

**TOWN OF FRANCONIA
BOARD OF SELECTMEN'S REGULAR MEETING
MAY 18th, 2020 AT 3:00PM, HELD REMOTELY VIA ZOOM**

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Eric Meth, Jill Brewer, Jeff Blodgett.

PRESENT PANELISTS: Jenny Monahan, Kim Cowles, Sally Small, Walter Palmer, Kathryn Palmer.

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

APPOINTMENTS:

Appointment for New Full-Time Police Officer: Chief Cashin introduced newly appointed Officer Kaitlin Barnum to the Selectmen. He then updated the Selectmen on the recent missing juvenile case explaining that she had been located and the investigation was ongoing.

TO SIGN/APPROVE:

The May 11th minutes were approved as amended.

Tax Abatement Applications: The Selectmen reviewed the following tax abatement applications:

Map 4 Lot 28-6 on Summit Drive was not approved for abatement. The Town's Assessor reviewed the application and advised the Board that the assessment is fair and equitable and consistent with similar properties in the surrounding area and town.

Map 15 Lot 24 at 151 Town Edge Lane was not approved for abatement. The Town's Assessor reviewed the property and advised the Board that new construction has begun on the property and it will be visited in 2021 to check for completion of the new building. The application was also not complete; the property owner did not submit the application in its entirety and did not sign the application.

TO DISCUSS/REVIEW:

2020 Budget Finalization: Chairman Brewer said he spoke with Public Works Director Scott Leslie and \$40,000 can be cut from the Highway Department's budget with the delay of some projects. Due to not having a Town Administrator for the past several months \$10,000 can be cut from Executive Wages & Salaries Budget. The Retirement line can be reduced by \$9,000 that was intended to improve the employee retirement plan. The Personnel Administration Budget can be reduced by \$18,000 due to not providing insurance to a part-time Town Administrator. The Transfer Station budget can be reduced by \$5,000. The Legal Expense budget can be reduced somewhat due to the Legal Capital Reserve Fund but it has not been decided by how much; Selectmen Meth suggested \$6,000 or perhaps a little more.

Sally Small commented that the Transfer Station cannot be cut because it's a warrant article so that \$5,000 must be retained.

Chairman Brewer said Karen Foss recommended a cut from the Fire Department but Chairman Brewer said Chief Gaudette is very responsible with his budget and it is difficult to plan a cut to an important Safety Service without knowing what the year ahead holds. She said if there is a surplus it can go to the Unassigned Fund Balance and be used to offset the tax rate.

Recreation Director Kim Cowles said there may be some savings in the Recreation Budget but as it is now known yet if there will be a summer program or what programming will look like at this point. She should know more in a week when some vital decisions are made based on the Governor's Covid-19 recommendations. Kim said there could be some savings in the Dow Field Maintenance fund as there won't be as many events held there due to Covid-19. The Board discussed a few other budgets but did not make any decisions on further cuts. Chairman Brewer said the Board had hoped to finalize the \$100,000 of cuts for this meeting but have not yet found all the funds and will continue to work on it.

Correspondence:

Chairman Brewer said she heard from Meredith Pratt regarding her complaint about Presby's Recycling Center. Chairman Brewer let her know that Allan Clark said the facility is grandfathered and therefore does not have to abide by current regulations but Allan is working on a full report that can be sent to her when it is completed. She suggested Meredith talk with the facility owners and see if progress can be made that way.

Selectmen Meth said a local business owner had asked the Board about financial help for his business due to revenue decline from Covid-19. The Board discussed that there are newly approved funds available from the State and to direct the business owner to those resources.

Committee Reports:

Conservation Commission: Chairman Brewer said the Conservation Commission is planning to meet on May 19th via zoom at 4:30.

Energy Commission: Selectman Meth said the Energy Commission has been meeting via Zoom every Tuesday at 4:30 and has been focusing on the Welcome Center. They were planning to apply for a NBRC grant however the Water Department may be applying for the same grant and plan to forgo applying if the Water Department applies. Selectmen Meth said he has written a letter of recommendation for the grant application for the other Selectmen to review and have Jenny print on letterhead if they support it.

Chamber of Commerce: Selectman Blodgett says the Chamber is meeting for the first time in a few months this week.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Susan Moore asked who she could talk to about using Zoom for the Supervisors of the Checklist meeting. Chairman Brewer said she could speak with Kim Cowles.

With no further discussion, the regular Selectmen's meeting was adjourned at 3:50pm.

Chairman Brewer made a motion to begin the Public Hearing for the Application for Historic Preservation Easement. As it was before the scheduled time of 4:00pm those in attendance chatted

socially until 4:00pm.

Public Hearing – Application for Historic Preservation Easement: Walter and Kathryn Palmer applied for a Historic Preservation Easement for their barn and property on which it stands at 1792 Easton Road, Map 33 Lot 1-1 under NH RSA 79D which would provide a tax abatement if granted.

Walter Palmer said the barn was erected on their property after being purchased in a dismantled state in Southern NH. Walter said the frame is stamped with the year 1867. He said there is an investment of time, effort and expense in maintaining the structure and an easement on the structure would help offset those costs, and he feels the barn adds tourist appeal to the area. Walter said the doors and windows were not included with the dismantled barn and they are building those themselves. They are using the structure for a horse barn and storage.

Selectmen Meth said the Board would consider the application and let them know when a decision is made.

With no further discussion, the public hearing was adjourned at 4:10pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jenny Monahan
Administrative Secretary