

MINUTES OF SPECIAL SELECTMEN'S MEETING
Hope Board of Selectmen
Tuesday, July 28, 2020
6:30 PM
Hope Town Office

Board Members Present:

- Brian Powers Jr., Sarah Ann Smith, Thom Ingraham, Bruce Haffner, and Amy Gertner

Others Present:

- Samantha Mank, Vern Ziegler, Langley Willauer, and William Matteson

Call to Order:

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

Public Comment:

- None

Minutes:

- Bruce made a motion to table all the minutes until the next meeting since the Selectmen did not receive their packets until two hours before the meeting. The motion was seconded by Thom.

Brian added his displeasure at not getting the information like they have been getting them for years on Fridays. He said he would like to go back to receiving packets then. He said he doesn't know what has happened over the past couple of months, but he wanted things to get better. Sarah suggested that the Town Administrator send whatever available information that is ready on Friday and as any additional information comes in later it could be added.

Motion passed 5-0

Town Administrator's Report:

- Presented office statistics
- A person with a long sturdy trailer backed into the ramp side of the deck yesterday causing some damage. He came in and gave us his contact information so that we can have him pay for the repairs.
- The 30-day lien notices went out last week. There have been a few calls of people concerned but it did result in some folks coming in to catch up on their taxes.

New Business:

- Election of Board of Selectmen Officers:
 - Chair: Thom nominated Sarah for the Chair position on the Board of Selectmen. It was seconded by Bruce. Sarah said she feels a little better about doing it this year but would also be comfortable with continuing as Vice Chair if Brian wanted to be the Chair. Thom reiterated that he nominated Sarah. Sarah accepted the nomination.

Motion passed 4-0-1 (Sarah)

- Vice Chair: Sarah made a motion to nominate Brian as the Vice Chair. It was seconded by Amy.
Motion passed 4-1 (Bruce)

Sarah took over the meeting and thanked everyone. She said she wanted to continue having meetings that were marked with respect, and integrity. She hopes everyone look beyond politics to be for the good of the town of Hope.

- Annual Agreement w/ ACO – Heidi Blood: The Animal Control Officer did not attend the meeting. The Selectmen voiced their displeasure with her not attending any meetings not even once a year including budget or occasional updates. The Town Administrator will add a sentence to the agreement stating that the ACO will meet with the Selectmen throughout the year in person from time to time.
- Annual Appointments: Thom made a motion to approve the entire slate of annual appointments including Samantha Mank: Town Administrator, Code Enforcement Officer, Local Plumbing Inspector, Treasurer, and General Assistance Administrator; Alexenia Payor: Town Clerk, Tax Collector, and Election Warden; Langley Willauer: Bookkeeper, Registrar of Voters. C. Vern Ziegler: Assessors Agent; Clarence Keller: Fire Chief, Addressing Officer, Emergency Management Director; Heidi Blood: Animal Control Officer. Beth Gindel: Sexton. Deputies will be appointed in accordance with Titles 30-A M.R.S. §2603 and 21-A M.R.S. §102. It was seconded by Bruce. Brian said that Heidi has been very ghostly at making appearance is before the Board of Selectmen. He said he finds it odd that she blows us off continuously. Thom then rescinded his motion and amended it to accept the slate of annual appointments excluding the Animal Control Officer. It was seconded by Brian. Sarah asked what the length of the agreement with the ACO is and she was told that each agreement is for one year. Thom suggested that the matter get tabled until 7:30 p.m. to give her ample time to arrive.

Motion passed 4-1 (Bruce)

- Appointment to MCSW Board of Directors: The Town Administrator explained to the Selectmen that Mike Brown indicated that he would like to be done serving on the Mid Coast Solid Waste Board of Directors (MCSW). However, Wendy would like to continue serving on the Board. Brian made a motion to appoint Wendy Pelletier to the MCSW Board of Directors. It was seconded by Thom.

