

MINUTES OF THE MARCH 31, 2014 BOARD OF SELECTMEN'S MEETING

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

At 7:31 pm, Mr. Canada opened the general meeting of the Board of Selectmen.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Deb Bronson reported that there is \$3,417,007.60 in the general checking account.

SECRETARY'S REPORT: Mr. Copeland moved to approve the minutes of the March 24, 2014 meeting as amended. Mr. Federico seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS: John Nestor and Pete Roberti of Nanepashement Project Management were present at the meeting to discuss the possibility of placing a cell tower on Stratham Hill. They explained that they work with AT&T who wants to enhance the network in Stratham – there is a gap in coverage in this area and they have been looking at sites in the Stratham area for a year. They presented a map to the Board outlining where they believe the best place to have a cell tower that would meet the data requirement needs for users who have smart phones, and meet the greater frequency objectives. They recognize that placing the cell tower on the Stratham Hill would be a long process and involve probate court. There are a couple alternatives that could also be considered –Morningstar Drive and Jack Rabbit Lane are two possibilities. Mr. Canada asked if they had talked with the Technical College, mentioning that it would be an ideal spot for the cell tower, and he will give them the contact information for the people who are purchasing it.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS:

HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT: Highway Agent Colin Lavery was present at the meeting to update the Board on his Department's activities.

Mr. Lavery reported that Town Center banners have been installed. He reported that the members of the Fire Department have approached him to install American flags in the Town Center for certain holidays.

Mr. Lavery reported that the new cemetery regulations take effect tomorrow, April 1, 2104. The Town Clerk has the new regulations to hand out to the public, and to the cemetery vendors. The new Veteran's grave markers have been delivered to the highway department. Mr. Lavery is working on the new cemetery layout for the new roadway for expansion of the Maple Lane cemetery. Mr. Lavery submitted to the Board a bid list for mowing the cemeteries—with a range of \$19,300.00 – \$29,800.00, for mowing both cemeteries, based on 22 mowing's per year, string trimming weekly, and spring and fall cleanups.

Mr. Lavery updated the Board on various projects throughout Town, including tree work and site clearing which will be completed soon. He will have a snow maintenance and equipment use overhead report to the Board by May 1, 2014. Trucks have all been inspected, one pick-up truck needed brakes, one of the larger CDL trucks needed a new front steer tire, and one truck

needed a city horn. The highway department summer hours will begin May 1, 2014 – they will operate (4) 10-hour shifts which help with production without spending excess in overtime.

Mr. Lavery reported that his department will be doing the required inspections and maintenance on all the Municipal building septic and grey water systems.

Mr. Lavery stated that he has begun the 2014 planned projects which include road paving, the Municipal Center new ball field project and the cemetery expansion project. Mr. Lavery asked the Board about getting electrical bids for the motion sensors at the Highway Department, light poles at the Municipal Center, and the light poles at the Police Department, asking if they want him to get three bids, or publicly put it out in the newspaper. The Board would like him to keep it to three bids, but have the contractors show up on the same day, at the same time, to go over all the specifications with them.

Mr. Lavery reported that in April he will be working on the required annual fuel tanks inspection. Mr. Lavery updated the Board on the maintenance projects his department is working on.

NEW BUSINESS CONTINUED: Boy Scout Ricky Daley from Troop 185 is working on his Eagle Scout project and asked the Board for permission to build a two-sided Smokey-The-Bear fire danger warning sign and would like to put it in front of the Firehouse. The cost of the sign will be around \$2200 including the sign, materials to match the existing sign in front of the Firehouse, bark mulch, and the flowers. Scout Daley is having a fundraiser to raise the cost of this project with no cost to the Town. There was discussion among the Board members as to who will be responsible for changing the fire risk sign on a daily basis, and concern with the line of site for traffic on Winnicutt Road. The Board decided that the Stratham Hill Park would be a better option for the sign and Kim Woods agreed to maintain the status of fire danger on a daily basis. Mr. Canada moved to allow Mr. Daley to put the sign up at the Park, with no cost to the Town, site at park to be determined, and have Kim Woods maintain the status on the sign. Mr. Copeland seconded the motion, which passed unanimously. The Board commended and thanked Ricky Daley for this project.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS CONTINUED:

