

**MINUTES OF SELECTMEN'S  
MEETING  
Hope Board of  
Selectmen Tuesday,  
April 28, 2020 6:30PM  
Via Zoom Conferencing**

**Board Members Present:**

- Brian Powers Jr., Sarah Ann Smith, Wendy Pelletier, Thom Ingraham, and Bruce Haffner

**Others Present:**

- Samantha Mank, Mary Tolles, Langley Willauer, Alexenia Payor, Dick Crabtree, Todd Snyder, Jessica Snyder, John Monroe, Dan Ford, Ellie Goldberg, Clarence Keller, Mike Ames, Argy Nester, Lindsay Pinchbeck, Gino Vanelli, Ginnie Vanelli, Elsie Pinchbeck, Chris Pinchbeck, Frank Simon II, and Mary Moran

**Call to Order:**

- The meeting was called to order at 6:34 PM by Brian.

**Minutes:**

- 4/28/20 Minutes: Sarah made a motion to accept the April 28, 2020 minutes. It was seconded by Thom.

**Motion passed 5-0**

**Town Administrator's Report:**

- I received an email from Argy Nestor regarding the creation of the 'Box of Hope'. The email reads:

*"What started as an idea to help the library discard the unused books has turned into a layered opportunity for the Sweetland Middle School.*

*You may know that the Little Free Library has been built and installed on the side of the Hope General Store in spite of the pandemic! The learners brainstormed ideas for design and Chris Pinchbeck helped learners with the construction. The learners have named it 'Box of Hope' and it is filled with the Hope Library books as well as other items that may be needed - food, games, notecards, beanie babies, and masks (that the students have been making).*

*Students finish contacting the local libraries and have compiled a list of who would like books for their summer sales (which I'm guessing might not be happening this summer). We were ready to make arrangements to deliver when the pandemic sheltered us.*

*I've attached a couple of photos of the 'Box of Hope' just in case you're not getting out. Please feel free to take what you need and to donate items for others. Thank you for providing this opportunity to the community service project that is almost completed.*

*Please let me know if you have any questions. Please stay well!*

- The Broadband Committee is planning to meet tomorrow evening via zoom. I did receive a new email from Alan Hinsey regarding an island Institute Grant opportunity. I have also included it in your packet. It is been forwarded to Allie Feener to discuss at tomorrow's

- meeting. I will keep you posted on any updates as she is planning on possibly participating in the next Selectmen's meeting.
- Couple of weeks ago I discussed an EMS Education Effort that was emailed by Bill Post from Rockport to the four towns. Now that it is getting closer to time when our contract with Northeast Mobile Health Services would be up for renewal. There is some discussion about finding out what the residents of each town want or expect in regard to EMS services. I have attached the proposal again. As we try to prepare a budget, this is something that may need to be looked at. It appears from all that I am reading that the total cost for the EMS initiative is \$14,000 to be spread among the four towns. And in email sent by Bill Post it does not appear that Camden and Rockport are looking for the towns of Hope and Lincolnville to put in a 25% equal match. Our share and Lincolnville's share have not yet been discussed. I've given you the material again to re-read and see if you think this is something that we should participate in as a town. My understanding is that it would be a presentation to any and all residents who want to participate.
- I am sad to say, that Mary's final last day will actually be May 15<sup>th</sup>. She has stayed on in the midst of this pandemic, whereas we were not able to have the firm from Portland come up and assist with a quarterly report. Thank you, Mary for staying an extra month past your retirement, it is very much appreciated.
- The Governor made a statement today that she plans on extending the Stay Safer at home order beginning May 1<sup>st</sup> extending it to May 31<sup>st</sup>. I have attached documents regarding her Order. It is my understanding that state workers or people who are able to work from home continue to do so. With that said, I would like to get a plastic sheet barrier put up in front of the front counter. I would still like to rotate the staff so that we're not all in at the same time. I'm prepared to possibly re-open in some fashion to the public beginning June 1<sup>st</sup>.
- Since the Governor has postponed the Primary Election until July 14<sup>th</sup>, I would propose that we use that date to plan for our Town Meeting. Town Meeting typically takes place two days after the primary Election. So, I would propose our Town Meeting be on Thursday, July 16, 2020. If all stays on track. I will figure out the exact dates for when nomination papers need to be turned back in and to get the ballots ready for the election. Also, the Budget Committee is planning on meeting the first week of May and that is when we can determine the new budget presentation schedule.

**New Business:**

- 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter Financial Report - Mary Tolles: Mary presented the third-quarter financial report. She said there were two things worth pointing out: real estate taxes collections have continued to increase, and the Town not lost any principal money on investments. However, there was a \$28,000 loss in March but \$15,000 of that has already been gained back. Brian said that it looks like the Town is still on track for where it would expect to be regarding excise taxes. Mary stated that we are on track as of now plus there will actually be a backlog of people waiting to register their

vehicles once the Town Office is able to open to the public.

