

MINUTES OF THE SELECT BOARD

Monday November 2, 2020, 7:00 PM

Via Zoom

Present: William Stewart, Chair, Tom Maher, Selectman, Dave McGuckin, Selectman, and Jennifer Smith, Administrative Assistant to the Select Board and Recording Secretary.

1. Non-Public Session - RSA 91-A:3 section II c

Selectman Maher made a motion to enter into a non-public session at 6:36pm. Said motion was seconded by Selectman McGuckin and carried unanimously, 3-0.

Present: William Stewart, Chair, Tom Maher, Selectman, Dave McGuckin, Selectman, and Jennifer Smith, Administrative Assistant to the Select Board and Recording Secretary.

Public Participants via Zoom: Tom Smith, Treasurer, Ken McDonald, Admin Project Coordinator, Mary Pat Gibson, Garden Club member, Anne Miller, Chair of CIP, Terri Golter, Chair of Cemetery Trustees, and Curt Springer.

Chairman Stewart opened the public session meeting at 7:00PM. Selectman Stewart explained the nature of the meeting, indicating it is considered an Emergency Meeting which meets all the State requirements of posting, and noted the availability of a phone number to call if a participant could not connect via Zoom. Selectman Stewart explained the criteria for Emergency Meetings, and stated that all votes by the Select Board would be roll call votes.

2 Approve Select Board minutes of October 5, 2020 and October 19, 2020

Selectman Maher made a Motion to approve the amended minutes of the Select Board Meetings of October 5, 2020 and October 19, 2020. Selectman McGuckin seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously, 3-0.

3. Public Questions and Answers.

Mary Pat Gibson, of the New Castle Garden Club, informed the Select Board that the club successfully planted 140 various bulbs and sea grass this summer at the park near the Coast Guard Station. Ms. Gibson stated that the park has been a very popular place and the flowers seem to add to visitors' enjoyment during Covid. Ms. Gibson requested the Garden Club be given approval to clear up a clump of bittersweet and sumac that have overgrown the area around the hardwood tree in the park in order to facilitate continued enjoyment of the area.

Selectman McGuckin supported the request stating it is a nice idea.

Chairman Stewart also supported the request and suggested the club contact a member of the Conservation Commission to possibly get advice on how to properly dispose of evasive plants to prevent future spread.

Terri Golter, Chairman of the Cemetery Trustees, stated that she has not been able to find any reports or letters indicating that Phase #2 is no longer considered wetlands.

Chairman Stewart stated that he recollects a letter from a wetland scientist deeming the location to no longer be a wetland, but could not recall the person's name or agency. He advised the Trustees not use that site for fill for the time being and he agreed to do further research on the matter.

Ms. Golter followed up with asking the Board if the town or insurance is paying for the damage to Engine 1 from its accident.

Fire Chief, Ted Hartmann, responded that the repairs will be covered by Primex, the Town's insurance carrier.

Ms. Golter further asked if the Fire Department is requiring a CDL license to operate the fire apparatus Engine 1.

Chief Hartmann responded that the Town is moving forward with unilateral requirements and that a CDL license is not currently required.

Ms. Golter questioned whether the department is performing any ongoing training.

Chief Hartmann stated that the department is currently performing on shift training, in service training and several employees are involved in off site seminars. Everyone is involved in in-depth, revolving training.

4. New Business.

a. Covid Update

Selectman Maher stated he gives a Covid report to the Select Board every two weeks and the last report on October 19th had seen a sizable jump in the amount of Covid cases from earlier in October, from 492 to 1020. Since October 19th, the numbers have increased from 1020 to 1407 to date. Selectman Maher re-iterated that the trend of positive cases being predominately along the I-93 route still appears to be the case. New Castle currently has no cases, Portsmouth has 31, Hampton 12 and Exeter 18. Two weeks ago, there were only 16 hospitalizations, which indicated that the most positive cases were not overwhelming the health care system. Currently, there are 41 hospitalizations. Selectman Maher reminded everyone to follow the protocols of masks, hand washing and social distancing.

Selectman McGuckin stated that the school continues to be extremely diligent and things are going well with no anticipated shut down at this time.

b. Seacoast Regional Disposal District 53B

Chairman Stewart stated that at its last meeting, the Select Board agreed to issue a letter to Seacoast Regional Disposal District 53B requesting they accept the Town of New Castle as a member and for a representative of the select board to attend the District's meeting of October 21, 2020.

Chairman Stewart attended that meeting and the District has agreed to accept the Town as a member if the Town so chooses to join. Chairman Stewart stated that he has not received a copy of the District's by-laws yet, but once he receives that he will move forward with getting legal advice regarding the Town's pending membership. The Town currently pays \$85/ton for trash and \$130/ton for recycling. The District fee would be \$73.45/ton for trash through July 2022 and then a 5% per annum increase. Recycling would remain the same price. The trash would be disposed of at the Turnkey Landfill in Rochester. Chairman Stewart informed the members that it is a possibility that Casella could remain the Town's trash collector for the same price and take the trash to the District's landfill in Rochester. He stated that, at this point, more conversations still have to take place with Casella. The fee to join District 53B is \$875.

Curt Springer asked if this matter would have to be presented at a Town Meeting?

Chairman Stewart responded "yes".

Ken McDonald, Admin Project Coordinator, stated that Casella's specific recycling guidelines have been posted on the Town's website.

c. Acceptance of Gift – Congregational Church

Chairman Stewart read the Church's donation letter into the record.

