

**Minutes
Bristol Select Board
April 2, 2020**

Announcement: Chair Anderson read announcement to inform the public that this meeting is authorized to take place virtually on the Zoom platform and is not in a physical location due to the COVID-19 pandemic and Executive Order #12 pursuant to Emergency Order 2020-04. Public access and participation is provided via telephone with additional access by video and other electronic means. Information on how to observe and participate is located on the front page of the Town of Bristol website (townofbristolnh.org). If a member of the public has a problem accessing the meeting, they should call 744-3354 and if they still cannot access, the meeting will be cancelled. Chair Anderson read the Zoom address for public access.

Roll Call Attendance: Select Board members: Chair Wayne Anderson; Vice Chair Don Milbrand; Anita Avery; JP Morrison; Les Dion; and Nik Coates, Town Administrator. Each member was alone.

Absent:

Public Session: Chair Anderson opened the public meeting at 6:00 PM with Mr. Morrison leading the Pledge of Allegiance.

Others Present: Police Chief McIntire, Fire Chief LaRoche (remotely)

Meeting Minutes: Mr. Morrison made a motion to accept the minutes of March 5, 2020 as written, seconded by Ms. Dion. Roll call vote taken; Ms. Avery, yes; Mr. Morrison, yes; Ms. Dion, yes; Mr. Milbrand, yes, Chair Anderson, yes. No discussion. The Board voted 5-0-0, motion passed.

Consent Agenda: Mr. Milbrand made a motion to approve the consent agenda dated April 2, 2020; to include the items named therein, seconded by Mr. Morrison. Roll call vote taken; Ms. Avery, yes; Mr. Morrison, yes; Ms. Dion, yes; Mr. Milbrand, yes, Chair Anderson, yes. No discussion. The Board voted 5-0-0 in favor of the motion to approve the consent agenda.

COVID-19 Update: Mr. Coates provided an update on relevant emergency orders issued by the Governor. They are as follows:

#12: Public access to meetings which allows meetings to take place remotely.

#16: Prohibits gathering of ten or more.

#17: Listing of essential and nonessential business. Municipalities are considered to be essential.

#23: Allows signatures of manifests, etc. to be collected after the fact.

Mr. Coates went over departmental operations. The Transfer Station, Highway, and Water & Sewer Departments are open their regular hours. The Transfer Station has suspended recycling for the time being and public access to the shed has been restricted. Highway Department operations such as street sweeping will continue and best practices for residents doing spring cleaning are located on the website. The Town Office has been restricted to one person on a floor at a time. All staff have been working remotely, phone calls are forwarded to cell phones and is going well.

Financial impacts to the Town are being monitored. Borrowing from the Water & Sewer Department and potentially obtaining a TAN are being planned for to deal with cash flow. Mr. Milbrand said that going forward with the TAN paperwork is a good idea in order to be prepared. The federal stimulus package will be helpful as 75% reimbursement of COVID-19 related expenses may be available as well as state Block Grants. All bills related to COVID-19 are currently being tracked. Mr. Blanchette, Finance

Director advised that there is no justification at this point for any spending freezes, though Department Heads have been told to continue being conservative in their spending.

Ms. Dion asked about booking the concert series as this is the time contracts usually go out. Discussion followed and it was decided that contracts would go out with the added Force Majeure stipulation regarding cancellation for circumstances beyond our control. Mr. Morrison asked if we could request from the firework vendor to be a back-up for July 4th in case of another town's cancellation. Ms. Dion will have Ms. Goodwin contact Hell's Gates. Mr. Milbrand spoke on tourism and the fact that people may not want to fly and will instead drive to NH and vacation here. Mr. Coates added that Sue Sodano and Cathy Redman are meeting with a group of volunteer's tomorrow to discuss supporting local businesses. He will include them on any ideas to encourage tourism here when the stay at home and other social distancing orders have been lifted.

Mr. Coates reported on the Town Clerk/Tax Collector financial aspects. He and Ms. Simpson, Tax Collector, considered the idea of a moratorium on deeding due to the high unemployment rate at the moment. Liens have to be done by September 30, 2020, and Ms. Simpson would like to have them out by the end of May. Discussion followed in which it was decided that more clarification on the Governor's Emergency Order which states landlords cannot evict tenants at this time and if this would apply in any way to liening delinquent taxpayers. As a taxpayer cannot be deeded until they have been late for three years, it was brought up that the current financial situation is not the cause and deeding should proceed. More discussion followed in which a 30-day grace period was agreed upon in which liens would go out in July. Mr. Coates will consult with Ms. Simpson for clarification and finalize this item at the next Select Board meeting.

Police Chief McIntire gave an update to the Select Board on the status of the Police Department. The department's schedule has been modified to limit staff's exposure, utilizing 20-hour shifts. The lobby is still open, with the phone being used to contact dispatch. The department has enough Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) with some coming through donations. The State Parks are still open, and the department has been monitoring Wellington State Park. Mr. Anderson requested that the Police Department check on the Town Office periodically and Chief McIntire confirmed that they will continue to do so and also that the alarm system at the Town Office is directly connected with the Police Department. He concluded by saying that part time Detective Barry Tanner has made himself available Monday through Friday to handle the increased police business now being conducted over the phone.

