

SELECTMEN'S MEETING (ZOOM) - TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 1, 2020

5:45 PM Workshop: Discussion on Roles and Responsibilities

6:00 PM – SELECTMEN'S MEETING

Present via ZOOM: Chairman Karl Ekstedt, Selectmen Tim Roche, Kathy Chase, John MacLeod, Sean Roche, Town Manager Larissa Crockett, Town Attorney Leah Rachin, Social Media Consultant Brittany DiCapua

Present: Police Chief Jo-Ann Putnam, Finance Director Jodie Sanborn, PWD Director Carol Murray, Town Assessor Keeley Lambert, WEMS Director Jim Lapolla, Meeting Recorder Cinndi Davidson

MUNICIPAL OFFICERS WORKSHOP / BUSINESS / PUBLIC HEARINGS

1. Public hearing on an extension of the Emergency Ordinance to temporarily relax and/or suspend certain provisions of the Code of the Town of Wells to assist businesses suffering economic loss due to COVID-19 and in a manner consistent with the governor's re-opening plan.

This extends to the end of October the emergency ordinance that was passed 60 days ago. Restaurants and other businesses will be allowed to remain open.

Motion by Mrs. Chase, seconded by Mr. T. Roche, to close the public hearing and amend and extend the Emergency Ordinance to temporarily relax and/or suspend certain provisions of the Code of the Town of Wells to assist businesses suffering economic loss due to COVID-19 and in a manner consistent with the Governor's re-opening plan. Passed unanimously

2. Workshop: Re-opening Town Hall to the public on September 8, 2020.

Town Hall will reopen fully on September 8, Monday-Friday 8AM-4PM. On the first and third Tuesdays, the hours will be 8 AM-6PM so people can stay for the Selectmen's meetings. Masks or face shields are required while people are in the building, and hand sanitizer must be used before transacting any business. Social distancing is required. Residents will enter by the back door and exit by the general office or front door to maintain a one way traffic flow in the building. If there is an outbreak in Town Hall we will have to close the building.

3. Workshop: COVID-19 Property Tax Impact on Local Businesses.

The Selectmen do not have any legal authority to abate taxes because of COVID. Our assessments are based on market value and that didn't change. Hardship abatements are granted only for primary residences. There is a state program to help small businesses with fewer than 50 employees. It must still be in business and current with all its state taxes. The deadline to apply is September 9.

4. Wells Elks Lodge 2738, 356 Bald Hill Road, Wells, Application for a full-time Malt, Vinous and Spirituous Liquor License. (R)

AND

5. Wells Elks Lodge 2738, 356 Bald Hill Road, Wells, Application for a Special Entertainment Permit. (R)

Public comment was solicited and there was none.

Motion by Mrs. Chase, seconded by Mr. T. Roche, to close the public hearings and grant the license and permit. Passed unanimously.

6. Good News

~A couple wrote to thank the police officers who caught a bat in their home and removed it without harming it.

~Congratulations to Jason Lizotte and his wife who had a baby boy, Julian, on August 27th.

7. Open to the Public: None

CURRENT AGENDA ITEMS

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

There is a Warrant dated September 1, 2020 with expenses of \$457,502.91, no school payment , net payroll for the week ending 8/20/2020 in the amount of \$103,974.56, net payroll for the week ending 8/27/2020 in the amount of \$105,709.72, and FICA, Medicare, state and federal withholding taxes filed electronically in the amount of \$87,406.64 for total expenses of \$754,593.83.

Motion by Mrs. Chase, seconded by Mr. T. Roche, to approve and sign the Warrant dated September 1, 2020 in the amount of \$754,593.83. Passed unanimously.

There is a General Assistance Warrant dated September 1, 2020 in the amount of \$99.74.

Motion by Mrs. Chase, seconded by Mr. T. Roche, to approve and sign the General Assistance Warrant dated September 1, 2020 in the amount of \$99.74. Passed unanimously.

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

a) Recreation Department Update on After School Care Program.

The Department is coordinating the program with the School Department. Buses will bring the children to the Activity Center. If our schools go to yellow, Group A will have classes 2 days, Group B 2 days, with a

day in between the groups for deep cleaning. In that case, the program would shift from before and after care to all day care for the students who are not in school. Mr. T. Roche said if we go to yellow, we would probably still have full school.

b) *Public Works Projects Update: PWD Director Carol Murray*

~ The Newhall Bridge is not stable. Structural engineer Jim Hall made some adjustments to make it safe for cars. A New Hampshire company came over and has restored access up to 23 tons, so the families can get oil deliveries and have their septic tanks pumped. We are looking into stream crossing grants from DEP for the Newhall Bridge and Drakes Island Road. Jim is working on the final design, and the cost to replace the bridge will be about \$250,000.

~Robinson Road/Pine Ledge/Ridge Top Lane:

CMA Engineers have been working on the drainage and will add a detention basin. There will be a controlled outflow into the pond. They have delineated the wetlands where a pipe will have to be constructed. This project and Swamp John Road are on the same schedule. Final design will be done this winter and permitting in January 2021. Applications have been piling up with the State. Ms. Murray is arranging for a skimcoat on Swamp John Road in the interim. The correct way to fix the road is to rebuild it from the ground up. We want to start the work on both projects as soon as the frost is out of the ground. Letters will be sent to the residents explaining the situation. The Selectmen asked about prioritizing the work. Swamp John Road is an immediate need with water under the road, while the seawalls will take longer. The skim coat will cost about \$90,000 and the work can be done in a few weeks. We can grind it up and reuse the material when the final work is done. Pave-Tek will use asphalt which will get us through the winter. Swamp John Road will be the detour when the work is done on the Bragdon Road bridges.

