

## **MINUTES OF THE FEBRUARY 10, 2014 BOARD OF SELECTMEN'S MEETING**

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

At 7:30 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 February 3, 2014. Mr. Federico seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

**TREASURER'S REPORT:** Deb Bronson reported that there is \$6,599,135.16 in the general checking account.

### **NEW BUSINESS:**

Mr. Canada opened the public hearing on the proposed 2014 Town Warrant as previously posted. The petition articles will be heard at the February 17, 2104 public hearing.

ARTICLE 7: To see if the Town will raise and appropriate Five million Nine Hundred Five Thousand Seven Hundred Thirty Eight Dollars and no cents (\$5,905.738.00) to defray general town charges for the ensuing year. Mr. Canada stated that a large portion of the request is for the Highway Department to overlay the roads, the paving costs in last years' budget was \$150,000 and this year \$380,000 is needed for the roads.

Resident Nancy Hunter referred to the Public Work Commission line item and asked why the proposed amount is so much higher than the 2013 actual. Mr. Deschaine explained that we are on a state mandated storm water quality testing for the MS4 permit, and the proposed budget costs are associated with that obligation.

Ms. Hunter then asked what the amount of money in the proposed 2014 budget for the Town Center Revitalization Committees will be used for. Town Planner Lincoln Daley responded the budget involves a number of programs aimed at improving the aesthetics and visual character of the Town Center. In addition, the budget will allow the Committee to organize events to help promote the current businesses in the Town Center and encourage residents and patrons to visit the area.

ARTICLE 8: To see if the Town will vote to establish a Capital Reserve Fund to be known as the "Highway Department Capital Reserve Fund" under the provisions of RSA 35:1 for the purposes of purchasing and maintaining Highway Department vehicles and equipment, and further to name the Board of Selectmen as agents to expend from said fund. Mr. Canada explained that the purpose of this Article would be to have funds available should a town vehicle or piece of equipment need to be replaced.

ARTICLE 9: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of One Million Four Hundred Seventy Seven Thousand Dollars and no cents (\$1,477,000.00) to implement the Capital Improvements Program for 2014 as presented in the Town Report and approved by the

Planning Board. This is a special warrant article which will be non-lapsing until the specific items are completed or obtained but shall in no case be later than five (5) years from this appropriation per NH RSA 32:7 (VI). Mr. Canada explained that the purpose of the CIP is to set money aside for up to 5 years; it then expires if we don't use it. It is to spread the cost of the more expensive capital improvements over an extended period of time instead of budgeting it all in one year.

Ms. Hunter asked about the water and sewer infrastructure, planning, and study line item in the CIP. Mr. Deschaine explained that the Public Works Commission identified a certain amount of money relative to if we wanted or needed our own water supply, and get that design started—that was between \$375,000 and \$400,000, so the costs were spread over the last three years and this is the last year of that three-year effort. Ms. Hunter asked how much money has been spent on the whole water/sewer project to date. Mr. Deschaine said that costs so far are under \$200,000.

ARTICLE 10: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate Fifty Thousand Dollars and no cents (\$50,000.00) to be deposited in the “Heritage Preservation Fund” as created by the March 11, 2011 Town Meeting. Mr. Canada explained that the money could be used to buy a house, if it would save it from demolition, then fix the house up and sell it. It could be used to work on the Cushman house.

Ms. Hunter asked if the \$50,000.00 capital needs request is in addition to the \$6,450 in the 2014 proposed operating budget. Mr. Deschaine responded that is correct.

Resident Frank LaSorsa asked if the Heritage Commission makes the final decision on how funds are spent. Mr. Canada responded that the Heritage Commission makes a recommendation to the Board of Selectmen, than a decision is made. The State Department of Historical Resources would also be closely involved, and there are certain criteria that must be met before any funds are used.

