

Select Board Meeting
Monday March 16th, 2020
Town Offices, Nowak Room
Draft Minutes

1. Call Meeting to Order

Members present: Julie Gilman [attending remotely], Molly Cowan, Lovey Roundtree Oliff, Daryl Browne, Niko Papakonstantis, and Russ Dean were present at this meeting. The meeting was called to order by Ms. Cowan, the Acting Chair, at 7 PM.

2. Swearing in of Elected Officials

a. Town Moderator Paul Scafidi swore in the newly elected officials.

3. Select Board Reorganization

MOTION: Ms. Cowan nominated Niko Papakonstantis to serve as Select Board Chair. Ms. Gilman seconded. By a roll call vote, all were in favor.

MOTION: Mr. Papakonstantis nominated Molly Cowan as Vice-Chair of the Select Board. Ms. Oliff seconded. By a roll call vote, all were in favor.

MOTION: Mr. Papakonstantis nominated Julie Gilman to serve as Clerk of the Select Board. Ms. Cowan seconded. By a roll call vote, all were in favor.

4. Department Updates: Fire/EMS, Police, DPW

Mr. Papakonstantis said that town officials have been working to determine how best to keep the town safe in light of the COVID-19 crisis.

Mr. Dean said they are in uncharted waters. They have been coordinating resources and ideas through numerous meetings. They are working on social distancing and taking extra cautionary measures. The Town Offices will likely be closing, and some government services will be going virtual.

Assistant Fire Chief Eric Wilking said things are changing quickly. He encouraged the public to follow the CDC and the NH DHHS for the best and most timely information. Social distancing and good hygiene are critical. He asked residents who feel that they have symptoms not to go to the hospital, but to contact their PCP and stay at home unless otherwise directed. Two ambulances are ready to roll, but there have been very few calls related to symptoms like that of the Corona virus. There's been no increase in the volume of calls, which is about 10 - 12 a day. One employee is out on long-term injury, but there is a probationary employee starting tomorrow. They are confident in being able to continue their response. The Fire Department is borrowing an electrostatic cleaning machine from the school district, in order to disinfect the back of the ambulances quickly. They are very well stocked on gloves, and moderately well stocked on gowns and masks. They're running low on sanitizer and pre-moistened sanitizing wipes; they are using disinfectant sprays instead.

Mr. Papakonstantis asked how confident they are that they can replace supplies once they use them, and also if he could advise folks at home how they can best check

on seniors that may be alone. Mr. Wilking said he doesn't have a huge comfort level that durable supplies will be available. The supply chains are doing a better job but they haven't caught up yet. In the short term, they're in good shape. For the senior population, they are in contact with each of the senior homes in the area to identify seniors who haven't been able to get out or are suffering from shortages.

Ms. Cowan asked him to give advice about utility shutoffs. Mr. Wilking said that he's not part of those discussions, but if someone is experiencing a shutoff, to contact the town for help. Everything they're hearing is that no one will be left behind.

Mr. Browne asked whether the public can make their own disinfectant. Mr. Wilking said Ms. Kohler arranged a hand sanitizer mix for the town for the election, as she was unable to purchase premade sanitizer. Mr. Browne asked what measures small businesses in town should take if they haven't decided to close. Mr. Wilking said that wasn't his place to say. He expects that foot traffic downtown will be greatly reduced. Mr. Dean said Darren Winham has taken on the role of business liaison during this process. They haven't had a shutdown order other than bars and restaurants, so things are still fluid.

Ms. Oliff asked if the town has had any conversations with supermarkets about excessive purchasing. Mr. Dean said not yet, but probably within the next few days they will coordinate with supermarkets. They've been more focused on the public health and safety side to this point. Mr. Wilking said if purchasing supplies reduces peoples' anxiety about protecting their family, they're not going to stop that. They've been assured by the grocery stores and wholesalers that there is no shortage, and the supply chains will continue to function.

Police Chief Stephan Poulin said the Police Department's main concern is staffing. The Dispatch Center is asking screening questions on calls per the CDC. They're asking the public to call rather than come in if there is a concern, but the lobby is currently open. If the public has questions regarding the Corona virus, they should call 211, and only call 911 if they need urgent help. He added that the department has mutual aid agreements with surrounding communities, so if there is an issue there will be help.

