

# Adopted

## Town of New Boston Selectmen's Meeting April 6, 2020

<b><u>PRESENT:</u></b>	Joe Constance	Selectman	
	Karen Scott	Selectman	via audio/conference call
	David Litwinovich	Selectman	via audio/conference call
	Peter Flynn	Town Administrator	

Members of the public were present for all or part of the meeting via town hall streams/audio/conference call.

This meeting is being conducted remotely consistent with Governor's Executive Order 2020-04 insuring compliance with RSA 91-A considering COVID-19 circumstances. Due to the State of Emergency declared by the Governor as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and in accordance with the Governor's Emergency Order #12 pursuant to Executive Order 2020-04, this public body is authorized to meet electronically. Please note that the public can access this live meeting by viewing it via a "live-stream" link on the New Boston NH website. Please note that all votes that are taken during this meeting shall be done by roll call vote.

**A. CALL TO ORDER:** A regular meeting of the Board of Selectmen was called to order by Joe Constance at 6:00PM beginning with the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Consent Agenda-**The Selectmen reviewed the consent agenda pending signatures. Joe moved to approve the consent agenda pending signatures except Item 9 on the Consent Cover Sheet. This pertained to an abatement of a refund for duplicate payment from previous year which was seeking a refund. All were in favor. 3-0 Poll Vote: Joe-yes, David-yes, and Karen-yes.

### **B. PUBLIC FORUM:**

No Public Comment at this meeting.

### **C. APPOINTMENTS:**

None.

### **D. OLD BUSINESS:**

**Item 1: Approval of Public Minutes of March 16, 2020:** The Selectmen reviewed the Public minutes of March 16, 2020. David moved the Public minutes of March 16, 2020 be accepted as amended. Karen seconded the motion. All were in favor. 3-0 Poll Vote: Joe-yes, David-yes, and Karen-yes.

## **E. NEW BUSINESS:**

**Item 2: Review of Default Budget as Passed At Election, And Discuss and Possibly Authorize the Department Managers to Revise Line Items of Various Budgets from Each Department:** The Selectmen continued to review the default budget. Peter, Department Managers and the Selectmen prepared memorandums and suggestions. The Selectmen asked Peter to watch spending closely. The Selectmen will consider adjustments, watch spending closely and consider suggestions of how to proceed to meet the default budget. This will be discussed at the next Selectmen's meeting. These included the following:

- Consider options including those outlined in Peter's memorandum to the Selectmen dated April 3 resulting from a meeting he held with Department Managers on April 2 where they discussed how to meet the default budget.
- Prioritize budget items such as public safety, public health and public welfare.
- Continuing twenty-four-hour police coverage is a priority.
- Paving and other important budget items may need to be postponed.

The Selectmen began discussing each Department budget as follows:

- Tax Collector: Karen recommended decreasing abatements for seasonal unregistered travel trailers at the campground. Peter noted that the abatements were not part of the budget process and had no effect. Many abatements at the campground are old tax liens that are uncollectable because of abandonment etc. Some have accumulated over the years and New Boston has been following this new procedure established by state law. The liens have become uncollectible resulting in the abatement brought to the Selectmen as noted in the Consent Agenda. This is the procedure followed by most towns.
- Town Clerk Ballot Clerks: For state and town elections 20 clerks are listed, for federal elections 40 clerks are listed. Karen recommended 20 clerks for federal elections to save \$2,800. Peter noted more clerks are needed for federal elections due to the workload caused by the record number of voters expected for the 2020 presidential election compared to state and town elections.
- Planning Department Special Projects: Karen noted this line has not been used since 2015 and could be eliminated saving \$1,000.
- Zoning Postage: Karen noted this is budgeted at \$600 but has not been used much in recent years. She recommended decreasing this line to \$300.
- Conservation:
  - Karen noted the Administration line has not been used since 2015 and the Conservation Commission has a separate account. Karen recommended this budget item be eliminated for \$500. Peter noted the Administration line may be for the Energy Commission at \$150.
  - Karen noted the Forestry Consultant line has not been used since 2015 when \$26 was spent. This line is for the State Forester who is called in as needed to check cutting violations.
- Recreation Department: Recreation Director Mike Sindoni submitted recommendations for Selectmen review and consideration. Karen noted Senior Trips and gas consumption needs are expected to decrease in 2020 due to COVID-19. The Groundskeeping line is \$1 in the default budget. Karen noted she asked if this was an error during the Finance Committee meetings. Peter will research this item.