ARTICLE 11: Shall the Town vote to raise and appropriate, by special warrant article, the sum of Ten Thousand Dollars and no cents (\$10,000.00) for the purpose of defraying the costs associated with the observance of the Town's 300<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in 2016. This is a special warrant article which will be non-lapsing until this purpose has been fulfilled, but shall in no case be later than five (5) years from this appropriation per NH RSA 32:7 (VI).

ARTICLE 12: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Twenty Five Thousand Dollars and no cents (\$25,000.00) to be deposited into the “Town Buildings and Grounds Maintenance Expendable Trust Fund” as created by the March 16, 2012 Town Meeting. Mr. Canada explained that this money would be held in reserve in the case of an emergency repair, such as septic system malfunction, a well fails, a roof needs fixing, etc. It would not be used for planned maintenance.

ARTICLE 13: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Twenty Nine Thousand Dollars and no cents (\$29,000.00) for the following purposes:

2014 EMS/EMT/First Responder Training	\$19,000.00
2014 ALS Service Contract	\$10,000.00

and to further authorize the withdrawal of Twenty Nine Thousand Dollars and no cents (\$29,000.00) from the Stratham Fire Department EMS Special Revenue Fund created for these purposes during the March 17, 2000 Annual Town Meeting and as amended during the March 11, 2005 Town Meeting. No additional funds from general taxation are to be used.

ARTICLE 14: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Ten Thousand Dollars and no cents (\$10,000.00) to be deposited into the "Accrued Benefits Liability Expendable Trust Fund" as created by the March 16, 2007 Town Meeting to meet the currently unfunded obligations of the Town.

Resident Michael Hunter asked why this amount is not included in the budget. Mr. Canada responded that we don't always know when employees are going to retire, and if it is put in the budget, and we don't spend it, we lose it. Mr. Deschaine explained that the theory behind it is that vacation times are accrued during a certain fiscal year, if they aren't used, at the end of that fiscal year the money goes back into surplus and the Townspeople get the advantage of reusing those funds. It is still a liability that is now unfunded, so putting the funds into a trust fund will, over the years, fund those accumulations as they are accrued.

Resident Everett Lamm asked what the current balance of the fund is. Mr. Deschaine replied that it is \$48,711.00 with a total of unfunded net obligation of \$43,839.00.

Ms. Hunter ask if this is just the Town employees, or the Town employees and the school employees. Mr. Canada answered that it was just the Town employees, and it did not include the school employees.

ARTICLE 15: To see if the Town will vote to change the Office of Town Treasurer from an elected position to an appointed position per RSA 41:26-e, and to have such an appointment made in accordance with RSA 669:17-d by the Board of Selectmen.

Ms. Hunter asked if the Town Treasurer is a paid position. Mr. Canada answered that the Town Treasurer receives a stipend. Ms. Hunter then expressed that she agrees with the Town Treasurer being appointed but the language needs to say that it cannot be a relative or a friend. Mr. Copeland responded that language is already in the statute about a relative, however, to insert friend could be problematic to the Town, how would one define friend.

Mr. Deschaine pointed out that if this Article passes, the current Town Treasurer would serve one year and then the term would expire. Mr. Copeland asked if language should be added that at the conclusion of the current term of the elected Town Treasurer is over then the position would be an appointed position. Mr. Deschaine read the RSA 669:17-d language which states when a town votes to discontinue an elected treasurer's office the person holding the elected office of Treasurer at that time of the vote to discontinue it shall continue to hold office until the annual town meeting first following the discontinuance of the office at which time the elected office of Treasurer shall terminate.

ARTICLE 16: To see if the Town will vote to authorize the creation of a Water and Sewer Utility District in accordance with RSA 31:134—149 to provide public water and sewer utility services to properties within the following Zoning Districts:

- All Zones of the Gateway Commercial Business District
- Special Commercial District
- Commercial/Light Industrial/Office District
- Town Center District
- Flexible/Mixed Use Development District
- Industrial District

as defined by the Stratham Zoning Ordinance as amended from time to time; and to further designate the Board of Selectmen as the governing body for the District with all the authority granted under these statutes. Mr. Canada explained that if we set up a utility district and then provide utilities we can assess the people within that district, based on some equitable means of distributing the cost, direct costs for the infrastructure we invest in.

