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**NEWTON BOARD OF SELECTMEN**

**DATE: MONDAY, MAY 4, 2020**

**TIME: 6:00PM**

**CONFERENCE CALL**

**PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES**

**I. Call to Order**

This meeting was held to bring the Selectmen and public up to date on the COVID-19 virus. The public meeting was held via conference call. On the phone 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 audio taped. The public meeting minutes were transcribed and typed by Secretary Morin.

Other conference call attendees were Tina O'Rourke, Chief Alcaldinho, Trisha McCarthy, Terry Caswell, Pete Gagnon, Chief Jewett, Jack Kozec, and members of the public.

Chairman Burrill called the meeting to order at 6:00pm.

**II. Scheduled Business**

**A. Update – COVID-19 virus**

Chairman Burrill explained the reason for the meeting was to bring the Board and public up to date on guidelines to combat the spread of the COVID-19 virus.

Mrs. McCarthy briefed the Board with new updates from the State conference calls that she attended. She provided the latest statistics from the State on cases of COVID-19 which included First Responders. The Department of Health and Human Services will be offering testing for anyone who thinks they might have COVID-19. They must follow protocols in order to be tested which are available on the DHHS web site or call the COVID-19 hotline 211. They are also offering onsite clinics for long term care facilities and businesses. They are looking for plasma donors that have tested positive, are now symptom free of COVID-19 and can meet other requirements.

Mrs. McCarthy informed the Board that she has emailed guidelines and emergency orders to the Board and Department Heads. She went on to review some of the changes that were made to previous emergency orders that are included in the latest one. She also provided a link to the Stay at Home 2.0 Executive Order via email.

She stated that the Town has received a grant for crisis counseling and will provide more information as it becomes available.

Mrs. McCarthy stated that Senator Shaheen is working with the US Government to ensure New Hampshire receives all the assistance it needs to combat the pandemic.

Mrs. McCarthy reviewed the number of cases and deaths statewide.

She reviewed what other State departments are doing to combat the virus.

Some campgrounds are opening but guests are not practicing social distancing. The State will ask the Governor's Office for clarification on the Governor's Executive Order on who can visit campgrounds.

Restaurants that put up a large tent with sides is considered indoor dining and is not allowed. The restaurants must still abide by the 10-person limit for gatherings with outside dining.

Chairman Burrill stated that the Governor will be providing a weekly stipend for First Responders. He stated that the Board had discussed providing a stipend. The Board appreciates the State stepping up to provide the stipend.

Chairman Burrill stated that the new Stay at Home 2.0 is in effect until May 31, 2020. The Board agreed that there are no changes to municipal buildings being re-opened.

Mr. Kozec stated that on the news he heard the stipend would be \$300.00 per week for full time First Responders. He was disappointed that Transfer Station staff were not included in the weekly stipend. Selectman Michaels will bring this to the attention of State Senator Sherman.

Chairman Burrill stated that stipend is for full and part-time First Responders.

Chairman Burrill stated that he spoke with the Bookkeeper and that the timesheets will not change but reflect in the comment section those employees that did not work due to the pandemic. They will write in "COVID-19 did not work" in the comment field. An email will be sent out to Department Heads with the information. Secretary Morin stated that she already sent the email to Department Heads. She will send the email to Mrs. McCarthy and the Board for their review.

Mrs. McCarthy stated that the way the timesheets are being done have not been challenged by FEMA auditors. She has been doing this for 13 years and does not recommend changing the process as it could raise flags when applying for reimbursement. Chairman Burrill stated that the Board is trying to measure hours not being worked because of COVID-19. Mrs. McCarthy stated that it is clear on the timesheets now and that employees are putting the correct comment in the appropriate field.

Selectman Foote suggested that employees submit 2 timesheets one for each week. The top section would be for regular hours and the bottom for COVID-19 related work.

Chief Alcaldinho stated that the Fire Department submits separate timesheets for regular hours worked and one for COVID-19 hours worked.

Selectman Gonyer would like to see a sample of the timesheets.

Chairman Burrill stated that he believes it is a shot in the dark that the Town will be reimbursed for those displaced employees not able to work due to the pandemic. Selectman Gonyer asked how the Bookkeeper will be able to take the comments and provide the Board with the information. Mrs. McCarthy stated that the Bookkeeper, EMD Foote and herself already have a spreadsheet with this information on it.

Selectman Melvin stated it should be left to the people that are doing the work and know what FEMA is looking for.

Selectman Foote stated that the information is available. Both Chairman Burrill and Selectman Gonyer agreed that the last spreadsheet the Board received did not distinguish between the number of hours worked for COVID-19 or the number of hours not worked because of COVID-19. Mrs. McCarthy stated that the information is available on the spreadsheet that the Bookkeeper and she maintains. She will send an updated spreadsheet to the Board for their review.

Secretary Morin addressed the Board. She stated that she spoke to Mr. Steven St. Cyr, who was on the call, about increasing his capacity to haul residential trash to the Transfer Station. She stated that by allowing him to bring trash to the Station more frequently would help to reduce the number of vehicles at the Station thus reducing the risks of exposure to COVID-19 to everyone.

