

**SELECT BOARD
TOWN OF NEW CASTLE**

**Monday, January 16, 2024, 7PM
Town Hall. 49 Main St.**

APPROVED

PRESENT: Chair William Stewart,(remote) Select Board Member Jane Finn, Select Board Member Pam Cullen, Town Administrator, Mike Tully, Police Chief, Don White, Building Inspector Russ Bookholz, via Zoom, Director of Public Works, Chris Robillard, Fire Chief Ted Hartnett, Bette Jane Riordan, Recording Secretary.

ALSO PRESENT: Residents Curt Springer, Catherine Eames, Peter Rice, Kate Herman, Pam Sterns, David Kovick, John Mortimer from Millenium Running.

The Select Board came out of non-public session with Chair Stewart opening the public meeting at 7:00 PM. Select Board Member Cullen made a Motion to Seal the minutes of the non-public session. Select Board Member Cullen seconded, and the Motion carried unanimously. (Roll call) Select Board Member Finn made a Motion to have Chair Stewart attend remotely. Select Board Member Cullen seconded, and Motion carried unanimously.

Review and Approval of Previous Select Board Meeting Minutes (January 2 for both public and non-public sessions.)

After review, Chair Stewart called for a Motion.

MOTION: To Approve the minutes of the Select Board Meeting Minutes of January 2, 2024, as amended (Public) and (Non-public).

MOTION: P.CULLEN
SECOND: J.FINN
UNANIMOUS

Acceptance of Payroll and Accounts Payable Manifests.

After review, Chair Stewart called for a motion.

MOTION: To Approve the Payroll Manifest dated January 4, 2024, in the amount of \$32,157.41 and the Accounts Payable Manifest dated January 5,2024 in the amount of \$164,786.86.

MOTION: P.CULLEN
SECOND: J. FINN
UNANIMOUS

Accept and Expend Safe Path Donations dated 12/27/23 and 12/28/23 in the amount of \$2000.

After review, Chair Stewart called for a Motion.

MOTION: To Accept and Expend Safe Path Donations dated 12/27/23 and 12/28/23 in the amount of \$2000.

MOTION: P.CULLEN

SECOND: J.FINN

UNANIMOUS

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR REPORT.

TA Tully presented his report for the time covering January 3, 2024, through January 12, 2024. He noted that he is coordinating the creation of a spreadsheet that will give a quick overview of the budget remaining comparative to weeks remaining in the fiscal year.

Police: The department received speeding complaints on Walton Road. They addressed speed with the owner of the vehicle in question and had directed patrols in the area to monitor speed. The average speed was 18-24 mph, and 36 vehicles were noted during the time traveling on Walton Road. The Chief also advised the complainant that the town will be putting up speed limit signs. DPW is also working on signage to post the speed limit on Walton as well as a no parking sign which was brought up at the last Select Board Meeting. The Police Department handled multiple calls over the last two weather events, including everything from motor vehicles off the road, to assisting elderly residents clean off their vehicles and with shoveling around doors for emergency access. The Department also assisted DPW with making sure roads were free from parked cars to allow for easy plowing.

Fire: The Department hosted a regional fire training event on 1/6/24 at an acquired structure on Wild Rose Lane. It was a great turn out. Topics included search/rescue, suppression, and self-rescue. Another training is planned for 4/24/24. Fire and Emergency Management Departments have been planning with neighboring agencies for large scale disaster preparedness on the seacoast in late 2024.

Highway: The DPW has 59-man hours invested in the recent snowstorm. Special thanks to DPW for their efforts. A visitor to our community slid off the roadway with her children in the car. Our crew recognized the hazard of waiting for AAA and worked to assist the family back on to the road safely. We received a thank you from the family. A job well done.

Facilities:

Town Office.

TA Tully referred to an agenda item to consider quotes received for remediation of the mold in the basement. He and Director Robillard met with an architect and completed a building walk through. TA Tully requested the architect give an idea of the cost to create a long-term plan for renovation of the building. The Select Board will then have the option of writing an RFP for the planning which could go out to bid. If the Board determines that as necessary, they could utilize the plan and divide tasks to be completed over time as finances allow. Select Board Member Cullen mentioned that in prior plans, an elevator was suggested to make better use of the upstairs space. TA Tully said those items need to be part of a bigger overall plan for the building.

Fire/Police Building.

TA Tully reported he has requested a walk-through with Director Robillard and Chief Hartmann to get a better understanding of the work to be completed. He will work on providing a plan and timeline to complete the project.

