

MINUTES OF THE SELECT BOARD

Monday December 7, 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.

Public Participants via Zoom: Tom Smith-Town Treasurer, Normand Houle-Chairman of the Water & Sewer commission, Dr. Kathleen Hollister, Deputy Health Agent, Damon Frampton- Former Selectman, Irwin Blau, Jane Finn-Library Trustee, Ruth Zikaras, Christiane McAllister, Town Accountant, Mary Ann Driscoll, Andrew Schulte, Curt Springer, and Priscilla Hodgkin, Town Clerk/Tax Collector.

Chairman Stewart opened the public session meeting at 7:03PM. 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 16, 2020

Selectman Maher made a Motion to approve the amended minutes of the Select Board Meetings of November 16, 2020. Selectman McGuckin seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously, 3-0.

2. Public Questions and Answers.

Irwin Blau, 163 Little Harbor Road, questioned if the Select Board had any thoughts about opening the Rec Building to indoor tennis.

Chairman Stewart responded that the building is still closed to indoor activities due to Covid restrictions and that the board does not currently have an estimated time for reopening.

Selectman McGuckin opined that it would be at least a month or longer due to the pandemic and that the elementary school has elected to put off using the building for gym for a minimum of 30 days.

Mr. Blau asked how the public would be notified once the Select Board chooses to re-open the building to activities.

Selectmen McGuckin responded that the board would post the reopening on their agenda and the Town's website.

3. New Business.

a. Public Hearing – Acceptance of the final GOFERR Funds reimbursement - \$13,500.34

Selectman Maher offered a motion to accept the final reimbursement of the GOFERR Funds in the amount of \$13,500.34.

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

b. Acceptance of Primary Election Cares Act Grant Funds - \$1,501.74

Chairman Stewart requested the board take the acceptance of the Cares Act funds out of order on the agenda

Selectman Maher and Selectman McGuckin agreed to do so.

Selectman Maher offered a motion to accept the Primary Election Cares Act Grant funds of \$1,501.74.

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

c. Water & Sewer Commission Transfer of Funds

Normand Houle, Chairman of the Water & Sewer Commission, gave a brief description of the current state of the sewer line located at the Sawtelle Bridge. The sewer line was installed circa 1975 and roughly 25% of the hoops which anchor the line to the bridge need to be replaced. While the Water & Sewer Commission cannot move forward without DOT's final approval, he stated that the Commission has asked Evroks, a construction firm familiar with the bridge, to present a bid proposal for the work that needs to be done. Chairman Houle further stated that he is optimistic that DOT will agree to the necessary construction and asked the BOS approve the use of the BOS controlled Sewer Capital Reserve funds for the anticipated cost of the project.

Selectman McGuckin offered a motion to approve the transfer of up to the amount of the balance in the BOS controlled Sewer Capital Reserve to the Water and Sewer Commission for the purpose of funding the hoop replacement project.

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

d. Tax Warrant

Chairman Stewart read the approved Tax Warrant into the record.

Tom Smith, Town Treasurer, offered a clarification of RSA 41:29 which requires daily deposits of collected monies totaling more than \$1,500. Mr. Smith stated section RSA 41:29 VII stipulates that the Treasurer does not have to make daily bank deposits of funds over \$1,500 if the town does not have a financial institution within its limits.

Damon Frampton, 10 Neal's Lane, what formula was used to create the .11 cent increase in the tax rate.

Chairman Stewart it was part of the whole budget process, taking the current year's budget and expenditures and using those numbers to anticipate a tax rate that will carry the town through to June of next year.

Mr. Frampton questioned whether the BOS was satisfied with the remaining reserve balance.

Chairman Stewart responded, "yes, the reserve is in the amount range suggested by the state".

e. Avitar Mapping Services Agreement

Selectman Maher offered a motion to accept the proposed Avitar Mapping Services Agreement.

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

f. Town Projects Update

Selectman Maher stated that the exterior work on Town Hall began earlier today and that work on the chimney will begin later this week. The takeaway from the initial assessment is that building is in decent shape. There are a few problem areas, but they are small.

Selectman McGuckin made an announcement that the Building Inspector would be out of the office for 7 to 10 days as a precaution due to a family member's possible exposure to Covid-19, but he will continue to work remotely.

g. New Castle 10K Road Race

Selectman Maher stated that the BOS had settled on September 11, 2021 as an acceptable date for the proposed New Castle 10K Road Race and he is currently waiting on a response/confirmation from Nick Diana.

h. Appointments – Library Trustees and HDC alternates

Ruth Zikaras, 81 Piscataqua St., thanked the BOS for considering her appointment to the Historic District Commission and stated she is looking forward to dedicating her time to working them.

Jane Finn, Library Trustee, spoke in favor of the BOS appointing Glica Kaplan to the Library Trustees as an alternate stating Ms. Kaplan has extensive experience with non-profits and the Portsmouth Library.

Selectman Maher offered a motion to accept the appointments of Ruth Zikaras as an alternate member to the HDC and Glica Kaplan as an alternate member to the Library Trustees.

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

i. Covid Update

Selectman Maher gave a brief Covid update stating that 3 weeks ago on November 16, 2020 there were 3306 active cases of Covid-19 and 69 hospitalizations in the New Hampshire and today there are 5386 active cases and 185 hospitalizations. He further stated that while the numbers are still increasing in Dover and Hampton, the numbers appear to be trending down in Durham and holding steady in Portsmouth.

Dr. Kathleen Hollister, Deputy Health Agent, stated that cases appear to be going up after Thanksgiving, but the vaccine is due to be released December 10, 2020, with New Hampshire looking to start inoculations the 3rd or 4th week of December. It is anticipated that this coming Friday it will be announced where the doses will go, with some states prioritizing long term facilities as recipients. Dr. Hollister reminded people that the CDC continues to recommend wearing masks, washing hands for 20 seconds and 6 ft. social distancing. Dr. Hollister listed the updated CDC guidelines for quarantining as at least 10 days if you have been exposed but are non-symptomatic and if you leave New England you must quarantine for 7 days without a negative PCR test.

4. Old Business

No old business was discussed

5. Committee Reports

No committee reports were submitted for review.

6. Adjourn

Selectman Maher offered a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:53pm.

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

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Smith
Recording Secretary