**MINUTES OF THE SELECT BOARD**

**Monday, August 1, 2022, 7:00 pm**

**Town Hall Conference Room**

**Present:** Dave McGuckin- Chair, William Stewart-Selectman, Jane Finn-Selectwoman, and Bernice Barnes- Administrative Assistant to the Select Board and Recording Secretary.

**Public Participants:** Curt Springer, Pam Cullen, Lisa English, Don White, Dawn Lake, Peter Rice, Doug Palardy, Jennie Schwartz, Mary Kennedy, Patty Frawley, Elaine Nollett.

Chairman McGuckin opened the public session meeting at 7:00 pm.

1. **Approve Select Board minutes of July 5 & July 18, 2022**

Chair McGuckin's first order of business was a motion to approve the Select Board minutes of July 5, 2022, & July 18, 2022. Selectwoman Finn motioned for the minutes' approval, Selectman Stewart seconded, motion carried.

1. **Public Questions and Answers**

Pam Cullen-Assistant Tax Collector, 11 Becker Lane, wanted to state that she has officially closed out the 2021 taxes. Tax bills were sent out in December 2021 for $5,099,947.00. There was already one property tax lien, and five more were added due to delinquent property taxes owed. We are down to 2 property tax liens with an outstanding balance of $3,430.95 that is still owed. The MS61 report required by the DRA is completed and prepared for the audit on September 28, 2022. There were 23 abatements this year, ten were approved, and 13 were denied with a total abated amount of $5,316.06, which does not include interest. Ms. Cullen also stated that of those 13 abatements denied, those property owners still have the right to take the Town to the Board of Tax & Land Appeals or to the Supreme Court because their time for the appeal process has not gone by.

Chairman McGuckin asked if there were any other public questions, and no additional comments were offered.

1. **New Business**
   1. **Doug Palardy: Islander Cafe**

Doug Palardy, Owner of Islander Café, 33 Walbach Street, asked about a clerical item he needed for the State of NH for his liquor license and the State's file, which is an updated letter of clarification from the Town stating the approval for alcohol service in the outdoor area which includes four seats (2 Tables) year-round. Selectman Stewart made a motion to approve the year-round service for four seats and two tables previously approved at the Islander Cafe, and Selectwoman Finn seconded, motion carried.

Selectwoman Finn had questions for Mr. Palardy regarding the 2 parking spaces on Main Street in front of the Great Island Inn and requested a copy of the authorization he received to add those spaces. Mr. Palardy agreed to provide such information to the Select Board.

* 1. **Peter Rice- Fort Stark:**

Peter Rice, 11 Atkinson Street, a member of the community and volunteer to Fort Stark, stated he is meeting with the State of NH Wednesday, would like to get the bunker at Fort Stark cleaned out and offered a solution to have 1-800-Junk remove all of the items, debris out of the bunker. He feels it is the Town's responsibility to do so, as the items were left from the fire Dept training. Chair McGuckin stated that the State and Fire Department were told not to remove anything until it was deemed safe to do so for those that are going to remove the debris from any contamination.

* 1. Laurie Chandler-Pulmonary Fibrosis Foundation Walk, September 24, 2022

Selectwoman Finn made a motion to approve the Pulmonary Fibrosis Foundation Walk at the Common on September 24, 2022, and Selectman Stewart seconded, motion carried.

* 1. **Town Clerk, Lisa English, Electronic Record Keeping:**

Lisa English, 15 Shaw Circle, and New Castle's Town Clerk discussed the record retainment and RSA rules and Regulations regarding Municipal records, and She recommended that we gradually move forward to storing these records electronically. This would allow more space and room and be more efficient for the Town Hall Municipal Department.

Selectman Stewart and Chair McGuckin stated they had wanted this to take place for a long time, and moving forward, and we could start this and pick a date to do so.

Curt Springer, 98 Cranfield Street, suggested some help and assistance set us up with PCG Computer Group. Lisa English said she would devise a plan to get this in motion, which will be discussed at a later date. The Select Board agreed.

* 1. **Dawn Lake- Historical Society:**

Dawn Lake, 108 Main Street, Unit # 1, and New Castle's Chair of the Historical Society, stated that she is going to move forward with the fundraiser for the Historical Society but is still awaiting her paperwork and will not move forward with any Memorial at this time. She presented a design of the landscaping. The Historical Society doesn't have the monies in the budget to proceed without the fundraiser. Dawn Lake will provide the final design to the Select Board when they are completed. The Select Board thanked them for all their hard work and dedication to the community.

* 1. **Town Hall Parking Lot Striping:**

Selectwoman Finn brought up that the parking lot at the Town Hall, fire lane, and handicapped section need to be painted and restriped, as it is fading, and people are parking there.

Pam Cullen also mentioned that on Walbach Street, people are parking there, which needs to be painted and restriped as well, due to people parking and coming to the Town Hall or the Great Island Inn. Chair McGuckin Agreed to look at that area with Chief Don White to determine what needs attention and take place, then discuss with DPW.

1. **Old Business:**
2. **Water Line Project:**

Selectman Stewart noted that the signed payment and loan documentation relative to the Town of New Castle's Water Line Project is now closed and in the process of final completion. The loan will be converted to a term loan with an interest rate of 1.256 %, which is considerably less than the approved interest rate of 2.42 % resulting in the Town saving approximately $720,000 on interest costs over the life of the loan. In addition, the Town was able to set up the first loan payment to be in FY 2023/2024. At this point this project is complete and awaiting the NHDES Signatures on the loan documentation. This also includes the piece of Lavenger-Spring Hill Road portion that was done, which will be paid for separately by the special assessment district that was established for those roads. Selectman Stewart stated that Portsmouth is reviewing the final drawings and will be moving toward accepting the Lavenger Spring Hill portion as part of their public system.

1. **Avitar Contract Renewal:**

Discussion amongst the Board was had regarding a one year or a Five-year contract, and discussion consisted of any issues or concerns with them, and if everything is being done efficiently, and cost analysis comparison on our rates for various services provided on the previous contract.

Curt Springer, 98 Cranfield Street, asked if we have been experiencing any issues with them and if our services are being met promptly, and if any document issues have taken place.

The Board stated they may want to stay with Avitar Assessors still, but perhaps a different Assessor, and before deciding that, would like to set up a meeting with Chad Roberge, of Avitar Assessors, with the Select Board, to discuss the contract and services provided, and have him answer any questions they may still have before signing a contractual agreement.

1. **Town Hall Hours:**

The Select Board office is now open Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday from 8 to 2 pm. The Town Clerk's office remains the same.

1. **Town Administrator:**

Chair McGuckin stated The Town is still planning to move forward with a Town Administrator, and there was a minor setback as we have lost our Town Accountant. Lori Ruest has retired as of July 29, 2022, and will be returning in 30 days to fill the position as a consultant, until we can hire someone.

1. **Committee Reports**

Chairman McGuckin stated that the monthly reports of the Fire Department and Police Department would be attached to this meeting's minutes.

1. **Adjourn**

Chair McGuckin offered a motion to adjourn at 8:08 pm. Selectman Stewart seconded; motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Bernice L. Barnes

Recording Secretary