

MINUTES OF THE SELECT BOARD
Monday, March 4, 2019 – 7PM(6:45 Public Hearing)

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

Also present: State Senator Tom Sherman, Christiane McAllister, Tom Smith, Jim Cerny, Andy Schulte, Dave McGuckin, and John Ireland.

At 6:45, Chair Maher convened the **Public Hearing** regarding Town acceptance of any funds in excess of \$10,000.00 pursuant to NH RSA. In 2015, the Town established a sidewalk trust fund under the provisions of RSA 31:19 . The amount to be accepted is \$12,100. One check for \$ 6,000 from David and Nancy Borden; another check for \$6,000 from Phyllis Reed, and the third check from Beth Barnhorst and Peter Hunt for \$100.00. The vote tonight is to accept these funds which will go into the sidewalk trust fund.

Chair Maher asked for any input from the public.

Tom Smith of 250 Wentworth Road asked to clarify the purpose of the public hearing. Chair Maher confirmed the intent which is to accept the funds, not create another fund.

Chair Maher called for a Motion. Selectman Frampton made a Motion to Accept the \$12,100 in private donations for the sidewalk trust fund. Chair Maher seconded and the Motion carried.

Selectman Frampton made a Motion to Close the Public Hearing which was seconded by Chair Maher. Public Hearing closed at 6:52. The Select Board resumed at 7:00 PM for its Agenda.

1. Approve Minutes of February 19, 2019.

Selectman Stewart made a Motion to Approve the minutes of the February 19, 2019 meeting as amended. Selectman Frampton seconded and the Motion carried.

2. Public Question & Answer:

Pam Cullen stated that the Town Resident stickers are in and available. Paul Hamblett initiated a new design this year which was beautifully done by Jen Rosenson. Non-resident stickers go on sale May 1st.

Pam was approached by the Library to see if she would host a bake sale at the Town Meeting on May 14th. The proceeds of the sale help defray some of the Library's expenses. The Select Board supported this request.

Pam also noted the Select Board discussed getting two quotes for any projects exceeding \$2,500. Chair Maher agreed.

Dan Hughes of Beach Hill Road had questions about Safe Path. Chair Maher explained the next segment is from Beach Hill Road to the Common. This may affect Dan as he lives on the corner of Beach Hill and Wentworth. He explained his corner is narrow, there is a utility pole, and the area is very busy. Chair Maher explained that efforts will be made to not interfere with people's property, and to provide a safe walkway. Selectman Stewart noted that there will be design work done to include neighbor concerns. Jim Cerny brought up an alternative-walking path (along the beach and down Walbach and other back streets) Selectman Stewart stated there will be some crossings or crossovers included in the final design. Use of Pit Lane was also discussed.

3. New Business:

State Senator Tom Sherman.

Senator Sherman provided the Select Board with an update on legislative matters in Concord. On the Senate side, they are still doing their own bills as cross over from the House does not occur until that time. Most of the work so far has been bi-partisan which is refreshing. He serves as Chair of Health and Human Services and Vice Chair of Election and Municipal affairs. He is working on Election laws with NHMA and how elections take place. Towns will be able to make independent decisions on Election Day if there is inclement weather such as occurred last year. There are other health issues, focusing on mental health issues and providing more designated receiving beds and voluntary beds for in patient services. There will also be a new mobile crisis team. SB 14 creates a comprehensive service for mental health services and wrap around services for kids. Mental Health and substance abuse are the two main crisis issues in NH, and focusing on children's needs.

On the Education front, on the House side, the issue of donor towns is probably not going to make it out there. Chair Maher said the issue of disparity has not gone away. He asked where the debate goes from here? Sen. Sherman seems to believe the property owners will need to get relief. The disparity is driving property taxes up in areas which can least afford them.

He discussed water issues, and a bill he is sponsoring regarding contaminants (MCL for PFAS). Other topics discussed include pension funding impact, including restoring 15% to \$30% which could help with local taxes and staffing. Chair Maher mentioned this as Rep. Cushing's bill and asked for help in promoting this bill as it would benefit New Castle.

There was a great deal of discussion about working with NH DOT as Selectman's Stewart's chief topic. He expressed the need to receive approvals faster and for increased flexibility on NHDOT's part to meet the public safety and accessibility needs of New Castle. Selectman Stewart asked for assistance in developing a better working relationship so that New Castle can achieve some of its goals.

There was also a lot of discussion regarding the Wentworth Bridge and New Castle's stance that the State needs to make a decision without tying the process to the Seabrook and Hampton Bridge issues. Chair Maher stressed the public safety motivator and referencing

access to the island by firefighting equipment. Our water improvement project is being affected by the delay in bridge decision-making as Portsmouth needs a decision to proceed with its portion of water line replacement. Sen. Sherman agreed to help in any way he can. Chair Maher asked he to reach out to the Commissioner and executive council on the need to move forward.

With respect to questions about various taxes, Senator Sherman noted there will be no income tax considered, the Business Enterprise Tax may be suspended, property tax relief may be suspended, and Rooms and Meals tax cut. He will continue to work with our Reps and report back.

The Board thanked Senator Sherman for his presentation and discussion.

New Castle Fire Chief:

Chair Maher announced that the Town has posted the position of New Castle Fire Chief with NHMA. He stated he and others have been working closely with acting Chief Mark Wooley for the last 5 and ½ months. He is hopeful to have the new Chief in place by May 1.

Water Sewer Update:

Selectman Stewart reported that this topic was covered in detail at the last meeting, and they are working through those items. There will be a full update for the Town on the 60% and close to 90% design drawings sometime in March, hopefully the week of the 25th. He stated he needs input from Underwood Engineers before setting the date.

Committee Reports:

Police Dept: See attached.

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

Meeting adjourned at 8:08 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Bette Jane Riordan