

**Meeting Minutes of Regular Meeting of Hanover Board of Selectmen held via conference call on Monday, April 6, 2020 @ 6:00 PM.**

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Present at Town Hall: Chairman John C. Tuzik. Present via conference call: Vice Chairman Emmanuel Dockter, Selectwoman Jocelyn Keegan and Selectmen David Delaney and John Barry. Also present Town Manager (TM) Joe Colangelo and via conference call Assistant Town Manager (ATM) Ann Lee, and Executive Assistant Janet Tierney.

**Call Meeting to Order**

At 6:00 p.m. the Chair opened the meeting and thanked HCTV Station Manager Colleen Smith for all her work facilitating the Board's meetings.

The Chair explained for residents listening how to gain access for commentary or questions by pressing \*9.

The Chair asked for any public commentary or questions. Seeing and hearing none.

**Board of Selectmen Meeting Minutes**

The Board voted to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes from March 30<sup>th</sup>, 2020 and the Executive Session minutes from March 2<sup>nd</sup>, March 23<sup>rd</sup> and March 30<sup>th</sup>, 2020.

**Town Water**

TM stated the water disinfectant byproduct capital improvement project is nearing completion. The DPW is still finalizing the chemistry aspect of the project. DPW Superintendent Victor Diniak gave the Board an update on the project. Two design issues had caused the project completion to be delayed. Some safety equipment was overlooked in the original design, and the chemical feed pumps that were originally specified were too large. Both issues have been resolved. All electrical, mechanical and safety systems are in place. The ammonia sulfate system still needs approval by DEP. Mr. Diniak stated a senior engineer from Weston & Sampson will be at the plant tomorrow to assist DPW staff with adjusting chemistry levels.

Selectwoman Keegan asked if we will be triggering another violation notice or are we in the clear regarding that. Mr. Diniak stated he is hopeful that the next sample will be good, and we will not trigger another violation. In the summer months, the Pond Street well is utilized more often and is higher in organics which increases the likelihood of violations. Mr. Diniak stated that by summer time he believes the chemistry will be perfect, and we will not trigger another violation this summer. Selectman Barry asked if we have an engineer from Weston & Sampson on the call this evening. Mr. Diniak stated no but he is arranging one to be on the next BOS call. Selectman Barry stated he would like to speak with Weston & Sampson regarding shortcomings in the engineering design. Mr. Diniak agreed that an after action meeting should occur with Weston & Sampson. Selectman Barry asked why the gate valves were being cleaned on Broadway recently. Mr. Diniak stated that is part of the flushing program. Vice Chair Dockter expressed the concerns of Town residents that the project took so long to complete and agrees that an after action meeting is needed. The Vice Chair asked if there was a definitive date when the project would be complete. Mr. Diniak cited the delays in the design process and the pending approval from DEP. All that remains is adjusting the chemistry, and Mr. Diniak is hopeful this can be achieved in a short amount of time.

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The Vice Chair asked who is adjusting the chemistry. Mr. Diniak stated it is a combination of DPW staff member Paul Cheney and engineers from Weston & Sampson. Mr. Cheney has a BS in chemistry. The Vice Chair confirmed that we need the final chemistry adjusted and then DEP approval. Mr. Diniak said ideally the chemistry would be correct prior to DEP's inspection and approval. DEP has not yet forwarded their requirements for inspection. The Vice Chair asked TM to report back to the Board when DEP forwards the requirements for the inspection. TM confirmed the information will be forwarded to the Board.

The Chair asked for any public commentary or questions. Seeing and hearing none.

### **Board of Selectmen Policies**

#### ***Transfer Station Rules & Regulations***

The Chair stated he would like to discuss this policy specifically, and when that discussion concludes move onto discussing current operational changes at the transfer station. TM stated after further review of the policy, Section 9C needs to be eliminated. TM also stated the Board should discuss adopting the policy with the current staff levels versus adding additional staff. TM does not believe the Town can properly enforce the policy without additional staff. The policies directive to increase enforcement and reduce some services was intended to create savings which would pay for additional staff to ensure the enforcement.

