

MINUTES OF THE SELECT BOARD
Monday May 4, 2020, 7:00 PM
Via Zoom

Present: Damon Frampton, Chair, Tom Maher, Selectman, Bill Stewart, Selectman, and Bette Jane Riordan, Secretary.

Also present: Pam Cullen, Administrative Assistant to the Select Board, Christiane McAllister, Town Accountant, Ken McDonald, TAPC, Dave McGuckin, , Tom Smith, Ann Miller, Andy Schulte, Fire Chief Ted Hartnett, and Shanna McBurney.

Selectman Stewart explained the nature of the meeting, indicating it is considered an Emergency Meeting which meets all the State requirements of posting, and noted the availability of a phone number to call if a participant could not connect via Zoom. Selectman Stewart explained the criteria for Emergency Meetings, and stated that all votes by the Select Board would be roll call votes.

Chair Frampton opened the meeting at 7:00 PM.

1. Approve Select Board minutes of April 6, 2020 and April 20, 2020.

Selectman Maher made a Motion to Approve the minutes of Select Board Meetings of April 6 and April 20, 2020 as amended. Selectman Stewart seconded. Roll call: Selectman Maher, yes, Select Stewart yes, and the Chair voted yes. Motion passed unanimously.

2. Public Questions and Answers.

a. Newly Constructed Path.

Pam Cullen stated that while at the Common she noticed a newly constructed cleared pathway which she realized had not received any Town approval. She gave a history of the pathway issues and expressed concern about the Town's potential liability. Chair Frampton responded recommended that for now the path should be closed and the Town would keep the pre-existing pathway. Selectman Maher stated there was no need to overreact, as he explained he did explore this a few weeks ago. After further discussion concerning liability issues, Selectman Maher stated the persons involved did approach him and he responded to them with what he believed to be appropriate. Selectman Stewart stated he was aware of the pathway issue and stated they are exploring some options, and plan to come before the Select Board to discuss the plan and obtain approval. They are not building anything at the present time, but were just in the clearing stage. Chair Frampton stated that the group needs to come back to seek Select Board approval for the pathway. Selectman Stewart supports exploration various options and agreed to place the item on the next Select Board agenda.

b. Cassela - Ken McDonald.

Ken reported that the first Monday trash pick up went well. They did use a smaller truck and did not complete all the pick ups. They will be back tomorrow to service the last 20 homes. From now on they will use the regular size truck.

c. Ritson update

Dave McGuckin asked for an update on the status of the Ritson Right of Way. Pam Cullen will share with him the latest information from NHDES, and Chair Frampton read the report about the delay until July 15, 2020.

3. New Business.

a. Covid 19 Update.

Selectman Stewart stated the Town has not received any updated information for guidance in holding Public Hearings. He stated that May 19th is the date set for the Public Hearing on the budget and expects to receive the necessary information. With respect to the Zoning Board of Adjustment, he noted that the ZBA is doing their meetings via Zoom, but there are legal questions which need to be addressed and is awaiting further guidance. The Planning Board is holding 2 meetings in June.

b. Office Protocol.

Chair Frampton proposed a meeting with Town employees to discuss how to move forward with the reopening of the Town. Pam Cullen mentioned the need to discuss and resolve how to achieve social distancing at the Town Hall, and formulate a protocol for all to follow. Chair Frampton stated there is need to connect with staff and make some decisions. He prefers to have a meeting as opposed to Zoom. Selectman Maher stated the need for a specific agenda, including the physical environment, payment processing, and the need for tangible things on how the Town will be conducting business. He stated there needs to be a discussion on how to create a system which is less “face to face”, and there needs to be an agenda with tangible issues.

Dave McGuckin suggested the Town look at how the Post Office does business. There was mention of the need for masks. Chair Frampton will schedule the meeting and notify staff.

c. New Castle Common. (Beach closure and restrictions)

Selectman Maher reported that he has been having weekly discussion with our State Senator and State Representatives, and have been coordinating with surrounding communities. He reported he regularly consults with the Fire and Police Departments regarding parking decisions. He noted that early last week was Chief Hartmann’s 1st anniversary as the town’s Fire Chief, and congratulated him. Chief Hartmann gave a brief overview of the many actions taken by the Department and improvements made. He also addressed the Department’s excellent response and coordination of issues relating to Covid 19. Selectman Maher thanked him for the updates. He also stated that the State’s guidelines and stay at home order continue to be in effect through May 31, 2020, and expects some softening measures will be taking place. He noted that reopening of the Seacoast by June 1 is still up in the air and requires more information. What transpires in the month of May will be critical in the determination. Selectman Stewart indicated that the Town Beach is still currently closed. Issues such as crossing the beach and book delivery have arisen, and will be considered, but there are currently no exceptions.

