



**TOWN OF
BROOKLINE, NEW HAMPSHIRE
SELECTBOARD**

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*Minutes
Selectboard
Wednesday, March 18, 2020*

Selectboard members present: Brendan Denehy, Eddie Arnold, Ron Olsen, Drew Kellner and Dana Ketchen along with Town Administrator Tad Putney.
Also present: Emergency Management Director David Coffey, Public Works Director Mike Wenrich, Police Chief Bill Quigley, Fire Chief Charlie Corey, Ambulance Chief Shawn Jackson (by phone), Town Clerk/Tax Collector Patti Howard-Barnett.

Brendan called the meeting to order at 8:00am and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Brendan noted this is an emergency meeting related to COVID-19 and did not fully meet the standard posting requirements of RSA 91-A.

Approve Minutes

Eddie moved, seconded by Ron, to approve the minutes from the Saturday, March 14, 2020 emergency COVID-19 meeting as written; Voted Yes 4-0-1, Drew abstained.

Emergency Management Department – **Director David Coffey** said as of yesterday morning at 9am the State of NH reported 26 patients with the COVID-19 virus, including one in Nashua, and a total of four cases in Hillsborough County. Nashua Public Health reported the local case was a travel-related case, not community spread. He said the State of NH reports there are 208 people with tests pending and the total number of people who have been tested in NH is 747. **David** said worldwide as of this morning there were 205,000 cases and 8,000 deaths, with the US having 6,500 cases and 114 deaths. The major countries still having large outbreak numbers are China, Italy, Iran and Spain. **Director Coffey** said the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) has been open every day reviewing procedures with the CERT team and posting updates from the Center for Disease Control and the State of NH as they come in. The EOC has checked in with the two daycares who are operating, but not taking any new students and are following Center for Disease Control Regulations and State of NH recommendations. We have been surveying local restaurants and are posting their hours at the EOC. He said the EOC is in constant contact with our emergency services here in town and have been monitoring the conference calls with the State of NH. **Director Coffey** said the state has testing materials available with a 1-2 day turnaround for results.

Police Department - **Chief Bill Quigley** said he issued an internal memo effective immediately: All non-emergency calls will be handled via phone, not in person. He

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said we have always provided a service to Brookline residents for fingerprinting free of charge for pre-employment or volunteerism at the schools, but we are suspending that until further notice. He provided additional information on several amended procedures. **Chief Quigley** said he received a call from an employee at Donovan Engineering yesterday who said most of their work is in the Boston area and has been temporarily shut down, so if anything were to happen, they are offering manpower to assist.

Fire Department - **Chief Charlie Corey** said he received the same call from Donovan Engineering. He said the Fire Station meeting room is closed and the fire station has signs on the doors for screening before entering. He said we have been disinfecting our areas, equipment and vehicles and limiting people responding to calls. **Charlie** said the dive team out of Nashua is out of service, but the S.M.A.R.T. team is still in service. He said there are lot of unknowns that are hard to assess, but we need to keep calm.

Ambulance Department – **Chief Shawn Jackson** said we are well prepared to respond to a local or regional outbreak of the COVID-19 novel coronavirus. We have been performing regular and ongoing monitoring of the situation and our level of preparedness to respond to local cases. We are limiting the number of providers responding to calls to limit potential exposure and 911 is asking screening questions to callers before the ambulance arrives. Our staff and the general public can remain safe through the use of social distancing, proper hand hygiene, environmental controls, and appropriate use of “Personal Protective Equipment” (PPE). He said we continue to use decontamination procedures for ambulances and durable medical equipment. Appropriate PPE for COVID-19 is similar to that required for seasonal influenza, which we experience and respond to every year and has been extensively prepared for in the past. He said if you have symptoms, please call your doctor first, assuming no shortness of breath; do not go to the emergency room. He also said that other emergency department drivers could drive the ambulance, if necessary. **Dana** asked if all departments are using the same screening protocol. **Bill** said pretty much, but it is easy enough to check. **Brendan** said we will make that available to the public.

