

**TOWN OF ENFIELD
ENFIELD BOARD OF SELECTMEN
MEETING MINUTES MAY 17, 2021**

TIME: 6:00 PM
LOCATION: via Zoom Teleconference

PRESENT

BOARD OF SELECTMEN: Meredith Smith, Katherine D.P. Stewart, John W. Kluge

ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF: Alisa Bonnette, Assistant Town Manager; Jack Wozmak, Interim Town Manager

CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Smith called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.

Virtual Meeting Preamble

Due to the COVID-19/Coronavirus crisis and in accordance with Governor Sununu's Emergency Order #12 pursuant to Executive Order 2020-04, this public body is authorized to meet electronically.

Please note that this is a virtual meeting only, as authorized by the Governor's Emergency Order.

We are utilizing the Zoom platform for this electronic meeting. All members of the Board/Committee have the ability to communicate contemporaneously during this meeting through the Zoom platform, and the public has access to contemporaneously listen and, if necessary, participate in this meeting through dialing the phone number and using the password provided or by clicking on the website address provided in the meeting posting on the Town's website and posted on the door of Town Hall

If anybody has a problem, please call 603-442-5401

*Please note that all votes that are taken during this meeting shall be done by Roll Call vote.
Let's start the meeting by taking a Roll Call attendance.*

ROLL CALL OF ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

APPROVAL OF MINUTES- April 19, 2021 & May 3, 2021

Mr. Kluge made a motion to approve minutes as presented.

Ms. Smith requested amendments to the May 3rd minutes:

- Page 3; regarding Ms. Smith's Board Report, parking for the business coffee in June should be **corrected to state the Union Church.**
- Page 6; requested the first sentence be corrected to use the term **SB2** instead of 'absentee ballots.'
- She clarified that, under the discussion and vote regarding exemptions, the New England Forestry Foundation request was denied, which reflects the same Board of Selectmen (BOS) determination as last year.

Mr. Kluge made a motion to approve minutes as amended. Ms. Stewart seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Vote unanimous in favor of the motion (3-0).

BOARD REPORTS

Mr. Kluge stated he had nothing to report.

Planning Board

Ms. Stewart stated that there was an extensive discussion at the Planning Board Meeting regarding the cell phone tower anticipated to be installed on the hill above Morehouse Lane. She noted that the request submitted to the FCC regarding the cell phone tower has been approved and is moving forward to the next phase. She noted that the group performing the work is a developer of the infrastructure and would proceed to install the base and a company such as AT&T or Verizon would opt into the building of the tower itself. She stated that, once constructed, the new tower will assist in covering areas currently lacking consistent cellular service on Route 4 and Route 4A.

Mascoma Lakeside Park (MLP) Committee

Ms. Smith stated that MLP Committee met, and the pavilion is making slow but sure progress. She noted that the contractor that had been lined up to do the rest of the site work will be unable to finalize the work due to personal circumstances and other excavation contractors may need to be pursued for the site work to be finalized. She noted that \$1,000 has been received from the Grafton County Friends of the Northern Rail Trail to put towards the access points being developed to the pavilion. She noted that there have been recent issues with bicyclists riding over the construction fence and destroying the newly planted grass.

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

Mr. Wozmak stated:

- The CDC has come out with new guidance regarding COVID. He stated that inquiries are pouring in regarding summer planned activities and current COVID guidance, including the Enfield Family Fair, which is scheduled to occur at the end of June. He inquired if the BOS might revisit the discussion regarding the ordinance sooner due to the changes in recommendations at the state and federal levels. He noted that there are several events scheduled in June and July, and it would be extremely helpful in providing guidance, particularly related to the current Mask Ordinance. He stated local communities may be making changes to their policy within the next month and invited Chief Holland, the Emergency Management Director, to speak to the changes he is seeing on the state and local levels.

Chief Holland stated that he has spoken with Town Managers from Hanover and Lebanon regarding their position on their mask ordinances. He noted that Hanover is currently focusing on revisiting their ordinance after Dartmouth graduation as they are anticipating a large influx of people for that event. He noted that Dartmouth is tracking the number of students vaccinated and is at around 55% of the student body being vaccinated. He noted that Lebanon would be discussing their mask ordinance in their upcoming meeting on Wednesday the 19th but noted that the Town Manager's recommendation to their Board of Selectmen will be to drop the mask ordinance. He stated he is receiving many calls regarding residents trying to plan for events in the months of June and July, and it would be helpful to have more information. He noted that there is no known data on the number of Enfield residents that have been vaccinated, but the state is averaging 50,000 vaccinations per week.

