

Select Board Meeting
Monday April 11, 2022
6:50 PM
Nowak Room, Town Offices
Final Minutes

1. Call Meeting to Order

Members present: Julie Gilman, Lovey Roundtree Oliff, Niko Papakonstantis, and Nancy Belanger were present in the room. Molly Cowan was present remotely via Zoom; she stated that she was not alone in the room, because she was on a train, but that the other passengers can only hear her and not the meeting. She affirmed that her absence was unavoidable. Town Manager Russ Dean was also present at this meeting. The meeting was called to order by Mr. Papakonstantis at 6:50 PM.

The Board went downstairs for an interview.

2. Board Interviews

- a. Andrew Elliott for the Budget Recommendations Committee

The Board reconvened in the Nowak Room at 7 PM.

3. Public Comment

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

4. Proclamations/Recognitions

- a. There were no proclamations/recognitions.

5. Approval of Minutes

- a. Regular Meeting: March 28, 2022

MOTION: Ms. Belanger moved to approve the minutes of March 28, 2022 as presented. Ms. Gilman seconded. In a roll call vote, the motion passed 5-0.

6. Appointments

- a. There were no appointments made at this meeting.

7. Discussion/Action Items

- a. RPC Housing Needs Survey - Sarah Tatarczuk

Sarah Tatarczuk gave a presentation on the RPC Housing Needs Assessment, which is for the 26 communities within Rockingham County. Ultimately it will be a tool for these communities to use when addressing housing challenges in the future. The assessment includes surveys of the public, employers, municipal employees, planners, developers, local business owners, real estate agents, and housing advocates. What challenges, barriers, and

successes are people facing who live here, work here, or want to live here? What is the perception of housing need in the community?

The Exeter Housing Advisory Committee is looking at updating their report on housing, and there's a lot of overlap with these data metrics. We will create a housing needs projection, looking at how many units are needed in our region and where those can be constructed. We will build an interactive useful model for communities to use.

Ms. Belanger said she's been on the Housing Advisory Committee since 2015, and this will be an important part of the work to update their materials. In 2021 the committee interviewed local businesses to see how hiring and housing were clashing for them. The committee will have a small invitation-only forum next month for local businesses.

b. Conservation Easement Map 47, Lot 7-1

Kristin Murphy, the Natural Resources and Sustainability Planner, discussed the proposed easement. The Gateway or King property is a 43.5+ parcel that is a part of the Planning Board application for the Gateway property fronting on Epping Road. This easement parcel fronts on Energy Way, which is off of Commerce Way. This was a portion of the wetland mitigation required for the State Dredge and Fill permit. Conservation was also a condition of Planning Board approval. This easement was presented to the Conservation Commission in June 2020, and that group established a subcommittee to work on the language of the deed. This has been reviewed by Legal counsel and has a recommendation for acceptance.

This property was logged under Kevin King's ownership, but is recovering. There are over 10 vernal pools on the property and it abuts a significant wildlife corridor. It supports some State species of concern. The deed is open to passive recreation by foot traffic only. Hunting in-season is proposed to be allowed; the parcel abuts NH Fish and Game property, and the Commission felt it would be challenging to have a line where hunting is no longer allowed.

MOTION: Ms. Belanger moved to accept the grant of 43.6 acres on the west side of Epping Road, shown as tax map 47/7-1. Ms. Gilman seconded. In a roll call vote, the motion passed 5-0.

c. Public Safety Complex Alternatives Update

Police Chief Stephan Poulin, Fire Chief Eric Wilking, Town Planner Dave Sharples, and Facilities Committee Chair Kris Weeks were present to discuss the report from Mr. Sharples. Mr. Papakonstantis said one proposal was to create a Police station and Fire substation on Continental Drive. Some of the current equipment and vehicles will not fit in our current storage. Then we would renovate the building on Court Street for the Fire Department, which would continue to be downtown. Alternately, the Rec Building on Court Street could be

renovated to be the new Police Station, but we've heard from some abutters with some reasonable concerns. With this plan, are we satisfying the needs of the Police Department long-term? Should we instead raze the Court Street building and build something new?

Mr. Sharples said if we put the Police Station at 30-32 Court Street, there would be no Fire Substation at 30-32 Court Street. We're not looking at a stand-alone Fire Station at Continental. The Facilities Advisory Committee suggested a new PD and a Fire Substation at 6 Continental. If there is no substation, the deficiencies at 20 Court Street would have to be addressed. The LBA did a study at 32 Court Street and found it inadequate for the PD; we'd have to get rid of all three buildings. Another alternative is to raze 20 Court Street and build something new for both Departments, but it wouldn't fit.

Ms. Belanger said she's concerned about response times if we move to Continental. Mr. Sharples said no option is to move the existing Fire Station from 20 Court - that would stay. The substation would improve response times in the North of town.

Mr. Papakonstantis asked if we've looked at other properties than Continental Drive. Mr. Sharples said we've looked at 30-32 Court Street, as well as Holland Way, but that property doesn't have frontage and would need to have a right of way across private property. We also looked at parcels we may not have owned, but it has to be in town, and there's no available property that's undeveloped. It would also have to be purchased, which would add to the cost.