Fire Chief LaRoche gave an update to the Select Board on the status of the Fire Department. The Fire Department building continues to have limited public access. State wide there are approximately 470 COVID-19 cases with the surge trying to be forecasted. NH has a low population, but also a low number of hospital beds. PPE supply continues to be a struggle throughout the state. The Bristol Fire Department is in good shape PPE wise as it is a health care agency and has been proactive. Donations have also been received from Home Depot and other organizations. Chief LaRoche has been in contact with other towns regarding potential staffing needs if Bristol Fire Department members become sick. The fire chief from Alexandria has agreed to have their personnel fill that need if it becomes necessary. Since Alexandria does not have their own ambulances, we would not be taking them from a need there. A number of Bristol responders have already had to self-quarantine due to exposure. Having the backup personnel already set up on the roster will be beneficial. PAF's for these personnel were presented to the Board for their approval. Mr. Coates interjected that he had the PAF's and would go over them during the nonpublic session at the end of this meeting. Further discussion ensued. Mr. Morrison made a motion to accept Chief LaRoche's recommendation on PAFs to hire additional staff to back fill any needs for the Bristol Fire Department. Seconded by Mr. Milbrand. Roll call vote taken; Ms. Avery, yes; Mr. Morrison, yes; Ms. Dion, yes; Mr. Milbrand, yes, Chair Anderson, yes. No further discussion. The Board voted 5-0-0, motion passed.

Mr. Coates updated the Select Board on COVID-19 information for employees, Temporary Policy on Leave due to COVID-19, and the Temporary Policy on Public Meetings. He worked with Finance Director Mr. Blanchette and legal counsel on finalizing these documents.

The Select Board Directives for COVID-19 Response document lays out ground rules in anticipation issues that may come up and will be used for guidance purposes. Employees will be required to comply with CDC guidelines such as social distancing, limiting travel, etc. Services to the public will be done remotely as much as possible. Guidelines were established in the case of sickness of an employee from COVID-19. Entry into the Town Office has been restricted. Mr. Coates asked the Select Board if they had any questions. Mr. Milbrand suggested the use of thermometers to assist in monitoring.

Mr. Coates went over updated document Temporary Policy on Leave due to Coronavirus based on federal guidelines. If an employee is sick from COVID-19 they will take time off and will have an additional 80 hours of sick time available to them. The employee will be able to go into a negative sick leave balance if it becomes necessary. Discussion occurred on duration of leave, risks involved and the need to institute the policy on a case by case basis. Mr. Coates also went over the Temporary Policy on Public Meetings which allow for the practice of holding public meetings remotely with access for the public to join via computer, telephone or other electronic manner.

Mr. Milbrand made a motion to accept the Select Board Directives for COVID-19 Response, the Temporary Policy on Leave due to COVID-19, and the Temporary Policy on Public Meetings. Ms. Avery seconded. Roll call vote taken; Ms. Avery, yes; Mr. Morrison, yes; Ms. Dion, yes; Mr. Milbrand, yes, Chair Anderson, yes. No further discussion. The Board voted 5-0-0, motion passed.

Goal Setting 2020: Last year, Primex worked with the Select Board and provided a report on Select Board goals for 2019. A Select Board document was also created which identified Select Board priorities. Mr. Coates updated the Board on the status of different ongoing and completed projects identified in the 2019 report. Mr. Anderson spoke on the importance of keeping up with the current state of affairs and still establishing goals as well as the need to be forward thinking not just reactive. He asked the Board to think about three current projects which align with the goals and priorities set out in the 2019 report. The Fiber/Cell, Sewer to Lake, Public Safety Building and Hall Road Paving projects were suggested.

Operational Decision Making and Policy Making Responsibilities: The role of the Town Administrator and the role of the Select Board were discussed to provide more clarity on policy vs. operational aspects. Mr. Coates provided guidance on the Department Heads request process in which the Department Head would submit a written request to the Town Administrator at least a week in advance of the needed decision. Mr. Coates would review the request and determine if it was an operational or policy matter. This would keep the Board focused on policy and running efficiently. Ms. Dion said that though the Board does not need to decide on operational details it is good to be aware of them. She also stated that the Board does need to consider some operational items as well as policy related. Mr. Milbrand agreed with Ms. Dion and added that the Board needs to stay abreast on the legal aspects of different situations. It was agreed upon that Mr. Coates would be responsible for day to day operational decisions but would keep the Board aware and to consult with them whenever necessary.

Select Board Items: Ms. Avery said that she is looking forward when she can do more and become more familiar with the workings of the town.

Ms. Dion gave her kudos to all of the volunteers, Hannaford's and the Town staff.

Mr. Milbrand thanked all of the volunteers, Town staff and all employees still working in this tough situation.

Chair Anderson thanked all including the grocery and postal workers.

Public Comments: None

Non-Public Session: Mr. Milbrand made a motion to enter nonpublic session per RSA 91-A, II (a), (b), and (c) at 8:06 PM. Seconded by Mr. Morrison. Roll call vote taken; Ms. Avery, yes; Mr. Morrison, yes; Ms. Dion, yes; Mr. Milbrand, yes, Chair Anderson, yes. The Board voted 5-0-0, motion passed.

Motion made by Mr. Morrison to leave nonpublic session at 8:20 PM. Seconded by Mr. Milbrand. Roll call vote taken; Ms. Avery, yes; Mr. Morrison, yes; Ms. Dion, yes; Mr. Milbrand, yes, Chair Anderson, yes. The Board voted 5-0-0, motion passed. Motion made by Ms. Dion to adjourn public meeting at 8:22 PM, seconded by Mr. Milbrand. Roll call vote taken; Ms. Avery, yes; Mr. Morrison, yes; Ms. Dion, yes; Mr. Milbrand, yes, Chair Anderson, yes. The Board voted 5-0-0, motion passed.

Respectfully submitted,

Wendy Smith