

## **MINUTES OF THE SELECT BOARD**

**Monday March 1, 2021, 7:00 PM**

**Via Zoom**

**Present:** William Stewart, Chair, Tom Maher, Selectman, Dave McGuckin, Selectman, and Jennifer Smith, Administrative Assistant to the Select Board and Recording Secretary.

**Public Participants via Zoom:** Dr. Kathy Hollister, Deputy Health Director.

Chairman Stewart opened the public session meeting at 7:03PM. 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.

### **1. Approve Select Board minutes of January 20, 2021, February 1, 2021 and February 16, 2021**

Selectman Maher made a motion to approve the minutes of the Select Board Meetings of January 20, 2021, February 1, 2021 and February 16, 2021. Selectman McGuckin seconded and the motion carried unanimously, 3-0.

### **2. Public Questions and Answers.**

#### **New Business.**

There were no matters discussed.

#### **a. Covid Update**

Selectman Maher read the current Covid statistics for the State into the record as 2363 active cases, 90 hospitalizations and a positivity rate of 3.7%. Selectman Maher further pointed out that these numbers are in contrast with the numbers of 2 weeks ago, which were 2952 active cases, 125 hospitalizations and a 4.4% positivity rate. In addition, Selectman Maher stated that a month ago there were 4662 active cases and 193 hospitalizations.

Dr. Kathy Hollister, Deputy Health Director, stated that the Johnson and Johnson vaccine has been approved under the emergency use authorization and the State of New Hampshire should be receiving 12,000 doses by the end of the week. Dr. Hollister further stated that the data looks great in terms of the outcomes we should care most about, hospitalizations and deaths. The statistics have its efficacy at 100% in preventing deaths and 85% effective in preventing severe disease. Choosing which vaccine you receive is not an option at this time. Right now, the priority is to get herd immunity. Phase 1B is

expected to continue through March. Hopefully, in late March or early April, vaccines will become available for teachers and child care workers, then individuals 50-65 years of age.

The CDC is coming up with guidelines for those individuals who have been vaccinated as to whether they need to social distance or not. The current recommendations are that if you have had Covid, or tested positive, you do not have to quarantine after travel for 90 days. We don't know if people who still have positive antibodies after recovery can still transmit Covid to others. Currently, it is believed that you will have more antibodies if you have had a more symptomatic version of the disease. If you were positive and asymptomatic, you are less likely to be protected for the full 90 days.

Dr. Hollister closed by encouraging everyone to stay vigilant.

#### **b. Coalition Communities 2.0**

Selectman McGuckin stated that the Coalition Communities 2.0 is close to hiring a lobbyist and the expectation is that person will be on board by April 1<sup>st</sup>. There are still a number of towns waiting for firm costs before they commit to join. There are currently about 35 towns in the group. The "magic number" is about 50 to keep New Castle's costs in the \$2,500 per year range.

#### **c. Neighborhood Water Improvement Program Update**

Chairman Stewart stated that there are two action steps that are currently in process. The first is a letter will be formulated by the Select Board to Portsmouth requesting that the city authorize its Town Manager to accept the private line once it is upgraded to Portsmouth's specifications. The second is the roads that are interested, Spring Hill Road and Lavenger's Lane, are preparing a draft betterment contract through counsel which will be submitted to the town to review. Chairman Stewart added that the project will not include a loop and the roads are aware of that and are still interested.

#### **d. Town Projects Updates**

Selectman Maher stated that the contractors lost about a week working on the siding due to a Covid exposure, but about 50% of the siding is now complete. Selectman Maher also spoke about the Department of Labor's report on its recent regular inspection of town buildings. The electrical repairs it called for are being addressed at both Town Hall and the Common.

### **3. Old Business**

Chairman Stewart reminded the board members that a contact person needs to be appointed to act as a liaison between the town and Sail Portsmouth. The board agreed to assign Jennifer Smith, the Select Board's Administrative Assistant, to act as the initial point person to gather information from the organizers.

**4. Committee Reports**

The Fire Department's monthly report was submitted to be part of the record for the meeting.

**5. Adjourn**

Selectman McGuckin offered a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:30 pm.

Selectman Maher seconded and said motion carried unanimously 3-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Smith  
Recording Secretary