

MINUTES OF THE OCTOBER 27, 2014 BOARD OF SELECTMEN'S MEETING

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

At 7:05 pm the Chair moved to go into a non-public session to discuss a personnel matter. Mr. Federico seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

At 7:33 pm the Chair moved to come out of the 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 7:34 pm the Chair opened the general meeting of the Board of Selectmen.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Treasurer Deb Bronson reported that there is \$4,023,303.01 in the general checking account.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS:

ASSESSING: Town Assessor Andrea Lewy was present at the meeting and presented the Board with five Veterans Credits for them to approve. All five applicants have met the criteria to receive the Veterans credit. The applicants are: Cindy Khoury, Persian Gulf; Gary Khoury, Persian Gulf; Kenneth Mendis, Vietnam Conflict; Patricia Lindberg, Vietnam Conflict and Patricia Lindberg again as surviving spouse of Robert Lindberg who was also in the Vietnam Conflict. Mr. Copeland moved to approve the five Veterans Credits as presented. Mr. Federico seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Ms. Lewy reported that she went to the BTLA last week; the tax payer presented reports from Zillow regarding the value of his home. He felt like it was an "arms-length" transaction. Ms. Lewy does not agree with that and presented that the house had been assessed at \$940,000; he purchased the house for \$640,000. During Ms. Lewy's discovery she found that the house had been rented for quite a while and then became vacant before the home was put on the market. She has anecdotal evidence that the seller was "just trying to liquidate". We should hear back from the BTLA Board in the next few weeks.

TOWN CLERK: Town Clerk Joyce Charbonneau appeared before the Board to discuss holiday hours. Ms. Charbonneau requested, on behalf of the Town employees, to be allowed to take a vacation day for the day after Christmas and to close the building. Employees may work if they so choose. Mr. Copeland moved to allow the staff on Christmas Eve to go home at noon and be paid for the day, and the option to take a vacation day on December 26 and close the building. Mr. Federico seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Ms. Charbonneau stated that next week is the Election Day and she is expecting it to be very busy. She has received over 250 absentee ballots. Mr. Canada stated that the 76ers have requested to have a bake sale table the morning of the election. Mr. Canada moved to allow the

76ers to have the bake sale table. Mr. Copeland seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

FIRE DEPARTMENT: Chief Rob Cook was present at the meeting to update the Board on his Department's activities. He stated that there have been a total of 468 requests for services so far this year.

Mr. Cook reported that two of the overhead doors are not working because the electronic sensor eyes need to be replaced and the total bill is \$1,275 from Toombs Door Co. Mr. Sapienza stated that Toombs Door Co gives excellent service. Mr. Canada asked if Mr. Cook obtained a second quote. Mr. Copeland moved to approve the \$1,275 expenditure and to have Toombs Door Co. do the work so that it will be done expeditiously. Mr. Federico seconded the motion, which passed unanimously. Chief Cook agreed to see if there are other vendors who could perform work on these doors, for future reference.

Mr. Cook reported that on the Air Conditioning unit in the IT room in the ceiling, the pump clogged up and leaked water down into the security computer system. The estimate to fix is \$398. They will replace the drain line and remove the pump that is in the unit now.

Mr. Cook reported that he has a quote to replace the spreader on engine #1. The PSA is not strong enough for some cars, so the SVFD is requesting to purchase new spreaders with the extended tips at a cost of \$7,367. Mr. Copeland asked if that amount is in the budget, Mr. Cook said that it is. Mr. Copeland moved to approve the \$7,367 to replace the spreaders on engine #1 to bring the PSA up to today's standards. Mr. Federico seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Mr. Deschaine presented the Board with the Town's Hazards Mitigation Plan for the Board to approve. Mr. Canada moved to approve the Hazards Mitigation Plan as presented. Mr. Copeland seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

SECRETARY'S REPORT: Mr. Federico moved to approve the amended minutes of the regular meeting on October 20, 2014. Mr. Canada seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS: Mr. Canada stated that the Board voted last week to change the Executive Assistant job description by giving 30 hours per week to the Town Administrator and 10 hours per week to assist the Parks and Recreation Director, and Mr. Copeland would like a reconsideration of that decision. Mr. Copeland stated that 30 hours for the Town Administrator office is insufficient and the 10 hours for the Parks and Recreation Department is not nearly what is needed with the problems that exist with the dearth of volunteers. Mr. Copeland requested that the Board reconsider restoring the 40 hours needed for Mr. Deschaine, and leave the 25 hours for the Parks and Recreation Department.

