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TOWN OF BROOKLINE, NEW HAMPSHIRE SELECTBOARD

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Minutes Selectboard Monday, March 22, 2021

Selectboard members present via Zoom: Brendan Denehy, Eddie Arnold, Drew Kellner, Dana Ketchen and Steve Russo along with Town Administrator Tad Putney.

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

Elect Chair and Vice Chair

Dana nominated Drew Kellner as Selectboard Chair, Drew accepted; Roll Call Vote Yes 4-0-1, Drew abstained. Dana nominated Eddie Arnold as Selectboard Vice-Chair, Eddie accepted; Roll Call Vote Yes 5-0. Dana acknowledged **Brendan** for doing an outstanding job guiding her through the first year as a Selectboard member amid the challenges of COVID-19. **Brendan** said he has enjoyed being Selectboard Chair, but three years is long enough for any one person and he gladly passed the gavel over to **Drew**. **Drew** asked that **Brendan** act as Selectboard Chair for the business portion of the upcoming town meeting, consistent with normal practice. **Brendan** agreed.

Public Input

No public input.

Approve Minutes

Dana moved, seconded by Eddie, to approve the minutes from the Monday, March 1st and Monday, March 8th meetings as written; Roll Call Vote Yes 4-0-1, Steve abstained. Eddie moved, seconded by Dana, to approve 5 sets of non-public minutes from the Monday, March 8th meeting as written; Roll Call Vote Yes 4-0-1, Steve abstained.

Sign Warrants for Payment

Brendan moved, seconded by Dana, to approve Accounts Payable Warrant #11 in the amount of \$73,308.94, Payroll Warrant #12 in the amount of \$62,337.72, and Police Detail in the amount of \$1,417.51; Roll Call Vote Yes 5-0.

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Selectboard Appointments to Committees/Boards

Representative to the Planning Board – Brendan Denehy

Representative to the Conservation Commission – Dana Ketchen, Alternate Drew Kellner

Representative to the Melendy Pond Management Committee – Eddie Arnold

Representative to the Economic Development Committee – Steve Russo

Brendan moved, seconded by Eddie, to authorize the Selectboard Chair to be able to appoint an alternate in the event the primary member and alternate are unable to attend a committee meeting; Roll Call Vote Yes 5-0.

Approve Sale of 2010 Ford Crown Victoria by Sealed Bid

Eddie moved, seconded by Dana, to approve the sale of the 2010 Ford Crown Victoria by sealed bid; Roll Call Vote Yes 5-0.

Re-appoint

Dana moved, seconded by Eddie, for the Board to sign the re-appointment slip for Kristen Austin as Deputy Treasurer until the term ends March 31st 2022; Roll Call Vote Yes 5-0.

Notice to Re-Appoint

Dana moved, seconded by Eddie, for the Board to give notice to re-appoint Alan Rosenberg to the Planning Board, Peter Cook and Webb Scales as Full Members to the Zoning Board of Adjustment, Francis Dougherty and Jerry Jaworski as Full Members to the Conservation Commission, Rich Vertullo, Yvonne Gutierrez and Tom LaRoche to the Recreation Commission; Roll Call Vote Yes 5-0.

Notice to Appoint

Dana moved, seconded by Eddie, for the Board to give notice to appoint Eric Pauer as Alternate Member to the Planning Board, Archer Batcheller and Kyle Lotring as Full Members to the Zoning Board of Adjustment; Roll Call Vote Yes 5-0.

SRLD Resignation

Tad said Brookline has two members on the SRLD Board; **Eddie Arnold** is one and **Jerry Farwell** has been the other. Tad said **Jerry** recently submitted his resignation from the SRLD Board and the town will be seeking a replacement. *Eddie moved, seconded by Brendan, to accept the resignation of Jerry Farwell from the Souhegan Regional Landfill District Board; Roll Call Vote Yes 5-0.* Drew thanked **Jerry** on behalf of the Board for his years of service on the SRLD.

