

MINUTES OF SELECT BOARD MEETING
Hope Select Board
Tuesday, August 18, 2020
6:30 PM
Hope Town Office/Zoom

Board Members Present:

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

Others Present:

- Samantha Mank, Bill Jones, Alexandria Payor, Susan Langley, Amy Powers, Eli Goldberg, Langley Willauer, Sydney Hall, Nancy Ford, and Eric Spenlinhauer

Call to Order:

- The meeting was called to order at 6:32 p.m. by Sarah.

Public Comment:

- None

New Business:

- Zoom Presentation on Town Hall Streaming - Eric Spelinhauer: Sarah made introductions and then turned the meeting over to Eric. He showed us the various equipment including a “football” camera that could broadcast and record live. It’s a 360° camera. It’s mobile and comes with a hard travel carrying case. Basically, it works by sitting it in the middle of the room. People would need to be approximately 8 feet from the camera. It has its own built-in microphone and people would need to speak loudly so that the camera could detect from which direction the voices was coming from and it would turn accordingly. Sarah asked with social distancing requirements in place, if it would be helpful for the Town to purchase microphones so that everybody could be further apart. Eric said no because the detection system is very similar to that of the Alexa technology. It does not have external microphone capability.

Sarah said currently each of the Select Board members bring in their own devices whether it be a laptop, phone, or iPad and set up a Zoom meeting each time so residents at home can watch and participate. We don’t want to have to do that each time. There are always some kind of technical problems that go along with it such as feedback.

Amy asked if there were any options for Closed Captioning with Zoom or YouTube. CC service is available but add costs. A live stenographer would cost about \$150/hr., a sonographer would cost \$150 an hour. A live speech to text program would be \$20 an hour and it has a 92% accuracy rate. There’s also “after the fact” transcribing available it’s much more accurate and that would be an additional \$10 an hour.

Brian wanted to know what the total costs were for the equipment for the storage for

everything on an ongoing monthly or annual cost. Can you just purchase the equipment, or do you have to purchase the entire package of streaming in storage?

Eric said the new 360° system is around \$1,500 for the equipment and the storage an additional; cost would be \$150 a month for 3 to 4 meetings a month or \$250 a month for unlimited meetings. Brian asked what the advantage of going with Townhall Streams was rather than basic YouTube?

Eric said that using YouTube, the Town would have to likely purchase a business account in order to avoid unwanted ads or having whatever the next video playing coming up and you may need somebody who was tech savvy to make sure everything was connected correctly. In addition, the 360° can be worked wirelessly but it works better if it is hardwired. There was discussion about Town Internet and the possibility of being able to connect directly through ethernet.

Sarah mentioned that the budget season had already come and gone for the Town of Hope and so we would need to go to the voters for approval for about \$3000 a year to have unlimited meeting access. The Town wouldn't be able to get this to the voters until November and we won't be able to pay until there was voter approval so is there a plan to be able to backpay once the money has been approved?

Thom asked if the fee is actually for leasing the equipment, and if there is any editing that happens with Townhall Streams, or is everything on a server there and we would have a link to the Townhall Streams website? Eric said it could very easily be integrated anyway the Town would like. Most Towns just give a link to the landing page and they can look and see which meeting they would like to view. There's also an option to have it directly embedded onto the Town's website.

Brian wanted to know what the archive history length is for Townhall Streams. Currently, it's a rolling five years and there is an option to have longer than five years for a fee. The Towns do have the ability to download each video and store their own meetings, however. There was also a question about video security as in can the public download these videos, and Eric said that they do not allow the public to download videos however there are programs that can capture video and nothing prevent someone from using a device to record if they wanted to. Amy said that we should discuss this and have time to research it before making any decisions this evening.

- Executive Session - Pursuant to 1 M.R.S. §405 (6)(A): Langley made a Point of Order stating he wanted to know the precise reason for the Executive Session. Brian said the Select Board is only required to recite the statute.

Langley called for another Point of Order and said that it is not sufficient to just merely recite the statute.

Brian made a motion to go into Executive Session Pursuant to 1 M.R.S. §405 (6)(A). It was seconded by Amy.

Motion passed 5-0

Sarah stated the meeting was going to close the meeting to the public now. However, Langley again called for a Point of Order. Ellie asked of the Select Board was just going to enter Executive Session without specifics.

Sarah said she would call MMA legal tomorrow and check about what can and what cannot be done. Ellie said the statute says that the person making the complaint can be included in the Executive Session.

Sarah repeated that she would take the issue up with MMA. Ellie told Sarah to read the statute again and said that it must be more specific to list the exact reason of the Executive Session. Sarah once again reiterated that she would speak with MMA legal tomorrow and cited the table associated with the statute which lists: Reasons for an Executive Session, Statutory Citation and, applies to the explanation; Further, it is a MMA Quick Guide to Executive Session motion citations states, "Under Maine's Freedom of Access Act, every motion to go into Executive session must indicate the precise nature of the Executive session and (2) include a citation of one or more sources of statutory authority", the motion complied with those requirements.

Sarah said that she is not going to allow other people into an Executive Session until she has heard from MMA legal or the Town Attorney. She said she doesn't want to get the Town sued by anyone.

Ellie said there are additional sections in the statute which state that the complainant can be present. So, is the Select Board going to tell her if this Executive Session is or is not going to be about Samantha, the Town Manager? Sarah replied, "Personnel matters are confidential".

Langley stated that he would like to just sit here, and he would be sure to keep the confidence of all that he heard. Because as the complaint, he has the right to be present and that these laws are written to protect little Towns like Hope.

Sarah repeated again that she is not going to allow anyone into the Executive Session without hearing from legal. Langley said that it is the Town Managers job to inform the Select Board of such things. Brian responded that the Town of Hope does not have a Town Manager. Finally, Langley said "it is with regret that I depart".

Once the public had left the area, the actual Executive Session was able to begin at 7:19p.m.

Brian made a motion to exit Executive Session at 9:15p.m. It was seconded by Amy.

Motion passed 5-0

Thom made a motion to instruct the Town Clerk to contact the Secretary of State and Maine Municipal Association on how to proceed Regarding the election and voting in question.

Motion passed 5-0

Brian made a motion to allow Sarah to contact the Town Attorney, Bill Kelly.

Motion passed 5-0

Thom made a motion to authorize the engagement of a third-party who is recommended by the Town Attorney to conduct an independent inquiry on all appropriate issues. It was seconded by Bruce.

Motion passed 5-0

Adjournment:

- Thom made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:17pm. It was seconded by Bruce.

Motion passed 5-0