

SELECT BOARD MEETING MINUTES

March 22, 2021

PRESENT: Cindy Silver, Select Board Chair, Kevin Meehan and Norm Brown, Select Board members comprising a quorum of the board.

ALSO PRESENT: Kathi Marshall, Assistant to the Select Board, Terri Larcomb, Joe Marshall, Jason Call, Cheryl Marshall, Alan & Debbie Balog, Paul Hayes, and Gregor Stocks

Board Chair Cindy Silver called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. The following letter was read:

As Chair of the Jefferson, New Hampshire Select Board I find that due to the state of emergency declared by the governor as the result of the COVID-19 pandemic and in accordance with the governor's emergency order #12 pursuant to executive order 2020-04 this public body is authorized to meet electronically. Please note there is no physical location to observe and listen contemporaneously to this meeting which was authorized pursuant to the governor's emergency order. However, in accordance with the emergency order I am confirming that we are:

- A. Providing public access to the meeting by telephone and by Zoom conference, so all members of the Town of Jefferson Select Board have the ability to communicate contemporaneously during this meeting through this platform. And the public has access to listen and, if necessary, to participate in this meeting by going to the Town of Jefferson website at www.jeffersonnh.org and clicking on the Zoom Meeting link. The meeting number is 752 621 9315 and the Passcode is 0rAf0p.
- B. Providing public notice of necessary information for accessing the meeting. We previously gave notice to the public of the necessary information for accessing the meeting. Instructions have also been provided through the Town of Jefferson's website www.jeffersonnh.org
- C. Providing a mechanism for the public to alert the public body during the meeting if there is a problem with access. If anybody has a problem accessing the meeting, please call 603.586-4553 or e-mail townofjefferson@myfairpoint.net
- D. *In the event the public is unable to access the meeting they will be adjourned and rescheduled.*

Please note that all votes that are taken during this meeting will be done by a roll call vote, so let's begin the meeting by taking roll call attendance: Cindy Silver, Chair "present." Select Board Member Kevin Meehan, "present." Select Board Member Norman Brown, "present." Assistant to the Select Board, Kathi Marshall, "present." Norm was alone in a remote location, Kevin was in a location with his father, Michael Meehan, and Cindy and Kathi were at the Jefferson Community Center.

ACCOUNTS PAYABLE/PAYROLL

Norm made a motion to approve Accounts Payable and Payroll items for the week ending March 20, 2021 and to authorize Kathi to pay invoices and payroll. Kevin seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken with Norm voting "aye," Kevin voting "aye," and Cindy voting "aye." The motion passed.

PUBLIC INPUT

Broadband Committee Work: Gregor Stocks asked about an update on the Broadband Committee and its work. Cindy explained that Julia Gilmore was not able to make that evening's meeting and would be on the agenda the following week. Joe Marshall was present, and he stated that he and Julia met with three state senators via Zoom

and they had a dialog about how towns can move forward toward obtaining broadband service. They mentioned the town of Bristol and what they have gone through to get reliable internet access. Joe said there is a lot to be learned from them, as they are now approaching the end of this process.

The senators also have two bills in process, #5 and #88. One of them is for funding broadband on a community basis. The second bill deals partially with speeding up the process of actual connectivity and construction work. Utility companies will not absorb those costs on their own, and funding for this project will be crucial.

Kathi said she did receive templates from Julia for the FRIs, and will fill them out for the board to sign. Joe did say they have to be submitted to qualify for funding.

Terri asked if the object was to provide broadband service to the entire town, and Joe said it was—the object is to get fiber to every door. But he also said Jefferson may end up being some kind of hybrid since many residents live quite a distance from one another.

Town Website Update: Veronica Francis, owner of Notchnet in Littleton, came to give a proposal on updating the town's website. Veronica began hosting a website for the town in 2012 and updated the website in 2017.

She said today they can offer the town many options. They now use a program called Word Press which is a user friendly design platform that will allow many more pages for news, photos and announcements. Veronica showed the board a couple of other town websites to demonstrate the diversity and ease of operation in navigating the website topics. She displayed Lisbon, Carroll and Ashland websites as examples.

If the town wants to have “online payments” such as dog licenses, registrations, property taxes, etc. it would require a third party, and Notchnet would supply the link in order for the town to set up those services. Cindy asked if that aspect could be added at a later time, and Veronica said it could be added at any time.

