

Town of Swanzey, New Hampshire  
**Board of Selectmen**  
Meeting – March 23, 2020  
Town Hall, 620 Old Homestead Highway  
Swanzey, NH

*Note: Draft Minutes are subject to review, correction and approval by the Board. Review and approval of Minutes generally takes place at the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Board.*

**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**

Health Officer Pam Fortner, Intern Julius Peele, Conservation Commission Chair Wally Smith, Nonna Dee on an iphone, Chief Eric Mattson, Human Services and Resources Coordinator Edna Coates, Fire Chief Bill Gould, Lt. Brandon West. The public was also able to join the meeting or at Town Hall.

**COVID-19 UPDATE**

Branley said that at a press conference today the State of New Hampshire Governor Sununu recommended ten people or less for meetings. Branley said the first death from the virus was announced and the new total number of cases now at 101 in the State. Other issues of government concern: unemployment, business support, and education matters. Branley said that the Town has been contacted for the potential use of Carpenter Home as surge facility to accommodate extra patients. Town departments are doing well. Police have seen lower calls for service than usual. Fire Department – Matson said calls are down a bit since people are staying home. He noted they had to deal with one household on self-quarantine. Fire Department is in good shape said Mattson. He added that mutual aid has been discussed. Brandon West also commented.

Homeland Security update – Pam Fortner said as of this phone call, the Governor is not going to be issuing a shelter-in-place order. Fortner is monitoring many emails that are coming in daily. West asked about an online petition going around which has not been seen by Fortner.

Branley said he is working on the Town's Leave Policy related to COVID-19 to add clarity, given employee concerns. Smith expressed concern about holding the Conservation Commission meeting in April and Bernard offered to run ZOOM for the Conservation Commission meeting at Whitcomb Hall. Branley asked Colby whether to meet at Whitcomb Hall for Selectmen's meeting on Wednesdays at 5:30 pm and Colby agreed to hold the meetings there.

Bill Gould, the new Fire Chief, was welcomed by Branley and Gould said he appreciates the support from the Fire Department and everyone else.

Hutwelker asked Branley to talk more about the potential use of the Carpenter Home. Branley said the Town has been contacted by the Department of Health and Human Services and Cheshire Medical about potential use of the Carpenter Home for people who are mildly sick, but not able to return to family

home where there may be more vulnerable family members. Potential relief for Cheshire Medical if they become over-taxed with sick patients. Branley said it would be staffed by DHS and National Guard.

Branley said the Planning Board meeting that would have been scheduled for this coming Thursday has been cancelled due to a lack of applicants. Hutwelker asked for a dry run using ZOOM with the Chairs of the various Boards and Committees. Branley said he would plan on doing so and noted there has to be a physical location for a meeting for anyone among the public without a computer or phone to call into the ZOOM meeting.

Hutwelker asked if Fire or Police have a list of residents who are vulnerable in order to contact by phone to check on them. Branley said he will follow up on the list. Mattson said that the Fire Department would be able to have a master list in the future. The old list needs to be updated said Mattson. Fortner said she used to keep the list updated, which was difficult, and she said she did attempt to call people from time to time, which was also difficult, and is willing to work with the Fire Department to work on an updated list.

Coates offered a chat question about eviction notices and wants to know who is enforcing the new rule that people not be evicted during the health emergency. Fortner said she would find out and report back to Coates.

Branley asked for further comments and there were none.

Meeting over at 2:42 pm

Respectfully Submitted,



Beverly Bernard, Recording Secretary  
Approved on March 25, 2020