

Selectboard Minutes 3/30/2020

Members Present by Zoom: Christine Werneke, Katie Mather, Roger Brown, Bard Hill

Absent: David Sander

Others Present by Zoom: Josh Arneson, Town Manager;

Kathy Daub-Stearns, Admin. Assist.; Connie Bona, Financial Dir.;

Pete Gosselin, Highway; Larry Muldoon, Police Chief, Angelica Contis recorded the meeting for MMCTV Channel 15.

Called to Order: 7:04 PM

1. Welcome by Bard.

2. Items for Presentation or Discussion with those present

I. Additions or Deletions to Agenda

a) COVID-19 Updates

i. Municipal Operations Overview

Josh provided information on how the Governor's "stay home, stay safe" order has been implemented across municipal departments. He reported:

- that on Wednesday, March 25 department heads met via Zoom,
- that Town Offices are closed except for a few employees who are using safeguards,
- that the Police, Fire and Water departments continue to work as they usually would with attention to distancing and cleanliness,
- that Planning, Zoning and Finance are set up to work from home except for picking things up from time to time,
- that he and Connie continue to work at the office and Linda is there until noon,
- that If anyone needs something they can call ahead,
- that the vestibule is being used for drop off and pick up of items for the public,
- that the Highway department is more problematic to "stay home, stay safe" orders and that Pete has come up with a plan to keep employees working and safe this week by assigning each person jobs that are individual assignments ensuring social distancing,
- that the Library ceased doing any lending to help prevent social interactions and that books were still available online.
- that Rebecca is trying to keep staff working with projects from home but that some employees are not working. Wendy and Rebecca are the only ones going into the Library and they are on separate floors.

Board members had no questions or concerns.

ii. Discussion of employee compensation

Josh reported that:

- he had implemented the plan to pay everyone with tracking of whether someone is sick, caring for someone is sick, caring for children out of school or has no hours due to the “stay home, stay safe” order by having employees note on their timecard “COVID- sick”,
- that the Federal bill passed for unemployment and he was waiting to see how the State would implement those changes,
- that there is a possibility of using part time unemployment for employees not able to work a full schedule due to COVID.

The discussion on unemployment included:

- Roger saying his understanding is that compensation for leave and sick time taken for COVID would be paid at $\frac{3}{4}$ salary
- Connie said FMLA had been extended with reimbursement done as a credit but that now reimbursement payments may be paid on the front end we will have to see how it gets rolled out. Connie added that for unemployment there may be benefits for part time people and those with a reduction of hours.
- Bard felt that VLCT or the DOL would be giving guidance shortly.

It was decided that this should be a standing item for future meetings and that to the degree work can be found for people, within the boundaries being set, people should work.

Discussion changed with Katie asking if we are going to look at providing hazard pay for police and fire?

- Bard stated that some organizations may be able to afford to do that but wasn't certain the Town could, that we should look to VLCT for guidance.
- Larry felt that from a budget standpoint there should be funds available due to less OT being scheduled. When asked Larry wasn't aware of other organizations receiving hazard pay.
- Bard thought waiting to see any policies from VLCT or how other municipalities handle it would be best.
- Larry added that everyone's schedule has been disrupted for the month of April due to COVID.

Katie then asked if anyone had spoken with the grocery store about curbside pickups? Josh thought it was a good idea and that he would inquire adding that currently from 7am – 8am there is senior shopping.

iii. Review of postcard for residents

Josh presented a sample postcard to be mailed to residents that included information regarding COVID, a number to call at the Town Offices for information or assistance, information on how to access the COVID webpage and a reminder to stay home, stay safe, and stay healthy.

During discussion possible edits included:

- adding a line for what not to put into septic system,
- adding 211 information,

- reduce wording to make it all fit

Christine offered to work with Josh. They will have something put together for the next meeting.

iv. Discussion of board/committee/commission meetings

Josh reported that the Governor signed a bill that allows public meetings to take place without a public meeting space. Meetings have to be recorded and have a call in option. Zoom offers both and we can meet online as well.

Discussion included:

- Bard's request that Josh inform the public, committees, commissions and boards of the Open Law change and provide everyone with Zoom information.
- Christine asked if anyone had heard any concerns about not being able to access meetings? Josh responded that any phone can be used to access meetings, unless it's a rotary phone, as well as accessing a meeting online.

v. Review of warrant approval options

Josh presented the idea of issuing a warrant sheet and invoices to each board member for approval by email, then at meetings have a roll call vote, followed by an email from the chair that would be attached with the meeting minutes to show approval.

