



**TOWN OF
BROOKLINE, NEW HAMPSHIRE
SELECTBOARD**

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*Minutes
Selectboard
Monday, December 14, 2020*

Selectboard members present via Zoom remote: Brendan Denehy, Eddie Arnold, Ron Olsen, Drew Kellner and Dana Ketchen along with Town Administrator Tad Putney. Also present via Zoom remote: Eric Pauer and Finance Committee members Brian Rater, Dennis Comeau, and Matt Mailloux.

6:30pm Brendan opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance and said we were meeting under Executive Order #2020-04 and Emergency Meeting Orders #12 and #23, which allow for remote meetings. Selectboard members all stated they were at their homes, alone in the room, and participating remotely due to COVID-19.

Public Input

Brendan acknowledged the passing of NH House Speaker **Dick Hinch** and expressed condolences to his family and friends. **Brendan** announced that the Brookline Food Pantry is accepting donations at the Town Hall and the Transfer Station. **Tad** announced that they will be unrolling the liners for the skating rink at the ballpark, tomorrow at 2:45pm. He said all hands are welcome and masks are required. **Eric Pauer** said he has concerns about the New Hampshire Retirement System's 28% increase for the "Employer Contribution" over the next two years. He said he would caution the Selectboard, regarding 2021 pay raises, and asked them to look at the total cost to the taxpayers.

New Ambulance Chief

Brendan said the Selectboard is pleased to announce the hiring of **Jeffrey Stewart** as our new Ambulance Chief who will start on December 28, 2020. He said **Jeffrey** is a NH Licensed Paramedic and comes to Brookline with over 25 years of emergency medical service, hospital operations and training experience. **Brendan** thanked **Jan Watt** for her dedication and support in stepping in, once again, to manage the department for an extended period. He said the Board is grateful and appreciative of her interim leadership.

Approve Minutes

Eddie moved, seconded by Drew, to approve the minutes from the Monday, November 30th meeting as written; Roll Call Vote Yes 5-0. Eddie moved, seconded by Drew, to approve 5 sets of non-public minutes from the Monday, November 30th meeting as written; Roll Call Vote Yes 5-0.

*Minutes
Selectboard
Monday, December 14, 2020
Page 2*

Approve Warrants for Payment

Eddie moved, seconded by Drew, to approve Warrant #49 in the amount of \$3,399,896.44, Payroll Warrant #50 in the amount of \$69,607.98, Police Detail in the amount of \$367.50 and Unused Sick Time Warrant in the amount of \$21,288.41; Roll Call Vote Yes 5-0.

Flu Shot Clinic at the Fire Station - Saturday December 19th from 12pm-2pm

Tad said this was put together largely by Emergency Management Director **David Coffey** in conjunction with the Fire Department and is scheduled for Saturday December 19th from 12-2pm. **Tad** said advance registration is required for planning purposes and the link to register is on the town website.

Town Clerk/Tax Collector's Office will be Closed on Friday, December 18th

Tad announced that **Patti's** office would be closed on Friday.

Transfer Station Holiday Hours

Eddie moved, seconded by Drew, to reduce the Transfer Station Hours of operation to 12:00pm-4:00pm on December 24th and December 31st; Roll Call Vote Yes 5-0.

Ordinance Regarding Plowing/Removal of Snow

Brendan read the Town of Brookline's February 9, 2009 Plowing of Snow into Roadways Ordinance: Pursuant to RSA 236:20, RSA 47:17, VII, and RSA 41:11, it shall be unlawful to plow, snow blow, or shovel snow across any, and all Town roads, including Class V and VI, or to deposit snow within the traveled portion of Town roads. **Brendan** said any person who violates the provisions of the Ordinance shall be guilty of a violation and subject to a \$100 fine. Subsequent offences shall be subject to a fine of up to \$500.

Update on Tax Payment Collections

Tad said **Patti** told him 91% of property taxes were paid by the December 7th due date and 94.81% were paid by December 10th, noting the percentages are a little bit higher than normal. **Tad** said this is very good news in the age of COVID. **Dana** asked if the Town has a formula built in somewhere for an anticipated amount of revenue not collected. **Tad** said there is an assumed amount that will be abated over the course of the year, but as for amounts that are not abated, he said the Town eventually gets all the taxes it is due.

Notice to Reappoint Welfare Officer

The Board gave notice to reappoint Rebecca Purdin as Welfare Officer at their next meeting.

6:45pm **Brian** called the Finance Committee meeting to order. All members stated they are meeting due to social distancing, identified their remote location, and that they are alone in the room.

