

**Office of the Board of Selectmen  
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[www.newton-nh.gov](http://www.newton-nh.gov)

**NEWTON BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
DATE: TUESDAY, AUGUST 18, 2020  
TIME: 6:00PM  
CONFERENCE CALL**

**PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES**

**I. Call to Order**

Chairman Burrill called the meeting to order at 6:01pm.

As Chairman of the Board of Selectmen for the Town of Newton NH, I find that due to the State of Emergency declared by the Governor as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and in accordance with the Governor's Emergency Order #12 pursuant to Executive Order 2020-04, this public body is authorized to meet electronically.

Please note that there is no physical location to observe or listen contemporaneously to this meeting which was authorized pursuant to the Governor's Emergency Order. However, in accordance with the Emergency Order, I am confirming that we are:

Utilizing Zoom Conference Call for this electronic meeting. All members of the Board have the ability to communicate during this meeting through this platform, and the public has access to contemporaneously listen and, if necessary, participate in this meeting through dialing the following phone #929-205-6099. Meeting ID number is 86907536632. Or using the link provided here:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86907536632>

We previously gave the notice to the public of the necessary information for accessing the meeting, including how to access the conference call via phone.

If anyone has a problem, please email [BOSSecretary@newtonnh.net](mailto:BOSSecretary@newtonnh.net). In the event the public is unable to access the meeting, the meeting will be adjourned and rescheduled.

Please note that all votes that are taken during this meeting shall be done by roll call vote.

Utilizing Zoom Video Conferencing was Chairman Matthew A. Burrill, Selectmen Lisa L. Gonyer, Kathryn Michaels, Lawrence B. Foote, Charles R. Melvin Sr., Town Administrator Nancy Wrigley, and Secretary Diane Morin. The public session was videotaped. A portion of the nonpublic session minutes and the public meeting minutes were transcribed and typed by Secretary Morin. A portion of the nonpublic session minutes transcribed and typed by Town Administrator Wrigley.

Other conference call attendees were Chief Alcadinho, Trisha McCarthy, Terry Caswell, Robert Dezmelyk, James Doggett, and members of the public.

Selectman Gonyer joined the meeting at 6:10pm.

Selectman Michaels joined the meeting at 6:25pm.

**II. Scheduled Business**

**A. Update – COVID-19 virus**

Mrs. McCarthy briefed the Board with new updates from the State conference calls that she attended. She provided the Board with the latest statewide statistics which includes First Responders.

EMD Foote will be picking up PPE's August 19, 2020 for the upcoming elections.

The State reported that UNH will be opening a COVID-19 testing facility for students and staff.

The State is distributing cloth masks to schools.

Military support is working with the Secretary of State's Office to help with deliveries of PPE's and election materials.

The Governor issued Emergency Order 65 that levels fines pertaining to people not following the emergency guidelines. This will provide law enforcement with a way to enforce the guidelines.

**B. Town Moderator -- Polling plan update**

Town Moderator (TM) Robert Dezmelyk reviewed the proposed plan for September 8 and November 3, 2020 elections. (See Attachment A for full plan.) For the State Primary election on September 8, a small tent may be needed. The number of booths needed is smaller than the General elections held in November. The polling place will be at 8 Merrimac Road and will be in the two garage bays behind the Police Station. Voters will remain in their vehicles until a parking spot is opened in front of the Fire Station. They will then exit their vehicle and proceed to the tent to be checked in where they will be given a ballot. Two ballot counting machines will be setup for voters to place their ballots in. Absentee ballots will be run through the machines as well.

The State is recommending that voters consider voting by absentee ballot. Also, absentee ballots will be available to voters on the day of elections should the voter decide that they do not want to enter the polling place.

All voters, elections officials, and staff will be encouraged to wear a mask and practice social distancing. No voter will be turned away if they do not have a mask or refuse to wear one.

There are still some issues that need to be worked out such as covering the garage doors should there be inclement weather. There will need to be restrooms available for staff and voters. A date for setting up the voting booths is needed.

TM Dezmelyk stated that setup usually takes place the day before elections, but the September election is the day after Labor Day. He will speak with Chief Jewett to see if setup can be done on an earlier day.

Some of the normal processes for voter check in and out will be modified to help maintain social distancing.

Chairman Burrill stated that it is not the desired way to hold elections but due to the pandemic this is best the Town can do. He stated that absentee voting is highly recommended.

