

## **TOWN OF RYE SELECT BOARD MEETING**

**Tuesday, November 7, 2023, 8:15 a.m.  
Rye Town Hall & Via Zoom**

**Select Board Present:** *Chair Tom King, Vice-Chair Bill Epperson, and Selectman Bob McGrath*

**Others Present on behalf of the Town:** *Town Administrator Matt Scruton, Asst. Town Administrator/Finance Director Becky Bergeron, Police Chief Kevin Walsh, Deputy Police Chief Scott Blaisdell, and Recreation Director Dyana Martin*

### **I. CALL TO ORDER AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Chair King called the meeting/budget work session to order at 8:15 a.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

### **II. BUDGET WORK SESSION**

#### **A. Capital Outlay**

##### **Police Department**

Police Chief Kevin Walsh met with the Select Board to review the 2024 Capital Outlay requests for the Police Department.

##### **Police Cruisers** **\$130,000**

The purchase of cruisers for the Department normally comes from the Outside Detail Fund. For 2024, the intent is to fund the cruisers through the budget under capital outlay. The preferred models for the cruisers are all-wheel drive Chevy Tahoes. Currently, there are five cruisers in the Department that run an average of 50,000 to 60,000 miles per year. One of the cruisers is used 24/7 and the others run about 18 to 20 hours a day. When a cruiser is decommissioned, it's revamped by the Highway Department and then send it to a town department that is in need of a vehicle. At this time, Rye has three town vehicles that will not pass inspection, due to body rot and mechanical issues, and those cars are being taken out of service. The two police cruisers being proposed for replacement have over 150,000 miles on them. Normally, the Town replaces only one vehicle in a year. However, due to the fact that the outside detail account has been drained for a few years, a vehicle was not purchased in 2023. The Department has been rotating and alternating the two main line cars in order to keep the mileage stable. The purchase of two vehicles will put the Department back on track with vehicle rotation. Some of the challenges with the Department's cruisers are the idle time, mileage, weather, and contact with salt air and

salt water. The capital expenditure proposed will include the vehicles, outfitting, and interior parts. The intent is to have the cruisers in service soon after town vote in 2024.

There was discussion with the Select Board about the current vehicles in the Department and planning for cruiser replacement in the future.

**Motion by Bill Epperson to recommend the purchase of two police vehicles in the amount of \$130,000 for the 2024 Budget. Seconded by Bob McGrath. Vote: 3-0**

**Software** **\$27,000**

The Police Department's current software is going to be obsolete within the next five years. The software being used right now was started in 2000 and there are very few agencies in N.H. that do not use this system, so it works with cross agency. The current software is also connected with the State and the Department of Motor Vehicles. The Police Department is dispatched by the Rockingham County Sheriff's Department and that will continue into the future. The Sheriff's Department has made an offer to change its software to Central Square. The multi-jurisdictional dispatch center will be spreading the costs of this software over five years and will include the towns of Rye, New Castle, Newington, and one other town. The expense of \$20,000 is an estimate from Central Square to migrate all the Town of Rye Police Reports into the Rockingham County Sheriff's Department server. In December of 2024, the reports from all twenty-seven of the Sheriff's Departments police agencies will be migrated into the new software. This will setup the same type of reporting service the Department receives now, as the agencies will be integrated with the State. Town and cities throughout the State who do their own dispatching are now considering Central Square so they can also be connected and integrated with the State and other agencies to be able to share information for efficiency purposes. There is also an annual maintenance fee of \$6,500 for five years. After five years, Central Square will go back to the Sheriff's Department with a cost that will get split up over the twenty-seven police agencies that the Rockingham County Sheriff's Department dispatches. At this time, the software fees for the Department are \$13,000 annually, so this will be a significant savings in the long-term.

Police Chief Walsh spoke to the Select Board about the importance of having statewide police reports available to the officers.

**Motion by Bob McGrath to recommend the capital budget amount of \$26,829.50 to upgrade the Police Department software to Central Square. Seconded by Bill Epperson. Vote: 3-0**

**Recreation Department**

Recreation Director Dyana Martin met with the Select Board to review the 2024 Capital Outlay requests for the Recreation Department.

**Softball Field Renovation** **\$75,000**

The Recreation Commission has been working on the Master Plan for recreation for two years and it's now complete. The softball field renovation and design are part of Phase I of the Master Plan. The softball improvements are to construct a skinned softball field at the recreation area

for Rye's softball teams. Right now, participation in softball is growing and the Town does not have a field for the players to use. The only field is at the Elementary School field; however, there is not enough space for all the players and teams to use. The Recreation Commission has decided that the Town should be providing a field for the softball players, as is done for Little League. If there are funds remaining from the construction of the softball field, the intention is to fix up the smaller Little League field at the rec area.