*Minutes
Selectboard
Monday, December 14, 2020
Page 3*

Discuss Proposed Warrant Articles for Budget Committee

Chair of the BudCom Study Committee **Eric Pauer** said at their November 24th meeting, the committee voted 5-0 to recommend the wording for the following two warrant articles: **Warrant Article A:** *To see if the town shall adopt the provisions of RSA 32:14 to establish a municipal budget committee. (One-hour simple majority vote at town meeting).* **Warrant Article B:** *To see if the municipal budget committee shall consist of 5 members-at-large per RSA 32:15 I(a), shall be elected per RSA 32:15 III, and initial members shall be elected to one-year terms by means other than official ballot (done at meeting) per RSA 32:15 III (Contingent upon approval of Warrant Article A).* **Eric** said the BudCom Study Committee is recommending these two warrant articles be placed on the 2021 town meeting warrant. **Eric** reviewed with the Board the information collected from other budget committees and the process for moving forward with this recommendation. **Eddie** said he would like to meet with the School Board before deciding on this, given they will be equally affected by a budget committee. The Board decided to take no action on this item now and discuss it at a future meeting. **Brendan** thanked **Eric** and all the members on the BudCom Study Committee for putting together this important information.

7:19pm *The Finance Committee voted to adjourn; Roll Call Vote Yes 3-0.*

COVID-19 Update and Discussion - David Coffey

David reviewed his Brookline Emergency Management Situation Report with the Board. He said on December 11th the FDA issued an “Emergency Use Authorization” for the Pfizer vaccine to be used on people ages 16 and older and the following day the CDC approved it as well. It has now been shipped to all 50 states and US territories. The State of NH will be administering the vaccine throughout the state starting with at-risk healthcare workers, older adults in assisted care and 1st responders. **David** said NH has an increase in cases, but death rates are lower compared with the beginning of the pandemic. He said hospital stays are shorter because they understand the virus better now. **David’s** NH Summary Report as of Dec 11th showed: current cases 6,824, currently hospitalized 258. Brookline cases as of Dec 12th: 22 active cases; 74 cases total. **David** said all departments in town are following guidelines with cleaning/disinfecting, wearing masks and social distancing. **Tad** asked the Board to weigh in on face coverings at the Frances Drive ice skating rink. **Drew moved, seconded by Ron, to require face coverings over the nose and mouth while on the ice at the skating rink; Roll Call Vote Yes 5-0.**

Update on Route 13 and South Main Street Intersection - Highway Safety Audit

Tad said last Thursday we had a productive two-hour meeting on Zoom with members of the Department of Transportation and the engineering firm that has been hired by DOT to complete a safety audit. He said there were 25 people in on the Zoom call and the focus was the highway safety audit for the intersection of South Main Street and Route 13. **Tad** said town representatives from Brookline with him included the Police Chief, Fire Chief, Acting Ambulance Chief, and Emergency Management Director. He said he was pleased that all direct abutters were also on the call. **Tad** noted the following items were noted as primary concerns at the intersection: high speed of traffic on Route 13, high speed of traffic northbound on Route 13 turning on to South Main Street, a misalignment of the South Main Street intersection with the entrance/

*Minutes
Selectboard
Monday, December 14, 2020
Page 4*

exit of Stateline, the expected addition of two more businesses in the area that will bring additional traffic to the intersection, concern about vehicles passing on the shoulders, pedestrian safety and also the downward slope of South Main Street as it enters the intersection. **Tad** said, having identified all the concerns, he is encouraged we will likely see them be addressed, but it will require some patience. He said the next steps are having the engineering firm come up with alternative recommendations for addressing the safety concerns (over the next month,) then over the following two weeks, a draft report will be circulated to the participants in the meeting for input. The report will then be finalized over another two weeks. At that point, DOT will have a report from which to select recommended actions and then DOT will bring its recommendations to the Selectboard for review. **Tad** said it will be a total of about four months before the Board sees the recommendations, which will likely be a mix of short, medium, and long-term actions. He said in the event of higher-cost items, DOT will conduct a cost-benefit analysis and the good news is that highway safety money is available to cover any project costs that are pursued.

Additional Forest Fire Warden

Eddie moved, seconded by Dana, to authorize the appointment of Richard Gribble as an additional Forest Fire Warden; Roll Call Vote Yes 5-0.

Review Bond Street Bridge Engineering Amendment #1 for Approval

Dana moved, seconded by Eddie, to authorize Brendan to sign the DOT State Bridge Aid Program Project Agreement; Roll Call Vote Yes 5-0.

Review Year to Date Expenses and Revenues

Tad said through the end of November we were 92% of the way through the year and had spent 83% of the operating budget. He said there are three line items that are worth reviewing. He said Cable Access is showing 103% of the budget spent and that is a function of requiring more time from Dave Pease to broadcast meetings that are done via Zoom. He noted Sanitation is showing 99% spent and the main driver of that is construction debris was budgeted at \$25,000 and actual spending is at about \$33,000, probably due to more people at home cleaning out and doing projects this year. **Tad** noted the third notable budget is Welfare, which has spent 108% of its budget. He said there were some larger expenses that came through in the last few weeks. **Dana** asked why the Emergency Management Department is way under budget. **Tad** explained that the funds allocated for the relocation of the Emergency Operations Center were budgeted in the “Safety Complex Building” budget not the “Emergency Management” budget and are being used to cover the unanticipated expenses for that project. **Drew** said since the EOC relocation went over budget, **David Coffey** is holding off spending on things that can wait, so he can allocate those funds to the overage in the Safety Complex building budget. **Dana** asked **Drew** to explain why the Conservation Commission is way under budget. **Drew** said several of the larger invoices come in at the end of the year. He said, from a wildlife perspective, we wait until the season is over for things like mowing the fields, so they will show up in the December totals.

