

Selectmen's Meeting Monday, January 25, 2021

These minutes were recorded by Angela Rizzitano, Secretary. The meeting was held in the Bub Avery Gymnasium at Town Hall.

Chairman Martha Eldridge made a motion to reconvene the meeting at 4:15 PM. Simpson seconded. A unanimous vote was taken.

Call to Order/Roll Call: Completed in the Work Session-Martha Eldridge, Jonathan Smith, Susan Simpson

Chairman M. Eldridge opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Public Input:

Joe Deighan questioned his latest Water & Sewer bill and the flat units being charged. T.J. Eldridge, Public Works Director, advised that monthly invoicing starts in February. Dallas Emery commented that he spoke to the Board about the Water & Sewer changes multiple times and there is still confusion over invoicing. T.J. Eldridge advised that he will look into the invoicing. Discussion ensued.

Daymond Steer, Conway Daily Sun, discussed the mask mandate. He spoke with the Attorney General's office and was advised that it is allowed to have a mask policy in place. Matt Sawyer Jr., Town Administrator, advised that the executive order does not have penalty or enforcements details. Dallas Emery expressed concerns regarding this and stated that there is no proof that wearing masks work. Frank Burke asked why some people are not wearing masks. Selectman Smith gave a synopsis of what Emergency Order 74 says. It states that if you are able to maintain a 6 foot distance inside or outside then a mask is not required. It also states that if you have a medical condition, you are exempt from this emergency order. Frank Burke also discussed the caricature in the newspaper and stated that it doesn't make the Town of Ossipee look too good. Smith advised that it was reported on false information. Discussion ensued.

Meeting Minutes:

Selectman M. Eldridge advised that the Board had a non-public Session upstairs per RSA 91-A: 3, II(c) and a motion to seal the Non-Public Minutes was also made in the work session.

Selectman M. Eldridge made a motion to approve the minutes from the Work Session held on January 19, 2021. Simpson seconded. A unanimous vote was taken.

Selectman M. Eldridge made a motion to approve the minutes from the Selectmen's Meeting held on January 19, 2021. Simpson seconded. A unanimous vote was taken.

Accounts Payable & Payroll Manifests:

The Payroll Check Voucher total was submitted for the week ending 1/23/2021 with a pay date of 1/26/2021 in the amount of \$50,094.50. Accounts Payable for the week ending 1/26/2021 is \$18,604.29. M. Eldridge made a motion to approve. Simpson seconded. A unanimous vote was taken.

January 25, 2021 Town Of Ossipee

Last Tuesday this board was attacked by the mask shaming police. Mask shaming has become nothing more than a new tactic by those who believe in tyranny and oppression at the hand of government. It has become the new political buzz word. This board has never ever indicated that a mask should not be worn. Actually the exact opposite is true. It has been clearly stated over and over again that if you want to wear a mask you can and should. Frankly, every employee had the opportunity to follow the Governors emergency order. The emergency order is not a law. There is no penalty. It states clearly that if you can maintain a 6ft social distance a mask is not and I repeat not required. It also states that if you have a medical condition a mask is not required and you do not have to prove such a condition. This idea that the board was careless and reckless is foolhardy. Immediately upon the presence of the virus this board shut down all town facilities and I was assigned to be the representative to the emergency management operations center. In the emergency meetings based on information provided by the state, we had great fears of massive death within the town. We were all gravely concerned. We continued with our weekly meetings to assess the situation. We determined the best course of action was to have limited access to town facilities which included the suspension of recycling due to the unknown transmissibility of the virus. In the interim we installed plastic barriers between the public and staff, suspended weekly selectman meetings and attempted to acquire sanitizing equipment and PPE. As we realized that a total shutdown is not practical for the continuity of government we opened up town facilities with restrictions. We slowly phased back in recycling and public access to town facilities by appointment. Employees slowly came back to work. At this point we had available some PPE, hand sanitizer and disinfectant chemicals. Our Town Clerk who gets the bulk of citizens stayed open by appointment only. She began a rigorous cleaning regiment in her office which included wiping down counters after every customer, issuing masks, offering hand sanitizer including the installation of plastic barriers. Our Public Works Director implemented a sanitizing and cleaning regiment within all government facilities. This included issuing sanitizing equipment, masks and guidance for social distancing. At that point each employee is and should be responsible for their health and well being. This is not kindergarten. We are professionals.