PARKS & RECREATION: Director Seth Hickey was present at the meeting to update the Board on his Department's activities. He introduced Scott Dubben of the Seacoast United Baseball organization. Seacoast United Baseball has requested use of the Stevens Park ball field for their organization which currently includes 17 Stratham families. They would pay a field usage fee that would cover the costs of some field maintenance. Mr. Copeland asked what the fee would be. Mr. Hickey responded that the typical fee among Seacoast teams is \$30 per hour. Mr. Canada stated that what he sees is a for-profit organization in Exeter using a Stratham field paid for by Stratham residents and he is not interested in renting out the Stratham fields. Tim Mason stated that he thinks the Board is looking at this with closed eyes – there are 17 Stratham families who would use this as a home base. We are asking that you would give this a shot – try it for one year and see if it is working out. Mr. Mason stated that he would be willing to be the liaison and that “we would leave the fields in as good of shape as when we arrived.” Mr. Dubben said there are 19 teams with 240 players with 17 Stratham families in mostly the 10–14

year-old range. Kim Woods said that having the baseball games on the fields helps to keep the weeds down; it helps maintain the infields by being used. Mr. Hickey stated that he has faith in Mr. Mason's capability in maintaining the fields while the Seacoast United Baseball group is using the fields, and that \$30 an hour is more than enough to cover the costs for their share of maintaining the fields. Mr. Copeland commented that the Stratham Babe Ruth program has the first priority for the fields. Mr. Hickey agreed that the Babe Ruth program does have the first priority. Mr. Copeland moved to allow Seacoast United Baseball to partner with our Parks and Recreation Director in the usage of the Stevens Park Babe Ruth field. Mr. Federico seconded the motion, which passed with two in favor and Mr. Canada opposed.

Mr. Hickey reported that Exeter Youth Soccer Association has requested field usage at Stevens Park. The Exeter Youth Soccer Association has 30 – 35 percent Stratham kids involved in their program. Last year the Exeter Youth Soccer Association purchased two sets of goals, and they have a remaining credit of \$2150. They want to practice at Stevens Park 5 afternoons with games on the weekends. Mr. Hickey stated that we have had a good relationship with this organization and there have been no issues in the years that we have worked with them. This program services an age group for which Stratham does not have a viable program. Mr. Copeland moved to approve the usage under the direction of the Park and Recreation Director. Mr. Federico seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Mr. Hickey reported that Exeter Youth Lacrosse has requested field usage at Stevens Park for practices on Wednesday and sometimes on Monday. They have asked to use the parking lot before the field is ready. Mr. Hickey noted that Stratham does not currently have a lacrosse program of its own. Mr. Copeland moved to approve Exeter Youth Lacrosse usage under the direction of the Parks and Recreation Director. Mr. Federico seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Mr. Hickey reported to the Board that he has a proposal in the amount of \$2619.10 from Route 125 Fence Company, the same company who replaced a portion of the cedar rail fence along the parking lot at Stevens Park, to replace the remaining section of that fence. They did a great work last fall on the first section, and they were the lowest bid at that time. Mr. Canada moved to approve the expenditure of \$2619.10 for the fore-mentioned fence. Mr. Federico seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Mr. Hickey reported that he is working with Park Ranger Kim Woods, and Town Planner Lincoln Daley to prepare for signage in areas for the hunting ban that was approved at Town Meeting in March 2014. Ms. Woods has been in contact with the school in regard to the 1,000 foot buffer from the school, and how it will impact the area surrounding the school. There was discussion among the Board members regarding posting of the 1,000 foot perimeter ban of firearms near the schools, per Federal law. The Town will not post the school zone but gave the school permission to post those signs in 2012; Ms. Woods will have a conversation with the school officials regarding this. Mr. Hickey reported that he will post approximately 60 signs every 300 feet in Stratham Hill Park and adjacent Town owned property regarding the ban on hunting.

Mr. Hickey reported that they are planning on finalizing the grading on the ice skating rink so that it is in shape when they drain the water in subsequent years. On May 6 and 7, 2014 we will

have our annual Liberty Mutual Day of Caring and one of the things we will accomplish is to create a pump track in the first field which will be mounds of dirt in a figure-8 configuration bicycle course for families.

Mr. Hickey reported that the programs are going well; the Coyote Club membership has grown and is a popular program. He reported that the youth sports just wrapped up basketball and is now beginning the baseball and softball programs.

Mr. Hickey reported that HB 295 requires all paid staff and volunteers for youth sports camps to have a criminal background check. The responsibility is on the individual camps which partner with the Town for programs to comply with the new law. The summer camp director will come back for a few weeks and when she leaves the assistant director will be the camp director. The summer camp program grows each year – it is a very successful program. Mr. Hickey has placed ads in the paper regarding a part-time seasonal position at Stratham Hill Park.

Mr. Hickey updated the Board on upcoming events such as an Easter egg hunt on April 5, 2014 at Stratham Hill Park; a soccer tournament at Stevens Hill Park; and a concert festival on September 21, 2014.