Thom thanked Mary for her service to the Town as did the other Selectmen.

- Sweet Tree Arts School Rental of Town Office Space – Lindsay Pinchbeck: Lindsay stated that the School would be very interested in continuing to rent the space next year. She said they would also like to extend the hours from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. Sarah said she was fine but will defer to the office staff. Town Administrator said there was everything was good from the Town Office point of view but would like to make sure the library was consulted for programming and scheduling events. Mary said that they have been terrific tenants and Langley said he loves having the kids at the Town Office.

Lindsay asked if it would be possible to keep the same rental rate or would it need to go up because of the additional hours? She said that the school was willing to adjust the rent rate accordingly. Brian asked if they were expecting the same number of children to be enrolled next year? Lindsay indicated that they were expecting at least the same number of students and possibly one or two more. Argy said that with the extra hours they would be able to rotate groups of students so that some students were at the main campus while others were at the Town Office even though it would still be all of the same students.

Brian said that he thinks the use of the space by the School is an asset to the Town. He said he doesn't really care about keeping the rent the same but wants to be fair and equitable to any other possible renters in the future.

Sarah said she was comfortable with keeping the rate the same for this year and possibly make an adjustment for the third year.

Thom said he supports the current rate.

Wendy asked if raising the rent would cause a hardship to the school. Lindsay said that they've had a lot more families requesting financial aid this year and that the budget has been greatly affected. "The Town has been very fair, and we can make it work if the cost went up".

Bruce said that he thought it was a great and loves to have the School using the space. Bruce made a motion to "do the deal".

Brian says he knows that a lot of people are going through financial hardships and that he would be an advocate of not raising the cost for this year.

Bruce made a motion to keep the same rate for the 2020-2021 school year for Sweet Tree Arts School. It was seconded by Sarah.

**Motion passed 5-0**

- Tree Removal from True Park: Sarah began by stating said that it feels like the Town keeps getting hit with a lot of unexpected expenses. Brian asked if there were any Town protocols in place for the removal trees. He wanted to know how these trees suddenly become an emergency.

Sarah said that as Selectmen we have been asked, we've looked into it, we've been warned by professionals, and now it is time to act because we could be held responsible.

Brian wanted to know where the money would come from. "There is no money in Recreation Budget for this or do we need to just have a Town Meeting?" Sarah asked if there were any a designated reserve funds that we can use for unforeseen expenses? If not, can we add one to next year's budget? Sarah went on to say that this seems like a public safety concern. Thom said that he was in favor of moving ahead with removing the trees now.

Brian said the reason the Town doesn't have a miscellaneous reserve fund in the budget is because Bill Pearse said it prevents Selectmen from getting together to decide to spend the money that has not been approved by the voters. Sarah asked what the process is of getting a miscellaneous reserve fund in the next budget so that unforeseeable expenses or emergencies that don't cost an exorbitant amount of money can be handled by the Selectmen without requiring a Special Town Meeting. Brian said he wanted Todd Snyder to look at the trees and give his opinion.

Bruce moved to put this at the end of the agenda because people are waiting to hear about the fire truck.

Sarah asked if Mary could find any creative ways of finding the money in the current budget that hasn't been spent yet. Brian said that the Recreation Budget does have a maintenance line of \$5000. So, it may be possible to delay some of the expenses until the next budget cycle.

Thom re-read the email from Rick. It stated that both bidders have seen the trees. Brian tabled this discussion until the next meeting in order to wait to hear Todd's analysis. Todd said he look at the trees and speak with Rick.

- Fire Truck Purchase Discussion – Clarence Keller: Clarence began by reminding the Selectmen that he had mentioned to them a couple of months ago that there was something in the works regarding the purchase of a fire truck. He now has some of the details. The Town currently owns a 1983 tanker which is 37 years old and is fueled by gas. Over the past 3 to 5 years, the Fire Department has discussed its replacement. Clarence said that right now there is a very favorable option so it's time to discuss it with the Selectmen and find out how they would like to proceed.

The Town of Camden is in the process of liquidating a 2004 International chassis diesel caterpillar engine with only 11,000 miles on it and 936 work hours. The engine is barely broken in and it has a 1500-gallon tank and automatic transmission. The Camden Fire Chief has conveyed to Clarence that Camden will sell it for \$120,000. Clarence said he thinks this is an exceptional deal for an exceptional price. This is the same truck that the Town borrowed when our truck was being repaired.

Clarence went on to say at the end of February there was just a little less than

\$120,000 in the investment account. By the end of March, the losses dropped the account to around \$115,000.

