

**TOWN OF RYE - SELECT BOARD  
MEETING  
Wednesday, April 19, 2023 – 9:00 a.m.  
Rye Town Hall**

**Selectmen Present:** Chair *Tom King*, Vice-Chair *Bill Epperson*, and *Bob McGrath*

**Others Present on behalf of the Town:** *Town Administrator Matt Scruton and Asst. Town Administrator/Finance Director Becky Bergeron, Regional Association Committee Chair Linda Toumpas, Regional Association Committee Member Ronna Werner, and Recreation Director Dyana Martin*

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Chair King called the meeting to order at 9:01 a.m. and let the Pledge of Allegiance.

**II. WORK SESSION**

**a. Regional Association Review Committee**

Members of the Regional Association Committee, **Linda Toumpas and Ronna Werner**, met with the Select Board to review the recommendations of the Committee. The Committee was charged with reviewing the regional associations that are supported by the Town of Rye. A recommendation report dated December 14, 2022 was submitted to the Select Board for review and discussion. It was noted that all agencies were approved by the voters through warrant articles at town voting. The budget for donations to each association is determined through a yearly request submitted by the agency to the Town. The recommendations before the Select Board were made for the consideration of next year's budget. It was also noted that the Committee worked on changing the questionnaire that goes out annually to agencies, in order to obtain more detailed information as to need in the community, relevancy, and proportionality of funds requested.

The Committee highlighted the following recommendations in their report.

- **Great Bay Services:** In 2022, their donation request was for \$1,500. For 2023, the request increased to \$5,000. The agency only serves 26 clients; however, none of them are from Rye. The clients come from Rockingham and Strafford Counties, along with York and Cumberland Counties in Maine. The clients served are spread out over a large geographical area. This agency received Covid relief funds over the past couple of years. Without those funds, this agency would have had to close its doors. The request in the donation increase is due to salaries to hire staff. It's the Committee's recommendation to keep the donation to Great Bay Services at \$1,500. The Committee feels there are many

agencies in the Seacoast that could absorb the needs of the clients that are served by this agency. It was also felt that this is an agency that will probably not be around long-term. The \$5,000 request is a big portion of what Rye gives annually, which is a budget of \$60,000 overall for the 2023 budget.

- **New Generation:** This is a good agency that works with homeless pregnant women to help them through their pregnancies, and to help them obtain housing and stability. This agency recently merged with NH Catholic Charities, which is a very large organization. The Committee recommends that the Select Board consider whether a religious organization should be supported. They should also determine whether it is possible to support a program within the parameters of a larger organization.
- **Seacoast Shipyard Association:** This organization is not a 501c3 nonprofit. It's a lobbying group of the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard; "Save Our Shipyard".org. The group's primary focus is to protect the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard from closure and focus on community support for the shipyard, as well as a visible and aggressive government liaison to lobby on behalf of the shipyard in Washington. Committee recommends removing this association from further funding; however, associations can't be defunded so it is recommended to bring the donation to \$50 per year. The Committee feels this is a political lobbying group.
- **Tufts Medical Care at Home:** This agency was formerly Seacoast VNA and then became Home Health VNA, which is one of the programs of Tufts Medical Care at Home. It was noted that the request is for \$9,975 which is 1/6<sup>th</sup> of the overall budget for regional associations. The Committee feels this is a very large percentage of the budget for a large Massachusetts organization that happens to have an office for one of their programs in the Seacoast area. The original warrant article, put before the voters, was for Seacoast VNA, which no longer exists. It was not a name change or a slight merger with a NH based organization. The agency was taken over by an out-of-state organization. It was noted that the agency served 79 Rye residents in 2021/2022. There were 642 NH residents served in the greater seacoast area who came from Newmarket, Newington, Seabrook, Rye, and Exeter. The Committee recommends bringing the donation amount for this agency down to \$3,000 and to eventually remove them from the list.
- **Waypoint:** This agency is formerly known as Child and Family Services. This is still the same organization with just a name change to incorporate all the programs served under this agency, as services have expanded. One of the expanded programs now offered through Waypoint is the Richie McFarland Center for children with cognitive development disabilities. Last year, Child and Family Services had requested \$1,400 and The Richie McFarland Center requested \$4,800. In 2021, there were 7 families served in Rye and a total of 572 seacoast residents. It was recommended by the Committee that the agency state the reason for the increase in funds being requested on the application. They also recommend that the request come from Waypoint only with no reference to The Richie McFarland Center or any of their other programs.

