

## **MINUTES OF THE JANUARY 28, 2013 BOARD OF SELECTMEN'S MEETING**

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

At 7:37 pm, the Chair opened the general meeting of the Board of Selectmen.

**SECRETARY'S REPORT:** Mr. Copeland moved to approve the amended minutes from the regular meeting on 1/14/13. Mr. Federico seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

### **DEPARTMENT REPORTS:**

ASSESSING: Assessor Andrea Lewy was present at the meeting and presented an abatement application to the Board for their review. Mr. Canada moved to approve the abatement request for James & Julie Robinson, as recommended by Ms. Lewy. Mr. Copeland seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Ms. Lewy then presented a Veteran Credit application to the Board for their review. Mr. Canada moved to approve the Veteran Credit application for David McNall, as recommended by Ms. Lewy. Mr. Copeland seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

The group then discussed House Bill 446, which would allow veterans with any service connected disability to receive half off their tax bill. Stratham currently has 12 disabled veterans who are entitled to a \$2,000 tax credit as well as a veteran's credit of \$500 if they served during the qualifying war times. This is a total of \$30,000 in tax credits from the Town per year. If it is changed to totally exempt the properties of the 12 disabled veterans, it would cost \$67,984.72. However, if it is changed to half of their property taxes a year, it would fluctuate, but the cost is estimated at \$34,000.

Ms. Lewy presented a memo regarding the adoption of the Blind Exemption to the Board. The presumption was that the Town had already adopted it through Town Meeting approval. However, after a diligent search of Town Reports going back to the 1920's, no evidence of Town Meeting action was found. The recommendation at this time is to move forward with a Warrant Article this year to clarify and reaffirm the granting of the exemption. The Board accepted the recommendation.

Ms. Lewy stated her office is responsible for filing the MS-1 report to the Department of Revenue Administration by September 1<sup>st</sup> each year. Included in the MS-1 are the utility assessments, which the Town valued at \$23,102,400 for 2012. There is a difference of \$3,385,239 from what the DRA's assessment totals. The lower value would produce \$65,400 less in tax revenue. Ms. Lewy stated she would like to hire an independent appraiser for 2014 to conduct utility assessments. The Board would like to know the costs involved, get the DRA's utility appraisal reports, and also get a feeling for the deference given to the State's appraisal over the Town's when these matters are brought to Court.

Ms. Lewy then presented a memo to the Board on the clarification of various glossary terms regarding revaluations.

**MEETINGS:** 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:

Katie Latimer requested the use of the Municipal Center on March 3, 2013 for a birthday party. The request was approved.

Jeff Caley from the Next Level Church requested the use of the Park on March 31, 2013 for an Easter egg hunt. Mr. Copeland moved to deny the request due to it being such a large group for that early in the season (no water or bathrooms). Mr. Federico seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Terri Mancini requested the use of the Park on June 15, 2013 for a graduation party. The request was approved.

Edie Barker requested the use of the Municipal Center on March 14, 2013 for a Seacoast Grower's Association meeting. The request was approved.

Lois Laurence requested the use of the Park on September 21, 2013 for a Philanthropic Educational Opportunities event. Mr. Federico moved to approve the use and to waive the fee predicated on them producing a 501(c)3 certificate. Mr. Copeland seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

The Town of Stratham requested the use of the Park on July 18, 19, 20, & 21, 2013 for the Annual Stratham Fair. The request was approved.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

John Sapienza was present at the meeting to discuss the original proposal of \$5,000 for the equipment to create employee ID's. He stated it was recommended by Chief Scippa to purchase a camera on our own. He stated there is approximately \$155 remaining after removing the camera and the laptop from the original equipment proposal, but requested an additional \$500 to purchase a camera. Mr. Copeland stated we can find a camera for less than \$155 and will assist Mr. Sapienza with the project.

