

FINAL
MINUTES OF THE SELECT BOARD
Monday, September 23, 2019 – 7PM

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

Also present: Fire Chief Ted Hartnett, Pam Cullen, Administrative Assistant to Select Board, Christiane McAllister, Accountant, Ken McDonald, TAPC, Keith Pratt, Underwood Engineers, Andy Sharpe, Underwood Engineers, Jim Cerny, Dave McGuckin, Tom Smith, Terry Golter, Peter Rice, Ann and Mike McAndrew, Peter Tarlton, Norm Houle, Chet Fessenden, Mary Beth Lambert, Guy Stearns, William Henson, William Kingston, and Heidi Maddox.

1. Approve Select Board Minutes of August 19, 2019 and September 3, 2019.

Selectman Maher made a Motion to Approve August 19th Select Board meeting minutes as amended. Selectman Stewart seconded, and the Motion carried. Selectman Maher made a Motion to Approve the September 3, 2019 Select Board meeting minutes as amended. Selectman Stewart seconded and the Motion carried.

2. Public Question and Answer. None.

3. New Business.

a. Recreation Department Revolving Fund.

Guy Stearns began the presentation with a history of the Great Island 5K Road Race which was initiated 26 years ago to raise money to install a playground at the Great Island Common. After the first five years they raised \$110,100, and purchased and installed the playground which exists today. The race has been a Town event since its inception. There is free entry for all MHT students to both the 5K and the Fun Run. Volunteers are all from Town. The following services have been provided over the years: 5K Race, additions to the playground, installation and maintenance of a skating rink, gave \$16,000 to install the MHT playground, donated to the conservation easement on the back channel, purchased MHT track uniforms, installed the fence which surrounds the current playground, donated to the building of the Macomber room at the library. In all, a total of \$200,000 has been raised for Town items. In addition, the Tom Quinn Memorial for scholarship fund was established (\$4,000 per year). 4 scholarships are given to 4 high school graduates each year. Donations are made annually to PHS cross country teams. They have always been a New Castle first organization.

Guy noted that the Revolving Rec Fund was established approximately 10 years ago. Prior to that, trust funds were utilized. After review by the Town auditors it was determined that the current fund needed to change, and that the race should establish a 501©(3) non-profit. This needed to take the place to make the race and the funds separate from the Town. A discussion was had concerning how to transfer the funds into the non-profit. The entity had its first board meeting a few weeks ago and the first order of business was a decision to donate \$10,000 of the fund to the Town to help with the update of the

playground. Guy is before the Select Board this evening to get approval and acceptance for the transfer to kickstart the playground improvements.

After brief discussion, Selectman Stewart made a Motion to Retain \$10,000 from the Rec Revolving Fund for playground improvements, and transfer the remaining balance to the non-profit entity. Selectman Maher seconded and the Motion carried.

b. Donations to upgrade playground - \$1,060.

Chair Frampton noted that the \$1,060 was raised by the Police Department for playground improvements. This money has been deposited in the General Fund, and is intended for playground improvements.

c. Awarding of contract for Water Project Selection of contractor.

Selectman Stewart gave a brief history of the project's bidding process leading up to this evening's awarding of the contract to the selected bidder. The Town approved the project at Town Meeting and the project went out to bid. The Town received five bids. N. Granese & Sons, Inc. of Salem Massachusetts was the low bidder. Underwood Engineers has reviewed the bids extensively. Meetings with the Town, Underwood and Granese have taken place to review costs and look for savings. The Town has reviewed a number of options for cost savings as well as possible start dates. There is a potential to start this fall should the contract be awarded this evening. What Selectman Stewart put forth was to have Keith Pratt from Underwood address the Board and hear Underwood's recommendation. Keith introduced Andy Sharpe who has been with Underwood for fifteen months, and will be the Project Manager.

The following is a verbatim of Keith's written submission to the Select Board dated September 23, 2019. As a result of discussions, note that the final numbers changed. These changes will be reflected in these minutes subsequent to the letter.

