

**MINUTES OF THE SELECT BOARD**  
**Monday, February 4, 2019 – 7PM**

**Present:** Thomas Maher, Chair, Bill Stewart, Selectman, Damon Frampton, Selectman, and Pam Cullen, Secretary and Administrative Assistant to the Select Board.

**Also present:** Ken McDonald, TAPC, Jim Cerny, VJ Strehl, Andy Schulte, Dave McGuckin, John Ireland, Jo Ireland, and Marcia Cronin.

**1. Approve Minutes January 22, 2019. Tabled to next meeting February 19.**

**2. Public Question & Answer:**

VJ Strehl spoke about a recent Portsmouth Herald article regarding Hampton's receipt of a grant to address staffing and equipment for the Fire Department, and expressed concern about New Castle's Fire Department with respect to skill levels and staffing. Referring to the water project she stated we may be getting pipes in the ground but not necessarily people on the street, meaning she questions if the Fire Department has enough skilled staff and suitable equipment to do their job.

Chair Maher responded to her questions by summarizing last week's special Select Board meeting with Fire Department personnel Chief Mark Wooley, Terry Golter and Bill Cronin. At that meeting they reviewed the department's budget, and discussed the diminishing pool of talent for both paid and volunteer staff, as all surrounding communities are drawing from the same population. He noted that New Castle is engaged in the process of focusing on personnel. He noted that the equipment is in good shape. He pointed out that there is a great deal of administrative staff needed to obtain grant funding and manage the grant, and we are not in the position to proceed in that direction at this time. He noted that there is a great deal of pressure on surrounding towns on acquiring personnel. There have been extensive discussions and New Castle is very much engaged in finding solutions.

**3. New Business**

**i. Rye Rec update:**

Chair Maher stated that at the last Select Board Meeting, Lee Arthur from Rye Rec addressed the Board seeking permission to use the Common for a two -week period for their summer camp. This would be late June-early July. He noted that he checked with DPW about the schedule and there doesn't appear to be a problem. Selectman Stewart asked if Guy Stearns had been contacted. Chair Maher said he would check with him. Selectman Frampton asked if our residents who play tennis had a problem with this. Pam did not feel they would mind if the children utilized the facility during this time frame. Chair Maher will check with Guy and contact Ms. Arthur for the go-ahead.

**ii. Flashing Lights at School update:**

Ken McDonald TAPC outlined three options for repair of the light at Ritson, provided by East Coast Signal. These included various permutations of replacing just batteries, replacing/installing a clock with or without a flash drive, or just replacing the battery with hard wire. After further discussion Selectman Stewart indicated he felt there was a way to hard wire which could easily and less expensively solve the problem. The Board agreed to

further review the options set forth by Ken and will advise Ken tomorrow (February 5<sup>th</sup>) of the final decision.

**iii. CLG Grant - HDC**

Chair Maher explained the federal grant recently applied for and received by Rodney Rowland, Chair of HDC ,for grant funds provided by the entity Certified Local Government. Funding of \$35,000.00 would be used to conduct a complete survey of all of New Castle's historic homes which would be utilized by not only HDC but NCHS and others as well. A warrant article for this must go before the voters at Town Meeting. There is no cost to the Town for use of these funds. There is no match required.

**iv. Avitar Software discussion.**

The Board reviewed the options for purchasing the Building Inspector software which would digitalize the permit process, and provide a complete record of actions on each piece of property. Whether the town should have a stand-alone computer is the main purpose of this discussion. Pam Cullen praised the ability to track the building permits. It is \$250 per workstation, so the cost is \$3700 to start, then \$1250 each year. This would provide us with a digital record. It has the ability to scan in documents tied to the particular parcel. Selectman Frampton is supportive. Selectman Stewart asked if we needed additional computers. The Building Inspector needs a new computer. It was stated that Pam's computer is fine. Selectman Stewart would like the contract period to run through June of 2020. Selectman Stewart had additional questions about our ability to print off the tax cards. There was some confusion, so Selectman Stewart will speak with Joshua from Avitar specifically about interaction with the assessing portion. Ken pointed out that we scaled back to only the building permit function, not the assessing. The decision will be made at the February 19<sup>th</sup> meeting.

**v. 65 Portsmouth Avenue.**

Selectman Frampton stated that he will be meeting with the Building Inspector and the Lavins, property owners at 4:30 tomorrow at Town Hall regarding the issues previously outlined with complying with Building Permit process.

**vi. Water Sewer Update:**

Selectman Stewart provided a recap of progress since the last Select Board Meeting. Referencing the digging portion, he stated that all environmentalals had cleared regarding the transmission main. There will be a public meeting which will be a general progress meeting, with Underwood Engineering in about a week and a half. This will be posted to the Town's website. He noted there have been discussions about meter pits with the City of Portsmouth, including possible replacements. The cost to replace each meter pit is \$150,000, which would improve flows. He discussed "lost water" and how billing would work as metering would be based on house meters. NH DOT is on record in support of the replacement idea as is the City of Portsmouth. Jon Ireland pointed out some problems with this idea. Selectman Stewart spoke about the "factoring" concept which would be around 15%.

Selectman Stewart reported that Underwood is now into the 60% design drawings. He spoke about the Sawtelle Bridge and four options to be considered:

- Replace as part of the project.
- Leave 8" water line and hook up 12" on each side.
- Go under the bridge on the ocean floor
- Run pipe from Pierce Island.

He stated that as we get into the Engineering phase, the two main issues are the meter pits and the bridge. He noted that March 18 is a proposed meeting date with Town residents to show all of the 60% drawings. This date may be changed depending on availability of all three Select Board members.

#### **vii. Warrant Articles.**

Chair Maher discussed the number of warrant articles proposed to date for Town Meeting which include the CLG grant, A Safe Path, a few school articles, V& E fund, Buildings and Maintenance, and Roads.

Ken McDonald gave a brief update of the Safe Path project which will be from Beach Hill Road to Pit Lane and the warrant article is for \$403,000 from the TAP grant. The signature of the Governor is required as the one last step. The Town will be responsible for 20%, The Safe Path Committee wants a separate warrant article for creation of a trust funded by taxpayer dollars, and \$80,600 for funding the trust. Dave McGuckin noted that a requirement is to have one full time employee assigned to manage the project. Selectman Stewart explained that this does not necessarily require a "new" employee.

Chair Maher noted that there is a CIP Meeting this Thursday, which should be the final one.

#### **viii. Donor Town Issue**

Selectman Stewart explained the potential impact of pending state legislation which a consortium of towns, including Portsmouth is fighting as passage would revert back to taxation relating to donor towns and education funding, and New Castle would be faced with another million and a half dollars in taxes. Selectman Stewart has spoken with legal counsel from Portsmouth and will keep a close watch on this process. Other local State reps will be involved to try to defeat this attempt.

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 8:02 PM.  
Respectfully submitted,

Bette Jane Riordan.