Chairman Burrill explained the policy that is currently in place for Commercial Trash Haulers. Selectman Gonyer stated that Mr. St. Cyr is the only one presently providing this service.

Transfer Station Manager (TSM) Gagnon stated that he does not see any issues with the policy change.

Mr. St. Cyr addressed the Board. He stated that he is not at full capacity because he is not able to pick up on Thursday's due to work obligations. The less restrictions he has the more clients he can service. Selectman Gonyer stated that Tuesday and Thursday were chosen due to less traffic at the Station.

Selectman Michaels asked for further details about the policy. Selectman Gonyer explained it is a service that a commercial hauler offers to residents only. Only Town residential trash is brought to the Station. There are limitations in place to limit the impact to the amount of waste that comes in.

Mr. St. Cyr asked if he could use a trailer for recycling only so it would not go against his load limit. Bringing recycling does not have a limit. Selectman Gonyer clarified that the truck bed will have household trash and the trailer will have recyclables. TSM Gagnon has no problem with having Mr. St. Cyr use a trailer for recyclables.

Selectman Melvin would like to see Thursday removed and add Sunday for Commercial Trash Haulers.

Selectman Michaels stated that the reason for doing this is to stop the bottleneck at the Station. She expressed concerns that the weekends are busy and would cause more issues than resolve. She stated that the number of cases of COVID-19 went from 9 to 15 in the space of week in Town. She got these numbers from "NH.Gov" website. She expressed concerns that not everyone is wearing a mask while at the Station.

Chief Alcaidinho stated that he receives from the State the number of positive cases of COVID-19 for the Town and he has never heard the Town having 9 or 15 cases. He stated he gets his number from County Dispatch and Public Safety.

Chairman Burrill stated that this Board is not a source for accurate numbers of COVID-19 cases. Residents should seek out this information from sources such as the CDC or the State Department of Health and Human Services.

Selectman Foote asked at the end of the 4-week trial period what is Mr. St Cyr going to tell his new customers should the Board decide not to continue with allowing him to drop trash off on Sundays. Mr. St. Cyr stated that he would inform any new customers that the service could be discontinued at the end of the trial period.

Mr. Kozec commented that Sundays are busier than Saturdays and would prefer to have him come to the Station on Saturdays. He expressed concerns that in the future that the Town will allow larger trucks and he does not want to see the policy changed without doing more studies. Selectman Gonyer stated that the policy was developed without knowing what the volume would be and the Board took a best guess when developing the policy. The Board realized that the policy may need to be changed once the program ran for a few years. She stated that large trucks would never be allowed in the Station as that would hinder the residents access to the dumpsters. The Board is not looking to change the size of trucks being used or number of days being allowed.

Chairman Burrill stated that it is temporary and can be stopped if allowing haulers to the Station on Sunday becomes an issue.

**Selectman Gonyer moved to modify the Transfer Station Commercial Trash Haulers Policy for a period of 60 days to change the days allowed from Tuesday and Thursday to Tuesday and Sunday and to allow a trailer to be pulled with recyclables only. Seconded for discussion by Selectman Melvin.**

Selectman Melvin stated that the hauler will most likely pick up the trash the day before and be at the Station early morning to deposit the load.

Chairman Burrill stated that if this proves burdensome, the Board can end the trial period earlier.

Selectman Gonyer stated that residents concerned about being exposed to the virus could use his service until such time they feel it safe for them to take their own trash to the Station.

**The motion passed. Burrill – aye, Gonyer – aye, Michaels – aye, Foote – aye, Melvin – aye**

Selectman Gonyer will make the changes to the policy and will have it posted on the Town's website.

Secretary Morin stated that the life safety issues at the Gale Library will be done on May 13, 2020. She received an email from the contractor for the estimated costs to finish the Town Hall office area. She used the worst-case scenario and believes that it will cost an additional \$1,320.00. The Board made a motion to not exceed \$2,200.00 at a previous meeting. The amount spent thus far on the issues was \$1,683.00. That leaves \$517.00 left. To finish the project another \$803.00 is needed.

**Selectman Gonyer moved to authorize, not to exceed \$1,000.00 to finish the life safety corrections at the Town Hall and funds to come from General Government Budget. Seconded by Selectman Foote. Burrill – aye, Gonyer – aye, Michaels – aye, Foote – aye, Melvin -- aye**

Mrs. Caswell asked if she could enter the Library on May 7, 2020. Secretary Morin stated the work is not scheduled until May 13, 2020.

TSM Gagnon asked when he could enter the Town Hall to collect the bills and mail. The Board agreed he should go after 6:00pm any evening.

### III. Adjourn

**Selectman Melvin moved to adjourn at 7:09pm. Seconded by Selectman Gonyer. Burrill – aye, Gonyer – aye, Michaels – aye, Foote – aye, Melvin – aye**

Respectfully submitted,

Diane M. Morin  
Board of Selectmen Secretary