

MINUTES OF THE SELECT BOARD
Monday August 20, 2018 - 7PM

Present: Thomas Maher, Chair, Bill Stewart, Selectman, Damon Frampton, Selectman, and Bette Jane Riordan, Secretary.

Also present: Pam Cullen, Administrative Assistant to the Select Board, Christiane McAlister, Accountant, Ken McDonald, Town Administrative Projects Coordinator, Tom Smith, Jim Cerny, and Dave McGuckin.

1. Approve Minutes.

Chair Maher called for a Motion to Approve Minutes of the previous meeting. Selectman Frampton made a Motion to Approve the Select Board 's minutes of the August 6 2018 meeting as amended. Chair Maher seconded, and the Motion carried.

2. Public Questions and Answers.

Dave McGuckin asked about the status of the Wentworth Bridge project, specifically about a May 24 meeting, and the expected drafts of letters to the Governor and DOT urging moving the project forward. He noted the meeting was three months ago and feels we have lost momentum.

Chair Maher reported that there has been some positive activity, such as conversations with our State Rep Murray, who has been in contact with the Governor's office and DOT and has kept the pressure on. Some abutters have sent letters. He reported that in researching this matter there was a letter 2014 from the Select Board that supported a bascule (moveable)bridge. He noted that we have more information now, however Chair Maher notified DOT that he did not want to confuse the issue, but that DOT has all the information they need to make a final decision as to whether it is a fixed or bascule bridge. He further stated there is no reason to link this decision for the Wentworth Bridge with Hampton and Seabrook Bridge replacements. This linking has caused a slow down in making a final decision and proceeding with the Wentworth project. No further study needs to be done. DOT had notified the Select Board in June that they have set up a new group to deal with the causeway, and some of the bridge issues have been discussed in this group. There is another meeting of that group in September, and public meeting scheduled for here in town in November. DOT is aware of what they need to do.

Chair Maher agreed to follow up with Rep. Murray to exert more pressure, at the request of Dave McGuckin. Dave noted that Portsmouth is also waiting for this decision to decide about the new water line. Portsmouth is in favor of a fixed bridge, according to Selectman Stewart. Chair Maher reiterated that DOT has all the information it needs to make a decision. Dave McGuckin noted that the Tarbell fire changed everything about whether it should be a bascule or fixed bridge, with many believing it should be fixed. Jim Cerny noted there is a draft letter which residents could sign, however he does not hold out hope that will make a big difference, but should probably be done. Chair Maher noted that DOT has said the earliest it will make a decision on the design is June 2019. Selectman Stewart noted that a decision had been made, but then the issue arose about having a fixed bridge,

and the Hampton and Seabrook bridge projects, which has caused the delay of going forward.

3. New Business.

a. TAP & Ken McDonald

Ken reported he attended a management class on TAP application (for Safe Path funding) in Concord, and learned their expectations of how to complete the application. As the Select Board has authorized the process to go forward in completing the application, Ken is reviewing the 2016 application, and rewriting to reflect the updates to include the segment from Rogers Road to the lilac ledges by Paul Hamblett's residence. He and the Safe Path Committee are working on getting letters of support from the community, to accompany the application which must be in this coming Friday August 24, 2018, in order to be included with the application. The application itself is due by September 7th at 4:00PM and Ken will be delivering it in person in Concord. It must be on a thumb drive. Ken explained that there are several towns applying, and the amount available is 5.1 million. New Castle is applying for 1 million. The minimum is \$400,000. Chair Maher stated that part of the application process is that the Select Board must commit to submitting a warrant article at Town Meeting for approval/acceptance of this grant for one million dollars, 20% of which the town must match. In November, the town will know if the application has been accepted, and then draft the article, after discussing budgetary considerations and public input. The voters have to be asked to approve the money for the Safe Path project. All the Town has to do now is to submit a letter of commitment that if the application is accepted in November, the Select Board will draft the warrant article seeking approval from the voters. After further discussion it was the sense of the Select Board to submit the commitment letter. Ken did note that as the application numbers are being reworked it may be that the final amount requested will be under one million dollars.