COVID Restrictions and Potential Changes – Director David Coffey

David said we have 72 hospitalized cases across the State of NH, 6 active cases in Brookline, and no reported cases within the SAU. He said the cases are trending down for hospitalizations and deaths due to immunizations becoming more available with mega immunization clinics like the one at Loudon Speedway this weekend. **David** said there has been no change in restrictions at the state level, but we could see that change.

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Tad said the state mask mandate is due to expire on Friday, March 26th. He said if the Governor lifts the mandate, masks will still be required on March 27th and 28th at the town meetings due to school board requirements. **Tad** said we recommend continuing meetings via Zoom as long as they are permitted. **Dana moved, seconded by Eddie, for the town to follow the state guidelines for the lifting of the mask mandate in unison with the state's timeline; Roll Call Vote Yes 5-0.** **Drew** said the SAU is holding a large immunization clinic at the high school on Tuesday and Wednesday of this week and again in Mid-April. He said they have invited other towns in the area to participate, so this will allow a substantial number of educators to be vaccinated. **Dana** asked **David** if we can help eligible people who are struggling to set up an appointment for the vaccine. **David** said if people reach out to the Selectboard, let him know and we will help with whatever we can. **Brendan** said, from his perspective, everything is looking good for town meeting, but asked if **David** sees any potential reason between now and Saturday that would cause us to have to postpone. **David** said he doesn't see any problems arising with personal protection equipment in good supply, proper ventilation with doors open and the tent set up, and a good social distancing plan in place. **Brendan** said he visited the Safety Complex a few weeks ago and was impressed by the new Emergency Operations Center.

Discuss Letters Received from NH Dam Bureau re Pierce Pond Dam

Tad said we have received several letters from the Dam Bureau related to the Pierce Pond dam. He said they include a letter informing the town of the Dam Bureau's attempt to reclassify the dam from "significant hazard" to a "high hazard" meaning it currently will withstand a 100-year flood, but the Dam Bureau did some testing and pushed it further to 2.5 times a 100-year flood and said the dam would fail in that scenario. **Tad** said he spoke with a representative from the Dam Bureau last week and learned that the town can push back on the re-classification, if it believes it is unreasonable and would result in excessive expense to the town. **Tad** said the state recommends, as we anticipated, the town hire an engineer to conduct a hydrological and hydraulic evaluation that can be used to support the current dam classification. He said suggested engineering costs are \$10,000-\$20,000 and would be eligible for 65% FEMA grant funding. **Tad** said he will work with the Dam Bureau to move forward with securing an engineer to do the review and will seek grant funding.

Review YTD Expenses

Tad said as of the end of February we were about 17% of the way through the year and had spent 14% of the budget. He noted we have already paid 53% of the 2021 budgeted expense for interest on bonds.

Potential Changes for 2021 Proposed Budget

Tad said that despite a recent rise in prices, the department heads do not feel they need to adjust their budgets for fuel. **Eddie** said he disagrees. He said the prices have been climbing pretty consistently and on some days 5 or 6 cents overnight. **Eddie moved to increase gas to \$2.70/gal and diesel to \$2.85/gal; there was no second.** **Tad** said **Mike** has recommended a \$20,000 reduction in the "Snow and Ice Management" budget for 2021. **Dana moved, seconded by Eddie, to reduce the Snow and Ice**

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Management budget to \$180,000; Roll Call Vote Yes 5-0. **Brendan** said the budget for Legal is at \$35,000, but we did not plan on the Workforce Housing issue. **Brendan moved, seconded by Eddie, to increase the Legal budget for 2021 to \$45,000; Roll Call Vote Yes 4-1, Dana Voted No.**

Review Draft Town Meeting Presentation

Tad reviewed the hand-out for the town meeting presentation, notably the “2020 Tax Rate” pie chart breaking out the town portion at just under 21%. **Tad** said if the proposed town budget and all warrant articles pass, the town tax rate is projected to decrease slightly. **Dana** said on the “Combined Impact on Taxes” chart, which includes the town and the schools, the “low impact” scenario on a \$300,000 home would be an increase of \$775 per year in taxes and the “high impact” scenario would be an increase of \$919. For a \$450,000 home, she said the “low impact” would be \$1,162 tax increase and the “high impact” would have a \$1,379 increase. **Tad** said the SAU Business Administrator noted the increase is due to significant state education aid received in 2020, but not for 2021. **Brendan** said hopefully the state legislature will hear that and put something in the budget since they are still in the budgeting process. **Drew** said unfortunately we won’t know that before we approve our budget.

