

SELECTMEN'S MEETING (ZOOM) - TUESDAY, JUNE 2, 2020

Present via ZOOM: Chairman Karl Ekstedt, Selectmen Tim Roche, Kathy Chase, Sean Roche, John MacLeod, Fire Chief Mark Dupuis, Town Attorney Leah Rachin, Social Media Consultant Brittany DiCapua

Present: Town Manager Jon Carter, Police Chief Jo-Ann Putnam, EMS Director Jim Lapolla Finance Director Jodie Sanborn, Code Enforcement Officer Jodine Adams

MUNICIPAL OFFICERS WORKSHOP / BUSINESS / PUBLIC HEARINGS

1. FY'21 Town Meeting and Budget Informational Hearing

A video was shown which included discussions of the budget and warrant articles by Mr. Carter, Town Engineer/Planner Mike Livingston, Public Works Director Carol Murray and Finance Director Jodie Sanborn. The Town Meeting is scheduled for July 14 from 8 AM to 8 PM at the Junior High School Gym and preferably by absentee ballot. The operating budget has increased, primarily due to debt and insurance costs. We are under the tax cap by almost \$175,000. CIP is down by 22%. Revenues are down a bit but still good. The school tax is up by 1.28%. The municipal tax rate is \$3.56 up by 8.98%. Articles 3-13 are the budget articles as explained in the Town Meeting booklet.

Keith Fletcher of the Conservation Commission discussed Articles 14-16 dealing with conservation land purchases. Article 14 is for the purchase of a 74 acre parcel in High Pine with high ecological value. It abuts the future Eastern Trail. Article 15 adds at least 20 acres to the Fenderson Wildlife Commons and is important for protecting water quality. Article 16 improves access to the Getchell Commons and is an important area for training bird dogs. The Town will grant a ROW easement to the Bragdon Estate to access their property from Route 9.

Ms. Murray discussed Article 17 on critical infrastructure, roads, seawalls and a bridge. Swamp John Road is extensively travelled and is in bad condition. The road needs to be rebuilt including the drainage. Pine Ledge Drive and Robinson Road have poorly designed drainage and the homes and yards are frequently flooded. Jim Hall of Dubois & King described the condition of the wooden Drakes Island Bridge which has a number of deficiencies. The bridge is the only access to Drakes Island and the recommendation is to completely replace it. The 3 seawall projects are Crescent Beach (a FEMA project), Webhannet Drive and Casino Square. The walls are deteriorating but Ms. Murray said the roads are safe to travel. Mr. Carter said the road work is expected to cost \$4.5 million and estimates for the bridge and seawalls are pending. FEMA will pay 75% for one of the walls; we will pay up front and be reimbursed. Our bond broker has put together a plan for bond anticipation notes. Mr. Ekstedt thanked everyone who participated in the budget process. He said that these projects are vital and urged the voters to approve them.

2. COVID-19 Update

- a. – 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.***

Town Managers have conferred with the Governor and her Economic Development Commissioner regarding economic conditions in southern Maine. We expect some changes this week to the quarantine issue. Outside dining was discussed and the Governor was supportive.

b. Update on Governor Mills Orders- Excise Tax

The Governor asked the municipalities to set a date for having the backlog cleared. Ms. Sanborn reported that we have 2700 registrations from February-May still due, down from a high of 4500.

c. Re-opening the Community discussion of concerns and ideas from the business community

i. Discussion on re-opening - Beach Parking Lots

The lots opened last weekend with no problems. We will monitor them again this weekend.

Mr. S. Roche has been talking with business owners and proposed opening government facilities for employee parking, to allow more room near shops and restaurants for outdoor sales and dining. Lots that could be used include the junior high school, Harbor Park, Activity Center and Town Hall.