- Transfer Station: Transfer Station Manager Gerry Cornett submitted recommendations for Selectmen review and consideration.
- Police Department: Police Chief James Brace submitted recommendations for Selectmen review and consider.
- Cemetery: There is a \$1,500 budget line for improvements. Karen asked what is planned and suggested it may be eliminated as it has not been used since 2015. Peter noted this is for gravestone and stone wall maintenance.
- Financial Administration: Karen recommended decreasing the Assistant position from twice per month to once a month.
- Selectmen: iPads and stipend increases are not planned in 2020 by virtue of the default. Joe suggested Selectmen forego Selectmen's stipends entirely in 2020.
- Health and Welfare: Karen suggested saving \$3,900 by eliminating the town bus service from New Boston to Manchester/Bedford Areas as it was only used by one person in 2019. Peter noted this line has decreased to \$1,900 for 2020 and the service has been suspended for now due to COVID-19.
- Fourth of July Patriotic Purposes: The 2020 celebration was discussed in prior Selectmen's meetings. The event was in jeopardy due to COVID-19 concerns and fundraising limitations. Therefore, the Fourth of July Committee cancelled the parade. The fireworks and police detail budgeted annually by the town will be used for other important town needs in 2020.
- Government Buildings:
  - Janitorial Services: Karen recommended postponing treatment of the wood floor in the lobby.
  - Building Repairs: \$5,300 is budgeted for emergency repairs. An emergency has come up at the Wason Building roof with a leak that has not yet been estimated for repair.
  - Furniture: Karen recommended this \$1,000 line be eliminated for 2020.
- Street Lighting: Karen requested disconnecting a couple streetlights. Peter noted disconnecting might cost money, the savings may not be very much from this procedure and the Energy Commission is considering an alternative to bring to the Selectmen that may result in savings.
- Library does not report to the Selectmen, it is operating under the Trustees that the Selectmen have no control over. Library Trustee Chairman Bill Gould has indicated the Library is planning to meet the default budget by cutting one day of service per week.
- Highway Department:
  - The Highway Department has not submitted recommendations to the Selectmen for review and consideration, but Peter assumes the default budget meets with the Department's approval.
  - Karen recommended not filling the open position. An eighth position was eliminated through the default budget.
  - Seminars: Karen recommended this \$900 line be eliminated for 2020. This possibility will be researched.
  - Signs: Karen recommended decreasing this request to \$500.
  - The 2020 winter budget lines will be compared to spending so far
  - Paving: Karen requested this line be adjusted to the amount needed.
- The Fire Department does not report to the Selectmen and has not submitted

recommendations to the Selectmen for review and consideration.

Joe moved that Town Administrator and Town Departments proceed under the guidelines of the default budget pending review by the Board of Selectmen at the next meeting to consider those default items as well as other suggestions for budget reductions. David seconded the motion. 3-0 Poll Vote: Joe-yes, David-yes, and Karen-yes. Karen requested the information needed to make the recommendations on April 20. Peter and Karen will meet before April 20 to discuss the items discussed tonight.

**Item 3: Discussion Regarding Signage Permitting for Town Departments:** Peter reported a sign permit was submitted for signs that have caused controversy in recent weeks. The temporary sign permit process/policy does not have language that allows signs on town property without a permit. (Including signs from various Town Committees and Departments) Department Managers were involved in placement of signs recently. The Building Department approves sign permits. It has been an unwritten policy that town departments could place signs on town property dealing with town business. Peter will prepare a policy revision.

Karen explained that on March 30 she went to the Town Hall for Selectmen's business, during which she conversed with Peter about several Selectmen matters including signs that had been placed on the town common. He said he saw the signs but did not know who put them there. Both said they liked the signs and their message. Karen asked if a permit had been pulled or if there was further information. Peter said he did not know. They then researched the ordinance and discussed that the signs could not be on the town common (but can be in other spots that are not town property). Since it was unknown who they were from because the Building Department was not open that day, they agreed the signs would have to be removed. Peter said he would do so but, since it was raining, Karen offered to do so. Peter told her to leave them on the vestibule outside the Town Hall which she did.

On Tuesday Karen tried to call into an Emergency Management Update meeting but could not connect and missed the meeting. Emergency Management Director Dan MacDonald e-mailed notes from the meeting to her. There was no mention of the signs in the notes.

On Wednesday Karen spoke to Peter again. She was upset. Peter said the signs were discussed during the Tuesday meeting but her name was not mentioned. Peter said he told the Emergency Management group that he had information that he would only report to the Selectmen Chairman. He called Joe after that meeting and did so. On Wednesday Karen also received a call about a post on Facebook from Dan MacDonald saying the signs had been removed from the town common because Selectman Karen Scott said they had to be removed. Dan went on to say the signs were needed to help residents with the stress of the emergency and they were replaced on the town common. He also stated he may be putting his job in jeopardy, but the decision was made for the good of the town residents.

