

Town of Swanzey, New Hampshire
Board of Selectmen
Meeting – April 1, 2020
Town Hall, 620 Old Homestead Highway and remotely using Zoom.
Swanzey, NH

ZOOM MEETING during Health Emergency

Town Administrator Michael Branley hosted a ZOOM online conference call at 2:00 pm at Town Hall due to the public health emergency. Present were W. William Hutwelker, Sylvester Karasinski and Kenneth P. Colby, Jr. Also present was Town Administrator Michael Branley and Recording Secretary Beverly Bernard.

OTHERS PRESENT

Code Enforcement Officer Mike Jasmin, Resident Mary Verner, Assessor Dave Marazoff, State Representative Jennie Gomarlo, Conservation Commission Chair Wally Smith, Administrative Assistant Jenna Fraunfelder, Recycling Center Manager Josh Whipple, Director of Planning and Economic Development Matthew Bachler, Health Officer Pam Fortner.

PUBLIC INPUT

The public may participate remotely over Zoom by going to www.zoom.us, using Zoom App on a cell phone, or on a landline calling 1 929 205 6099 and entering Meeting ID 235 370 4380#. If the public is unable to access the meeting, they are asked to call 352-7411 ext. 107.

COVID -19 UPDATE

Branley said he has been working on financial impact of the health crisis on the Town's budget. He has been working on review of projects that might be able to be delayed and sent them to the Board. He said that for EMS responders, staff is making arrangements for Carpenter Home as temporary residence if exposed to the virus, so as not to infect family members at home. For other town employees, case by case basis.

Fortner said the State has cleared a lot of backlog for testing, but still recommending practice of social distancing, and to call for PPE if need. Concern about number of people hiking on trails and state parks – some are crowded. Concern is out of state people who are transferring prescription to local pharmacies and concern is their permanent presence would strain existing facilities.

Notifications about business resources was noted by Bachler. He said there is some information on business page on Town's website. Bachler said he participated in a Webinar for small businesses, to let folks know what resources are available. He referred to the stimulus package being funneled through Small Business Association (SBA). NH SBA website is a good place to start. They have extended hours with people available to answer questions. We have a link to the State's resource page on Swanzey website. Bachler said for businesses to be qualified as an essential business the State has set up a portal at the state level Department of Business & Economic Affairs.

Smith asked if Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is getting involved with helping the State. Jasmin said he has not heard FEMA participating in state level calls. Smith spoke about a law that triggers FEMA activity. State must declare the state is a disaster. Branley said he would investigate that.

Fortner said might add to Swanzey website, if self-employed, can use Schedule C 2018 and 2019 to apply. It would be denied, but then if appealed someone will get in touch with that individual.

Colby said regarding Carpenter Home, no decision has been made. Branley said they are making arrangements in case the need is urgent.

Hutwelker asked about email and phones. Hutwelker asked for any explanation from WiValley, and Branley said that everything that can be done is being done.

Hutwelker said he would not support any diligence about determining whether a business is essential. He said unless there is a directive from the state, he personally does not want to see the Town going in that direction. He is concerned about gun sales and ammunition. If a business wants to stay open, that is their decision. Branley said he has no interest in pursuing that. Bachler said he agreed and Gomarlo agreed as well. Colby said he is not in favor of pursuing that issue either.

Gomarlo said her concern is for people without access to internet, or skills to use the internet, to file for unemployment benefits. Jasmin said there are a couple of ideas that are being considered locally. Hutwelker asked how State is handling that? Gomarlo said people are calling local center and they are bumped to call center in Concord and then pushed back down to the local center. Not a good situation right now. She said some 26,000 checks have gone out totaling more than \$7 million. Gomarlo said some folks may fall back to the Town for help if they cannot get unemployment funds. Gomarlo said volunteers cannot help file for someone else because of privacy issues.

Whipple said a stack of flyers for residents is being given out. Some are reluctant to take them. Gomarlo asked if staff wears gloves when passing out flyers. Whipple said some residents don't respect the changes or the COVID situation. Branley asked if they have enough PPE and Whipple said yes for now. Gomarlo pointed to a NH Business Review article about recycling and she said she would send it to Whipple.

Colby asked about hand sanitizers for staff at Town Hall and Branley said they will likely need more. Whipple said Future Supply Co. has sanitizers and other sorts of sanitary products.

Hutwelker asked about a possible press release regarding new regulations at the Recycling Center. Whipple said most people are aware of what they need to do and how recycling is working now.

Branley asked for any further comments. Jasmin said that there will be a small percentage of people who don't care and don't want to be cooperative. There is no time for that now. He appreciates everyone being helpful and cooperative. Colby added that Megan Foley is back working for the Sentinel newspaper and perhaps she could do a story on the Recycling Center. Branley said he would follow up on that.

Marazoff said his assessing work is done with new construction. He noted that as of April 1, many people won't be able to make mortgage payments. Good time to be thoughtful of people going through bad times.

Meeting over at 2:33 pm

Respectfully Submitted,



Beverly Bernard, Recording Secretary
Approved on April 8, 2020