

Select Board Meeting
Monday March 30, 2020
Remote via Zoom
Final Minutes

1. Call Meeting to Order

Members present: Julie Gilman, Molly Cowan, Lovey Roundtree Oliff, Daryl Browne, Niko Papakonstantis, and Russ Dean were present at this meeting.

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Papakonstantis at 7 PM. Mr. Papakonstantis said that gatherings of 10 or more people currently pose a risk to our community. The Select Board meeting is imperative to maintaining the Town of Exeter public services, so per RSA 91-A:2(3)b, this meeting will be conducted without a quorum of this body being physically present in one location. He welcomed the members of the public attending remotely, and said the usual rules of conduct and decorum will apply. All votes will require a roll call vote.

2. Public Comment

Mr. Papakonstantis said he received an email regarding a suggestion from the Facebook Community forum: residents are inquiring if the town can close Swasey Parkway to automobile traffic temporarily. Ms. Oliff said she's in full support of closing the Parkway, as it's one of the few places that people can get outside to walk now. Ms. Gilman agreed. Ms. Cowan said she agrees, but added that it's important for people to practice social distancing and not have big groups congregating, even if people are six feet apart. Mr. Browne said he's in favor, but he'd like to hear how it will affect the Police and FD. Mr. Dean said Chief Poulin was in support of the idea. He [Mr. Dean] is trying to figure out the signage to implement this. In about three weeks, JA Polito will be putting the final coat of pavement on Newfields Road, so they may need to open the Parkway at that time. Chief Wilking said he can't see any significant issue with the closure, other than possibly an emergency on Newfields Road. If they use soft barriers, they could get through in an emergency. The Parkway was closed most of last year and it did not affect operations. Mr. Papakonstantis asked if Mr. Dean thought crowds would be an issue. Mr. Dean said the Chief has expressed concerns about it, and the Police Department is out trying to enforce social distancing. For public gatherings, there's a Governor's Executive Order against gatherings of 10 people or more.

MOTION: Ms. Cowan moved to close the Swasey Parkway road portion to vehicle traffic for 30 days. Ms. Oliff seconded. By a roll call vote, all were in favor.

3. Proclamations/Recognitions

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

4. Approval of Minutes

a. Regular Meeting: March 16, 2020

MOTION: Ms. Cowan moved to approve the minutes of March 16, 2020 as submitted. Ms. Gilman seconded. By a roll call vote, all were in favor.

5. Appointments

- a. There were no appointments at this meeting. Mr. Papakonstantis said the town should reach out to those committee members whose terms expire April 30 to see if people want to be reappointed. Mr. Dean agreed, and said they'd already heard from a few people.

6. Discussion/Action Items

- a. Epping Road TIF Contract: VHB

Mr. Dean said this is a result of the town vote to approve the TIF contract with VHB, and would allow them to continue the project proposed for the King Property.

Darren Winham, the Economic Development Director said it's imperative to get this project up and running. The budget, which is not to exceed \$100,000, will go further than hoped, and includes some engineering conceptals. This will open up the planning of the Epping Road corridor. VHB has already been out there doing traffic counts. They're accounting for the COVID-19 situation.

Mr. Dean said they make two payments a year, one a partial interest payment in February, and one full payment in August. They've already made a whole payment on the bond and a partial interest payment for 2020.

MOTION: Ms. Gilman moved to sign the agreement for professional services with VHB for the Epping Road Corridor Study at a cost not to exceed \$100,000. Ms. Cowan seconded. By a roll call vote, all were in favor.

- b. 2020 MS-232 Report of Appropriations

Mr. Dean said this report is something that the DRA gets from the town, and it's used to set the tax rate in the fall. It's due 20 days after the vote, which is today, but the DRA is being understanding about minor delays. Only three members need to sign; Mr. Papakonstantis, Ms. Oliff, and Ms. Gilman will go in to the Town Offices and sign it.

- c. COVID-19 Updates

Assistant Fire Chief Wilking said that Sunday they saw the largest single day of positive tests. Today, the news is reporting 300 statewide cases. The numbers are not moving in our favor, and the virus is still in the growth phase. We're doing well in Exeter; and the Fire and Police Departments are still functioning well. There have been three deaths statewide, low numbers compared to our neighbors but still too many. One death was in Rockingham County.

The Fire Department has six employees impacted by non-direct exposure. For 14 days, these employees will report on their general health, including temperature, and the department will decide whether they should stay on active duty or go on quarantine. One individual's spouse tested positive, so that employee will not return until 2 weeks after the spouse's symptoms are over.

Another employee's spouse is presumed positive, and he was pulled off as well, so two of 30 employees are out.

Mr. Wilking said that Health Officer Murray is working with local food establishments, making sure that businesses are complying with the Governor's orders and following safe practices. Fire/EMS have had an average number of calls, they have yet to see a spike in service. They have transported patients that are presumed positive, and they were geared up with protective equipment. His goal is to keep all employees safe and working as long as possible. Their stock of PPE is adequate for 2 weeks to 1 month. They've been placing orders and have received plastic face shields. Last week, Exeter was chosen for a drive-through test site, but it was determined that they don't have enough people that need to be tested yet so it was cancelled. Currently, they're only testing health care workers and public safety employees.

Mr. Wilking helped Durham/UNH develop an action plan for a 250 bed "surge hospital" to serve as a transitional facility. This will allow hospitals to push patients to this facility for monitoring and stay for quarantine, and relieve the pressure on the hospital. The best guess on when to expect a surge is the middle to the end of April. We're a week behind Boston/MA.

Residents can get information about dealing with the virus online or by calling 211. He urges the public to practice social distancing and obey the stay at home order, and minimize trips to those absolutely necessary.

