

Select Board Meeting
Monday January 25, 2021
6:45 PM
Remotely 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 6:45 PM.

Mr. Papakonstantis read a statement:

As Chair of the Select Board, I find that due to the State of Emergency declared by the Governor as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and in accordance with the Governor's Emergency Order #12 this public body is authorized to meet electronically.

Public notice of this meeting was posted on the town website and on the bulletin board of the town offices at 10 Front Street on Jan 22, 2021. As provided in that public notice, the public may access the meeting online and via phone. The usual rules of conduct and decorum will apply.

Please note that all votes taken during this meeting shall be done by roll call vote. Let's start the meeting by taking a roll call attendance. When each member states their presence, please also state whether there is anyone in the room with you during this meeting and who that person is (son, daughter, spouse, etc...), which is required under the Right-to-Know law.

2. Board Interviews

- a. Elizabeth Stevens for the Energy Committee
- b. Anne Kenny for the Exeter Arts & Culture Commission
- c. Dawn Amey for Exeter Arts & Culture Commission

3. Public Comment

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

4. Proclamations/Recognitions

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

5. Approval of Minutes

- a. There were no minutes approved at this meeting.

6. Appointments

- a. There were no appointments at this meeting.

7. Discussion/Action Items

- a. Town Moderator Updates

Town Moderator Paul Scafidi, Supervisor of the Checklist Vicky Nawoichyk, Town Attorney Walter Mitchell, SAU Facilities Director Rusty Lyster, and SAU Moderator Attorney Kate Miller were present to discuss the Deliberative Session.

Mr. Papakonstantis said that a letter, which was approved by Attorney Mitchell, went to the Governor. The Governor then issued Executive Order #83, allowing towns to postpone Deliberative Session, but not to hold a virtual session.

Mr. Scafidi said he met with Attorney Miller and all SAU towns except East Kingston. By consensus and vote, the towns are all going ahead with a traditional town meeting and Deliberative Session and voting on March 9th. They will be doing all that they can to keep social distancing and safety. The SAU session is at 2 PM Saturday January 30; the Town Deliberative Session will be Feb 6. They will be meeting with Rusty Lyster and others to discuss logistics. Mr. Lyster said they did a trial run of the SAU session and it went well, with video to the locations that they talked about. Mr. Scafidi said the other towns wanted to keep the traditional Deliberative Session and voting. There was no consensus to postpone until June or July as per the Governor's order.

Attorney Miller said Town Moderators make the call on postponement, but they need to get consensus, and the decision of the majority was to continue with the schedule as set. It's complicated with budget matters and teacher contracts that will cause problems if delayed.

Mr. Dean showed a proposed layout for the Deliberative Session.

Robin Tyner of 9 Mill Stream Drive had a comment that she was not able to make during public comment period. She said she has trouble find the info for logging into Select Board meetings.

Ms. Gilman asked if there was a discussion about the virtual option. Mr. Scafidi said the only mention of it was that it would be too difficult. The other towns' Deliberative Sessions will be smaller. He will oversee a full run-through of the Session on Wednesday.

Mr. Papakonstantis asked what the Board's set-up would be. Mr. Scafidi said he needs their help and participation in setting up both Deliberative Session and the Election, as there are a lot of odds and ends need to be done. Selectpersons can be designated as Assistant Moderators. Ms. Gilman asked if they will be making virtual accommodations for staff, and Mr. Dean said they haven't yet had that conversation. They'll see what concerns people have.

Mr. Browne asked how this relates to the Board's vote at the last meeting, as it sounds like it directly negates it. Mr. Scafidi said the six towns make the decision, not any one Select Board. If the other five towns decide that that's the way to go, the Select Board has no choice but to follow. Ms. Oliff asked why they spent the hours having the discussion if it wasn't up to them. Mr. Papakonstantis said they looked at different ways to make this safe, which he thinks was a valuable conversation.

Ms. Nawoichyk said signage will be crucial with the different areas at the Deliberative Session. There should be documentation for attendees to orient them. They should have current CDC guidelines posted, such as double masking. Mr. Scafidi said all attendees will have to come inside to check in with the Supervisor of the Checklist. They will put out a PSA following the SAU meeting with all the information.

b. Tree Committee - Activity Update and Proposed Tree Ordinance

Eileen Flockhart was present to discuss the proposed Tree Ordinance. They re-applied for Tree City USA certification. The Tree Committee is now a subcommittee of the Conservation Commission. They need an ordinance with a mission statement on protecting trees. They've learned a lot about how to plant trees and keep them alive, which could be incorporated into a standards document. They are presenting a draft, but will come back with a final version, possibly in late summer.

Mr. Papakonstantis asked if they need the ordinance for Tree City USA. Ms. Flockhart said there is something basic in place, but they're looking to create something more substantial. Ms. Gilman asked if the County Extension is involved, and Ms. Flockhart said yes, in the person of Greg Jordan. He is looking for an intern to do an iTree survey, which was last done in 2017 and looks at tree cover in the downtown area. Ms. Gilman asked if they're prioritizing native trees, and Ms. Flockhart said she'd like to put recommended trees in their specifications. She will come back before the Board with a more finished draft.

c. Involuntary Lot Merger - 11 Bonnie Drive, Tax Map 65/43/1

MOTION: Ms. Cowan moved to open the public hearing for the involuntary lot merger for 65/43/1. Ms. Gilman seconded. In a roll call vote, all were in favor.

Mr. Dean said that a law has been passed that the Select Board should hold a public hearing to determine whether to restore a lot that was involuntarily merged, if they are petitioned before Dec 31, 2021 by the property owner. The Boudreaus have applied for the restoration of an involuntarily merged lot at 11 Bonnie Drive. It was merged in April 1999. This process goes through the Building Inspector's office and Assessing, and they've confirmed the date, but there's nothing on the records beyond that. The staff is supportive of this application being granted with minor conditions.