Ms. Stewart stated that she has been contacted by quite a few people regarding the Mask Ordinance. She noted that Enfield has had a significant rise of COVID positive people in the last week and she is apprehensive to lift it immediately without having more information to understand and support the decision.

She noted that area towns, such as Hanover, Lebanon, and Plainfield are not dropping their mask mandates yet, and she does not believe it will have a negative effect on local businesses to continue the current ordinance. She added that before the mandate is changed it should be announced as an agenda item and allow the public to attend and give feedback.

Chief Holland stated that the vaccine does not prevent people from getting COVID, it just prevents severe cases, and therefore the metrics relevant to the ordinance should be based on hospitalizations or deaths and not just active cases.

Dr. Beaufait agreed with Chief Holland's statement regarding accurate metrics and noted that vaccination rates and case rates statewide need to be carefully considered. He noted that we are still in a place of substantial community transmission statewide.

Ms. Stewart noted that the vaccinations for residents 12 years of age and older only just opened, and she would like to hold off a little longer to allow the timeframe for that age range to reach full vaccination.

Mr. Kluge inquired if a distinction could be made between events happening indoors and events happening outdoors. He stated he is more comfortable being lenient with things outdoors, and there is evidence they are safer than indoor events.

Ms. Stewart noted that the town ordinance made a recommendation for use of masks and distancing outside, but not a requirement.

Chief Holland stated that the ordinance for wearing masks includes any business that is conducted outside, but the ordinance notes mask wearing during recreational activities as a recommendation.

Mr. Wozmak noted that he was not looking for an immediate decision but wanted it to be known that requests for public events are coming in and it will be important to understand where things are and for the public to understand that it is in discussion.

Members of the BOS agreed to have a discussion regarding the current mask ordinance at 6:30pm on June 7th. It was noted that a discussion regarding reopening the Town Offices and the Community Building will take place that evening as well.

With no further discussion, Ms. Smith requested Mr. Wozmak proceed with the remainder of this report.

- Three applications have been received for the Fire Chief position, with the job posting closing on May 20th. He stated that after the closing date, the process of interviews with a panel composed of regional fire chiefs will begin.
- Noted he will be taking vacation June 23-30th
- Attended a Master Planning meeting last week. He stated the Master Planning group has been meeting since December and they are trying to do as much of the work on their own as possible so that the work they get from a consultant will fit the budget.
- Met with Trustees of the Trust Funds to assist them with feedback on their investment timelines for money in the trusts as well as budgetary expectations.
- It is anticipated that a settlement of the FairPoint tax litigation will be ending soon. FairPoint took issue with Enfield, as well as many other towns regarding the real estate taxes charged for the poles. It was noted that Enfield is anticipated to pay a sum of about \$60,000.

- It is anticipated that the land owned by the state on Depot Street will be listed as surplus and will be available for the town to purchase. It was noted that, because the Town uses the land, if it is found to be surplus and the Town opts not to purchase it, the state may begin to charge the Town for use of the property.

Ms. Smith stated that it would be important for the Town to get their appraisal in before the state does.

Mr. Wozmak requested any questions regarding the Town Manager's Report.

Elliot Clark stated that, regarding the Mask Ordinance, the Town needs to set qualifications about what it will take to lift the mask ordinance in the Town. He is confused why the conversation is being pushed off when the current ordinance was set with state and CDC recommendations in mind; however, those have been lifted, and inquired why is the town not following the same guidance.

Ms. Smith stated that the discussion of the ordinance is slated for June 7th. She added that the BOS is also taking into consideration that other local towns are continuing their mask ordinances as well.

Ms. Stewart stated that listening to the health officials and local community leaders that the BOS worked with to initiate the ordinance is an important part of the process.

Mr. Clark stated that he has read in many places, including the town website which note that the town is 'following the science', and right now the science supports vaccinated people not wearing masks inside or outside, and the ordinance should be addressed as soon as possible. He thanked members of the BOS for their time and allowing him to give feedback.

With no further questions or comments, Ms. Smith moved on to the next agenda item.

BUSINESS

Tax Deeding

Ms. Bonnette stated that a list of properties that are up for deeding was distributed. She stated the BOS has to decide whether a deed waiver should be prepared for any of the presented properties.

Mr. Wozmak stated that there are two statutory reasons to not take the property related to deeding. He added that, as a courtesy, he has been to many of the listed properties to visit with residents and ensure that property owners received communications and understand the deeding process.

Ms. Bonnette reviewed the list of properties subject to being deeded if taxes are not paid by the deeding date of May 21st. She stated that deed waiver forms will be available for signature if necessary, in the town office.

Upon review of the properties listed for deeding, the BOS agreed to grant three deed waivers. Members of the BOS agreed to go to the Town Office to sign the agreed upon deed waiver forms.