Karen asked why she is charged with the removal although it was a dual decision with Peter. Joe noted this is because Karen asked they be removed in a confrontational way to Peter on Monday when Peter then agreed. Peter noted he is not responsible for what happens on Facebook, he is only responsible for what happens in his office which he has explained.

Joe also called David to discuss but did not call Karen to discuss. Peter told Karen during a conversation in his office that is because they knew how she would have voted. She asked what that means as she liked the signs, thought the meaning was good but the only problem was they were placed inappropriately without a permit or a question of how they were done. She said there are three Selectmen and if they are going to have a meeting to discuss something she is curious why she was not included.

Joe noted he and David knew where Karen stood as she wanted the signs down and took them down. He and David talked and thought they could be placed, that is a majority. He has received more phone calls, e-mails and texts this week protesting Karen's actions. The Selectmen are not here to enforce laws or act as an enforcement officer. He noted Karen had a confrontational meeting with Peter and with Dan. He said if a Selectman wants to talk to a Department Manager it is appropriate for a Selectman to ask the Department Manager to speak to the Board. He noted the people who have talked to him have been furious about this worrying about a permit for signs like this, motivational signs during a time of national crisis when 10,000 people have died, more are going to die, this innocuous positive statement sign coming under wild criticism for not having a permit was petty, foolish and an embarrassment to many citizens. He said this calling public employees on the carpet, making statements, calling people liars and assertions of old boy networks must stop. It is documented and identifiable over the past year through minutes and testimony of people. He doesn't want to spend any more time on this as it is foolish and repulsive.

Karen said she is sorry Joe is upset over this. She understands there is a coronavirus happening, people are sick and dying and there will be many more but that does not mean the town stops operating. There is a sign permit, but no one says a word. Some say it was put up by the Recreation Department, Jen Brown and/or Dan Macdonald for Emergency Management. She said it does not matter who put them up, the town does not stop operating or enforcing things because there is a virus. The Selectmen are still meeting and conducting business. The signs are good and should be out there but the town has an ordinance for the town common and town property, zoning ordinance section 318.7 that says "the Board of Selectmen regulates signs on Town of New Boston owned property and has adopted an ordinance for that purpose." The signs are on town owned property. The Selectmen are regulating the signs on town property and have adopted an ordinance for that purpose. She was doing her job. Had he or Peter called her on Tuesday the rest could have been avoided.

Joe noted he spoke to Karen on the phone where he said it was foolish, petty and ridiculous to worry about a permit at this time. He said she wouldn't let it go and he finally hung up because it was pointless. He said he doesn't want to waste any more time on this, although it seems to be an important issue to Karen, he doesn't see the point. Moreover, the behavior and assaults on public employees must stop now.

After much discussion the Selectmen approved the permit application signed by Dan MacDonald. Peter will bring a draft revision of the ordinance to the next Selectmen's meeting as a First Reading.

## **F. OTHER BUSINESS:**

**Item 4: Detail Revolving Fund Request from the Police Chief:** Police Chief James Brace submitted a letter to Peter dated April 1 requesting permission to expend money from the revolving fund for a \$46,000 cruiser including equipment and decals. This does not affect the Police Department budget. Karen moved to approve Chief Brace's request to expend funds from the revolving account for a cruiser as proposed in his letter of April 1, 2020. David seconded the motion. All were in favor. 3-0 Poll Vote: Joe-yes, David-yes, and Karen-yes.

### **Item 5: Town Administrators Report:**

- Recreation Bus Shelter: Contractors Ken Dionne is reviewing the project and plans to prepare a quote. Other quotes may also come in. The refund check from the previously contracted company has been deposited.
- RFQ's For Air Conditioning at Police Station and Recreation Building: These are prepared but responses are not expected for an additional month due to COVID-19.
- Highway Department Dump Truck: A condition will be revised by the leasing company. The check and title are in process with the insurance company. The official order will be accepted once legal counsel's concerns are addressed.

### **Item 6: Selectmen's Reports:**

None.

## **G. PUBLIC FORUM:**

None.

**ADJOURNMENT:** Joe moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:08 PM. David seconded the motion. All were in favor. 3-0 Poll Vote: Joe-yes, David-yes, and Karen-yes.

*Prepared by Maralyn Segien*

**Next Scheduled Meeting: Town Hall Conference Room on April 20, 2020 (6:00 PM)  
7 Meetinghouse Hill Road- New Boston, NH 03070  
Phone: (603) 487-5504-[www.newbostonnh.gov](http://www.newbostonnh.gov)**