Director Martin reviewed the proposed location for the field and intended construction, which will also include the reconfiguration of the soccer field.

The Select Board requested more information on the number of teams and players, along with the number of games that are played during the season. It was noted by Finance Director Bergeron that currently, there are between six to eight Rye teams for softball. The teams play teams from other communities; however, the field space is being created for Rye's softball program. The players are between 8 to 14 years of age, with the addition of a 6U team in 2023.

Lt. Jake MacGlashing joined the meeting to speak with the Select Board about Rye's softball program, as he is involved with the program. In 2018, there were thirty players in the Rye Youth Softball program. At this time, there are eight teams with almost one hundred players and only one field in Rye at the Elementary School. There have been challenges with only having one field and eight teams that need to practice. The program continues to grow and more players are signing up to play. The intent is to get another field for the teams to play and the recreation area seems like the best choice. It was noted that the Rye Youth Softball program is not run by the Recreation Department. Costs to run the program are generated through participation fees, which is managed by the organization.

**Motion by Bill Epperson to recommend the capital budget amount of \$75,000 for a new softball field at the Rye Recreation area. Seconded by Bob McGrath. Vote: 3-0**

**Engineering & Design \$75,000**

The Recreation Department is proposing a separate capital outlay request of \$75,000 for the engineering and design of the recreation area, which would include the proposed softball field. This is also part of Phase I of the Master Plan. In order to implement a number of things that the community voiced that they would like to see, the Recreation Department's office needs to be moved towards the storage area at the recreation fields. The intent is to address the flow for people using the recreation area. The parking at the fields is also inadequate and needs to be addressed. Moving the office will allow for easier access and will also allow for bathroom facilities. The other requests from the community include pickleball, tennis courts, and basketball courts, along with indoor space for practices and luncheons for seniors. This request covers the full design of the recreation area, which would be needed to submit for construction bids.

The Select Board expressed concern about the expenditure for the engineering and design. They agreed that further information about the overall plans for the recreation area would be helpful before making any decisions on moving forward with spending funds on a plan that may not be supported by the community.

**Recreation Department Vehicle**

**\$40,000**

The Recreation Department is requesting the purchase of a truck for the Department, which will replace the current aging vehicle. The truck will meet the needs of the Department with regard to transporting equipment and materials to event locations. The Department is proposing to purchase a Ford F-150, four door, super cab.

The Select Board did not have an issue with the request. They suggested adding lettering/town logo to the side of the truck for town identification. There was also some discussion on the possibility of having a camper top to have dry secure space for transporting materials. It was agreed that this can be considered in the future.

**Motion by Tom King to recommend \$40,000 for a Recreation Department vehicle for 2024. Seconded by Bill Epperson. Vote: 3-0**

**III. OTHER BUSINESS**

*None*

**IV. RECESS**

**At 10:03 a.m., Tom King made a motion to recess the meeting. Seconded by Bill Epperson. All in favor.**

**10:30 a.m. Presentation at Webster at Rye**

Chair King reconvened the meeting at Webster in Rye, 795 Washington Road, at 10:30 a.m.

**V. Presentation of Rye's Boston Post Cane by the Select Board to the town's oldest resident in the foyer at Webster at Rye.**

The Select Board members recognized residents Barbara Long and Marion Cronin. The two residents were given certificates of distinction, and the Select Board presented them with the Boston Post Cane for being the oldest residents of Rye. It was noted that both residents were born on the same date and that both were 102 years old. The presentation was made publicly in front of staff, guests, and family members of the recipients. Ms. Cronin and Ms. Long, who have no relation to one another, joked back and forth about being twins, as neither knows who was born first.

Both women were overjoyed as they received certificates and were presented with the Boston Post Cane and flowers from the Select Board. Stories of Ms. Long's life were shared, as she was described as fiercely independent and one of a kind, by Webster staff. Ms. Long is also a mother of three children. One of Ms. Cronin's children, Dianne Ryan, spoke about how Ms. Cronin was born in New York and how she lived in Massachusetts from 1968 up until two years ago when she moved to Rye. Ms. Ryan described her mom as a wonderful mother and a creative and artistic individual, even taking fashion and design classes in high school. Ms. Cronin has three children, seven grandchildren and seven great grandchildren. It was also mentioned that Ms.

Cronin's mother was also awarded the Boston Post Cane distinction in Stow, MA years prior. She lived to be 108 years old. The ceremony concluded with light refreshments provided by Webster at Rye. The Boston Post Cane originated in 1909. The Boston Post newspaper distributed about 700 canes throughout New England so that towns could recognize their oldest resident in a ceremony.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

**Motion by Tom King to adjourn at 11:10 a.m. Seconded by Bob McGrath. All in favor.**

Respectfully Submitted,  
Dyana F Ledger