" We have reviewed the bids for the referenced project received on August 19, 2019. The lowest bidder is N. Granese & Sons, Inc. of Sale, Ma. A Bid Tabulation is attached. We called three references and found that N. Granese & Sons has successfully completed projects similar in scope to the proposed work in New Castle. These include projects for Pennichuck East Utilities, Exeter, NH, and Concord, NH. Granese also completed a roadway and drainage project in Salem NH, designed by Underwood Engineers Inc. The bid bond issued by the United States Surety Company also meet the requirements of the contract documents.

At this time, we recommend that the award include the Base Bid (\$3,893,615.00) plus Alternative 2 (\$64,000.00) in the total amount of \$3,957,615.00. We also recommend that Change Order #1 in the amount of \$229,500.00 be signed as a condition of Contract Award(draft copy attached). This will reduce the contract at signing to \$3,728,115.00. It is noted that Bid Alternative 1: Tidal Crossing (Pierce Island to Shapleigh island) should be added to the contract on or before March 14, 2020. We understand that award of Alternative 1 is contingent on the Town of New Castle and the City of Portsmouth executing an agreement regarding metering ad cost sharing. Additionally, the work on the meter pits cannot proceed without an agreement on metering and billing.

Once the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services approves the ward of the project we will assist the Town in executing the Contract for the Base Bid plus Alternative 2.

Please note that the full packet submitted by Underwood is available for review at Town Hall.

Keith Pratt began by addressing the bidding process, and noted that the bid number is good until March. He recommends awarding the Base Bid plus expansion of the joints on the bridge and holding off on the crossing to Pierce Island. The hold on the tidal crossing is \$544,000.00. He explained some conditions, such as the NH DES and Army Corp. approval. He provided a draft for the Board to review and put on Town letterhead, and Keith will submit it. The second condition is confirming the metering. The third condition is Change Order Number 1, which reduces the contract by \$229,000.00. This is made up of six items:

- The first is to use PVC pipe, as opposed to HTPE. This would be a cost savings. This will actually improve hydraulics.
- Granese is now teamed with Evrocks for bridge work (Inspection and design for hangar replacement) (Savings: \$20,000)
- The Town will provide some office space for some of the project worker. (Field engineer) (Savings: \$15,000)
- The sign package will not have a large lighted flashing message board. There will be messaging and signs, just not the large lighted message board. (Savings: \$20,000 for 2 signs).
- Possible shortening of the project 500 feet. After discussion, the Board preferred to keep the full line ending at Wentworth Road, and not ending at Town Hall as suggested (Savings of \$150,000). Selectman Maher fully supported doing the whole line and not shortening it. He stated this was what was intended and expressed to the public, and the central promise made. He supported the other suggested changes.

Keith stated that the contract will note that the contractor will accept the change order. He has already said he would accept the change order. Chair Frampton also indicated he wanted to keep the whole line. Keith said we could revisit this issue in March. Selectman Stewart said that a decision on this change order did not have to be made right away, but a contract award did need to go forward this evening. He noted that the contract number without shortening the project puts the Town over by approximately \$600,000.00, and that this will affect the number of loopings or if the loops are done at all. The Town will have to find additional funding for the loops. He wanted the Board to consider this when making a final decision on the change order. Keith stated the purpose initially was to improve fire flows and not water quality specifically. The loops involved trying to ameliorate standing water.

Keith stated there is a budget included in the packet, as well as a draft letter, which may have to be changed depending the Select Board's vote. There is also an engineering contract for Underwood. Some of the loop design has been taken out for design with a resulting reduction in the contract price of \$60,000.00. Three of the loops remain in the contract (Underwood's Engineering Contract). There is also included a construction services

contract to cover the liaison with the public, quality control, change order issues, etc. That contract is approximately \$300,000.00. Taking out the \$60,000, the net is \$270,000. The Select Board should appoint a designated representative from the Town so things can be decided expeditiously, such as minimal change orders. This would obviously be under the financial limits of the contract, as authorized. This is more of an administrative process. Selectman Maher asked about paving issues, and what DOT may require. Keith indicated there may not be a lot of wiggle room as to what is required by DOT. Final paving may not occur until 2021.