Norm asked if individual boards might be able to have a discussion page so people could send in a question or comment that could be posted. Veronica said if you allow “discussion,” which you can, you are inviting spammers to fill up your site with often unsavory material. She said it is very difficult to sort them out from legitimate responses, and the site would need to be closely monitored. She said it might be wise to just have a comment column that gets e-mailed to the office so it can be read by someone before it gets posted.

Norm also asked how many hours it would take to manage a website on a weekly basis. Veronica said they are usually spending several hours a day to maintain a website. The minimum would be about five hours a week. He also asked about putting an employment application on the website so people could download it and not have to come into the office to get it. Veronica said that was possible.

Veronica asked if the town had ever considered a “.gov” domain and whether or not they needed information on that. Kathi mentioned she had a great contact for “.gov” information that was obtained from the town's insurance company. Veronica said it comes with much better protection for your e-mails and website, and she suggested they look into that.

Kevin asked if the website would be mobile-friendly. Veronica said it will be, and it should be responsive to shrinking down to phone size without distortion.

Cindy asked if there was room for more forms and information people could print out. Veronica said the town could add as many as they want to the site. Cindy also asked about a possible newsletter that could go out to the town's residents. Veronica said yes, people opt to subscribe and then will receive a copy of every public notice

and the announcement will be posted under “public notices” on the website as well. It requires an e-mail management program which is an added expense. It would probably be around \$200 annually to set up the program.

Cindy said the board members will discuss the issue of updating the website and would get back to Veronica.

Historical Society/Community Building Access: Joe Marshall asked about setting up a lease agreement before the Historical Society moves into the Community Center. He also suggested new locks for the adjoining doors in his area since there will be electronics and other items that should be protected. He recognized that work needs to be done in that area and said they would not go crazy bringing in a lot of items, but really needed a work space first—for meetings and data-entry work.

Norm asked Joe if he had a target date for getting into the building. Joe said he would like to believe June 1 was a possibility to have a lease in place and new locks on the doors. Norm suggested the possibility of having a numerical key pad as opposed to a key in order to secure his area. Joe said that might work better—it was a good idea for discussion. Norm said technology has come a long way and it might be economical as well.

MEETING MINUTES 3.15.21

Kevin made a motion to approve the meeting minutes from March 15, 2021 as recorded. Norm seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken with Kevin voting “aye,” Norm voting “aye,” and Cindy voting “aye.” The motion carried.

NON-PUBLIC RSA 91-A:3 (If needed)

REPORTS OF DEPARTMENTS AND BOARDS

Board members accepted the Highway and Business Office reports as submitted.

NEW BUSINESS

New Committee for the JCC: Norm said now that the two offices are nearly up and running, we need to look at moving forward with opening the rest of the Jefferson Community Center. He said there are many areas that will need work including flooring, ventilation, painting, etc. He suggested composing notices and posting them on the website, at the transfer station, the post office, and the Old Corner Store seeking people with particular skills in different areas. If they were interested in volunteering they could submit a letter of interest. Once we know how many people are interested, we can begin to form committees to work on certain projects. Norm said he would develop the notice and send it to the board for review.

Department of Transportation Presentation: Kathi said the DOT wants to replace the bridge that goes over Priscilla Brook right near Route 115/Route 2 intersection. There is also a culvert nearby that needs replacing. DOT would like to make a presentation about this project to abutters and to the Select Board. They will be on the agenda for the board meeting on April 19, 2021. DOT is aware the board will be meeting live at that time and are asking to be able to make their presentation via Zoom on that night.

Norm said even though the board will be meeting face-to-face, he would like the ability for the public to listen to the meeting if they want to—whether it’s Zoom or some sort of mike and speaker. He said it was fine to allow DOT to make their presentation via Zoom. Kevin and Cindy both agreed. Kathi said she will contact DOT and let them know.

Solar Farm on Town Land: Kathi received a letter from New Hampshire Solar Choices inquiring as to whether or not the Town of Jefferson would be interested in a possible solar farm on unused town property.

Norm said he personally is not in favor of tying up town land for something like that. He said if the public had an interest in it, and there was a public discussion, he would listen though.

Kevin mentioned we have a serious problem with our power grid and any large scale power generated might tax that system. He also mentioned it was a very expensive proposition to make it possible, and while it has been discussed in the past, it has been on hold for a while.

Trustee Allowance: Each year the Library Trustees receive an allowance for expenses, usually \$5,000 to begin. Liz Milligan asked if they could receive their allowance prior to the town meeting which will not be held until June.

Kevin and Norm both approved the request, and Norm added it might be an issue for the board to discuss with the auditor at a later date since the process seemed a little complicated. That amount is approved at town meeting each year, and he felt once its approved they should be able to receive their allowance without needing approval from the board.