Paving Bids

Members of the BOS agreed with the recommendation as proposed by Mr. Taylor in the BOS packet.

Water Hookup Request (Mativia & Johnson) – Vote Required

Ms. Stewart made a motion to approve the water hookup request. Mr. Kluge seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Vote unanimous in favor of the motion (3-0).

Acceptance of \$8,000 anonymous donation to the Conservation Fund

Mr. Kluge made a motion to accept the \$8,000 anonymous donation to the Conservation Fund. Ms. Stewart seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Vote unanimous in favor of the motion (3-0).

Schedule Joint Selectboard/Library Trustee Meeting to discuss the Whitney Hall Renovation/Addition project

Mr. Wozmak stated that the Library Trustees were requesting to meet with the BOS regarding what recommendation may move forward at the end of the year for Whitney Hall.

Ms. Stewart stated that it would be important to start getting public feedback. She stated that money and time were committed to the project, along with a very talented group of individuals that formed the Municipal Facilities Advisory Committee, and it would be important to disclose the findings and open a dialogue with residents.

Ms. Smith stated that she spoke with Ms. Hutson, the Librarian, and had discussed severe issues, including finding dead birds on the third floor, which involve basic maintenance and should be addressed. She stated that the Town has a fiduciary responsibility to take care of the space. She noted that the previous assumption regarding birds on the third floor was due to windows being left open and that no one has been using the third floor and dead birds are still being found up there.

Ms. Stewart stated that there were other discussions that may be necessary to go through CIP to invest in updating the building or having a contingency plan if a bond vote did not pass to approve a full renovation.

Shirley Green stated that it was her understanding at the December 14th meeting, when the renovation project was approved by the Library Trustees and Selectboard, that the Library Trustees and the BOS would be working together on the path forward, and this meeting request is to establish that communication.

Ratification of Approval of 1st Issue Property Tax Warrant on 05/13/2021

Ms. Stewart made a motion to approve of the 1st Issue Property Tax Warrant. Mr. Kluge seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Vote unanimous in favor of the motion (3-0).

Mr. Wozmak stated that he and Ms. Bonnette have moved forward on the terms and conditions of the note to purchase the fire engine, as approved at Town Meeting. He requested permission to proceed with executing the financing and approval by the BOS to sign appropriate documentation.

Ms. Stewart made a motion to approve the previously approved financing conditions for the fire truck.

Ms. Stewart amended her motion to state: approve the previously approved financing conditions for the fire truck and authorize the Interim Town Manager, Jack Wozmak, to execute all documents, as necessary. Mr. Kluge seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Vote unanimous in favor of the motion (3-0).

ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS

- MS-232 Appropriations Actually Voted
- Property Tax Abatements (Niles, LaCroix)
- Intent to Excavate (Crate)
- Land Use Change Tax (Woodward)
- Timber Yield Tax (Bonardi, Hackeman)

Ms. Bonnette requested a motion regarding the property tax abatement applications as recommended by the assessor.

Ms. Stewart made a motion to accept assessor's recommendations relative to the property tax abatement applications. Mr. Kluge seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Vote unanimous in favor of the motion (3-0).

OTHER BUSINESS TO COME BEFORE THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN / PUBLIC COMMENTS

Ms. Stewart stated that the Master Planning group would be attending Markets, which occur on the 2nd and 4th Saturday of the month from 10a-1p, to encourage public feedback and participation in the Master Planning

process. She stated there are multiple committees looking for input from residents and invited the public to participate.

Dr. Beaufait inquired if the BOS had considered his recommendation to reengage MFAC to review potential cost adjustments for the proposed budget.

Members of the BOS discussed current market costs and how it may affect the proposed budget.

Ms. Stewart stated that information should be taken to the community in a way that is easy to digest and allow the opportunity to get questions and feedback prior to making any changes from what the Committee presented.

Ms. Stewart inquired if there were any updates regarding the Town Manager search.

Mr. Wozmak stated that the Town Manager position has been narrowed down to four individuals, each with municipal experience. He noted that the next step will be setting up interviews with the Screening Committee, who will pass on their recommendations to the BOS.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS – NO ACTION REQUIRED

- Town Clerk's Report – April 2021
- Lien Execution Report – Levy Year 2020
- GL Beyond Income Fund Shareholder Update
- Grafton County Commissioners' Proposed FY 2022 Budget (Summary Only – Detailed budget available for viewing at Town Office)

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Kluge made a motion to adjourn at 7:30 pm. Ms. Stewart seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Vote unanimous in favor of the motion (3-0).

The meeting was adjourned at 7:30 pm.

Meredith C. Smith, Chair

John W. Kluge

Katherine D. P. Stewart
Enfield Board of Selectmen