

Town of Swanzey, New Hampshire
Board of Selectmen
Meeting – April 8, 2020
Whitcomb Hall, Main Street, Swanzey NH
and remotely using Zoom Meeting

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Chair Selectman Kenneth P. Colby, Jr. at 5:31 pm at Whitcomb Hall Main Street, Swanzey, NH and remotely using Zoom Meeting. Present were W. William Hutwelker, Sylvester Karasinski and Kenneth P. Colby, Jr. Also present was Town Administrator Michael Branley and Recording Secretary Beverly Bernard was present via Zoom.

OTHERS PRESENT

Fire Chief Bill Gould, Solid Waste Manager Josh Whipple, Captain Eric Mattson, Lieutenant Brandon West, Wally Smith

MINUTES

- The regular meeting Minutes of March 25, 2020 were considered. There was a **motion** by Hutwelker to approve the regular meeting Minutes of March 25, 2020. The motion was seconded by Karasinski and there was no further discussion. And April 1, 2020. All were in favor by roll call. ***Motion passed.***
- The regular meeting Minutes of April 1, 2020 were considered. There was a **motion** by Hutwelker to approve the special meeting Minutes of April 1, 2020. The motion was seconded by Karasinski and there was no further discussion. All were in favor by roll call. ***Motion passed.***
- The special meeting Minutes of March 25, 2020, March 26, 2020, March 27, 2020, March 30, 2020, March 31, 2020, April 1, 2020, April 2, 2020, April 3, 2020, April 6, 2020, and April 7, 2020 were considered. There was a **motion** by Hutwelker to approve the special meeting Minutes of all the above dates. The motion was seconded by Karasinski and there was no further discussion. All were in favor by roll call. ***Motion passed.***

CONSENT AGENDA

Motion was made by Hutwelker to approve the Consent Agenda. There was a second by Karasinski. There was no further discussion. All were in favor. ***Motion passed.***

- Payroll Manifest
- Payables Manifest
- Intent to Excavate – Map 12, Lot 5
- 2020 MS 232 – Report of Appropriations as Voted
- 2020 MS 535 – Financial Report of the Budget
- Personnel Action Report(s)

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.

APPOINTMENTS

**Fire Chief Bill Gould
Department Update**

Gould said the department has been getting ready for COVID-19 impact. Not many changes have been made but there are items they are working on now that will be readied for when the COVID-19 situation is over.

Hutwelker asked Branley when a better microphone for larger meetings will be here. Branley said according to shipping confirmation says it should be here soon. Colby suggested Amazon might be a good source for microphones.

Gould said ambulance could be delivered as early as Thursday or Friday. Hutwelker asked about additional equipment. Gould said West has done an outstanding job and equipment should be here tomorrow, and radios will be installed soon. Gould said the hospitals have been notified and DiLuzio has been notified and they are positive about the Town having an ambulance. Lettering will need to be done. There was a brief discussion about 6-month warranty on drive chain and possible other major failures and Gould confirmed the warranty. Hutwelker asked about enough staff and Gould said he felt staff is sufficient to respond. He said the department will need more people to respond after hours and weekends. Gould said everyone has been great helping with his transition into the position. Gould said the department held a Zoom meeting with 15 – 16 participants. He said it is great tool. He referred to emails as well for communications purposes. He referred to a fire call that came in and staff did a good job. Hutwelker asked about a plan for recruitment. Gould said that is something to work on as well as retention. He noted that it is a major commitment to get EMT certified. Karasinski asked if fire permit online process was going smoothly and Gould said it is working, so far so good.

Hutwelker said to check the Town's Fire Department web page about burn permits as there is some confusion about it. Branley said he would check it out. Gould said he spoke to Administrative Assistant Fraunfelder about updating the webpage with new photos.

Fire Station Project Discussion

Colby asked Gould to consider what needs to be done to move forward with the fire station project. He asked if Gould had reviewed the plans. Gould said he walked the property and would like to see the land prepared this year. Branley said we want to make it look like a building site. Gould said he has looked over the plans and there is a need for the new station, but he has not had a chance to make any suggestions to modify the plans. He said he thought the design would serve the town well. He said he is aware of the controversy about the location, but he says it is an open site and looks okay to him.

