



TOWN OF THORNTON BOARD OF SELECTMEN

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

Approved on: 30 Dec 20
BOS Initial: gmm
Rec'd by Town Clerk on: 1/4/2021
Town Clerk Initials: djm

Board of Selectmen Meeting Minutes December 16, 2020

1:01 p.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 (via telephone conference call), Selectman Jack Gaites and Selectman Joseph Monti.

STAFF PRESENT: Debra Shepard, Town Administrator

Minutes

MOTION: "To approve the Board of Selectmen non-public meeting minutes of December 2, 2020 as presented."

Motion: B. Benton

Seconded: J. Gaites

Discussion: None.

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

Motion Passes: 3– Yes, 0 – No Abstained: 1

MOTION: "To approve the Board of Selectmen meeting minutes of December 2, 2020 as amended."

Motion: B. Benton

Seconded: J. Monti

Discussion: None.

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

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

Town Administrator Presents:

Tax Deeded Property Update

TA Shepard informed the Board that payment in full has been received from the previous owner of PID #8/10-2, Smoke Rise Lane. A deed was provided for Selectmen approval.

MOTION: "To sign the deed with no covenants back to the property owner of PID #8/10-2."

Motion: J. Monti

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

Donation

TA Shepard informed the Board that Mary MacCloud passed away. Mr. MacCloud was the town moderator, and both had participated in town functions.

MOTION: "To donate \$100 in the memory of Mary MacCloud to the charity as noted in her obituary.."

Motion: J. Monti

Seconded: B. Benton

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 Abstained: 0

Resident Request

John Gabbeitt submitted a request to the Board asking the board to waive the one-year check suspension policy relative to an online payment he made which was later rejected by the bank due to the account number being entered incorrectly. TA Shepard explained that this was not an insufficient funds check, it was an entry error and therefore, per the BOS policy relative to returned checks, the board could waive the one year no check restriction. **MOTION: "To grant the request of Mr. Gabbeitt and waive the one-year check writing suspension policy."**

Motion: B. Benton

Seconded: J. Monti

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

2009 Warrant Article – Millbrook

Selectman Sabourn researched a warrant article pertaining to Millbrook Road as requested at the previous Board meeting. After researching, he found that the trust fund was established for construction and repairs for Millbrook Road.

USDA Grant

Chief Miller requested permission to apply for the 2021 USDA grant. The grant is for additional patrol.

MOTION: "To allow Chief Miller to apply for the 2021 USDA Grant."

Motion: B. Benton

Seconded: J. Gaite

Discussion: None.

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

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

Letter for Hamm Property

TA Shepard provided a draft letter for the Board's review relative to the Hamm property relative to the consistent junk yard status of his property per the Board's request at their previous meeting. The Board reviewed and signed the letter.

Events Committee

Chairwoman Peabody praised the Events Committee for their decorations this year and for the "Light Up Thornton" event.

Town Administrator Contract

Chairwoman Peabody stated that the Board did not motion to approve the Town Administrator 3-year contract after their non-public session on December 2, 2020.

MOTION: "To approve a 3-year contract for the Town Administrator."

Motion: B. Benton

Seconded: J. Gaite

Discussion: None.

Roll Call: Marianne Peabody – yes, Brad Benton – yes, Joseph Monti – no,
Jack Gaite – yes, Roy Sabourn – yes.

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

Peter Laufenberg – Transfer Station Advisory Committee

Present: Peter Laufenberg and Steve Chiocca

P. Laufenberg met with the Board to discuss the functions of the Transfer Station Advisory Committee. He explained that the Board's decision to change the Transfer Station hours at their last meeting, gave the impression that the Committee is not valued by the Selectboard.

Chairwoman Peabody stated that the Board of Selectmen never had any intentions of working against the Advisory Committee. She feels there is great value in this committee. Chairwoman Peabody stated that the Selectboard has not been informed as to the work being conducted by the committee and was unsure if the committee was meeting on a regular basis.

Mr. Laufenberg stated that he was under the impression that the Board member serving on the Advisory Committee would be updating the Selectboard as to their meetings. He also reminded the Board that the committee submits their minutes to town hall for review. Chairwoman Peabody suggested that the chairman of the Advisory Committee meet with the Selectboard on a regular basis to provide an update as to their recommendations. Mr.

