

**MINUTES OF SELECTMEN'S MEETING**  
**Hope Board of Selectmen**  
**Tuesday March 10, 2020**  
**6:30PM**  
**Hope Town Office**

**Board Members Present:**

- Brian Powers Jr, Sarah Ann Smith, Wendy Pelletier, Thom Ingraham, and Bruce Haffner  
*(Bruce arrived after the Broadband item under New Business)*

**Others Present:**

- Samantha Mank, Duane Wright, Dieter Weber, Regina Rooney, Kitty Stevens, Jacob Stevens, Charles Weidman, Theresa Withee, and Langley Willauer

**Call to Order:**

- The meeting was called to order at 6:33PM by Brian

**Public Comment:**

- None

**Minutes:**

- 2/25/2020 meeting: Thom made a motion to accept the February 25, 2020 minutes with a minor grammatically edits. It was seconded by Sarah.

**Motion passed 4-0**

**Town Administrator Report:**

- Several shingles have blown off during the recent storms that had high winds. I contacted Jarrod from William's Roofing and someone is scheduled to be here tomorrow to replace the missing shingles and nail the loose one back down.
- The election went very well last Tuesday. Allie did very well and was checking in with and Mary when something she didn't know popped up. It was Langley's second day on the job. Mary helped him with registrar duties for the election. We began running out of ballots around 2:00 PM. {Apparently, this was a state-wide problem}. We photocopied approx. 150 additional ballots. Those ballots were not able to be counted through DS200 machine and had to be tabulated by hand. This did cause a higher cost for the election because of the hourly wages of the workers. The day overall day was a success.
- Matt Weaver from First National Wealth Management sent a form letter regarding the potential effects the coronavirus could have on the Towns investments. Ultimately, he wants everyone to remain calm and to not panic. Although nobody knows when the effects of the virus will pass, First National is in good shape to ride this out and we needn't worry.
- There will be a hands-only CPR training on March 25<sup>th</sup> at the Knox EMA Building for \$5.00. I have put this on the Town website and Facebook. In addition, I forwarded it to Ted Steele as he is the Town's Health Officer.

- MMA has also sent out information regarding the Coronavirus. This was also forwarded to Ted Steele. I will send along any additional information that pertains to Hope or Knox County.
- Clarification of the stipend requirements versus minimum wage questions that arose from last night's Budget Committee Meeting. Volunteer stipends are permitted for the following: expenses, reasonable benefits, nominal fees {cannot be more than 20% of the total compensation that the employer would pay to full-time firefighters for comparable services}, or some combination of all of these.
- Camden, Rockport, and Pen Bay Medical Center are moving forward with a plan to provide EMS service which may not include contracting with NEMHS. I have included several documents for your review. Bill Post, the Rockport Town Manager is asking to meet with the Administrator's from Hope and Lincolnville this week to discuss the plan.
- There are 16 outstanding 2019 real estate tax accounts totaling \$30,669.94 with liens that will go to automatic foreclosure on February 16, 2021 if accounts remain unpaid.
- There are 991 RE 2020 tax accounts totaling \$1,522,285.60. The second half of real estate taxes are due on April 30, 2020.

#### **New Business:**

- Discussion/Creation of Ad Hoc Broadband Committee: Duane began by reiterating that there is a lot of interest in bringing broadband to Hope. He asked if the Selectmen would officially recognize the ad hoc broadband committee as a Town Committee.

The members of the committee will be: Allie Feener – Chair, Duane Wright – Vice Chair, Melissa Hall – Secretary, Regina Rooney – Board Liaison, James Hancox, Kate Bracher, Dieter Weber, Barbara Mason, Alexandra Ruby, Linda Moran, Michael Kelley, Ellie Goldberg, Bruce Haffner – Selectman, and Thom Ingraham – Selectman.

The mission statement of the committee is: *The Broadband Committee is an ad hoc committee created by the Board of Selectmen to assist in getting 100% access to high speed broadband internet to each current and future resident and parcel available in the Town of Hope as directed by the Board of Selectmen.*

Sarah mentioned that Deb Hall from the Rockport Selectboard had sent an email regarding researching joining in with a group of Towns that is already looking at GWI for getting broadband internet. Duane and Regina thought that it would be more timely and remain within the Town's control to not join but, they are clearly not opposed to working with a different company than Tidewater.

95 residents have completed the survey asking if they want fiber optic internet in Hope. It even seems that Spectrum may have become interested in Hope now that the Town as a whole and several residents as individuals have voiced wanting high speed internet in Hope.

There was some discussion on how to best communicate with Town residents. Ideas included: Town bulk email, The Hawkeye School Newsletter, postcards, and a door-to-door approach. The committee has a list of each property and owner in town and they are mapping out a strategy to connect with each resident.