~Bragdon Road: We have been detouring traffic off Swamp John Road, and now Bragdon has a culvert about to fail. The plan is to replace it with a box culvert at about \$410,000. The bridge is close to failure and rehabilitation will cost about \$150,000. These were not included in the bond.

Mr. MacLeod asked about being proactive in assessing our infrastructure. Ms. Murray has been working on pavement and equipment replacement plans. Her next project is to look at drainage starting with Route One. Ms. Crockett reviewed the 2020 warrant and we are not able to shift money around to different projects. Ms. Murray said that when we get to the design phase we may be able to get economies of scale by combining projects with the same engineer and contractor.

~Drakes Island Bridge and the approaches. The guard rail is hanging in the air and will be a complicated project. We have to work with the residents and environmental groups. This is a good candidate for a stream crossing grant.

Mr. Ekstedt said that when we cut into a road it has to be repaired properly. Ms. Murray said she will talk with the Water and Sewer Districts because their rates are based on the cost to repair pavement cuts. A reserve account can be established with the cost of a repair decreasing based on the number of years since the road was paved. Standards for the repair would also be set. We should reach out to the utilities early with our paving plans to coordinate if they have any projects pending.

~Dike Street drainage project. The drainage work will be done before the dirt road is paved. The road needs catch basins to take the water out to the marsh.

b) ***Discussion and action on approval and adoption of an Anti-Nepotism Policy.***

The policy was developed to avoid any conflicts of interest due to family relationships or financial involvements. No employees will be removed from their current positions. A management plan will be developed to address situations where a relative is a direct report. There is a 6 month period to work with department heads and identify existing relationships. The policy has been unanimously approved by the Personnel Advisory Committee. Mr. MacLeod said this is a small town and he isn't aware of any problems. Mrs. Chase said people should stay in their current positions and the policy should be effective going forward. A workshop with the Personnel Advisory Committee was recommended.

Motion by Mrs. Chase, seconded by Mr. T. Roche, to table this item. Passed unanimously.

d) ***Discussion and action on the FY'20 Carry Forwards into FY'21.***

Ms. Sanborn said the carry forwards are primarily due to bills that were delayed and COVID related items.

Ms. Crockett recommends \$15,000 to fund the full-time firefighter position that was approved in the June 2019 warrant. We are currently running 3 person shifts which do not comply with OSHA "2 in 2 out" rule and Department of Labor standards.

The other recommendation is \$22,000 to purchase laptops for senior staff in case there is a resurgence of COVID and we have to work remotely. Personal computers in people's homes are not secure. The computer in the meeting room needs to be replaced for \$1,500.

Motion by Mrs. Chase, seconded by Mr. T. Roche, to carry forward the list of FY'20 Municipal budget funds and accounts recommended by the Town Manager and Finance Director in the amount of \$182,096 less \$22,000 (laptops) into the FY'21 Budget. Passed unanimously.

e) ***Presentation of preliminary year end financials.***

Ms. Sanborn reviewed the bills from Period 13 which were dated in June and approved on warrants in July and August. We collected \$868,000 more than the expenses. The Transfer Station Enterprise Fund is still carrying a loss. The Beach Enterprise Fund has a balance of \$360,000. The Recreation Enterprise Fund has a balance of \$665,000; most of this is for approved CIP projects. We are at the 85 day mark ending June 30.

f) ***Discussion and action to approve Quitclaim Deed for the following property that had a foreclosure date of February 27, 2020. The 60 day buy back period for the property ended April 27, 2020.***

~Gates, Daniel O. and Amy B. Property is known as parcel number 0045/007-006. Payment was received to pay FY 18, FY 19 and FY 20 on August 12, 2020.

Motion by Mrs. Chase, seconded by Mr. T. Roche, to approve and sign the Quitclaim Deed to release the lien on the property listed above. Passed unanimously.

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

1. Donation of a Power Pruner Echo PPT-2620/H from Don Esson of 31 Tote Road to the Public Works Department.

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

2. \$50.00 donation from Marc Gold to the Wells Public Library.

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

3. \$200.00 donation from William and Eleanor Andrews to the Town of Wells for the Fuel Assistance Program Fund.

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

h) ***Discussion and action on approving minutes of August 18, 2020 Selectmen's meeting.***

Motion by Mrs. Chase, seconded by Mr. T. Roche, to approve the August 18, 2020 Selectmen's meeting minutes. Passed unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Open to the Public: None

2. Town Manager's Report

~Starting with the October meetings, the live stream will be moved to the Town's Facebook page. Ms. Crockett will monitor the Open to the Public portions of the meetings and has some other communications projects for Ms. DiCapua to work on. Ms. DiCapua is under contract through March.

~The CDC recommends limiting touch points and not having people handle things. We are removing pamphlets and other things people would pick up, read and put down again. Ms. Crockett would like to limit the physical posting of agendas. Mrs. Chase said if people touch a paper they should take it with them. Agendas are available in the Town Manager's Office, on line, and posted at Town Hall and various places around Town. The Selectmen would like to continue with the current distribution.

~The stairs at Public Way 16 have been repaired and are now safe to use.

~Swamp John Road is closed to all but local traffic until the skimcoat is applied.

~Four of our police officers handled a challenging situation and were able to de-escalate it, preventing a tragedy.

~Mr. MacLeod thanked Mr. and Mrs. Esson for their continued support of the community.

~Mr. S. Roche responded to a question about beach rules and lifeguards. The Fire Department has people walking the beach now that the lifeguards have returned to school.

3. *Adjournment*

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

Respectfully submitted,

Accepted by,



Cindi Davidson,
Meeting Recorder