Selectman Maher asked about the temporary water capacity. Keith indicated Granese is a water and sewer specialist. He has done a lot of work in coastal communities. Keith pointed out that he will be laying temporary lines, while the main is shut down. Granese will keep a spare supply system, and is comfortable with dealing with this issue.

Keith stated there will be a pre-construction meeting next week at Town Hall, with all of the stakeholders, including DOT, DES, etc. Contracts will be signed, and schedules will be determined. The time and date will be posted as a Select Board Meeting.

Norm Houle, Chair of the Water and Sewer Commission asked about the status of the meter issue. Keith reported that the check valves will be taken out but the meters will stay. A Scada system will be on Shapleigh Island for Portsmouth to read the meters.

Dave McGuckin asked about a Clerk of the Works. Keith responded there will be a resident Engineer. Jim Cerny asked about possible work this year. Keith indicated the proposed contractor is interested in doing some work on Shapleigh prior to the onset of winter. That would be helpful to him.

Keith indicated that part of Evrocks work is to schedule some time with the Town to go over the bridge issues (water and sewer crossings). Evrocks will be back to work on the second bridge.

Selectman Stewart reviewed the decision points for this evening. Awarding the contract and point of contact. (Town representative). Selectman Maher made a Motion to Appoint Selectman Bill Stewart as the Town representative for the project. Chair Frampton seconded and the Motion carried.

Selectman Maher made a Motion to Approve the contract and change order with four initial changes at a contract price of \$3,874,615.00. Selectman Stewart seconded and the Motion carried. Keith will issue a new letter reflecting the new number. Keith will let the contractor know. Underwood contract will be approved at the next Select Board meeting. Keith is going to proceed to submit the draft Underwood contract. Keith noted that Mark Guimont will be the resident engineer for the New Castle project.

d. Wildlife Management Committee.

William Henson of Ducks Head presented a request to form a Wildlife Management Committee. This proposal to establish an ad hoc town committee grew out of the recent deer kill dispute. He stated there is a complete lack of reliable and credible information in existence with respect to the wildlife living on the island. He stated there is no developed plan that sets parameters relative to agreed upon nuisance or safety levels of any kind with respect to not only deer, but geese, wild turkeys, coyotes and fox. He asked the Town to appoint an initial group of 6-8 concerned citizen-volunteers to gather information and be a resource. He related a deer count that he and others conducted over the weekend showing 18-22 deer with 25% being fawns. Later in the presentation Tom Smith made a point that it is early in the season and that soon the population will swell. But much of the information that does exist is anecdotal. Mr. Henson feels a process should be established, starting with the establishment of a committee and the creation of a charter.

After discussion, the Select Board supported the concept of getting better data and information, but indicated the group is advisory only, realizing the limitations of what can be done (State Fish and Game being the primary authority in wildlife management.). Policies cannot be established at the local level other than town owned land. In response to a question, it was noted that the Police cannot remove any injured or dead deer from private property. The committee should keep minutes, post notices of meetings, and perhaps connect with the Conservation Commission as well.

e. Cemetery Trustees.

The recent resignation of Jim Cerny has created a vacancy, which needs to be filled. After discussion Selectman Stewart made a Motion to Appoint the current Alternate, Holly Fraumeni, as a trustee to serve until the election in May 2020. Selectman Maher seconded and the Motion carried. Pam Cullen will notify her.

f. Water Sewer (Covered previously)

TAPC Ken McDonald questioned where the field engineers for the Water Project are going to have office space within the Town. Selectman Stewart stated they will be looking into various areas, including the DPW building.

g. Fire Department - Fire Chief Ted Hartmann

1. Emergency Management LEOP Grant:

Chief Hartmann provided hard copies of the grant award dealing with emergency management and hazard mitigation plan which must be updated every five years. It is a \$7000 award with a \$3500 match by the Town. After brief discussion, Selectman Maher made a Motion to Accept the Grant Agreement as presented. Selectman Stewart seconded and the Motion carried.