Clarence asked if this something Town would like to pursue? Bruce said that he would like to look at comparable vehicles. He wanted to know if Clarence had any other trucks to compare this truck or this deal with. Clarence responded that it is more difficult to get a clear and concise picture of the vehicles when dealing with the fire apparatus. A new truck of the same caliber would cost between \$300,000-\$350,000. Fire equipment is specialized so it is not just a simple as going to a dealership to shop for a firetruck.

Thom asked if it been a practice in the past to put aside \$10,000 each year in the firetruck reserve. Clarence responded that prior to the year 2000 the Town was putting \$30,000 a year aside but, when the new fire station was built the amount decreased to \$10,000 each year to offset the \$50,000 cost of the annual bond payment for the fire station.

Brian said that Camden must have to go through some kind of Town approval. He instructed the Town Administrator to find out if the Fire Chief or the Town Manager can just sell this truck and is the price set. He also went on to say that this looks like a very good deal on the surface and that the firetruck is barely broken in. Firetrucks are kept in a perfect condition and always very well-maintained this seems like a pretty good deal.

Bruce ask Clarence if he thinks this is a good deal and if Camden works with us for \$110,000 now and \$10,000 in the next budget year then we should do this deal.

Clarence was concerned about paying the remaining \$10,000 if it had not yet been approved by voters. The Town Administrator explained that there is generally an “escape clause” in contracts with municipalities since they know that funding is always contingent upon voter approval. Brian asked Town Administrator to follow up with the Camden Town Manager to find out what the final lowest price would be and what the protocol will be for doing it.

- Snowplowing Bid: Brian recapped where the Town is at so far in this process. He said he received some emails from some of the Selectmen and had discussions with the ones that he had not received emails from. He thinks it would be better for the Town to not accept any of the bids and to put out a Request for Proposal. He said, “for me, a \$100,000 jump in one year it’s just too much of a jump to pass on to the taxpayers.”

Bruce presented a PowerPoint presentation to the Selectmen which outlined the cost of the Town having its own Winter Public Works Department.

Brian thanked Bruce for all of his hard work and research.

Sarah said she didn’t think there was enough time to put this together before next winter. She went on to say that she thinks there are some potential legality issues with the current bid process and doesn’t want any liabilities to befall the Town, so she also

thinks that bids should be rejected and an RFP should be sent out so that the Town can negotiate for with those who submit a proposal for the good of taxpayers.

Referring to his presentation, Bruce thinks his municipal snow removal plan could all be accomplished within two months once it gets started. He said that the Town doesn't even need storage for the first year. Brian explained that the Town must follow certain protocols including at least one public hearing and then Town Meeting approval. There just isn't enough time to do it this year.

Thom thanked Bruce for his presentation, and he agrees with Brian that we just can't sustain the current trajectory of cost that the plowing and sanding keep going up. He thinks that taking a serious look into Bruce's proposal for possibly next year could be the direction the Town needs to go in. Thom went as far back as 2015 and increased the snow plowing contract 10% each year and it was still lower than the current bidders.

Brian suggested that the Selectmen reactivate a Roads Committee to help the Town take a serious look at the municipal plowing option and give the Board of Selectmen a better and clearer picture. Sarah said it sounded like a great idea having people who know about roads advising the Selectmen.

Thom said he agreed with Brian and Sarah and added, when the Committee is finally put together, he would suggest that Mr. Haffner would definitely be a part of the committee.

Wendy said that she concurs with Brian and going out with a different type of bidding system, and that she would be in favor of going out one more time with an RFP and trying to get a better price for the taxpayers.

John Monroe stated that he would like Mike Ames to also be on the Roads Committee.

The Selectmen tasked the Town Administrator with drafting an RFP within the next two weeks. There was much discussion regarding the number of years in the contract and a possible opt out clause.

Ellie said having a committee to look at Bruce's concepts and having an RFP timeline could take a lot of time. Perhaps the committee should get appointed now or at least a purpose of the committee could be started and they could use Bruce's work as a starting point.

Sarah made a motion to respectfully declined the bids and thanked them for the time that they have spent with the Town on this process and to send out an RFP and letting them know that they are invited to make a proposal. Bruce amended the motion to include a one through five-year option in the proposal. It was seconded by Thom.

**Motion passed 5-0**

**Old Business:**

- None

**Other Business:**

- None

**Warrants #'s 81, 82, 82, & 84:**

- The Selectmen reviewed the warrants. Sarah made a motion to approve and sign warrant #'s 81, 82, 83, and 84. It was seconded by Bruce.

**Motion passed 4-0-1** (*Brian had reviewed warrants yet*)

**Adjournment:**

- Wendy made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:07 PM. It was seconded by Thom.

**Motion passed 5-0**