

MINUTES OF THE NEW CASTLE SELECT BOARD
Tuesday, September 7th, 2021 – 7:00 p.m. (Recreation Building)

Members Present: Thomas Maher, Chair, Dave McGuckin, William Stewart.

Members Absent: None.

Others Present: Jane Finn, Ken McDonald, Chris Robillard, Tom Smith.

Chair Maher called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

1. Approve Select Board minutes of August 16, 2021 meeting.

Selectman McGuckin made a motion to approve the August 16, 2021 minutes as amended. Chair Maher seconded. Motion carried unanimously by a vote of 3-0.

2. Public Questions and Answers.

Jane Finn mentioned a new device called Owl Meeting Pro that allows for remote meetings. It is a camera/microphone and costs approximately \$1,000. She would like the Select Board to look into purchasing this device. Chair Maher stated that Town meetings must take place in a physical location based on the Governor's rules, but the Select Board will look further into the device.

Tom Smith expressed his frustration with being unable to participate in meetings held in the Recreation building because of the poor acoustics. He has a handicap which makes it very difficult to hear people speaking in the large room. Mr. Smith would like to be able to participate in meetings as an elected official. Selectman McGuckin explained that the last Select Board meeting was held in the Recreation room downstairs because large attendance was expected, but the Board would look into moving future meetings to the Macomber Room upstairs. Chair Maher stated that the Board will do everything in its power to accommodate everyone. Covid-19 has been a challenging time for everyone, and it is difficult to predict the size of the crowd at any particular Select Board meeting. Since the Macomber Room is smaller, it is not an ideal space given the rising number of Covid cases.

3. New Business:

- a. Acceptance of Safe Path Donations.

There have been eight (8) new donations to the Safe Path Fund since the last Select Board meeting. The new donations total to \$5,500 and are as follows: \$1,000 from Nancy Jackson and David Myers; \$400 from Laurie and Clarke Chandler; \$100 from Elaine Nollet; \$500 from David and Nancy McArdle; \$1,000 from Jay and Mary-Pat Gibson; \$1,000 from Alan and Sharon Weston; \$1,000 from John and Diana Appleton; and \$500 from John and Kate

Fitzpatrick. Selectman McGuckin motioned to accept the eight (8) Safe Path donations as outlined above. Selectman Stewart seconded. Motion carried unanimously, 3-0.

b. Acceptance and Award of Bid for F550 Vehicle.

Chris Robillard, Public Works Director, reviewed the three bids for the old Town F550 truck, which has been out of commission for some time and is too expensive to repair. The bids received were as follows: \$5,501 from Andrew Croteau in New Durham, NH; \$9,825 from Asian Auto Services in Plaistow, NH; and \$15,250 from James Jones of Jones Snowplowing Service in North Hampton, NH. Selectman Stewart motioned to accept the highest bid of James Jones of North Hampton, NH. Selectman McGuckin seconded. Motion carried unanimously, 3-0.

c. Covid Update.

Chair Maher stated that Covid-19 cases continue to rise in New Hampshire, though overall there is a much higher rate of vaccination in this area of the country, which has kept hospitalizations lower. The greatest challenge now will be getting school-aged children vaccinated. Dr. Kathy Hollister, New Castle Health Officer, could not be present at this meeting but previously stated that she was hopeful that by the end of this year or in early January 2022, there will be approval of the vaccination for children. The Town is still navigating handling business with the Governor not allowing towns to go completely virtual again. The Select Board is keeping an eye on things and remaining flexible.

d. Town Projects Update.

The Select Board interviewed four information technology (IT) firms last week, who will assist the Town in a range of services, primarily doing an assessment of what the Town currently has for network security, protocols, etc. The Board would like a professional to provide guidance in this area. The Board will choose one of the four firms in the next week or so. The IT firm will work with all Town departments to do a full assessment of cybersecurity and create protocols for staff. The goal is to make sure that what each department has fits their needs.

Chair Maher announced that Steve Tabbutt, longtime Department of Public Works director, has retired. Chris Robillard is now the lead DPW director with Aaron White assisting.

The Town has approved the project for 11 private aerial lights (PAL) that Ken McDonald is leading. Mr. McDonald is also looking into options for indoor lighting in Town buildings. He explained that Eversource has not had a lot of utilization of their energy rebate program, so they are offering a double rebate amount if the Town signs a contract by October 31. Affinity LED Lighting, based out of Dover, NH, would provide the Town a free estimate. The Town is currently in the research phase of this lighting project.

e. Neighborhood Water Improvement Program Update.

Selectman Stewart stated that Underwood Engineering is working through the process, and the Town has signed off on three shoreland permit applications that will go to the NHDES. The

Town has 30% drawings and is continuing to move forward. There is a meeting this evening with the Portsmouth City Council to request that authority be given to the Portsmouth City Manager to accept the water lines in the Neighborhood Water Improvement Program if they are built to Portsmouth's specification. The plans should be ready to bid by mid-September.

4. Old Business.

Chair Maher announced that Committee reports from the Fire and Police Departments will be incorporated into the minutes.

5. Adjourn.

Selectman McGuckin moved to adjourn the meeting. Selectman Stewart seconded. The motion carried, unanimously, and the meeting adjourned at 7:29 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Meghan Rumph
Recording Secretary