As time went on the board began to reassess the financial impact this would have on the town and taxpayers. The estimation by the state indicated they expected a 500 million dollar revenue shortfall. This was a scary thought for the board. If the state's revenues were going to fall that short what did this mean for the town's finances? The Board of Selectman had a lot of discussion as to how to cut costs. Since we had employees with very limited duties at the time we suggested a furlough program which we estimated would have saved

approximately \$60k. A dual benefit of the furlough program would have been the social distancing since they are no longer at the town. This furlough program would have allowed most employees to collect more money at home than being employed due to the extra \$600 federal benefit. After the unanimous vote of the board to furlough employees, the Union challenged it on the basis of an early 90's Supreme Court case. The board then had to rescind the vote to furlough. In the following weeks and months as the crisis continued town operations slowly got back to normal. This included full recycling, road maintenance by the highway crew, planning, zoning and budget meetings at the Freight House plus normal Board of Selectman meetings.

During the September and November 2020 election which had the largest voter turnout ever in Ossipee history; the Board of Selectman, Town Clerk and Moderator worked collaboratively to put on an extremely safe and efficient election. This comprised of plastic barriers, hand sanitizer, masks and social distancing. Every poll worker, elected official and the majority of voters wore a mask when participating in the election. This includes the Board of Selectman.

It is undeniable that some of us got sick. No rational person can say for certain where it came from. Our employees are only with us for 40 hours per week. There are 168 hours in a week. That means for 75% of the time they are not at the town. Every employee when they leave work does not go home to a protected bubble. They go out into the world. This involves everything from dining at a small restaurant to shopping at a large box store. Exposure can happen anytime and anywhere.

This board cares deeply for its employees and residents. None of us would run for this office unless you truly cared and loved to serve people. We are human beings just like you. We have spouses, children, grand children and extended family members just like you. It is foolish for one person to present to the public that we are careless, insensitive people.

In closing the board would like to state the virus is real, take precautions, use common sense but never surrender your liberty and principles for the sake of political expediency.

Sincerely,

Selectman
Jonathan H. Smith

Selectman
Martha Eldridge

Selectman
Susan Simpson

Review of Red Folder:

The Board received a request from T.J. Eldridge, Public Works Director, suggesting the promotion of Eric Seamans to Equipment Operator. The department has only one operator currently. M. Eldridge made a motion to promote Eric Seamans to Equipment Operator effective January 23, 2021. Simpson seconded. A unanimous vote was taken.

The Board received a request from T.J. Eldridge, Public Works Director, to lease a rubber-tired drum compactor to help with summer road maintenance. He recommends using the \$10,000 line item in the Highway operating budget to enter into a lease to buy contract with an escape clause for 7 years. M. Eldridge made a motion to approve. Simpson seconded. A unanimous vote was taken.

The Board received a request from T.J. Eldridge, Public Works Director, for purchase of gravel for the 2021 season. Amounts are as follows. Evans Brothers (Berry Pit) - \$20,000. Ossipee Aggregates - \$20,000. Pine River Sand & Gravel LLC - \$10,000. The J Jeddrey LLC - \$10,000. He recommends to award each aggregate pit per the amount listed. M. Eldridge made a motion to approve. Simpson seconded. A unanimous vote was taken.

The Board received a request from T.J. Eldridge, Public Works Director, to purchase winter sand from Ossipee Aggregates as this facility has washed grits to get the fines out of the aggregate to help prevent clogging in the spreaders and gives motorists more traction on gravel roads. The amount budgeted for 2021 is \$35,000 at \$6.50 a ton. M. Eldridge made a motion to approve. Simpson seconded. A unanimous vote was taken.

The Board received a request from T.J. Eldridge, Public Works Director, to use All State Materials for Calcium Chloride for dust control. The price is consistent with last year's price. The quote received was 95 cents per gallon. It includes a storage tank and distributor system. M. Eldridge made a motion to approve. Simpson seconded. A unanimous vote was taken.