Ann Miller brought up the issue of difficulty in maintaining social distancing on the bridges where there is a confluence of contractors, runners, bicyclists, fishermen, and pedestrians, creating a bottleneck, with many not wearing masks. Selectman Stewart stated he has recommended that while construction is ongoing people exit the Town the other way (by the Wentworth), but he recognizes how tight it is on the bridges. Chief Hartman noted the workers are complying Covid19 protocols. Selectman Stewart will follow up on this matter and report back. There was some mention of perhaps restricting the fishermen on the bridge during this time. Chair Frampton will check with NH DES.

d. Election and Town Meeting.

Selectman Stewart noted that most of this information was covered at the last meeting but as of today, the Town Meeting is scheduled for June 23rd.

e. Rec Building

Selectman Maher reported on progress with the panels and expressed thanks to Ken, Ben and Chief Hartnett. He stated that the problems with the phones at the Library seem to have been rectified. He will provide a final update.

f. Island Items.

Pam Cullen reported that she did not put a memo seeking submission of articles for the May issue. She intends to skip May. Selectman Maher suggested that we do an Island Items in advance of Town Meeting in June and request that articles be submitted this month. Selectman Stewart feels this is a good idea. Pam noted it will be sent out direct mail. Bill will work on an article for the June issue.

g. Tom Bolko tribute.

Pam reported that Tom has worked for the Common for 36 years but will not be returning. She would like the Board to consider giving a Gift Certificate, and Ben Jankowski will do a write up for the Islander. Pam is open for suggestions. Selectman Maher will work with the other Select Board members to come up with an appropriate appreciation gift.

h. Water Sewer Update.

Selectman Stewart gave a general update. The project has been underway for a few weeks. They have done the section from the bridge to KPYC. The next two weeks will be focused on the water crossing from Pierce Island. There will testing on the new section of pipe.

He explained 3 change orders to the contract. The first had to do with cost savings (Use of Evroc's, pipe substitution, eliminating trailers and message boards), resulting in savings of \$95,000. The second change order dealt with Alternate 1, which is the crossing from Pierce to Shapleigh. That added \$543,965 to the contract, but we are cost sharing with Portsmouth so we are responsible for ½ that number. The 3rd change order which was just signed adds \$41,459 to deal with the crack in the pipe coming from the Sawtelle bridge, as well as an abandon asbestos cement pipe which was unexpectedly found running in the new pipe trench.

The final contract value was \$4,448,039.

Selectman Stewart acknowledged that Ann Miller would like some updates on the looping issues. He indicated he will have more information once he meets with Andy of Underwood Engineering, and should have that information for the next Select Board Meeting.

The sewer report on the bridge has come in. Chair Frampton noted that Steve had received reports about the water being overly chlorinated. Selectman Stewart noted this may not have anything to do with the water project, but he will mention it to Underwood.

4. Committee Reports.

Fire Dept.

Both Selectman Maher and Chief Hartnett reported on the monthly statistics (April 1 through May 4) which will be an attachment to the minutes. There were sixteen calls for service, medical aid 6, fire alarm activation 3, check hazardous conditions 6. The Department has taken delivery of the small boat, and will begin training for this boat. There are 2 new per diem licensed EMTs now on board. The Board again thanked the Chief on his first anniversary.

Police Report.

Selectman Stewart gave the highlights which were predominantly property checks and traffic control. (176 calls) He thanked the Department for all the work associated with beach closures, and Common closure. He acknowledged the tough but professional job the officers have done. We continue to focus on community policing.

There being no further business to come before the Board, Selectman Maher made a Motion to Adjourn, which was seconded by Selectman Stewart. Selectman Maher voted yes, Selectman Stewart voted yes, and Chair Frampton voted yes. The Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

BJ Riordan, Recording Secretary
Attachments: Fire Dept. Report
Police Report