



TOWN OF THORNTON BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Town of Thornton • 16 Merrill Access Road • Thornton NH, 03285 • 603.726.8168

Approved on: 12-16-20
BOS Initial: MP
Rec'd by Town Clerk on: 12/21/2020
Town Clerk Initials: dpm

Board of Selectmen Meeting Minutes December 2, 2020

10:00 a.m. Chairwoman Peabody opened the Thornton Board of Selectmen meeting work session with the Pledge of Allegiance. This meeting was held via Zoom with the link referenced on the posted agenda.

ROLL CALL: Chairwoman Marianne Peabody, Vice-Chairman Brad Benton, Selectman Roy Sabourn, Selectman Jack Gaites and Selectman Joseph Monti.

STAFF PRESENT: Debra Shepard, Town Administrator

Manifests

MOTION: "To approve the payroll manifest dated 12/4/2020 in the amount of \$31,296.11."

Motion: J. Gaites

Seconded: R. Sabourn

Discussion: None.

Roll Call: Marianne Peabody – yes, Brad Benton – abstained, Joseph Monti – abstained, Roy Sabourn – yes, Jack Gaites – yes

Motion Passes: 3 – Yes, 0 – No Abstained: 2

MOTION: "To approve the vendor manifest dated 12/4/2020 in the amount of \$915,743.00."

Motion: J. Monti

Seconded: B. Benton

Discussion: None.

Roll Call: Marianne Peabody – abstained, Brad Benton – yes, Joseph Monti – yes, Roy Sabourn – yes, Jack Gaites – abstained

Motion Passes: 3 – Yes, 0 – No Abstained: 2

MOTION: "To approve the welfare manifest dated 12/2/2020 in the amount of \$850.00."

Motion: J. Monti

Seconded: B. Benton

Discussion: None.

Roll Call: Marianne Peabody – abstained, Brad Benton – yes, Joseph Monti – yes, Roy Sabourn – yes, Jack Gaites – abstained

Motion Passes: 3 – Yes, 0 – No Abstained: 2

MOTION: "To approve the consent agenda dated December 2, 2020 as presented."

Motion: J. Monti

Seconded: R. Sabourn

Discussion: None.

Roll Call: Marianne Peabody – yes, Brad Benton – yes, Joseph Monti – yes,
Roy Sabourn – yes, Jack Gaites - yes

Motion Passes: 5 – Yes, 0 – No Abstained: 0

The approval of the Consent Agenda for December 2, 2020 includes:

1. Capital Reserve Request - \$3,198.04 from the Property Tax Maps Capital Reserve Account for CAI Technologies Mapping Contract.
2. Notice of Intent to Cut – PID #15/4-55. Ed and Sue Danis, Logan Street.
3. Notice of Intent to Cut – PID #6/9-34, Elizabeth Soukup, Route 175.

Minutes

MOTION: "To approve the Board of Selectmen non-public meeting minutes of November 18, 2020 as presented."

Motion: B. Benton

Seconded: R. Sabourn

Discussion: None.

Roll Call: Marianne Peabody – yes, Brad Benton – yes, Joseph Monti –
abstained, Roy Sabourn – yes, Jack Gaites - yes

Motion Passes: 4 – Yes, 0 – No Abstained: 1

MOTION: "To approve the Board of Selectmen meeting minutes of November 18, 2020 as amended."

Motion: B. Benton

Seconded: R. Sabourn

Discussion: None.

Roll Call: Marianne Peabody – yes, Brad Benton – yes, Joseph Monti – yes,
Roy Sabourn – yes, Jack Gaites - abstained

Motion Passes: 4 – Yes, 0 – No Abstained: 1

Town Administrator Presents:

Tax Deeded Property Update

Ferguson Property– PID # 13/5-13

TA Shepard informed the Board that back taxes and fees have been paid in full for tax deeded property PID #13/5-13. The Board signed the deed with no covenants conveying the property back to the original owner.

MOTION: "To sign the deed with no covenants back to the property owner for PID #13/5-13."

Motion: R. Sabourn

Seconded: B. Benton

Discussion: None.

