

MINUTES
SELECT BOARD
TOWN OF PETERBOROUGH
Tuesday, April 21st, 2020 – 5:00 PM
1 Grove Street, Peterborough, New Hampshire

Present: Tyler Ward, Karen Hatcher, Bill Taylor

Also Present: Rodney Bartlett, Nicole MacStay, Chief Ed Walker, Alison Kreutz

Chair Ward opened the meeting, conducted via Zoom web conference, at 5:00 PM. The meeting was broadcast live on USTREAM, Facebook Live, and Channel 22 (Comcast).

Chief Ed Walker – COVID-19 Update

The Town continues to provide all its essential services to residents. Chief Walker encouraged everyone to review the Weekly Dispatch, which is published on Tuesdays to the town website and social media, and is also emailed to everyone on the Select Board email list, which anyone is welcome to sign up for.

The Roadside Clean-Up is this weekend (bags for the clean-up are available at the Recycling Center).

Healthcare

The Town continues to meet weekly with local healthcare facilities. Town EMS providers are being trained by MCH to administer testing, so they are prepared in case they need to assist in those efforts.

Ambulance traffic is returning to normal. The Chief emphasized that if someone is having a life-threatening emergency, they should not hesitate to call 9-1-1.

School District & Community Service Organizations

Virtual learning will continue through the end of the school year. ConVal, End 68 Hours of Hunger and the Food Pantry are working to make sure families in need are still receiving food donations. There are multiple drop-off locations for donations, including the Fire Station, Masiello Real Estate, and the Birchwood Inn in Temple. People who would like to donate are encouraged to look online to see what donations are most needed.

Retirement Communities

Regular check-ins with retirement communities continue.

Businesses

Business portal was created for businesses to input vital information. Our GIS system being used to convert that information to a live, interactive map, which will be similar to the Parcel Viewer, for any folks who are familiar with that.

Chief Walker said that last week/this week are projected to be the 'peak' weeks, regarding COVID-19 infection. There have been many recommendations regarding masks, and many more people have been wearing them. On the state's DHHS website there are guidelines about face coverings and when to wear them. Examples of when to wear face coverings include trips to the grocery store, pharmacy, doctor, or hospital, or places where you cannot ensure that the 6-foot social distance can be maintained. You don't need to wear a face covering when at home (if no one at home is symptomatic of illness) or when walking/exercising in an area that does not have a lot of people, though it would be a good idea to bring a mask with you in case you met someone in your travels and wanted to chat with them.

Those who should not wear masks include children under two, people who are having trouble breathing, or anyone who is unable to take a mask off without assistance.

There have been a few infections in town, but “nothing super serious.”

Ms. Hatcher asked if MCH has any patients with COVID-19 in the hospital. Chief Walker said, at least as of last week, they did not.

Chair Ward said he thought the GIS business mapping was a great idea. Chief Walker said it will benefit the town and local businesses going forward, as well.

Ms. Hatcher added Keene’s business community has a site called ‘Keene Strong’ which is also using mapping.

Chair Ward noted people are “sustaining their giving” through all of this, which is “inspiring.”

Ms. Hatcher said residents who are struggling financially are encouraged call the Town office and make an appointment with the Welfare administrator.

Ms. MacStay, who functions as the welfare administrator, said when people need help meeting their basic needs (shelter, food, and utilities), they can come to the town to seek help. There may be people in the community who are not coming in for assistance because of the moratorium on evictions, but it would be better for all involved if they would seek help before that hold on evictions is lifted. Affordable housing in the area is very limited, as is shelter space, so it’s very difficult to find new accommodations for people who have lost their housing: “If you have needs now, reach out.” She added that, during welfare appointments, we are doing our best to be mindful of people’s health and safety.

Chair Ward said that was important information to get our there.

Rodney Bartlett – Update from Town Administration

Main Street Bridge

Mr. Bartlett said the traffic signals are in place and on flash-mode. Goal is to have striping done by Friday and the signals fully operational on the 27th. The Main Street Bridge will be closed to traffic on the 27th if all goes to plan. The sidewalk will remain open for pedestrians as they construct the free-standing pedestrian bridge which will extend from the Library over to the Centertown parking lot.

At the end of April and May there will be a “fair amount” of construction on Main Street, including work on storm water drainage. The schedule from Beck & Bellucci does not call for the Bridge reopening until November of 2021.

Library Project

The contract with Harvey Construction has been signed. Harvey is currently shopping out their subcontractor contracts and pricing, and should have an update in pricing to us next week. The aim is for ground breaking by June 1st, and project completion by August 2021. Contract has guaranteed maximum price of \$6.4 million, and we have almost \$6.5 million in the bank. The 1833 Society is continuing to fundraise.