Motion by Mr. S. Roche, seconded by Mr. T. Roche, to allow overflow employee parking at the public lots. Passed unanimously.

ii. Coastal Community Collaboration

iii. Update on Town Facilities Re-opening

iv. Lodging Facility Advisory Committee

This is the deadline for submitting applications. There is a list of applicants in tonight's packets; the recommendation is to conduct brief ZOOM interviews in Executive Session with the Selectmen on June 16.

d. Update COVID-19 –We Are Wells Fund

3. Good News

~We have received a number of compliments on the re-opening of Town Hall and how well we are serving the public.

~The Library began curbside service as of June 1. Items can be ordered on line and an employee will bring them to your car. Guidance from the State is needed about re-opening safely, social distancing and cleaning materials after they are returned.

~Mr. S. Roche gave an update on Project Stimulus. As of today \$10,700 has been raised with over 100 baskets donated. Tickets can be purchased on Facebook for the June 18 raffle. The goal is \$11,000 by the end of tonight's meeting.

Mr. Roche also reported on a local photographer who does not get unemployment and planned to sell his photographic equipment. People responded to his post, convinced him to keep his equipment and bought his art work. Jay Hopkins has a beautiful Facebook page and now can continue with his passion and talent.

~Mr. T. Roche reported on graduation. Last week 125 of the 130 students participated in the ceremony. The parade will start Sunday at 1 PM on Route One from the Messiah Church to the Ogunquit Playhouse. People who are quarantining must stay inside. They cannot stand on the sidewalk and cheer for the graduates.

~Mr. MacLeod thanked Gary Milliard for grading Swamp John Road today.

~Mrs. Chase thanked the Varano family who has donated over 3,000 meals to our seniors.

~Project Stimulus just passed \$11,000!

4. Open to the Public

~Out-of-state visitors still have to quarantine. The Governor is expected to make an announcement this week or early next week with updates on quarantine and re-openings. Hotels and cottages have the same restrictions—quarantine in Maine for 14 days, then you can go to the hotel.

~Gatherings of more than 50 people are not allowed.

~There will not be an extension on property taxes.

~Mini-golf does not have a re-opening date yet.

~If a lodging guest becomes ill, call Wells ERgent Care. They will notify Maine CDC if the person tests positive. ERgent Care has stayed open the entire time.

~Quarantine means to stay at home except for essential travel, such as a medical visit. Don't contaminate other people. You have to stay on your property.

~Campgrounds and RV parks have a list of places that will deliver; check with your park manager.

~How are quarantines enforced? We don't know who the people are. We have to assume that people are trying to do the right thing. We are not aware of people being harassed for having out-of-state plates.

~The beach parking lots haven't been full yet. 10% of the spaces are reserved for people with stickers. If you don't have a sticker you pay at the meter. We don't know when the bathrooms will open.

~Paving Swamp John Road: residents will vote on the bond question on July 14. The road will be reconstructed once the bond passes.

~Can we have sidewalks on Branch Road? It's a state road and the state would have to authorize it.

~We are looking into a mix we can put on Furbish Road.

~How are land trusts funded? We have the land bank, there are grants from the state and private donations. The Conservation Commission works to obtain grants and they partner with Great Works Land Trust.

~The absentee ballots are at the printers. People can request them now.

~Will we issue more permits on line? Clam licenses might be difficult. It might work for dog licenses.

~Can we get a traffic light at Eldridge Road? The state would have to authorize it based on calculations of year round usage, not just the summer traffic. The light to be installed at Routes 109/9A does meet the state standard.

~When FEMA reimburses us will we pay down the bond? The Bond Anticipation Note is good for 3 years and we expect FEMA to reimburse us before we bond.

~Chief Putnam said that anyone whose concealed weapons permit is expiring should call or e-mail the Police Department and the paperwork can be mailed to them.

~Will the arcade open this summer? Yes, he has his permit and business license.

~Are yard sales allowed? Yes.

