



Select Board

Town of Hinesburg
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Meeting Minutes – April 1, 2020

- Draft -

Attending the Meeting: Phil Pouech, Merrily Lovell, Mike Loner, Jeff Tobrocke, Renae Marshall, Joy Dubin Grossman, Al barber, Jon Trefry, Pat Mainer, Melissa Levy

Meeting called to order at 7:00 p.m.

Phil advised Jeff French was not able to attend but has reviewed the agenda and is okay with moving ahead. He also thanked everyone for their flexibility in attending remotely and thanked those who worked to set this platform up.

Additions / Deletions / Public Comment

Phil said he anticipates Al Barber to be available for discussion on item 3 (updates on COVID 19) and will move item 7 (LEMP) discussion to follow item 3.

Updates on COVID 19 Response Efforts

Al said responses are going well as far as responses, there is potentially one case of COVID 19 in Hinesburg that he is aware of.

Respecting the governors mandates and requests have resulted in a few changes for response such as the number of responders and protocol of using personal protective equipment.

Renae talked about the community efforts at this time. She is seeing a lot on Front Porch Forum offering support. She has been in contact with Age Well and Hinesburg Community Resource Center. They are creating a Google form to be used for those offering help and those needing help. A virtual mailbox has been established for the Town. Help at Lantman's market has been requested, they are working on setting up a shopper's network for those who do not feel safe going to the store. This will work in conjunction with volunteers to deliver the groceries. Mike suggested a specific shopping time be assigned for this so as not to increase the number of shoppers in the store.

Joy thanked Al for the daily updates.

Consider Approving Local Emergency Management Plan (LEMP)

Al reviewed the LEMP for 2020. This is for use in the community for department heads and first responders. Mike asked about the fact that there were no contacts listed for the mobile home communities, Kelley's Field or Annette's Play School. Al said he has not completed all the information on the form yet.

Phil noted another piece of information needed is if the Town needs to spend emergency funds. The purchasing agent is the Town Clerk but no other local resources are listed.

Merrily moved to approve the 2020 Local Emergency Management Plan (LEMP) for the Town of Hinesburg. Second by Mike and approved with 5 yes votes.

Discuss Revolving Loan Fund and How to Support Local Businesses

Renaë said the Revolving Loan Fund Committee is looking to support businesses that have utilized the fund by approving 3 months of suspended interest and payments on the loans. Also being considered is how it could benefit other small businesses in Town.

Melissa Levy, of the Revolving Loan Fund Committee, said the committee is looking at how they can use the funds. Originally they were thinking help would be needed for restaurants, cafés and in person customer businesses like nail salons and hairdressers. Today she heard from a local stable asking what help is available. The Committee is looking at how they might change the conditions of the loans to make them available for short term help.

Phil said while the Board approves the loans, it is the Committee that does all the work and knows all the details. He feels it is a great time to use these funds to help local businesses. Merrily asked if the Committee will reach out to small businesses or wait till a business contacts them looking for assistance. Melissa said she has considered using FPF to let businesses know about the program and make decisions on requests as they come in. Renaë suggested reaching out to the Agency of Commerce and Community Development to get some guidance. Melissa said she did and they pointed out the fact that it needs to be for low and moderate income residents.

Action Item - *Melissa will put the information on FPF and report back to the Select Board.*

Jeff T suggested to put that information on the Town website with the COVID 19 resources.

Consider Temporarily Suspending Interest Accrual on Delinquent Taxes and Water/Wastewater Bills

Renaë said the Board of Abatement would be the official governing body to take this under consideration.

Merrily said anything the Town can do to lift the burden of those in need is positive. Jeff T and Mike both agree with the idea. Mike also noted he had a board meeting with Champlain Housing Trust

where this subject was discussed. He said the State is currently looking at this to see how municipalities can allow that to happen.

Merrily moved that the Select Board supports the temporary suspension of interest accrual on delinquent taxes and water / wastewater bills and for the Board of Abatement to move forward and pursue. Second by Mike and approved with 4 yes votes.

Consider Approving LaPlatte Headwaters Town Forest Management Plan

Jon noted the monitoring plan section needs to be completed, this is an appendix and not part of the plan so the plan itself is complete.