Laufenberg agreed that he could meet with the Board of Selectmen monthly to provide an update.

Steve Chiocca stated that the change in hours was discussed with the advisory committee prior to his discussion held with the Board of Selectmen.

Selectman Monti stated that just because there is a Selectman on the committee does not mean that the information is being relayed. Selectman Monti discussed the minutes of the Advisory Committee being vague as to the discussion of the change in hours. He also had recommended to the Selectboard that the committee be aware of the change of hours prior to the public notice.

Mr. Laufenberg agreed that there was discussion regarding the hours during the Advisory Committee, but no conclusion was made. Discussion continued on the purpose of the Advisory Committee.

The Board of Selectmen value the committee and the work they are completing on behalf of the transfer station and the town.

Discussion continued on the functions of the Advisory Committee. The Board does not expect the committee to oversee the day-to-day operations. The committee should be discussing the flow of the transfer station and the needs of the station. The Board of Selectmen appreciates the work of the Advisory Committee and looks forward to monthly updates.

Agenda Items:

1:30 COVID 19 Discussion

The Board received a memo from the Health Department regarding the current COVID 19 pandemic. TA Shepard stated that the Board had previously adopted a no travel order for town employees outside of the State of NH back in March and she asked the Board to consider reinstituting that order. Selectman Monti stated that the Governor's order requires that if a person travels outside of New England they need to quarantine for 10 days. He stated that he feels that is sufficient.

TA Shepard stated that since the infection rates in the New England states have continued to rise and several employees have expressed concern to her, she would like the board to implement the travel restrictions outside of NH not New England.

The Board discussed the request. Selectman Monti is not in favor of putting any further restrictions on employees regarding travel outside of NH. Selectman Gaites and Selectman Benton agreed that the rules set forth by the Governor are sufficient. Selectman Sabourn and Chairman Peabody do not agree and feel restricting travel outside of NH is reasonable due to the increase in COVID cases.

MOTION: "To support the health officer recommendation to implement the quarantine requirements if an employee or committee/board member travels outside of NH."

Motion: R. Sabourn

Seconded: None.

Discussion: None.

Roll Call: None.

Motion Failed.

2:00 Welfare Budget

Marianne Peabody discussed the proposed 2021 welfare budget. This budget has been reduced. Selectman Monti discussed concern with the increase in unemployed residents. Ms. Peabody stated that there has been a decline in need for many years and did not reduce the budget based on figures from this year only.

2:15 Health Budget

Marianne Peabody discussed the increase in activity due to COVID. This budget is level funded beside the 2% COLA. Selectman Monti suggested an increase in pay for the Health Director due to the expected amount of work for this position to \$2,500 per year. Marianne Peabody explained that she has been in this position since 1982 and is not seeking an increase in pay.

Average Stumpage Value List

MOTION: "To accept the medium range for the average stumpage value for Timber Taxes."

Motion: R. Sabourn

Seconded: J. Monti

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

Timber tax Warrant

MOTION: "To approve a timber tax warrant in the amount of \$1,911.80 for PID 16/7-65, owner James and Marleen Uhlman."

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

Town Report Dedication

The Board discussed and approved a Town Report dedication.

MOTION: "To dedicate the 2020 Annual Town Report to Fred Gunter for his years of service to the Planning Board."

Motion: R. Sabourn

Seconded: B. Benton

Discussion: The Board discussed presenting the town report to Mr. Gunter. The Board agreed to send a letter to Mr. Gunter informing him of the dedication. A town report will also be mailed to Mr. Gunter.

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 Library Budget

Nina Sargent met with the Board to discuss the proposed 2021 Library Budget. The Board did not make any recommendations for change.

3:00 Events Committee Budget

TA Shepard informed the Board that the Events Committee has requested to level fund their budget.

3:15 Beautification Committee Budget

The Board reviewed and discussed the 2021 proposed budget for the Beautification Committee. The budget request was to level fund.

Manifests

MOTION: "To approve the payroll manifest dated 12/18/2020 in the amount of \$31,129.71."

Motion: B. Benton

Seconded: J. Gaites

Discussion: None.

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

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

MOTION: "To approve the vendor manifest dated 12/18/2020 in the amount of \$439,875.69."

