

MINUTES OF THE SELECT BOARD
Monday, May 6, 2019 – 7PM

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

Also present: Pam Cullen, Administrative Assistant to the Select Board, Ken McDonald, TAPC, Jim Cerny, Andy Schulte, Dave McGuckin, Tom Smith, Tom Chamberland, Connie White, Anne and Mike McAndrew, Jim Wilbur, Fire Chief Ted Hartmann, Tim Driscoll, Christiane McAllister, Jane Finn, Laurie Chandler, and John Ireland.

1. Approve Select Board Minutes of April 15, 2019.

Selectman Stewart made a Motion to Approve the April 15, 2019 minutes of the Select Board as amended. Selectman Frampton seconded, and the Motion carried.

2. Public Question and Answer.

Chair Maher requested that those who speak limit their time to five minutes as is customary in this portion of the agenda.

Tom Smith, speaking on behalf of the Ledges Subdivision and the Home Owners Association, also of Abigale Lane distributed a map detailing the a Town owned lot which was formerly owned by the La Rose family. Portions of the lot are filled with debris, and he is asking permission from the Select Board to clean up this area and return it to its natural state. Piscataqua Landscaping would do the work, and he assured the Board the company would provide the Town with a copy of its insurance to cover any liability while the work is being done. The Select Board approved the request.

Jane Finn asked about the status of making the Building Inspector a full time position. She indicated that the trees committee had previously made this recommendation and asked for an update. The Board noted that the issue is on the Town's radar, and has taken the matter under advisement. Chair Maher indicated that allocating the appropriate resources is part of this consideration. He noted that in December the Town part time Building Inspector was tragically killed, and we are fortunate to have Ian Moodie in that position.

Ken McDonald, TAPC gave an update on the Safe Path project. While they were a week ahead of schedule they are now a week behind in installing the granite curbing because of poor weather conditions. Paving will follow the curbing installation. He noted that the culvert will be raised this week in preparation.

3. New Business.

a. Appointments:

Chair Maher asked Jim Wilbur if he would like to introduce himself as he has been asked to be an Alternate for the Trustee of the Trust Funds. Mr. Wilbur provided the Board with background information and gave a brief history of when he came to New Castle and why he wishes to serve. Chair Maher thanked him for stepping up and serving.

Tom Chamberland introduced himself and gave some work history. He will be serving on the Conservation Commission.

The Select Board approved both appointments.

b. Coverage for Town Meeting May 14.

The Select Board agreed to the following coverage:

Chair Maher – 9-Noon

Selectman Frampton – Noon to 4:00 PM

Selectman Stewart – 4-7:00 PM

All Selectmen will be present for the rest of the evening.

Chair Maher thanked Pam Cullen for her work on the Town Report which was distributed to all residents over the weekend.

c. Health Trust- domestic partner rider.

Chair Maher indicated that this request has been made for the Town to extend coverage for domestic partners. He became aware of the significance of this during the ongoing interviews for the Fire Chief position. And how it could impact future hiring practices and understanding that if we want to attract talented people, we may need to be flexible on the benefits we provide. While the final decision will not be made tonight, he asked accountant Christiane McAllister to give an overview. He noted that we currently do not have this policy. She indicated she would provide the paperwork which is very explicit, and explained the process if the Town chooses to add to the personnel policy and open enrollment and the tax liability involved. Selectman Frampton stated the Board should hold off in order to be able to disseminate the information, and the effect on future benefits. Chair Maher agreed that they need to consider about the costs to the Town if this were to become part of the Health Trust benefits for employees.

d. New Town website.

The Board thanked Ken McDonald for all of his work on getting the new web site designed and up and running. Ken noted the new page looks fabulous, and we now have new photos and videos. Ken and Pam Cullen are the only employees currently trained. There is also a new format which has a bit of a learning curve, but he is

developing guidelines. He noted the addition of a new emergency line feature and how that works. Dave McGuckin suggested that this be announced at Town Meeting, May 14.

e. Personnel Policy.

Chair Maher stated he was looking forward to getting the final version signed. Christiane noted that once signed it will be sent out and she will have a modified copy for new employees. There is a new section under vacations, and she gave examples. The final version will be formalized at the next Select Board Meeting.

f. Water project.

Selectman Stewart reported that he met with officials from Portsmouth last week to discuss the aeration plant, which is expected to be fully operational by the end of August/early September. It will be partially operational in June, so we may see some benefits earlier than expected. Discussions continue on Pierce Island to Shapleigh Island portion of the project. There is a meeting with their Conservation Commission to discuss that crossing. There is also another pre-meeting with Underwood and Portsmouth with the environmental representative tomorrow, along with a wetlands scientist to talk about the water crossing, and eliminating the meter spots. He noted that the estimated water loss is down to 14-15%. The project will go out to bid after the Conservation Commission meetings, and explained about the time line of how and when certain portions of the project kick in. Dave McGuckin asked about if the Shapleigh /Pierce Island line is being held up in order to keep the costs down. Selectman Stewart spoke about the cost sharing memo with Portsmouth on this issue, and also explained where the water line is located. There was further discussion on measures to address potential higher than expected costs should that become an issue. Reference was made to the 2017 Memo from the acting Portsmouth City Manager regarding the Pierce Island to Shapleigh Island line.

4.Committee Reports.

a. Fire Dept.

Chair Maher introduced Fire Chief Ted Hartmann, who requested permission to dispense with or sell several items in their equipment inventory. One of the items is a small boat which is not certified, but has some negligible value. Selectman Frampton supported the Chief's decision to get rid of this vessel. The whaler does have some value. There was further discussion about the boats and the Board supports the Chief in his recommendations who has only been here a week. Chair Maher noted how many positive things he has already heard from the public about the Chief, and welcomed him to the Town.

The full monthly report will be attached to the minutes.

b. Police Department.

Chair Stewart gave the highlights, one of which was “ Shots fired call- Negligent firing” which apparently was regarding someone shooting turkeys. The full report is attached to the minutes.

c. Water Sewer.

Selectman Frampton reported that the Commission is meeting this week, and he will have a report at the next Select Board Meeting.

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

Meeting adjourned at 7:40 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Bette Jane Riordan