Selectman Michaels asked how will we communicate with the voters about the changes? Chairman Burrill stated that the plan proposed tonight should be posted on the Town's website and to use the electronic message board.

TM Dezmelyk stated that the Town Clerk, Supervisor of the Checklist, and himself are working on setting a date where voters can drop off their absentee ballot at an outdoor location.

Signage will be placed in key locations within the Town to inform voters of the changes to the upcoming elections.

Selectman Gonyer suggested moving the electronic message board to different parts of the Town.

Selectman Foote asked about ordering port-a-potties for voters. Staff will be allowed to use the restrooms at the Police and Fire Station. Town Administrator Wrigley will contact the vendor for renting 2 port-a-potties. One will be handicap accessible.

Town Administrator Wrigley informed the Board that because the Transfer Station is open on Saturday and Sunday it may be difficult to get the usual staff to setup the booths. Chairman Burrill stated that the booths will need to be moved from the Town Hall to the Police Station. This will require a pickup truck to move the booths. TM Dezmelyk stated that Chief Jewett would need to weigh in on when the booths can be setup.

Mrs. McCarthy stated that she and TM Dezmelyk made inquiries for a 60'x30' tent which would be used for the elections. She provided the quotes from 3 different vendors. Two of the vendors would be able to provide a tent for the September election at a cost ranging from \$3,900.00 -- \$4,330.00. The least expensive is not available for the September and the cost was \$1,964.00. The quotes included lights and sides. Some of the quotes did not include setup and tear down which cost extra.

Chairman Burrill stated that Recreation has a small tent that would be available. He asked what is the proposed purpose for the tent? TM Dezmelyk stated the State requires more booths for the November elections and there is not enough space in the garage area. Some of the booths will be put in the tent. For the September election the need for booths is lower. A small tent may be all that is needed. Chairman Burrill recommends using the available tent the Town has for the September election. Mrs. McCarthy asked about lights for the tent. TM Dezmelyk stated that for the September election we can improvise the lighting. He is more concerned with the November elections where the weather could have an impact and the number of voters is usually higher.

The Board agreed to have Mrs. McCarthy book the 60'x30' tent at a cost of \$1,964.00. The vendor recommended 2 heaters at of cost of \$291.00 each as well.

Selectman Melvin stated that the traffic pattern would be going over an unpaved section near the Police Station. TM Dezmelyk will work with Chief Jewett on the traffic pattern.

#### **C. Recreation – Senior Luncheon August 26**

Chairman Burrill informed the Board that the Recreation Commission will be distributing lunches for seniors on August 26 at the Fire Station. They are planning on providing more lunches later.

#### **D. Donation from Friends of Recreation**

Chairman Burrill stated that the Town received the \$9,000.00 donation for the playground equipment for Greenie Park revitalization project. The equipment is expected to be delivered sometime in October.

**Selectman Gonyer moved per RSA 31:95-b to accept and expend \$9,000.00 donation from the Friends of Recreation for the purpose purchasing playground equipment for Greenie Park Revitalization Project. Seconded by Selectman Foote. Burrill – aye, Gonyer – aye, Michaels – aye, Foote – aye, Melvin – aye.**

#### **E. Filing for MS-1 Extension**

Town Administrator Wrigley explained that the DRA utility values will not be available until October. She filed for an extension with DRA and they approved the one month extension.

#### **F. Review bid specifications for landscaping contract**

Secretary Morin reviewed the RFP letter and bid specifications. She stated that she included the Town Beach to have a spring and fall cleanup with trimming the area once a month.

Selectman Melvin proposed hiring a full-time employee who would work under the Road Agent. The Road Agent would then be responsible for the landscaping of Town properties. He stated that this employee would be responsible for shoveling, minor repairs and mowing the cemeteries as well as Town properties. He stated that he has asked Chief Jewett to see if there is any surplus equipment that could be used. The equipment could be kept in a bay at the Butler Building.

Chairman Burrill stated that he would need to see the cost of maintaining the equipment. Selectman Gonyer would like to see a cost analysis so that she could make an informed decision. She would like to

see how the employee's time would be divided up so that the landscaping and road work would get done on time. Selectman Michaels and Foote both agreed to the idea but would need more information.

Selectman Gonyer stated that some of the proposed duties are currently being done by another employee.

Selectman Melvin will work on gathering the information the Board needs to make an informed decision.

Secretary Morin will send out the RFP.