Building Inspector Doug Eastman said the abutters have been duly notified.

Craig Boudreau, the property owner, thanked the Building Inspector and the Assessor's Office for their help with the application process.

Mr. Papakonstantis opened the discussion to public comment, but there was none. He brought the discussion back to the Board

MOTION: Mr. Browne moved to approve the application for the restoration of the involuntarily merged lot for the property at 11 Bonnie Drive, Tax Map 65/43/1, as presented, subject to the property owners obtaining a survey and preparing a deed for the unmerged lot to be provided to the town for recording purposes. Ms. Oliff seconded. By a roll call vote, all were in favor.

MOTION: Ms. Oliff moved to close the public hearing. Ms. Gilman seconded. By a roll call vote, all were in favor.

d. Squamscott River Siphons Project Update - Public Works

Jennifer Perry, Matt Berube, and Paul Vlasich were present to discuss the Squamscott River Siphons project. Mr. Vlasich gave a presentation on the project, which started with \$1.6M in 2020 and now has a deficit of \$930,000.

Mr. Papakonstantis asked when this project needs to be completed by. Mr. Vlasich said they have no deadline, but if they delay they may hear from the Environmental Services. There are holes in both pipes. They could have a design in 3 - 4 months and put it out to bid in another month. Mr. Papakonstantis pointed out that they finalized the warrant last week; couldn't this have been identified earlier? Mr. Dean said not all the field activities were completed until now.

Ms. Cowan asked what happens if one of these pipes fails. Mr. Vlasich said the worst thing that will happen would be a complete collapse while trying to work within the pipe, and then only one barrel would be going across the river where two are required. The flow would back up on the Jady Hill side of the river. Ms. Cowan asked if they can wait until next year's budget. Jennifer Perry said they've been up front with DES once they discovered the state of the pipe. She reached out to find out if there is funding from DES, and unofficially there is money, but they can't do it without an authorization of the town. Everything they've seen has been infiltration, not exfiltration, at this point.

Mr. Vlasich said they have enough in the project's money to start with designs, just not enough to execute them. Mr. Papakonstantis asked if that could wait until next year, and Mr. Vlasich said yes, unless NHDES required a more immediate fix. Mr. Dean said they could potentially have a special meeting. Mr. Papakonstantis said he's not comfortable with moving forward, and would like the Department to come back and discuss this further.

e. COVID 19 Updates

Chief Wilking said the State Covid numbers are steady following the holidays. 5500 more people tested positive, with 8 deaths in Rockingham County. There are 53 new cases in Exeter, for a cumulative total of 506. There were 28 new cases over the weekend. Vaccinations are moving ahead, and the State reports 120,000 vaccinations delivered statewide. Exeter is managing the majority of the Seacoast region. The State is finishing with group 1A, and many of those have already received their second dose. Exeter personnel start their second dose tomorrow. In Group 1B, 300,000 residents are eligible, 200,000 have signed up. The signup has gone smoothly for many, but some have not been able to log on. Exeter Fire has been asked by Seacoast Region Public Health to assist with the delivery of vaccinations, in "mobile units". He added that Fire and EMS will be present at the Deliberative Session to assist.

Mr. Dean said they continue to have positive Covid tests within the organization. He's hoping for their speedy recovery.

8. Regular Business

a. Tax Abatements, Veterans Credits and Exemptions

MOTION: Ms. Gilman moved to approve a Veteran's Credit - Disability for 95/64/12 in the amount of \$2,000. Ms. Oliff seconded. In a roll call vote, all were in favor.

MOTION: Ms. Gilman moved to approve a Veteran's Credit of \$500 for 65/73. Ms. Oliff seconded. In a roll call vote, all were in favor.

Ms. Gilman read the list of solar exemptions: 62/81, 62/58, 63/53, 62/17, 74/142, 64/22, 82/30, 64/11, and 104/63. There was no action by the Board.

b. Permits & Approvals

Mr. Dean said the MRI Assessing contract expired at the end of 2020, and he's looking for the Board to approve an extension through June 30, 2021. They must report this to the State as well. This is the same amount they're currently billing per month.

MOTION: Ms. Gilman moved To extend the agreement with MRI's professional services \$8,958.38 billed monthly through June 30, 2021. Mr. Browne seconded.

c. Town Manager's Report

- i. The Warrants for the Town Deliberative Session have been posted.
- ii. He was able to testify at the SB2 hearing at the Election Law Hearing at the House.

d. Select Board Committee Reports

- i. Mr. Browne had no report. The EPSC and Communications meetings are tomorrow.
- ii. Ms. Oliff had no report.
- iii. Ms. Gilman had a Historic District Commission meeting; the owner of a building on Front Street wanted to re-side it, but the Commission rejected the proposal.
- iv. Ms. Cowan had no report.
- v. Mr. Papakonstantis has a Sustainability meeting next week.

e. Correspondence

- i. A letter from Swasey Parkway Trustee Chair Dwayne Staples.

9. Review Board Calendar

- a. Deliberative Session is Feb 6; the next Select Board meetings are Feb 8 and Feb 22. Rather than meeting March 8, the night before the election, they will switch the meeting to March 1st.

10. Non-Public Session

- a. There was no non-public session at this meeting.

11. Adjournment

MOTION: Ms. Oliff moved to adjourn. Ms. Gilman seconded. By a roll call vote, all were in favor, and the meeting adjourned at 8:54 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Joanna Bartell
Recording Secretary