Sarah made a motion to officially recognize the Broadband Committee as an officially ad hoc committee for the Town. It was seconded by Thom.

**Motion passed 4-0**

Duane asked to bring an item before the Selectmen for their consideration. He stated that in order to be competitive enough to receive a grant, we as a town have to have some “buy-in”. The committee is asking if the Selectmen will set aside \$50,000 in a reserve fund designated for the Town’s share of the overall project as a part of the budget consideration.

Duane explained that in order to qualify for a grant, the Town has to have some “skin in the game”. Brian wanted to know what had changed and why we were able to apply for the ConnectME grant a couple of years ago without putting up any money. Duane said the culture has changed since the last time. Brian wanted to know what the Town gets for \$50,000. Duane said he has the same question. He acknowledged that we all would need way more answers. Right now, we don’t know where the money actually goes when the time gets here. We don’t know who will receive the money. What we do know is, we’re going to need it but, we don’t exactly how much yet. Perhaps there could be a safeguard on the money once in the reserve account that any money not used automatically reverts to the general fund.

- **Appointments/Confirmations:**

- Town Bookkeeper – Langley Willauer: Bruce made a motion to confirm Langley’s hiring as the Town Bookkeeper. It was seconded by Thom. Brian said that he is glad to have a good, honest, and competent person in this position.

**Motion passed 5-0**

- Registrar of Voters – Langley Willauer: Thom made a motion to appoint Langley as the Registrar of Voters. It was seconded by Sarah.

**Motion passed 5-0**

- **Review/Award Mowing Bids:** The Town Administrator gave an overview of all seven mowing bids. Bruce commented that the Town should consider having the snowplowing bis divided into grid areas to save money. He believes this could result in an approx. \$40,000 savings. He said that there are always trucks driving around with their plows up. The Town could hire them for certain sections of the Town. The roads are no different than a driveway. The Town should really consider have the bids separated and quoted out like the bids for the mowing. As a matter of fact, the Town should also consider, hiring the lowest bidder for each location that is mowed in the Town. Brian explained that regular pick-up trucks couldn’t handle the commercial, heavy-duty needs of town roads.

Brian noticed that the South Hope Fire Station was included in the bid specs this year. He said that he didn’t see it in the public safety budget. The Town Administrator said would an error and it will get included on the next printout.

The Selectmen carefully reviewed every bid. There was a discussion about the change in the mowing specs and that those specifications are now far more detailed than last year. The final decision came down to two contractors: Stevens Lawn Care/Property Maintenance (\$30,000 3/yrs.) and Todd’s Landscaping (\$34,800 3/yrs.) Brian commented that the current contractor has been very receptive to requests made by the Selectmen.

Thom wanted to recognize that Todd is a Hope resident and that should count for something, but the bid is nearly \$5,000 higher. Bruce commented that Stevens was the only bidder that bothered to show up. Bruce made a motion to award the 3-year mowing contract to Stevens Lawn Care. It was seconded by Wendy.

**Motion passed 4-0-1** (*Brian*)

Bruce said he wanted to suggest posting Alford Lake Rd. to restrict traffic to under 6 tons (12,000 lbs.). Brian said that was something the Selectmen could take up with the Road Commissioner. Bruce also commented that Crabtree Rd. has been ruin by heavy trucks already and suggested the Selectmen should make a point of driving up and down on it.

- Review/Award Insulation for Town Office Quote: The Town Administrator provided the Selectmen with the sole bid for insulating the attic at the Town Office. The bid was from Quantum for \$4,000. Brian said he thinks that is a really good price. Sarah made a motion to hired Quantum to insulate the Town Office attic. It was seconded by Wendy.

**Motion passed 5-0**

- Review/Award Hot Water Heater Replacement South Hope Fire Station Quote: Tabled

**Old Business:**

- None

**Other Business:**

- None

**Review & Sign Warrants #'s:**

- The Selectmen reviewed the warrants. There was a concern that the electric bill at the South Hope Fire Station was higher than the electricity use at the Town Office. Brian thinks it is because the Energy/Thermostat Policy is not being followed at the So. Hope Station. Brian stores letters for the sign inside the fire station and has to go inside when it is time to change the letters. The policy states the bay thermostat is to be kept at 50°. However, in late Feb. the thermostat was set at 70° and the building temp. was actually 72° with nobody there. In March, the thermostat was set at 61° and the building temp. was actually 64°. Brian said that the policy needs to be followed because not following it causes situations like this where a building with very little use is costing more than the Town Office that is getting a lot more usage.

Sarah made a motion to approve and sign warrant #'s 71, 72, 73, and 74. It was seconded by Thom.

**Motion passed 5-0**

**Adjournment:**

- Bruce made a motion to adjourn at 8:55PM. It was seconded by Sarah.

**Motion passed 5-0**