Assign Warrant Articles

The Board assigned who will present which warrant article at town meeting.

Discuss Compost Bin Purchases for Resale

Eddie said we need to submit an “Intent to Participate Form” by April 8th and commit to a final order of bins by April 22nd. He said they come in pallets of 20. **Eddie** said if we promote composting in Brookline, it reduces the weight of the trash being hauled by the SRLD and therefore saves taxpayer money. He said Hollis’s composting program has been very successful. **Eddie** said the round plastic bins are open on the bottom with a removable top and the cost is \$58 each. **Eddie** suggested prepaid orders. The Board agreed to have **Tad** submit the intent to participate form by April 8th and **Eddie** will work on an advertising campaign to get the word out.

Discuss Potential Contract for Building Energy Audit

Tad shared a sample building audit contract from EEI as well as a sample building audit report from their work at another municipality. **Dana** said she would like to know more about what is involved in the audit process - what the process entails and what is expected of us after this no charge audit. She said she doesn’t think we can just take the audit and not have a continued relationship with them; there will be an expected commitment. **Drew** said we can just take the audit and be done with it, but it is fair to say they are offering the audit for free as a sales method to win the business of managing the remaining process, which are the actual energy conservation measures agreed upon between what they have found and what we collectively agree to be a good trade-off between investment and what we will save. **Dana** said that can simply be said in one page. **Drew** said perhaps a memo from EEI outlining that would work. **Dana** said absolutely. She said she doesn’t want any surprises with this and thinks it is important that the town employees know these people have been vetted by the Board if we are giving permission for them to go into the town buildings.

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Mail Folder

The Board reviewed the mail folder. **Tad** said he received an email from the owner of Superior Steel last Wednesday saying that he was aware of the proposed public works facility and was interested in letting the town know that another alternative may be the purchase of his facility given his plans to retire in the not too distant future. **Drew** said **Don Hoard**, the owner of Superior Steel, offered his building and land at a price of \$1.9 million. **Drew** said that the price does not include the cost of a salt shed or a sprinkler system, so it would end up being higher. **Drew** said a big component of this scenario is that the Superior Steel property is privately owned and pays over \$26,000 in property taxes annually to the town. He said if the town purchased it, that property tax revenue goes away – and needs to be shared by all remaining taxpayers. Further, he said that property tax would grow over time. **Drew** said it is very generous and thoughtful of **Don** to approach the town with the offer, but he doesn't think the purchase is in the best interest of the town when you factor in property tax loss and other costs that would be incurred. **Brendan moved, seconded by Dana, not to pursue the purchase of the Superior Steel property; Roll Call Vote Yes 5-0.** **Brendan** said at this late date it is hard to vet this offer fully.

Next meeting agenda

It was agreed the following would be on the next meeting's agenda:

- Review and approve Selectboard meeting schedule
- Review and re-adoption of the Code of Ethics
- Review and approve the DRA appropriation forms from town meeting

8:23pm Drew moved, seconded by Eddie, to go into non-public session per RSA 91-A:3 II (c) reputation, and (l) legal, other matters may be discussed, and immediately upon coming out of non-public session, to seal the minutes and adjourn the meeting; Roll Call Vote Yes 5-0.

8:51pm meeting adjourned.

Minutes submitted by Sharon Sturtevant.

Drew Kellner

Brendan Denehy

Eddie Arnold

Dana Ketchen

Steve Russo