

MINUTES OF SELECT BOARD MEETING

Hope Select Board

Tuesday, November 24, 2020

6:30 PM

Hope Town Office/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
(via Zoom)

Others Present:

- Samantha Mank, Paul Smith, Amy Powers, Dick Crabtree, Bill Jones, Dan Dunkle, Clarence Keller, Ellie Goldberg, Nancy Ford, Mary Ireland, and Hunt

Call to Order:

- The meeting was called to order at 6:37 PM by Sarah.

Agenda Adjustments/Approval:

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

Motion passed 5-0

Public Comment:

- None

Minutes:

- 11/10/20: Brian made a motion to approve the November 10, 2020 minutes with a correction. It was seconded by Bruce.

Motion passed 5-0

- 11/17/20: Brian made a motion to approve the November 17, 2020 minutes. It was seconded by Thom.

Motion passed 4-0-1 (Bruce)

Town Administrator Report:

- Reminder that the Town Office will be closed on Thursday and Friday of this week in observance of Thanksgiving.

- Spoke with Bill Brewer regarding the annual audit. The school still has to prepare a few additional things. Jen, our accountant has been working with them. Once they are ready, then the Town's audit will begin.
- The Town has received approx. twenty-five FOAA requests from Courier Publications. The latest one is going to require the Town pay around \$880.00 in order to have all of the data compiled and sent to the Town. Depending on how the files are received there will be additional time spent filtering through the ones that are a part of the request and those that are not. The Select Board will also need to decide if the final set of documents should be reviewed by the Town Attorney before releasing them.
- There is also a brief update regarding the hardship abatement request. I'd like to request a few moments of the executive session to discuss this as sharing this in public could do harm. Pursuant to 36 M.R.S. 841(2)(E). If this cannot be discussed this evening, I request that it is scheduled at the next meeting of the Select Board.
- There are 7 outstanding 2019 RE accounts totaling \$12,913.85 with liens that will go to automatic foreclosure on February 16, 2021 if accounts remain unpaid.
- There are 24 outstanding 2020 RE accounts totaling \$45,439.17 with liens that will to automatic foreclosure on February 10, 2022 if accounts remain unpaid.
- There are 1017 RE accounts for 2021, totaling \$1,605,725.23. The second half of taxes are due on April 30, 2021.

New Business:

- Town Office Maintenance Needs:
 - Electrical Outlets in the Library: This will require an electrician.
 - Window in Meeting Area: This will need someone who can repair the inner working of a window.
 - Mailbox Pole: Brian said that there was an organization that fixes mailbox posts in the Knox, Lincoln, Waldo County area. If it can't be located, the Road Commissioner may be able to assist.

Brian made a motion to authorize the Town Administrator to seek out the appropriate professionals to make the needed repairs at the Town Office. It was seconded by Bruce.

Motion passed 5-0

- Pole Location Installation for Tidewater Telecom: Brian made a motion to approve the installation of the pole as long as there are no potential safety risks. It was seconded by Thom.

Motion passed 5-0

- Coronavirus Update & Discussion – EMA Director, Clarence Keller: Clarence said that most of the Covid-19 issues are being handled at the county and state level at this time. Locally, the EMA Directors have been meeting weekly with the County Director, Ray Sisk.

Clarence spoke with the Hope Elementary School Principal, Danielle Fagonde, and reported that things are going very well, and they continue to follow their plan. The students are doing a tremendous job, possibly even better than some of the adults, according to Clarence. The Fire Dept. has had only one incident, but it was not a direct incident from performing town duties. The individual contracted Covid-19 from an outside of fire department duties.

With the rise of cases in the greater Knox County area, the Fire Department has cancelled some of their meetings, but emergency responses will not be affected.

There were some positive cases in employees from NEMHS our ambulance provider. They promptly handled the situation and Clarence is not aware of any additional spreading of the virus. Because of HIPPA rules of confidentiality, Clarence does not know if any Hope residents were in contact with any of the ambulance crew that tested positive. However, there was contact tracing that took place and any individual who may have been exposed would have been contacted directly.

Old Business:

Broadband Update: Thom said that he would like to step away from the Broadband Committee in order to serve on the Roads Advisory Committee. Amy Gertner has agreed to take his place on the Broadband Committee at their next meeting. There have been 285 households identified as qualifying for the High Speed Internet Program funded through the CARES Act. So far, 161 of those 285 households have applied from the program. There will be another email reminder going out from the school after Thanksgiving. The Broadband Committee is trying to help get the message out and help get people signed up early.

Things are going well. LCI wants to meet with the Broadband Committee and Town Governments and see how to push forward to getting Hope with 100% access to high speed internet.

Brian asked if there was any kind of contingency plan in place for families that may not be able to afford the cost of high speed internet once the 6-month free service has expired? Are there any grants available for those families? Brian is concerned that if there isn't some kind of plan in place that it could create student inequity.

Thom said that the school has been providing hotspots for now but that would be something to discuss with Alan Hinsey.

Other Business:

- **Roads Advisory Committee Update** - Thom: Already mentioned that Amy would be

stepping in on the Broadband Committee so that Thom could serve on the Roads Advisory Committee. Thom has sent out some emails to contact the committee members. About half of them have responded so far. The initial meeting will be sometime between Thanksgiving and Christmas.

Warrants: 41, 42, and 43:

- The Selectmen reviewed the warrants. Brian made a motion to approve warrant #'s 41, 42, and 43. It was seconded by Bruce.

Motion passed 3-0-2 (*Thom & Amy*)

Executive Session - Pursuant to 1 M.R.S. §405 (6)(A) – Personnel Matter:

- Brian made a motion to enter Executive Session at 7:20. It was seconded by Amy.

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

- Motion to exit Executive Session at 8:15. It was seconded by Thom.

Motion passed 4-0

Regular Session: Any action needed resulting from Executive Session:

- Thom made a motion to pay compensation that has been determined to be appropriate for actual hours worked, to be paid to the former Bookkeeper, Langley Willauer. It was seconded by Amy.

Sarah added: This is to pay Langley for the hours worked but not claimed on the front of his timecard. It should go on the next appropriate warrant.

Motion passed 4-0

Adjournment:

- Brian made a motion to adjourn at 8:19. It was seconded by Amy.

Motion passed 4-0