Mr. Diniak stated he also does not believe the policy is enforceable without a staff member at the gate, and three part time positions would be created to fill that role. The Chair stated he supports the policy but only if the Town can effectively enforce it. The Chair proposed adopting the policy but changing the effective date to June or July. Selectman John Barry would like to wait to adopt the policy, and would like the Board to consider the transfer station as an area where the Town could reduce services in order to save funds long term such as reducing transfer station hours of operation, prohibiting large items etc. Vice Chair Dockter stated his concern that the savings from stricter enforcement could be outweighed by the cost of new staff. The Vice Chair stated he has been in support of the policy but given new developments with the COVID-19 crisis, he believes the Board should pause given the financial concerns of retaining current employees and the tax burden on Hanover residents. The Vice Chair sees no reason why this policy cannot wait to be adopted at a later time. Selectwoman Keegan expressed her disappointment that although the Board has been discussing the policy for some time, they are not any closer to adopting it. Selectwoman Keegan is concerned that we are continuing to allow non-residents to utilize the transfer station, and we are not giving the DPW staff the enforcement tools they require. Selectwoman Keegan understands the financial concerns but believes it is time to adopt the policy. Selectman John Barry asked can we man the gate with existing staff if we continue to reduce services at the dump. Mr. Diniak stated with further items reduced, they could staff the gate most times. Mr. Diniak expressed concern that with additional large items prohibited, illegal dumping in town may increase. Selectman Delaney agrees that with some reduction of services, we could enforce better security at the dump. Mr. Diniak stated currently we do not have a large problem with illegal dumping in town. The Chair stated his opinion that the Board is in general ready to sign off on the policy; however, given the new COVID-19 crisis, some members of the Board are concerned about the financial impact of adding additional staff. The Vice Chair stated given financial concerns he is not in support of adopting the policy at this time, but he agrees that stricter enforcement at the dump is needed to

benefit all residents. The Board discussed the cost savings from eliminating contraband trash and C&D. Selectwoman Keegan asked if we have the ability to start enforcement now with the current reduced services. Mr. Diniak stated yes at times but not during busier times. The Chair stated the policy will be tabled and revisited in a month.

The Board discussed current reductions in services at the dump enacted due to the COVID-19 crisis to promote social distancing and public health. The Board discussed a proposal to prohibit all items except household trash. The Chair stated if illegal dumping in Town increases due to this, the Hanover Police will be given the full authority needed to fine people. The Board agreed and requested that Mr. Diniak temporarily prohibit large items and keeping the recycling area closed thus only accepting residential trash in the pit effective Friday, April 10<sup>th</sup>.

The Chair asked for any public commentary or questions. David Cedrone from WATD News asked if the Board is seeing a large increase in activity at the dump due to residents cleaning their homes. The Chair stated there does seem to be an increase. Selectman Barry explained the prior closing of the recycling area to promote social distancing and protect the public and transfer station staff members. The Chair thanked the transfer station staff and Hanover Police Sergeant Dan Salvucci for his supervision of the public at the transfer station this past weekend.

#### ***Senior Tax Work-Off Program***

TM stated the policy is ready for adoption. The Board voted to adopt the Senior Tax Work-Off Program Policy.

#### **Public Hearing**

##### ***Joint Hearing of the Bylaw Review Committee and BOS***

Bylaw Review Committee Chairman David Ladd joined the Board of Selectmen and opened a hearing relative to proposed amendments and additions to the General Bylaws, said amendments to be included as a Warrant Article at Annual Town meeting on June 29, 2020. The BOS Chair read the public hearing notice into the record. A motion was made to waive the reading of the proposed bylaw. All were in favor, and the motion passed. Chairman Ladd asked for any public comment regarding the bylaw under review. Hearing and seeing none, a motion was made to recommend the bylaw amendment as written and forward it to the BOS for inclusion in the 2020 Annual Town Meeting Warrant. All were in favor, and the motion passed. Chairman Ladd stated the Bylaw Review Committee forwards its unanimous recommendation to include the bylaw relative to the Council on Aging. BOS Chair thanked the Bylaw Review Committee. Seeing no other business, the Bylaw Review Committee voted to adjourn the public hearing at 7:07 pm.

