ms. Lewy stated the assessment was based on sales in the area. She further explained that, of the several styles of houses in the neighborhood, Ms. Bentley's was a "Saltbox" style. These were the largest of the homes built in Stratham Green. Of the Saltboxes, Ms. Bentley's was assessed the lowest of all. Number 11 is not a Saltbox and, accordingly, is smaller than Ms. Bentley's home. Ms. Lewy stated that the Town did recognize that the market had come down since the time Ms. Bentley purchased her residence and it was assessed accordingly. Mr. Canada stated that if Ms. Bentley develops new data that she would like to present, she could ask for an abatement every year. Ms. Bentley thanked Ms. Lewy and the Board for their time.

Present at the meeting was resident Ronald Dean from 3 Chase Lane in reference to an abatement filed with the Town, which was approved. Ms. Lewy reported that she had met with Mr. Dean several times in reference to the filing of his abatement and to discuss the different sales and what occurred during the reevaluation. There were exterior and interior inspections done and there were some adjustments made to the assessment at that time. The residence was originally assessed at \$591,600, however, after adjustments were made, is now assessed at \$570,500. Ms. Lewy's recommendation is to approve Mr. Dean's request, as amended. Mr. Canada gave Mr. Dean the opportunity to comment on this matter. Mr. Dean stated he compared his home to his next-door neighbor at 200 Portsmouth Avenue, which he feels is a very good comparison as far as age, the land site, the outbuildings, and the square footage of the houses. He stated there was a pretty significant increase in his assessment and he does not understand the reasoning behind this increase but not at #200. Ms. Lewy stated that Mr. Dean has 1,249 square feet of living area more than his neighbor's house. Mr. Dean's neighborhood is also 1 grade above his neighbor's. This is factored into the assessment. Mr. Canada suggested to Mr. Dean that he double check his square footage numbers. Mr. Copeland also suggested to Mr. Dean to get involved in the school budget process since that is where most tax dollars are utilized.

Mr. Federico left the meeting for a short time at 8:10 pm.

Mr. Federico returned to the meeting at 8:37 pm.

There was a lengthy discussion between the Board and Ms. Lewy on one aspect of the assessment process. One abatement applicant's house was valued \$10,000 higher than the

amount he paid for it only 5 weeks after the April 1, 2009 assessment value snapshot date. Why is this not a prima facie establishment of value? Ms. Lewy explained that every sale has buyers and sellers with different motivations. Although an arm's length transaction, there are still subtle reasons a buyer might pay more, or a seller might take less, for any given transaction. By using a broad based average and applying it consistently to all valuations, the varying motivational influences applied to each individual sale is evened out. The Board accepted Ms. Lewy's explanation and approved her recommendation.

Ms. Lewy continued her report to the Board on her recommendations for actions on various abatement applications (please see attached). After review and comment by the Board, Mr. Canada moved to approve all abatements as presented with the exception of 56 Stratham Health Center LLC, which will be tabled until further review by Ms. Lewy. Mr. Copeland seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Ms. Lewy stated there are currently two cases that will be going to Superior Court. Those cases involve NP Stratham LLC and Soft Draw Investments LLC. Ms. Lewy stated these cases have to go to the Town's attorney because they filed their appeals in Superior Court.

Ms. Lewy stated there are six (BTLA) cases being processed at this time. They are Ralph & Jean Pynn, Sullivan Tire, Charles Hayes, Ila Snyder, James and Karen Ryan and 56 Stratham Health Center. Due to delays with BTLA processing, it is possible there could be additional cases coming. All abatement requests are complete with the exception of seven remaining properties, all of which are on Portsmouth Ave. Ms. Lewy will be working on these items.

Ms. Lewy stated that resident John Gray has applied for a Veteran's credit. He does not meet the criteria because state law, which determines eligibility, does not recognize Mr. Gray's service as falling into the established time line of the war. He did have training service time during an eligible period but the guidelines do not consider training time as being active duty. Ms. Lewy stated residents Mary Jo Sanders and Arthur Coyne have applied for a Veteran's credit, which do meet the criteria. Mr. Canada moved to deny John Gray's request for a Veteran's credit, and to approve the application of Mary Jo Sanders and Arthur Coyne. Mr. Copeland seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

At 9:37 pm, Mr. Federico moved to go into non-public session to discuss a personnel matter. Mr. Canada seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

At 9:58 pm, Mr. Canada moved to come out of non-public session and to seal the minutes due to the personnel matters discussed. Mr. Copeland seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

The Chair then reviewed the meetings scheduled for the coming week and reviewed the meetings held this past week.

PARK PERMITS/MUNICIPAL CENTER RENTALS:

The following Park permits and Municipal Center rentals were discussed and acted upon:

The New Life Baptist Church requested the use of the Park on October 2, 2010 for a religious service. The request was approved.

Administration: There was a general discussion in reference to a Deferred Compensation Plan amendment. A Nationwide representative came into the office recently and met with Accounting Supervisor Valerie Kemp. Mr. Deschaine stated it would be beneficial to have an informational meeting with employees to re-introduce the plan to them. One of the new features that Nationwide offers is the ability to borrow against your investment, which employees were unable to do with the previous plan. Mr. Deschaine will be researching this matter further and will report back to the Board at a future date.

Mr. Canada asked Mr. Deschaine for an update on the removal of the unused oil tank at the Municipal Center. Mr. Deschaine stated that Proulx Oil was initially interested in the equipment, however, there was a misunderstanding on exactly the type of tank/equipment it was. Proulx stated they would get back to Mr. Deschaine on this matter. The Board agreed to give Proulx Oil one more week on this matter before taking other action.

Mr. Canada asked for an update on getting quotes for propane for the Municipal offices. Mr. Deschaine stated the Energy Buying Cooperative is actively working on it and hopes to have pricing shortly. Mr. Deschaine stated Green Power Management in Newmarket is doing the legwork on this.

Mr. Canada stated that during the last election, he noticed the lighting at the ramp at the Municipal office is insufficient. Mr. Copeland suggested bringing in freestanding lights for election night only. Mr. Canada asked Mr. Deschaine to meet with Custodian Charlie Browne to discuss this matter. Mr. Canada moved to instruct the election people to have three check-in tables at the November 2nd election. Mr. Copeland seconded the motion, which passed unanimously. Mr. Deschaine will inform Town Clerk Joyce Charbonneau of same. Mr. Canada stated that during the November, 2008 election, the Town had volunteers acting as facilitators and ushers, however, Ms. Charbonneau's expectation was they would be paid for their services. Mr. Canada asked Mr. Deschaine to meet with Ms. Charbonneau to see what her expectations are.

Mr. Canada stated it was brought up at the Stratham Hill Park Association meeting that they would like to close Jack Rabbit Lane for approximately one half hour for the bike race on October 17th. The families that live on that street have no objection since they can exit through the Park. Mr. Canada moved to allow the Stratham Hill Park Association, in conjunction with the Police Department, to close Jack Rabbit Lane on October 17th for the Gordon Barker Bike Race for whatever time they need, which is expected to be about one half hour. Mr. Copeland seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

At 10:20 pm, Mr. Canada moved to go into non-public session to discuss two negotiation items and one personnel matter. Mr. Federico seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

At 10:35 pm, Mr. Canada moved to come out of non-public session and to seal the minutes due to the matters discussed. Mr. Federico seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

At 10:36 pm, Mr. Canada moved to adjourn. Mr. Federico seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Reviewed By,

Stacey J. Grella
Executive Assistant

Paul Deschaine
Town Administrator