

Select Board Meeting
Monday January 6, 2020
Town Offices, Nowak Room
Final Minutes

1. Call Meeting to Order

Members present: Anne Surman, Kathy Corson, Julie Gilman, Molly Cowan, Niko Papakonstantis, and Russ Dean were present at this meeting. The meeting was called to order by Ms. Corson at 7 PM.

2. Public Comment

- a. There was no public comment at this meeting.

3. Proclamations/Recognitions

MOTION: Ms. Surman moved to rescind the one year MOU by the Town of Exeter and Seacoast Farms Products. Ms. Cowan seconded. Mr. Dean said that Mr. Kelly is going before the Zoning Board this month. Ms. Surman said she appreciated that he's now going through the process, but they should still rescind the MOU. Ms. Surman voted yay, and Ms. Cowan, Ms. Corson, Ms. Gilman, and Mr. Papakonstantis voted nay. The motion failed 1-4-0.

4. Approval of Minutes

- a. Regular Meeting: December 16, 2019

MOTION: Ms. Surman moved to approve the minutes of December 16, 2019 as submitted. Mr. Papakonstantis seconded. Ms. Gilman abstained and the motion passed 4-0-1.

5. Appointments

MOTION: Ms. Cowan moved to regretfully accept the resignation of Jennifer Bracket Piskovitz from the Sustainability Advisory Committee, with a term expiring 4/30/22. Mr. Papakonstantis seconded. All were in favor.

6. Discussion/Action Items

- a. Renay Allen Energy Committee - Offshore Wind Task Force Meeting

Renay Allen, a member of the Energy Committee, gave the Board a recap of the Offshore Wind Task Force Meeting Dec 12 at UNH.

- b. Sustainability Officer

Mr. Papakonstantis said the BRC decided not to include the cost of a Sustainability Officer in the budget recommendations, but it's an important initiative. He suggests naming Dave Sharples as the sustainability coordinator for now, and revisit the issue in the future. Ms. Corson said that Exeter has been awarded a UNH Fellowship grant of \$11,500 and a \$15,000 grant from Coastal Resiliency which Mr. Sharples will be overseeing. She would like to put a stipend for Mr. Sharples in the budget. Ms. Surman said that a sustainability position could be regionalized in the future. Having Mr. Sharples in this position now will make them more flexible later.

Terri Harmon of 6 Oak Street said that Article 31 related to a standalone Sustainability Officer. There are over 200 signatures on their petition on the creation of a Sustainability Office.

Herb Moyer of 51 Westside Drive said that sustainability would lend itself to regionalization, but asked the Board to keep in mind that the Officer position did get 61% of the vote. He asked Dave Sharples to involve community members in the fellowship process. He also asked if there's a rating system that shows communities' water quality statewide, as he has concerns about the quarterly reports. Mr. Dean said the reports were related to an issue that the town had with TTHM, which is now in compliance. They do produce an annual water quality report which will continue, and he thinks the other systems must as well. Mr. Moyer asked if the town is looking for sustainability resources for the 2021 budget. Ms. Corson said it's hard to know what will develop. She wants to see a "Master Plan" of Sustainability for Exeter, which is part of the Coastal Resiliency grant; the plan would tell them where they're going. Warrant Article says "The Sustainability Office will require up to \$40,000 in 2019," but they can't do that because it's not part of the budget. The cost was "to be recouped through sustainability initiatives, which has not been proven. It has to be shown that there will be a cost savings.

Christopher Zigmont of 22 Crestview, a member of the Sustainability Advisory Committee, applauded the effort of Dave Sharples to fill the gap temporarily. He also embraces the regional perspective. However, in the future, the town should attempt to fulfil the intent of the voters who put in the warrant article.

Nancy Belanger of 1 Mill Street, the Chair of the BRC General Government subcommittee, said the BRC took this very seriously, and did add \$500 extra for Planning for Sustainability. She personally voted for the warrant article but did not have the understanding that it necessarily included a new position.

Ms. Cowan said that they wouldn't be able to get someone with Mr. Sharples' qualifications for \$45,000. They also need to be thinking regionally. She encouraged the Sustainability Committee to keep going and continue pushing sustainability.

MOTION: Mr. Papakonstantis moved that the Board designate Dave Sharples as the Town of Exeter Sustainability Planner. Ms. Cowan seconded. All were in favor.