Highway Department: All equipment has been prepped and changed over for the winter season.

Ocean Street Property: TA Tully contacted committee members chosen by the Select Board and proposed January 25th for an organizational meeting. Over half could not attend so he will work on scheduling another meeting date.

Rec Center: TA Tully reported that the town has received a request for reservation of space for indoor softball. Director Robillard denied the request due to the possible damage to unprotected lighting and safety concerns. Chair Stewart indicated that his preference is to try and allow as many indoor children's activities as possible and would like this to be a case-by-case process and urged a review of this particular request. The lights are high up and there will be no "batting". He would like to be as accommodating as possible and urged a further review with the applicants.

Projects:

Budget: TA Tully would like to schedule a budget workshop for next week with the Board and Finance Director. He has been working with the Finance Director on FY2025 budget. This will be a public meeting.

Cable Franchise Agreement: TA Tully has had some discussions with Kate Miller regarding the agreement and will begin her review. He will report back to the Board.

Computers/IT: TA Tully has met with Portsmouth Computer Group (PCG) and is waiting for them to schedule meetings with staff to identify and rectify identified issues.

Personnel Plan: TA Tully has begun review of personnel plan and will be soliciting feedback from the Board on specific changes they would like to see.

Rec Desk software. Director Robillard will be building the platform for the Rec Desk and a meeting will be scheduled with him and Ms. Barnes, Administrative Assistant, to begin entering reservations for the Great Island Common season. Select Board Member Cullen asked about a problem brought to her attention about difficulty getting into the Rec building. Director Robillard explained how the Kisi app work and one can't get in earlier than their scheduled time.

Safe Path: One item remains involving paving which will be taking place in the Spring 2024.

Solid Waste: TA Tully has begun writing the RFP for solid waste collection and is waiting to hear from Cassela, our provider, on tonnage information.

Water/Sewer: The Commission meets next Thursday to review the draft budget.

Playground: The committee has met and has begun researching vendors' proposals. This item is on tonight's agenda and will be discussed. Their next meeting is February 6th at 11:00 AM.

OLD BUSINESS.

Discussion of proposed Kiosks.

TA Tully reported that he has met with Director Robillard to discuss benefits and cost savings to be realized by going forward with the kiosk installation. This matter has come before the Board previously and TA Tully urged the Board to act soon, as Director Robillard will have to make needed schedule, planning and budget changes depending upon the Board's decision. Director Robillard asked for any questions. The Select Board expressed concerns about how the kiosk plan will fit into the budget, and questioned how effective enforcement would take place. TA Tully noted that Police Chief White has helped with his officers in the enforcement effort. Director Robillard also repeated that he has compiled an enforcement report detailing how the process works in comparison to Portsmouth's program. He believes that on most days, one attendant can cover the park. Select Board Member Cullen expressed concerns about people ignoring the ticket process. Director Robillard again assured the Board that the escalation process is handled by the third party (credit reporting, collections, etc.) up through summons and court involvement. He noted that Portsmouth has 95% compliance.

Director Robillard had put together some budget figures, and noted there is a substantial amount of money to be generated and gained by kiosk installation. Chair Stewart noted kiosks would provide flexibility. He does think a \$50.00 ticket fee is high but is generally on board. While he has been reluctant, he is now at the point of being ready to go forward. He wants people to have a good experience at the park. As for budget figures, Director Robillard noted there would be a \$17,000 annual cost in addition to the wages and installation and operating costs. These costs have already been submitted to the Board. Select Board Member Finn stated she wants more budget information. Select Board Member Cullen expressed her uncertainty. Chair Stewart asked to see what the outcome is from the proposed budget workshop next week. In response to a question from the public, Director Robillard clarified that residents of the town would see no change. A current residential sticker is all that is needed. This matter tabled to a future meeting.

Discussion of Town Hall Remediation.

TA Tully reviewed the work that needs to be done and received quotes from vendors. He is putting together a pricing sheet. Director Robillard talked about the options of concrete and plastic as barriers to encapsulate the soil and vapor barrier. Both Select Board Members Finn and Cullen favored the concrete barrier. Chair Stewart spoke about his concerns if we do concrete, citing the possibility of future changes to the building, such as the proposed elevator. TA Tully provided some cost options and recommended to go forward the remediation and within a week to do the concrete. Chair Stewart asked for additional quotes on the concrete. Matter tabled until future meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Resident Catherine Eames addressed the matter of use of the Town Hall building, noting all the unused space. Only 30-40% of the building is being used. She asked the Board to identify what specific things/tasks need to be done in this building. The Board needs to address the parking issues, along with looking at other town buildings and properties, and how best to utilize them. TA Tully spoke about the need for both short term and long-term goals.