Mr. Weeks said that the Facilities Committee put together recommendations. We looked at not having the substation, to make it more affordable. A few Committee members remember 15-20 years ago when a substation for the Fire Department did not pass on the ballot. For the Feasibility Study, we've planned three public forums; the first is May 4 at 6 PM. Regarding 30-32 Court Street, the question is whether public sentiment will favor having a Police Station outside of town or staying downtown.

Mr. Papakonstantis asked about the feasibility of having one Officer downtown. Chief Poulin said there could be a Police substation downtown with a single Officer. Police will continue with downtown foot patrols. Ms. Belanger said the proposal to put an Officer into the Wheelwright Room won't work because there isn't enough meeting space. Mr. Dean said there are also some concerns about the look and feel of the Town Offices with an Officer. Mr. Weeks said 20 Court Street is probably the best option for a remote Officer.

Mr. Sharples said if the PD were only downtown, moving the FD to Holland Way would reduce service and increase response times, unless we did a substation on Continental, so it didn't seem like the best option.

Ms. Cowan asked about the cost of building a substation on Continental Drive vs renovating a building. She added that we want to hear from abutters and other people on those issues. Mr. Sharples said we haven't pursued a stand-alone Fire Substation at Continental, it would be part of a new Police

Department. We won't get accurate numbers until we get an in-depth design, but don't want to pursue too many options to that point.

Mr. Papakonstantis asked if 30-32 Court Street is off the table, and the Board generally agreed that it should be off the table. Ms. Belanger said it's a historic building she's not comfortable with removing.

Mr. Papakonstantis said we should pause on further questions until hearing from the public. Mr. Dean said we should remember we would be going from a 6,000 square foot Police Station to an 18,000 square foot to accommodate their needs, and there's not room to expand in the current location. The substation/station conversation in 2003 was about 35,000 square foot building, and we're not talking about that now.

d. Lease/Purchase Financing: Engine 5, Fire SCBA Equipment

Mr. Dean said we had two bids on the Lease Purchase Financing for Engine 5 and the Fire SCBA equipment. We asked for a third but Newburyport Bank declined. Interest rates are really fluctuating; currently, the most advantageous to the town is TD Bank at 2.91%. If we go back for a "last best," we would like the flexibility to go with a better offer.

MOTION: Ms. Belanger moved to approve the TD Bank rate of 2.91% for the Fire SCBA Equipment and authorize the Town Manager to sign the contract. Ms. Gilman seconded. In a roll call vote, the motion passed 5-0.

MOTION: Ms. Belanger moved to approve the TD Bank rate of 2.91% for Fire Engine 5 and authorize the Town Manager to sign the contract. Ms. Gilman seconded. In a roll call vote, the motion passed 5-0.

e. Household Hazardous Waste Collection Agreement

- i. Mr. Dean said this is different than in the past, they're looking for a certificate of authority by vote and calling for a meeting with the Board of Directors.

MOTION: Ms. Belanger moved to approve the Household Hazardous Waste Collection Agreement and authorize the Town Manager to accept and sign all documents. Ms. Gilman seconded. In a roll call vote, the motion passed 5-0.

f. Boards and Committees 2022 Discussion

Mr. Papakonstantis said the report on recommendations from himself and Ms. Oliff will be ready soon. We have a lot of vacancies in town committees.

8. Regular Business

a. Tax Abatements, Veterans Credits and Exemptions

MOTION: Ms. Gilman moved to approve an Intent to Excavate for 113/5 for 2022-2023. Ms. Belanger seconded. In a roll call vote, the motion passed 5-0.

MOTION: Ms. Gilman moved to approve a Disability Exemption in the amount of \$125,000 for 95/64/331 and 104/79/217 for FY 2022. Ms. Belanger seconded. In a roll call vote, the motion passed 5-0.

MOTION: Ms. Gilman moved to approve an Elderly Exemption in the amount of \$152,251 for 95/64/381 for FY 2022. Ms. Belanger seconded. In a roll call vote, the motion passed 5-0.

MOTION: Ms. Gilman moved to approve an Elderly Exemption in the amount of \$152,251 for 95/64/301 for FY 2022. Ms. Belanger seconded. In a roll call vote, the motion passed 5-0.

MOTION: Ms. Gilman moved to approve an Elderly Exemption in the amount of \$183,751 for 104/79/143 for FY 2022. Ms. Belanger seconded. In a roll call vote, the motion passed 5-0.

MOTION: Ms. Gilman moved to approve a Veteran's Credit in the amount of \$500 for 103/15/3, 114/1, 63/102/48, 104/79/143 and 103/13/2. Ms. Belanger seconded. In a roll call vote, the motion passed 5-0.

MOTION: Ms. Gilman moved to approve a Veteran's Credit in the amount of \$2,000 for 63/102/48 for Disability and Veteran's Credit for 2022. Ms. Belanger seconded. In a roll call vote, the motion passed 5-0.

