

**TOWN OF RYE - SELECT BOARD
MEETING
Monday, August 28, 2023 – 6:00 p.m.
Rye Town Hall**

Selectmen Present: *Chair Tom King, and Selectman Bob McGrath*

Others Present on behalf of the Town: *Town Administrator Matt Scruton, and Asst. Town Administrator/Finance Director Becky Bergeron*

6:00 p.m.

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair King called the meeting to order at 6:20 p.m.

II. NON-PUBLIC SESSION (1) per RSA 91-A:3, II (b) Hiring

At 6:21 p.m., Tom King made a motion to go into Non-Public Session per RSA 91-A:3 II (b) Hiring. Seconded by Bob McGrath. Roll Call: McGrath – Yes, King - Yes.

At 6:27 p.m., Tom King made a motion to come out of Non-Public Session. Seconded by Bob McGrath. Roll Call: McGrath – Yes, King - Yes.

6:30 p.m. RECONVENE PUBLIC MEETING

III. CALL TO ORDER AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chair King reconvened the public meeting at 6:32 p.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

IV. ANNOUNCEMENTS

- A.** DPW Director introduced Beth Grecoe who will be joining the Public Works Department as the new administrative assistant. Ms. Grecoe has a lot of previous business experience and is very well qualified for the position. He is excited to have her join the DPW Team.

Ms. Grecoe stated that she is a Rye resident and is thrilled to be a part of the community. She is looking forward to working with Director Rucker and his team at DPW.

Motion by Tom King to hire Beth Grecoe as a part-time administrative assistant to the Department of Public Works. Seconded by Bob McGrath. All in favor.

The Select Board congratulated Ms. Grecoe and welcomed her to the position.

- B. The Town Offices will be closed Monday, September 4, 2023 for the Labor Day Holiday.
 - C. Rye Schools start on Tuesday, August 29th. The Select Board ask that residents keep this in mind when traveling on the roads, as there will be children making their way to and from school.
 - D. Selectman McGrath noted that he was fortunate to attend the Rye Day Celebration on August 19th. He would like to give credit to the Recreation Department and the Rye400 Committee who helped put together the celebration. There were several vendors and many residents attended the event. The most popular part of the day was the dunking booth with Chief Walsh being the most popular “dunkee.” He commented that Selectman Epperson and Chief Walsh were good sports to volunteer to take part in the dunking booth. Selectman McGrath continued that it was a great day and almost immediately the praise started on social media. It felt really good to be a Rye Resident that day in particular. He noted there is a photograph of the 400 formed on the field. He hopes the Town will purchase one for the Town Hall to hang on the wall. Residents may purchase one as well from Memories Studio on Route 1. Selectman McGrath thanked everyone who volunteered for Rye Day.
- V. **PUBLIC COMMENT** – (at the beginning of the meeting, for any comment by any Rye resident on any topic. Requested time limit, up to 5 minutes each person.)

Joe Cummins, 990 Washington Road, spoke to the Select Board regarding his concerns with high school students traveling distances to catch the school buses at central locations to be transported to Portsmouth High, which can turn out to be a fifty-minute commute overall to school. He noted it’s about a \$40,000 estimate to have a third bus. He thinks it’s very sad that the Town cannot find \$40,000 to relieve some of the burden on the highschoolers. Mr. Cummins pointed out that if the length of the school bus journeys were shorter, there may not be the congestion at Portsmouth High School and maybe Rye’s roads would not be as congested during school pickup and drop-off.

Referring to the August 23rd select board meeting, **Steven Borne, 431 Wallis Road**, noted that the information from the Building Inspector about what is increasing the workload in that department was very interesting. The data that can be collected should feed the Master Plan. Some of the things that are driving up the work of the Building Department are that people who are buying the houses can afford to do projects to fix up the home. He noted that the whole building permit process can be improved with better communication. He continued that in regards to townwide equipment, the asphalt hotbox is a great idea; however, the town has too much equipment and that is something that is only used a little bit during the year. That piece of equipment is perfect to rent or share with other communities. The Town should be trying to figure out how to shift capital money from equipment to people because more people are needed. In regards to paving, in doing the math, the three miles of road times thirty square feet comes out to four seventy-five. He suggested that next time the budget is done, they do three times the cost of asphalt for the paving budget. Mr. Borne commented that he would like to see the Town do

more paving, so they can have quality roads. He pointed out that the main roads that bicyclists ride on should never get to the condition as to what Sagamore Road was. Maybe the way to do the roads is to have a leap year. On that leap year, maybe DPW could work less on other projects and have the resources to do the paving work. This may be a way to keep the roads that people cycle the most on up to date.