Selectman Maher made a motion to accept the unanticipated revenue of a gift of \$500 from the Congregational Church. Said motion was duly seconded by Selectman McGuckin and the motion carried unanimously, 3-0.

d. Approval of contracts – Plodzick and Sanderson

Selectman Maher made a motion to approve the contracts with Plodzick and Sanderson pending legal review. Selectman McGuckin seconded and said motion carried unanimously, 3-0.

e. Approval of Health Trust 2021 calendar year contract

Chairman Stewart stated that the existing plan had a roughly 5% increase for next year. Chairman Stewart opined that this is a good plan in the mid-range of expense and suggested the Board stay with it one more year and look into changing it next year.

Selectman Maher agreed that the Board should get a better understanding of what Health Trust offers for all its plans.

Selectman McGuckin asked what the deadline is.

Chairman Stewart responded "December 1st".

f. Town Projects Update – Nicely Done Contracting – Solstice Heating and Air

Selectman Maher informed the members that the painting of Town Hall has wrapped up until next spring and the east side work to be done needs to be buttoned up. Selectman Maher stated that the Town is in receipt of a quote for the heating/air units and that the contractor could start the chimney removal over the coming months. Actual construction is anticipated to begin in the spring.

Selectman Maher commended Building Inspector, Russ Bookholz, on his negotiations with the contractors to tighten up the contracts and the work to be done.

Selectman McGuckin and Selectman Maher both spoke in favor of the proposals.

Tom Smith, Treasurer, asked if any potential unknowns discovered once the walls are opened would be included in this number.

Chairman Stewart stated that a change order would need to be generated for time and materials not included in the fixed price. If anything extremely extensive were to be discovered, an additional contract may have to be considered.

Selectman Maher made a motion to approve both the bid and the work with Solstice Heating and Air and Nicely Done Contracting. Selectman McGuckin seconded. The motion carried unanimously, 3-0.

g. New Castle 10K Road Race

Selectman Maher stated that it is impossible at this time to predict how things will play out with Covid between now and April 21, 2021 and opined that the Board's guidance to Mr. Diana for the time being should be to plan for a virtual race.

Chairman Stewart agreed.

The Board asked the Administrative Assistant to contact Mr. Diana to relay their concerns and suggestion.

h. Water/Sewer Update

Chairman Stewart stated that the paving for the Water/Sewer project resumed today. A member of the construction crew had tested positive for Covid last week, and based on protocols, the team had to be tested before being allowed back to work. Paving should be completed by November 8th. Once paving is finished, striping will be performed at night.

Chairman Stewart further stated that the private road lending program as been opened and the town is waiting on applications.

Anne Miller, 410 Wentworth Road, asked if flow testing had been completed on the meters yet.

Chairman Stewart responded "not yet". Pricing was high, so they have been asked to submit a Revised Scope of Work. Testing should start to happen over the next few days provided the ESR is acceptable. Chairman Stewart stated that 31 Fire Hydrants are on the New Castle side and 5 test hydrants on the Portsmouth side will be tested.

Ms. Miller asked if it would make more sense to include the side streets as well in the testing.

Chairman Stewart responded that our engineer is seeking permission from Portsmouth to test more of theirs.

Ms. Miller stated that fire suppression is a town issue, not a Portsmouth issue.

Chairman Stewart agreed.

Ms. Miller asked what the rationale was for the Loops being contingent on private roads doing upgrades to the pipes and mandating that the private roads participating in the upgrade be mandated to turn over their pipes to either Portsmouth or New Castle.

Chairman Stewart responded that the rationale was the borrowed money would allow residents to upgrade the pipes and then get out of the "water business" and this would be viewed as a big win for the residents because they would no longer have to maintain the pipes. Private lines are problematic so Portsmouth, as well as New Castle, do not want a lot of private pipes tying into their (our) system. With regards to the upgrade of the Loops, we started to unearth a lot of issues tying private into public.

Ms. Miller opined that the private lines are already tied into public lines and that she feels Portsmouth has been a poor steward.

Chairman Stewart stated that Portsmouth would be responsible for repairs to the pipes if necessary and that they are making strides within the Town of New Castle. They are planning on replacing piping on Wild Rose Lane in the spring.

Ms. Miller asked if Wild Rose Lane would be funded out of the 3 million dollars already set aside for New Castle.

Chairman Stewart responded that it is his understanding that they are two separate pieces.

i. Special Town Meeting

Chairman Stewart stated that the Town will need to have a Special Town Meeting in January to address the new FEMA changes. The Planning Board will hold a public hearing on this matter in December. The chairman stated that the town had requested a waiver until the regular scheduled town meeting, but was denied. The 53B contract could be addressed at this meeting as well, along with possible building permit adaptations and application fee changes.

Selectman Maher asked if it would be permissible to hold this meeting via Zoom.

Chairman Stewart responded "no, they need to be live meetings".

5. Old Business

Selectman McGuckin offered confirmation of the hours the selectman would be covering the polls for the election.

Selectman McGuckin – 9am – 12:30pm

Selectman Maher 12:30pm – 4pm

Chairman Stewart 4pm – closing of the polls

Selectman McGuckin announced that the commemorative table and benches for Pamela Cullen are going to be installed Friday and the next step will be to plan an event for the presentation.

Selectman McGuckin also asked that the Board consider appointing someone as the point person for the town's upcoming 400th anniversary.

6. Committee Reports

Selectman McGuckin read the Fire Department report into the record.

Chairman Stewart read the Police Department report into the record.

7. Adjourn

Selectman McGuckin made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:15pm. Said motion was duly seconded by Selectman Maher and carried unanimously 3-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Smith
Recording Secretary