

MINUTES OF THE SELECT BOARD
Tuesday, January 21, 2020 – 3PM

Present: Damon Frampton, Chair, Tom Maher, Selectman, Bill Stewart, Selectman, and Bette Jane Riordan, Secretary.

Also present: Chief Ted Hartmann, Pam Cullen, Administrative Assistant to the Select Board, Christiane McAllister, Accountant, Theresa Walker, RCPC, Dave McGuckin, Tom Smith, Jim Cerny, John Ireland, Ann Miller, Ann and Mike McAndrew.

Chair Frampton opened the meeting at 7:00 PM.

1. **Approve Select Board minutes of December 16, 2019, and January 6, 2020. Minutes of December 16 tabled until next meeting February 3, 2020.**

Selectman Maher made a Motion to Approve the minutes of the Select Board meeting of January 6, 2020. Selectman Stewart seconded, and the Motion carried unanimously.

2. **Public Questions and Answers. None.**

3. **New Business.**

- a. **Theresa Walker on update to Town's Hazard Mitigation Plan.**

Theresa Walker of the Rockingham County Planning Commission (RCPC) began her presentation regarding the need for the Town to update its 5 year hazard mitigation plan, which is required by Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA). Her role is to facilitate the process to draft an update to the plan. She will engage Town department heads and walk them through the process. The Town's last plan is from 2014. The plan addresses three areas: natural hazards that New Castle has or is vulnerable to; what kind of protective measures for infrastructure are in place for those hazards; and what the Town will do to mitigate and prepare for these hazards. Since that time, FEMA has made changes to add the natural hazard categories of vulnerability and climate change. This process should take about 4 or 5 months. She will meet with department heads about 4 times. Once completed, she will submit the plan to NH Homeland Security, who reviews and sends back to Town for public hearing and a 30-day public comment period, then FEMA will review. After FEMA approves, the Town will sign a Certificate of Adoption. The grant funds go to NH Homeland Security, and are passed through to RCPC to do the work for the Town. While there is no cost for the plan update, there is a match requirement, which is usually derived from staff time. She noted there will be maps produced for this plan. They identify areas of the Town which are prone to flooding or other issues. This plan must be done in order to get any federal disaster relief funds. Selectman Maher

asked if this funding was just for natural disasters. Ms. Walker replied in the affirmative.

Selectman Stewart asked if this plan informs State DOT decisions and about the role of the State DOT giving its relationship with the Town. All access points to the Town and the major road connecting Town residents to resources and evacuation routes are dependent on state roads and DOT. How much of this helps with the State 10-year plan? This led to a discussion of our evacuation routes, etc. She stated she could work with the language to better reflect the town's emergency needs vis a vis the State.

Selectman Maher noted that in the last five years it has become apparent that it no longer takes a hurricane to cut the Town off. Lack of access to the Town has been and is becoming more frequent during King tides, wind-blown high tides and other related events emphasizing our vulnerability. If the road is shut down it impedes our ability to fight fires, respond to emergencies, evacuate and other things. Ms. Walker will be sure to include these factors in the updated plan.

Ms. Walker noted that in the beginning of this program, FEMA had money and the towns would come up with what was akin to a wish list of items. But that level of funding is no longer present. Now they want the towns to show how they have made themselves less vulnerable and more resilient. Now the emphasis is on public outreach and education. She noted that existing mitigations are listed in the report. Members of the public asked some questions about the current report being made available online on the Town's website. There was also discussion about inclusion of the causeway in the State's 10-year plan. Paving costs were included, but not the elevation. Selectman Stewart is not sure what projects will be included and the current the status of DOT's 10 year plan is. They are still in the process of developing and vetting it. There was a study group which included review of the causeway and other items, but he is unclear at this time the outcomes from that group. It was noted the causeway floods now, and needs to be addressed by the State. He noted that there are other studies that have been done by PREP and the new FEMA maps showing the town's vulnerabilities.

With respect to Ms. Walker meeting with the Department Heads, it was noted by Tom Smith, that four times per year, the Joint Loss Committee which consists of all department heads meets, and perhaps that would be a convenient her to connect with the Department Heads.

Chief Hartmann stated that his department has approached these issues from a different angle, and asked that prior to the Select Board signing a contract with RCPC, that he be allow some time to pull together his information for presentation to the Board. NCFD has already contracted with another vendor to do similar work. There was further discussion, resulting in the matter being tabled until the Board receives the information from the Fire Chief, and the Select Board can review the matter.

b. Accept \$100 donation from KPYC to Police Department-Christiane McAllister.

The Select Board acknowledged and accepted the donation from KPYC in the amount of \$100.00.

c. Town mileage policy.

Chair Frampton read the draft of a proposed new incidental mileage policy, which addresses reimbursement of employees who use their own vehicles to conduct Town business. Any use of a private car for Town business would need prior approval from a Department Head or the Select Board is required. The draft proposal is attached to the minutes. During discussion, issues arose concerning Fire Department employees versus volunteers, and "appointed" and "elected" officials, as well as how to handle review of who is eligible on a case by case basis. Selectman Stewart pointed out some of the pitfalls of the proposed language, and suggested that further vetting needs to happen prior to adoption of a new policy. Chair Frampton stated the Select Board will continue to work on this.

d. Appointment of Anne Miller to CIP.

