



**Office of the Board of Selectmen
2 Town Hall Road, Newton, NH 03858
Tel: 382-4405 Option 5 Fax 382-9140**

www.newton-nh.gov

NEWTON BOARD OF SELECTMEN
DATE: TUESDAY, AUGUST 25, 2020
TIME: 6:00PM
CONFERENCE CALL

PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES

I. Call to Order

Chairman Burrill called the meeting to order at 5:45pm.

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

In attendance were Roger Hamel, Julie Lamere, Jamie Saucier and members of the public.

II. Scheduled Business

A. Town Hall -- Future public meetings

Chairman Burrill stated that some members of the Board would like to go back to in person meetings. He stated that the Governor's Emergency Order is still in effect and that the Board can still meet electronically.

Selectman Michaels stated that she would err on the side of caution. She would prefer to see the meetings held electronically unless the issue/s need to be addressed in person.

Selectman Foote stated that the Town Hall should be opened to all Boards, Commissions and Committees that choose to meet in person. There could be a hybrid approach where the meeting would be held in person and via Zoom conferencing.

Selectman Gonyer stated that she is in favor with the hybrid approach as well.

Chairman Burrill stated that it must be a hybrid approach and that we cannot keep disinfecting the Town Hall each time there is a meeting. It might be feasible to have the custodian disinfect instead of hiring a vendor.

Selectman Gonyer stated that if people utilize the hand sanitizing station and allow access only to the meeting hall, then disinfecting would not be needed each time.

Planning Board Chairman Roger Hamel addressed the Board. The Planning Board discussed meeting in person and due to the limitation on the number people that are allowed in the meeting hall voted to continue to meet electronically. He stated that the Zoom meetings are working for the Planning Board.

Chairman Burrill explained the hybrid model. Zoom would be utilized by the Selectmen while in the meeting hall. At the same time, the meeting would be broadcast on Comcast Channel 20. This would allow participants utilizing Zoom to hear the meeting.

Secretary Morin addressed the Board and explained that with the current equipment we are not able to broadcast a Zoom meeting. She stated that she has reached out to a vendor and asked what equipment would be needed to use the hybrid setup.

Cable Station Manager, (CSM), Jamie Saucier, addressed the Board. He explained that Zoom users would not be able to hear anyone that steps up to the public microphone to address the Board. The people in the meeting hall would not be able to hear anyone utilizing Zoom. Having multiple microphones would create a feedback that makes it hard to hear. He explained that at the Planning Board meeting held in July 2020, Secretary Morin had to sit far enough away from the second computer so that there would be no feedback.

Selectman Melvin stated that we need to start somewhere and work out the issues as we go along.

Chairman Burrill stated that one or two members could utilize Zoom in the meeting hall. Secretary Morin explained that the audio from those in the meeting hall would not be heard by anyone in the Zoom conference due to microphone limitations.

Selectman Gonyer asked if those members who are in the meeting room had a headset connected to their computer and a lapel microphone for broadcasting on channel 20 would that work? A separate computer would be needed with a microphone to broadcast on channel 20. CSM Saucier explained that when it was tried at the Planning Board July meeting the audio would cut in and out.

Chairman Burrill asked if external speakers connected to the computer could be used so that anyone in the meeting hall could hear the Zoom audio. CSM Saucier explained that you would get feedback from the speakers into the microphone connected to the computer.

Selectman Foote stated that he asked for this meeting due to misinformation about why the meeting hall is not open. He stated that neither the Governor nor the Board of Selectmen should be faulted for this issue.

Selectman Foote moved to start regular meetings on September 1, 2020 in the Town Hall. Seconded by Selectman Melvin for discussion.

Selectman Gonyer asked if everyone would be required to wear a mask? Selectman Foote stated that if social distancing is not possible than masks should be required.

Selectman Michaels is in favor of looking into acquiring the necessary equipment to use a hybrid approach.

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

Chairman Burrill stated that he voted aye but still has concerns that not everyone can meet. He also stated that he has not had any correspondence from any resident asking the Board of Selectmen to meet in person.

Selectman Gonyer stated that she believes the requests to hold in person meetings are more for the Board of Appeals and Planning Board because of the size of the documentation that needs to be reviewed.

B. Town Hall -- Supervisor of the Checklist

Chairman Burrill stated that the Supervisors of the Checklist are required by law to meet prior to elections for a minimum of 30 minutes to allow residents to register to vote. Mrs. Lamere confirmed that the Supervisor of the Checklist must meet. She would like to setup in the Town Hall on Saturday, August 29, 2020 from 11:00am-11:30am. She will only allow one person in at a time. She does not expect to have many people coming to the register to vote.

Chairman Burrill moved to allow access to the first floor of the Town Hall to the Supervisors of the Checklist for a socially distance meeting that is required by law. Seconded by Selectman Gonyer. Burrill – aye, Gonyer – aye, Michaels – aye, Foote – aye, Melvin – aye.

Chairman Burrill read the following statement.

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.

III. Adjourn

Selectman Melvin moved to adjourn at 6:29pm. Seconded by Selectman Gonyer.

Respectfully submitted,

Diane M. Morin
Board of Selectmen Secretary