

Selectmen's Meeting Minutes
Monday, December 21, 2020

At the Selectmen's meeting held on Monday, December 21, 2020 at 6:30 p.m. the Selectmen participated via Zoom:

Stanley Holz is at his home in South Carolina, maintaining social distancing.

Peter Corey is at his home in Whitefield, maintaining social distancing.

Shawn White is at his home in Whitefield, maintaining social distancing.

Chairman Holz called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

The Board reviewed a proposed Town of Whitefield Employee Face Mask Policy.

The policy which Shawn worked on along with Ed and John Ross, Jr. Stan and Peter have had a chance to review the policy. Anxious to hear from our employees how they feel about it. Ed said biggest changes he made was to change some of the language to include the 6-foot distance. In the meeting room the supervisors are in there sometime and if they can maintain the 6-foot distance the masks are not necessary. If a mask interferes with doing a job safely, it doesn't have to be worn. The only vague point is the enforcement—should we spell out the steps. Shawn said the policy states it starts at a warning and moves on up. The personnel policy covers that pretty well. John Ross, Jr. said they have a stricter enforcement which is guided by protocols with State of NH Bureau of EMS.

Rob Larson said you asked Chief Samson and Chief Ross to weigh in and he wasn't sure why he was not asked to weigh in as well. Rob said the only thing excluded from this is your ADA compliance. Rob suggested we have a conversation with the town attorney. Chairman Holz said that we are ADA compliant, regardless. Rob thinks it needs to be mentioned in the policy. Rob said even the Governor's order mentioned it. Shawn said this policy was taken from the State of NH policy. If there is an ADA complaint, it goes through the state anyways. Chief Ross said any policy that is passed is ADA complaint, and it is implied as well as that is from the State EMS Bureau. If there is a medical condition that someone is exempt, then they have to have that in their file.

Peter Corey made a motion to accept the policy as written. The motion was seconded by Shawn White. Roll Call Vote: Corey: Yes; White: Yes; Holz: Yes. All in favor, 3-0. Motion passes.

Shawn White said he would like to make changes on the warrant articles. Shawn thinks \$275,000 for road construction is a lot. He would recommend going with \$175,000 instead of \$275,000 and do it as a capital reserve appropriation. Take the capital reserve and make it \$175,000 and take out the Kimball Hill Road article and it would over-all lower it \$100,000. Shawn said this is a lot more than we used to raise. Most towns around us, you hardly see them

raising that much money in one year for road maintenance. When you have a big road project, the highway department only has so much time. Shawn said he feels with the times we are in, we need to minus \$100,000 out of there and help the taxpayers. Rob Larson said he has to do Kimball Hill. The other \$100,000 was going to be dedicated to Old East Road. Rob said we can drop that or eliminate that. We do have some money in that reserve now for Old East, and we can limp along for another year. Kimball Hill can't wait another year. Shawn said our hands are tied when we do warrant articles for specific purposes. Just caution on that. What are the plans for the future of Old East Road? Rob said to repave it, but it has to get done in chunks. Shawn said this was a contentious thing back 6-7 years ago. There is zero base to that road. It is very muddy material and that road was paved many years ago and it only lasted several years. That road was recommended to go back as a gravel road. It is probably not the wisest to pave a portion of the road towards Lancaster. Rob said if we don't pave it, what is there has to be taken up and put back down again. The pavement under the gravel is what is causing the problem. The pavement holds the water so the road won't drain. Shawn would recommend to have it reground. Rob said if we take out \$100,000 it will slow down the progress we are making on the other roads. Rob said that would take away from the proper maintenance to other town roads. Rob cannot do what he would have liked done. Shawn said how about raising the capital reserve appropriation to \$200,000? Peter Corey said he does not want to negatively impact the town's infrastructure. Every year we see increases in salaries, associated tax payments, health care, the NH retirement went up so those expenses continue to go up. To keep level funding, we would have to take away from services. The money we have allocated in the past has not been enough for maintaining the roads the way they should be. Gravel on top of the pavement was because of years-ago decisions and we didn't have the money to take care of the road properly.