Resident Peter Rice spoke about the state of the town's Emergency Preparedness and cited the instance after recent storms 1 and 2, when he was approached by concerned residents who were worried about access to the island (and the time of no access). He also spoke about the problem on Wild Rose Lane which he observed with Terri Golter, resident, when a high-water vehicle could have been used but at present the Fire Department doesn't have one and couldn't assist the homeowner. Chief Hartman responded that he did contact the homeowner and provided a background on the Department's efforts for long range planning.

Resident Kate Herman commented on the storm and concerns about access. Chief Hartmann noted there is a plan and directed her to the Department's website.

NEW BUSINESS

Select Board Permit Application: SPCA Doggie Paddle Plunge.

Director Robillard stated the event is scheduled to take place March 2nd or 3rd and there is a need for a deposit and fee to be paid. Because of the storms, the area is damaged, and accommodations will have to be made. Chair Stewart expressed safety concerns for the site due to the storm damage. The applicants will be contacted regarding the monies owed, prior to approval.

Select Board Application: Millennium Running.

Applicant John Mortimer was present to address any questions. The event is April 28, 2024, from 8AM to 12:30 PM, and has been an annual event. Pam Sterns, Rec Committee member questioned the logo "New Castle 10K", and after discussion the Select Board found no issue, and the Chair called for a Motion.

MOTION: To Approve the Application of Millennium Running New Castle 10K for April 28, 2024, from 8:00 AM to 12:30 PM as presented.

MOTION: P.CULLEN

SECOND: J.FINN

UNANIMOUS

Peter Rice: Appointment for HDC Alternate.

After discussion the Chair called for a Motion.

MOTION: Appoint Peter Rice as an Alternate to the Historic District Commission for a one-year term.

MOTION: P.CULLEN

SECOND: J.FINN

UNANIMOUS

Discussion of UNH Tower.

TA Tully noted that UNH has notified the Town that it intends to erect a 70-foot communications tower (35 additional feet to the current one) to better communicate with the Isles of Shoals. While it is not required, they do so, UNH went before the Planning Board for a hearing, giving the public an opportunity to comment. Select Board Member Cullen attended the meeting and did not feel there were really any options. TA Tully was given a contract to discuss about what exactly would be at the top of the tower. Chair Stewart wants to know what is in the best interest of the town, and there may be opportunities to co-locate some of the materials. There is an opportunity to explore better outcomes. TA Tully suggested a representative from UNH come to the next meeting. Resident Curt Springer recommended that the Board contact Executive Councilor Jan Stephens who may be very helpful in this matter. Resident David Kovik expressed his appreciation for Chair Stewart's concern for the town.

Discussion of Playground.

Director Robillard stated the Committee has met and he had received five proposals from vendors, all vastly different, so he requested revised proposals. As a result, the field has been narrowed to two. He noted that the town voted \$100,000 for a Warrant Article, which will not be enough to replace the playground. He asked the Select Board for fundraising suggestions, noting the Town can't do a fundraiser but other organizations or individuals can. The Committee would like feedback from the Select Board. Cost options for the replacement range from \$250,000 to the preferred option of \$375,000. David Kovik indicated the latter was the most popular choice. Select Board Member Finn suggested creating a "Friends of the Playground" organization. Pam Sterns and other members offered various ways to raise funds. Chief White also had some suggestions and offers of assistance. Chair Stewart noted there is currently \$225,000 available, and that the project needs to be done in Phases. Director Robillard and the Committee will keep the Board apprised of its progress.

Replacement of Fire Department Rescue.

MOTION: To expend funds in the amount of \$100,000 for the Fire Department Rescue as presented.

MOTION: P.CULLEN

SECOND: J.FINN

UNANIMOUS

Select Board Members Times for Election Day, Tuesday, January 23, 2024. No Decision.
There being no further business to come before the Board, the Chair called for a Motion to Adjourn.

MOTION: To Adjourn

MOTION: P.CULLEN
SECOND: J.FINN
UNANIMOUS

Meeting Adjourned at 9:05 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Bette Jane Riordan
Recording Secretary.