

Present

Selectboard: (On site)

David Jones (Chair), Gwen Tanza

Town Officers: Guy Tanza (Town Clerk, videographer)

(Meeting transcribed from video conference)

(Online)

Bruce Mello, Shelby Brimmer, Joseph Dutton

Recorder: Peter Barus

Members of the Public: Dorothy Maggio

Call the meeting to order

The meeting was called to order at 6:30PM.

Review changes to agenda if any

Scheduled members of the public

Dorothy Maggio (reporting on animal control)

Unscheduled members of the public

Approve Minutes

Minutes from April 1, 2020 Regular Meeting

Mr. Jones moved to approve the minutes for April 1, 2020. Second by Ms. Tanza. **All in Favor.**

New Business

Papoose Lane Dog Situation

Ms. Maggio reported that this year several municipal tickets were written for the owner in January and February; and cited a Judiciary Board document showing that defendant failed to answer, and failed to pay; that non-trial dispositions were disposed and payment due; that the Judiciary Bureau found the owners guilty by default and will pursue court costs and fines.

Ms. Maggio reported two other incidents in February, noting that Mr. Dutton had found a stray dog, and no complaint was lodged; and that SLP had reported a dog in the school yard, and the owner had appeared, looking for the same dog, after which the Bournes had reported a dog hit and killed near their home; and that the deceased animal was returned to the owner, the same person cited above.

In discussion it was noted that all the dogs cited above had been licensed last year; that the deceased animal had been returned several times after being found running loose in the area.

Traffic Speed Issues

Mr. Dutton discussed several instances of reckless driving he had witnessed since the Governor's pandemic emergency order; noting he had spoken to neighbors and residents with young children who expressed significant concerns; that one resident had fallen off her bicycle, nearly struck by an orange sports car; that there had been three or four trucks speeding whose drivers were not recognized; that several vehicles had been making tire-marks; that a motorcycle and a small car had apparently been racing, repeatedly; that many residents have expressed fear and concern; and discussed the lack of law enforcement and the danger of a pedestrian being injured or killed. Mr. Dutton reported speaking with the Sheriff, who had quoted (informally) a price of \$51/hr until July, \$52/hr thereafter, and offered two hours of monitoring per week; that the Sheriff's office could contract until July and execute another contract thereafter; that the Sheriff had mentioned developing a cooperative, community oriented police force, and suggested Newfane, Townshend, Brookline and Athens pool resources to have full-time deputies.

There was discussion; that the State Police had not been called. that a trooper drove through town about two days after these incidents; that this was probably less than two hours per week; that the Police are probably understaffed; and discussion about whether to work with the Sheriff or the State Police; that previous contracts with the sheriff had been for one hour per week, that had not been fulfilled, and that many towns had stopped using these contracts; and that there was a trooper operating radar in town (the day of this meeting). Mr. Tanza confirmed this and suggested that resident complaints have been effective in bringing police attention to the area. It was noted that speed and traffic safety issues are the responsibility of the State Police; that the Sheriff's office will require a contract; and suggested that providing information to the State Police about likely times and locations to monitor. It was noted that the Town budgets about \$600 for law enforcement. It was suggested that the Sheriff could be more flexible on price, and that the budget should be examined for funds that could be reallocated for this purpose.

There was discussion; that the financial situation is potentially precarious, depending on tax payments; that there may not be funds to move. It was suggested that particular times and locations be identified and reported when speeding occurs. Mr. Dutton suggested 11:00AM to 5:00PM, noting that the most dangerous activities have occurred in the middle of the day, when people are out walking their dogs, with children, jogging etc. Other complaints to the Police were discussed. Mr. Dutton reported that some neighbors have called the State Police; and it was suggested to speak with them about the need for monitoring at the most likely times. Mr. Mello discussed previous relationships with law enforcement, hours and costs. Mr. Tanza noted that the budget had been \$3,600.00 in the past; and noted rubber marks and gunshots heard Easter Sunday.

Mr. Jones encouraged calling the State Police, suggesting that eyewitness accounts would be most likely to elicit a law enforcement response; and that members hearing complaints make this suggestion to complainants.