The Board received a request from T.J. Eldridge, Public Works Director, to award the road salt contract to Granite State Minerals for the 2021 season. This is the higher of the 2 quotes received but the quality of salt and same day delivery from Granite State contributed to this recommendation. M. Eldridge made a motion to approve. Simpson seconded. A unanimous vote was taken.

The Board received the Recycling Center Daily Cash Log for the month of December. Total collected was \$7,669.00.

The Board received a memo from Matt Sawyer Jr. regarding tax deeded property at 101 Ossipee Mountain Road. Legal has advised that the Town can sell this property. Sawyer Jr. asked the Board to allow him to proceed. Simpson made a motion to proceed. M. Eldridge seconded. A unanimous vote was taken.

Selectman Simpson read a letter to Chief Castaldo regarding his promotion to Chief of Police in Ossipee.

The Board received a Water & Sewer Warrant for \$99.20 for the property at 1 Shorey Lane. Simpson made a motion to approve. Smith seconded. A unanimous vote was taken.

The Board received a request for an Abatement for property owner Maxfield Property Holdings for \$2,194.06 plus interest if applicable. The Taxpayer filed an appeal with the BTLA and after meeting with the assessor, the Taxpayer offered a settlement proposal which resolves this issue. The Assessor recommends to grant this request. Simpson made a motion to approve. Smith seconded. A unanimous vote was taken.

The Board received a request for an Abatement for property owner David M. Sullivan for \$1,199.75 plus interest if applicable. The Taxpayer filed an appeal with the BTLA. The Assessor recommends the Board make the decision. M. Eldridge made a motion to deny. Smith seconded. A unanimous vote was taken.

The Board received an agreement with Total Notice LLC for Tax Liens and Executions. Smith made a motion to approve this contract. Simpson seconded. A unanimous vote was taken.

The Board received a Wetlands Permit Application for property located at 80 Weetamoe Road. It will be on file in the Selectmen's Office.

Old Business:

None

New Business:

Selectman Smith read a drafted letter signed by all 3 Selectmen in regards to the Mask discussion at the previous Selectmen's Meeting. That letter can be found on our website at www.ossipee.org.

Second Public Input:

Dallas Emery said the letter was good but did not go far enough. He advised that he has always supported the Boards decision to stay open to the public. He thinks the story written about the previous meeting was horrible. He said he just wants the fear mongering to stop. Discussion ensued.

Daymond Steer, Conway Daily Sun, advised that he reported what he heard at the previous meeting and according to RSA 31:39 the Selectmen can make an ordinance to require masks per the Attorney General. Smith advised that the Town of Ossipee will be mirroring the Executive Order 74. It states that if you are able to maintain a 6 foot distance inside or outside then a mask is not required. Dallas Emery asked whether the mask mandates would stand up to the NH Constitution. Discussion ensued.

Frank Burke, on behalf of his wife, gave Selectman Smith some homemade masks.

Kellie Skehan, Town Clerk/Tax Collector, advised on the open positions available in the Town of Ossipee. They are as follows. Selectman, Treasurer, Trustee of Trust Funds (3 year term), Trustee of Trust Funds (2 year term), Cemetery Trustee (3 year term), 2 for Library Trustee (3 year term), Library Trustee (2 year term), Supervisor of the Checklist (5 year term), 2 for Budget Committee (3 year term), Budget Committee (1 year term), 2 for Planning Board (3 year term), 3 for Zoning Board (3 year term). Skehan advised that anyone interested should sign-up at the Town Hall M-TH 8AM-4:30PM and Friday 8AM-5PM.

Smith asked Daymond Steer about the caricature in the paper. Smith also mentioned that the County has some Covid cases and he asked for prayers for them.

The next Budget Committee Public Hearing will be held on February 3, 2021 in the Town Hall Gym.

The next Selectmen's meeting will take place on Monday, February 1, 2021.

Adjournment:

Being no further input, M. Eldridge made a motion to adjourn. Smith seconded. A unanimous vote was taken.

Adjourned at 5:03 PM.

Martha B. Eldridge, Chairman

Susan J. Simpson

Jonathan H. Smith

To be approved 2/1/2021

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