

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING MINUTES
TOWN OF EPPING, NEW HAMPSHIRE
July 27, 2020**



**MEETING OF THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN
VIA ZOOM FOR BUSINESS
MEETING ID # 829 8808 2605
PASSWORD 146890**

ATTENDANCE

Chairman Adam Munguia; Selectmen Bob Jordan, Mike Yergeau, Cody Belanger and Joe Trombley. Town Administrator Gregory C. Dodge. Executive Secretary Joyce Blanchard was excused.

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Adam Munguia called the public meeting to order at 7:00 PM via Zoom.

MINUTES

Minutes from the July 20, 2020 Selectmen's meeting were submitted for approval.

Motion by Selectman Joe Trombley to approve the minutes from July 20, 2020 Selectmen's meeting. Seconded by Selectman Mike Yergeau. Roll Call Vote; Selectmen Cody Belanger, Mike Yergeau, Joe Trombley, Adam Munguia all voting aye. Selectmen Bob Jordan abstained.

PAYROLL MANIFEST

Payroll manifest for the pay period ending July 23, 2020 in the amount of \$145,224.79 was submitted for approval.

Motion by Selectman Bob Jordan to approve the payroll manifest for the pay period ending July 23, 2020 in the amount of \$145,224.79. Seconded by Selectman Joe Trombley. Roll Call Vote; Selectmen Cody Belanger, Mike Yergeau, Joe Trombley, Bob Jordan, Adam Munguia all voting aye.

ACCOUNTS PAYABLE MANIFEST

Accounts payable manifest for the week ending July 23, 2020 in the amount of \$1,377,321.25, (\$1,000,000.00 for the school payment, \$136,584.85 is for PRB (Water Treatment Plant Project, \$240,736.40 is the Town portion) was submitted for approval.

Motion by Selectman Bob Jordan to approve the Accounts payable manifest for the week ending July 23, 2020 in the amount of \$1,377,321.25, (\$1,000,000.00 for the school payment, \$136,584.85 is for PRB - Water Treatment Plant Project, \$240,736.40 is the Town portion). Seconded by Selectman Cody Belanger. Roll Call Vote; Selectmen Mike Yergeau, Joe Trombley, Cody Belanger, Bob Jordan, Adam Munguia all voting aye.

BUSINESS

TOWN CLERK/TAX COLLECTOR HOURS

Town Clerk and Tax Collector Erika Robinson asked to address the Board of Selectmen on her recent decision to change her hours of operation. She told the Board that in hindsight she should have advised the Board of Selectmen. There is no statutory requirement to advise the Board and she had thought that after her discussion with Town Administrator Greg Dodge and Board Chairman Adam Munguia it was settled as she was told to keep the new hours. She then listened to the meeting of July 20, 2020 and was surprised to hear that the Board felt that some courtesy should have been shown by being advised ahead of any changes. She went on to say that with the new Drop Box in place, which is widely used, residents have an opportunity to drop off paperwork any time of day or night and usually there is a quick turnaround. Selectman Joe Trombley said that he was concerned with losing the evening hours but after speaking with the Town Clerk and understanding that the Drop Box was a new feature he understands the change. Selectman Mike Yergeau said that his only concern was that tax payers should be able to pay their taxes at times listed on the tax bill and those times are now the old hours. Administrator Dodge said that could be a concern. Chairman Adam Munguia acknowledged he had a conversation with Erika Robinson and felt she knew her office best and ultimately was okay with her decision to change the hours.

In closing the Town Clerk said if there was a need to return to evening hours she would certainly consider doing so.

NEW ENGLAND DRAGWAY SCHEDULE CHANGE

New England Dragway General Manager, Joe Lombardo met with the Selectmen to discuss a change in his operating schedule. He said that NHRA cannot hold some of their events in other states due to COVID and wanted permission to run a portion of those races here in Epping. August 19th will be a day race only from noon to 6:00 PM and is a test session with no spectators, participants only. On Thursday August 20th this would be a qualifying session, again day racing only from 9 AM to 6 PM, no spectators, participants only. Friday August 21, 2020 instead of running regular evening racing it would be elimination rounds from 9 AM – 6 PM with no spectators. The only real change is on Thursday August 20. Regular racing would resume on August 22 and 23, 2020.