2. Fire Boat

Chief Hartmann began the discussion by stating that Marine 1 is no longer tenable budget wise to retain and recommends we transfer it. He noted there will be an assessment and some maintenance done to bring it up to standards for transferring it to Newburyport, MA

or Meredith NH, both of which have expressed interest. He has been touch with the State Grants Management Unit to discuss this to make sure he is proceeding as authorized. He stated that Newburyport is within the Seacoast Fire Chiefs Mutual Aid District. So if need be they could assist with the boat. He would like the Select Board to support his recommendation. Selectman Maher asked if the State had any problem with transferring it out of state, and the Chief said there were no concerns. Both Selectman Stewart and Maher would prefer Meredith to keep the boat in NH but were open to either outcome after due diligence. The Chief would like to get the transfer done before the winter to avoid maintenance (\$4000) and storage costs at Great Bay Marina.

Selectman Maher spoke about how he came to learn that the firefighting capacity of the boat does not meet expectations, and recommended to let the Chief proceed to get rid of it. Selectman Maher noted that at the time of the acquisition it was agreed that the Town would review the situation on a yearly basis. Chair Frampton noted that he had never supported the acquisition of the boat. Selectman Stewart supports the Chief's recommendation to transfer the boat. He feels more comfortable now with the water project coming then he would have a year ago.

The Chief also spoke of the work he has done with surrounding municipalities regarding enhancement of the "automated aid system", and gave assurances that New Castle is now better protected as a result of the improvements. He spoke about high volume tanker trucks being made available if a fire occurs to assure we have enough water.

Chair Frampton would prefer it gets transferred as soon as possible, and urged the Chief to communicate this urgency to the two communities.

Peter Tarlton asked about response time issues for the tanker trucks to arrive. Chief said it would be immediate depending on travel time issues. The partnership is growing. Peter also asked about a hose line that used to be kept near where the boat was kept. The Chief will look into this as he was not aware of it.

William Kingston spoke in opposition to transferring the boat, citing the tanker trucks would take too long, difficulty with turning around, and the current work force here is not trained in working with tankers. It is not a reliable or practical water source. The Chief did say the tanker trucks come fully staffed, and turn around areas have been designated. According to Selectman Stewart, the tankers would have better response time than the boat in the winter time. Selectman Maher reiterated that the boat is not a viable asset with weather issues. In practicality, the boat is not usable given weather conditions. The tankers are more reliable and quicker.

Terry Golter brought up the rescue operation. She hopes there will be a new replacement. This matter is provided for in the CIP for a new small practical maritime asset. The Chief outlined his vision and plan for a new smaller practical boat which will fit within the budget of the Town.

Peter Rice wants to make sure the boat is in good condition when it is transferred. He noted the former Chief had put a lot of work into that boat and wants to be sure its in reasonably good condition. Chief Hartmann stated this will be done.

Selectman Stewart made a Motion to Approve the transferring possession of the fireboat as recommended by the Fire Chief, as soon as a suitable entity is finalized, and to authorize the Chief to execute the transfer in a timely fashion. Selectman Maher seconded and the Motion carried.

3. NCFD Update

Selectman Maher began by noting that Chief Hartmann and he met with members of the Fire Department in August, who were expressing some concerns. In the interim there have been further discussions. He asked the Chief to lay out before the public some of his ideas, and allow the opportunity for questions. Chair Frampton added that the Select Board will be having this segment of public discussion with the Fire Department every month. It will be the second meeting of the month.