ASSESSING: Town Assessor Andrea Lewy was present at the meeting and presented three abatement applications to the Board for their review. Mr. Canada moved to deny the abatement request for Northern New England Telephone, as recommended by Ms. Lewy. Mr. Federico seconded the motion, which passed unanimously. Mr. Canada moved to deny the abatement request for Ralph and Jean Pynn as recommended by Ms. Lewy. Mr. Federico seconded the motion which passed unanimously. Mr. Canada moved to deny the abatement request for Shasta LLC property. Ms. Lewy had recommended a reduction in the assessment. After discussion, Board members agreed that the value of the land and building combined warranted the existing valuation. Mr. Copeland seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Ms. Lewy then presented a Veterans' credit to the Board for their review. Mr. Copeland moved to approve the Veteran's credit for John A. Rice, as recommended by Ms. Lewy. Mr. Canada seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Ms. Lewy presented a timber tax warrant from David Short, Map 18 Lots 45 & 46 for \$1,792.58 for the Board to sign which the Board did after a vote of 3-0.

Ms. Lewy updated the Board on the revaluation saying they are on schedule. Steve Traub is scheduling inspections with Lindt and Golf Club of New England the week of April 14, 2014. Ms. Lewy is currently working with the DRA on a public informational presentation that covers what occurs during a revaluation and a statistical update which will be presented in May.

ADMINISTRATION:

Mr. Canada began the discussion with the Board regarding the proposal Mr. Deschaine presented last week for the Code Enforcement Officer and the Building Inspector positions. He stated that since becoming a member of the Board of Selectmen he has seen the support staff almost double, we struggle every year to keep our budget down, and adding an additional ½ time staff position

would not help keep our budget down. He checked with surrounding towns and believes it is not necessary to add staff. He went on to say that he does see the value of merging the two part-time positions into one full-time position. Mr. Canada believes we should be looking for someone who knows the trade, someone who knows what it takes to get a structure built. Mr. Copeland expressed that he would like to see one full-time person for both jobs, and that we should get started on the process. Mr. Federico stated that he does not see the benefit of making it one full-time position – he thinks it would be better handled by being two part-time positions. Mr. Barnes stated that it will be difficult to find two people who would be interested in a part-time job; he believes there should be one full-time person doing both jobs. Mr. Deschaine stated that he would caution the Board in terms of the proposal – not looking at the job today, not looking at the job yesterday, not looking at the job a year ago, but looking at the job today going forward – the MS4 requirements are looming; someone who can assist when the sewer and water lines are installed; someone who is trained to do some of the things we hire consultants for – it would save money by not paying for consultants. Mr. Canada moved that Mr. Deschaine advertise for a full-time position combination Building Inspector/Code Enforcement Officer with salary range of \$50,000 - \$65,000 based on qualifications and experience. Mr. Copeland seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

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:

Joanne Schottler requested use of the Stratham Hill Park Front Pavilion on September 14, 2014 for the Pease Greeters. The Board approved the request.

Jason Plante requested use of the Stratham Hill Park Front Pavilion on July 12, 2014 for the Plante wedding. The Board approved the request.

ADMINISTRATION CONTINUED:

Mr. Deschaine reported that at the Department Head meeting the question was asked if the Board intends to have a staff meeting; overall support was expressed for this. Mr. Canada said this is something on his list to do. Mr. Copeland expressed that it was a great idea and he would like to see it happen during business hours so all the staff could participate. Mr. Federico suggested having a before hours meeting so that the Town office would not be unmanned. Mr. Canada stated that he does not see any reason why we cannot close the Town office for an hour to have the meeting. Mr. Deschaine stated that during business hours would be the best option. Mr. Canada asked Mr. Deschaine to set up the meeting.

NEW BUSINESS CONTINUED: Mr. Deschaine reported to the Board that the Cooperstown Team requested a raffle permit. The raffle will be a fundraiser to offset costs for the 12-year-old Stratham/Cooperstown baseball team. Mr. Federico moved to approve the permit. Mr. Copeland seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Mr. Deschaine presented a request from the Reach the Beach relay race for a NHDOT Parade permit as they pass through route 111 in front of the Industrial Park. Mr. Copeland moved to approve the permit. Mr. Canada seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Mr. Canada asked Mr. Deschaine about the status of the annual employee compensation letters . Mr. Deschaine said it is on his desk waiting for final review and should be out by the end of this week.

At 10:09 pm, Mr. Canada moved to go into non-public meeting to discuss personnel matters. Mr. Federico seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

At 10:22 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. Copeland seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

At 10:22 pm, Mr. Canada moved to adjourn. Mr. Copeland seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Debbie Hensley
Executive Assistant