

**MINUTES OF THE SELECT BOARD**  
**Monday July 20, 2020, 7:00 PM**  
**Rec Building and Via Zoom**

**Present:** William Stewart, Chair, Tom Maher, Selectman, Dave McGuckin, Selectman, Don White, Police Chief, Ted Hartmann, Fire Chief, and Jennifer Smith, Administrative Assistant to the Select Board and Recording Secretary.

**Public Present:** Paul Hamblett, Toni St Germain, Curt Springer, and 32 Zoom participants.

Chairman Stewart opened the meeting at 7:05PM and explained that the meeting was being held in person at the Rec Building as well as being on Zoom. The “chat” option was disabled due to the logistics of managing the meeting. The chair requested that those participants wishing to express a position do so succinctly.

**1. Approve Select Board minutes of June 24, 2020 and June 30, 2020.**

Selectman Maher made a Motion to Approve the minutes of Select Board Meeting of June 24, 2020 as amended. Chairman Stewart seconded the motion. The motion carried 2-0-1, with Selectman McGuckin voting to abstain.

Selectman Maher made a Motion to Approve the minutes of Select Board Meeting of June 30, 2020 as amended. Selectman McGuckin seconded the motion. Said motion carried unanimously

**2. Public Questions and Answers.**

Selectman Maher informed those participating by Zoom that if they had trouble with their audio they could call in as well.

Thomas Smith, Treasurer, requested that all future meetings be conducted by Zoom until the Town Hall is open for business.

Chairman Stewart stated that the reason the Select Board can currently have their meeting by Zoom is due to the State of Emergency. The reason this meeting was a hybrid is because at the time of the posting on Friday we were still uncertain about whether or not the Governor would extend the State of Emergency. Going forward, without a State of emergency in effect the Select Board will have to have a physical location with a quorum.

**3. New Business.**

**a. Common.**

Chair Stewart stated that the purpose of this item is to address the Select Board’s decision to close the Common to parking until 7/20/20.

Toni St. Germain, 47 River Road, asked what the rationale was for the Common being closed. She stated she had read in previous Select Board minutes that the Common was to open July 1<sup>st</sup> and questioned how it came to be closed.

Chairman Stewart repeated the question for those participating via Zoom.

Selectman McGuckin stated that members of the Board visited the Common the day it opened and were concerned about the inconsistent Covid data and the young staff monitoring the anticipated crowds for July 4<sup>th</sup> weekend. He stated the members came to the realization that there was an increased concern for the general residency of New Castle as they are of a susceptible age.

Selectman Maher stated that while he was not available for that discussion on July 1<sup>st</sup>, he did concur with Selectman McGuckin's description of our residency being of a susceptible age. He further stated that the Select Board took an official vote at its July 6<sup>th</sup> meeting to pause the opening until July 20<sup>th</sup> to better study the data.

Ms. St. Germain opined that the science is questionable.

Selectman Maher stated that he can only look and interpret the data as a layman, that he is not a professional. He further stated that the Common is not closed, it is accessible to anyone walking, riding a bike, or getting dropped off.

Paul Hamblet, 3 Main Street, spoke in favor of keeping the Common closed to parking.

Jenny Rosenson, 32 Quarterdeck Lane, spoke against opening the Common to the general public.

Pamela Yonkin, 90 Mainmast Circle, requested the Board explain the consistency of the Town's parking regulations, citing Portsmouth Yacht Club (PYC) members are allowed to park in one of the more densely populated parts of the Town.

Selectman Stewart responded that historically PYC has had this agreement with the Town. Prior to Covid, this area was open to public parking. Members are not walking through the Town. They access their boats through the club. It was a trust discussion that PYC would manage their patrons and if there was a problem, we could discontinue the agreement.

Ms. Yonkin opined that the Town needs to apply rules consistently.

Beth Barnhorst, 14 Pit Lane, spoke against opening the Common to the public due to a lack of manpower to supervise people coming to the beach.

Chairman Stewart read an email to the Town from Diane Keith, Program Manager, Federal Land to Parks Program. In her email, she questioned when New Castle would once again be open to public parking and vehicular access.

Chairman Stewart noted that New Castle is a stand out community due to not opening as other area beaches have. Chairman Stewart stated that while he believed the Select Board and Town Staff put together an extremely responsible plan to allow people to recreate outside, he also understood people are fearful.

Mary Kennedy, 131 Davidson St., stated that she and her husband are members of the PYC and that the number of spaces available to PYC members to park is no comparison to the number of parking spaces in the Common.

Chairman Stewart confirmed that PYC members are only allowed to park along the white fence along Piscataqua Street near the PYC.