Motion passed 5-0

Brian volunteered to be the second person to represent Hope on the MCSW Board. Thom made a motion to appoint Brian to the Mid Coast Solid Waste Board of Directors. It was seconded by Bruce.

Motion passed 4-0-1 (Brian)

- Accept Cemetery Committee Resignation: Brian made a motion to accept the resignation of Jody Saasasthomionen from the Cemetery Committee with thanks. It was seconded by Thom.

Motion passed 5-0

- Annual Summary from North East Mobile Health Service: The Town Administrator presented the annual summary from Northeast Mobile Health Services. The Selectmen reviewed the annual summary, it was noted that the Town's ambulance service continues to meet performance standards and the Town's expectations.

- Discussion for Town wide Zoom Meeting about Brown Tail Moths: Thom shared that he was in contact with a Forrester who was willing to provide the Town with a Zoom informational meeting regarding Brown Tail Moths including question and answer time. Thom will reach out to him to get final dates and be sure to provide the information well enough in advance so that all residents have the opportunity to attend this public session.
- Discussion for sale of Old Fire Truck: The Selectmen suggested putting the old fire truck at the South Hope Fire Station where it can be viewed on Route 17 for higher visibility. The Town Administrator, in cooperation with the Fire Chief will write a bid advertisement. There will be no minimum bid and include the caveat that the Selectmen can accept or reject any and all bids will be included.
- Abatement Request 2-Year: Vern explained to Amy as well as the other Selectmen that they are not only a Selectmen but also Assessors and Overseers of the Poor. In this case, there are three legal events or errors. A subdivision was approved in 2014. Those plans were given to the Assessors Agent and they were mapped and divided into three lots. However, the plans were not recorded in the Knox County Registry of Deeds within two years, so the plans became null and void, but the Town continued to tax them on three separate lots. Brian wanted to know what trigger should be going forward so that this type a flaw in our system doesn't happen again. Vern said that this is the first time that he has ever seen it happen during his career or in any other town. Brian made a motion to approve an abatement for fiscal year 2019 to Eric and Jennifer Simon and the amount of \$838.81. It was seconded by Thom.

Motion passed 5-0

Brian made a motion to approve an abatement for fiscal year 2018 to Eric and Jennifer Simon in the amount of \$771.08. It was seconded by Thom.

Motion passed 5-0

Board of Assessors:

- Suspend as Selectmen and Convene as Board of Assessors: Brian made a motion to suspend as the Board of Selectmen and to convene as the Board of Assessors it was seconded by Thom
- Abatement Request 1-Year: Thom made a motion to approve an abatement for fiscal year 2020 to Eric and Jennifer Simon and the amount of \$870.07. It was seconded by Brian.

Motion passed 5-0

- 2021 Tax Commitment: Vern said that one of the most important duties of the Assessor is to assess the taxes for each year. Vern showed the Assessors that with the approved budget and the increased valuation due in part to building permits, that the tax mil rate could actually go down to 16.6. Brian made a motion to set the mil rate at 16.6 it was seconded by Thom. During the discussion Bruce wanted to know if overlay is the same as surplus. Vern said eventually it could be but not if the property gets leaned. Bruce said if we increase the mil rate to 17.2 then we would have enough money left over in the overlay to recoup the \$175,000 that was in the designated fund used to lower this year's taxes. Perhaps we should do this because a lot of folks may choose to pay other things rather than the taxes.

Sarah wanted to know what other towns do as far as selecting a high, middle, or low end mil rate. Vern

said every town widely varies. Sarah wanted to know what the overlay would be if the mil rate was kept the same. Vern said it could be in the \$52-\$53,000 range. She also wanted to know if having the larger overlay would give money to fund the broadband project. Vern explained that the town can't just spend the money without voter approval.

