

## MINUTES OF SELECT BOARD MEETING

Hope Select Board

Tuesday, April 20, 2021

6:30 PM

Via Zoom

*View the meeting in its entirety at*

[https://townhallstreams.com/towns/hope\\_me](https://townhallstreams.com/towns/hope_me)

### **Board Members Present:**

- Sarah Ann Smith, Brian Powers Jr., and Bruce Haffner

### **Others Present:**

- Samantha Mank, Rick Bresnahan, Alan Hinsey, Matt Siegel, Margaret Morse, Paul Smith, Juanita Hunt, Jordan Barnett-Parker, Dick Crabtree, Bill Jones, David Oakes, Betty Ingraham, Amy Powers, Melissa Hall, Wendy Pelletier, and R.

### **Call to Order:**

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

### **Agenda Adjustments/Approval:**

- Brian made a motion to approve the agenda as presented. It was seconded by Bruce.  
**Motion passed 3-0**

### **Public Comment:**

- Bill Jones and David Oakes asked the Select Board to include an article on the Town Meeting Warrant authorizing the Select Board to convey to Hope's state legislators, Members of Congress, Governor, and President of the United States that the town hereby calls upon our Federal elected representatives to enact carbon-pricing legislation to protect Maine from the costs and environmental risks of continued climate inaction.

Both Bill and David acknowledge that this is a symbolic gesture. There are no fees involved. This is not a partisan issue, just a sensible issue. The Select Board will review the wording of the proposed article and make a decision at their next meeting.

### **New Business:**

- Discussion/Decision about Broadband – LCI or Midcoast Broadband Coalition: Melissa gave a summary of where the Town of Hope is with the Mid Coast Broadband Coalition.

Matt wanted everyone to know that the Midcoast Broadband Coalition (MBC) is not in competition with Lincolnville Communications (LCI). The Towns of Camden and Rockport are creating a utility broadband. It will be a legal entity that has the framework on the utility. Not able to give a set date at this point.

Brian asked what the advantages and disadvantages of getting broadband from each company?

Melissa cited several concerns with LCI at this time: requiring a landline, rates that are far above the national average, lower speeds for higher costs, lacking customer service and uncertain timing.

Bruce noted that MBC is still in the planning stages. It is so far down the road that we would be better off going with LCI.

Both Sarah and Melissa said that we don't have to choose one over the other. We have the ability to have both options.

Alan said that right now, LCI is backlogged by about 3 months. However, all of the work that was funded through the Cares Act is expected to be completed within the next two weeks. He also noted that LCI is asking for \$0 from the Town.

Brian wanted to know how negotiable the other items are. For instances, being required to have a landline could be a deterrent. Why would we even need this requirement?

The people who had the broadband installed through the Cares Act were not required to have a phone. They were also given faster speed of 100/100. However, if you're a regular customer the cost is \$129.95/mo. for the same speed. LCI prices are higher than others.

Alan explained that LCI is a telephone company. There are FCC regulations in which they have to show that they are providing phones to everyone whether they use them or not. Shirley Manning, the owner of the company made the decision to offer the 100/100 as a part of the package for the first six months as well as not require the phone. However, that was her prerogative as an introductory offer.

Matt described LCI as a closed network with only one provider. This makes it a monopoly. Once the agreement is signed, LCI will be able to determine the "Terms of Engagement".

After much discussion, Sarah said it was time to make a decision.

Bruce said we should not waste or miss this opportunity. The first offer is probably the best offer.

Brian made a motion to sign on with LCI in the first round of the ConnectME Grants and Alan's commitment to the Town of Hope to continue to negotiate [not in a public forum] as Hope would like to continue to negotiate on some of the specific details. It was seconded by Bruce.

**Motion passed 3-0**

Bruce said, people moving to Hope want internet now, not years from now.

The Select Board authorized the Town Administrator to draft and sign a letter of support for LCI on their behalf.

- Use of Knox County Stimulus Funds: The funding formula for the stimulus money sent out nationwide as a part of the American Rescue Act is meant to help with some local infrastructure costs. In New England, municipalities bear these costs without the assistance of the county unlike most western states. Therefore, the towns in Knox County are sending letters to the County Commissioners and Andy Hart, County Administrator, seeking a different formula that would be more fairly and accurately represent the funding responsibilities of local municipalities. The Select Board ask the Town Administrator to draft and sign a similar letter and send it on behalf of the Town of Hope.
  