Priscilla Hodgkins, Town Clerk, spoke in favor of the Common remaining closed to vehicles.

Mr. Springer opined that the Town lost a lot of data when it did not stay open for July 4<sup>th</sup> weekend and encouraged the Select Board to make a decision tonight for the season.

Selectman Maher agreed that the Board's vote should be for the season. He stated that all other communities to our south have been open since June 1<sup>st</sup>. He cited that there has not been a spike in Covid cases and that if the Common remained closed to a parking there will still be issues and concerns regarding visitors. He requested that the Board still remain vigilant to other areas of concern that may be dangerous, such as ride share drop offs, home rentals and VRBO listings.

Chairman Stewart agreed with Selectman Maher with regards to remaining extremely vigilant on all points.

Ms. St. Germain asked what would stop drop offs at the Common.

Chairman Stewart responded that Route 1B does not allow parking or drop offs, but people could drop off on side streets.

Selectman McGuckin offered a motion to keep the Common open to pedestrian traffic only through Labor Day 2020 and to make handicap accessibility better available to the public. The motion was duly seconded by Selectman Maher and carried on a vote of 2-1-0, with Selectman Maher voting "nay".

#### **b. Trash/Recycling – Contract**

Chairman Stewart stated that there is a significant cost increase with the new proposed contract from Casella, the Town's current vendor, but after some discussions, the Town has received a substantially lower rate. He added that he has reached out to vendors to inquire

about a competitive bid, but that the few he has received are actually higher than the one from Casella. He will continue negotiating with our current vendor and work to find a few more concessions, if possible.

Selectman McGuckin asked if there is an opt out clause.

Chairman Stewart responded that there is no opt out clause and the contract is a 4-year plan with the negotiated concessions.

Chairman Stewart said that Casella will offer training in the proper disposal of recycling vs. trash. The new proposed contract has some new pricing regarding recycling that will require greater compliance and attention to detail by residents to ensure that materials that are in recycling bins are not contaminated with food waste or other issues that render the underlying material useless.

Allyson Tanguay, 15 Main St., opined that it should not be optional to be responsible with regards to recycling and agreed that education is key.

**c. River Road Flow Meter Replacement.**

Selectman McGuckin presented a proposed request from the Water and Sewer Commission for the Select Board to authorize the payment of \$15,000 out of the Sewer Capital Reserve to replace the River Road Flow Meter.

Selectman McGuckin made a motion to fund the replacement of the River Road Flow Meter out of the Select Board managed Sewer Capital Reserve. Selectman Maher seconded the motion. Said motion carried unanimously.

**d. Riverside Cemetery Storage Shed**

Selectman McGuckin stated that the Cemetery Trustees would like a vote from the Select Board authorizing the Trustees to remove and donate a shed located in the Riverside Cemetery. Removal of the shed will allow for more crematory plots and the shed is no longer being used for cemetery needs.

Selectman McGuckin made a motion to allow the Cemetery Trustees to give away free of charge the shed located in the Riverside cemetery, which was seconded by Selectman Maher. Said motion carried unanimously.

**e. Building Inspector.**

Selectman McGuckin stated that this matter was placed on the agenda for information purposes. The Building Inspector position has been advertised and the Town has had multiple responses to its posting. Iain Moody, the current Building Inspector, has agreed to be part of the interview process for selected candidates.

Ms. Barnhorst questioned whether the posting for the position included the title of Code Enforcement Officer.

Selectman McGuckin responded “yes”.

Chief Hartmann requested that the Fire Department be invited to be part of the final interview process of candidates as well.

**f. Covid -19 Response.**

Selectman Maher stated that the Town of New Castle remains at zero for active cases of Covid-19. He further stated that the trend in New Hampshire continues to be positive, with the number of active cases declining to 565, down from 838 two weeks ago.

Chiefs Hartmann and White provided brief summaries on staffing, readiness and issues they are facing with COVID. From their vantage point, their operations are fully staffed, healthy and prepared to fulfill their department mission each day.

**g. Accept Unanticipated Funds.**

Chairman Stewart stated that at its last meeting the Select Board voted to accept \$9,814.27 in unanticipated funds from the First Responder Program. This number should have been \$22,242.85 and he requested a motion be made to accept the remaining \$12,428.58.

On motion of Selectman McGuckin, seconded by Selectman Maher, it was voted unanimously to accept the amount of \$12,428.58 in unanticipated funds.

**4. Old Business.**

**5. Committee Reports**

**6. Adjourn**

There being no further business to come before the Board, Selectman McGuckin made a Motion to Adjourn, which was seconded by Selectman Maher. Said motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Smith,  
Recording Secretary