Colby said he wants to look at the shrubs to see what can be moved from the site to a park. Geoff Davis will look at what is there and what can be moved. Colby noted some folks suggested a sign for the site for a future fire station. Hutwelker said marketing is critical. Colby also urged Gould to move forward as soon as possible. There was a brief discussion about Gould working with architect Katie Sutherland to review the plans. Branley said the Town has spent all the funds for the architect. Hutwelker asked if she might be willing to review the plans with Gould without further compensation. Hutwelker said Sutherland and Branley did a great job promoting the design but not enough people attended the sessions that were meant to inform the public and answer questions. Gould left the meeting at 5:55 pm.

Solid Waste Manager Josh Whipple – Update on Operational Changes in Response to COVID-19 Pandemic

Whipple gave an update – what they have been doing following CDC guidelines and requiring the residents to do the same. They have a sign at the Center. PPE is better now, they have washable masks. He noted the life span of the virus on plastic and metals is up to 72 hours, so he is trying not to have the staff sort those items. He does update staff with a bulletin board. He also suggests that employees

bring another set of clothes to change after work and wash their hands frequently. In an NRRA (Northeast Resource Recovery Association) survey of New England transfer stations some 63 stations responded, 4 have closed and 17 not receiving any recyclables for now. Whipple said earlier today they had two full compactors but will have swap outs and be back to normal. Karasinski asked if 30-yard dumpster might be useful for now so staff does not have to handle any extra materials. Whipple said he would look into that. Colby said he was at Recycling Center and there were 50 bags outside. He said his concern is animals spreading it all over the place. Whipple said he moved it into a container before the end of the day. Whipple said the trend is to add recyclables into the trash, the bulk keeps the compactor from doing its job as usual. Karasinski asked about market for corrugated cardboard - \$67 a ton was quote so that is up, and mills are looking for material because of the health crisis. Plastic will be shipped out soon.

The Town's Solid Waste Ordinance was discussed and the waiver that was approved on March 18, 2020 by the Board of Selectmen. The waiver is meant to reduce exposure by staff at the Recycling Center to the virus and was approved until April 8, 2020, at which time a reassessment of the situation would be made. Whipple said he would like to follow the stay-at-home executive order until May 4th.

Motion was made by Hutwelker extend the waiver of the Town's Solid Waste Ordinance to May 6, 2020 and there was a second by Karasinski. All were in favor by roll call. **Motion passed.**

Whipple said he would call in to the 2 pm meetings on days he is working. Colby said it was not necessary for Whipple to attend daily.

Whipple said he is working on some items: glass house sorting would change. Steel cans and aluminum bin would change as well. He said he would like to purchase dump cars and add some windows by the sorting rooms so that newspaper could be dumped out. He said these are items that the Capital Improvements Program Committee (CIPC) is aware of. He said he is working on creating a slip lane to make a clear path for the public to use which will keep folks from backing up and limit contact. He said the slip lane will be good after the health emergency is past.

Whipple said some of the larger facilities like Keene, Lebanon and Manchester have conveyor belts so there is less hands on and they are continuing to operate normally. Hutwelker asked if something could be done to have plans in place if some of the upgrades are relatively inexpensive. Whipple said most of the items are on the CIPC list. More people ordering online so there is more cardboard being brought in. Hutwelker spoke about sorting of paper and newsprint. Whipple said an electric forklift along with dump carts would be useful. Karasinski asked about a baler. Whipple said he has priced out one in the past and that would eliminate all hand sorting. Horizontal baler would compact like garbage does said Whipple. Whipple said the machine would eliminate a lot of hand sorting.

Whipple said he was thankful that Police Chief DeAngelis sent over an officer on Saturday because everything went very smoothly. Colby said that would be passed on to DeAngelis.

Whipple left the meeting at 6:15 pm

NEW BUSINESS

Request by Cemetery Sexton to Open Cemeteries Early

Branley informed the Board that due to a light winter, the ground is ready for burials now. He said Cemetery Sexton Lee Dunham would like to open the cemeteries before the usual date of May 1st.

Branley said that Dunham would observe social and physical distancing for any funerals during the State of Emergency. The request was discussed. The Board agreed by consensus.

Town Internet Provider Alternatives

Branley said that considering the service issues faced by the Town with WiValley last week which lasted 48 hours, Allan Treadwell with Twin Bridges which provides IT support to the Town has come up with the following options:

1. Consolidated Communications – a 36 commitment would cost the Town an additional \$370.52 per month
2. Spectrum – no commitment at an additional \$134.97 per month.