Jay Perkins, the Highway Superintendent, spoke on behalf of the Public Works Director. They're also concerned with staffing, but right now doing ok. They're doing a lot of cleaning, and have some PPE in stock. Ms. Cowan asked if they expect any changes to trash pickup, and Mr. Perkins said not at this time. Ms. Oliff asked what will happen if residents have trouble obtaining blue bags. Mr. Perkins said he heard that one store ran out of blue bags, but the supplier is operating at full function. If there were a real shortage, that would be a question for the Town Manager.

Mr. Dean discussed current town closures, including the Library and the Senior Center. They are planning to close the Town Offices and encourage people to do business online. He recommends that if Boards don't have to meet, they shouldn't plan on meeting until May 1. He has been meeting with representatives of other town organizations, such as PEA, on their plans. He is concerned about Human Services issues increasing, and they are working with Saint Vincent de Paul on coordinating services.

Ms. Oliff expressed concern for families who do not feel home is a safe place to be because of other people in the home. Chief Poulin said if anyone feels unsafe they can call the Police and they will respond. They can also reach out to a victims' advocate group such as Safe Haven.

5. Public Comment

- a. There was no public comment at this meeting.

6. Proclamations/Recognitions

- a. There were no proclamations/recognitions at this meeting.

7. Approval of Minutes

- a. Regular Meeting: March 2, 2020

MOTION: Ms. Cowan moved to approve the minutes of March 2, 2020 as submitted. Mr. Papakonstantis seconded. By a roll call vote, Ms. Cowan, Ms. Gilman, and Mr. Papakonstantis voted yea, and Ms. Oliff and Mr. Browne abstained as they were not present at that meeting. The motion passed 3-0-2.

8. Appointments

- a. There were no appointments at this meeting.

9. Discussion/Action Items

- a. Review Town Ballot Voting Results

Mr. Dean said the Town Election was last Tuesday, and every article on the warrant passed other than Article 4, the Rec Park project. The budgets were approved by 65% or more. They haven't yet discussed next steps for the Rec Park. They don't have a timeline for Lincoln Street Parking yet, but it's in the queue.

- b. Paving Recommendation 2020

Jay Perkins said they received a good offer on paving from a long-time town contractor. If the price of liquid asphalt continues to go down, the pricing will be revised to reflect that.

MOTION: Ms. Cowan moved to extend the contract with Bell & Flynn for the paving. Mr. Papakonstantis seconded. By a roll call vote, all were in favor.

- c. TAP Easement Vote

Dave Sharples, the Town Planner, said that they've had two public hearings on the easements required for the TAP project, and now they can vote on acquiring the easements. This is the last step in executing the easements.

MOTION: Ms. Cowan moved to authorize the Town Manager to execute any and all documents to acquire the land and easements shown on the easement plan by Hoyle, Tanner and Associates dated 2/21/2020 that are necessary to complete the Transportation Alternatives Program sidewalk project, Federal project #X-A004(611) on Epping Road, Winter Street, and Spring Street. Ms. Gilman seconded. By a roll call vote, all were in favor.

- d. Select Board Representatives to Town Committees

The Board was in consensus on all of the following appointments:
Planning Board: Ms. Cowan, with Mr. Browne as the alternate.

Rec Advisory Board: Ms. Cowan, with Ms. Oliff as the alternate.
Conservation Commission: Ms. Gilman will continue to be the representative, with Mr. Browne as the alternate.
The Economic Development Commission representative is usually the chair of the Select Board, so Mr. Papakonstantis will serve in this role.
Heritage Commission: Ms. Gilman
Historic District Commission: Ms. Gilman
Rockingham Planning Commission: Ms. Gilman attends as the State Rep, so can also serve as the representative from the Select Board.
Swasey Parkway Trustees: Ms. Oliff
Communications Advisory Committee: Mr. Browne
E911 Committee: Ms. Cowan
Energy Committee: Ms. Gilman will continue to serve as representative.
Facilities Committee: Mr. Browne
Housing Advisory Committee: Ms. Oliff
River Advisory Committee: Mr. Papakonstantis
Sustainability Advisory Committee: Mr. Papakonstantis
Water/Sewer Advisory Committee: Ms. Cowan

Mr. Papakonstantis said he plans to bring forward a proposal a Cultural Commission soon. Mr. Dean said if there are changes they want to make to the list of committees, other than the ones created by statutory process, there can be a review. Mr. Browne said he thought they should consider the Facilities Committee, and it will be on a future agenda.

10. Regular Business

a. Tax Abatements, Veterans Credits and Exemptions

MOTION: Ms. Cowan moved to approve a Veterans Credit in the amount of \$500 for 75/17/33. Mr. Papakonstantis seconded. By a roll call vote, all were in favor.

