

*Selectmen's Meeting Minutes*

Monday, April 6, 2020 at Town Hall - Auditorium

Present: Chairman Steve Diorio, Selectman Bernie Rideout, Selectman Megan Kondrat, and Selectman Richard Johnson; T.A. Jill Collins and Kim Worden. Selectman Mike Carrier participated via cellphone. Sean Leary participated via Zoom. Chief Rataj was also present.

6:00 p.m. Chairman Diorio called the meeting to order.

Chair Diorio opened by thanking Jill and staff for helping keep the Town offices open while maintaining a positive attitude and to Julie for going above and beyond to assist people. He pointed out that fortunately the county has a relatively low (COVID-19) count while continuing to practice safety. He noted the Board is considering meeting every other week and guesses we will be remote by then.

Selectman Kondrat made a **motion to approve** the manifests of 3/30/20 and 4/6/20 and minutes of 3/23/20, second by Rideout. Motion passes unanimously.

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*New Business:*

T.A. Collins informed the Board that *New Business* paperwork (placed on the stage) would be signed at the end in order to keep social distancing.

First presented was an Application for Current Use for Chris Shaw, 821 Plain Road, Hinsdale. Selectmen Rideout asked if the minimum acres for current use was ten acres. Discussion followed on the minimum acreage and it was agreed that this should be looked into. Selectman Rideout made a **motion to table** the Application for Current Use for Chris Shaw, second by Kondrat. Motion passes unanimously.

Next presented was Elderly Exemption #04062020A for Map 45, Lot 49. Selectman Carrier made a **motion to approve** Elderly Exemption #04062020A, second by Kondrat. Motion passes unanimously.

There was a Notice of Intent to Excavate for Michael Renaud on Brattleboro Road, Map 19, Lot 19. After a question from Selectman Rideout and clarification from Sean that this was the former Halliday property, Selectman Rideout **made a motion to approve** the Notice of Intent, second by Kondrat. Motion passes unanimously.

An Application for Recreational Campground/Camping Park Permit re: Thicket Hill Campground was presented. Due to the recent Executive Order on campgrounds, T.A. Collins suggested tabling the permit as being the best thing to do. Selectman Rideout made a motion to table the Application. There was no second. Motion fails. It was suggested to follow up with a letter to Mr. Herod pointing out that he can't open until the order is lifted. Selectman Kondrat voiced her opinion that it is unfair to not approve this as it could delay their opening and hold them up (in the event Selectmen didn't meet for weeks following the order being lifted). Selectman Diorio had concerns that the Board had already approved one permit (prior to the Order). Discussion followed. Selectman Rideout made a **motion to approve** the Thicket Hill Campground Permit, contingent upon Executive Order #17 being lifted, second by Kondrat. Motion passes unanimously.

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Chief Rataj was present to update the Board. He first noted a uniform change indicating that the chosen uniforms are extremely well-made, cheaper, giving a different, friendlier image to the community and noting the new hires will need them too. He added that financially the change makes sense now.

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He informed the Board that the new cruiser is back-ordered until October and they will be making use of the two oldest vehicles with the highest miles now in order to conserve.

Case Management is being worked on with instruction and mentoring.

The Evidence Room should be inventoried and that is a priority for him. Firearms inventory has been done and all are accounted for.

Voicemail System was a mess and is now going to the proper people for appropriate accountability.

NH State Police have been contacted and services for May have been politely declined, saving money. They have, however, left the agreement in place in the event it is needed.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is coming tomorrow: masks, goggles, gloves, gowns, etc.

There are significant computer issues to be dealt with. He explained that what is in place now is causing officers to do three times the work and needs serious attention. They are working with two separate data bases, same program, but not linked. He is looking into the options and will come back with facts and figures.

Chief Rataj described that they do not and have not had a janitor. This is also on his radar to take care of.

He will have a full-time officer starting in two weeks with an eight-week turnaround time. He also has two interviews this week and one interested. He noted other possibilities and recruiting efforts. He said that Claremont will do background checks at no charge vs. Keene who has been charging for them.

Selectmen expressed their appreciation for what the Chief has accomplished in one week.

