



Town of Hopkinton

Office of Select Board

330 Main Street, Hopkinton NH 03229-2627 - (603) 746-3170 – www.hopkinton-nh.gov

**SELECT BOARD
PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES
Monday, June 29, 2020
Approved July 6, 2020**

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Dunlap called this regular meeting of the Select Board to order at 5:33 p.m. on Monday, June 29, 2020, via Zoom. Chair Dunlap introduced the members of the Board.

Members Present: Sabrina Dunlap, Ken Traum, Steven Whitley, Anna Wells and Jeffrey Donohoe through video conference.

Staff Present: Neal Cass, Town Administrator, and Robin Buchanan, Administrative Assessing Assistant through video conference.

Public Present: Bruce Ellsworth, Andrea Kane, Beth (no last name), Bonnie Cressy, Catherine Ledoux Matteo, Robert Matteo, Judi Case, Jim O'Brien, Jean Lightfoot, Sue Strickford, Elizabeth Sides, Cettie Connelly, Ron Noyes, Rick (no last name), Mary (no last name), Anne Chehade, njs, Gary (no last name), Lori & Dale Warner, Brian (no last name), anon, Pat MacMillan, Jan (no last name), Ian Tewsbury, Kate Martel, Lindsey Vincent, Byron Carr, Tammy Clay, Candie Garvin, HMiller, Rick MacMillan, (650)620-9266, (603)746-4070, (802)324-0055, (603)387-0073, and (603) 219-0193.

DECLARATION OF CHAIR: Chair Dunlap read the Right to Know Law Meeting Checklist as follows: As Chair of the Hopkinton Select Board, due to the COVID-19/Coronavirus crisis and in accordance with Governor Sununu's Emergency Order #12, pursuant to Executive Order 2020-04, this Board is authorized to meet electronically.

Please note that there is no physical location to observe and listen contemporaneously to the meeting, which was authorized pursuant to the Governor's Emergency Order. However, in accordance with the Emergency Order, this is to confirm that we are:

a) Providing public access to the meeting by telephone, with additional access possibilities by video or other electronic means.

We are utilizing the Zoom platform for this electronic meeting. All members of the Board 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 following phone # 1-646-558-8656 and meeting ID: 377 225 532, or by clicking on the following website address: <https://zoom.us/j/377225532>.

b) Providing public notice of the necessary information for accessing the meeting.

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We previously gave notice to the public of how to access the meeting using Zoom, and instructions are provided on Town of Hopkinton's website: www.hopkinton-nh.gov and on the Town of Hopkinton's Facebook page.

c) Providing a mechanism for the public to alert the public body during the meeting if there are problems with access.

If anyone has a problem, call (603) 746-8242 or email: townadmin@hopkinton-nh.gov.

d) Adjourning the meeting if the public is unable to access the meeting.

In the event the public is unable to access the meeting, we will adjourn the meeting and have it rescheduled.

Please note that all votes that are taken during this meeting shall be done by Roll Call vote. Let us start the meeting by taking a Roll Call attendance. When each member states their presence, also please state whether there is anyone in the room with you during this meeting, which is required under the Right-to-Know law.

Sabrina Dunlap and I am alone
Ken Traum and I am alone
Anna Wells and I am alone
Steven Whitley and I am alone
Jeffrey Donohoe and I am alone

EXPLANATION OF ZOOM:

There are several things about Zoom that will be helpful to know:

- This meeting is being recorded and will be available to watch at a later time. The link to watch will be on the Town website.
- The Select Board is unmuted, but all others are muted. If you have a question during the meeting use the chat feature to let the hosts know you have a question. The chat only goes to the hosts so off-line conversation cannot take place.
- During Public Forum, the line will be unmuted to allow participants to speak. Please be respectful of each other as we try to manage this.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

POINTS OF PRIDE:

Mr. Cass wanted to highlight the Town Clerk/Tax Collector's office noting that taxes are due on Wednesday, July 1, 2020, it is the end of the month with car registrations due, voter information and that outside of November this is the busiest time of year for that office. He thanked them for all their efforts in serving the public.

Mr. Traum stated that a friend of his in town, put their house on the market and it sold in two (2) days at over assessed value. He noted that the buyer was someone that wanted to move back to Hopkinton. He stated that although we may have disagreements in Town, there are still many qualities that keep people here and have some people moving back here.

Mrs. Wells thanked the DPW for the signage of a speed sign on Hatfield Road.

