

MINUTES OF THE SELECT BOARD

Monday April 19, 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: Kathy Hollister- Deputy Health Director, Curt Springer

Chairman Stewart opened the public session meeting at 7:01PM. 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 March 24, 2021 and April 5, 2021

Selectman Maher made a motion to approve the minutes of the Select Board Meeting of March 24, 2021 and April 5, 2021. Selectman McGuckin seconded and the motion carried unanimously, 3-0.

2. Public Questions and Answers.

Thomas Smith, Town Treasurer, questioned if the Select Board will be conducting meetings in person if town hall opens given there are two scheduled Select Board meetings at Town Hall this week.

Selectman Maher explained that the two scheduled meetings for this week are essentially for staff to discuss the potential openings of the Common and Town Hall in the near future. The meetings will be open to the public.

New Business.

a. Covid Update

Selectman Maher stated that the State's dash board was updated today and currently there are 3,329 active cases of Covid in New Hampshire, with 133 hospitalizations and a positivity rate of 4.7%

Two weeks ago, there were 3073 active cases and 87 hospitalizations. On a positive note, the positivity rate has actually decreased and the total numbers were actually higher last week. It would appear that the numbers are trending downward.

Dr. Kathy Hollister, Deputy Health Director, thanked Selectman Maher and agreed that hopefully that those numbers last week were the peak.

Dr. Hollister gave a brief presentation in which she stated that Governor Sununu lifted the mask mandate last Friday by letting it expire at midnight. The Governor is also planning on letting the business guidelines expire on May 7th. We currently do not have any active cases of Covid in New Castle. The total here has been 35. Over half of Americans have had their first dose of vaccines, totaling over 131 million people. Over 80 million are fully vaccinated. The Johnson and Johnson vaccine continues to be put on hold due to rare clots.

Dr. Hollister closed by stating that not everyone who would like to be vaccinated has been able to do so yet and reminded people to continue to wear masks, wash their hands and avoid crowded indoor places.

Chairman Stewart asked if members could recall if the Select Board voted on a mask mandate last year.

Selectman Maher opined that the Select Board did not officially vote on a mask mandate, but instead provided guidelines to staff.

Chairman Stewart suggested the Select Board consider taking an official vote in the near future to mandate mask wearing in New Castle public buildings.

b. Town Meeting

Chairman Stewart stated that the Town Meeting will be held on May 11, 2021 consisting of an eight-hour voting session, with an hour break in between, and the business session starting at 7pm.

Selectman McGuckin stated that the voting booths will need to be broken down in between the two sessions.

Chairman Stewart stated that he has spoken with the Town Moderator and the suggestion has been to have to voting from 8am to 6pm with an hour for the breakdown and the business session beginning at 7pm.

Selectman Maher offered a motion to hold Town Meeting and Election Day on May 11, 2021. Selectman McGuckin seconded and said motion carried unanimously, 3-0.

c. The Common

Selectman Maher stated that the Select Board is having a meeting tomorrow to discuss the opening of the Common with staff. Attendees will be Steve Tabbutt- DPW, Ross McLennan- the Summer Manager of the Common, Christiane McAllister- Finance Director, Jennifer Smith- Administrative Asst., Ken McDonald- Admin Project Coord. and Police Chief Don White. We are scaling up towards an opening date of May 15, 2021 and will be running through all the logistics included in opening safely. We will also be looking for Dr. Hollister's advise on what's safe to do.

Selectman McGuckin stated that he agreed with all Selectman Maher said.

Chairman Stewart stated that he was in agreement for a May 15th opening as well.

d. Trailer Parling – 1B

Chairman Stewart stated that the BOS received a note from former Selectman Damon Frampton in which he states that he has noticed more and more bigger trailers parking on Route 1B. These trailers are blocking a portion of the road, as well as causing a hazard for school kids on the road. The Select Board does not have autonomy over the State road, we do have the ability to have conversations with these companies. Chief Don White has spoken to a number of landscapers and has asked them to do a better job of parking, especially to avoid parking on sharp corners.

e. DOL Safety Division – Written Safety and Health Program

Christiane McAllister, Finance Director, stated that she had emailed the Select Board a draft of a Safety and Loss Control, Employee Safety Manual. Ms. McAllister drafted this manual after the town underwent a Department of Labor Safety Division inspection. The town had 3 areas of violation, including a series of safety issues in various buildings that were itemized. There were some violations that directly involved the Joint Loss Management Committee that have been corrected. The final item was the Department of Labor expected the town to have a formal written employee safety manual. Ms. McAllister stated that the town has been provided an extension until next week to comply with the requirements of the findings and she would like to be able to get the Select Board's written approval of the manual she has written so that she provide the Department of Labor with a copy.

Selectman McGuckin commended Ms. McAllister on the great job she did creating the well written document and offered his approval.

Chairman Stewart and Selectman Maher requested the Select Board delay voting on this until they are able to fully vet it.

Ms. McAllister stated that there is a letter requiring the Select Board's signatures that could be sufficient.

The members agreed to sign the document after before the pending deadline.

f. Town Projects Update

Selectman Maher stated that Town Hall is finally coming to a close. There were a few items that were flagged by the Building Inspector that are being addressed, but the project is 99% done.

g. Neighborhood Water Improvement Program Update

Chairman Stewart stated that there is a warrant article associated with the Neighborhood Water Improvement Program, Article 13, which has been recommended by the Budget Committee and the Select Board to be presented as a warrant article at Town Meeting. This article is basically allocating some of the previously approved funds of from the 2018 Warrant Article towards the improvement of some of the private water lines. This does not increase the amount approved in 2018 and any funds that are used under Warrant Article 13 will be repaid by the residents of a Special Assessment District. It will not cost tax payers any money if it is approved.

h. Old Business

No matters were discussed.

i. Adjourn

Selectman McGuckin offered a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:45 pm.

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

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Smith
Recording Secretary