

## **MINUTES OF THE SELECT BOARD**

**Monday November 16, 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.

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.

### **1 Approve Select Board minutes of November 2, 2020**

Selectman Maher made a Motion to approve the amended minutes of the Select Board Meetings of November 2, 2020. Selectman McGuckin seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously, 3-0.

### **2 Public Questions and Answers.**

Selectman McGuckin commended the members of the Supervisors of the Checklist, the Town Clerk's Office staff, the Town Moderator and all the election volunteers for a well-run State Election and thanked them for their hard work.

Chairman Stewart agreed that all did an amazing job and Selectman Maher stated that he echoed Selectman McGuckin's comments and thanked everyone for their fantastic work.

Mary Ann Driscoll, 4 Cranfield St., gave a detailed report of her research into NHDES application requirements and asked that the Select Board consider reviewing what she considers loopholes between the Town's Land Use requirements and NHDES requirements.

Chairman Stewart thanked Ms. Driscoll for her presentation.

Selectman McGuckin suggested a presentation from Eben Lewis of NHDES to the Land Use boards might make certain everyone is on the same page.

Chairman Stewart said he would contact Mr. Lewis.

Jane Finn, 169 Portsmouth Ave., stated that there are currently chunks of pavement in her yard left behind from the water project paving and asked if there is an anticipated clean-up.

Chairman Stewart stated that there will be a clean-up of any debris and anyone having any problems specifically relative to the water project should contact him directly and he will pass the information on to the contractor.

Andy Schulte, 107 Main St., questioned why there is a  $\frac{3}{4}$ " level difference between the sides of the street.

Chairman Stewart stated that both the contractor and paving company wanted the paving to be level. NHDOT prevailed in their requirement that the pavement to be folded over and dictated the small ridge be left at the centerline.

Curt Springer, 98 Cranfield St., opined that the depth difference presents a pedestrian hazard. He stated that he recently fell because of the ridge in the road and severely sprained his shoulder.

### **3 New Business.**

#### **a. Covid Update**

Selectman Maher stated that on November 2<sup>nd</sup> there were 1407 positive cases of Covid in New Hampshire, with 41 hospitalizations. As of today's date (November 16, 2020), there are 3344 positive cases, 74 hospitalizations and active cases are starting to increase in the seacoast towns in New Hampshire. He stated that the trend is obviously going in the wrong direction for the state and the surrounding communities. He advised vigilance and a continued commitment to mask wearing, handwashing and social distancing.

Selectman Maher introduced Dr. Kathy Hollister, as the Town's new Deputy Health Officer. Dr. Hollister gave a brief presentation informing the board that there are currently two vaccines in the pipeline. The first currently needs to be stored at minus 70 degrees, the second is much easier to store. Both will require 2 doses and the safety data on both is great.

Dr. Hollister commended the elementary school on its phenomenal job of remaining Covid free. Dr. Hollister also offered a friendly reminder for people to continue to be vigilant with wearing multi layered cloth masks, adhere to a 6' social distance, wash hands for 20 seconds and avoid crowds. Dr. Hollister closed with an additional reminder of how important it still is to get the flu shot this year.

Selectman McGuckin stated that it is noteworthy that Dr. Hollister has entrenched herself in the elementary school to help ensure that cases remain at zero and thanked the doctor for her commendable support.

#### **b. Seacoast Regional Disposal District 53B**

Chairman Stewart stated that during his research with regards to the town rejoining 53B it was discovered that the trash transfer fees to the Turnkey landfill site make a wash of any savings received from the district's tipping fees. Chairman Stewart suggested the town remain with its current contractor, Casella.

Selectman Maher made a motion to approve the 4-year proposed contract with Casella as revised.

Selectman McGuckin seconded said motion and it carried unanimously 3-0.

#### **c. Approval of Health Trust 2021 calendar year contract**

Chairman Stewart stated the Select Board will review the costs as presented and make a determination of the best plan to sign off on.

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

Selectman Maher stated that deposits have been made to the contractors and that the work on Town Hall will begin shortly, most likely starting with the chimney.

**e. New Castle 10K Road Race**

Nick Diana, promoter of the New Castle 10K Road Race, appeared before the board to request they approve a fall date for his proposed race. Mr. Diana further stated that he is aware there is a traditional fall race scheduled for October in New Castle and he understands the need to space out any races, as well as not interfere with weddings or other summer events.

Chairman Stewart asked Mr. Diana if he would be willing to contact the organizer of the other race, Guy Sterns, to discuss the possible implications or conflicts of two fall races and possibly mutually agree on an acceptable date for the 5K.

Mr. Diana agreed and will return to the board if a date is agreed upon.

**f. Appointment to the Planning Board – Alternate – Iain Moodie**

Selectman McGuckin made a motion to approve the appointment of Iain Moodie as an alternate member to the Planning Board.

Selectman Maher seconded and said motion carried unanimously 3-0.

**g. Water/Sewer update**

Chairman Stewart reported that on November 17<sup>th</sup> he will be walking the length of the water project and putting together a punch list of items that may need to be addressed. He stated that the water connection from the main to the bridge is basically finished, that flow tests and hydrate testing were performed today and the town should have a data report from the engineer within a week or so. Winterizing of the fire hydrants is expected to be completed this week.

Chairman Stewart further stated that the town is moving forward with the Neighborhood Water Improvement Program, and while there is some interest in the program, the town has not yet received any formal letters.

**h. 2020 Tax Rate**

Chairman Stewart reported that the town has received a tax rate from the Department of Revenue Administration (DRA). Chairman Stewart advised the select board approve a tax rate of \$6.30, which is a 1.8% increase from last year's tax rate. This would leave \$538,598 remaining in the surplus account, or 9.86% of the Town's overall budget, which is well within the suggested range of retainage.

Selectman Maher made a motion to set the Town of New Castle's 2020 Tax Rate at \$6.30.  
Selectman McGuckin seconded and said motion carried unanimously 3-0.

**4 Old Business**

Selectman Maher informed the board that Rodney Rowland, Chair of the Historical District Commission, has advised him that he will be submitting a name for alternate appointment to the board in the near future.

**5 Committee Reports**

**6 Adjourn**

Selectman McGuckin made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:02pm. Said motion was duly seconded by Selectman Maher and carried unanimously 3-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Smith  
Recording Secretary