Motion: J. Gaites

Seconded: B. Benton

Discussion: None.

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

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

MOTION: "To approve the IRS vendor manifest dated 12/18/2020 in the amount of \$7,876.70."

Motion: J. Gaites

Seconded: B. Benton

Discussion: None.

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

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

Town Accounts/Town Administrator Budget

TA Shepard presented the 2021 proposed Town Accounts/Town Administrator Budget. Discussion was held:

- *Account 41302* – Wages for TA, Benefits, etc. TA Shepard is requesting a step increase with COLA.
- *Account 41309* – Wages for Full Time Staff - Administrative Assistant/Municipal Agent, Finance Assistant/Assessing Assistant and Board Secretary. TA Shepard is requesting a step increase for the Administrative Assistant/Tax Collector/Municipal Agent and a 2% COLA for all employees.
- Finance Assistant/Assessing Assistant is behind others in the office in salary. TA Shepard would like to increase the labor grade from 8 to 10 in consideration of the level of work responsibility this position is responsible for. Selectman Monti stated that this is a 20% salary increase. Chairwoman Peabody agreed with this recommendation. Selectman Monti asked about the Board Secretary which does not appear to have a 2% COLA increase TA Shepard explained that the 2% COLA for the Board Secretary is actually included in the budget, the increase did not change the budget amount due to the part time hours worked.
- Selectman Monti stated that the only person in the office not getting a raise in salary is the Town Clerk. TA Shepard stated that the Town Clerk's wages include the 2% COLA increase.

The Board continued to review the accounts.

3:30 Conservation Commission Budget

Myrtle Lewis, Conservation Chairman, met with the Board to discuss the proposed 2021 Conservation Commission Budget. The Commission would like to begin a new project to protect the Pemi River. M. Lewis explained this project. The Commission would like to purchase name tags and polo shirts to represent the Town when they are in the field.

Selectman Monti recommended that the Commission members use the town vehicle signs when they are in the field. He also suggested asking the Administrative Assistant to create business cards consistent with the town office personnel.

The Board continued to review the 2021 proposed Town Accounts/Town Administrator Budget.

The Board discussed looking into funds or grants available to replace the existing lights in the town hall with LED.

Health Agency Requests - Selectman Monti requested more information from Speare Hospital to determine how they assist Thornton residents.

The Transport Central request is based on the number of rides provided to elderly residents. The ride request was lower this year due to COVID which explains why the request amount was lower for 2021. The Board agreed to fund this line at \$300.

5:00 Vacation Time Discussion

TA Shepard stated that a few employees were not able to use their vacation time due to COVID restrictions this year and a lack of staffing. TA Shepard provided three options for the Board to consider so that the employees do not lose their vacation time.

The Board considered the options for vacation time earned in excess of what can be carried forward to 2021.

One option the Board discussed was paying the employees for their earned vacation time that is in excess of the amount that can be carried forward to next year. This would be a one-time exception and would cost approximately \$6,500.

Selectman Monti suggested the additional vacation time could be carried forward to 2021 rather than paying it out. Employees would need to use this additional vacation time in 2021. He is concerned that paying for this time could set a precedence. TA Shepard cautioned that this could be burdensome for the departments for coverage if some employees have large amounts of time which must be used in 2021.

Selectman Sabourn would like employees to be paid out for vacation time they would otherwise lose and feels it is appropriate after the year we have had in 2020. This would be a one time exception and would not set a precedence in his opinion.

Selectman Monti stated that he does not agree. He stated that two employees used over 200 hours in comp time and argued that vacation time could have been taken during 2020.

Selectman Sabourn explained that comp time is not vacation time, and comp time is compensation for hours already work. TA Shepard further clarified that comp time is accrued after the hours are worked and comp time is generally used first. Discussion followed.

MOTION: "To pay the town employees for their earned vacation time that is in excess of the amount that can be carried forward to next year. This would be a one-time exception due to the pandemic."

Motion: B. Benton

Seconded: J. Gaite

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

Discussion followed regarding a petition received relative to Fondue Avenue. The BOS will respond in writing to Mrs. Dubach. TA Shepard will prepare a draft letter and forward to the BOS for review.

4:56 p.m. MOTION: “To adjourn.”

Motion: J. Monti

Seconded: B. Benton

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