Roll Call: Marianne Peabody – yes, Brad Benton – yes, Joseph Monti – yes,
Roy Sabourn – yes, Jack Gaites - yes

Motion Passes: 5 – Yes, 0 – No Abstained: 0

TA Shepard informed the Board that no further communication has been received from the previous owner of PID #8/10-2, Smoke Rise Lane. After discussion, the Board gave permission to proceed with the eviction process with the town attorney.

MOTION: "To begin the eviction process for PID #8/10-2."

Motion: R. Sabourn

Seconded: B. Benton

Discussion: None.

Roll Call: Marianne Peabody – yes, Brad Benton – yes, Joseph Monti – yes,
Roy Sabourn – yes, Jack Gaites - yes

Motion Passes: 5 – Yes, 0 – No Abstained: 0

R. Sabourn informed the Board that he requested that ZCA # 2020-73 be removed from last week's consent agenda because he was not sure if flood plain requirements had been met. The applicant, Jerry and Lauren Warren, of PID #16/3-50 completed a ZCA for an addition to their property. After a thorough review, the ZCA is ready for approval from the Board of Selectmen.

MOTION: "To approve ZCA #2020-73 for PID #16/3-50."

Motion: R. Sabourn

Seconded: B. Benton

Discussion: None.

Roll Call: Marianne Peabody – yes, Brad Benton – yes, Joseph Monti – yes,
Roy Sabourn – yes, Jack Gaites - yes

Motion Passes: 5 – Yes, 0 – No Abstained: 0

Ken Michaud – Letter to Board of Selectmen

The Board reviewed a letter received from Ken Michaud regarding the Governor's mask order. TA Shepard discussed this letter with NHMA legal counsel and provided a response to Mr. Michaud.

Zoning Enforcement Officer Position

Chairwoman Peabody stated that she has been approached by some residents in town asking if the Board plans to consider adding a Zoning Enforcement Officer position. Chairwoman Peabody asked for discussion on adding this position.

Selectman Sabourn stated that it is not in the Board's best interest to have a Board member or current staff member continue serving in this position. He explained that the position should be filled by a professional or someone with experience in this field. He

also stated that this process should be reviewed fairly and applied to all town residents. The Board would need to create a warrant article for the new position. Discussion also included raising permit fees to offset the cost of the position. The Board discussed the difference between a Zoning Enforcement Officer and a Building Inspector position.

Selectman Sabourn believes the Board should hire a Zoning Enforcement Officer to ensure that requirements are being followed as indicated on the ZCA and to enforce the current town zoning ordinances.

Chairwoman Peabody believes that this could be a contracted or part time position.

Selectman Monti asked what problem the Board is intending to solve by adding this position. Chairwoman Peabody explained that the town zoning requirements need to be verified, including setbacks. Mr. Monti feels that a Zoning Enforcement Officer would slow down the building growth in Thornton. Chairwoman Peabody further explained that Selectman Sabourn has been volunteering his time to review ZCA's and during this time he has recognized a need for a professional employee or contractor to verify applications.

Selectman Monti agreed that junkyard properties should also be addressed through Zoning Compliance. He suggested that the warrant article be clear and transparent as to the job description and function of this position.

The Board discussed current building projects in town and fees that could be increased to offset a part time position.

Selectman Benton believes that the taxpayers should be able to vote on this position through a warrant article.

Selectman Benton and Selectman Monti feels that the zoning ordinance should be reviewed and updated by the Planning Board.

The Board agreed to have TA Shepard draft a job description and draft a 2021 warrant article for the Board to review relative to hiring a part time code enforcement officer.

Agenda Items:

11:00 CIP Committee Budget

Present: Bill DeLeo (via Zoom)

B. DeLeo met with the Board to discuss the CIP Budget:

- Beginning in 2021 the CIP will be applying a 2.5% increase for inflation to any project not set by contract. The annual funding will be increased from \$270,000 annually to \$300,000 annually.
- An addition to the CIP includes the unmarked police cruiser that is scheduled to be purchased in 2021.