Mr. Papakonstantis said at the last meeting, Mr. Wilking was somewhat optimistic about getting supplies. Has that changed? Mr. Wilking said they're still cautiously optimistic. They haven't yet tested the supply chain because they were well prepared going in. They've had PPE donations from the community. Mr. Papakonstantis asked about mutual aid calls, and Mr. Wilking said they're about the same. There was a small blip about a week ago as departments geared up, but it levelled off.

Mr. Browne asked him to define a "surge," Mr. Wilking said it's a term the health care industry uses that describes when they have an influx of patients they can't handle all at once. They will be able to transfer them to the UNH facility to allow them to better manage patient flow.

Ms. Cowan asked about the Police Department, who had initial concerns about their lack of PPE. Mr. Wilking said they meet with the Police Department daily and shared some PPE with them. The Police Department has been working on alternative scheduling for their staff. EMS offered to share the electrostatic cleaner they use for the ambulances for use in patrol vehicles.

Mr. Dean said Chief Poulin sent a memo, urging citizens to be cautious about scams involving COVID-19. He added that the Police Department is going to a staffing model which will help address positive cases in the Police Department, as multiple officers on a shift may need to be quarantined for multiple days.

Ms. Gilman asked about COVID-19 testing options in Exeter or nearby. Mr. Wilking said EHS is managing testing locally. If someone is recommended to

be tested by their PCP, or a first responder needs to be tested based on exposure, and is showing symptoms, they can be tested there. Convenient MD is also testing. A more rapid test is being developed; currently they're waiting 5-7 days for test results, and have personnel that don't need to be quarantined but can't come back to work for that time. EHS has been able to manage the testing we need. If a person is not showing symptoms, the test may be negative even though you have it.

Mr. Dean said that things have been turned upside down by these events. The town government is doing everything they can to make sure services are still being provided while protecting the employees. They're keeping the town website updated daily. Darren Winham is working to help businesses understand the issues. The Families First Act, which some employees may use for leave to deal with childcare issues and schools being closed, could cause staffing problems.

Ms. Gilman asked where the public can get dump stickers. Mr. Dean said they should call public works directly and work with them. They will try to get them out via mail.

Mr. Papakonstantis asked whether the Land Use Boards could use Zoom to meet remotely. Mr. Dean said up to 100 people can attend the remote meetings, but they're looking to move those Boards' business items out to May if possible and limit the amount of meetings over the next month.

7. Regular Business

a. Tax Abatements, Veterans Credits and Exemptions

MOTION: Ms. Gilman moved to approve a Veterans Credit of \$500 for 86/59. Mr. Browne seconded. By a roll call vote, all were in favor.

MOTION: Ms. Gilman moved to approve Elderly Exemptions for 104/79/310 and 65/23 in the amount of \$236,251. Ms. Cowan seconded. By a roll call vote, all were in favor.

MOTION: Ms. Gilman moved to approve an Intent to Cut for 28/19 for 2020 - 2021, 28/20 for 2019 - 2020, and 28/20 for 2020 - 2021. Ms. Cowan seconded. By a roll call vote, all were in favor.

MOTION: Ms. Gilman moved to approve an abatement of \$127.99 for 60/9. Ms. Cowan seconded. By a roll call vote, all were in favor.

b. Permits & Approvals

i. There were no permits and approvals at this meeting.

c. Town Manager's Report

Mr. Dean thanked Principal Rawson at PEA for the interactions they've had, it's good to have that exchange of information. They've also been in conversations with the Hospital and how they can help. Vapotherm, a local company, is working overtime to produce ventilation equipment. The town is

exploring virtual signature software. The IT Department has been unbelievably helpful during this process.

Mr. Papakonstantis thanked SAU 16 for their efforts to give kids structure and continue their education. Ms. Oliff said assured homeschooling parents that the kids will be okay, and parents shouldn't be stressed out. Ms. Gilman thanked those putting together the school lunches.

Mr. Papakonstantis asked about Meals on Wheels. Mr. Dean said he heard that they've reduced the number of deliveries a week, but he will get an update from them. Mr. Papakonstantis asked how seniors can get help from the town. Mr. Dean said to call or email Parks and Recreation, who are in the best position to triage those requests.

Mr. Browne said he's concerned about the impact on the tax base; the town will really feel it 18 months later, and they should keep an eye on it for the BRC and budget processes. Mr. Dean said he's started to have conversations with Finance about the impacts. They'll have to crunch those numbers at some point.

d. Select Board Committee Reports

There were no committee reports. Ms. Gilman said the State House is closed until May 4th, when they will reconsider the closure.

e. Correspondence

- i. A notice from Xfinity saying they postponed moving the Cartoon Network to Digital Preferred tier in light of recent events.
- ii. A letter from Seacoast Family Promise thanking the town for their recent donation.
- iii. A notice from NHDES dealing with proposed revisions to NWQ305 which will affect the Wastewater Treatment Facility, and asking for town comments.
- iv. A sample application for Community Revitalization tax relief per RSA 79-E. Mr. Dean said that tonight it's informational. Once people start applying, they will have to schedule a public hearing for the Board to discuss with the applicant the relief they're seeking.

8. Review Board Calendar

- a. The next meeting is April 13th, and will be remote.

9. Non-Public Session

- a. There was no non-public session at this meeting. Mr. Dean said he'll have to speak with legal counsel regarding how to do a nonpublic session in a remote meeting. Mr. Glowacky said he's in contact with other station managers, and can ask them how they handle it. As the organizer of the Zoom meeting, he can push members of the public to the "waiting room," but he'll have to look at how to stop streaming.

10. Adjournment

MOTION: Mr. Browne moved to adjourn. Ms. Cowan seconded. By a roll call vote, all were in favor, and the meeting adjourned at 8:20 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Joanna Bartell
Recording Secretary