Mr. Sharples explained that he would like to have the fellow do a municipal emissions inventory done, and come up with targets and strategies to meet the targets. Ms. Corson said there's \$5,295.48 in a Capital Reserve Fund established in 2009.

MOTION: Mr. Papakonstantis moved that the Board authorize \$5,000 from the Renewable Energy Capital Reserve Fund for the purpose of funding the town's match for the 2020 UNH SI Sustainability Fellowship program. Ms. Gilman seconded. All were in favor.

c. Facilities Committee Review and Recommendation - Parks and Recreation Expansion/Renovation.

Mark Leighton of the Facilities Committee said the committee reviewed the design for the Parks and Rec expansion, and spoke with Greg Bisson and Melissa Roy of Parks and Rec. The Facilities Committee's unanimous recommendation was to not move the Rec Park expansion to a warrant article until the following items can be

completed: 1) The Select Board conducts a debt service analysis to determine the affordability of all projects in the next ten year period and 2) Completion of a comprehensive Facilities Master Plan with which they can assess and prioritize all future projects.

Ms. Corson asked how their recommendation differed from the existing Master Plan. Mr. Leighton said it would be a detailed description of how facilities will be used to support the Master Plan. If the town strategically decided that the Rec Center was a project that it needed, they would look at that. Other needs are coming, and if this project goes to the voters it could endanger future projects. Ms. Cowan said that in the town's Master Plan, there was a specific need for updating the Parks and Rec facilities.

Peter Lennon of the Facilities Committee said that they viewed the overall Master Plan as unconnected to fiscal constraints. The Facilities Committee tried to bring in fiscal constraints and other considerations. They want to look at how this project stacks up against other needs, which may not yet be in the CIP but which the town will have to address in the near future.

Ms. Cowan said the Select Board is very budget-conscious. They missed where the library would fit into a Facilities Master Plan, although she's glad the town passed the library project. She is worried that they don't have a Rec facility that is inclusive. Mr. Leighton said they are only asking to pause to answer the questions and to look at the costs of this project. Ms. Cowan said she wants to hear from the voters on this project. Ms. Corson said there are several other known projects coming in the next few years, and this project is \$1.4 million for 20 years starting in 2022. The cost has gone from \$7.1 million to \$12.7 million since the last proposal. The Facilities Committee is looking at this from a different perspective

Ms. Surman said she's opposed to this being on the warrant this year. Debt service is coming up and the Public Safety Study results are not yet in. They have to prioritize and look at how much the taxpayers can afford. It's the Select Board's job to put on responsible warrant articles.

Mr. Papakonstantis said that he's the Select Board rep to the Facilities committee and he appreciates the work that they do, but he also supports putting this project on the warrant. This Rec Park project would accomplish at least four priorities of the Master Plan. The scope of the project expanded because it's more aligned with what's needed and with the Master Plan. Voters can tell them what they can afford. He's looking at value, not price. The bond will eventually be paid off, and there will be long term value to the community. This piece of land can only be used for parks and recreation. They can relocate to this property and free up the property on Court Street which could be used for a Town Office or be sold.

Mr. Leighton said they did not intend to pause the project at this point in the budget cycle and they hope to be part of the discussion earlier in future projects. Mr. Dean said this project came out of the warrant article passed last March. The cost of this project could go even higher in the future. This parcel can only be used for this purpose and there's no other similar parcel in town. At some point they will need to complete the projects they've put money into studies on.

Mr. Lennon said the composition of this project was not settled until late this year, and the debt service analysis and Facilities Master Plan can help them decide their priorities for the 2021 budget. The Rec Department hasn't looked at other lower-cost alternatives that would be an improvement to the current offering.

Ms. Cowan said the Rec Advisory Board considered a lot of alternatives, as well as phasing this project, but found they weren't cost effective. She said that the project will include naming rights and other cost offsets that won't be settled until the project goes forward. Mr. Lennon said that the track record of Rec getting those offsets is inconsistent. He also believes that the project cost could be approached in a different way, for example by asking a firm to design the best facility possible for a fixed amount like \$8 million.

Brinn Sullivan of 44 Hampton Road, a member of the Rec Advisory Board, asked if the Facilities Master Plan would be another chapter of the Master Plan, and if so the town would have to vote on it again and delay projects further. She also asked whether the Facilities Committee had taken public input on this decision. She said that the Rec Board wants the Select Board to put this on the ballot and let the voters decide.

