

MINUTES OF SELECT BOARD MEETING

Hope Select Board

Tuesday, January 12, 2021

6:30 PM

Via Zoom

View the meeting in its entirety at

https://townhallstreams.com/towns/hope_me

Board Members Present:

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

Others Present:

- Samantha Mank, Margaret Morse, Paul Smith, Dick Crabtree, Amy Powers, Mark Benjamin, Seth Haskins, Ashley Haskins, Caleb Lincoln, Ari Meil, Betty Ingraham, Bill Jones, John Monroe, Molly Luce, and Saili

Call to Order:

- The meeting was called to order at 6:30 PM by Sarah.

Agenda Adjustments/Approval:

- Thom made a motion to approve the agenda without any adjustments. It was seconded by Brian.

Motion passed 5-0

Public Comment:

- Betty Ingraham stated that she thought some residents might be confused about the recall election. She asked for clarity so that people could differentiate the recommendations made in the Maria Fox report, the official Select Board statement, and the statement made by Sarah as a private citizen following the Select Board statement.

Minutes:

- 12/8/20: Thom made a motion to approve the December 8, 2020 minutes as written. It was seconded by Bruce.

Motion passed 5-0

Town Administrator Report:

- The first round of interviews for the bookkeeper position should wrap up next week. Paula Emerson and Jodi Davis who are the new finance team for SU69 have agreed to participate in the second interviews and lend some of their knowledge of bookkeeping and accounting.
- The interviews for the clerk position will begin as the bookkeeper interviews are ending.

I will also be choosing a couple of people to take part in the second interviews.

- It is time to consider putting the budget schedule together. This would be the time to decide how you plan to conduct the annual Town Meeting. The specific dates will hinge on when and how Town Meeting is handled. *The Select Board discussed the plan for moving forward with Town Meeting verses referendum. Sarah also mentioned that Camden was conducting a “drive-in” Town Meeting and that Hope may be able to do something similar. The Select Board decided to move forward with plans to have the regular annual Town Meeting. The state referendum and municipal secret ballot election will take place on Tuesday, June 8, 2021 and the annual Town Meeting will be on Thursday, June 10, 2021.*
- Called Maritime Energy to find out why we were having so much propane delivered. They sent out a tech to make sure there wasn't a leak anywhere. He did a very thorough search. Ultimately, no leak was found. I asked how we could be using propane since the heater thermostats have been in the off position. I was told that cold temperatures could affect the amount the gauge reads and/or the tanks weren't filled the first time. We have been automatic delivery through the winter. That has been halted and the tanks will now need to be monitored and propane delivered when they reach 30%. However, I did end up gathering information for the about of propane and oil we were actually using in 2019 and 2020. I emailed those results to you all earlier. Turns out we are only using a fraction of what we had been using. It appeared to be so much more because we were on automatic delivery in the colder months. *Brian asked that when a permanent Bookkeeper has been hired if the Select Board could have a 5-year average of usage for electricity, propane, and heating oil.*
- A property owner on Lermond Pond wants his property to be removed from the Resource protection designation. The Chair of the Planning Board sent the documentation to you on Jan. 9th. It can also be found on the Town website under the Planning Board Planning Board Meeting Documents. He believes that it was not in RP when it was first purchased. He met with the Planning Board about the matter. The PB was not able to handle his request. He has contacted the DEP but was told that the Town decides whether or not to remove areas out of the RP area. Since then, the resident has obtained an attorney who is requesting that the Town provide information on the best way to have the parcel removed from RP.

What I know, is that it was in RP in 2014 when the new Official Zoning Maps were approved. But I am unable to locate material about when it was actually put in. I do have a contact at DEP who has been assisting me with fairly significant violation also on Lermond Pond and may be able to give some direction in the matter. Before we go too far down the research avenue, are any of you aware or remember any changes to the properties located on bodies of water and when that would have been. It is also my understanding that this would have had to been properly noticed and then approved by

the voters before it was changed. *The select Board instructed the Town Administrator to contact the DEP and find out if the information from the property owner is accurate. Dick said he remembers that there was a ‘re-draw’ of the Resource protection areas approx. 6-10 years ago. The DEP should have those historical maps. In addition, Brian wants to know if Vern has any pertinent information that would be helpful as the property owner is possibly being taxed at a rate not appropriate for an unbuildable lot.*

- Reminder that dog licenses are due by January 31st. There is a \$25 fine per dog on top of the registration fee for anyone who is late. So, a simple \$6 license could turn into \$31.
- Today the 45-30 day notices of impending foreclosure were mailed out via certified mail for 6 outstanding real 2019 real estate accounts totaling \$12,884.38 that will automatically foreclose on Feb. 16, 2020 if the accounts are not paid in full.
- There are 20 real estate accounts totaling \$39,734.36 that are liened and have interest added to the outstanding balance. Unpaid 2020 real estate taxes will automatically foreclose on February 10, 2022 if the accounts are not paid in full.
- There are 1009 RE accounts for 2021, totaling \$1,546,652.73. The second half of taxes are due on April 30, 2021.

New Business:

- Response to Select Board Statement from 12/8/20 - SB Member Bruce Haffner: “The comments that came out of the Fox Report, [I can’t remember how far that goes back to], I never intended for anyone to feel threatened about anything I had said. That tape that was made of me was about the election. I never made the skewer remark. I hope we all work for a better future for Hope”.

Brian remarked on a statement that Bruce had made to the Village Soup in which Bruce said he knew what Brian was thinking. Brian reminded Bruce that they have never discussed these issues and that they have never been put on the agenda to discuss as a group. Therefore, he did not appreciate Bruce making things up about his [Brian’s] thoughts.