Motion by Selectman Bob Jordan to approve the modified racing schedule at NE Dragway as presented by General Manager Joe Lombardo. Seconded by Selectman Cody Belanger. Roll Call Vote; Selectmen Joe Trombley, Mike Yergeau, Cody Belanger, Bob Jordan, Adam Munguia all voting aye.

POLICE DEPARTMENT – PURCHASE ORDER

Chief Michael Wallace submitted purchase order #0282 to purchase an additional portable radio from Motorola Solutions in the amount of \$3,663.88.

Motion by Selectman Cody Belanger to approve purchase order #0282 to Motorola Solutions in the amount of \$3,663.88. Seconded by Selectman Bob Jordan. Roll Call Vote; Selectmen Joe Trombley, Mike Yergeau, Cody Belanger, Bob Jordan, Adam Munguia all voting aye.

Selectman Cody Belanger apologized to the Chief for not attending the retirement party of Sgt. Richard McFadden as he was out of Town. He asked that the Chief pass on his well wishes to Rich McFadden. Chairman Munguia expressed the Board's appreciation for all that Sgt. McFadden has done for this Town and also asked the Chief to let Rich McFadden know that the Board wishes him well. Chief Wallace said he would pass on the good wishes of the Board and said that Rich McFadden is staying on the department as a part-time patrol officer.

ROAD WEIGHT ORDINANCE

Town Administrator Gregory C. Dodge brought up the Town's "Selectmen's Ordinance" on weight limits for trucks on Town roads. He explained that the ordinance adopted in 1981 and 1986 were too restrictive and needed to be improved. He stated that he has spoken with the NH Timber Owner's Association, Chief Mike Wallace, State Police, Town Attorney and NHTOA Attorney who all agree that the ordinance needs work. It was suggested that the ordinance be rescinded immediately and that a new draft ordinance be presented at a later date. The Selectmen heard input from Chief Mike Wallace who acknowledged that he had spoken to the State Police who said that even without an ordinance they would write violations under the State statute. Chief Wallace said that he agreed with the Town Administrator that this ordinance should be rescinded and that a new ordinance be drafted in its place. Selectman Joe Trombley was interested to know how Dave Reinhold felt. Administrator Dodge said that Mr. Reinhold agreed that the current 20 ton limit was low in today's standards. Selectman Mike Yergeau said that many trucks on the road today would be in violation based on the current ordinance. Chairman Adam Munguia agreed that the ordinance should be repealed.

Motion by Selectman Bob Jordan to immediately rescind the Road Weight Limit Ordinance adopted by the Board of Selectmen in 1981 and 1986 and that a new draft ordinance being submitted for review. Seconded by Selectman Adam Munguia. Roll Call Vote; Selectmen Mike Yergeau, Joe Trombley, Cody Belanger, Bob Jordan, Adam Munguia all voting aye.

OTHER and INDIVIDUAL SELECTMEN REPORTS

Selectman Joe Trombley

Chairman Adam Munguia asked if the Board had anything to bring forward. Selectman Joe Trombley wanted to give an update to the library landscaping matter. The library trustees asked that he amend a motion made previously to release \$7,000 to Lorax landscape for site preparation, to instead release that amount to Chappelle (Oyster River Construction). This will be pending an official proposal from ORC and assuming this amount does not change. The only change is the vendor. Administrator Dodge felt that a new motion based on new information would be more in line than amending a motion made a month or so ago.

Motion by Selectman Joe Trombley to release \$7,000 to Oyster River Construction pending an official proposal from Oyster River Construction assuming the amount does not change based on new information discussed at the July 21, 2020 Library Trustee meeting. Seconded by Selectman Bob Jordan. Roll Call Vote; Selectmen Mike Yergeau, Joe Trombley, Cody Belanger, Bob Jordan, Adam Munguia all voting aye.