Peter said he is ok with saving money and trying to keep taxes low, but he is not ok with going backwards to where we were not too long ago where we didn't put any money against maintenance and that is why the town hall fell down, the wastewater treatment plant was in such poor condition, and we were losing 57% of our water. Peter would be more favorable to leaving the warrant article and let the voters decide. Our roll is to tell them and show them what is needed to maintain the community in the way they wanted it maintained. If you don't want to spend the money, then it is your decision. Peter worries we won't get both roads done. Peter doesn't enjoy paying high taxes, but people want to live in a community that is well maintained and that will get others to come here. Let the voters decide. If they want to support it great and if they don't fine. Stanley said try to get the roads back to how it once was, and make the town look good again. There were a lot of years when a lot of projects were not done, and we are playing catch-up. Shawn said that if that is what the Board wants to do that is fine, but he doesn't want to hear the town crew can't handle it and we have to hire it out. Rob said that the town crew will work with the contractor to do the road. The town very much is going to be involved to cut costs to get it down. Stan asked if they can do both roads, and Rob said yes. Shawn said the Old East Road project will be over a month-long project. Rob said it is a project that has to get done. Rob said we need to start on South Whitefield Road as well. Shawn talked

about responsible spending. Shawn asked Rob to go to some T2 classes. Shawn said he had a study done in 2008 with UNH and it was determined that it would take \$450,000 to spend on the roads and not go backwards. We need to sit down and talk to some people and get engineers and fix the real bad areas and do a reclaim. Rob said we will waste our money if we do an overlay on Kimball Hill Road. He took the survey that was done by UNH to an engineer, and they said that it is a waste our money if we don't do a rehab on Parker Road and Kimball Hill Road. Old East Road doesn't need a pavement rehab. It is going to be reclaim to pull up the old pavement which retains water and is what is creating problems. Rob said he has been to the classes at T2. Stan said we have agreed to let the voters decide what they want to spend the money on.

The Board reviewed the draft budget and made the following changes:

- Changed the culvert line item in the highway budget from \$5,000 to \$2,500
- Changed the street light replacement line item from \$1,000 to \$500
- Lowered the Septage Receiving Station capital reserve from \$25,000 to \$5,000
- Deleted the highway garage door warrant article (\$12,000)

A motion was made by Peter Corey to approve the Selectmen's Meeting Minutes of December 14, 2020. The motion was seconded by Shawn White. Roll Call Vote: Holz: Yes; White: Yes; Corey: Yes. All in favor, 3-0. Motion passes.

Peter Corey said he had a new item to discuss. Peter said that Stanley is familiar with a project that CEDC undertook that would have seen a rehab or renovation of multiple buildings in downtown Whitefield. This project would have included new HVAC, sprinkler systems, etc. For various reasons that project fell through a couple of years ago. A group of private citizens, Peter being one of them, is trying to reinvigorate a portion of that and today we had a meeting with NCIC out of St. Johnsbury. We are seeking a planning grant through CDBG that would look at architectural and structural items and it would be somewhere between \$15,000 to \$30,000. It has to be sponsored by a non-profit or municipality. There would be no cost to the town, and any fees would come out of the grant or paid for by the private citizen group. Peter said he would bring it up tonight to see if the town be willing to be the sponsor of the planning grant. It would be one step to further exploring the buildings in the downtown. Stanley said he does not have any problem as long as the town would not be subject to any unforeseen expenses. Shawn would like to read more about it, but as long as there are no costs or liabilities to the town he is o.k. with it. Peter explained that the planning grants don't have encumbrances toward the town getting another CDBG grant in the same time frame. Peter said he is recusing himself on the vote for this. Stanley made a motion to support the grant application as proposed by Peter Corey. Shawn White seconded the motion. Roll Call Vote: Holz: Yes; White: Yes; Corey: Recusing himself. Motion passes, 2-0.

Shawn said we received an email about taking stones or rocks from a residence being torn down. Can we legally give that stuff away because those are not town-owned buildings? Can we give foundation stones away that are in a house we don't even own? Shawn said that we could crush

that into our gravel pile to make useful material. Shawn is just questioning the legality whether we can give the stuff away that is not ours. Shawn said he is talking about the property at 23 Lancaster Road. Peter said no we cannot. Peter is wondering about the foundation—is it left or is it destroyed? If you have a hole in the ground, you would want to fill it in. It would depend on the demolition company. Who does that material belong to? Peter said the law provides the town the ability to sell any scrape vehicles and use the proceeds of the expenses incurred. It would seem lawful for the town to take possession of everything in the demolition. The question is does that include foundation stones or should those be going in the hole? Would the town market those otherwise to offset the costs of demolition of the house? Shawn said it would depend on if they are granite or regular stone and if those stones are under 2x2 they do have value to the town highway department. Over that no, cost to break them up would be more than they are worth.

A motion was made by Peter Corey to enter non-public session at 7:15 p.m. pursuant to NH RSA 91-A:3, II (a) the dismissal, promotion or compensation of any public employee or the disciplining of such employee, or the investigation of any charges against him or her, unless the employee affected (1) has a right to a public meeting, and (2) requests that the meeting be open, in which case the request shall be granted. The motion was seconded by Shawn White. Roll Call Vote: Holz: Yes; Corey: Yes; White: Yes. All in favor, 3-0. Motion passes.

The Board adjourned from non-public session at 7:25 p.m.

The meeting adjourned at 7:25 p.m.