MOTION: Ms. Gilman moved to approve a Solar Exemption in the amount of \$12,500 for 29/25 for 2022. Ms. Belanger seconded. In a roll call vote, the motion passed 5-0.

MOTION: Ms. Gilman moved to approve a Solar Exemption in the amount of \$36,000 for 85/21 for 2022. Ms. Belanger seconded. In a roll call vote, the motion passed 5-0.

MOTION: Ms. Gilman moved to accept a Land Use Change Tax in the amount of \$19,500 from 17/2/1 for FY 2007. Ms. Belanger seconded. In a roll call vote, the motion passed 5-0.

b. Permits & Approvals

- i. The Board received a letter from Representatives of Riverrun LLC, formerly Exeter River Landing, regarding a manufactured home that has been vacant and is in disrepair. They have received consent from the owner to remove the manufactured home. They are looking to abate some past taxes in the amount of \$2,036.34. Mr. Dean said this action is taken under RSA 80:2-a.

MOTION: Ms. Belanger moved that under RSA 80:2-a, the Select Board abate the total tax due of \$2,036.94 for parcel 104/79/602 for the tax years 2018, 2019, 2020, and 2021. Ms. Gilman seconded. In a roll call vote, the motion passed 5-0.

c. Town Manager's Report

- i. Today we welcome Corey Stevens as our new Finance Director. He has been a key part of our Budget Recommendations Committee for many years.
 - ii. We closed on 10 Hampton Road Friday. Now people can park there for events or to use the fields.
 - iii. Tomorrow there is a ribbon cutting event at Cobham. Senator Shaheen and Congressman Pappas will be there
 - iv. The Egg Hunt is Saturday April 16 at 10 AM.
 - v. April 23 - May 7 is the Picking the Parks program. More details are on the website.
 - vi. The Select Board goal setting meeting will be April 18 at 4:30 PM.
- d. Select Board Committee Reports
- i. Ms. Belanger had a Housing Advisory Committee meeting. They talked about the Regional Needs Assessment; 98% of it can be incorporated into our housing report. Dave Sharples is looking at our zoning to see what we can do for density in downtown and housing needs.
 - ii. Ms. Gilman discussed several bills her committee went through at the State level. The one they spent the most time on was a bill relative to short-term rentals, such as Air BnBs, which would prohibit the town from restricting short-term rentals. Mr. Dean said that James Murray testified about HB 1272 to explain the downside of restricting Health Officers' authority.
 - iii. Ms. Oliff had no report.
 - iv. Ms. Cowan had no report
 - v. Mr. Papakonstantis said the Sustainability Committee talked about putting together a single-use plastic ordinance that would be applicable to town buildings and events. It would be similar to Portsmouth's ordinance. Kristin Murphy is taking the lead on that.
- e. Correspondence
- i. A letter from the Arbor Day Foundation acknowledging our Tree City USA status.
 - ii. A note from St. Vincent de Paul thanking us for a \$2,000 grant.
 - iii. An email from a resident regarding pickleball courts.
 - iv. A letter from the Kingston NH Board of Selectmen suggesting regionalization in the Fire Department. Chief Wilking said regionalization only works well when both towns are of similar size. Communities along the Route 125 corridor could band together and do a common hiring practice, and perhaps have employees who could cross borders. For Exeter to jump in would be an interesting discussion. We have been involved in three different communities, primarily behind the scenes so as not to interfere with their volunteers, but they're not sustainable. He's not sure the benefit Exeter would see.

Ms. Gilman asked if we had heard from East Kingston and Kensington about taking on their ambulance calls. Chief Wilking said we

entered into discussions, but it tends to break down when we discuss who pays the bills.

The Board asked him to hear Kingston's proposal.

- v. A notice that the mosquito program starts this week.
- vi. A Legislative Bulletin from NHMA.

9. Review Board Calendar

- a. The goal setting meeting will be next Monday at 4:30 PM. The next meetings are April 25, May 9, and May 30.

10. Covid-19 Update

Chief Wilking said we had a few good weeks, then the BA2 subvariant arrived. Last week we had 41 residents positive, and this week 33. We're not seeing a large influx in patients in the hospital or a high mortality rate. There were only 3 fatalities due to Covid statewide. 2nd boosters are available for those over 50 and having 5 months since the first booster. The Covid numbers remain consistent, but they're higher than we'd like. All State run test sites and vaccination sites have closed. The FD is no longer giving vaccines.

Ms. Belanger thanked Chief Wilking and James Murray for running the town's Covid response.

11. Non-Public Session

MOTION: Ms. Belanger moved to enter into non-public session under RSA 91-A3II(e). Ms. Gilman seconded. In a roll call vote, the motion passed 5-0 and the Board entered non-public at 9:03 PM.

12. Adjournment. Selectwoman Belanger motioned to adjourn. Selectwoman Gilman seconded. The Board stood adjourned at 9:15 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Joanna Bartell
Recording Secretary