ARTICLE 17: To see if the Town will adopt the provisions of RSA 79E Community Revitalization Tax Relief Incentive Program giving the Board of Selectmen authority to grant Community Revitalization Tax Relief Incentives and to further designate the two zoning districts of the Professional / Residential ("PRE") and Town Center ("TC") districts as defined by the Town of Stratham Zoning Ordinance as amended from time to time as meeting the standards for an eligible district as set forth in RSA 79-E:2. (A map of these districts is available on the Town's website and Town Clerk's Office.)

Town Planner Lincoln Daley explained that RSA 79-E is a tax incentive program that seeks to incentivize investment in town centers and to rehabilitate under-utilized buildings within these areas. The adoption of this RSA allows for an application process, made to the Board of Selectmen for property owners to make improvements that meet 79-E guidelines. In return, the Board of Selectmen may provide tax abatement at a pre-rehabilitation value for a period of five years. The article will designate the Town Center District and the Professional Residential Zoning Districts under the 79-E program.

Mr. Canada stated that Petition Article's 18 through 21 will be discussed next week. With no further questions or comments, Mr. Canada recessed the public hearing until February 17, 2014.

Mr. Canada moved to recommend Article 7. Mr. Federico seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Mr. Canada moved to recommend Article 8. Mr. Copeland seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Mr. Federico moved to recommend Article 9. Mr. Copeland seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Mr. Copeland commented that he cannot support Article 10 stating that with other priorities the Town has, such as the repaving of the roads; it is not a good time for the Town to allot money to the Heritage Preservation Fund. Mr. Canada moved to recommend Article 10. Mr. Federico seconded the motion, which passed with a vote of 2 – 1, with Mr. Copeland opposing.

Mr. Copeland commented that he cannot support spending money for a celebration with tax payer money. He would support the 300<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Committee raising private funds for the celebration, or cut down what they are planning and to work within the budget they will end up having without the \$30,000 they are asking for in Article 11. Mr. Federico commented that it is too early to say to the townspeople that we are going to raise money for the purpose of the Town's anniversary. Mr. Canada commented that he believes cultural and community functions are an appropriate expenditure of Town money as long as done reasonably. Mr. Canada commented that the Committee has worked hard, raising money is not easy and yet they have fundraised quite a bit. The purpose of raising this over a period of three years is to spread out the costs instead of waiting until 2016 to say they need \$30,000. Mr. Copeland moved to deny the recommendation that the Board of Selectmen support Article 11. Mr. Federico seconded the motion. The motion not to recommend Article 11 passed with a vote of 2 – 1 with Mr. Canada opposed.

Mr. Federico moved to recommend Article 12. Mr. Copeland seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Mr. Copeland moved to recommend Article 13. Mr. Federico seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Mr. Copeland moved to recommend Article 14. Mr. Federico seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Mr. Federico moved to recommend Article 15. Mr. Copeland seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Mr. Federico moved to recommend Article 16. Mr. Copeland seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Mr. Copeland moved to recommend Article 17. Mr. Federico seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

## **DEPARTMENT REPORTS:**

FIRE DEPARTMENT: Chief Rob Cook was present at the meeting to update the Board on his Department's activities. He stated he is still waiting for a quote for the replacement radios – he should hear something in the next couple of weeks.

Mr. Cook reported that the Fire Station is hosting the EMT class in Stratham. We would like to register three people to attend. As a bonus for hosting the training, we get one registration fee waived. The total cost will be \$1800 that we would like to use from the ambulance billing account. Mr. Canada moved to allow the Fire Department to spend \$1800 for EMT training. Mr. Federico seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Cook reported that have been very busy – they have had 62 calls in the last 30 days. The trucks are running well – no problems. Mr. Federico asked if they are getting enough responders. Mr. Cook reported that they are getting enough responders, but last week they did

need assistance two different times and had ambulances come in from Newmarket, and from Exeter.

