

MINUTES OF THE SELECT BOARD

Tuesday February 16, 2021, 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: Maryann Driscoll, Thomas Smith-Town Treasurer and Curt Springer.

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 January 20, 2021 and February 1, 2021

Selectman Maher made a motion to table the approval of the minutes of the Select Board Meetings of January 20, 2021 and February 1, 2021. Selectman McGuckin seconded and the motion carried unanimously, 3-0.

Thomas Smith, Town Treasurer, asked if the draft minutes are available for review.

Chairman Stewart replied that they are available upon request but are not posted on line.

2. Public Questions and Answers.

Curt Springer, 98 Cranfield St., commended the Budget Committee on their posting of information to the Town Website. Mr. Springer also asked if the Select Board could invite members of the New Castle state delegation to hold a session in town to have some feedback with regards to the Governor's proposed budget and tax cuts.

Chairman Stewart stated that he will send an email to the representatives to see if something can be arranged.

3. New Business.

a. Mosquito Control

Selectman McGuckin gave a brief description of the revised mosquito control proposal submitted by Municipal Pest Management Services.

Selectman McGuckin offered a motion to approve the revised proposal submitted by Municipal Pest Management Services, the current vendor for the town, and retain their services for this coming season.

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

b. Safe Path

Selectman Maher stated that the Safe Path Committee has engaged Ironwood, who works closely with CMA and Ryan Landscape, to help the committee achieve some design work to create a visual for people to understand some concepts and options that could be available to us through Safe Path. Selectman Maher stated the Safe Path committee has raised substantial private funds and would like to expend some of the money on engaging Ironwood to create a more fully designed vision of what the options are. Selectman Maher further stated that the Select Board is the governing body to expend those funds and Mary Ann Driscoll, on behalf of the committee, is here to ask for the authorization to do so. Selectman Maher closed by stating no tax dollars will be spent on this contract.

Mary Ann Driscoll stated that this will be part of Phase 2 to connect Wildrose to the TAP grant, that Ironwood has provided a “not to exceed” bid and the committee has the funds for it. Ms. Driscoll further stated that Ironwood will also provide promotional material and this will be a great fundraising tool for the project.

Selectman McGuckin asked if the private funding could be used to accelerate the project between Beach Hill Road and Pit Lane.

Ms. Driscoll responded that the monies for that area are already funded by the Tap grant and the funds have been allocated. The project is well underway.

Selectman Maher stated that the two projects are completely separate and the TAP section is in coordination with NHDOT, which the Town does administer. CMA is going to do the work.

Chairman Stewart stated that the Select Board can make a motion on the concept of the contract and have council look at it. Chairman Stewart also spoke in favor of the project and agreed with the proposal.

Selectman Maher offered a motion to approve the expenditure from the Safe Path funds to engage Ironwood to provide conceptual design for the stretch located between Rogers Boulevard and Beach Hill Road.

Selectman McGuckin seconded and the motion carried unanimously, 3-0.

At this point in the meeting, Chairman Stewart took a moment to announce that he had spoken with Ebin Lewis of DES and a Zoom meeting with Mr. Lewis and residents has been scheduled for March 24, 2021 at 6pm. The meeting is to address resident concerns with DES wetland applications and conservation questions.

c. Coalition Communities 2.0

Selectman McGuckin stated that currently at the state level there is the possibility of 2 or 3 bills being proposed to bring back the return of SWEPT funds. The Coalition Communities are reforming and the Select Board has received a request by the organizing group to vote to approve the following language as a motion.

Selectman McGuckin offered the motion to authorization the Town of New Castle to participate in the newly formed Coalition Communities 2.0 and to authorize the Select Board to execute a Memorandum of Understanding with the Coalition Communities 2.0 on behalf of the Town and to further authorize, until rescinded, Selectman David McGuckin to represent the Town regarding all matters related to membership in the Coalition Communities 2.0.

Selectman Maher seconded and the motion carried unanimously, 3-0.

Chairman Stewart stated that it should also be noted that the town will need to carry some money as part of this to fund communication with the legislature on some of these bills.

d. Neighborhood Water Improvement Program Update

Chairman Stewart stated that Beach Hill Road residents have determined that their water pipe is relatively young and of effective size, so they will not be participating in this current Neighborhood Water Program. Spring Hill Road and Lavenger's Lane are still involved and representatives of each road participated in a meeting with Portsmouth's Assistant City Attorney and the city's deputy in charge of the water system. The meeting resulted in a request from the Asst. City Attorney that the Select Board issue a letter to the City of Portsmouth explaining the project, what New Castle is looking for and why it is in the best interest of the residents to transfer the pipe to Portsmouth once it is upgraded. The Portsmouth representatives would then authorize acceptance to the City Manager assuming construction is done in accordance with the City's specifications.

Additionally, Spring Hill Road/Lavenger's Lane residents have indicated they would like to pay for the engineering costs, as well as the construction, through their betterment fees. Chairman Stewart he has started discussions with the roads' attorney from Tucker and Donohue, Eric Mayer, in an effort to draft what the betterment agreement might look like. Chairman Stewart further stated he hopes to have more to report at the Select Board's next meeting.

e. Town Projects Updates

Selectman Maher stated that the windows are installed and the trim is in. The siding has been started but may be delayed a week or two due to possible Covid exposure for the contractor.

f. Covid Update

Selectman Maher reported that Covid cases continue to trend downward in New Hampshire with 2953 current cases and 125 hospitalizations. Selectman Maher added that according to Dr. Kathy Hollister's Friday update, the state is currently getting more vaccines and will be starting to vaccinate people at pharmacies such as Walgreens and appointment availability is improving.

Selectman Maher cautioned that sites asking for social security numbers or mandated insurance information are red flags for fraud.

4. Old Business

No old business was discussed

5. Committee Reports

6. Adjourn

Selectman Maher offered a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:39 pm.

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

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Smith
Recording Secretary