Brian then asked for some feedback from the rest of the Select Board on matters like this regarding members of the Select Board making statements to the press and just saying anything we want when it has no validity whatsoever.

Bruce responded that since Brian didn’t know what he was talking about and didn’t have any reference, that he [Bruce] also didn’t know what Brian was talking about. However, Bruce did recall Brian lecturing him on how a public works department works, early on in his tenure.

There was additional discussion before Brian read the exact quote made by Bruce in the Village Soup. Brian repeated that he has never had a private or public conversation with Bruce and told him to not issue statements about what somebody else thinks. Bruce responded by telling Brian he was wrong and again talked about Brian lecturing him.

After some back and forth dialogue, Sarah said that there are conflicting issues. Freedom of speech versus the impropriety of giving statements as a member of the Select Board while representing yourself as a member of the Select Board. Sarah continued, “I think we need to have enough respect for the Town and each other to behave with civility and respect and to work things out at meetings of the Select Board”.

Thom said that enjoys working with both Bruce and Brian and that he knows they both want whatever is good and the best for the Town. He added that he wished they would just “cut it out and move on”. Then he thanked them both.

Amy said that she respects Brian for stating how he felt through this time. She went on to echo Thom in that she believes they both want what they think is best for the Town and she thinks that an honest open dialogue is where that can be found, with respectable language.

- Set date for Recall Election: Sarah asked the select Board if they wanted to have a special election or if they wanted to include in the municipal secret ballot election that has already be scheduled for June 8, 2021. She indicated that those who circulated the petition may not want to wait. However, she also indicated that there is a cost to having a special election. She said that waiting to have the election until June allows residents time to gain a better understanding of the recall process. Another reason is to maximize voter turnout. Brian wanted to make sure that the procedural requirements of the ordinance was followed.

All of the Select Board members as well as a couple of the petition circulators all agreed to wait until June 8th for a variety of reasons including costs, clarity, and public safety.

Thom made a motion to include the recall election on the secret ballot for the June 8, 2021 election. It was seconded by Brian.

Motion passed 4-0-1 (Bruce)

- Set date for Select Board Workshop for Goals and Objectives for Town: The Select Board discussed the various items to target in the goal setting workshop. They discussed the process for the Town Administrator’s annual performance evaluation, the employment contract, CEO/LPI position, any change in office hours, and the policy changes that were recommended in the Select Board official statement. The workshop was scheduled Tuesday, Feb. 2nd at 5:00 p.m.
- Set dates for Exec. Session for Town Administrator Annual Eval & Contract: The Select Board set an Executive Session on Jan. 26th prior to the regularly scheduled Select Board meeting (5:00 p.m.)
- Update on Roads Advisory Committee – Thom Ingraham: Thom gave an update on the first meeting of the Roads Advisory Committee. The meeting was recorded and can be viewed in its entirety at https://townhallstreams.com/towns/hope_me

Old Business:

- Discussion Amending the “Retail Marijuana Establishments and Retail Marijuana Social Clubs Prohibition Ordinance” – Seth Haskins: Brian asked Seth about an incident that

happened at his home last year. Seth explained that there had been a home invasion in which some of his antiques and instruments had been stolen, Seth told the Board that the incident is still under investigation. The police are aware of the identity of the perpetrators. Brian asked for a copy of the police report is possible. Seth said he didn't now as it is an ongoing investigation.

Ari did some research and provided the Select Board with some information on what other Towns have included in their ordinances. Five of the Towns were very similar, [Rockland, Camden, Union, Searsmont, and Northport]. These towns either created a new ordinance regarding adult use marijuana or amended the existing land use ordinance and put most of the approval under the auspices of the planning board.

Some towns put a limit of the number of marijuana stores are allowed in town. Some grandfathered the medical dispensaries and allowed them to become retail stores. None of the towns put a limit on cultivation that Ari was able to find.

The Town of Warren took a simpler approach. By a citizen's petition it was put on the warrant for Town Meeting. Basically, it says any medical marijuana cultivation company that has already been approved through the planning Board process is automatically approved for adult use marijuana cultivation as long as all of the state requirements are met.

Sarah wanted to know if Seth was the only licensed medical marijuana grower in hope. Seth wasn't able to say for sure.

The select board would like to have Ari forward the actual ordinances and documents for the Select Board to review. Once the Select Board has reviewed the documents, then perhaps getting some advice for the Town Attorney would be the next step.

- Update on July 14th Election Ballots: So far, nobody has tracked down an attorney with election experience. Thom has written to Dave Miramant for advice.

MMA has recommended two attorneys. Bill Kelly and Kristen Collins. Sarah read some excerpts from an MMA attorney, Brianna.

Bruce wants to see the tally sheets.

Sarah says if we open the box, we have to dispose of the ballots but, we can see the tally sheets.

Sarah will contact Kristen Collins.

Other Business:

- Sarah said that she is concerned because she asked Langley to resign. If our policy had been in place, he would not be able to serve on the Planning Board. There is still friction with him. His term expires on June 30th and as a Board, we could choose to not reappoint him or rescind his current appointment.

Brian said that he would want to have the specific reasons for removing Langley from the Planning Board.

Sarah said that Sam should not have to work with him even though he has some institutional knowledge. No action was taken.

Warrants #'s 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, & 56:

- The Select Board reviewed the warrants. Brian made a motion to approve warrant #'s 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, & 56. It was seconded by Thom.

Motion passed 5-0

Adjournment:

- Thom made a motion to adjourn at 8:50 pm. It was seconded by Amy.

Motion passed 5-0

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