Bus Shelter

The award for the bus shelter at the Riverwalk Parking Lot, which has been partially funded by DOT grant, has been given to Project Resources. There is a 6-week lead-time for the timber shelter structure. The project should be completed before the end of June.

Bonding Applications

The details of the applications for the NH Municipal Bond Bank have been approved but we still need to finalize length of terms. Finance Director Leo Smith has analyzed 15 and 20-year bonds, and the 15-year bonds save interest. When we look at anticipatory interest rates, it’s very close to what we have budgeted. Mr. Bartlett requested the board to authorize to sign applications and allow him and Mr. Smith to make the final determination on bond lengths, pending more data from the Bond Bank.

Ms. Hatcher asked what the bond amounts were. Mr. Bartlett answered that the bond for Library is \$3 million (as authorized at Town Meeting) and the bond for the Main Street Bridge is \$1.6 million, as 80% of the project is funded by federal highway funds.

Motion: Ms. Hatcher made a motion to authorize Mr. Bartlett to sign the New Hampshire Municipal Bond Bank applications for the Library & Main Street Bridge projects.

Vote: Mr. Taylor seconded. All in favor. Motion passed.

Town Planner and Economic and Community Development Coordinator Update

Mr. Bartlett shared that OCD director Pete Throop's final day will be May 31st. Administration started the process to find a replacement after Mr. Throop gave his notice in December. In January of 2020 the position was advertised in several places, including the American Planning Association's website, and there were only 8 applicants, and none of those had a "sufficiently broad background" to take on the role as it was then defined. It was decided to find full-time Town Planner, "a very technical position" and take care of that first. The job was re-advertised and we have selected an applicant to fill the position of Town Planner.

With the COVID-19 pandemic in March, it was recognized that there was a need for someone to help us better position ourselves when we "reopen for business"; someone who could focus of working with all the Town businesses and associated agencies. We started to look for a Community Economic Development Coordinator, and initially reached out to those who had applied for the OCD Director position, but none of the applicants were interested in a part-time position that focused primarily on community development.

Danica Melone, presently working as a Planning Administrator for the North Country Counsel, has accepted the position of Town Planner and will be starting in late May. She is very excited about the opportunity.

Karen Hatcher has been selected to fill the position of Economic and Community Development Coordinator. With Ms. Hatcher's background and knowledge about Peterborough and the challenges we're facing, she was a good fit.

Ms. MacStay said a press release is on the website and will be sent to the papers. The Office of Community Development will be reorganized into the Planning and Building Department, which Ms. Melone will oversee. Ms. Hatcher will be working in her new role as member of administration starting May 4th.

Chair Ward said he was very impressed with Ms. Melone's scope of knowledge and looked forward to working with her on Planning Board matters. He said he also again wanted to extend his thanks to Pete Throop, who brought a "sense of depth" to the position: "He did a great job...and will be sorely missed."

Ms. Hatcher added that she worked with Mr. Throop on the EDA, Housing Task Force and Hub & Spoke, and his efforts provided support for the community. She said was grateful for his leadership and "is happy to be taking up the mantle."

Mr. Taylor said he would miss Pete, too.

Via Facebook, Bob Bolt asked if Ms. Hatcher would need to resign her position as Select woman. Ms. MacStay explained that a select board member is legally allowed to have a part-time position with the town concurrent with service as a select board member.

Chair Ward said, with Ms. Hatcher's experience and passion for Peterborough, it seemed natural that she "should grab the reigns on this."

Ms. Hatcher said she was honored to fill the role and support our community, which is "reeling" from the effects of COVID-19.

Chair Ward said, "Welcome aboard again!"

Via Facebook, Susan Arscott commented that some federal funds awarded to the town correspond with our census response. Chair Ward said completing the Census could ultimately help the town of Peterborough and reminded those who haven't done it to do so. Ms. MacStay said every household should have received a mailing (including a code for online entry) from the Census by now, and the process is very quick and easy.

Via Facebook, Kate Coon added that you can fill in the Census online without a code, in the event the paper mailing was not received.

Review and Approval of Minutes from March 16th and March 19th, 2020

Ms. Hatcher asked who was taking the minutes during the virtual meetings, and Ms. MacStay said Ali Kreutz was watching the meeting and taking minutes live.

Motion: Ms. Hatcher made a motion to approve the Minutes of March 16th and March 19th, 2020

Vote: Mr. Taylor seconded. All in favor. Motion carried.

Ms. Hatcher recognized the important work of the community's non-profit organizations, including those who are not the front lines, like those assisting those people struggling with addiction, mental health issues, and domestic violence, and she encouraged people to support them.

Ms. Hatcher made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 5:33 PM. Mr. Taylor seconded. All in favor. Motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted,
Alison Kreutz, Department Assistant

PETERBOROUGH
SELECT BOARD:

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ACTION ITEM PENDING LIST

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