ADMINISTRATIVE

The Board reviewed documents for signature and approved (5-0) the Consent Agenda, taking the following action on a motion made by Mr. Traum, and seconded by Mrs. Wells

**Town of Hopkinton - Select Board
Consent Agenda
June 29, 2020**

<u>Item</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Action</u>	<u>Comment</u>
PAYROLL	-	-	-
ACCOUNTS PAYABLE	-	-	-
BUILDING PERMITS			
227-044-000 633 & 635 Maple St	6/29/2020	Approve	Change use from law office to medical office
240-012-000 2398 Hopkinton Rd	6/29/2020	Approve	Construct detached shed
223-002-003 32 Granite Valley	6/29/2020	Approve	Renovate basement
216-027-003 Moran Rd	6/29/2020	Approve	Demolish two barns
257-016-000 353 Farrington Corner Rd	6/29/2020	Approve	Renovate basement
225-044-000 89 Amesbury Rd	6/29/2020	Approve	Interior renovation
CURRENT USE APPLICATION			
PROPERTY TAX ABATEMENTS			
225-038-000	6/29/2020	Approve	\$2,040.00
223-025-000	6/29/2020	Approve	\$385.00
245-038-000	6/29/2020	Approve	\$657.00
TIMBER TAX			

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231-001-000 & 231-005-000 169.5 ACRES	6/23/2020	Approve	Stumpfield Road

Mr. Whitley made a motion, seconded by Mr. Traum, to authorize Jeff Donohoe to sign paperwork for the Board relative to this meeting.

ROLL CALL VOTE:

- Sabrina Dunlap Yes
- Ken Traum Yes
- Steven Whitley Yes
- Anna Wells Yes
- Jeffrey Donohoe Yes

MOTION PASSED 5-0.

The Board reviewed the Select Board Meeting Minutes of Tuesday, June 23, 2020. Mr. Traum made a motion, seconded by Mr. Donohoe, to approve the Public Meeting Minutes of Tuesday, June 23, 2020. Correction to be made to the time that Sabrina Dunlap arrived and voted for the Rail Trail application.

ROLL CALL VOTE:

- Sabrina Dunlap Yes
- Ken Traum Yes
- Steven Whitley Yes
- Anna Wells Yes
- Jeffrey Donohoe Yes

MOTION PASSED 5-0.

APPOINTMENTS:

Bruce Ellsworth, Moderator RE: Town Meeting: Chair Dunlap stated we are going to discuss a format for Town Meeting; however, she has another option to consider. She noted that an idea has been floating around to combine the school district meeting with the town meeting outside and in-person. Mr. Ellsworth stated that he had not heard that, however, it is his preference to have an outside meeting and it would have to be reviewed with Steve Chamberlin, Superintendent of Schools. He stated that he revisited the previous school meetings and he is prepared to use the zoom format for Town Meeting. Discussion ensued, with regards as to accommodating a larger crowd than expected, the logistics of an outdoor meeting with regards to weather, space considerations and elderly residents comfort level, having people remain in cars, and broadcasting short range over the radio. Chair Dunlap noted that the State has provided formats to hold meetings. Discussion ensued, with regards to holding a joint meeting with the school, including back to back evening meetings, two weekends in a row and the possibility of holding the meeting at the Hopkinton Fairgrounds. Mr. Ellsworth stated that he would need to speak with James Newsom, School Moderator and that we would have to move the Town Meeting date. Discussion ensued, with regards to using the zoom format twice for discussion

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and then drive through voting. Discussion ensued, with regards to costs of holding an outdoor meeting in case the weather does not cooperate. Discussion ensued, with regards to what the COVID grants would cover for expenses. Mr. Cass stated up to \$132,000 and we have not yet reached \$25,000.

Mr. Ellsworth stated another option would be to have people in the gym, the auditorium, the dining hall, and some classrooms with monitors so people could social distance. Discussion ensued, with the Board agreeing that inside in-person would not be a feasible option.

Discussion ensued, with regards to moving the Town Meeting to August, and the interest payment made to hold the new Fire Truck until July 18, 2020. Mr. Whitely suggested calling the company and inform them of the possibility of an extension and paying another month's interest payment for August.

Discussion ensued, with regards to the length of time it would take to pivot from an outside format to a zoom format and drive through, if needed. Mr. Cass replied three (3) weeks.

Chair Dunlap state the Board census is to move the meeting date to August, to have Town Moderator Ellsworth meet with School Moderator James Newsom and come back to the next meeting on Monday, July 6, 2020, and he agreed.

OLD BUSINESS:

Approval of 79-E Covenant: The Board reviewed the suggested changes to the 79-E Covenant. Discussion ensued, with regards to how to phrase the wording for penalties. The Board agreed to use "tax relief will be null and void".

2020 Budget Review:

Chair Dunlap noted that Mr. Donohoe had made some suggested cuts to the budget. Mr. Donohoe noted that he was not here during the original budget discussions and used a process of looking back two (2) years and noted what areas had been under expended. Mr. Traum thanked Mr. Donohoe for his input and noted that he will be meeting with Mr. Cass on Thursday, to go over the budget as they will have more actual expenses. Discussion ensued, with regards to having a zero tax rate increase vs. a negative tax rate decrease. Mr. Donohoe noted that most of the suggested cuts he made were in Public Safety. Chair Dunlap stated that these were areas the Board discussed in November of 2019 and felt there was no place to cut. Discussion ensued, with regards to the proposed Economic Development Committee position. Mrs. Wells noted that the position is not due to start until October 1, 2020. Mr. Whitley noted that he is comfortable with cuts that Mr. Traum has suggested, however, he would like to hear from the Department Heads with regards to any further cutting. Mrs. Wells stated that she understands Mr. Donohoe's logic, but believes the Board must have been given reasonable explanations for leaving those items in. She would also like to hear from the Department Heads.