#### **G. DOT – Rowes Corner – Public Hearing schedule**

Chairman Burrill stated that the recording of the DOT public hearing is available for viewing on the Town's website, Comcast Channel 20 and YouTube. He encourages anyone interested in the DOT's options to improve the intersection of Route 108/Amesbury Road/Maple Ave to watch the video. The DOT would like to have the Town provide them with the option the Town would like by mid to late September 2020.

Selectman Gonyer stated that the public has had ample opportunity to be heard on this subject. There was a meeting that the Board of Selectmen held in 2019 as well as the DOT hearing held on August 13, 2020.

The Board will hold a public hearing on September 15, 2020 beginning at 7:00pm via Zoom Conference Call to take public input.

#### **III. Other Business**

##### **A. Manifests**

**Selectman Gonyer moved to sign vendor manifest dated August 18, 2020 in the amount of \$49,158.64. Seconded by Selectman Foote. Burrill – aye, Gonyer – aye, Michaels – aye, Foote – aye, Melvin – aye.**

**Selectman Gonyer moved to sign Police Special Details manifest dated August 18, 2020 in the amount of \$569.30. Seconded by Selectman Foote. Burrill – aye, Gonyer – aye, Michaels – aye, Foote – aye, Melvin – aye.**

**Selectman Gonyer moved to sign Cable Revolving Fund manifest dated August 18, 2020 in the amount of \$2,360.00. Seconded by Selectman Foote. Burrill – aye, Gonyer – aye, Michaels – aye, Foote – aye, Melvin – aye.**

**Selectman Gonyer moved to accept the minutes dated August 12 and 13, 2020 as written. Seconded by Selectman Foote. Burrill – aye, Gonyer – aye, Michaels – aye, Foote – aye, Melvin – aye.**

**Selectman Gonyer moved to sign payroll manifest for pay period August 2-15, 2020 with a pay date of August 20, 2020. Seconded by Selectman Burrill. Burrill – aye, Gonyer – aye, Michaels – aye, Foote – aye, Melvin – aye.**

Selectman Gonyer informed the public that there is no other public business at this time except to come out of nonpublic session to seal the minutes.

**Selectman Gonyer moved to go into nonpublic under RSA 91-A:3 II (a) – Compensation at 7:25pm. Seconded by Selectman Foote. Burrill – aye, Gonyer – aye, Michaels – aye, Foote – aye, Melvin – aye.**

**Selectman Gonyer moved to close the non-public session at 7:31pm. Seconded by Selectman Michaels with a unanimous roll call vote: Burrill – aye, Foote – aye, Gonyer – aye, Michaels – aye, Melvin – aye.**

**Selectman Gonyer moved to go into nonpublic under RSA 91-A:3 II (b) – Reputation at 7:31pm. Seconded by Selectman Foote. Burrill – aye, Gonyer – aye, Michaels – aye, Foote – aye, Melvin – aye.**

**Selectman Gonyer moved to close the non-public session at 7:55pm. Seconded by Selectman Michaels with a unanimous roll call vote: Burrill – aye, Foote – aye, Gonyer – aye, Michaels – aye, Melvin – aye.**

**Selectman Gonyer moved to go into nonpublic under RSA 91-A:3 II (c) – Compensation at 7:55pm. Seconded by Selectman Foote. Burrill – aye, Gonyer – aye, Michaels – aye, Foote – aye, Melvin – aye.**

Chief Alcadinho joined the meeting at 7:56pm.  
Chief Alcadinho left the meeting at 8:30pm.

**Selectman Gonyer moved to close the non-public session at 8:35pm. Seconded by Selectman Michaels with a unanimous roll call vote: Burrill – aye, Foote – aye, Gonyer – aye, Michaels – aye, Melvin – aye.**

**Selectman Gonyer moved to go into nonpublic under RSA 91-A:3 II (b) – Reputation at 8:35pm. Seconded by Selectman Foote. Burrill – aye, Gonyer – aye, Michaels – aye, Foote – aye, Melvin – aye.**

Selectman Foote left the meeting at 8:45pm.

**Selectman Michaels moved to close the non-public session at 9:03pm. Seconded by Selectman Melvin with a unanimous roll call vote: Burrill – aye, Gonyer – aye, Michaels – aye, Melvin – aye.**

**Selectman Gonyer moved that the Board just came out of a non-public session under RSA 91-A: 3 II (a) & (c) and that they keep all matters discussed confidential until in the opinion of the majority of the Board the circumstances no longer apply. Seconded by Selectman Michaels.**

IV. Adjourn

**Selectman Gonyer moved to adjourn at 9:04pm. Seconded by Chairman Burrill.**

Respectfully submitted,

Diane M. Morin  
Board of Selectmen Secretary

## Attachment A

### Plan for State Primary and General Election

8/18/2020

#### Overview

This document contains a snapshot of our plans for conducting the State Primary Election on September 8<sup>th</sup>, 2020 and the General Election on November 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2020. I expect that the plan will change as conditions evolve, and that we may alter the process for the General Election based on what we learn during the State Primary Election.