b. Avitar Software- Len McDonald & Pam Cullen

Ken and Pam have recommended Option 3 presented by Avitar for the new software which will track all properties within the town, through I Cloud service, so there is no need for internal back up at Town Hall. New Castle would be Avitar's first client to use the Cloud system. Other benefits of this option which costs \$8550 are: Users can remotely sign in; eliminates a lot of Pam's work; its the most flexible option; instant updates; do not need to have the assessing program. Ken noted that the town would do its own tax bills and warrants, which includes on site printing. Pam is in support of this. All of the data with the Building Inspector would have to be entered manually. Chair Maher noted that this software would allow for a digital archive of all the records. Selectman Stewart expressed some concern about the manual work required, as well as the fact that the Cloud service is not presently available. Ken did note that Avitar has a third party provider, which could provide the Cloud service. He also feels part of his current job could include the manual entry of all the property information for the Building Inspector and Pam. Selectman Frampton asked if the Building Inspector was amenable to this. Chair Maher stated they will be discussing this matter. Chair Maher recommended going forward with the project. A representative from Avitar (Joshua) will be asked to come back and do a presentation/demonstration to the Board. Selectman Stewart wants to make certain that

plans and applications can be submitted electronically. He also questioned the process for adding in all the information and modifications, and the need to flag certain items. After further discussion the Board will wait for a further presentation from Avitar prior to making any final decision.

c. Audit Update – Christiane McAllister

Christiane reported that the new auditors (Ploznick & Sanderson from Concord) did their fieldwork on June 20, and packages of documents were distributed to department heads for information gathering purposes. They will back in September 5th, 6th and 7th, and Christiane is working on document preparation to submit to them. They will be speaking with various department heads, and they will be looking at last year's numbers.

d. Budget year in review.

Christiane handed out FY 18 review document to the Select Board. She noted there will be some minor changes as there are still some items which are not completed in the general fund and sewer fund. Budgeted expenses were at 91%. She went on to explain the various categories. She was pleased with the water revenue as 90% came in, and a deposit was made to capital reserves for water. Sewer revenue came in at 97% and expenditures only exceeded budgeted amount by 1%, which included all the SCADA expenditures and the five payments on the sewer pumps loan.

e. Background checks policy for town employees.

Chair Maher asked the Board to review the current town policy and compare it with the more particularized NH RSA, and consider whether the town's policy needs to be amended or tightened up. Pam Cullen had gotten this information from the New Hampshire Municipal Association. He asked the Board for their input. Various topics were discussed regarding the subjects of background checks (no school personnel); whoever gets a W-2; difference between elected employees, appointed, and regular hires by the town. There were questions raised about "volunteers" who receive a paycheck, and whether or not they should have background checks. Chair Maher read the current policy, which deals with the requirement of a criminal background check for all employees. He compared it with what the Police Department does. Chair Maher explained we just need to make sure we have a sound policy, but perhaps not as sweeping as suggested by NHMA. Selectman Stewart would like more information from Chief White, and the Board should talk with Department heads to review personnel files to see if any need a background check. After further discussion, Chair Maher stressed the need to strike the appropriate balance. He agreed to draft language for the Board to review by the next meeting. Christiane noted she needs to follow Dept. of Labor regulations and wants to assure that each employee, whether full time or part time, gets a personnel policy packet. The Board agreed. Continued discussion ensued, but the conclusion reached was to review the entire process, and discuss at the next meeting.

f. Water project update.

Selectman Stewart reported that the survey crews have begun doing their work on the island, primarily Rte. 1B. The contract with Underwood (design presented at last meeting for survey work through bid process) is under legal review. It was approved by the State,

and is now under our legal review by town counsel. It's a 2-piece contract. The omnibus general contract is in place; however there is an ESR (Engineer Service Request) for \$536,000 which is being reviewed. Once we get feedback, the town will continue forward.

TTHMS: Testing was completed, where we hit 70 parts, so DES is in agreement, and we are just under the point where we should have to do a public notice, as we are under the 89 parts. The result was due to our mitigation efforts which included bleeding of the system. DES encouraged the town to continue with our mitigation, including bleeding at the Coast Guard Station. There is a school test on Friday the 24th.

Sewer: The pumps are up and running and the town is set to make the payments. SCADA is working. Selectman Stewart will be speaking with Keith of Underwood regarding the punch list, and if approved, the town will make payment as agreed, but will hold back a percentage according to the contract.

Dave McGuckin asked for the expected date of "shovels in the ground" to which Bill responded Spring 2019 is target date, but a number of factors are in play, so its difficult to pinpoint a specific date.

Christiane asked for clarification of the payment sharing cost for the mitigation bleeding of the water system. Bill responded that Portsmouth will do 50%. The bleeding is working and is the least expensive option. Bill reported that he is talking with Portsmouth about relocating the test sites.

4. Committee Reports.

Water Sewer Commission: Selectman Frampton reported on the recent meeting and commented that the installation of bulkheads and risers needed for for River Road is moving forward.

There being no further business to come before the Select Board, Selectman Frampton made a Motion to Adjourn, which was seconded by Selectman Stewart. Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 8:20 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

BJ Riordan
Secretary