

MINUTES OF THE SELECT BOARD
Monday November 15, 2021, 7:00 PM
Recreation Building/ Via Zoom

Present: Tom Maher-Chair, Dave McGuckin-Selectman, William Stewart-Selectman and Jennifer Smith-Administrative Assistant to the Select Board and Recording Secretary.

Public Participants: Representative Kate Murray, Dawn Lake – President of Historical Society, Carol White-Historical Society, Curt Springer, Ken McDonald-Admin. Project Coord., Dave Hodgdon-Portsmouth Computer Group, Chris Robillard-DPW Supervisor.

Chairman Maher opened the public session meeting at 7:00PM.

1. Approve Select Board minutes of October 4, 2021

Selectman McGuckin made a motion to approve the Select Board minutes of November 1, 2021 with amendments. Selectman Stewart seconded and the motion carried unanimously, 3-0.

2. Public Questions and Answers.

Dawn Lake, newly appointed President of the Historical Society, introduced herself to the Select Board. Ms. Lake stated that she and Nancy Borden, 40 Walbach St., along with Curt Springer, 98 Cranfield St., and Carol White, 40 Vennard's Court, are all interested in co-chairing a committee of sorts for the organization of the town's 400th Anniversary celebration, vs. an individual chair person.

Carol White, stated that it is her understanding that the Select Board has approved the weekend dates of June 24th and June 25th for the celebration of the 400th Anniversary.

Chairman Maher confirmed that as being correct.

Ms. White asked if that included permission for the artisans and performers to camp out at the Common for the weekend. Ms. White explained that the camping is an essential element and without permission to do so the groups will not come.

Chairman Maher stated that the Select Board isn't ready to agree to that level of detail at this point in time.

Selectman McGuckin agreed.

The Select Board agreed that Ms. White should move forward with securing the artisans with the Select Board working with her to resolve the remaining details at a later date.

Ms. White stated that she would do so, but wanted the Select Board to be aware that the group may still expect payment if the event is cancelled due to lack of permission to camp at the Common.

3. New Business

a. Redistricting – State Representative Kate Murray

Chairman Maher stated that the Select Board had recently issued a letter to town residents informing them that the State is planning a redistricting which could join New Castle with Portsmouth vs. Rye for voting purposes. Chairman Maher expressed his gratitude to the community for reaching out at the state level to express their concerns and introduced State Representative Kate Murray to speak before the board.

Rep. Murray gave a brief presentation on the anticipated redistricting stating that the legislature has not made a final decision and it is her understanding that they will be meeting again later this week to further discuss the matter. While the Governor has said that he feels this will pass legal muster, Rep. Murray expressed her concerns that New Castle may be swallowed up by the largeness of Portsmouth and that it is very likely that the next representative for New Castle will live in Portsmouth vs. Rye. New Castle could also be broken down into different wards. Rep. Murray asked that New Castle residents maintain their vigilance in voicing their want to stay with Rye as a district boundary.

Curt Springer, 98 Cranfield St., stated that he had researched the redistricting and that it is a distinct possibility that New Castle will be divided into different wards.

Selectman Stewart asked Rep. Murray if the Rye Select Board has issued a letter to its town residents.

Rep. Murray responded that they have.

Selectman Stewart questioned whether the bridge reconstruction is still included in the State's 2023 plan.

Rep. Murray stated that at this point in time nothing has really changed with regards to the plans for the bridge.

The Select Board members thanked Rep. Murray for coming to speak with them.

b. Portsmouth Computer Group (PCG) – Dave Hodgdon

Chairman Maher stated that Portsmouth Computer Group (PCG) has essentially mapped out the town's IT needs with regards to risk and network assessments and he invited Dave Hodgdon of PCG to present the company's findings.

Mr. Hodgdon thanked the Select Board for contacting PCG regarding the town's concerns. Mr. Hodgdon stated that there are consistent cyber threats and attacks on cities and towns and New Castle was wise to do a risk assessment. PCG assessed that the town is lacking in 7 or 8 key areas, examples of which are old PCs with no computer communications between each other, an antiquated email system that does

not meet compliancy requirements, wireless system is in a poor position and is shared publicly, and Avitar should be put on a file server. Currently, the town does not have a proper fire wall. Mr. Hodgdon stated that there are 2 ways to acquire equipment, either purchase or lease. PC replacements have already been initiated in the Town Clerk's Office. The Fire Department can share a network with the Town Hall, but Police Department will need to have its own network. Overall, the estimated budget would be \$30,000. Mr. Hodgdon closed by saying that security is an expense and the question becomes what can we put in place to limit the town's vulnerability.

Chairman Maher asked whether it is better to lease a firewall and server.

Mr. Hodgdon said it is better to lease, especially a firewall, because systems become antiquated within 5 years.

Selectman Stewart asked who would own the network.

Mr. Hodgdon responded that the town would own the network and PCG would manage it.

Chairman Maher asked if it is accurate that utilizing the Cloud right now would be more expensive for the town.

Mr. Hodgdon stated that is 100% accurate and currently Avitar does not offer a Cloud based service.

Chairman Maher asked if the current PCs can be repurposed.

