

TOWN OF FRANCONIA
BOARD OF SELECTMEN'S REGULAR MEETING
MAY 4th, 2020 HELD REMOTELY VIA ZOOM

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Eric Meth, Jill Brewer.

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT: Jeff Blodgett.

PRESENT PANELISTS: Jenny Monahan, Kim Cowles, Ann Steurnagel, Michelle Reagan, Bob Montagno.

The meeting was called to order at 3:00pm.

APPOINTMENTS:

Ann Steurnagel – Abby Greenleaf Library: Ann let the Selectmen know that she is hoping to reopen the Library in phases over the next few weeks. She said the immediate plan would be not to have people in the library but to have curbside pick up for books and conduct any scheduled programming on the Dow in the pavilion or gazebo.

Bob Montagno & Michelle Regan – Franconia ArtWalk Association: The Selectmen approved the FAA's 3-Party Agreement. Selectman Meth said the town's Legal Counsel spoke with Primex and they confirmed that the Town's liability coverage would apply to the art installations. Primex did suggest that it would be a good idea to have the installations evaluated for safety by Safety Services Personnel.

TO SIGN/APPROVE:

The April 13th minutes were approved as written. The April 20th minutes were approved as amended.

TO DISCUSS/REVIEW:

2020 Budget: Chairman Brewer said the Board continues to evaluate the budget for places to trim the \$100,000 cut from. She remarked that while the town can continue to function in spite of the budget cut the loss of funds will be impactful and urged voters to think consider that when voting in the future.

Chairman Brewer said she thought that \$10,000 could be taken from the Executive Budget's Wages line and \$10,000 could be taken from the Highway Department's Gravel line. She said she spoke with the Fire Chief Gaudette and that budget does not have any surplus as the wages for the Firefighters are far below regional standards and he plans to improve that with his existing funds. Chairman Brewer also spoke with Transfer Station Supervisor Tim Blake and there is \$5,000 in that budget to that can be cut. Chairman Brewer and Selectman Meth agreed that the Employee Retirement line will likely have to be cut by \$9,000 and the improvement to the employee retirement plan will have to be forgone this year. Selectman Meth said the Legal fund was a place for a cut as there is a Capital Reserve Fund the town can fall back on.

Historical Preservation Easement: Selectman Meth said the Palmer's have requested a Historical Preservation Easement for a barn on their property. He said the next step is to have the barn and parcel accessed by Avitar and then a public hearing will be held. The application was submitted on April 11th and the town has 60 days to complete the process and issue a decision.

Update on Town Administrator: Chairman Brewer said the ad for a part-time Town Administrator is posted on Indeed.com, NHMA.com and is in the Littleton Courier the week of May 6th. She said there are several promising applicants for the position thus far.

Water Department Letter of Support: The Water Department is applying for grants through the Community Development Block Grant program and Northern Borders Regional Commission to replace a water line that will cost approximately \$500,000. The funds would need to be administered through the Town and the Water Department requests a letter of support from the Selectmen.

Chairman Brewer made a motion that the Franconia Select Board writes a letter in support of the Franconia Water Department seeking grant funds through the Northern Border Regional Commission and the Community Development Block Grant Program to replace a critical piece of the town's water line. Selectman Meth seconded the motion. All were in favor. **Motion passes.**

ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION:

The Selectmen discussed a letter received from Tim Clough of the Iron Furnace Brewery requesting that they be allowed to set up outdoor seating. The State has already approved the request. Selectman Meth said Principal Gordon Johnk has invited the brewery to use the school's parking lot as well. Chairman Brewer said she spoke with Building Inspector Allan Clark and he is willing to oversee the permitting for outdoor restaurant seating. After a brief discussion, both Selectmen agreed that they would like to support the local eateries by allowing permitting for outdoor seating.

Chairman Brewer made a motion to allow Allan Clark to issue temporary outdoor dining permits during the pandemic. Selectman Meth seconded the motion. All were in favor. **Motion passes.**

Selectman Meth said he noticed that the Franconia Market & Deli site parking lot has been excavated and it appears they may be changing the footprint of the building. The Selectmen thought the changed plan may need to be heard by the Planning Board. Chairman Brewer said she will reach out to Allan Clark to see what should happen if there has been a change in plans that alter the footprint of the structure.

Correspondence:

None.

Committee Reports:

Energy Commission: Selectman Meth said the Energy Commission has been meeting via Zoom every Tuesday at 4:30. Kim Cowles also reported on the meeting and said the Energy Commission has also been discussing applying for a grant for a new Welcome Center but it is the same grant the Water Department is applying for and as the new water line would be important for the town the Energy Commission should discuss other grant opportunities.

Conservation Commission: Chairman Brewer said the Conservation Commission is planning to try to meet on May 18th but it remains to be determined whether the meeting will be a zoom meeting or in person.

PUBLIC INPUT:

Bob Montagno commented regarding the budget cut. He said when he was a Selectmen he looked at the budget as a whole and figured the percentage of the cut and asked department heads to reduce their budgets by that percentage amount.

Dawn Steele thanked Jenny Monahan for working to get caught up on the meeting minutes.

Jenny Monahan said that Sally Small has offered to look at the budget with the Selectmen to help with finding places to cut.

Selectman Meth thanked Sally Small for her help with the Town Administrator work.

With no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 3:56pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jenny Monahan
Administrative Secretary