

**TOWN OF RYE SELECT BOARD
MEETING**

**Monday, February 12, 2024, 5:30 p.m.
Rye Town Hall & via Zoom**

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

Others Present: Town Administrator Matt Scruton and Asst. Town Administrator/Finance Director Becky Bergeron

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair King called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

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

6:30 p.m. RECONVENE PUBLIC MEETING

III. CALL TO ORDER AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chair King reconvened the public meeting at 6:37 p.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

IV. ANNOUNCEMENTS

- A.** The Town Offices will be closed Monday, February 19, 2024 for the Presidents' Day holiday.

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.)

Alex Herlihy, 55 Lang Road, Town Historian, spoke about the newly created town historian position. He also spoke in regard to a few interesting historical facts about Rye, which is highlighted in his article for the upcoming Town Newsletter.

Becca McGee, Deputy Recreation Director, announced the latest programs being offered by Rye Recreation:

- The Wave Club is now open, which is a program available to 6th to 8th grade students, open 3:00 to 5:30 p.m. every weekday, excluding holidays. Registration is available on the Rye Recreation website: **RYE.RECDESK.COM**
- Registration is open for the Recreation Department's spring and summer programs, including the Summertime HoRYEzons camp; spring/summer baseball camp; summer basketball camp; volleyball camp for teens; adult yoga and meditation; chair yoga; strength and balance; golf lessons; and senior day trips.
- Rye Recreation will be offering two trips this summer through Collette Tours; exploring British landscapes, and exploring Switzerland, Austria, and Bavaria.
- Programs coming soon to Rye Recreation include spring track and field, pickleball, and surf lessons with Cinnamon Rainbows.
- Rye Recreation will be holding an Easter Egg Dig at Wallis Sands Beach; a Memorial Day Ceremony on May 27th; July 4th Event on June 30th; and Strawberry Fest on July 27th at the Library Commons.

More information about Rye Recreations' Programs may be found on the Town website, as well as the upcoming Town Newsletter.

VI. AGENDA ITEMS

A. Advisory Committee for the Restoration of the Historic Rye Town Hall

David Choate, representing the Rye Heritage Commission, met with the Select Board to discuss the proposal to form a citizens' advisory committee to organize a plan and funding mechanism for the Town Hall restoration, with an ultimate goal of returning the second floor to a meeting room that would be appropriate for town meetings.

Alex Herlihy, Rye Heritage Commission Chair, gave a brief history of the Town Hall building.

The Select Board reviewed the committee's charter, which was drafted by Town Administrator Matt Scruton and agreed upon by all parties involved. The committee positions will be listed on the Town's website for 30 days, so residents who are interested will have an opportunity to apply.

Bill Epperson moved to establish a new committee to be known as the Advisory Committee for Restoration of Historic Rye Town Hall. This is an advisory committee to the Select Board. The purpose of the Committee shall be to collect and analyze all previous town hall plans and studies and to propose a restoration/renovation plan for the Rye Town Hall that not only meets the space needs of the town hall based staff, as well as the general public, but which also proposes a methodology and time table for the funding and execution of the project. Information to be provided to the Select Board for their review and consideration. Committee composition will be seven members from the general public. Committee member term will be a two-year term, which may be extended by the Select Board. The duration of the Committee shall terminate after two years, unless extended by the Select Board.

Seconded by Bob McGrath. All in favor.

- B. Chief Walsh – Event Permit Application:** Millennium Running – Eastern State 20 Miler, Sunday, 3/17/24, 11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. to benefit Exeter & Portsmouth Boosters and Special Olympics

Police Chief Kevin Walsh presented the details for the event permit application submitted by Millennium Running for the Eastern State 20 Miler, which will be held on March 17th. He confirmed that all insurance and paperwork for the event are in place.

Tom King moved to permit the event application submitted for Millennium Running Eastern State 20 Miler on Sunday, March 17, 2024, 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., to benefit Exeter and Portsmouth Boosters and Special Olympics. Seconded by Bill Epperson. All in favor.

- C. DPW Director Jason Rucker – Request to Sole Source with Vendors for Emergency Repairs to Harbor Road Bridge**

DPW Director Jason Rucker met with the Select Board to request a waiver to the purchasing policy specifically in regards to the Harbor Road seawall, as well as investigations and inspections of Harbor Road Bridge. Director Rucker noted that the Town has recently experienced some damage to its infrastructure due to hightide events and storms; in particular the revetment of the seawall on Harbor Road, as well as significant erosion between the abutments of Harbor Road Bridge. The waiver request of the purchasing policy is being made in order to expedite the inspections of Harbor Road Bridge and sole source contractors for the repair of the revetment seawall along Harbor Road.