Brian said he doesn't think that the Town should charge the taxpayers money that we don't need to. It belongs to the taxpayer and they should be allowed to keep their money in their own accounts instead of the Town keeping it for them. We should only ask taxpayers for money when we actually need it.

Thom said that when we were working on the budget, we were excited to keep it under 17.0 so keeping the mil rate at 16.7 would also be very good. Sarah brought the matter to a vote.

Motion failed 1-3-1 (*Sarah, Thom, Bruce - Amy*)

Thom made a motion to set the mil rate at 16.7. It was seconded by Bruce.

Motion passed 4-1 (*Brian*)

- Suspend as Assessors and Re-Convene as Board of Selectmen: Thom made a motion to adjourn as Assessors and to reconvene as Selectmen.

Motion passed 5-0

Old Business:

- Committee Service Applicant Introduction: The applicant for the Recreation Committee, William Mattson who goes by Will, came to introduce himself to the Board of Selectmen. He said he just moved to Hope from Bar Harbor and really wants to be involved. He said he is a self-proclaimed nerd for local government and is willing to serve on just about any committee. Thom spoke about the Broadband Committee and Will said that he would be very interested in helping with broadband. Sarah also mentioned that there was just a resignation from the Cemetery Committee as well.

The Town Administrator will put Will and Todd in contact with each other regarding the Recreation Committee.

- Review & Approve Revised Cemetery Rules: Bruce made a motion to approve the revised cemetery rules for the Hope Grove Cemetery and Morey Hill Cemetery. It was seconded by Thom. Brian had a question regarding firearms. He wanted to know if this is unique to Hope or are the rules prohibiting firearms to all people other than a military escort mandated by the state or feds. Brian wanted to know if police officers or law-enforcement are allowed or not allowed to carry a firearm.

Sarah suggested approving the new rules and to make revisions if needed at a later date.

Thom added that police officers are allowed to wear their guns in schools so it would only make sense that they would also be permitted to wear them and cemeteries.

Motion passed 5-0

Other Business:

- Proposal for Town Digital Communications Policy: Sarah discussed the Town Digital Communication's

proposal part one. She presented ideas to change some layout on the Town website including adding Selectmen packets on the website where minutes and agendas are kept. She presented a slideshow that outlined different media outlets including YouTube, Twitter, Instagram, as well as Facebook. There was discussion on having a permanent camera so that all meetings for the Town could be record or live streamed and would be available for public access and participation. Part two of her presentation will be presented at the next Selectmen's meeting.

- Thom made a motion to once again suspend a Selectmen and to reconvene as the Assessors at 9:12p.m. It was seconded by Brian.

Motion passed 5-0

- Vern gave the Board of Assessors the: Assessors Certificate of Assessment, the 2020-2021 Municipal Tax Assessment Warrant, a Certificate of Commitment, and a Certificate of Assessment to be returned to the Municipal Treasurer. The Assessors reviewed all of the documents with Vern, the Assessors Agent, and then approved and signed all of the documents.
- Brian made a motion to adjourn as the Board of Assessors into reconvene as the Board of Selectmen. It was seconded by Thom.

Motion passed 5-0

Warrant #'s 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10:

- The Selectmen reviewed the warrants. Bruce noticed an invoice for the roadside mowing was \$1,990 and we had only budgeted \$808. The Road Commissioner had said that it was a steal getting the work done for under \$1000 but this is more than double the budget amount. The Town Administrator will contact the road Commissioner to find out what had changed.

Brian made a motion to approve and sign warrant #'s 4,5,6,7, and 9 but warrants 8 and 10 did not have enough signatures from the School Committee. It was agreed that the selectmen would come in and sign the additional warrants once the School Committee had properly signed them. The Town Administrator has been instructed to contact the new Superintendent to tell her that the proper signatures need to be garnered prior to the selectmen's meeting. It was seconded by Bruce.

Motion passed 5-0

Adjournment:

- Amy made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:41 p.m. It was seconded by Thom.

Motion passed 5-0