- Changes to the CIP plan include adding anticipated purchases (as recommended by the Board of Selectmen) such as police cruisers. B. DeLeo added a police cruiser #2 in 2030 and delayed purchase of cruiser #3 from 2026 to 2027 in order to meet the 5-year CIP plan requirement.

The Board discussed funds that are currently allocated in the CIP for Mill Brook Road. The Board was unsure if the allocated funds were for improvements to Mill Brook Road, or if they were only to be used for engineering studies. Research of the account creation is necessary to determine the actual use of the funds.

Selectman Monti discussed adding funds to the CIP for acquiring land to be used for town purposes. Selectmen Benton agreed that this would be a good idea. Selectman Sabourn believes that this can be accomplished through a warrant article as a capital reserve account rather than in the CIP. The Board discussed the benefits of having land available for community purposes. The Board also discussed the current plan to purchase land from the State of NH alongside the town hall property and Route 3 side of the town hall.

MOTION: "To approve the CIP plan as submitted."

Motion: R. Sabourn

Seconded: J. Gaites

Discussion: None.

Roll Call: Marianne Peabody – yes, Brad Benton – yes, Joseph Monti – yes,
Roy Sabourn – yes, Jack Gaites - yes

Motion Passes: 5 – Yes, 0 – No Abstained: 0

11:30 a.m. Tax Collector/Zoning Enforcement Budget

Present: Desiree Mahurin

D. Mahurin discussed the tax collector budget. D. Mahurin proposed a step increase for the Deputy Tax Collector/Municipal Clerk and explained the merit for this request.

Selectman Monti stated that last budget season he recommended that the Board should consider step increases for all town employees at the end of the budget process rather than by department budget. TA Shepard explained that the Board will not finalize department budgets at this time and will have the opportunity after the department head's present their budget to consider salary changes. Selectman Monti asked TA Shepard to provide a spreadsheet with all salary increase requests from departments to be considered before the board approves the final budget.

D. Mahurin discussed the Municipal Agent Budget.

D. Mahurin discussed the Zoning Compliance Budget. This budget is level-funded from last year.

12:00 p.m. Town Clerk/Elections Budget

Present: Donna Monti, Town Clerk

Donna Monti presented the town clerk budget.

- The postage line has decreased to \$200 due to purchasing prepaid envelopes last year.
- Training and Mileage – D. Monti is hoping to have training workshops available in 2021
- General Supplies increased due to COVID requirements.

Donna Monti presented the Elections budget. Donna requested an increase in wages for the ballot clerks from \$8.50/hr. to \$10/hr. She also requested an increase in the stipend amount for the moderator from \$100 per event to \$125 per event and \$12 per hour for preprocessing absentee ballots.

Selectman Monti suggested compensating ballot clerks for their time when helping with setting up the night before elections. The Board agreed.

Zoning Board Budget

Chairman J. Monti presented the proposed Zoning Board budget. J. Monti suggested increasing the hours for the Zoning Board assistant to 8 hours per week. This would result in an increase in the salary line from \$2,000 to \$7,164.

J. Monti stated that the Zoning Board has already spent \$10,000 this year in legal fees. He increased the 2021 legal budget to \$10,000. J. Monti explained that the current cell tower application has contributed to the increase recommendation. He also anticipates additional cases in the coming year.

Selectman Sabourn suggested adding \$5,000 to the legal line instead of \$10,000. The Board agreed with the increase in hours for the part time zoning assistant and suggested reviewing this line again next year.

The Board took a brief break.

12:30 p.m. Fire Department Budget

Present: Chief Defosses

Chief Defosses presented the proposed Fire Department Budget. The budget has also been proposed to the Town of Campton. The Town of Campton plans to make their decision on the proposed budget Monday during the joint budget meeting with Thornton and Ellsworth.

Chief Defosses reviewed the annual call report, including 830 calls to date. He anticipates the department will have over 900 calls by the end of 2020. In 2019, the department ended the year with 830 calls. Chief Defosses reviewed the call details.

Chief Defosses discussed the mutual aid agreements between surrounding towns.