Mr. Hickey stated that he came before the Board a few months ago to report a significant decline in volunteerism over the last two years and finding that the time commitment to support the youth sports programs is too much for the volunteers. Mr. Hickey stated that having an assistant

beginning last month has helped him incredibly and has requested that he can keep her until the end of the year and then reassess at the beginning of the next year. Mr. Canada stated that he would like to stay with the plan to have the Recreation Department assistant stay until the end of the year and that a proposal to eliminate that temporary position had never been considered.. In the meantime the new person can be trained to be a volunteer coordinator which will help recruit, support, and retain volunteers.

Resident Chris Caveratta stated that Stratham is growing, families are moving in and we need to have a Recreation program that supports the community. To have a volunteer coordinator position will be detrimental to the Mr. Hickey, the Recreation Department, and to the residents of the Town. We have a great Town and if we have a Recreation program that is operating less than it could be it will be a "black eye" to the Town. As a Town, we can do better than to simply have a volunteer coordinator, we need to look forward and move forward.

Resident Ellen Ellis stated that the Recreation Department has done extremely well since Mr. Hickey joined the staff and she would support a paid assistant position.

Resident April Mason stated that she serves on the Recreation Commission and it is her understanding that Mr. Hickey would be granted a temporary assistant until the end of the year, to deal with some immediate needs with the understanding that during that timeframe he would substantiate the need going forward so that we can prepare for the next budget session. The reality is that in the two years that I have served on the Recreation Commission, the volunteer hours have become an issue. We need to be proactive and not reactive.

Resident Melissa Currier stated that she is in support of assistance for Mr. Hickey because the demand of programs and program directors has escalated over the years and the amount of administration required for background checks for anyone who has contact with children and the amount of paperwork that goes into certifying referees, coaches, and other volunteers, has increased greatly. It simply cannot be done in 10 hours.

Resident Patty Elwell stated that the group that has not been represented tonight are the seniors – they look forward to the Senior Trips that the Recreation Department hosts.

Resident Marin Duty stated that Mr. Hickey and his programs have had a positive effect on our community.

Tracey Abbott stated that she has been on the Recreation Board for several years and she can attest to that fact that the changes since Mr. Hickey has become the Director of the Recreation Department have been incredible. The Recreation Commission has been discussing a part-time assistant for Mr. Hickey for years; it is not just something that we thought up because of the soccer program. There is an unbelievable amount of time that goes into the programs that the Recreation Department provides.

Resident Katie Warner stated that her family chose to live in Stratham because of the reputation of the Recreation Department. Combining two positions is not a good strategy.

Mr. Canada stated that the most important thing to recognize is that Mr. Hickey is getting more out of this deal because what we adopted last week was not to take away anything, Cantrese Forest will work until the end of this year, and in addition to that, he will have 10 hours that he can use to help develop a volunteer coordinator. What this boils down to is Mr. Deschaine is losing 10 hours and Mr. Hickey is gaining 10 hours.

Katie Warner asked if the thought of having a volunteer coordinator to generate enough volunteers where that 25 hour position will not be needed any longer. Mr. Canada stated that is his hope. Ms. Warner said that even if you have volunteers, they come and go. We need to have some consistency in the job.

Resident Pam Dziama asked if it would be difficult to create a job description and hire someone now when it is not clear what the hours will be. Mr. Canada stated that we will hire someone as a full time assistant and when they come to work they will divide the time as necessary.

Park Ranger Kim Woods stated that another possibility would be to hire someone for 30 hours for Mr. Deschaine, and hire someone else for 25 hours for Mr. Hickey – wouldn't having two part-time employees offset the cost of the extra 15 hours for Mr. Hickey because the Town would not be paying benefits to either employee.

Resident, and current temporary assistant to Mr. Hickey, Cantrese Forest stated that the need to replace Mr. Deschaine's assistant should be based on Mr. Deschaine's needs and it is muddying the waters trying to combine the two jobs and Departments.

Mr. Sapienza stated that he would like to hear what Mr. Deschaine has to think about this. Mr. Deschaine stated that he is sitting here with a Board decision that has already been made and that in his role as Town Administrator, he needs to have the perspective of supporting the Board. Mr. Deschaine stated that his position is that he does need a full time assistant. The position has not been full time for a very long time. It is not an assembly line position and there are many aspects, such as transcribing minutes, which is an art form, where we need someone who is intuitive and knows how to best use their skills and knowledge in the office., Also, there is an element of trust that develops over time. We need someone who understands the Town and its people and our practices to move forward. I need someone with the flexibility to support any portion of the Town's needs on any given day. There are a complex variety of issues my assistant faces on a day-to-day basis.