Selectman Trombley continued by saying that Charlie Goodspeed has completed the items on the punch list. There is a commitment from Seth Donaldson (original brick layer for the addition) to return and brick up the doorway at the rear of the building for a price of \$650 pending a formal proposal. If the fundraiser (bricks purchased and engraved) is not complete by November 1, 2020 the doorway will be bricked in regardless. Once the door is complete the library addition project will be done.

Motion by Selectman Joe Trombley to reserve the dollar amount required to “brick up” the door opening on November 1, 2020 so that the labor costs are covered pending official proposal. Seconded by Selectman Mike Yergeau. Roll Call Vote; Selectmen Cody Belanger, Bob Jordan, Joe Trombley, Mike Yergeau, Adam Munguia all voting aye.

Selectman Trombley continued by saying that with funds of \$7650 committed that leaves approximately \$10,200. The trustees would like the Selectmen to reimburse their non-lapsing fund from the bond for several purchases made for the "shelving and decor". This was a line item in the approved budget for the project. The invoices would be submitted in the neighborhood of \$10,400 (\$4,700 and \$5,000 for shelving, \$700 for an air conditioner and possibly a couple of other items). The Board will reimburse as much of lapsing fund as possible to get the balance to zero.

The trustees will use their non-lapsing funds from different sources to do the plantings and such that the Trustees wanted to do and leave the Selectmen out of that portion of it.

Selectman Joe Trombley updated the Board on the library stairs project. The correct materials are on order and there could be a 3-4 week delay and thus not much activity on site from the selected contractor.

Selectman Trombley concluded by thanking Jen Roy for the “Town of Epping” face masks she made for each Board member.

Selectman Cody Belanger

Selectman Belanger said that there was about 40 days until the primary and 99 days to the general election. He was speaking to someone in Maine recently who said that there were a record number of absentee voters in their primary two weeks ago. Selectman Belanger expects the same here in New Hampshire.

Selectman Belanger said he has spoken to the Town Administrator, Selectman Trombley and Chairman Munguia about his role as a Selectman at the polls since he was on the ballot. He plans on appointing Administrator Dodge to act in his stead but that he would be at the polls to open and close. He also reached out to the Secretary of State’s office on this topic and though he could still perform his duties as a Selectman even though he is on the ballot he did not think it was morally and ethically right to do so.

Selectman Mike Yergeau

Selectman Yergeau said there has been a lot of feedback on the RFP for the Railroad Ave. water main project. So far only one has responded stating they would not be submitting a bid. There will be a review process with the Selectmen and Board of Commissioners. Then how the project will be funded will have to be sorted out.

Selectman Bob Jordan

Selectman Jordan said that the boiler project at the Safety Complex is complete.

Selectman Adam Munguia

Chairman Munguia will report later on and asked Deputy Chief Joe Lombardo to given an update.

Assistant Chief Joe Lombardo

Acknowledged that the boiler at the Safety Complex was complete and that he has been in contact with the Department of Labor's Inspector, Steve Sawyer of Travelers Insurance. There will be no re-inspection and the inspector will sign off that the problem has been fixed and advise the Department of Labor of the same so there should be no further letters from the State.

COVID Cases – Chief Lombardo gave a COVID update. There is a 30 case increase but NH cases are still relatively low and we are certainly above the curve. As far as Epping cases there was a cumulative number of 23 cases but currently there are no active cases. He suggested continued use of a mask and social distancing. Selectman Trombley asked the Chief about the reporting of cases. There is an official report once a week but daily cases are still reported but not from NHDHHS.

