

## Selectmen's Meeting Minutes

Monday, July 13, 2020

At the Selectmen's Meeting held on Monday, July 13, 2020 at 6:00 p.m. the Selectmen participated via Zoom:

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

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

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

A motion was made by Peter Corey to enter non-public session at 6:00 p.m. pursuant to NHA RSA 91-A:3, II(b) the hiring of any person as a public employee. The motion was seconded by Shawn White  
Roll Call Vote: White: Yes; Corey: Yes; Corey: Yes. All in favor, 3-0. Motion passed.

The Board adjourned from non-public session at 6:15 p.m.

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

Ted Joubert from the Lancaster Fire Department is here with Whitefield Fire Chief, John Ross, Jr., for an initial conversation about our dispatch services. We currently get our dispatch from the DOT office in Lancaster. This is relatively a free service. Unfortunately, that is probably not a sustainable path. We don't want to hear that. Public safety is secondary for them. Regionally we need to look at a regional dispatch center. Whitefield, Lancaster, and Groveton are the primary towns to lead the effort. There are a sustainable amount of pros. Some good news is that the Town of Lancaster owns all the equipment DOT uses to dispatch. They purchased that through a grant process a few years ago. Weeks Medical Center has offered some space to locate the dispatch center at the hospital. That would save us some costs to start out. Weeks wants to help. It is a good location because it has elevation and an antenna tower already set up. Staffing and moving equipment to that location would be the start-up costs. There is a lot to consider. Ted feels it needs to be led by the Police Departments. We want the input early. We don't have an approximate time frame. This has been kicked around for 30 years. DOT is currently holding strong, but the state is on a hiring freeze so if dispatchers leave they cannot be replaced. Ted said he thinks the earliest we would be able to have anything operational would be in 2022.

Ed Samson, Police Chief, said he mirrors everything Ted said. The current issue is the DOT dispatch supervisor resigned so that is the position that is vacant. There are wheels in motion to get the position filled. That could be a problem in the very near future. The price tag for a dispatch center is not what people are going to want to hear, but it is reality. It has been looming out there a long time.

John Ross, Jr. said he has been working with Ted on this for the past few weeks. Some day it is going to happen.



Peter said a question he has is who is going to collaborate to put together a proposal for this? What is this going to look at, i.e., salaries, certification requirements, equipment, proposed funding structure--per capita? Is that something Ed, Ted and Mossy can coalesce into a document so we have something concrete to look at? How do other towns do this across the state?

Ted said the proposal is definitely something we can do. We wanted the Board of Selectmen to have a head's up. We don't want people to feel off guard. It is different all throughout the state. Littleton has one run by the Sheriff and County. There are a lot of different models out there. An option for Whitefield is Twin State. There are a ton of different models for you to take a look at. Ed Samson said that Littleton pays between \$100,000 to \$200,000 for their dispatch services. Berlin PD and Gorham PD have their own dispatch. The costs are fairly high. The regionalization will save costs. Twin State is an option for the PD in Whitefield. Grafton County really logistically wouldn't be good. Ted said moving forward we may be able to incorporate some other towns. We may be able to recruit other members to help with the costs. Weeks Hospital does Lancaster EMS and Groveton EMS for free. Weeks doesn't have much interest in continuing with this service, and that is why they are offering the space.

Peter asked what are talking about for staffing? Ted said preliminary discussions have 5 full-time staff. The supervisor will have a dual role. The feeling is that this needs to be under the control of the Police Departments. Shawn White asked if we know of any grants to help with start-up? Ted said the first step is to make a proposal then we can look into possible funding sources. They are thinking of reaching out to Heidi Lawton of Emergency Management and our elected officials for possible assistance. The sheriffs use the system as well so there may be some county assistance. Ted thinks there may be some grant funding available. Ed said that the county has been approached and they have 0 interest in being involved in a regional dispatch center.

Peter said if 2022 is the goal, then we need to set a date for when this will be operation. We will need to know what it is going to look like going into 2021. Do we do it under the police department or do we create a public safety category? We are going to enter the budget season sooner than you would like. Stanley thought it might be worth setting up a capital reserve fund for this. Tom Ladd, who is a Trustee of the Trust Funds, said you probably would want it to be an expendable trust fund. Tom said we will have to look at the operations procedures and priorities. Shifting management in the past has caused issues. The Board thanked Ted for coming and updating us on this matter.

A motion was made by Shawn White to approve the minutes of the June 22, 2020 Selectmen's Meeting and the June 30, 2020 Non-Public Session Meeting Minutes. The motion was seconded by Peter Corey. Roll call vote: Holz, Yes; Corey, Yes; White, Yes. All in favor, 3-0. Motion passed.

Rob Larson, Director of Public Works wanted to discuss the RFP for the wastewater treatment plant contract. He sent everyone a draft, and Peter came back with comments. Should we move forward? The biggest one Rob saw was Town legal Counsel. It is prudent to have it reviewed by legal counsel. The inclusion of the sewer distribution system is beyond the typical sewer contract. The sewer system is an overlooked entity, which we all respond to when we have a problem. We take away from the highway department in order to respond to sewer issues so the sewer department is a separately paid entity so



he would like to separate that response. Rob said we are dealing a lot with plugged lines from wipes that don't break down. He included that in this proposal. Peter said he is not opposed to separate that out. Stanley said he is neutral. Shawn said he doesn't know of a town who is not involved in their sewer collection. Most of the bigger companies don't have people to do sewer collection. Shawn said it probably takes 30 hours a month to tend to this. Shawn said he doesn't see the savings in putting this in the RFP. Shawn said he would ask it go out as a bid alternate. Rob said he would rather see the Town have a sewer department and not contracted out, but everybody wanted this RFP to go out first so he will separate the collection as a separate bid. Shawn said Whitefield is a town of 2,300 people and we can't afford a sewer department of 3-4 people. Rob said in reality, in talking with Wright Pierce about this, they are telling him this facility would run with a part-time person like the Welch's do right now. The problem is the state is requiring the full-time personnel. This is a fully functional system that can be operated from your cell phone. Rob thought we could only have two people. Rob said that he has six catch basins on Brown Street that are caving in because they have not been looked at in a very long period of time. Shawn said he used to work at the sewer treatment plant in Littleton and they had 3 people. Shawn can't see running that facility with two people. Peter's recommendation is to put the collection system in as a bid alternate. The pump stations to be included in the RFP were discussed. Shawn said when he took care of the pump stations, there were three--Brown Street, Grandma's and Hilltop Park that were the town's. The rest were taken care of by the property owners. Rob said he will separate those out and resubmit. Peter said that Septage Receiving Station needs to be included as we will be taking in septage and creating revenue for the Town. The other item that needs to be included is a plan for the dewatering.

Rob said when we discuss the personnel policies he thought we should change the minimum hours for a call-in from 2 hours to 3 hours. It causes a disruption in people's lives. Shawn said that the state is 3 hours. Shawn said this only really affects the summer time call-ins. Rob said he would like to get closer to the state standard for call-ins.

The Board worked on personnel policy updates.

The Board discussed the town office being available for meetings. The ZBA wanted to have their meeting at the town office. Stanley said he feels with the Covid-19 and the Governor's State of Emergency Order, we are still not having public meetings at the town office. The Board agreed that this is the best option for the time being.

Shawn asked to invite someone from the Summit to attend the next meeting, which is the monthly department head meeting so we can discuss the sewer issues at the Summit. Stanley said he has asked Courtney Vashaw to take part in the monthly department head meetings as well.

The meeting adjourned at 7:40 p.m.