

Town of Swanzey, New Hampshire
Board of Selectmen
Meeting – April 2, 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

Mr. Caesar Head Librarian Cadigan Gregory, Conservation Commission Chair Wally Smith, Recycling Center Manager Josh Whipple, State Representative Jennie Gomarlo, Police Chief Tom De Angelis.

COVID-19 UPDATE

Branley updated those on the call with the number of cases in New Hampshire, which continue to rise and noted the IT issues that were prevalent yesterday have been resolved. He referred to Executive Order #23 from the Governor relating to statutory deadlines. Example is Planning Board responses to applications. Those types of deadlines have been given flexibility. He said electronic signatures for documents are under consideration.

Colby asked if the Governor has done anything about motor vehicle registrations. Branley said temporary plates were extended, but Colby spoke about extensions for existing registrations. Branley said he would research and let Colby know.

Hutwelker said he had nothing to add at this time.

Smith said 6.6 million people have applied for unemployment nationally. He asked what the Board might be doing about the 17% interest rate on real estate taxes if people cannot pay. Branley said that is being discussed at State level. Branley said there are not new bills out there now. Smith asked if people could pay quarterly, but Branley said the Town only bills semi-annually. Changing it would have to be done at Town Meeting and quarterly billing would mean people get a bill sooner. Hutwelker said the Board has been very considerate and if folks need to work out a payment plan, he is confident the board would work with residents. Colby said that was well put and added that the Board has been compassionate in the past and will be in the future. He also said that folks must come to the Board to make the Board aware of any issues folks are having in that regard.

Gomarlo said the legislature cannot meet electronically. The Constitution says “present” and the lawyers are looking at the wording. Colby said the NH Constitution needs to be reviewed as a living document subject to change.

Gregory said if there is anything the library can do for the Town, somehow the building or staff could be useful, to please ask.

Hutwelker spoke to Whipple and asked him about an idea he has about change hours or days at the Recycling Center. Whipple said the idea is to disburse people throughout the week. Just an idea that is being tossed around. Branley said there is discussion about restricting the number of folks at the center

and possibly eliminating Saturdays. Gomarlo asked if Whipple would like volunteers to help with traffic on Saturday. The volunteers might work, but he has cut down on some of the part-time hours and will have a better handle on what is needed by next week.

De Angelis said if the Recycling Center has issues with traffic, he can send a patrol unit there to help. He said calls for service are down so a cruiser would be readily available. Whipple said that would help keeping the flow going. He said the busiest times are from 10 am to 2 pm and at end of day. He said he doesn't want a lot of cars lining up in the street but De Angelis said they could help with that.

De Angelis asked if anyone had questions for him. Gomarlo asked about domestic violence and De Angelis said in Swanzey has some up-tick but nothing alarming at this point. He added that they are in contact with Keene Police and with the State Police and are trying to keep cruisers out 24/7 to make public aware that they are monitoring traffic.

Gregory asked whether the liquor stores were remaining open. Branley said the Keene store is still open and those sales are an important revenue source for the State.

Colby thanked all for their participation. Caddy said she appreciates these meetings.

Meeting over at 2:25 pm

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Beverly Bernard".

Beverly Bernard, Recording Secretary
Approved on April 8, 2020