

Officially Approved by the Board
Town of New Castle Board of Selectmen Meeting
Public Session: 7:00 p.m.
September 1, 2020

Board Members:

Mr. William Stewart, Chair
Mr. Thomas Maher
Mr. Dave McGuckin

Others:

Ms. Jennifer Smith, Administrative Assistant, Select Board
Ms. Amelia Trapp, Board Secretary, Town of New Castle Select Board

Chairman Stewart called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. 3 members were present, and a quorum was established. They are holding the meetings under remote per the Governor's emergency order of the amount of people able to meet. All votes will be done in a roll call.

Approval of Select Board Minutes:

August 3, 2020 – Selectman McGuckin made a motion to approve the minutes as amended. Selectman Maher seconded. A roll call vote was taken, and all members were in favor.

August 17, 2020 – Selectman McGuckin made a motion to approve the minutes as amended. Selectman Maher seconded. A roll call vote was taken, and 2 members were in favor with Chairman Stewart abstaining.

Public Comments:

Curt Springer – He was excited for the schools to begin the year and hoped everyone stayed safe amid the pandemic.

J.D. Barker – He had two building permits that he submitted and has yet to receive a response. Selectman McGuckin said he was working with the new building inspector and they would check it tomorrow.

Carol White – She asked when the Vennard Court Sign would be reestablished. Selectman Maher said he would check on it.

New Business:

≠ **The Common** – Chairman Stewart said they are working with the no parking ban on the common. It is open to pedestrians and though the summer plan was to keep it closed, they needed to discuss the plans for fall and winter. Selectman Maher said they should not consider opening it on Tuesday, September 8, as it is Primary Day. It would not be

appropriate to open it on voting day. He also said they needed to consider hiring staff to keep the area maintained. Selectman McGuckin said they should open it to the community. He was concerned with how to manage the warmer days with an excess of traffic. The Board considered limiting how many vehicles would enter the Common. 160 vehicles are currently allowed to park there. They also considered which days the Common would be open.

Selectman McGuckin said the middle of September was about the time they had stopped charging vehicles to enter. Chairman Stewart said they usually charged on the weekends into the fall. If they had staff in place, it was wise to have a limit of around 160 vehicles again. Chief White said that limiting the lot and staffing it on weekends was a good plan to the end of September. Selectman McGuckin asked what the charge would be, and Chairman Stewart said the fee that was approved was \$10 per vehicle.

The Select Board opened the discussion to public comment. **Jenny Rosenson** agreed with the plan to limit the number of cars and to continue charging on the weekends. Parking meter and attendance are used in most other areas. It was a natural crowd control as well.

Carlos Rincon asked about the public playground and social distancing. Chairman Stewart said he had spoken with public works about it and they said the CDC did not see an issue with Covid and playgrounds. The recommendation is that the playground should be opened and if needed, they could sanitize the equipment. Chairman Stewart said the governor recommends masks for groups over 100 and they would continue to have the signage up in the Common, though it was not something they could enforce.

Selectman McGuckin said they would open the Common on September 14 and would limit the vehicles to 160 on the lot at one time. They would charge \$10 per vehicle and would staff the Common to maintain the lot and care for the funds. Selectman Maher said they should have at least two staff members to watch the gate. The summer protocol was to have two staff members, one to count vehicles and one to monitor the gate and funds. Chairman Stewart said they should have the bathhouses remain closed. Ms. Smith asked the Board to include the senior citizen discount of \$5 per vehicle to their vote.

Carol White asked if people could walk into the Common if they parked elsewhere. Chairman Stewart said that they could, but they would prefer people use the gate, pay the \$10 and enjoy the park.

Chairman Stewart made a motion to open the Common on September 14 with these plans in place and was seconded by Selectman McGuckin. A roll call vote was taken, and all 3 members were in favor.

≠ **Covid-19 Update** – Selectman Maher gave the update. There was a suspected positive case in New Castle since the last meeting. It was investigated and the information came back that they in fact, did not. At the time of the last meeting, there were 279 cases in NH, and now there are 231 cases. The number of active cases continues to decrease. Schools are continuing to open, and restrictions are relaxing, but it is important to stay cautious and mindful of risk factors.

≠ **Acceptance of Government Office of Emergency Relief Reimbursement (GOFERR) #1** – This is federal money given by the state for towns affected by Covid. They have received their first grant payment of \$9,362.66. **Selectman Maher made a motion to accept the GOFERR Reimbursement of \$9,362.66 and was seconded by Selectman McGuckin. A roll call vote was taken, and all 3 members were in favor.**

- ≠ **New Building Inspector** – Selectman McGuckin said Russ Bookholz is the new building part-time inspector, effective yesterday. He will be working 5 days per week, 8a-12p. **Selectman McGuckin made a motion to approve the hiring of Russ Bookholz and was seconded by Selectman Maher. A roll call vote was taken, and all 3 members were in favor. Tom Smith** asked where he had worked before; Selectman McGuckin said Mr. Bookholz had been the building inspector for the Town of Wakefield, as well as for Nottingham and continues to do part-time work for the Town of Rye.
- ≠ **New Castle/Rye Bridge** - Selectman McGuckin spoke on the new bridge between Portsmouth and Rye. Selectman Maher said there were still community members speaking for a moveable bridge at the last meeting. He agreed with Selectman McGuckin, saying they were highly in favor of a fixed bridge. The town of Rye would like a fixed bridge as they are concerned with rising water levels, however, there are other items that still need to be discussed. NH DOT has been asked to commit to regular updates to the Select Board on all the discussions on the bridge. **Jim Cerny** said there was an optimistic schedule to have the bridge completed in the spring of 2023.
- ≠ **BOS Election Duty Assignments** – The primary is on September 8 and the polls are open from 9a-7p. Chairman Stewart said he would take the evening shift, Selectman Maher said he would take the morning shift and Selectman McGuckin would take the mid-shift.
- ≠ **Water/Sewer Update** – Chairman Stewart said the project has been going well. The contractor will be focusing on the final 200 feet of main line installation between 22 Main St. and the intersection of Wentworth Rd and Main. The main line installation will be completed by September 4th. There is a scheduled water shutdown on September 1st to connect the main line to the existing line serving the Coast Guard Station. The contractor will begin connecting residents to the new line and removing the old line as well. The one-way alternating traffic patterns will continue into this week, though there are some transitions into two-way traffic with police assistance. A community member asked about when the project will be finished. Chairman Stewart said there still exists funding to do routes and private road funding as well. The estimated main line project was due to be done in November 2020 with paving done next spring. The DOT still must approve the paving, but they are moving ahead of schedule. The anticipated tax bill would show the payment around December 2020.
- ≠ The Board discussed opening the Macomber Room and the Rec Center. They were not prepared to decide about it. A book club wanted to use the Macomber Room. The Board chose to put it on an upcoming agenda.

Committee Reports

Selectman McGuckin read the Fire Department and the Police Department's monthly reports into the record. He had had a conversation with the Police Chief yesterday as well.

Selectman Maher said there would be a full report of Consolidated Communications at the next meeting. Ken McDonald would be present to give the report.

Future Meeting Dates: Remote Platform @ 7:00 p.m.

September 21, 2020 7:00 p.m. Regular Board Meeting
October 5, 2020 7:00 p.m. Regular Board Meeting
October 19, 2020 7:00 p.m. Regular Board Meeting

Meeting Adjourned:

Selectman McGuckin made a motion to adjourn and was seconded by Selectman Maher. A roll call vote was taken, and all 3 members were in favor. The Selectmen Board Meeting on September 1, 2020 was adjourned at 8:05 p.m.