



**Office of the Board of Selectmen
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NEWTON BOARD OF SELECTMEN
DATE: WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 12, 2020
TIME: 6:00PM
CONFERENCE CALL

PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES

I. Call to Order

Chairman Burrill called the meeting to order at 6:02pm.

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. 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, Town Administrator Nancy Wrigley, and Secretary Diane Morin. Utilizing Zoom Audio Conferencing was Selectmen Lawrence B. Foote, Charles R. Melvin Sr. The public session was videotaped. The public meeting minutes were transcribed and typed by Secretary Morin.

Other conference call attendees were Tina O'Rourke, Trisha McCarthy, Terry Caswell, Pete Gagnon, Chief Jewett, Barbara White, Robert Dezmelyk, and members of the public.

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 Board with the latest statewide statistics which includes First Responders.

The Governor has extended the State of Emergency until September 1, 2020. He also issued an emergency order requiring face covering for gatherings of more than 100 people. This emergency order does not apply to elections nor to the day to day functions of the state or municipalities. However, social distancing should be maintained and if not possible, face coverings should be used.

Universal guidelines have been updated and can be found on [NHResource.org](https://www.nhresource.org).

Town/Cities that are considering using large tents for schools, should contact the State Fire Marshall Office for guidance.

The Secretary of State will be issuing guidelines concerning elections and law enforcement responsibilities.

The National Guard is still distributing PPE's.

Data being provided by the State about the number of COVID-19 cases will now include hospital information.

EMD Foote continues to order PPE's for the Town.

Different bus services throughout the State will resume in August.

Mrs. McCarthy, Chief Jewett, Chief Alcainho and EMD Foote attended a regional meeting at the Kingston Town Hall on August 12, 2020. The meeting included area towns to discuss a drive-thru vaccine distribution point. The attendees discussed which venue would be best to have people drive up and be vaccinated without having to leave their vehicle. The vaccine, when it is available, would be administered by medical professionals. A document is being worked on to educate the public on how the drive-thru vaccine distribution point would work.

Mrs. McCarthy stated that some area town halls are fully open, others by appointment and some are staff only in the building.

Should the drive-thru vaccine distribution point turn out to be feasible, letting the public know is crucial to its success.

Mrs. McCarthy stated that the Federal mandated Seabrook Emergency Response meeting will be held on September 16, 2020 at the Fire/Rescue Station. The Seabrook emergency drill will take place on September 30, 2020.

Chairman Burrill recommends that the Board consider eliminating Wednesday's meeting and to incorporate the COVID-19 information on the regularly scheduled Board of Selectmen meeting. He suggests that Mrs. McCarthy send an email to the Boards, Commissions, Committees, and Department Heads with the information prior to the meeting.

Mrs. McCarthy stated that she is fine with that and should a need arise she will contact Secretary Morin to ask the Board to meet. She would also like to see the email read at a Board of Selectmen's meeting so that the public is kept informed.

The Board agreed to cancel the Wednesday COVID-19 meetings until needed.

B. Upcoming Elections

Town Moderator (TM) Robert Dezmelyk addressed the Board to discuss the preliminary plans for September 8, 2020 elections. He stated that the Town Clerk, both Chiefs and other election officials met at the Safety Complex. The group reviewed the best location to hold elections and determined that the Police Station garage would be their choice. This location would cause the least amount of disruption for the Fire Department.

Vehicles will be lined up along the driveway and onto Merrimac Road. Voters will remain in their vehicles until there is an empty parking spot in front of the Fire Department. Then they will enter the garage to cast their ballots. Should a voter not feel comfortable at the polling place, they can vote via absentee ballot while remaining in their vehicle.

A more detailed plan will be sent to the Board prior to the August 18, 2020 meeting.

Chairman Burrill would like to see a schedule for the volunteers. The Board will schedule which members will be at the polling place.

TM Dezmelyk stated that at previous elections there were several volunteers to make the election run smoothly. For this election, there will be a need for qualified traffic controllers instead of volunteers. Controlling the traffic will require more resources from the Police Department than previous elections. TM Dezmelyk stated that the Board will need to come up with funding for the extra personnel that will be needed for traffic control.

Voters will be encouraged to vote via absentee ballots. For those that are undeclared, they will receive a piece of paper with some wording that will be used to return them to undeclared status.

Chairman Burrill stated that it is his understanding that election expenses related to COVID-19 may be eligible for reimbursement.

Selectman Michaels asked if the absentee ballot requires additional stamps to be processed via mail. TM Dezmelyk stated that the Town Clerk would be able to answer that question.

C. Town Hall re-opening

Selectman Melvin joined the meeting at 6:35pm.

Mrs. McCarthy informed the Board that she received a quote to install plexiglass shields on the Town Clerk's customer window, the interior office window and one to separate the desks. The total cost was \$950.00. To have just the customer window shield installed was \$500.00. She spoke with the Town Clerk and it was decided to hold off on ordering the shields for the interior of the office and to order the shields for the customer window only.

Selectman Gonyer stated that even with the shield in place it still does not protect the individual because one person would need to go behind the person at the first window. That area is not 6 feet wide. She would prefer to not have more than one customer at a time.