Mr. Copeland asked if the forestry truck's electrical problem has been fixed yet. Mr. Cook responded that it has not been fixed, he received an estimate for a new control box for the lights and siren for \$150, and if they cannot fix it, it will cost \$650 for a new one.

#### **NEW BUSINESS CONTINUED:**

Mr. Deschaine mentioned to the Board that the Town Report will go to the printer before the next public hearing on the Warrant Articles and in order to be as accurate as possible, would the Board like to share where they are leaning on the remaining four Petition Articles that will be discussed next week. Mr. Canada responded that, in his opinion, the Board should not take a stand on Article 18; or on Article 19. The Board is leaning toward support for Article 20. The Board will not take a stand on Article 21.

#### **DEPARTMENT REPORTS CONTINUED:**

POLICE DEPARTMENT: Chief Scippa then updated the Board on his Department's activities. The Police Department has received mapping information from the Department of Homeland Security and State Police. They provided aerial maps and tactical area maps for both schools to help with the response plans to the schools. The police department will be sharing the maps with the fire department to keep on their fire trucks in case they are needed.

Chief Scippa informed the Board that the state of New Hampshire police want to donate four rims for the 2003 Town Victoria – the total value is under \$500. Once he gets the information in writing, he will bring to the Board for their approval. He also informed the Board that a Boy Scout from Exeter is working on his Eagle Scout badge and as a project wants to build sports-like cubbies for each of the officers to put their coats and others items in. This young man will come before the Board for approval in the near future.

Chief Scippa recommended to the Board that the Highway Safety Committee remains the same for the next term, which is a one-year term. Currently on the Committee are the Road Agent, Public Safety liaison, and Chief Scippa. Mr. Copeland moved to keep the current Highway Safety Committee for another term. Mr. Federico seconded the motion, the motion passed unanimously.

PLANNING: Town Planner Lincoln Daley was present at the meeting and updated the Board on current and future Planning Board applications and projects.

Mr. Daley reported that the Town Center Revitalization Committee (TCRC) continues to work on the sign and banner program. Mr. Daley presented the application to be submitted to the utility company on behalf of the Town. The banners will be hung from their poles. We are working with the Highway Agent about the installation of the banners, finding the appropriate height and making sure safety measures are in place. Mr. Canada moved to authorize the Town Administrator to sign the application. Mr. Federico seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously.

Mr. Daley stated that the Economic Development Committee is working on two projects, one is the NH RSA Chapter 79-E Community Revitalization Tax Relief Program, and the other is the Economic Revitalization Zone (ERZ) with designation of the mixed use development, industrial, commercial/light industrial, and special commercial as an ERZ. The program encourages businesses to add employees, and based on the number of employees added, they get a State Business Tax benefit.

Mr. Daley reported on the projected fee schedule for building permits. Mr. Daley presented the restructured fees for the Board's endorsement before going to the public hearing on February 24, 2014. The group then reviewed and discussed in detail the new fee schedule. Mr. Canada moved to accept the fee schedules presented, and authorize Paul Deschaine to publish them in the newspaper so that we can have a public hearing in two weeks. Mr. Federico seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously.

Mr. Daley reported on the Transportation Enhancement Grant for the Town Center project. Mr. Daley and Mr. Deschaine are working with the consultant, GPI, on the final conceptual design plan. GPI is scheduled to present to the Board next week to finalize the budget for the submission to the Department of Transportation (DOT).

ASSESSING: Town Assessor Andrea Lewy was present at the meeting to present a contract for Steve Traub, the commercial appraiser. The Board will review the contract.

**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:

Robin Front requested use of Stratham Hill Park on June 21, 2014, for a Collie Rescue picnic/meeting. Mr. Canada made the motion and moved to waive the fee. Mr. Federico seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

At 9:32 pm, Mr. Canada moved to adjourn. Mr. Copeland seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Debbie Hensley  
Executive Assistant