The Chief distributed his Department's plan for organizational change. He stated the need for change. The Mission of Change is the elevation of the professional standards and profile to enhance coverage and deliverable services to residents and visitors. He stressed that the assessment of the need for change was important, in order to lay out the groundwork. He raised concerns about the lack of emphasis on formal training and adherence to best practice with regard to certification by the previous administration. He stated that the fundamental oversights have bred low-level certification and as a result operational ability. To further the argument for change the Board of Selectmen have identified the official appetite of the town for a more professional, organized department and a higher level of deliverable service. He stated that ultimately it is his opinion that formal, progressive and professional leadership led change to bring skill and certification levels up in concert with expanded coverage must be undertaken without delay. **The full report follows:**

New Castle Fire Department plan for organizational change- Overview

Mission of Change: Elevation of the professional standards and profile to enhance coverage and deliverable service to residents and visitors.

Assessment of the need for change: Chief Hartmann came to the department from Greenland that currently employs a combination of full time and part time firefighter/ EMTs delivering advanced life support and structural firefighting. He saw that the median skill and certification level in New Castle was below the expectations of a fire department of similar size, complexity and service demand. The Chief has real-time working knowledge of the department with regard to reputation and perception within the Seacoast firefighting community. He has found and seen that the

department has suffered in years past as a result of a lack of emphasis on formal training and adherence to best practice with regard to certification by the previous administration. These fundamental oversights have bred low-level certification and as a result, operational ability. To further the argument for change the employing authority, the Board of Selectmen, have identified the official appetite of the town for a more professional, organized department and a higher level of deliverable service. Ultimately it is Chief Hartmann's opinion that formal, progressive and professional leadership led change to bring skill and certification levels up in concert with expanded coverage must be undertaken without delay.

Decision for change: It should be noted that identification of change to be undertaken must be an ongoing and continuously evolving practice. The fire service has taken drastic, pointed and well vetted steps in the past decades to get away from bullish brute force tactics and made the transition to critically-thinking, highly educated responders capable of addressing complex, tense and rapidly evolving situations that rely on high quality, certification-based training to succeed.

To deliver this elevated level of service and professionalism the department will need to design and foster a system that encourages high level certification and maintenance of all best practices adopted by the fire service. Chief Hartmann has, in response to the need, redesignated funding previously allocated to a wider range of non-certification based training for the express purpose of sending members to schooling that results in licensure and real ability to perform critical tasks in emergent situations. These classes are costly and are consuming of much of the budget but additions to the bottom line have been made by the select board to bolster this effort in advance of the fiscal year. Chief Hartmann has also curtailed many past practices not in keeping with the state and federal guidelines that were reducing the amount of funds available to send members to obtain certification or maintain those they already possessed. Looking toward the future Chief Hartmann has begun to explore cost sharing both preliminary training for members but also in-service course work with other area departments. In the next budget cycle Chief Hartmann will advocate for an increase in the amount of funds dedicated to training and certifying firefighters and EMTs. Chief Hartmann and his deputy have begun to recruit and seek out other certified firefighters and EMTs from the surrounding area that can be brought on board at minimal cost to serve the town in part time capacities. This program will require additional resources to fully develop as personal protective clothing for a single firefighter costs upward of \$4000.00 dollars in addition to licensure.

This self-supporting and improvement from within to become stronger will be supported by the addition of a third full time firefighter/ EMT. Chief Hartmann will make a top priority of the passage through budget and voting processes the allocation of funding for this position. This new position, when created, will allow for an even greater level of coverage to the town but also serve as

an opportunity to bring in a skilled and experienced professional capable of starting service the first day while also to assisting in the training of existing members. Chief Hartmann will minimize the impact of the cost to fund this position by eliminating as much waste as possible and streamlining resources within the department to ensure every dollar is best utilized.