In addition, replacement of WiValley could be done and Allan Treadwell recommended Consolidated due to the high speed they offer. If the Board decides to backup WiValley, then Treadwell recommends Spectrum because they are cost effective and fast enough to get the Town through a temporary disruption in service. Branley said the cost to get the backup system up and running is \$4,800. The cost to only change providers is \$1,800 because no additional equipment would be needed. With either option the cost will be shared between Town Hall and the Police Department. The Town Hall Information Management System Expendable Trust Fund has an estimated balance of \$38,224.91 and the Police Information Management System Expendable Trust Fund has an estimated balance of \$29,096.24.

Branley spoke about the lack of communication from WiValley during the outage. They are not the most effective at communication. Hutwelker said he had a conversation with Treadwell, and he said the frustration is with lack of communication. He said the Board should consider a true dedicated landline. WiValley didn't provide the courtesy to return Treadwell's call. They had phone numbers for Treadwell's people and didn't take advantage of them.

There was a discussion about the cost of a landline. Karasinski said it is inexpensive for local calls. Branley said he would check with Spectrum to handle both internet and phone. Colby said Spectrum upload speed is not good and he asked if that could be upgraded and Branley said he would check to see if they offer a faster upload speed. Colby asked if that is critical to the Town's work. Branley said the upload speed is mostly for IT while download speed impacts on users.

Hutwelker asked if there is any value in bringing in Spectrum in to meet with the Board. Branley said he would ask Treadwell to get on a call to answer the Board questions if they liked. Karasinski said we are going to need a backup no matter what. Branley said he agrees with Karasinski; the Town will still need a backup even if you switch the main provider. Hutwelker said he would prefer Spectrum be the provider and WiValley be the backup. Discussion occurred about which company would get to users quickly if all lines were down. Hutwelker said Spectrum would probably be quicker. Colby spoke about out of town connectivity which impacts all lines. Colby said he thought Spectrum as provider and WiValley as a backup might be workable. Branley said we would want to get Spectrum up and running and confer with Treadwell to see which works best as provider and which as backup.

Motion was made by Hutwelker to authorize the expenditure of \$4,800 to provide internet service through Spectrum to Town Hall and the Police Station, with \$2,400 from the Town Hall Information Management System Expendable Trust Fund and \$2,400 from the Police Information Management System Expendable Trust Fund. There was a second to the motion by Karasinski and no further discussion. All were in favor by roll call. ***Motion passed.***

The Board also had consensus on further investigation by Twin Bridges to review as to which provider should be primary and which should be backup.

Town Operations related to COVID-19

Recreational Facilities

Branley said questions have come from the public regarding use of recreation facilities such as the Swanzey Lake boat ramp and Lane Ballfields. Branley said staff does not feel closing the facilities is practical nor effective, given the boat ramp belongs to the State. He suggested putting up signs reminding the public to follow recommending social distancing at recreational facilities to show that the Town is taking some action. Hutwelker said it is important to give people the benefit of the doubt that they will behave appropriately. He said he is not in favor of spending money on signs. He said he is disappointed in towns that have closed their recreational facilities. It was agreed by consensus to keep the recreational facilities open to do nothing further with signs but to promote people behaving responsibly and complying with CDC recommendations.

Property Tax Interest Waiver

Executive Order #25 for property tax waiver was discussed. Some challenges with how this will be managed. Branley said he is recommending not doing any blanket waiver now and using the process already in place to manage. Board agreed by consensus.

NON-PUBLIC SESSION(S)

Non-public sessions(s) per RSA 91-A:3II(a) the dismissal, promotion, or compensation of any public employee or the disciplining of such employee

Motion was made by Hutwelker to enter Non-public session pursuant to RSA 91-A:3(II) the dismissal, promotion, or compensation of any public employee or the disciplining of such employee. The motion was seconded by Karasinski. The Selectmen voted unanimously by roll call to go into non-public session at 6:45 p.m. **Motion passed.** Present was Kenneth P. Colby, Jr., W. William Hutwelker III, and Sylvester Karasinski. Also present was Town Administrator Michael Branley.

Motion was made by Hutwelker to leave non-public session and return to public session. The motion was seconded by Karasinski, with all in favor. **Motion passed.** Non-public session ended at 6:56 p.m.

Motion was made by Hutwelker to seal the minutes of the non-public session. The motion was seconded by Karasinski. The Selectmen voted unanimously by roll call to seal the minutes. **Motion passed.**

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Hutwelker. The motion was seconded by Karasinski without further discussion. All were in favor. **Motion passed.** Adjournment occurred at 7:25 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,



Beverly Bernard, Recording Secretary

Approved on April 22, 2020