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T.A. Collins provided the Board with information re: Emergency Order #23. She referred to Planning and Zoning Board meeting relief in the Order.

T.A. Collins discussed going remote and various avenues to do that: A free conference call service, Zoom with invitation to join meeting, and "Town Hall Meeting" which she will need to explore further and can be watched on the website. She indicated that she will probably purchase Zoom for a year and that participants will be able to tune in by phone, laptop, or tablet. Her idea would be to have the chairman present with her, electronic signing is now allowed, and she could make changes to documents so that the chairman would be the sole signature. She indicated that this is spelled out in the Executive Order.

Chair Diorio suggested it would be wise to plan for it and leave it up to the Board. Jill will plan for it and get the kinks out and then Chair Diorio will get word to the Board for discussion.

T.A. Collins also informed the Board of options in handling non-publics.

T.A. Collins had a request from the EPA re: property at 54-54A Canal Street. They will do testing and then training with DES. This is a joint effort with Southwest Regional Planning, Brownfields, DES, and EPA. She indicated that she would need the Board's consent to give them access to the property. Selectman Rideout made a **motion** to have the Chair sign the EPA authorization, second by Kondrat. Motion passes unanimously.

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*Board Comments:*

Selectman Kondrat indicated that she is impressed with the new Chief's accomplishments in his first week and with the Program Director's efforts in trying to build the community.

Selectman Rideout raised questions re: the camp and pool being up in the air and the status of new hires. Jill indicated that letters are going out to people who already responded. She also indicated we are not doing interviews right now. Discussion and questions followed. It was pointed out that we don't know what is going to happen but the Board would like a plan.

Selectman Rideout also noted a hike in the County Tax Rate of 1.4 to 1.6%. He would like us to consider no unnecessary spending and would like to be able to buy down the tax rate.

Selectman Johnson agreed with Selectman Rideout and indicated that voters authorized a certain amount to spend and if we can come in at any amount less than that, it would be preferred. What is left at the end, he would also like to see reduce the tax rate. All agreed.

Chair Diorio reminded all that a few weeks ago there was unfinished discussion due to figures not being available. T.A. Collins retrieved figures from her office for later discussion.

Chair Diorio thanked Selectman Kondrat for decorating windows (at Town Hall and PD) and bringing some cheer.

Chair Diorio extended appreciation to Chief Rataj. Chief Rataj also noted an excessive number of cellphones and that bill being reduced to half.

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*Citizen Comments:*

Sean Leary informed everyone that there is a School Board Meeting on Wednesday. They will be trying remote access as we are. He noted they may put off election of officers. Parks and Rec members were sent an email today to see how many have access to remote participation. They plan to have a remote meeting soon. He will send a notice to Jill re: sound and technical stuff and indicated that a microphone is a must. He also extended thanks to the new Chief for so much progress in such a short time.

T.A. Collins informed the Board that she is working with the Police Chief, Fire Chief, and Selectman Kondrat on a parade with the Easter Bunny this Saturday. They plan to have three fire trucks, a cruiser, and Selectman Kondrat.

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6:55 p.m. Selectman Kondrat made a **motion** to enter into non-public under RSA 91-A:3, II (b) hiring, with Chief Rataj, second by Rideout. The vote is as follows: Diorio-I; Rideout-I; Carrier-I; Kondrat-I; and Johnson-I; Motion passes unanimously.

7:10 p.m. Regular meeting reconvened and Chief Rataj left.

Selectman Kondrat made a **motion** to seal the minutes, second by Rideout. The vote was as follows: Diorio-I; Rideout-I; Carrier-I; Kondrat-I and Johnson-I; Motion passes unanimously.

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7:10 p.m. Selectman Kondrat made a **motion** to enter into non-public under RSA 91-A:3, II (a) personnel, second by Carrier. The vote is as follows: Diorio-I; Rideout-I; Carrier-I; Kondrat-I; and Johnson-I; Motion passes unanimously.

7:14 p.m. Regular meeting reconvened.

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7:18 p.m. Selectman Rideout made a **motion** to adjourn, second by Kondrat. Motion passes unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kim P. Worden  
Secretary