This plan is based on my understanding of the State election law, guidance from the Secretary of State's office, guidance from the State and the CDC regarding COVID-19 prevention, and input from our town clerk, Mary Jo McCullough, from a number of people that are responsible for conducting elections here in Newton, and from Chief Jewett, Chief Alcadinho, Trisha McCarthy, and the Board of Selectmen. As it evolves this plan will represent our consensus as to the best approach to use for the elections.

I will be speaking with the Supervisors of the Checklist about their needs for same day voter registration shortly, and will include their feedback and requirements in the next revision.

This document does not include details that are unchanged from our normal election process, but highlights areas where we will be using a different approach in response to COVID-19.

#### Overall Approach

1. Encourage absentee voting to reduce the number of people voting in person, and to provide a convenient way for individuals who are concerned about possible exposure to COVID-19 in any public setting.
2. Move the polling place to the Safety Complex, using the garage bays on the back of the police building and an outside tent.
3. Have voters wait in their cars instead of lining up in or outside of the polling place. This will avoid the risk, however small, of people being in close proximity for a period of time while waiting to vote. It also reduces the problem of people waiting in line outside if the weather is poor.
4. Maximize ventilation in the polling place to minimize the risk of any airborne disease transmission, while being consistent with the intent of RSA 658:9 which states that the selectmen "shall provide for a suitable place to hold state elections and shall see that the same is warmed, lighted and furnished with proper supplies and conveniences...". Given the importance of ventilation to protect against COVID-19 transmission, and the evidence suggesting that outdoor situations are safer than indoor areas, ventilation is an important component of a "suitable place" and is more important than the degree of warming.
5. Operate both of our vote counting machines so that we can process absentee ballots in parallel with ballots being cast by voters without being in close proximity to the in person voters.
6. Provide ample personal protective equipment for all people working at the polls on election day. I will encourage anyone who is working at the polls who is concerned about their personal health risk to consider only working in areas that they are comfortable with. We will have fewer people interacting with voters inside the polling place since the line management, greeting, and direction to same day voter registration will take place outside while the voters are in their cars.
7. Encourage voters to wear a mask and follow CDC guidance to reduce the risk of transmitting or being infected by COVID-19, without placing any particular requirements on voters which might infringe upon their right to vote. Our polling place will be designed so that it is as safe as possible for everyone even if someone happens to arrive to vote who may unknowingly have COVID-19, or if for some reason, such as a disability, they are not wearing a mask. We will offer

on site absentee voting, as provided by NH law, for anyone who arrives at the polling place but does not want to enter the polling place and instead wants to vote from their car.