~Mr. T. Roche and Mr. MacLeod asked about comments that the Fire Department doesn't respond to calls. Mr. Carter and Mr. Ekstedt said the 3 chiefs are working on the protocol for the COVID emergency to keep our personnel safe. Chief Dupuis said the Fire Department has enough PPE. Mr. Lapolla said the Fire Department goes on medical calls that are not COVID-related. EMS calls statewide are down since the start of the pandemic. We have a response plan that the 3 departments developed and are relooking at the 2018 agreement. Chief Putnam said we have very good response times for all emergency services. Maine EMS requires that the Fire Chief determines how the Fire Department responds to calls. The transporting and non-transporting agencies need to be in agreement. We are looking out for the best interests of our personnel and the public. Mr. T. Roche asked what other towns are doing and what the response would be without COVID. Mr. Lapolla said the Fire Department responds only to life-threatening emergencies. Chief Putnam said she spoke with Maine EMS today and will share the information with our chiefs tomorrow. Mr. Carter said coordination is easier in Portland where MEDCU comes under the Fire Department. The Fire Department doesn't respond to every medical call.

CURRENT AGENDA ITEMS

1. Review and action on Accounts Payable and Payroll Warrants.

There is a Warrant dated June 2, 2020 with expenses of \$232,047.03, no school payment, net payroll for the week ending 5/21/2020 in the amount of \$84,225.77, net payroll for the week ending 5/28/2020 in the amount of \$91,804.19, and FICA, Medicare, state and federal withholding taxes filed electronically in the amount of \$72,170.24 for total expenses of \$480,247.23.

Motion by Mrs. Chase, seconded by Mr. T. Roche, to approve and sign the Warrant dated June 2, 2020 in the amount of \$480,247.23. Passed unanimously.

There is a General Assistance Warrant dated June 2, 2020 in the amount of \$1,200.00 from the We Are Wells Fund.

Motion by Mrs. Chase, seconded by Mr. T. Roche, to approve and sign the General Assistance Warrant dated June 2, 2020 in the amount of \$1,200.00. Passed unanimously.

2. Update, discussion and action on Committees, Projects, Issues, Purchases and Personnel:

a) ***Discussion and action on requiring delinquent Wells vehicle re-registrations and new or private sale vehicle registrations to be excised completed by July 11, 2020 for the months of February – June 2020 per the Governors Order 53-A.***

Motion by Mrs. Chase, seconded by Mr. T. Roche, to accept the date of July 11th as the deadline for delinquent vehicle registrations from February through June for the Town of Wells to meet the Governor's Order 53-A. 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. \$60.00 from Lindsey Strug, Katelyn Cantelli and Allison Barden to the Wells Harbor Community Park in memory of Nay Young.

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

d) ***Discussion and action on approving minutes of May 26, 2020 Selectmen’s meeting.***

Motion by Mrs. Chase, seconded by Mr. T. Roche, to approve the May 26, 2020 Selectmen’s meeting minutes. Passed unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS

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

~How many firefighters do we have? 9 full time, 3 shifts of 3—a captain and 2 firefighters. We have 8 call firefighters.

~Why are the public ways closed? The piping plovers are nesting along Atlantic Avenue. Once the chicks hatch the families will move down to the beach for food and we can reopen the ROW. # 13 and 14 are open now and we have sprayed for ticks. #4 isn’t kept up because it is also a deeded driveway to a private house. We will put some material on the sand to toughen it.

2. ***Town Manager’s Report***

There is a start-up company that is looking at doing parking lot reservations. It sounds like an interesting idea and we could do a pilot on 1 or 2 lots. We can look into it for next summer and tie it to the tax bills and beach stickers so people would be aware. Mrs. Chase asked if people would understand the new system. Mr. S. Roche said we should balance the number of reserved spaces with some for the “walk-ins.” Mr. T. Roche asked if people would pay when they reserve, and what to do about no-shows. Mr. Ekstedt asked what the program would cost the Town and if there are any competitors who should bid for the contract.

3. ***Adjournment***

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

Respectfully submitted,

Accepted by,

Cinndi Davidson,
Meeting Recorder