

MINUTES OF THE MARCH 23, 2020 SELECT BOARD MEETING

MEMBER'S PRESENT: Board Member Chair Mike Houghton, Vice Chair Joe Lovejoy and Finance Administrator Dawna Duhamel were present. Board member Allison Knab and Town Administrator David Moore were on conference call.

The Board Chair opened the meeting at 7:00 p.m.

MINUTES

Ms. Knab motioned to approve the minutes of 2/20/2020 and 3/9/2020 as amended. Mr. Lovejoy seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

ADMINISTRATION

Mr. Houghton directed attention to the Town's response to COVID 19 and introduced Mr. Moore who provided a summary of steps taken by the Town to respond to the public health emergency.

Mr. Moore has been coordinating with a COVID planning team made up of Police, Fire, the Emergency Management Director, Health Officer and a small team of other department heads has been convened in order to ensure a coordinated response. He reminded the Board that the Town-owned buildings had been closed as of the close of business on March 17th. The staff continues to respond to the public via the phone, online, mail and in some cases, appointment (meeting patrons in the parking lot). Department heads are aware that they should track COVID 19 related expenses. The Ladies Auxiliary is requesting use of the Morgera Room for a Red Cross blood donation event in April. Mr. Houghton recognized the priority of this event and said he would support it, as did Mr. Lovejoy.

Mr. Moore reviewed the guidance from the State regarding requirements of holding meetings according to the RSA 91 during the health emergency. There are two upcoming public hearing meetings that have been legally noticed and cannot be postponed. We are working on technology to be able to work remotely should the need develop. Finance Administrator Dawna Duhamel explained that the new phone system has the capability to be forwarded to cell phones (with return calls from cellphones registering as the work phone number and not personal cell numbers). Access to computer files from remote locations is also possible and is being deployed more fully in case it is needed. Mr. Moore added that there is currently no policy in place to work from home. Mr. Houghton expressed concerned about security of sensitive town information. Ms. Duhamel suggested a confidentiality agreement. Mr. Moore went on to describe the sick leave policy for COVID related illness. Ms. Duhamel further explained and answered questions.

Mr. Moore raised the issue of the budget and planning the rest of year given no formal appropriation and that the Town meeting may not be able to come together on May 16th as planned. He has communicated with Department heads that all expenditures that are discretionary in nature should be put on hold until further notice and to limit spending generally as much as practicable in the meantime. Mr. Houghton noted he would like to see a specific budget plan that will reflect what cuts are necessary in order to fund the Town's services without

an appropriation prior to the Board's next meeting of April 6th. There was general discussion about the effect of the current emergency on revenues and cash flow. They discussed, in general, items that might be cut. Mr. Moore noted that a part-time seasonal employee is due to be hired in April, but he will be revisiting that in light of the discussion. Police Chief King has put a hold on hiring a part-time police officer, which was in the 2019 budget. He indicated the preferred candidate had withdrawn.

Mr. Moore noted that there is time before Town Meeting to re-engage the community regarding the TIF. As required, the public hearing has been held. The timeline requirement between the public hearing and the Town Meeting is being addressed at the state level. Mr. Moore requested guidance on how to proceed. Mr. Lovejoy recognized that because of current events, people's attention is elsewhere. Mr. Houghton suggested written correspondence addressing the misinformation that has been persisting. Ms. Knab suggested this was not the right time to bring this issue to the residents.

Ms. Knab asked about staff morale. Mr. Moore replied people are concerned about the pandemic and there is a great deal of uncertainty about the effects of this on our operations all of which is contributing to frustration and lower morale.

At 8:15 p.m. Ms. Knab made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Lovejoy seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Richard
Recording Secretary