**ADMINISTRATION:**

Mr. Deschaine presented a draft of the 2013 Public Hearing notice on the Town Warrant. After some discussion, Mr. Canada moved to offer the voters the opportunity to either buy the

Cushman property as a bonded measure or a one-time purchase. Mr. Copeland seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Mr. Canada moved that the Board of Selectmen not present the Heritage Commission's request for \$50,000 to fund their Heritage Conservation Fund to voters. Mr. Copeland seconded the motion, which passed unanimously. Mr. Canada will contact Chairperson Becky Mitchell to inform her of the decision so that she will have enough time to get together a citizen's petition if she so chooses.

The Board had no objection with the draft warrant.

Mr. Deschaine stated that Granite State Clean Cities Coalition has inquired as to what the Town has done in energy conservation or alternative energy sources. They asked if the Town wanted to be a signatory on the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) from stakeholders since the Town has made some efforts. The Board agreed that there is no urgency to signing the MOU and requested that Roger Stephenson from Cool Air-Cool Planet review it as well.

Mr. Deschaine stated the Bestway collections contract is just about ready. Mr. Canada moved to authorize Mr. Deschaine to sign the Bestway contract once finalized. Mr. Federico seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

The group then discussed the COAST funding formula and the transportation services they provide to the Town. COAST is required to offer accessible services beyond what their handicapped accessible buses currently do, which is a huge strain on their budget. Prior to this, it was not part of the cost formula that they were asking towns to support, but which they are now proposing to include. COAST has not finalized anything yet as far as how they are going to handle this and nothing definitive has been presented.

The group then discussed a letter that the Board will send out to residents to be included in the dog letter that goes out in February.

The Board agreed to meet with the Exeter Board of Selectmen to discuss the next steps for the water/sewer plan on February 12<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 pm.

Mr. Deschaine stated the application for the Household Hazardous Waste collection grant is due by the end of the week. The Town's commitment to the program is \$3,829.95. The Board had no objections.

The Board discussed the original Town Center signs that were damaged during a storm. Mr. Canada stated he would like to pursue taking Sign of the Times to small claims court for reimbursement since the signs were not suitable for their intended use. Mr. Copeland moved to allow Mr. Canada to pursue reimbursement of the Town Center signs via small claims court with Sign of the Times. Mr. Federico seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Mr. Deschaine stated he received the renewal notice for the accident and sickness insurance for the Fire Department. The underwriter discovered the existence of the Association and they will

basically insure the Association and not the members. Mr. Deschaine will look into this further to make sure they are insuring the members.

Mr. Canada moved to appoint Nancy Hanson as an alternate to the Heritage Commission with a term expiring 2014, and appoint Nathan Merrill as a regular member to the Heritage Commission with a term expiring 2014. They are both current members of the Commission, but are swapping positions. Mr. Copeland seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Mr. Deschaine stated that as part of their proposal, Colonial Life (long term and short term disability) will be sending out the letters to employees outlining their total compensation for the previous year.

After reviewing the proposals in detail, Mr. Deschaine recommended the Town accept the proposal from CMA Engineers for Landfill Closure monitoring services. Mr. Canada moved to accept the proposal submitted by CMA Engineers for Landfill Closure monitoring services. Mr. Copeland seconded the motion, which passed unanimously. Mr. Deschaine stated the Town's groundwater permit expires in 2015 so it will need to be renewed at a cost of \$600, which was part of the proposal.

Mr. Federico moved to re-appoint Mr. Deschaine as the Chairman to the Lamprey Regional Cooperative Board of Directors. Mr. Copeland seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

At 9:25 pm, Mr. Canada moved to go into non-public session to discuss a personnel issue and also a matter that may affect the reputation of another not a member of the Board. Mr. Copeland seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

At 9:52 pm, Mr. Canada moved to come out of non-public session and to seal the minutes due to the nature of the matters discussed. Mr. Federico seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

At 9:53 pm, Mr. Canada moved to adjourn. Mr. Copeland seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Stacey J. Grella  
Executive Assistant