*Minutes
Selectboard
Monday, December 14, 2020
Page 5*

Drew said the Conservation Commission can vote to move unspent funds to the land acquisition fund, but will return any unused milfoil or Lake Host funds to the general fund. **Tad** said revenue thru December 11th is trailing what was projected, but this is because we are still waiting to receive \$271,000 in NH Meals & Rooms funds due in December. **Tad** said the TAP-2 Sidewalk Project was anticipating \$625,000 of revenue from the State's 80% reimbursement, but the project has been shelved so we will not be seeing that this year. Overall, he said revenues are in line with estimates.

Discuss Fire Station/Town Hall Well Pump Failure

Tad said the pump in the well that the Fire Station and Town Hall share failed last week. He said it was not a big surprise due to its age, but it was not budgeted for. **Tad** said **Charlie** advised the invoice will be about \$4,200 and that Skillings replaced the pump this morning. **Tad** said a pump at the Safety Complex also failed and was repaired today at a cost of about \$1,300. He said the second pump serves the irrigation system and also tops-off the cistern for the Safety Complex. **Dana** said is there someway we could have handled this to prevent it from being an emergency. **Tad** said the well pump started to act up, so **Charlie** started the purchasing policy process for a new one, but in the meantime, the pump failed completely. He said there was no way of knowing ahead of time it was going to fail.

Radio Capital Reserve Invoice

Eddie moved, seconded by Drew, to approve payment of the Modular Communications Invoice in the amount of \$29,117.28 from the Radio Capital Reserve Fund by the Trustees of the Trust Funds; Roll Call Vote; Yes 5-0.

Set Date for Annual Department Head Performance Reviews

The Board discussed the different models they have used in the past for the annual reviews and decided with the pandemic it would have to be done with a minimal presence or via Zoom this year. The Board set the review times for January 4th and 5th from 1pm-4pm. **Tad** will schedule the meetings via Zoom.

Review Peer Town Survey Data for 2021 Pay Increase; Approve Increase for 2021

Tad said we reached out to 22 peer towns for their expected 2021 non-union pay increases. He said 12 of the 22 towns responded and nine provided a specific percentage averaging 2.28%. ***Dana moved, seconded by Drew, to set the non-union employee pay increase for 2021 at 2.28%. Eddie said while he does agree with going with the average, he feels after setting the guidance at 2.5%, reducing it will be disappointing to employees; Roll Call Vote Yes 3-2, Brendan and Eddie Voted No.***

Discuss Proposal to Enhance Broadcasting Capabilities

The Board discussed the pros and cons of the first part of Access A/V's proposal to outfit the meeting room with new cameras for \$7,257, but **Tad** cautioned that the new cameras may not dramatically improve the image seen in residents' homes due to the existing wiring used to transmit the camera signals. **Tad** reviewed the second part of the proposal, which would outfit the Town Hall auditorium with the ability to broadcast live for \$12,809. **Tad** said he thinks the cost is too high given the likely limited use of

*Minutes
Selectboard
Monday, December 14, 2020
Page 6*

broadcasting from upstairs. **Brendan** said we always have the option of the CSDA cafeteria, which is a larger space and already set up to broadcast. The Board took no action on this item.

Other Business – New Ambulance Chief Introduction

Brendan said at 7:30pm on Wednesday, December 16th he will be introducing the new Ambulance Chief to the ambulance service personnel. **Eddie** said he would like to attend, so at least two board members will be there to represent the Selectboard.

Other Business – Souhegan Regional Landfill District (SRLD)

Eddie said the SRLD approved a budget of \$1,288,655.12 at their last meeting. **Eddie** also reviewed some planned purchases and relocation of equipment.

Other Business – Thank You Letters

The Board signed thank you letters to each of the four members of the Oral Board for their time and effort interviewing and evaluating candidates for the Ambulance Chief position.

Review Mail Folder

The Board reviewed the mail folder.

Next Meeting Agenda

Review carryover requests for vacation
Reappoint Rebecca Purdin as Welfare Officer
Review 2019 Auditors Report

8:29pm Brendan moved, seconded by Eddie, to go into non-public session per RSA 91-A:3 II (c) reputation, and other matters may be discussed, and immediately upon coming out of non-public session, seal the minutes and adjourn; Roll Call Vote Yes 5-0.

9:48pm meeting adjourned. Minutes submitted by Sharon Sturtevant.

Brendan Denehy

Eddie Arnold

Ron Olsen

Drew Kellner

Dana Ketchen