John Sinka of 61 Acadia Lane, an abutter of the Rec Park, said that abutters were not given input or time to voice concerns about the project. There was a meeting January 2nd, but things were already set in stone. This project will upset or even destroy two neighborhoods. He doesn't see an issue with waiting to address the concerns of abutters and the Facilities Committee.

Cathy Stikney of 8 Wayside Drive, an abutter, said she recommended waiting and taking a stronger look at the impact on the neighborhood.

Allan Pelletier of 19 Fuller Lane, an abutter, said that 15 years ago, they didn't want to have the soccer fields put in. The neighborhood is now a parking lot. The town disrupted their lives with these fields. This is not the right place for this project.

Jennifer Clark of Acadia Lane, an abutter, said she is concerned about the traffic, crowding, lights, two way street, erosion, wetlands, loss of trees, weed spraying, and their view. Ms. Gilman said the weed spray is organic.

Nancy Belanger of 1 Mill Street said these facilities have been static since 1978. This project has been delayed since 2014. Parks and Rec were asked to go back to the drawing board and they've done that. It's well beyond time to get this in front of the voters. This facility could also be a potential future voting place.

Ms. Corson said they will have a public hearing on the budget January 21st, when they will decide whether this project will go on the warrant or not.

Mr. Papakonstantis said he will personally work with the Rec Department to address the abutters' concerns if this project goes forward. Ms. Corson said they haven't been taken into consideration thus far so it can't go forward without changing the cost of the project.

Ms. Surman said after what she's heard tonight, she's definitely not in favor of this project going forward to the warrant. Ms. Corson said it will take 60% to get this past, so it would be in everyone's best interest to get full consensus. Currently, she would not support this. The library was asked to go back and redesign and came back with less.

d. FY20 Bonds Budget & Warrant Articles

Mr. Dean said the current budget for the General Fund is \$19,612,683, a decrease from \$19,666,000, due to changes in benefits and a different approach to Police prosecution. This is under the 3% YOY increase, at 2.8% over the last Operating Budget article. He added that in the Water Budget, they did get the TTHM loan, at \$1.12 million with 20% debt forgiveness.

Mr. Papakonstantis said they previously allocated \$500 to Sustainability in the Planning Budget in line item 55200, Planning Supplies, but they needed the full \$2,500 of that line for a grant match, so he would like to increase it by \$2,500. He would also like to add a \$5,000 stipend for the Sustainability Coordinator position. Mr. Dean said they would make the changes for the version of the budget presented at the public hearing.

Ms. Surman would like to increase the Veterinary Services line item 55321 in the Police budget by \$1,400, for a total of \$2,150 in that line, to support the NHSPCA.

Ms. Corson said she would like to look at the MyCivic App budget of \$6,000. Andy Swanson, the IT Director, said that 65% of all internet traffic is on phones. In the future, websites will have to adapt. While they may not be getting \$6,000 of use yet, this is the direction they should go. Hope Godino, the director of the Exeter Public Library, said her patrons are using it. Jennifer Perry said they get 2 - 5 work order requests from the app each week. Mr. Dean said if they take the app away, there would be a negative response.

Ms. Corson said she'd like to hear more about the GPS tracking software. Mr. Dean said they have it installed in a number of vehicles, mostly in the Public Works Department. It gives data on the location and usage of the vehicles, at a cost of \$4,250 a year. Ms. Corson asked how they are using the data. Mr. Dean said they look at it periodically but haven't done a full analysis yet. They have it for insurance purposes and tracking service hours for the vehicle replacement program. He will provide the Board with a further report on its usage.

Ms. Corson said there is \$25,000 for the DPW garage in the budget, but they just spent \$75,000 on a Public Safety Study, which she has heard will say the Public Safety building is in poor shape. She would like to put the \$25,000 in the Police and Fire budget for further study. Mr. Papakonstantis said he would like to see the actual study before making changes. Mr. Dean said they're verifying the data for the Police study and have not yet received the Fire/EMS results. Ms. Gilman said they know that the DPW garage is at the end of its life and has snow load issues. Bob Kelly of the Budget Recommendations Committee said the Public Works garage is in the CIP, while the Public Safety Complex is not. The DPW requested \$100,000 but the BRC recommended \$25,000 to allow initial designs and cost estimates. He recommended not cutting that. Ms. Corson said she would not challenge that allocation further.