There was some discussion with the Select Board about other recommendations from the Committee. It was recommended that more delineation and parameters are set on what types of agencies Rye would support. It is important to give better guidelines for existing associations, as well as future association requests. It was also recommended that the Select Board extend the Committee's charter as a standing committee. An annual review of donation requests should be done each year by the Committee to be sure they comply with the mission of the Town of Rye. The Committee's work should be better aligned with the budgeting process in order to provide recommendations for the upcoming year's budget. The Select Board is asked to make some decisions on how to move forward before the next round of applications go out in August. It was noted that the Committee has provided input on the application and tweaks have already been made.

It was noted during discussion that the 2023 budget has been voted and approved by the town voters. At this time, the association donations are set as that is what was requested and approved through the budget process. The Select Board may review the amounts earmarked for 2023 and vote to change the donation amount; however, this will have to be done before funds go out in July.

**b. Monitoring Wells and Ground Water Management Zone**

*Tabled*

**c. Recreation**

**Dyana Martin, Recreation Director**, met with the Select Board to give an update on the Recreation Department's plans for new personnel and programming.

- The Recreation Department is working on new advertising and software. A new idea for advertising is the use of flyers focusing on one particular program, which are promoted through the Town's website and Facebook page. The software used by the department is being changed to RecDesk. This is an easy-to-use cloud-based system that will ultimately be saving the department \$7,000 to \$8,000 in fees.
- The Easter egg dig was recently held at Wallis Sands and was a complete success with approximately 100 people in attendance.
- The department will be adding a Strawberry Festival for seniors, which will be held on July 19<sup>th</sup> at 1:00 p.m. This event will involve four town departments. The police and fire departments will be sponsoring the strawberry shortcakes, which will be served on library grounds.
- Recreation is working on more programming ideas to involve preschool aged children, as well as high school students. The intent is to create more sports programs for the high school students. A new cooking class has been set up for preschool aged children and the hope is to have those classes ongoing.
- The Recreation Commission is working on the Recreation Master Plan. Some of the items at the top of the survey list include a community senior center and pickle ball courts.
- Ms. Martin is working on the addition of an assistant deputy director to the recreation staff. This new position will be in charge of the programming at the WAVE Center. The goal is to increase the fitness programming at the center and increase passive recreation

items, to take advantage of the open space. The new position will also be responsible for developing programs for the teenage groups.

- The Recreation Department is working on events for the Rye400; such as, Rye Day which is being held on August 19<sup>th</sup>. They are also working on events for Memorial and the Fourth of July.

Ms. Martin spoke with the Select Board about the benefits of having a bus for the Recreation Department, which would be used for programming and trips. This was requested by the Recreation Department in last year's budget, but was not approved by the Select Board to be included in the budget for 2023. It was agreed that Ms. Martin should bring the proposal forward again for consideration; however, it should be earlier in the budgeting process with more details and information.

Ms. Martin also gave a brief update on the after-school program. The program runs through the school year, excluding school vacations. There are approximately 40 to 50 students in the after-school program. The program is very well received and the children enjoy the programming. Staffing for the program can sometimes be a challenge, as it is mandated by the State to have one counselor for every fifteen students. It was noted that Rye's program tries to maintain one counselor per ten students. The program is funded through the revolving fund with fees of \$18 per student per day.

The Recreation Department is looking for Korean War Veterans to be honored at the Memorial Day Celebration. Anyone who is interested in more information may visit the Town's website.

### **III. OTHER BUSINESS**

Selectman McGrath spoke to the Select Board about the selection of members for boards, commissions, and committees. He expressed concern that the document that was written does not include the policy that is being practiced. He feels there is some confusion as to what the policy is and how it's being followed. He submitted a paragraph he drafted as a suggestion to add to the document.

It was the consensus of the Select Board to get through this cycle of appointments and to readdress this issue after that time.

### **Adjournment**

**Motion by Tom King to adjourn at 10:59 a.m. Seconded by Bill Epperson. All in favor.**

Respectfully Submitted,  
Dyana F. Ledger