After discussion it was decided that the warrant sheet and invoices would be distributed by email to all board members on Friday, actively reviewed by one of the board members (Roger) who would provide Connie with questions by Monday morning to have answers available at that evening's board meeting. The warrant will be signed by the acting chair electronically after the board meeting. The board will vote to allow the approval and signature as described above. On Tuesday the Town Treasurer will be able to sign checks as usual.

At the next meeting there will be a full plan/ process for approval presented to the board for approval and acting chair signature.

vi. Discussion of CSWD hours in Richmond

Josh reported that CSWD has no hours in Richmond during COVID and that there is a \$10 per car flat fee being imposed at the Williston drop off site, compost is free. No other garbage can be dumped. Information was provided that the lease with CSWD provides for CSWD to be open 3 days a week and that CSWD's compliance specialist suggested working with Casella. Discussion with Casella determined that they could provide two options, Fast Trash where there would be a garbage truck at a location for a period of time to drop garbage off or dumpsters. Josh thought CSWD could be asked to pay for at least a portion of the cost.

Discussion included:

- that Town Center would have space for dumpsters since it is not staffed people could show up any time

- that if the dumpsters got full and overflowing that someone would have to pick the mess up,
- that compliancy with just household trash would likely be a problem,
- the possibility of setting up a security camera

After discussion these were the possibilities:

1. Do nothing
2. Provide dumpsters
3. Trash service as a trial
4. Town provides service

Christine asked whether we are trying to solve a problem we don't yet have? Adding that we should do nothing now but get information. All agreed to keep an eye on the situation and if it becomes an issue address it then.

vii. Update on Bridge St. infrastructure replacement project

Josh reported that the project has been postponed until 4/22/2020 due to COVID concerns. That the questions is whether the contractor believes that workers will be safe and able to follow COVID guidelines? Workers Comp becomes an issue if employees get COVID on the job. There are also concerns that there may be delays in the supply chain. If the "stay home, stay safe" date gets pushed back by the Governor then construction may have to be pushed back again. Josh added that the meeting with business owners was also pushed back to next Tuesday.

viii. Other COVID-19 related topics

Larry reported that the State Department of Public Safety has asked that Richmond Officers make sure only essential businesses are open. When asked he responded that everyone has been in compliance to date.

Josh added that out of state visitors should be in self-quarantine for 14 days due to the newest order out of Montpelier.

II. Approval of Minutes, Warrants, and Purchase Orders

Roger moved to approve the Minutes of 3-16-20, Katie seconded. All agreed.

Roger moved to approve the Minutes of 3-23-20, Katie seconded. All agreed.

Roger moved to approve PO 3873 for Jericho Rd interest in the amount of \$10,568. & interest for the 2005 Fire truck in the amount of \$1,342.50 for a total of \$11,911.10, Katie seconded. All agreed.

Roger moved to approve an increase of \$367.52 for PO 3745 to various vendors for salt for the Highway Department, Katie seconded. All agreed.

Invoices and warrants: Roger looked through them and thought they looked ok. There was a discussion surrounding an invoice to Green Lantern Solar, Connie provided information that it is a solar program that used to reduce GMP electric for 4 departments.

Adding that a month ago it was determined that for 2019 the town saved \$9000. utilizing the program.

Roger, moved to allow the acting chair to sign the warrants and approve invoices on behalf of the board, Katie second. All agreed.

III. Adjourn

Items for next meeting:

Bridge St. infrastructure project

CSWD

Warrants and invoices

Employee compensation

Petition for midwives run in Sept.

Transportation Committee

Conservation Commission regarding a swimming hole steward -the board had several questions that need to be looked into such as: Whose employee would it be? and Whose authority would that person be acting under?

Easement Dugway rd.

FEMA update

DISCUSSION CONTINUED:

Roger noted a trail has been cut out on the current Dugway Rd. easement. Pete reported residents have found another way around and that it was not the Town. Pete reported that the highway department secured the fence and that bolt cutters would be needed to cut it down now adding that the entire roadway is unsafe to be on. New signs will be posted.

Pete emphasized that we are trying to keep people away due to issues with emergency services and warning people to stay away is the prudent thing to do.

Katie moved to adjourn, Christine seconded. All agreed. The meeting adjourned at 8:50pm.