Implementation of change: Chief Hartmann has undertaken effecting the necessary change through an ongoing series of evaluations and assessments in addition to the following actions:

- Rewriting and modernizing the compensation and response policies to eliminate waste and ensure those responding are certified and licensed.
- Incentivizing certified members to respond by modernizing pay structure and scale.
- Minimizing waste to enable funding for backfill of sick and vacation time that was previously uncovered.
- Increasing the number of covered shifts by nearly 200 percent per week.
- Forming new response and mutual aid partnerships with surrounding departments and community partners by opening long closed channels of communication to share resources and supplement coverage.
- Streamlining fleet service and performing cost-benefit analysis to best prioritize work to be performed within each fiscal quarter.
- Subsidizing the full cost of state certification courses for members to elevate deliverable service and attract new members looking for opportunities to grow their own knowledge.
- Regularly conferencing with members of the Seacoast Fire Chief Mutual Aid district to best employ the resources available to the town at little to no cost.

Evaluation of change to date: Thus far Chief Hartmann has seen a substantial reduction in the response times to emergencies as more frequently than ever there are personnel in the station on

shift. Chief Hartmann has also seen a rise in and has been able to accommodate the enrollment of several members in new certification courses. As the full effects of this change are realized Chief Hartmann is confident that additional response time reduction will be seen and deliverable service will rise considerably.

Additional considerations for change:

- Fire boat- As of this date the chief will begin to make assessments of the maritime liabilities of the town and formulate a plan for replacement of the aging and cost intensive existing fire boat. Capital improvement funding has already been designated for this purpose and should eliminate much of the need for additional funds.
- Night/ Off hour coverage- The Chief will continue to develop a plan for adding more shift coverage that progresses toward having staffing in-station 24/7.
- Water Project- The Chief will continue to custom design a plan to minimize enhanced liability as a result of the upcoming water project. Substantial steps to bring water into town in the moments following notification of a fire have already been taken utilizing county and local agreements.

End of Chief's Report.

The Chief indicated that there is a great deal of misinformation circulating and he encouraged anyone with questions to contact him, either stop in, Email or text him. He would like to interface with as many people as possible and encouraged going forward together.

Selectman Maher brought up some issues from the August meeting, particularly about morale. He acknowledged that we are going through a transition and change is hard. He asked how do we maintain some of the good things that we've had? He acknowledged he had some difficulties with that meeting, but he does want to find some compromise with the members who have given a long time of service. Relying on volunteers in the long term is not a good plan. There is not a lot of new people to replace them. We need to rebuild morale and move forward.

Peter Rice of 21 Atkinson Street and a 21-year member of NCFD read a statement expressing his concerns. He stated he is part of a group of 11 firefighters and EMT's. He

acknowledged that change is hard and we owe it to the Chief to make it work. However he noted there has been friction and tension which have led to sagging morale and ambiguity. Despite that he expressed hope that compromise is achievable. He identified three areas of concern: Chain of Command, Training, and responding to fire and medical calls. He also called for more of an open door policy with regard to airing concerns to the Chief, and believes compromise is achievable. He noted that respect and trust are earned, not given and stressed the need to devote efforts toward the restoration of those principles. He provided a written statement along with details of his expressed concerns, which are on record with the Select Board.

Chair Frampton asked for any additional comments.

Terry Golter thanked Selectman Maher for clearing the air. She did however express her concerns about lack of training, and asked for help in that regard. She realizes the need for compromise. Selectman Maher asked her to accentuate the positive. In August, there was a lot of negativity. He stressed that New Castle has a new leader of the Fire Department, and stressed the need to get behind him.

Chair Frampton went back to the phrase “change is hard” and noted that communication is key. Everyone needs to communicate better. Terry identified other issues such as nighttime coverage and extra training. Again Chair Frampton suggested better communication. Selectman Stewart suggested to Terry and the Chief that he communicate his plan details if he hasn’t done so, and reset. Selectman Stewart is not trying to roll back, but to go forward. Pam Cullen expressed her support for the Chief, thanking him for providing articles for the Islander, which the former Chief never did. Tom Smith thanked the Selectmen for hiring Chief Hartmann. He indicated that while change is hard, change is necessary.

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

Meeting Adjourned at 9:55 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Bette Jane Riordan

ATTACHMENT A: Underwood Engineers Packet (Available at Town Hall)

