

SPECIAL SELECTMEN'S MEETING - TUESDAY, MARCH 31, 2020

5:00PM Executive Session: To hold an executive session, pursuant to 1 M.R.S. section 405(1)(E), to consult with the town attorney regarding the Board's legal rights and duties regarding issues relating to COVID-19, including the enactment of emergency ordinances and orders.

Motion by Mrs. Chase, seconded by Mr. S. Roche, to go into Executive Session. Passed unanimously

Motion by Mrs. Chase, seconded by Mr. S. Roche, to come out of Executive Session. Passed unanimously

6:00 PM – SELECTMEN'S MEETING

Present via teleconference: Chairman Karl Ekstedt, Selectmen Kathy Chase, Tim Roche, Sean Roche, John MacLeod. Town Attorney Leah Rachin, Finance Director Jodie Sanborn, Social Media Consultant Brittany DiCapua.

Present: Town Manager Jon Carter, Police Chief Jo-Ann Putnam, Fire Chief Mark Dupuis.

MUNICIPAL OFFICERS BUSINESS / PUBLIC HEARINGS

1. Town COVID 19 Update – Update from Town Manager on Town COVID 19 issues from last meeting and BOS continued discussion of Federal and State COVID 19 policies and directions.

With the increasing number of cases in this part of the State we felt that more action was needed beyond just closing our beaches. Ms. Rachin was asked to draft two orders, one a temporary stay at home, the other temporarily limiting rental and seasonal accommodations. We have at least 5,000 seasonal units in Wells. Our year-round population is around 10,000, which jumps to around 40,000 in summer. There has been an influx of people in the past week. Our nearest medical facility York Hospital has only 6 ICU beds. A concern is the density of the seasonal accommodations, and the fact that they are occupied by many elderly and vulnerable people. The order is effective until May 1 or until the Governor determines that the emergency is over, whichever occurs first. Anyone who comes up to their seasonal property is strongly encouraged to self-quarantine, consistent with the Governor's order. The exceptions are:

~Someone comes here to care for a resident who is ill or infirm.

~Government facilities, agencies and services necessary for government operations and public health, safety and welfare.

~General Assistance recipients who have been provided with those accommodations.

~Workers in essential businesses.

Motion by Mrs. Chase, seconded by Mr. S. Roche, to accept and approve the order temporarily limiting rental and/or occupancy of temporary and seasonal accommodations during COVID-19 pandemic, effective March 31 to May 1, 2020 or when the Governor terminates the state of emergency, whichever occurs first.

Discussion of the motion:

~These are the effective dates for now, subject to change as we see how things develop. The Selectmen are currently meeting weekly.

~Ms. Rachin clarified the definitions:

- A. A short term rental means 30 days or less, whether rent is paid or not. An exception is if the occupancy began before today.
- B. High density accommodations include hotels, motels, small inns, seasonal cottages, B&B's, campgrounds, tent and RV parks and recreational parks.

Short term rentals and high density accommodations are prohibited during the emergency.

- C. Second/Seasonal Properties. Everything else not included in A or B. The Town is recommending that people stay where they are until May 1 or when the state of emergency is over. Self-quarantine when they arrive is a recommendation in our order and a mandate from the Governor.

In the Governor's executive order there is a travel ban except for those essential services.

The motion passed unanimously.

Motion by Mrs. Chase, seconded by Mr. S. Roche, to accept and approve the Town of Wells temporary stay at home or place of residence order, effective March 31 to May 1, 2020 or when the Governor terminates the state of emergency, whichever occurs first.

Discussion of the motion:

This was drafted before the Governor's executive order was released. Essential activities include: for health and safety, for necessary supplies and services, for essential work, to take care of others, and for outdoor activity that is not prohibited. People need to be aware of the latest restrictions on outdoor activity, such as which facilities are closed. Visitors to senior care facilities are restricted. Retail establishments are prohibited from using customers' reusable bags.

The motion passed unanimously.

2. Good News

~Ms. DiCapua has started a gratitude challenge on our Facebook page to offset the negativity.

Comments include:

~Thank you to our first responders.