Robert Hodgman

Discussed the status of the Civil Round Table group and their meetings. A group founded 30 years ago. The group returned to the library out of a nostalgic approach because that was their first meeting location. They are a small 501-C III organization and they have already paid \$430.00 for nine meetings. The April, May and June meetings were cancelled and he wanted to know what the probability of opening up the meeting room again at Town Hall. It is a larger space for the Round Table to meet. If the group could not meet at the Town Hall he was hoping that the three lost meetings already paid for might be reimbursed to the group. The group has some big named speakers coming in and the events are only going to get larger. Mr. Hodgman was looking for any information as to when the Town Hall might be open again. Chairman Munguia said that he believes the Civil War Round Table should be made whole for any lost funds. Speaking for himself he feels that Town Hall is now open for meetings but that there still needs to be a conversation amongst the Board as to when meetings can be held again.

Selectman Adam Munguia – Continued Report

The Chairman said that chairs need to be removed from the meeting room, sanitizing stations in place, social distancing, etc. Mr. Munguia sees a sort of hybrid approach maybe as soon as next week where he will be at Town Hall but the meeting will still be on Zoom. He went on to say that he met with the new Superintendent Bill Furbush and that a large meeting is anticipated when school re-opening is discussed. Chairman Munguia said that we are still a long way from holding meetings as we did pre-COVID but that a hybrid scenario is being looked into. Selectman Trombley wanted to clarify what the Chairman had said regarding opening for meetings next week. Mr. Trombley said the Board had voted on opening Town Hall but did not vote on opening for meetings. The Chairman said that there still needs to be a conversation about opening for meetings. The Chairman stated that it isn't a matter of whether or not Town Hall will be opening for meetings, it is a matter of how Town Hall re-opens for meetings. Selectman Trombley wanted to make sure he understood that it is the goal of the Board to re-open Town Hall but that we were not there as of yet.

ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Town Administrator

Town Administrator Gregory C. Dodge said that the Selectmen's petition for a Special Town Meeting was submitted to the Court this past Friday and that a hearing has already been scheduled for Monday August 3, 2020 at 11:00 a.m. The notice of hearing will be published in the Manchester Union Leader and is posted at Town Hall, Post Office and the Town website. Chairman Adam Munguia and Town Administrator Gregory C. Dodge will attend the hearing. A ruling is expected the same day.

Town Administrator Gregory C. Dodge advised that the Democratic absentee ballot has an error on it and new ballots were being printed. This was a mistake at the State level and they are in the process of printing new ballots. Those who already have the old ballot will be sent a new ballot as the old ballot cannot be read and will not be counted. Selectman Yergeau wanted to reiterate that the error was not the Town's error the State made the mistake.

Town Administrator Gregory C. Dodge advised the Board that in anticipation of a favorable outcome in Superior Court the Selectmen will have to hold a Bond Hearing, Budget Committee a public hearing all of which have time constraints. The meeting must be posted in the newspaper seven days in advance and must be held within 25 days of the vote. Mr. Dodge said he has made contact with the Budget Committee Chairman and is awaiting a date for the hearing.

Administrator Dodge said that he spoke with MtBE, DES and Dave Mercier regarding the budget for the water treatment plant. There are some questions lingering but it will be resolved.

In closing Mr. Dodge said that a discussion about re-opening Town Hall needs to be had at some point and he hopes the Board will trust him in getting the room ready for a socially safe environment for all to attend meetings.

Chairman Munguia advised Mr. Hodgman that the Board would be discussing re-opening Town Hall in one week. Selectman Trombley said that no matter what money should be reimbursed to the Civil War Roundtable for meetings missed. Mr. Hodgman appreciated that but would rather the Town keep the money in the event they are able to meet in the Town Hall.

ADJOURN

Motion by Selectman Bob Jordan to adjourn. Seconded by Selectman Cody Belanger. There was a 30 second pause in case a resident wanted to call in. Roll Call Vote; Selectmen Joe Trombley, Mike Yergeau, Cody Belanger, Bob Jordan, Adam Munguia all voting aye.

Meeting adjourned at 8:22 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

**Gregory C. Dodge
Town Administrator**

Adam Munguia, Chairman

Bob Jordan, Vice-Chairman

Mike Yergeau, Selectman

Cody Belanger, Selectman

Joe Trombley, Selectman

Dated: August 3, 2020