Ms. Chester said that the new budget number is \$19,622,523. Mr. Dean said this is 2.6% over last year's adjusted budget and 2.91% over last year's original operating number.

7. Regular Business

a. Tax Abatements, Veterans Credits and Exemptions

MOTION: Mr. Papakonstantis moved to approve a Veterans Credit for 88/1/8 for \$500 and \$2,000. Ms. Surman seconded. All were in favor.

MOTION: Mr. Papakonstantis moved to approve a prorated abatement for 63/150 for \$2,513. Ms. Surman seconded. All were in favor.

Ms. Corson said she had concerns about the Intent to Cut and the parcel's proximity to wetlands. Mr. Dean said if it would violate wetlands laws, the requester would have to deal with DES. If the Board approves the Intent to Cut, they can have the state review it.

MOTION: Mr. Papakonstantis moved to approve an Intent to Cut for 107/8. Ms. Gilman seconded. All were in favor.

b. Permits & Approvals

- i. Mr. Dean said the Rec Park Building Project is looking for an approval of \$6,400 for Design Services for work that has already been completed.

This would come out of the \$250,000 appropriation already made.

MOTION: Mr. Papakonstantis moved to authorize the amendment of \$6,400 for design services related to the Recreation Park building design pursuant to Article 7 of the 2019 Town Meeting. Ms. Surman seconded. All were in favor.

- ii. Disbursement of the Town for the Swasey Parkway Maintenance Fund. Ms. Surman said this should have been done by the Swasey Parkway Trustees. Mr. Dean said they spend funds on maintenance and reimburse the General Fund from that account. It's possible that both the Board and the Trustees will need to make a motion on it.

MOTION: Mr. Papakonstantis moved to process a disbursement of \$25,914.78 payable to the Town of Exeter from the Swasey Parkway Maintenance Fund subaccount #111. The amount is to reimburse the town for maintenance expenses paid by the town on behalf of Swasey Parkway in 2019 in excess of the budget. Ms. Cowan seconded. Ms. Surman abstained and the motion passed 4-0-1.

- iii. Snow and Ice Budget, up to \$100,000 from the Snow and Ice Deficit Capital Reserve Fund.

MOTION: Mr. Papakonstantis moved to approve the withdrawal of up to \$100,000 from the Snow and Ice Deficit Capital Reserve Fund to offset the FY19 Snow and Ice Fund deficit. Ms. Surman seconded. All were in favor.

c. Town Manager's Report

- i. Mr. Dean said he would waive his report.

d. Select Board Committee Reports

- i. Ms. Gilman said that at the State level, all of the vetoed bills are coming back, and two have to do with recycling and plastic shopping bags.

- ii. Mr. Papakonstantis said the Planning Board had a meeting Dec 19th where they heard two cases. The first, for Auto Holdings Realty Trust to install a parking lot, was approved with conditions. They also accepted the application of the Harbor Street Limited Partnership, for five single family lots off Brentwood and Spruce Street; they did a sitewalk for that project, with abutters present. There will be a public hearing on new Zoning Amendments at the next Planning Board meeting of January 9th.
- iii. Ms. Cowan attended the Parks and Rec abutters' meeting, which had a great discussion. They heard abutters both in favor and against the Rec Park project. She has two Housing Advisory Committee meetings this week.
- iv. Ms. Surman had no report; E911 meets tomorrow.
- e. Correspondence
 - i. A notice of the IRS mileage rate change to 58 cents.
 - ii. An Alteration of Terrain Permit application for Parks and Rec.
 - iii. A letter from Big Brother Big Sister thanking the town for their grant.
 - iv. A report from the State of NH Dept of Transportation on recommended bridge postings for weight and height restrictions, which recommends no posting for the Court Street Bridge over Little River.
 - v. Letters from residents of 277 Water Street in strong support of improving the Recreation Park. Ms. Corson said they will be read aloud at the next meeting.
 - vi. A notice that there were no public Combined Sewer Overflows in this quarter, but there was one private CSO.
- 8. Review Board Calendar
 - a. The next meetings are January 21st, February 3, and February 17th; February 11th is the Primary. There are also meetings March 2nd and 16th. March 10th is the Town Election.

9. Non-Public Session

- a. There was no non-public session at this meeting.

10. Adjournment

MOTION: Mr. Papakonstantis moved to adjourn. Ms. Surman seconded. All were in favor and the meeting adjourned at 10:10 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Joanna Bartell
Recording Secretary