- Final Vote FY22 Municipal Budget:
  - Payroll Costs: Bruce made a motion to approve the Payroll line for \$201,261. It was seconded by Brian.  
**Motion passed 3-0**
  - General Administration: Bruce made a motion to approve the General Administration line for \$71,711. It was seconded by Brian.  
**Motion passed 3-0**
  - Municipal Building: Brian made a motion to approve the Municipal Building line for \$16,807. It was seconded by Bruce.  
**Motion passed 3-0**
  - Professional Services: Bruce made a motion to approve the Professional Services line for \$39,850. It was seconded by Brian.  
**Motion passed 3-0**
  - General Assistance: Brian made a motion to approve the General Assistance line for \$750. It was seconded by Bruce.  
**Motion passed 3-0**

Total Administration Cost Center: \$330,379

- Animal Control: Brian made a motion to approve the Animal Control line for \$7,638. It was seconded by Bruce.  
**Motion passed 3-0**
- Fire Department: Bruce made a motion to approve the Fire Department line for \$103,604. It was seconded by Brian.

Brian discussed the cost of heating/cooling and the electricity. He wanted to know if the Town was going to implement and enforce a true energy policy. The temperature was raised in the bay of the fire department and more propane and electricity was used and the cost continues to go up.

Brian made a motion to amend line 1C for the volunteer firefighter's stipend to \$11,000. He said we can't continue to have these increases. The costs have increased 50% over five years. There was no second. Motion fails.

A vote on the fire department line for \$103,604 was called.

**Motion passed 2-1 (Brian)**

- Ambulance: Bruce made a motion to approve the Ambulance line for \$44,954. It was seconded by Brian.

Brian made a motion to change line 1B to \$0 for the First Responders. There was no second. Motion fails.

A vote on the Ambulance line for \$44,954 was called.

**Motion passed 2-1 (Brian)**

Total Public Safety Cost Center: \$156,196

- Recreation: Brian made a motion to approve the Recreation line for \$9,600. It was seconded by Bruce.

**Motion passed 3-0**

- Streetlights: Brian made a motion to approve the Streetlights line for \$1,650. It was seconded by Bruce.

**Motion passed 3-0**

- Roads: Brian made a motion to approve the Roads line for \$525,662. It was seconded by Bruce.

**Motion passed 3-0**

- Sanitation: Brian made a motion to approve the sanitation line for \$57,510. It was seconded by Bruce.

**Motion passed 3-0**

- Cemeteries: Brian made a motion to approve the Cemeteries line for \$10,577. It was seconded by Bruce.

**Motion passed 3-0**

Total Public Works Cost Center: \$604,999

- Reserve Accounts: Brian made a motion to amend line 3 for the Firetruck Replacement line to \$10,000 bringing the total to \$71,535. It was seconded by Sarah.

**Motion passed 2-1 (Bruce)**

- County: Bruce made a motion to approve the County line for \$293,618 it was seconded by Brian.

**Motion passed 3-0**

- Hope Elementary School: Bruce made a motion to approve the HES line for \$2,016,167. it was seconded by Brian.

Brian commented that the school budget is up over a million dollars in six years with no increase in school student enrollment.

**Motion passed 3-0**

- Five Town CSD: Brian made a motion to approve the CSD line for \$802,455. It was seconded by Bruce.

**Motion passed 3-0**

- Revenue: \$653,512  
Brian made a motion to add \$11,700 from the undesignated fund line as a result of moving all of the carry forwards bringing the new total to \$161, 200 and to add \$49,500 from the abatement and overlay line bringing the new total for the Revenue Cost Center to \$714,712. It was seconded by Sarah.

**Motion passed 2-1 (Bruce)**

**Other Business:**

- Sarah started a Go Fund Me page for the new Town Seals. \$2,000 is the goal.

**Adjournment:**

- Brian made a motion to adjourn at 10:17 p.m. It was seconded by Bruce.

**Motion passed 3-0**

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