The Select Board approved Ms. Miller to a 1-year term as a member of the CIP Committee. Selectman Stewart made the Motion to Approve, which was seconded by Selectman Maher. Motion carried unanimously. The Board thanked Anne for her willingness to serve.

e. Ken McDonald-Recap on status of assigned town projects. – Tabled until February 3, 2020.

f. Maude H. Trefethen Scholarship.

Selectman Stewart asked Dave McGuckin, who attends the School Board meetings and give general updates to the Board, if he had spoken with the Chair of the School Board to determine if it's the State DOJ or a government taxing authority is the entity that is saying the scholarship language regarding who can apply is too limiting if it restricts it specifically to New Castle residents? Or is it the NH Charitable Foundation who administers the fund? Selectman Stewart recalled that it had been the State or some government authority. Mr. McGuckin feels this may be a misnomer, as the State doesn't have anything to do with this. As far as he knows, it has always been the Charitable Foundation which is the driving entity. Selectman Maher feels it is fundamental to clear this up. (Information was requested from the School Board who indicated that it was the Federal Government through the IRS that requires the pool to be larger than the number of students New Castle alone provides). Selectman Stewart recalled that at Town Meeting, the discussion was that the intent of the charitable warrant was to use New Castle tax dollars toward a

student that came from New Castle. If we deviate from that it may not be in keeping with the intent of the residents. This needs to be clarified. Further discussion ensued, with Jim Cerny questioning why NHCF was involved. Selectman Maher pointed out that the scholarship was set up by Wayne Semprini and administered by the NHCF for New castle residents and that perhaps things have deviated from the initial purpose. Selectman Stewart noted that the Town has not funded the scholarship since the warrant article passed because of these outstanding questions and concerns. Selectman Stewart noted there is approximately \$40,000 in the scholarship fund with the NHCF and it is still being administered, with scholarships awarded, but the Town is not and has not been a contributor. All the funding thus far is from private donations.

After additional discussion, all three Selectmen agreed they are not ready to fund the scholarship at this time but will continue to review the issues and report back.

Pam Cullen asked that the Select Board to include a warrant for Town Meeting regarding a universal exemption for veterans, which would allow for \$500 tax exemption for any veteran who meets the criteria. Pam has the exact language which the Board will review.

g. Water Sewer update.

Selectman Stewart reviewed progress to date which includes principal completion of replacement of the check valves, meter pits, and hangars on the bridge. He noted the project included installation of new expansion joints in the existing water line, but this may not be necessary. The Town is waiting for more information from the structural engineer on the existing pipe. Regarding work on the looping portion of the project, he stated that they are getting ready for another outreach to the property owners so that survey work can be conducted on their properties. By not doing the expansion joints, the Town is expected realize approximately \$60,000 in cost savings which can be applied to other areas of the project such as the looping portion.

There was a brief discussion regarding the existing water line on the bridge and the decision to not replace it for this project. The principal reason is that DOT is scheduled to replace the bridge in 15-20 years. Thus is the current pipe life span exceeds this time line it makes sense to replace it when the bridge is replaced. It was also noted that the current bridge may not be able to handle the weight of the larger pipe.

The cost sharing agreement for Pierce Island and the Shapleigh meter it is still being worked on with Portsmouth. John Ireland asked if there had been any decision about laying the water and sewer pipes in the same trench. He feels its very important to get that decision from DES.

Tom Smith asked if the Select Board was considering the possibility of borrowing more money from the SRF to cover all of the looping, and therefore submitting a warrant for the upcoming Town Meeting in May. Chair Frampton noted that the Water and Sewer Commission asked this question at its recent meeting. Selectman Stewart indicated that the Board will be discussing this over the next month and that NHDES has indicated there are potential funds available under the current SRF program. If the Town does decide to apply for additional funds the Town would only have to apply to increase the loan so the application process would be abbreviated. The rate and term would remain the same. In order to do this, the Town would still conduct a public hearing and a warrant would be presented at Town meeting. It's not a guarantee that we would receive the funds, but applying is an option.

Anne Miller asked questions about the looping and funding. Selectman Stewart noted that some of the loops are very complicated with questionable cost benefits. Selectman Maher noted that fire flow was the main focus and concern, with water quality secondary. Some loops have more to do with one or the other. Perhaps we need to do a ranking system of the loops to determine benefits and costs. She hoped this analysis had already been done. Selectman Stewart indicated there have been discussions about modifications and trade offs with the loops that are still ongoing. John Ireland brought up a discussion of private roads funding, which is a separate pool of money, which property owners could borrow for upgrades to their system and pay back as a betterment fee.

Selectman Stewart clarified that "loops" are included in the main project. The \$500,000 is for "private roads", for upgrade of connections or pipe. Selectman Maher stated that the private road is separate from the main project.

4. Committee Reports.

Water Sewer:

Chair Frampton stated that the Commission has begun work on its budget. The Commissioners also asked to hear back from the Select Board on whether they will be applying for additional funding in order to complete the entire water project.

There being no further business to come before the Select Board, Selectman Maher made a Motion to Adjourn, which was seconded by Selectman Maher. Motion carried unanimously.

Meeting Adjourned at 8:20 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Bette Jane Riordan
Secretary