~Thank you to the restaurants for keeping their employees on the payroll and providing nice meals.

~I was able to move someone into my home and care for them during this crisis.

~I am able to view church services on line.

~Thank you to the employees at Hannaford, Spillers and IGA.

~Varano's served a delicious meal to go for seniors.

~The Ogunquit Village Market is providing free deliveries.

~Mrs. Chase thanked Billy's Chowder House for the delicious shepherd's pie they served to the seniors. The sewing group at the Senior Center has been making masks for local hospitals.

~Mr. T. Roche thanked Feile for providing food to Wells PD. Thank you to all the restaurants who are providing food and take-out. The distance learning programs are going well. The School District provides some extra bag lunches each day, they are at the PD lobby for anyone who would like them.

~Mr. S. Roche noted that 3 distilleries are making hand sanitizer and L.L. Bean is making masks. Many local businesses are making deliveries. Thank you to Ms. DiCapua for doing a great job with our social media. The Town Facebook page is Town of Wells, Maine.

~Chief Putnam thanked all the delivery people –postal, FedEx, UPS—who are getting necessary things to people. Most people are co-operating with the beach closing.

~Mr. Carter thanked the Town employees for their dedication and keeping the Town functioning.

3. *Open to the Public. Questions and comments from Facebook.*

~Can people go to restaurants for take-out? Food is considered an essential service.

~If someone owns a home here, can they come up for the day and go back to Massachusetts? There are stay in place orders in surrounding states, too.

~Are there any cases in Wells? There are over 50 cases in York County. The CDC doesn't give specific information because of HIPPA regulations.

~Will we have an evening curfew? There are no plans to at this time.

~How do the restaurants handle take-out? Is it drive-through or can you go in and pick up your food? Each facility has its own system. Some will bring it out to your car. If you do go in, be sure to maintain the 6 ft. distance.

~Should the expiration of the order read 5/1 or when the Governor ends the state of emergency "or later" rather than "or earlier"? If she ends it earlier then the early date would apply. The Board was satisfied with using the early date.

~What are the essential services? The complete list is in the Governor's order.

~Who can seniors call for help with food or medication? The Senior Center is staffed Monday-Friday 9 AM-3 PM at 646-7775. They have teams of volunteers. The list of restaurants serving meals is on the Center's Facebook page. Tricia Hazlett has a Facebook page and is coordinating help for seniors.

~Can Lafayette's stay open for current guests and essential workers? Ms. Rachin said it is hard to give specific advice to a business owner. She referred people to the definitions in the Governor's executive order. Since the order starts today, current guests may stay in the short term rentals.

~With the travel ban, how can someone from "away" check on an elderly person here? If you are already in Town caring for someone, that is allowed. If you need to come up and care for an elderly or infirm person, that is one of the exceptions.

~Is construction work permitted? Not mentioned in the order. If it is outside and the workers are not congregating it seems to be safe. The order is for people's protection, not to stop work.

~Ms. Rachin referred to the Governor's order and certain tiers of stores, how many customers are permitted at a time based on the square footage (convenience stores, stand-alone hardware stores and pharmacies, small grocery stores, chain grocery stores and big box stores). A chain grocery store can allow 75 customers and must ensure that they are 6 ft. apart at the check-out.

~Can people come up to Sea Glass and Beach Dreams on weekends? Not this month.

~What about food trucks? Congdon's After Hours might not open. Individual trucks on private property require a site plan.

~Can the employees at campgrounds start working now to get things ready for the season? The order applies to people staying at campgrounds. The employees are local people and our concern is that they can work safely i.e. working outdoors and not congregating. Mr. MacLeod said that landscaping comes under the heading of agriculture and is an allowed business.

~Are construction permits available? The Code Office has an explanation of the process on the web site and permits are issued on line. They are doing virtual tours for certificates of occupancy.