### Absentee Voting

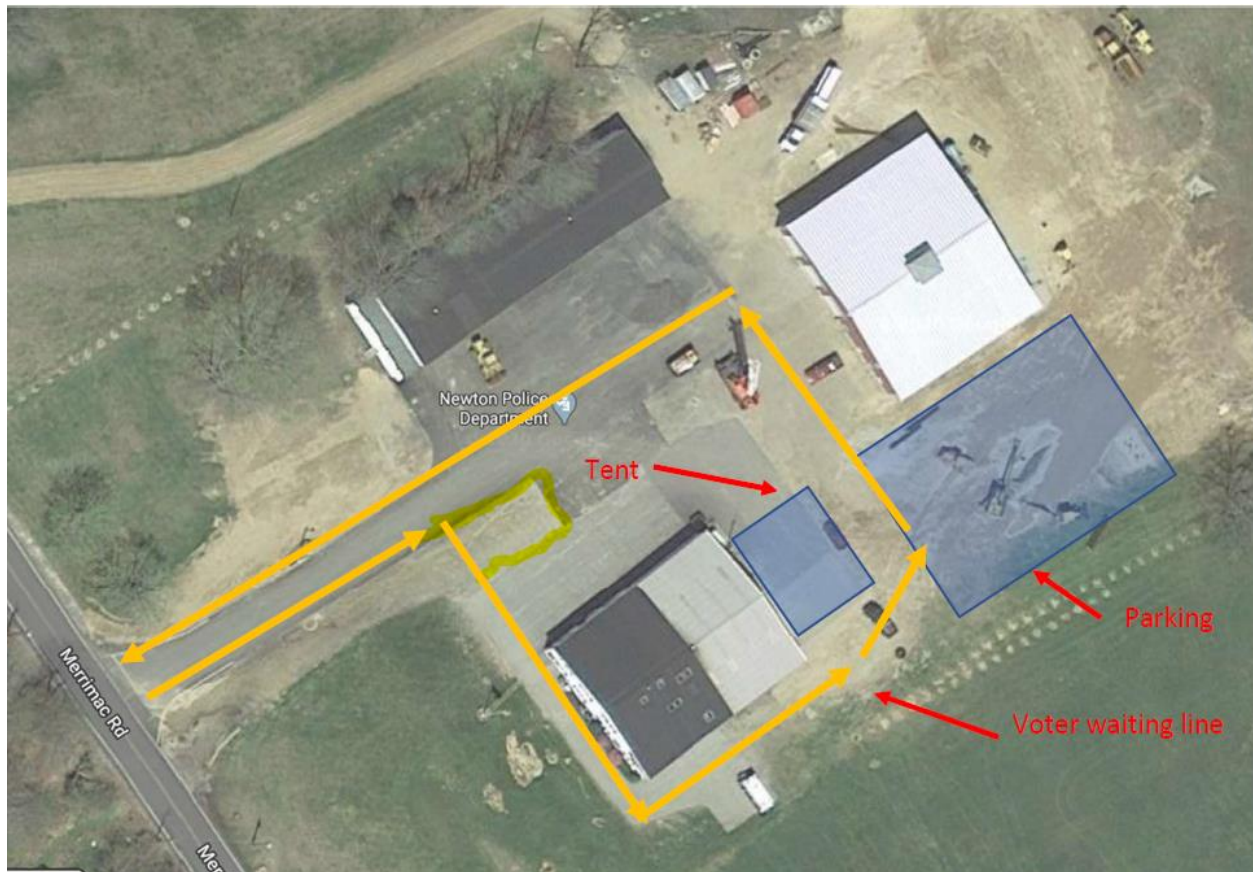
There are a number of actions we can take in addition to what the Secretary of State and the various political parties are doing:

1. Put out a consistent message to voters encouraging them to vote absentee if they are not comfortable coming to the polls on election day.
2. Possibly provide one or more opportunities for voters to go to an outdoor location in town to pick up and return absentee ballots, along with voter registration if possible before the General Election.
3. Post notices around town about how to vote absentee
4. Letters to the editor – Carriage Towne News
5. Messages regarding absentee voting should also mention the new location of our polling place

### Location

We will use the two vehicle bays on the back of the police station, along with the area directly in front of the doors. Open questions and action items:

1. How to prevent windblown rain from entering if we have very bad weather – is it possible to close the garage doors partially
2. Restrooms for election workers
3. Is there sufficient access by other doors so that we could close the main garage door after the polls close when we are doing the post election processing.
4. Size of tent required for additional space in front of the bays. The COVID-19 guidelines dramatically increase the amount of space needed for voting booths, and create a nearly impossible situation with respect to the availability of booths. Based on our current voter registration list we will need approximately 33 booths. Of those one is the accessible booth, and the remaining 32 can consist of 16 booths and 16 table top voting stations. To achieve 6 foot spacing between voters only every other booth in a line of booths can be used, and table top voting stations require about 36 square feet per voter. The square footage required is less for booths along a wall, or the outside of a tent, but spacing out the voters requires a large amount of space. The state has indicated that they will consider waivers of the booth requirements, but only once the number of returned ballots is known which is too late for any practical use.
5. Notify residents of the new polling place, and update online lists including our town website as soon as possible
6. Obtain sufficient traffic cones and signs to enable management of the waiting voters
7. Plan for additional Police Department staffing in order to direct the voters in line. Traffic will be wrapped around the Police Station, with voters directed to park once we have an available voting booth (based on someone else leaving, or there being open spots)



### Line Management

Typically voters park their cars and then line up inside of town hall, or on the steps and out onto the sidewalk outside. This type of line is very difficult to manage in a situation where we want people to be spaced apart and minimize the amount of talking or other actions which can lead to the generation of aerosol droplets. Simply putting the line outside helps dramatically, but a long line in poor weather would be burdensome for voters and might have the effect of discouraging voter participation.