Bob McGrath moved to waive the Town’s Purchasing Policy to facilitate the DPW in entering into sole source agreements with vendors to address emergency repairs to infrastructure damaged by coastal storm flooding. Seconded by Tom King. All in favor.

- D. Discussion on establishing an Arts Council**

Chair King noted that he asked that this idea be added to the agenda for discussion, as there was much enthusiasm and success with the various Rye400 arts, civic, and educational programs. With the establishment of a Town Historian, it made him think about the fact that the Town doesn’t have an equivalent on the art side; such as, a poet laureate or other types of arts. He suggested that the Select Board think about helping to establish something like an arts council that can facilitate these types of programs for the Town. He noted that it would probably be too cumbersome to have a formal committee, as public meeting notices, meeting minutes, and committee quorums would be required. He pointed out that some of the folks that were on the Rye400 Committee are willing to canvas with others in town to come up with a proposal as to how this could be structured.

The Select Board agreed that they support the idea. Chair King will follow up with Jan Olmstead from Rye400.

E. Town Clerk/Tax Collector Donna Decotis – Contract for Lien Process

Town Clerk/Tax Collector Donna Decotis spoke to the Select Board about the yearly contract with Total Notice, LLC for the services of mortgage research to assist the Tax Collector's office with the tax lien process. The Town has been using the services of Total Notice for the past seven or eight years.

Finance Director Becky Bergeron explained that the reason the contract is before the Select Board is that originally there was going to be a change in vendor. She thinks this would be a good time for the Select Board to vote to waive the purchase policy so the Town doesn't have to go out to bid.

There was some discussion about the possibility of signing a multi-year contract to save on costs, which would need to go to warrant.

Tom King moved to accept the proposal from Total Notice, the Town's existing vendor, for services provided relating to the lien process and to authorize the Town Administrator to sign the agreement for services. Seconded by Bill Epperson. All in favor.

VII. CORRESPONDENCE

A. Email rec'd from John Mitchell – re: his resignation from the Town Center Committee

Tom King moved to accept the resignation of John Mitchell from the Town Center Committee and to direct the Town Administrator to send a note of thanks for time on the committee. Seconded by Bill Epperson. All in favor.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

- Chief Walsh gave an update to the Select Board on the incoming snowstorm conditions.

IX. OLD BUSINESS

None

X. OTHER BUSINESS

A. Deputy Health Officer Appointment

Chair King noted that the Select Board has decided to appoint Deputy Fire Chief Kevin Wunderly as the Deputy Health Officer with Dr. Snow as the Health Officer. He pointed out that Fire Chief Mark Cotreau is also a Deputy Health Officer.

Motion by Bill Epperson to appoint Kevin Wunderly as Deputy Health Officer for Rye. Seconded by Bob McGrath.

Deputy Fire Chief Wunderly thanked the Board for the opportunity. He looks forward to learning from Dr. Snow and Chief Cotreau, and serving the community in this capacity.

Vote: All in favor.

B. Meeting Minutes

1. Meeting, Tuesday, December 26, 2023, 6:00 p.m., Rye Town Hall

The following correction was noted:

- Page 7, 3rd paragraph, 1st sentence should read: **Vice-Chair Epperson stated that when the Town was presented with this particular situation, it was so egregious to the rules and regulations.**

Motion by Tom King to approve the December 26, 2023 meeting minutes as amended. Seconded by Bill Epperson. All in favor.

2. Non-Public Session, Tuesday, December 26, 2023:
 - (1) per RSA 91-A:3, II (b) Hiring
 - (2) per RSA 91-A:3, II (c) Reputation

Motion by Tom King to approve the non-public meeting minutes of December 26, 2023, 6:02 p.m., Hiring, as written. Seconded by Bob McGrath. All in favor.

Motion by Tom King to approve the non-public meeting minutes of December 26, 2023, 9:25 p.m., as written. Seconded by Bill Epperson. All in favor.

Motion by Bob McGrath to seal the non-public meeting minutes of December 26, 2023, 9:25 p.m. Seconded by Bill Epperson. All in favor.

3. Meeting, Thursday, January 18, 2024, 3:00 p.m., Rye Town Hall

Motion by Tom King to accept the minutes of January 18, 2024 as written. Seconded by Bob McGrath. All in favor.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Tom King to adjourn at 7:45 p.m. Seconded by Bill Epperson. All in favor.

Respectfully Submitted,
Dyana F Ledger