Mr. Copeland stated that he believes that this Board has taken a giant step backwards with its vote last week. The citizens of our community and our voters have an expectation of this Board to promote the community and the Recreation program and its needs. We will not be able to do so if this policy goes forward. We are not respecting the Recreation Commission's work and opinions as they have taken the testimony first hand as to the needs of the Recreation Department. We as a Board are being very short-sighted in those community meetings and it will reflect on us and will show down the road our ineffectiveness to promote the Recreation Department and to make it as good as it is now or even better. Mr. Copeland moved to undo what we did last week, that we restore the 40 hour position on the Administrator side so that person can learn the job as well as the welfare component and not be affected and involved in

learning anything to do with the Recreation program. And I would move to leave the Recreation Department alone until the budgetary cycle when the Director can come before us with a proper evaluation completed and whether the hours are enough or need to be increased. There was no second so the motion died.

Mr. Sapienza reported that the lighting at the skating rink at the Stratham Hill Park has been installed by him and Dan Whittier.

Mr. Deschaine then discussed with the Board and Mr. Hickey a job description for the new position. Mr. Canada moved to adopt the job description. Lacking a second the motion failed.

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:

Leslie Blaney requested the use of the Municipal Center Meeting Room B on November 15, 2014 for a Girl Scout meeting and requested the fee be waived. Mr. Copeland moved to approve the request and waive the fee. Mr. Federico seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Leslie Blaney requested the use of the Morgera Room on November 6, 2014 for a Girl Scout meeting and requested the fee be waived. Mr. Copeland moved to approve the request and waive the fee. Mr. Canada seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Emily Christian requested the use of the Stratham Hill Park Front Pavilion on August 22, 2015 for a Bike MS Seacoast Escape Ride-Fundraising bike event. The Board would like to know, since it is a fundraiser for a non-profit organization, if they are requesting that the fee is waived. The Board will make a decision after they get that information.

Vicky Cook requested the use of the Morgera Room on November 11, 2014 for the Ladies Auxiliary Veterans' lunch, and to have the fee waived. Mr. Copeland moved to approve the request and waive the fee. Mr. Federico seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

ADMINISTRATION: Mr. Deschaine reported that Mr. Lavery was able to get someone to validate the HVAC system repairs that need to be done. West Mechanicals in Lee, NH looked at the units to make that verification and provided a proposal in the range of \$6,750 for all three compared to the \$4,046 that Dowling had proposed.

Mr. Deschaine reported that we received correspondence last week from the NHDOT inquiring about the posted speed limit on Route 33 in the stretch between Stratham and Greenland. They had received a request from a Greenland citizen for a change and felt, due to the proximity to Stratham; it would affect Stratham's enforcement efforts. NHDOT is happy to do a speed study to see if current circumstances warrant lowering the speed limit. The Board discussed the issue and stated that they are not interested in a speed study.

Mr. Deschaine reported that he received an invitation from Portsmouth to attend a regional meeting on November 20, 2014 to discuss helicopter regulations.

Mr. Deschaine stated that back in February 2014 there was an Eagle Scout who came before the Board with a presentation to replace the Welcome to Stratham sign as part of his Eagle Scout service project. The Board supported his project. In April, 2014 Mr. Deschaine and the property owner tried to contact the Eagle Scout but have not been able. The Economic Development Committee stated that they would be willing to have the sign replaced since the Eagle Scout has been unresponsive. Over this weekend Mr. Deschaine finally heard from the Eagle Scout who apologized about being unresponsive as he was away at summer camp and he would like to complete the sign next spring. This morning Mr. Deschaine drove by the old sign and discovered that the wind had totally blown it away. So he is asking the Board, in light of that, should we wait for the Eagle Scout to complete the sign in the spring, or have the Economic Development Committee purchase the sign at a cost of \$1200. Mr. Copeland stated that he would like to see if Mr. Laverty could temporary fix the downed sign and if so, have him fix it until the Eagle Scout has competes the new sign. Mr. Canada stated that he agrees with Mr. Copeland.

Mr. Deschaine stated that the wetlands impact application for the Gateway road behind Subaru has been reviewed by Mr. Daley and he provided a summary with an explanation of what needs to be signed. Mr. Canada moved that he would be allowed to sign the document when it is completed. Mr. Copeland seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Mr. Deschaine stated that he received the renewal rates for health insurance from the Health Trust for the coming year and the Plan we currently have had an increase of .1% with no projected increase in the cost of dental insurance.

At 9:22 pm Mr. Canada moved to go into non-public session to discuss a personnel matter. Mr. Copeland seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

At 9:31 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 9:32 pm Mr. Federico moved to adjourn. Mr. Copeland seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Debbie Hensley
Executive Assistant