

TOWN OF BENNINGTON

BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Minutes of the Meeting – October 20, 2020

Selectmen James Cleary, David Hardwick, Sr. and David Foster were present as well as Town Administrator Kristie LaPlante. The meeting was called to order at 6:02 p.m.; David Foster joined the meeting at 6:10 p.m.

Highway Department employee Chris Davies met with the Selectmen to discuss their July 28, 2020 decision to change his work schedule. Citing productivity, safety concerns, and wage variations, Chris inquired of the Board if they would allow him to resume a Monday through Friday schedule. Selectman Jim Cleary reported the Board is reevaluating the need for three permanent, full-time Highway Department employees with only 19 miles of roadway. Because Selectman David Foster was not yet at the meeting, Selectmen Cleary and Hardwick declined to make a decision until the full Board is in attendance.

Selectman David Foster arrived after Mr. Davies had left. The full Board discussed the circumstances that led up to the Board's decision to change the schedule and the impacts it has on operations at the Transfer Station and the Highway Department. The full Board agreed that the existing schedule shall remain in effect until further notice.

Selectman Cleary updated the Board on an October 16, 2020 meeting he had with NH Department of Transportation officials about the speed limit and passing zones on Route 202 north of Antrim Road. Also present were Town Administrator Kristie LaPlante and Police Sergeant Jason Lepine. During the meeting NH DOT was able to observe the roadway conditions, traffic conditions, driveway locations, and sight distance conditions. NH DOT requested the Town's assistance in communicating with Dollar General about their need to trim trees to create 400' clear sight distance on both sides of their driveway. Town Administrator Kristie LaPlante reported that a letter has been sent to the property owner with a copy of the Driveway Permit authorized by NH DOT that requires these improvements to be made.

The Selectmen reviewed the First Draft of the 2021 Budget as proposed by Department Heads. No decisions were made. The Selectmen intend to continue review at their next meeting. The Selectmen requested updated information on savings within the Town budget due to COVID-19.

Chairman Jim Cleary invited the Board of Selectmen to attend a Ground-Breaking Ceremony on Friday, October 30, 2020 at 1:00 p.m. for Bridge Street Recovery, LLC at 608 Francestown Road. Governor Chris Sununu will be present to celebrate this project.

The Town Administrator briefed the Selectmen on the following matters:

- The Road Agent will return from leave on Monday, October 26, 2020. There is no update on the status of locating a used Loader.
- State Forest Ranger Adrian Reyes has provided follow-up that a Timber Trespass for Operation 20-041-05 has occurred onto Map 21, Lot 1. The Ranger is still working on determining the Stumpage Values for the Trespass.
- The door for the new entrance for the Police Department has been ordered but will not be delivered until mid-November. The Selectmen requested the Town Office hold off on reopening

to the public until all improvements are finalized. The Selectmen also authorized the installation of a window to the top half of the door between the Town Office lobby and the Police Department lobby.

In addition, the Selectmen acted on the following matters:

- Reviewed and approved the Minutes of the Board's October 13, 2020 Meeting.
- Reviewed and approved Payroll Registers for October 1, October 8, October 14, and October 15, 2020.
- Reviewed and approved Accounts Payable Registers for September 24, September 29, October 1, and October 8, 2020.
- Voted that the Highway Department schedule will return to a 7:00 a.m. start time as of November 2, 2020.
- Discussed the condition of the Town Hall lobby before COVID-19 improvements. The Selectmen agreed that minimal furniture will return to the room in an effort to maximize floor space and allow for up to three people in the lobby at a time. Similarly, the Selectmen agreed to reduce the amount of material posted on walls. Every effort should be made to maximize information available on the Town's website. Only required postings should be displayed in an organized fashion.
- Selectman David Foster requested the Town Administrator seek clarification on the number of Selectmen and duration required for the November 3, 2020 Presidential Election.
- Chairman Jim Cleary reported to the Board that he is working on the construction project at Bridge Street Recovery, LLC and will need to recuse himself from any and all matters that may come before the Board relative to that property or project.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kristie LaPlante, Town Administrator