MOTION: Ms. Cowan moved to approve an Elderly Exemption in the amount of \$236,251 for 95/64/267 and 95/64/338. Mr. Papakonstantis seconded. By a roll call vote, all were in favor.

MOTION: Ms. Cowan moved to approve an Elderly Exemption in the amount of \$152,251 for 65/124/10, 89/14 and 87/14/15A. Ms. Gilman seconded. In a roll call vote, Mr. Browne abstained, and the motion passed 4-0-1.

MOTION: Ms. Cowan moved to approve an Elderly Exemption in the amount of \$183,751 for 68/6/421. Mr. Papakonstantis seconded. In a roll call vote, Mr. Browne abstained, and the motion passed 4-0-1.

MOTION: Ms. Cowan moved to approve a Blind Exemption in the amount of \$15,000 for 96/15. Mr. Papakonstantis seconded. By a roll call vote, all were in favor.

MOTION: Ms. Cowan moved a denial of abatements in the following properties: 73/13/1, 113/5, 95/64/37. Mr. Papakonstantis seconded. In a roll call vote, Ms. Cowan and Mr. Papakonstantis voted yay, and Mr. Browne, Ms. Oliff, and Ms. Gilman abstained; the motion failed 2-0-3.

The Board reviewed the reasons provided for the abatement denial recommendations in the packet.

MOTION: Ms. Gilman moved to reconsider the motion for denial of abatements. Mr. Browne seconded. In a roll call vote, all were in favor.

MOTION: Ms. Cowan moved to approve an abatement in the amount of \$709.74 for 83/39. Mr. Papakonstantis seconded. By a roll call vote, Mr. Browne abstained and the motion passed 4-0-1.

MOTION: Ms. Cowan moved to approve an abatement in the amount of \$30.25 for 68/6/115. Mr. Papakonstantis seconded. By a roll call vote, Mr. Browne abstained and the motion passed 4-0-1.

MOTION: Ms. Cowan moved to approve an abatement in the amount of \$451.44 for 24/5. Mr. Papakonstantis seconded. By a roll call vote, Mr. Browne abstained and the motion passed 4-0-1.

Mr. Dean said the next abatement involved an error in a plan used for assessment; a piece of a basement, at 400 square feet, was incorrectly attributed to Mr. Leach. The assessor's position was that the property was recently sold at a price which far exceeds both the incorrect and the corrected valuation, so they recommend denying the abatement. Ms. Oliff said she would like to table this issue until the next meeting.

MOTION: Ms. Gilman moved to table the question until the next meeting. Ms. Cowan seconded. By a roll call vote, all were in favor.

Mr. Dean said that in the last issue, Mr. Peeke of the MCM Realty Trust said he never received his first tax bill from the town. They couldn't substantiate that, but recommended waiving the interest, which is about \$1,500. Ms. Gilman said in the past they've taken the position that the burden to remember to pay taxes is on the owner, not the town.

MOTION: Ms. Cowan moved to deny the motion of waiving the interest for Mr. Peeke. Mr. Papakonstantis seconded. By a roll call vote, all were in favor.

- b. Permits & Approvals
- c. Town Manager's Report
 - i. Mr. Dean said the election and the Corona Virus situation have been taking most of his time. He has a meeting of the Health Trust tomorrow fully electronically, under the emergency 91A rules approved by the Governor.
- d. Select Board Committee Reports

- i. Ms. Cowan attended the Housing Advisory Committee, where they are somewhat stalled on their project on multifamily housing. In the Water/Sewer Advisory Committee, they talked through a number of abatements; she encourages the public to follow up on any high usage alerts immediately to avoid big bills.
 - ii. Ms. Gilman had no meetings. She asked Ms. Cowan if she could present to the Housing Advisory Committee regarding upcoming bills on affordable housing. Ms. Cowan suggested she reach out to Nancy Belanger, the chair of the committee.
 - iii. Mr. Papakonstantis said the Planning Board meeting was cancelled.
 - e. Correspondence
 - i. The annual report from the Exeter Sportsman's Club.
- 11. Review Board Calendar
 - a. The next meetings are March 30, April 13, and April 27. If there's a need to meet in the meantime due to the ongoing crisis, they will make arrangements.
- 12. Non-Public Session
 - a. There was no non-public session at this meeting.
- 13. Adjournment

MOTION: Ms. Cowan moved to adjourn. Mr. Browne seconded. All were in favor, and the meeting adjourned at 9 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Joanna Bartell
Recording Secretary