Norm made a motion to approve the request for the \$5,000 allowance to go to the Trustees of the Library. Kevin seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken with Kevin voting “aye,” Norm voting “aye,” and Cindy voting “aye.” The motion passed.

Update on Fire Site Clean-Up: Norm said GEM Environmental has the results of the testing. Lead paint was not an issue. There were some 8x8 floor tiles that contained asbestos. They ran 8- to 10-feet wide for the entire width of the building. The permit for removal of the asbestos is being submitted to the state today. It will be about \$350. We cannot remove anything from the site until the asbestos is removed first, and that must be done by a specialist. The remainder will go to Mt. Carberry, and we can select a local hauler to do the job. GEM originally bid \$3,100, and they came in at \$2,900.

Mark is going to remove the debris over the tiles so they can be easily accessed. He will do that within the next few days. The permit may take 7-10 days.

Advertisement for Cleaning/Maintenance: Norm said the job description that was sent to Kevin and Cindy should be tweaked a little, and once they were okay with it the notice should be posted in all the public places where we usually post public notices. Hopefully that can be done by next week. It should be put on the following week’s agenda so the wording can be fine-tuned by the board, and they can set the wage scale. The ad should then be posted publicly in town and in the Democrat for a period of two weeks.

Turnpike Road Letter: Kathi sent the letter to board members for approval. Norm suggested that whenever we send a letter referring to RSAs that a copy of the RSA should be included with the correspondence so the recipient knows exactly what the town is referring to. He also said a letter such as this, inquiring about the intended use of property, should be signed by all the board members.

Town Report: Kathi spoke with the printer for a time line on when the Town Report books would be ready. She has one more article to submit to them and was told if the work was in to them this week they believed the town could move its meeting date up to the last week of April, possibly the third week of April.

Norm said it would be good to wait until we have a definitive date for the completion of the books. Then we can set a meeting date. If social distancing changes—there is talk it could go to three feet instead of the current six—we can have the town meeting in the Community Center building. If social distancing is still six feet, it may have to be held in the High School gymnasium.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Intent to Excavate: Jeanne Oleson submitted an Intent to Excavate, and Kathi presented it for approval. Kevin asked the amount, and it was for 7,000 cubic yards. Norm made a motion to approve the application. Kevin

seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken with Kevin voting “aye,” Norm voting “aye,” and Cindy voting “aye.” The motion passed.

PUBLIC INPUT

Jason Call mentioned that planning is beginning for the Athletic Association, and they would like to have fireworks this year. Norm said it was time to get back on track, and the town should have fireworks. Kevin agreed, but thought it would be good to run it by Chris. Cindy felt the town needed a celebration and a return to a little bit of normalcy. Jason said he would contact Chris about the fireworks and also ask him if he planned on holding the Firemen’s Breakfast this year.

Norm asked Jason if he had submitted a list of items that the Athletic Association lost in the fire so Norm could send it in for reimbursement from the insurance company. Cindy said she would forward that list to Norm.

Cindy mentioned newcomers may not know the town has an Athletic Association. She is currently President and Jason is Treasurer, but both Cindy and Jason will be stepping down, so there will be positions available within the Association. Terri suggested it be posted on the website.

Jason asked if there would be any problem with the Trustees meeting at the Community Center in the weeks to come, and board members had no issue with that.

Jason commented on the signs at the playground behind the Community Center building that indicate the playground is closed. He asked when those would be removed. He said it seems so unfriendly. He did admit the playground needs some work. The briars have come up through the ground, and the surface is uneven. He proposed the Boy Scouts might help in cleaning it up since they often look for community projects. Cindy thought that was a great idea.

Norm said he had no problem with removing the signs, but cautioned it should not be open if there are safety concerns. He said some of the equipment is not safe to use, and we might have to mark it. Cindy asked who would be the appropriate person to assess the condition of the equipment. Norm suggested Chris look at it, and assess the safety issues.

Jason said he would speak with Kim Perry about the scouts getting involved. Terri expressed concern about the thistles that have grown up, and Jason agreed it was pretty bad. He thought the ground might have to be rototilled. Kevin said once the ground is treated and worked on, it might be a good idea to put down a layer of bark or stone or whatever is currently being used there as ground cover.

ADJOURNMENT

Norm made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Kevin seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken with Kevin voting “aye,” Norm voting “aye,” and Cindy voting “aye.” The motion passed and the meeting was adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

The next meeting of the Select Board will be Monday, March 29, 2021.

Respectfully submitted,