

TOWN OF BENNINGTON

BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Minutes of the Meeting – March 31, 2020

Selectmen James Cleary and David Foster were present as well as Town Administrator Kristie LaPlante. The meeting was called to order at 6:03 p.m.

Emergency Management Director Keith Nason met with the Selectmen to provide the following update on the Town's response to COVID-19:

- Emergency Management Staff (Director Nason and Deputy Emergency Management Director Kristie LaPlante) have been working every day and have been attending 5-8 conference calls a week to keep updated on ever changing information and resources available.
- On March 18<sup>th</sup> the Transfer Station has suspended all recycling, with the exception of paper and cardboard. Recyclables will be disposed of in the compactor along with household waste.
- Town Hall has been closed to all foot traffic since Tuesday, March 24<sup>th</sup>. The goal was to conduct essential business by appointment to limit the number of guests in the lobby.
- The Town Clerk's Office was observed conducting non-essential business and allowing access to Town Hall during their hours on March 26<sup>th</sup> despite the closure of Town Hall to non-essential business. Selectman Jim Cleary and Director Nason met with the Town Clerk's Office March 28<sup>th</sup> to discuss the importance of this change.
- Following the lead of area communities, the difficult decision has been made to close Town Hall to the public effective April 1, 2020. No customers will be allowed in the building. Any essential business will be conducted by Drop Box and tote delivery to customers waiting outside.
- Director Nason provided a verbal update on staffing and operating changes.
- The Recreation Committee has arranged birthday parades for children with April birthdays. Police, Fire, and Highway have all committed to participating.

The Selectmen discussed the layout of the Town Office and the intent of State of NH Emergency Order 16 (Scheduled Gatherings of or more) and Emergency Order 17 (Stay at Home). Given the proximity of desk locations, effective immediately, Town Hall will be closed on Fridays and Administrative staff will stagger their schedules to two per shift to reduce the exposure risk. Administrative employees will not receive a reduction in pay for this reduction in hours.

The Selectmen acted on the following matters:

- Agreed to temporarily reduce staffing at the Transfer Station to one attendant during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Heard a report that the Tax Lien process will proceed according to statute; the Tax Deed process has been temporarily suspended due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Reviewed and approved the Minutes of the Board's March 19 and 26 Accounts Payable and Payroll Registers as well as the Minutes of the Board's March 17<sup>th</sup> meeting.
- Approved a Request for an Extension on Timber Operation #19-041-12.
- Signed the 2020 Report of Appropriations.
- Agreed to meet every other week during the COVID-19 pandemic.

There being no other business before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 6:53 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kristie LaPlante, Town Administrator