Public Works Department - **Director Mike Wenrich** said he is doing what he can himself for Public Works. He said Souhegan Regional Landfill District met last night and left it up to each town whether or not to close their transfer station, but we are fortunate with a good flow of traffic compared to some others. He said he would like to use the Police Department’s electronic sign to advise the public as they enter to keep moving. **Eddie** said we should temporarily waive fees for items disposed of at the Transfer Station since handling cash and checks would be a hazard. Anyone with construction debris can be asked for their name and mailing address to be put on a temporary account list and billed at a later date. ***Drew moved, seconded by Eddie, to temporarily suspend all transfer station fees, except construction debris, which will be individually tracked and billed on account; Voted Yes 5-0.***

Town Clerk/Tax Collector Office – **Patti Howard-Barnett** said Monday was very busy and yesterday was quiet. She said we are wearing gloves due to accepting cash/checks, have removed pens from the counters and are disinfecting every 1-2 hours.

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She said she does not see a need to close at this point. She said the state has increased the expiration period on temporary plates and transitioning to online registrations can be pursued, but will take some time.

Town Administrator Office – **Tad Putney** said the Town Hall is fully staffed at this time. He said we are propping open interior doors to reduce touch points and only one entrance is being used on the ground level to limit traffic. We are proceeding with normal operations as best we can.

Succession Planning

The Board discussed succession planning for each department:

Police Department - **Bill** said his second in command would be **Sgt. Doug Barnett**.

Public Works Department – **Mike** said **Fire Chief Corey** and **Eddie Arnold** would serve as back-ups. **Dana** and **Drew** suggested reaching out to former road agent **Jerry Farwell** as well.

Town Clerk/Tax Collector - **Patti** said she has been in contact with former **Deputy Grace LaBombard**.

Emergency Management - **David** said CERT team members and remote direction would be the plan.

Fire Department – **Charlie** said **Dave Joki** then down the ranks.

Town Administrator Office - **Tad** said work would be spread among town hall personnel.

Ambulance Department – **Shawn** said **Jan Watt** and **Tad Putney**.

Curtailed Spending

Brendan said this is unknown territory and all departments need to curtail spending where they can and put some things off for a while. **Bill** said the new police hire will be put off until August or September. **David** said the disaster declaration by the state covers 75% of costs incurred by the town through the federal government and is retroactive back to January 20, 2020. **Tad** said we need to track time and costs due to COVID-19 in small manageable increments and send them to Emergency Management Director **David Coffey**. **David** said he will provide forms with categories to keep track on a weekly basis.

Friday School District Recount

Tad said there is a recount of a school district warrant article vote on Friday at 10:00am in the upstairs of the Town Hall.

Closure of Town Buildings

Tad said we could close town buildings to the public, but keep them open for employees to continue doing work. He asked if the Board wants to defer to the governor on this or make the decision ourselves. **Dana** said she would be in favor of closing the building and keep staff on. **Eddie** said he agrees with **Dana** if there is an outbreak in this community. **Bill** said extensions have been placed on license renewals and temporary license plates. ***Eddie moved, seconded by Drew, to close all public buildings and suspend custodial services when the State drops guidance for maximum group sizes from 50 to 10 people; Voted Yes 5-0.***

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Planning Board Meeting

Tad said we should postpone the Planning Board meeting tomorrow night since there are no time critical items. **Brendan** said, based on recent guidance from the state, meetings can be held via phone, if one person is physically present. **Drew** said if conference call services are available no one needs to be present, so he would opt for virtual meetings. **Tad** said based on our telephone system in this building, we can only connect to one person at a time. **David** said he has conference call capabilities, which he will share with **Tad**.

Building Inspection

Tad said Avitar was in town yesterday and their policy for home assessments just changed. They will only be assessing from the outside and will not be entering any buildings. The Building Inspector will similarly not be entering any occupied buildings until further notice and will conduct virtual reviews via Skype and then document them.

Other Items

Tad asked the department heads if they are feeling comfortable with supplies. **Shawn** said there is a five-month backorder on masks and wipes, but feels the Ambulance Department is sufficiently stocked at this time. **Brendan** suggested reaching out to dental practices for supplies since their offices are closing. **Charlie** said the Fire Department can use air masks. **Brendan** asked the department heads to let the Board know what they need. **Tad** said he will send out COVID-19 Communication #3 to the community via the town website and social media later in the day.

Brendan moved, seconded by Eddie, to go into non-public session per RSA 91-A:3 II (c) reputation; Roll call vote Yes 5-0.

Brendan moved, seconded by Eddie, to come out of non-public session and seal the minutes; Roll Call Vote Yes 5-0.

Meeting adjourned at 9:26am.

Minutes submitted by Sharon Sturtevant.

Brendan Denehy

Eddie Arnold

Ron Olsen

Drew Kellner

Dana Ketchen