CURRENT AGENDA ITEMS

1. ***Review and action on Accounts Payable and Payroll Warrants. – None***
2. ***Update, discussion and action on Committees, Projects, Issues, Purchases and Personnel:***
 - a) ***Discussion and action on Swamp John Road Warrant Article.***

Since the repair of Swamp John Road will cost over \$100,000 a warrant article is required. The estimate is \$1.1 million to improve the drainage, reconstruct and repave the road. Funding sources would be 1) \$600,000 from the Infrastructure Reserve Account, 2) \$250,000 from the

Beach Erosion Account, 3) \$200,000 from the Inland Golf Reserve Fund, and 4) any additional funds from the FY'21 paving account.

The other major projects are Pine Ledge Drive /Robinson Road, the wooden bridge at Drakes Island Road, the sea wall at Casino Square. We expect to have the engineering estimates over the summer and have these items ready for the November ballot.

Motion by Mrs. Chase, seconded by Mr. S. Roche, to include the article onto the Town Meeting Warrant and obtain the Budget Committee's recommendations on it. Passed unanimously.

b) ***Discussion and action on Updates, Personnel and Committee Assignments, Resignations and Issues.***

1. Town Manager - None
2. Selectmen - None

c) ***Discussion and action on accepting donations and bequests.***

1. \$3,000.00 received from Friends Supporting Wells Public Library to the Wells Public Library for 1st quarter programming.

Motion by Mrs. Chase, seconded by Mr. S. Roche, to accept the generous donation and write a letter of thanks to the donor. Passed unanimously.

d) ***Discussion and action on approving minutes of March 17, and March 24, 2020 Selectmen's meeting.***

Motion by Mrs. Chase, seconded by Mr. S. Roche, to approve the March 17 and March 24, 2020 Selectmen's meeting minutes. Passed unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS

1. ***Open to the Public***

~When is the Town going to pick up and chip all the branches that are down? Public Works will get to them as soon as they can unless there is a hazard. Some employees are self-isolating so staffing is an issue.

~Hours at the Transfer Station? This is an essential service. There had been some staffing issues and they had to shorten their hours for a while. Staffing is resolved and they are back to regular hours.

~12 step programs had to cancel their meetings. AA is doing on-line meetings. People were urged to call their sponsors and other friends from meetings. They need to hear from you just as much as you

need to hear their voices. Literature is available, read your Big Book and Twelve & Twelve. It's a great program, and it works when you work it.

~Victims of domestic abuse are especially vulnerable during times of high stress when they are confined at home with their abusers. The domestic violence agencies are not meeting clients face-to-face but they are available for phone calls. Caring Unlimited has a web site caring-unlimited.org and their number is 1-800-239-7298. If you are in danger, don't hesitate to call 911.

~The clam flats are closed.

~Can I have a plumber turn on the water in my cottage? Not recommended. We will probably have more freezing temperatures for a while.

~Outdoor activities. Mt. Agamenticus is closed. Rachel Carson is federal, so call and see if they are still open. Stay local with your outdoor activities; don't drive a long distance to a popular spot and find it crowded.

~Is anyone checking on the elderly? Mrs. Chase said the Senior Center is doing e-mail blasts and having their volunteers make phone calls. Call the Center at 646-7775; they will take the person's information and assign someone to call them. The Police Department does regular phone checks with the Good Morning Program. Loved ones who are "away" can call Wells PD and ask them to check someone in Town.

~Can the condos open? No, if you are closed you have to stay closed.

~Mr. T. Roche noted that Jack Ladderbush lost his battle with cancer. Jack was a Wells High School graduate and well-known builder in the Wells-Ogunquit area. Our condolences to his family.

~Mr. Ekstedt reminded everyone that we are doing the best we can in challenging circumstances. We need everyone to cooperate and follow the rules. Thank you to the Selectmen, Town staff, Town Attorney for countless hours involved in keeping Wells as safe as possible.

2. ***Town Manager's Report***

With the number of layoffs many people may be having financial difficulties. Our General Assistance Coordinator is working remotely and her contact information is on the website. The SBA has information on their website for businesses who need help with loans, etc.

3. ***Adjournment***

Motion by Mrs. Chase, seconded by Mr. S. Roche, to adjourn. Passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Accepted by,

Cinndi Davidson,
Meeting Recorder