Mr. Borne continued there are departments that have people who cannot take vacation times and have no backup. Maybe this can be solved just like the hotbox as something that can be shared. This would provide the depth so people could take vacations and there could be backup. The Town needs to be thinking outside the box, so the Town can run smoother and workloads don't get backed up. In regards to the Parsons Creek Watershed, Mr. Borne noted that when the Town gets grants the work is done. The Town didn't get the grant and the work should be funded. The big issue, when working through the spreadsheet, is who's going to own it, who is going to take care of it, and when is the work going to be done. Dropping it on the DPW Director, who is overworked, is probably not the best solution. An engineer, or someone else with the skillsets, is needed to be able to tackle those tasks. In regards to the DNA testing, the phylochip analysis really didn't work, as the numbers barely cleared for raccoons and rats; however, the question is what is the Town going to do with the DNA testing. If there are things with animals that could be done, the Town should just do it. Referring to the Grove Road presentation, Mr. Borne stated that it's the "Grove Road Dump," it's not a "landfill." He pointed out there are a lot of things that didn't come up in that meeting; such as, the firefighting foam and what is going to be done. Mr. Borne noted that he needs to retract his statement about PFOAs leading to ADHD. There are not enough peer reviewed studies to say there's a direct correlation. There are only directional studies to this date that ties PFOAs to ADHD.

VI. AGENDA ITEMS

- A. **Event Permit Application:** Tri Maine – Wallis Sands Triathlon, Sunday, 9/17/23, 8:00 – 11:00 a.m. to benefit youth sports organizations.

Police Chief Kevin Walsh presented the event permit application for the TriMaine Wallis Sands Triathlon, which will be held on Sunday, September 17th. He confirmed that all paperwork and insurance is in place.

Motion by Tom King to approve the TriMaine Wallis Sands Triathlon for Sunday, September 17th, from 8:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m., with the condition that the event organizer schedule the appropriate number of detail officers, as recommended by the Police Chief, prior to the event and all road signs must be removed within twenty-four hours following the event's completion. All surface markings must be made with washable chalk or washable sidewalk non-toxic paint. Seconded by Bob McGrath. All in favor.

- B. **Rye400 Committee** – Discussion on a community dinner being arranged for the fall.

Eileen McCue, 17 Clark Road, spoke to the Select Board in regards to holding a community dinner in celebration of the Rye400. The idea is to have a community picnic where the Rye400

Committee would supply the tables, which would be organized in a long line. It would be open to anyone in Rye and there would be no cost to attend. People would bring their own picnic baskets and tablecloths. People will be encouraged to be creative with their table decorations, dishware, dinner, beverages, and desserts. Everyone will get together to eat at the same time for a wonderful community building event. The best areas for the events, as recommended by Chief Walsh, would be the Town Green or Parsons Field. The dates being considered for the event are either October 1st or October 29th with dinner starting at 4:00 p.m. and ending at 6:00 p.m. The goal is to have between 100 and 120 people attending. Costs for the tables and other necessary items will be covered by the Rye400 Committee.

The Select Board agreed this sounds like a great idea and they support the event. There was some discussion about other possible locations; such as, the state parks or Seacoast Science Center. Further details on the date and exact location will be organized by the Rye400 Committee with input from Chief Walsh.

- C. Date for Deliberative Session:** Earliest date, Saturday, February 3 – Last day, Saturday, February 10. *Selectmen, please vote on the date and snow date.*

Motion by Bob McGrath to approve the Deliberative Session date for Saturday, February 3, 2024 with a snow date of Saturday, February 10, 2024. Seconded by Tom King. All in favor.

VII. CORRESPONDENCE
None

VIII. NEW BUSINESS
None

IX. OLD BUSINESS
None

X. OTHER BUSINESS

- A. Select Board Representative Updates**
Tabled to the next Select Board meeting.

Chair King noted that the TAP Grant Committee is planning pre-interviews for the three engineering firms, (for the Town Center project), for the first week in September. There will be a multi-interview process for selection of the engineering firm.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Tom King to adjourn at 7:10 p.m. Seconded by Bob McGrath. All in favor.

Respectfully Submitted,
Dyana F. Ledger