Mr. Hodgdon responded that 30% to 40% of the equipment could be repurposed as long as it can meet the compliance requirements of the new user.

Ken McDonald, Admin Project Coord., suggested having a couple of laptops that could be shared by various boards if necessary.

Select Stewart questioned why the current PCs would not be replaced with laptops vs. desk tops.

Mr. Hodgdon stated that it is a question of functionality and portability vs. cost. Currently, a laptop is about 30% more expensive than a desk top. Mr. Hodgdon expressed his preference for the laptop option.

Selectman Stewart asked Mr. Hodgdon to explain the firewall in more detail.

Mr. Hodgdon stated that the firewall is a physical appliance with Cisco package to enhance the updates, the anti-virus, and the intrusion protection, which also gives the employees the option to work remotely securely.

Selectman Stewart asked if there would be two wires running to each station.

Mr. Hodgdon responded that he was glad that the wires are being discussed. Currently, the wiring system is “ad hoc” and PCG has recommended that the infrastructural wiring be done over and with two drops per location, one for voice and one for data. This would be a onetime cost. The other option is to continue with the wiring the way it is and run runs.

Mr. McDonald opined that the town would significantly benefit from the re-wiring.

Chairman Maher added that this affects the phones as they are voice over internet.

Mr. Hodgdon stated that this also includes security cameras, HVAC, and anything else that is moving over wireless, so no matter what is needed, it could be easily added. The estimate that PCG gave was based on a walk through of town hall, the police and fire departments are fairly new and are in great shape. The work in the DPW would be minor as there are only two people located there, but they do need their own phone service. One option would be to trench the wires from the Library to the DPW building.

Chairman Maher asked Mr. Hodgdon to discuss the migration of email from Zoho to Microsoft Office and explain the new version of Microsoft 365.

Mr. Hodgdon stated there are various plans at various costs, but the main thing the town really needs is email and Office. There is the regular Cloud which is a cost of \$12.50 per user, per month and there is the Government Cloud, that only people in the US have access to. This requirement is coming for municipalities in the future. It will be an extra \$7.50 per user, per month, in addition to the regular fee of \$12.50 for normal email. Microsoft 365 Premium, gives the multi factor verification so we confirm who we are on our phone, as well as the ability to have Azure.

Selectman Stewart asked if the town goes with the less expensive Microsoft for now, is it as easy as flipping a switch to go to the Government Cloud version.

Mr. Hodgdon responded that the migration would need to take place again, and this would include labor costs again because all new accounts would need to be created.

Selectman Stewart asked what the cost would be for migrating from the regular Microsoft to the Premium one.

Mr. Hodgdon responded that the cost would be between \$2,500 to \$3,000. He opined that where the Government Cloud is not currently being mandated, he would save the money and just put it on the Police Department’s system at this point in time.

Selectman Stewart asked what the training options are for staff with regards to the new systems to be implemented.

Mr. Hodgdon recommended PCG host 2 or 3 lunch and learns and then see how people do before offering one on one training. Videos could also be provided.

Selectman Stewart agreed that training should be provided and asked PCG provide the costs related to that.

Mr. McDonald stated that the Town Clerk's Office is currently one of a handful of towns out of compliance with the State required firewall and the state is creating a new environment for the Clerk's Office to log in daily, so the firewall is a pressing necessity.

Mr. Hodgdon stated the firewall could be prioritized and installed as soon as approved.

The Select Board thanked Mr. Hodgdon for appearing before them and answering questions.

c. Town Projects Update

Chairman Maher stated that the town has been addressing some issues at the town hall and is still navigating some of those issues. It remains a work in progress. Where it is an old building, the town will always have to solve issues, and when employees' work gets interrupted, services will get interrupted.

d. Neighborhood Water Improvement Program Update

Selectman Stewart stated that the town has validated some prices with N. Granese and Sons for both the Spring Hill Rd/Laverger Lane project and the loops for Mainmast and Locke Rd. The town was able to reduce the cost to \$521,304 for the entire project, a reduction of approximately \$30,000. This amount does not include the additional cost of approximately \$100,000 for engineering. Selectman Stewart will sign the necessary documents to move the project forward as soon as he gets confirmation from the representatives for Spring Hill/Lavenger Lane that everyone is on the same page.

4. Old Business

a. Automated Water Meter System

Selectman McGuckin stated that the automated water meter system will need to erect two antennas, one at town hall and the other at the library.

Chairman Maher asked how large the antennas will be.

Chris Robillard, DPW Supervisor, stated that the antennas will be 6', similar to the existing antenna on the DPW building and Fire Department, and the company would like to will be place one on the back side of town hall and one near the library's cupola.

Chairman Maher stated the HDC may have concerns if the antenna is visible from the street.

Selectman Stewart suggested avoiding placing a rod near the cupola.

Mr. Robillard stated that the Public Safety building is also an option.

The Select Board members agreed that might be the better option.

5. Adjourn

Selectman McGuckin offered a motion to adjourn at 8:16 pm. Selectman Stewart seconded and said motion passed unanimously, 3-0.

Respectfully submitted,
Jennifer Smith
Recording Secretary