Mike moved to approve the LaPlatte Headwaters Town Forest Management Plan as presented. Second by Merrily and approved with 4 yes votes.

Review and Discuss Draft Purchasing/Procurement Policy

Renaë said the purpose of having a written policy is for clarity but also to have a procurement policy in place for the Town for a clear way of how to go about the bidding process. This is also necessary for certain grants and for FEMA. Renaë based the draft on a template from VLCT and adapted it to Hinesburg. Renaë needs to put in the particular information for purchasing agents, level of purchase.

Phil suggest to use a chart to refer to in identifying purchasing agents and levels of purchase in addition to the information being in the text.

Mike recommends re-wording the section under affirmative action and local preferences to have State funding as one section and federal as a different section.

Jeff T asked why the wording “whenever possible”. Why not always have the option to use affirmative action and local preference. Mike said it is likely that the reason is they may not always exist in every situation. Phil agreed that as a small town it may be difficult to find the resource.

Action Item – Renaë will come back to the Board with completed information in the policy.

Consider Approving Draft Audit & Management Representation Letter – Fothergill, Seagale & Valley

Renaë said the letter has been reviewed by Missy and Joan.

Merrily moved to approve the FY 19 draft Audit & Management letter for Fothergill, Seagale & Valley. Second by Mike and approved with 4 yes votes.

Town Administrator Report/ Essential Town Office Discussion

Renae reports that almost all Town Hall staff are working remotely. Planning and Zoning are trying to figure out how to meet the needs of applicants while staying at home. They are looking for clarity if they are allowed to go out and check a property to see if it meets the requirement for a CO, and the posting of zoning notices. The DRB is looking at how to continue to move forward with current applications. Phil has a strong recommendation for P&Z to do as much as possible remotely. If there is an absolute reason for an essential business and they need to come to the office to look at files, there should be only one person in the office. There should be written procedures for entering and exiting. All other activities concerning building permits and such be put on hold. Mike said real estate is considered non-essential. Jeff T asked about if someone needs to do a repair requiring a permit can we set up a process that would not require a physical interaction. Phil said he would look to Alex to identify what is essential and how we can make it work, we need to be flexible.

Renae noted when the assessor for NEMRC needs to come into the building she does so between 5 and 7 in the morning. Phil said if that work can be put off for 6 weeks, we should do so.

Renae will talk with the P&Z office to let them know of the Board's support.

Renae reports she has had a lot of communication from people during this time of uncertainty. She said we are also seeing some wonderful things with neighbors helping neighbors and supportive posts. Phil asked what is needed to finalize the Village North Sidewalk. Renae said there a few items required by the State but the work of the sidewalk is done.

Mike asked Renae is she had done any financial modelling for possible lost revenue for the Town budget. Renae said it is difficult to predict but it is likely there may be a loss in revenue for property taxes. Phil said it is not really lost revenue as the Town will be sending tax and water bills as the budget it set and voted on. He feels if there is a higher number of unpaid taxes and water bills we would look for relief to the State to provide funds to those individuals. Mike asked if the Town has any large loans we might look for forgiveness on. Renae said options for municipalities for bridge loans is being looked into.

Action Item - Phil suggested to have Missy look at cash flow and to figure out at what point this might be a problem.

Select Board Forum / Correspondence Received

Merrily suggested the Board put a recap of the meeting on FPF. She would like to call it "highlights of the meeting" and volunteered to write it up and send to Phil and Renae for review.

Phil brought up his request for Board members to get involved in a Town project they are interested in. He will be continuing his work on the water/wastewater needs. Merrily has indicated her wish to continue to work on the ambulance committee.

Action Item – Board members to select a project.

Phil advised he spoke with Chuck Reiss about the solar initiative. He suspects the July 1st deadline will be pushed out. He said he discussed the difficulty to have public meetings at this time.

Review Minutes from March 18, 2020

Merrily moved to accept the minutes of March 18, 2020 as amended. Second by Jeff T and approved with 4 yes votes.

Consider Approving Warrants

Phil moved to approve the warrants, including payroll, as submitted by the Town Treasurer. Second by Mike and approved with 4 yes votes.

Merrily moved to adjourn at 9:10 p.m., second by Mike and approved with 4 yes votes.

Respectfully Submitted,
Valerie Spadaccini, Clerk of the Board