Chairman Burrill stated that it gives peace of mind and will make people feel more comfortable.

Selectman Foote moved to authorize the installation of the plexiglass shields for the Town Clerk's customer window in the amount of \$500.00. Seconded by Selectman Melvin for discussion.

Selectman Michaels asked why at the Town Hall we are not maintaining a 6-foot distance and putting everyone at risk. Selectman Foote stated that the current state we are in will be going on for several more months and serving one person at a time will put a strain on the Town Clerk's office. The staff does not have an issue with serving more than one person at a time and feel safe behind the shield. This new shield would be to protect the customers. Mrs. McCarthy stated that everyone is required to wear a mask unless they have a medical need. With everyone wearing a mask, the 6-foot social distancing is not a requirement.

Burrill – aye, Foote – aye, Melvin – aye. Gonyer – nay. Michaels – abstained because she needs a better visual.

Selectman Foote stated that he has received complaints about the Town Hall not being opened and would like to have the Board discuss at a future meeting opening the Town Hall for meetings and regular business. Chairman Burrill stated that Selectman Foote should reach out to the Department Head to resolve any issues with the public not getting a response from a department.

D. Grant Opportunity – CARES Act

Selectman Gonyer stated that she received an email from NH Votes about a grant opportunity under the CARES Act. The Town is eligible for up to approximately \$10,000.00 of 80% in reimbursable expenses related to holding elections in September and November due to the pandemic. There is no application but an agreement that needs to be signed.

Selectman Gonyer moved to authorize the Chairman to sign the completed agreement and initial the attachments to be submitted before August 28,2020. Seconded for discussion by Selectman Michaels.

Selectman Foote would like to review the agreement before submitting it to ensure that the Town is not double dipping and getting paid twice for expenses.

Selectman Gonyer stated that this was brought up in the webinar she attended and that BerryDunn also stated that any expenses reimbursed from another grant such as GOFFR could not be submitted under this grant but the agreement can be submitted since we will not know the extent of the expenses until after the elections and this agreement needs to be submitted by Aug 28th. Should the Town be reimbursed from another source, we would not submit those expenses under this grant. She will forward the grant email to Selectman Foote and Mrs. McCarthy.

Burrill – aye, Gonyer – aye, Michaels – aye, Foote – aye, Melvin – aye.

E. Review Website hosting annual agreement

Secretary Morin reviewed the annual cost for hosting the Town's website with CivicPlus. The annual cost is \$1,575.00. Town Administrator Wrigley stated that there was no increase from last year.

Selectman Gonyer moved to authorize the Chairman to sign the annual agreement in the amount of \$1,575.00 for hosting the Town's website. Seconded by Chairman Burrill. Burrill – aye, Gonyer – aye, Michaels – aye, Foote – aye, Melvin – aye.

F. Requisitions for radio equipment for new cruiser & printer for 2 other cruisers

Secretary Morin reviewed the 2 requisitions for equipment needed for police cruisers. One requisition is for a new radio to be installed in the new truck cruiser. The second one is for 2 printers to be installed in 2 other cruisers.

Selectman Gonyer moved to authorize the purchase of radio equipment from Motorola Solutions for the new truck cruiser in the amount of \$5,231.46. To be paid from the Police Cruisers and Equipment Capital Reserve Fund. Seconded by Selectman Melvin. Burrill – aye, Gonyer – aye, Michaels – aye, Foote – aye, Melvin – aye.

Selectman Gonyer moved to authorize the purchase of printers from MHQ for 2 cruisers in the amount of \$2,844.00. To be paid from the Police Cruisers and Equipment Capital Reserve Fund. Seconded by Selectman Michaels. Burrill – aye, Gonyer – aye, Michaels – aye, Foote – aye, Melvin – aye.

G. Appointments – Conservation Commission

Selectman Gonyer moved to appoint Alicia Geilen to the Conservation Commission for a term of 3-years. Seconded by Selectman Melvin. Burrill – aye, Gonyer – aye, Michaels – aye, Foote – aye, Melvin – aye.

Selectman Gonyer moved to appoint Nancy Slombo to the Conservation Commission for a term of 3-years. Seconded by Selectman Melvin. Burrill – aye, Gonyer – aye, Michaels – aye, Foote – aye, Melvin – aye.

H. Selectmen's public meeting minutes dated August 5, 2020

Selectman Gonyer moved to approve the public meeting minutes dated August 5, 2020 as written. Seconded by Selectman Michaels. Burrill – aye, Gonyer – aye, Michaels – aye, Foote – aye, Melvin – aye.

I. Lot line adjustment – 35 South Main Street

Mrs. McCarthy, as a representative from the Conservation Commission, stated that she has received 2 calls from abutters asking if the proposed lot line adjustment could be marked off. Selectman Melvin will contact the engineering company and get back to Mrs. McCarthy.

III. Adjourn

Selectman Gonyer moved to adjourn at 6:58pm. Seconded by Selectman Michaels.

Respectfully submitted,

Diane M. Morin
Board of Selectmen Secretary