#### **COVID-19 Emergency Management Agency Update:**

Fire Chief Blanchard gave the Board an update on Hanover's Emergency Management Response. The Chief stated the Incident Command Team is holding a daily meeting. All departments are doing an excellent job. The team is continuing to review the daily updates from the CDC. The Hanover Volunteer Nurse Call-in Center is almost up and running. The Chief stated they are waiting for final approval from the Department of Public Health and have been asked to make some changes to the program so that the DPH may use the program as a model for the state. All staff members are working together to be prepared for any future programs such as testing and vaccination. The CERT

Team has enlisted volunteers to monitor areas in Town regarding COVID-19 issues and also other issues in order to free up staff for other tasks. A new CERT team is also being assembled to deal with issues in the future such as traffic at drive thru testing sites and/or vaccination sites. The Chief stated they are also preparing and identifying areas that could be used for field treatment if necessary.

Selectman Barry asked if the number of ambulance runs has changed. The Chief stated although the ambulance runs have reduced due to the public largely staying home, the runs being done take longer due to transfer safety protocols and decontamination requirements of equipment and staff afterwards. Selectwoman Keegan asked if we are doing any redirection of ambulance calls to urgent care versus hospital ED. The Chief stated that process is part of mobile integrated health care and not in place yet but may be implemented sooner rather than later. Selectwoman Keegan asked the Chief if he expects patients in the future with otherwise avoidable conditions because of the lack of routine care during the COVID-19 crisis. The Chief stated the Fire Department has discussed that possibility. The Chief stated telehealth is hopefully helping with that issue, and the volunteer nurses call center should help as well. Vice Chair Dockter thanked the Chief for all the hard work. The Chair thanked Hanover resident Dr. Rick Ashburn on behalf of the Board for the assistance he has given to the Town.

### **COVID-19 Action Items**

#### ***Actions Regarding Fees, Bills, etc.***

TM stated the Governor signed legislation that gives TM the authority to delay the due date for excise tax bills, and TM proposed a new due date of June 1<sup>st</sup>. TM asked the Board to ratify the decision to change the due date. The legislation also gives relief from property tax bills; however, TM and the Finance Director still need time to thoroughly read the applicable legislation. The Chair agreed with the change of date. Vice Chair Dockter supports the change but asked if the due date could be pushed out to July 1<sup>st</sup>. The Vice Chair believes given the strong public safety measures rightly taken to protect public health, there will be strong financial relief measures needed. TM stated his understanding is that the new due dates cannot be past June 30<sup>th</sup> but is open to pushing them back further if allowed. In the future, the Vice Chair supports pushing all fees due from residents as close to July 1<sup>st</sup> as possible. Selectman Barry supports the change of due date but also would like to remind the residents that revenues are what run the Town, and if they are still in a financially capable position, they should pay their bills. The Board voted to extend the due date for excise taxes to June 1, 2020.

#### ***Cost of Telehealth for Residents***

TM asked on behalf of Hanover Fire Department Captain Freeman that the Board approve the use of the Town of Hanover credit card, at \$50 per call, for residents whose insurance does not cover telehealth. A funding source of \$3,500 from the South Shore Community Partners and \$1,000 from the Tri Town Rotary Club has been obtained. The Town will be refunded the charges from these funding sources. Vice Chair Dockter supports this program and would like TM to report back when the costs get close to the limit of the funding sources, however the Vice Chair supports going beyond the available funding. Selectwoman Keegan asked if the Town is paying for a registration fee for residents whose insurance does not cover telehealth. Captain Fred Freeman, via teleconference, stated the fee is per call, and he does not expect to expend all the funding available.