Chair Dunlap reiterated that the majority of the Board favors a zero (0) tax rate increase, and we will meet again with the Moderator on Monday, July 6, 2020, and noted that July 18th Town Meeting date would be difficult to keep.

Road Bond Proposal: The Board agreed at the last meeting to go with a \$1.8 million road bond for the roads vs. the original \$2.2 million which does not include the Kearsarge Avenue project, because it is being done out of the current operating budget.

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2020 Town Meeting Warrant Review: Mr. Cass suggested that the Board hold off on approving the Warrant until the format is set. Discussion ensued, as to which articles Jim O'Brien was going to handle if the Town Meeting had taken place in March. Chair Dunlap noted that he was to speak about the Land Use Change Tax. Mrs. Wells stated that she had conversations with residents regarding the limits of the Elderly Exemption with regards to the asset limit of \$150,000 and their request to make that number higher. Discussion ensued, noting that when this issue was discussed previously the \$150,000 limit put us in the middle of the range with other towns. Chair Dunlap reminded everyone that this is not "free" money, noting that all the other taxpayers make up the difference.

Mr. Traum noted that he recently heard on New Hampshire Public Radio (NHPR) about the per capita spending by Police and Fire noting that in Hopkinton, spending per capita for Police is \$125, Fire is \$50, and Health is \$5. He also noted that at the State level of spending for Police is \$184; Fire is \$112 and Health is \$9. He noted that Hopkinton is below the state average.

NEW BUSINESS:

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR UPDATES:

Mr. Cass noted that the Rail Trail Application was sent in last Friday.

Mr. Cass informed the Board he will be out of the office at noon on Tuesday, June 30, 2020 and will be off all day Wednesday, July 1, 2020.

Mr. Cass noted that taxes are due Wednesday, July 1, 2020.

Chair Dunlap thanked Mr. Cass for all his hard work.

PUBLIC FORUM:

Denis Goddard, 757 Penacook Road noted that he feels that an inside in person meeting is not feasible at this time, noting that people's health could be at risk and that ending up with no budget should not be their reason for not having drive through voting. Keep it simple. We should not weigh the risk and stated that he did not like the tone of the meeting. Chair Dunlap responded that we are concerned about those people that are elderly and/or have health risks, stated but the Board is not being dismissive. She noted that safety is their number one priority.

Rick MacMillan, 1584 Maple Street, spoke to the hard work the Board did on the budget and urged them to go with the zero tax increase.

Andrea Kane, 331 Briar Hill Road, supports having a form of an in person meeting, noting that it is the right thing as everyone gets a chance to speak. She noted that if other towns can do it, so can Hopkinton.

Judi Case, 1030 Briar Hill Road, supports the Moderator's choice to do the Town Meeting via zoom. She stated that the internet is accessible to most residents and rebuttal could be allowed. She stated that the school budget was voted down, but it was not because of the drive through voting.

Chair Dunlap stated that it is the Moderator's choice as to the format and no one is trying to convince him of anything, we are just putting options out there. Mrs. Wells noted that in a traditional format of Town Meeting, there would be back and forth, and we would leave the meeting with a budget.

Catherine Ledoux Matteo, 108 Park Ave, noted that on Monday, June 15th, Mr. Cass stated that things could get difficult if we delay the July 18th meeting. She stated that zoom is a good alternative. She noted that having people in their cars would make for a long meeting. She also noted that bond issues usually bring out more voters. She also noted that if we delay, and cases spike then what do we do. The sooner we have the meeting the better.

Laurie Storey-Manseau, 603 Upper Straw Road, stated the goal is to get a large voter turnout. She noted that zoom worked fine for the school meeting and zoom works for the Select Board meeting getting more people engaged.

Cettie Connelly, Bassett Mill Road, stated that the numbers may be going down, but the Governor advises that seniors continue to stay home. If you do not do drive through voting, she will not be able to vote and feels that having an in person meeting will be age discrimination and will take her vote away if she cannot attend an in-person meeting.

Chair Dunlap stated voter turn out is very important, but format is not the only factor in voter turnout.

Tammy Clay, 62 Buckingham Lane, stated we should use the same format as the school, then everyone will have a chance to vote.

Elizabeth Sides, 265 Crowell Road, stated that she understands the concerns about inside, in person meeting, noting that if other towns have had their meeting outside then we can as well. She suggested contacting those other towns to see what worked and what did not work.

Robert Matteo, 108 Park Ave, stated he has concerns noting that seniors will not attend an inside format and the concerns should be about them and not about getting a budget passed and he is not sure what stage COVID will be in at that point.

There being no further comments, Public Forum was closed. Chair Dunlap thanked everyone for their comments.

OTHER:

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Mr. Traum made a motion, seconded by Mr. Donohoe to adjourn the meeting. Meeting was adjourned at 7:37 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Robin Buchanan, Administrative Assessing Assistant