Chief proposed adding two new full-time positions. This would add an additional 3 shifts of coverage. R. Sabourn mentioned that the full-time officers should have a CDL so they can operate the equipment. Chief explained that 2 of the new employees have CDL's or are in the process of acquiring a CDL. R. Sabourn firmly believes that the current full-time officers should hold a CDL license so that they can operate the equipment. Chief stated that EMS certification will also be necessary for the new proposed positions.

The proposed budget increase for 2 additional full-time officers is about \$166,000. Discussion continued on staffing.

Selectman Monti suggested that Chief Defosses try to reduce the Fire Department budget to \$990,000.

Chief Defosses discussed possibly buying a mini pumper in the future. Selectman Sabourn stated that he would not support this request. Chief Defosses stated that the main station will always have a full-size engine and a water carrying truck. He recommended purchasing a mini pumper for Station 3, which would not require a CDL to operate.

The Board continued to discuss the proposed budget. The Board will meet with the Towns of Campton and Ellsworth on Monday for a joint budget meeting to further discuss the Fire Department budget.

1:30 p.m. Transfer Station Budget
Present: Steve Chiocca, Transfer Station Manager

S. Chiocca presented the proposed 2021 Transfer Station budget. Some budget lines have been reduced. S. Chiocca discussed some repairs and maintenance proposals for the transfer station buildings.

TA Shepard informed the board that the transfer station salary/benefit line has increased as a result of recently hired employees. The overall transfer station budget has decreased aside from the employee benefit cost.

There are no step increase requests this year. The Board reviewed the 2020 revenues for the Transfer Station, which were lower this year due to COVID 19 closures.

S. Chiocca presented the Solid Waste Disposal budget. This budget was level funded.

Chairwoman Peabody asked S. Chiocca to explain why the Transfer Station has been closing early for the past three weeks. S. Chiocca explained that the Transfer Station is receiving more business than ever before. He is proposing increasing the operational hours of the station to avoid closing early on Sundays. Establishing additional hours during the week and closing the Transfer Station on Sundays would help offset the amount of trash that is being hauled away on the weekend.

The Board discussed the current and proposed Transfer Station hours. Selectman Monti supported the change in hours. The additional hours that Zach works on Fridays

for housekeeping duties were discussed and determined that these additional hours may not be needed in the future.

The Board discussed solar lighting options to accommodate evening operational hours. The Town of Campton and Ellsworth Board of Selectmen plan to discuss this Monday evening during the joint budget meeting as well. Selectman Monti and Chairwoman Peabody supported changing hours as soon as possible. Selectman Monti recommended advertising a change of hours on December 10th in the local newspapers, with the change in hours to be implemented December 13th. Selectman Sabourn suggested waiting to implement a change in hours until January so that the Town of Campton and Ellsworth can discuss this as well.

Selectman Benton suggest giving residents a few weeks of notice before changing hours.

The Board agreed to draft an advertisement to be placed in the local newspaper on December 10th and for the following two weeks to inform new hours begin on Saturday, January 2, 2021.

MOTION: "Effective January 2, 2021, new transfer station hours (increasing the operational hours to the public from 31 hours to 34 hours) will be implemented as follows: Saturday 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., CLOSED on Sundays and Mondays, Tuesdays 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Wednesday 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Thursday 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m."

Motion: J. Monti

Seconded: J. Gaites

Discussion: None.

Roll Call: Marianne Peabody – yes, Brad Benton – yes, Joseph Monti – yes,
Roy Sabourn – yes, Jack Gaites - yes

Motion Passes: 5 – Yes, 0 – No Abstained: 0

2:30 p.m. Police Department /Emergency Management Budget

Present: Chief Miller

Selectman Monti noted an increase in the 2021 budget of \$125,000.

Chief Miller explained that most of his budget increase is due to an increase in mandatory retirement contributions and an increase in payroll expenses for the new full-time position. The overtime line was also increased. Chief Miller is also budgeting for a new Corporal position to be filled by a current officer as a promotion. The Board discussed the promotion process and staffing.

The operating and maintenance budget in the department has decreased.