If a patient does not need to go to the hospital, yet their doctor cannot be reached, they can access South Shore Hospital's Care Call Telehealth, which is a paid service, rather than be transported to the hospital needlessly. The Board thanked Captain Freeman, South Shore Community Partners and the Tri Town Rotary. The Board voted to allow the use of the Town of Hanover credit card for the telehealth service charges for residents.

### **Budgets**

#### ***Fiscal Year 2020 Budget Status***

TM stated they expect the May 4<sup>th</sup> property tax installments to arrive as normal, and to complete this fiscal year well into the black. Finance Director Lincoln Heineman via teleconference, agreed with TM and stated delayed fees could affect the fiscal year 2020. Mr. Heineman clarified that the State legislation signed by Governor Baker only allows the fee due date to be delayed to June 1<sup>st</sup>. TM stated the Town is not making any expenditures that are not COVID-19 related. Vice Chair Dockter stated he supports delaying any fees above and beyond excise and property taxes. The Chair stated the MMA sent a very thorough synopsis of House Bill 4617.

#### ***Fiscal Year 2021 Budget***

TM stated he, Mr. Heineman and AdCom Committee Chair Hickey are working diligently to reassemble the 2021 budget. They are trying to cut a half million dollars of expenditures, eliminate most, if not all, capital purchases with free cash, and repurpose the free cash to offset the tax payer burden. Mr. Heineman stated they are looking at cuts to both Town side and School Department side, and he has met with every department head to find areas to cut that will not affect services. Some revenue from the state side is not predictable. Property taxes may be predictable; however, excise taxes rely on residents purchasing newer cars which may not happen at the same rate next year. Also state aid for the schools could be affected. Vice Chair Dockter would like to make sure no staff layoffs are needed and to provide some financial relief to residents. The Vice Chair suggested a hiring freeze or adjusting the hiring policy, accessing what staff may wish to retire if any and what businesses in Town may not be able to reopen after this crisis. TM stated the Board should give guidance on how they feel about service changes at the transfer station which could benefit the budget. Mr. Heineman agreed and stated he would be meeting with the AdCom Committee next week to review budget cuts. Mr. Heineman stated property tax value estimates for 2021 are based on value in January of 2020, so any reduction in values will be felt in the 2022 budget. Mr. Heineman is also looking to recapture appropriated money from old, unused accounts to ease the financial burden. The Chair stated the Board will be looking seriously at the new Transfer Station policy in the short term, and perhaps the CPA needs to be looked at again due to the Covid-19 Crisis. The residents of Hanover would then make any final CPA decisions at Town Meeting. The Chair stated it's the Board's obligation to present all options to the residents to relieve their tax burden. Selectwoman Keegan is in support of keeping the CPA surcharge in place, and believes it is intended for times like the current crisis. Selectwoman Keegan also noted the State matches the funds. Vice Chair Dockter stated he agrees that given the state match the CPA is very beneficial but all options should be discussed. The Vice Chair also stated that matching funds could be affected by the State's budget after this crisis. Mr. Heineman stated the matching funds from the State come from fees collected at the Registry of Deeds. Selectwoman Keegan asked TM to report back to the Board regarding what expenses will be reduced and what factors are they considering when deciding the cuts that can be made and the cuts that are too aggressive.

The Chair asked for any public commentary or questions. Seeing and hearing none.

**Executive Session**

At 8:07 pm the Chair asked for a roll call vote to enter into executive session to discuss legal strategy with respect to the Fireworks Site as well as strategy with respect to collective bargaining agreement negotiations as the Chair determined that an open session discussion would have a detrimental impact on both. Roll Call Vote: Vice Chairman Dockter aye, Selectman Barry aye, Selectwoman Keegan aye, Selectman Delaney aye, Chairman Tuzik aye.

At 8:07 pm the Board moved into Executive Session.

At 8:53 pm the meeting ended and adjourned.

*Respectfully submitted by Irene Coleman*