Financial/Tax Status

Mr. Jones noted the May 15, 2020 tax payment deadline for the Town; noting also the large anticipated School Tax payment coming due; that Ms. Wiswall has had no communication from the School district to date; that there are no major deadlines; that there is a Selectboard Meeting May 6, 2020; and that the voters set the date for Tax Collection; that a Special Meeting would not be appropriate under the Governor's order; that financial stresses may result in delinquencies. Mr. Tanza noted that Town will pay the education bill in June; that the impact on revenues remains unknown; that about 80% of taxes are related to education; that the next deadline will be in August; that some residents have made payments already; and most major projects have been suspended during the pandemic. Mr. Jones noted that the WRC has been informed of suspension of Sand and Salt Shed work.

The Chair polled the membership on tax issues. Ms. Tanza noted that more will be known May 15. Mr. Mello asked about the delinquency fine. Mr. Tanza noted 8% is the maximum fine, but that there are no delinquencies at present. Mr. Jones noted that the amount of the fine is under the

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Wednesday, April 15, 2020, 6:30 PM

purview of the Town Clerk and the Selectboard. Mr. Mello noted that 60,000 people are unemployed in Vermont, and called for compassion. It was noted that the Delinquent Tax Collector has some discretion, and that the penalty rate must be the same for all. Mr. Tanza discussed alternatives, noting that taxpayers have been cooperative on the whole.

Old Business

SLP Update

Mr. Mello reported speaking with Norm Holden about the work on the windows; that he had offered to defer payment, and fix one window at a time, installing plywood, taking the frame home to rebuild, returning and installing, one window at a time; and noted there is \$14,362.17 on hand; and that window repair is a maintenance item.

The Selectboard noted last meeting's plan to spend nothing and wait; and the Governor's emergency mandate; that continuing this work would send a mixed message when residents are urged to stay home; that it would be non-essential work, and not supported; that the Town must cooperate with the state on this question; and that this be revisited after restrictions are lifted.

Mr. Mello discussed a minor leak and other details, sand and wood chips; he will be negotiating a price with Mr. Bloom. There was consensus that safety of playground equipment should be maintained. Costs of sand and wood chips, and possible alternative methods of improving the safety-fill around the playground equipment were discussed.

Summary / Update / Reports

Guy Tanza – Town Clerk Report

Mr. Tanza reported that dog licenses were due April 1, and while registrations received after April 1 were shifted to March 31 to eliminate late charges, there are 25-30 dogs yet to be registered, and the issue is safety; and reported that the Town is awaiting information on elections, which are under state control.

Highways & Roads

Mark Bills – Road Supervisor

Mr. Jones reported that Mr. Bills has been in communication about paving being on hold; that he is doing only what he and the state would deem essential work, such as grading roads; that he would buy repair parts as needed; that all grant-related work is suspended by the state.

Communications

Email Communications from WRC and State (VTRANS) regarding suspension of non-essential work

- Strolling of the Heifers postponed June events, including the bike race in Brookline
- The WRC has broadband survey results on their website (Brookline has about 30% household participation; 81% of respondents have broadband on cable; a separate investigation shows 90% of the homes in Brookline are served by cable, that Brookline is not an underserved town. Mr. Jones expressed appreciation for residents' participation.)

Regular Mail

- Southern Vermont Economy Project announces video meetings schedule on their website

Pay Orders

Mr. Jones polled the members about each Warrant, as to review, questions and approval.

- Payroll Warrant #2020-42, dated 4/15/20, \$1077.42
- Accounts Payable Warrant #2020-41, dated 4/15/20, \$12,954.89

Payroll

Mr Jones moved to approve Payroll Warrant # 2020-42, dated April 15, 2020, in the amount of \$1,077.42. Second by Ms. Brimmer. All in Favor.

Accounts Payable

Mr Jones moved to approve Accounts Payable Warrant #2020-41, dated April 15, 2020, in the amount of \$12,954.89. Second by Mr. Mello. All in Favor.

Set agenda for the next meeting – Wednesday May 6, 2020

- Traffic speed issues
- Financial Tax status
- Draft update to LEMP (due by May 1, 2020)
- Census
- SLP

Adjournment

Mr. Jones moved to Adjourn. Second by Mr. Mello. All in Favor.

The meeting was Adjourned at 8:00PM.

Respectfully submitted, Peter Barus, Recorder, April 16, 2020