Selectman Monti asked what the increased benefit to the town is with the increase in the Police Department budget. Chief Miller stated that there is more coverage in town and experienced officers.

The Board reviewed the proposed Emergency Management Budget.

Chief Miller presented the NH Department of Safety Grant for signatures.

MOTION: "To apply for the NH Department of Safety Grant in the amount of \$6,078.00 for FY2021."

Motion: J. Monti

Seconded: B. Benton

Discussion: None.

Roll Call: Marianne Peabody – yes, Brad Benton – yes, Joseph Monti – yes,
Roy Sabourn – yes

Motion Passes: 4 – Yes, 0 – No

Abstained: 0

Selectman Sabourn stated that he had changed his mind and does not support the Laser gun purchase as discussed at the previous board meeting. Selectman Sabourn did inform Chief Miller of his change of mind and that he would not support this purchase.

Chief Miller stated that the camera system for the Police Department needs replacing. He discussed a grant that could provide 35% reimbursement. A quote was received from Minuteman for \$8,844. Chief Miller is planning to request additional quotes. This cost would be in the GGB Budget Line, not the PD Budget.

MOTION: "To apply for the USDA Grant (MBR for the camera system) with an amount to be determined."

Motion: J. Monti

Seconded: B. Benton

Discussion: This grant is for extra DUI patrol.

Roll Call: Marianne Peabody – yes, Brad Benton – yes, Joseph Monti – yes,
Roy Sabourn – yes

Motion Passes: 4 – Yes, 0 – No

Abstained: 0

3:30 p.m. Planning Board Budget

TA Shepard presented the Planning Board budget on behalf of the Planning Board Director. The budget is mostly level funded. The budget proposal includes a replacement laptop for the Planning Director.

COLA Increase

MOTION: "To approve a 2% COLA increase for town employees."

Motion: R. Sabourn

Seconded: J. Gaites

Discussion: J. Monti recommended keeping the 2% COLA.

Roll Call: Marianne Peabody – yes, Brad Benton – yes, Joseph Monti – yes,
Roy Sabourn – yes, Jack Gaites – yes.

Motion Passes: 5 – Yes, 0 – No

Abstained: 0

4:30 p.m. 2021 Draft Warrant Article Review

The Board reviewed the 2021 draft warrant articles.

Selectman Sabourn received a complaint of junk vehicles at the Ham Farm property. R. Sabourn visited the area and confirmed many vehicles on the property. R. Sabourn stated that this is an ongoing issue on this property. R. Sabourn stated that the property owner did clean up some of the area previously, but now there are more vehicles on the property.

J. Monti asked if the board has the authority to give a \$275 fine for non-compliance. The board does have this authority. After discussion, the Board agreed to send the property owner a notice that the vehicles need to be removed by the end of the year to avoid a fine for non-compliance. The Board agreed to forward copies of previous non-compliance letters for this property along with the letter.

Non-Public Session pursuant to RSA 91-A:3, II (a)(c)

4:21 p.m. MOTION: "To enter into non-public session under RSA 91-A:3, II (a-personnel and c-reputation)."

Motion: J. Monti

Seconded: B. Benton

Discussion: None

Roll Call: Marianne Peabody – yes, Brad Benton – yes, Roy Sabourn – yes,
Joe Monti – yes, Jack Gaites - yes.

Motion Passes: 5 – Yes, 0 – No Abstained: 0

4:43 p.m. MOTION: "To exit non-public session."

Motion: R. Sabourn

Seconded: J. Gaites

Discussion: None

Roll Call: Marianne Peabody – yes, Brad Benton – yes, Roy Sabourn – yes,
Joe Monti – yes, Jack Gaites - yes.

Motion Passes: 5– Yes, 0 – No Abstained: 0

4:43 p.m. MOTION: "To adjourn."

Motion: R. Sabourn

Seconded: J. Gaites

Discussion: None.

Roll Call: Marianne Peabody – yes, Brad Benton – yes, Joseph Monti – yes,
Jack Gaites – yes, Roy Sabourn – yes.

Motion Passes: 5 – Yes, 0 – No

Respectfully submitted,

Jessi Fleury
Board Secretary