

**TOWN OF FRANCONIA**  
**BOARD OF SELECTMEN'S REGULAR MEETING**  
**JUNE 15th, 2020 AT 3:00PM, HELD REMOTELY VIA ZOOM**

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

**PRESENT PANELISTS:** Kim Cowles, Jenny Monahan, Carol Wills.

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

**APPOINTMENTS:** None.

**TO SIGN/APPROVE:**

The June 8th minutes were approved as written.

**Property Tax Abatements:** The Selectmen reviewed the following two property tax abatement requests for the year 2020:

- Alpen Hill Road, Map 28 Lot 17, Von Pantz: The Selectmen granted this abatement.
- 793 Main Street, Map 13 Lot 28, TTD Meadow Realty: The Selectmen granted this abatement.

**TO DISCUSS/REVIEW:**

**2020 Budget Cuts:** Town Administrator Cowles said she and Sally Small evaluated the budget for additional reductions to meet the \$100,000 cut made by voters at Town Meeting. Town Administrator Cowles suggested the following reductions:

- Executive, Wages - \$10,000 (Savings from months without FT TA, using less services from MRI and using PT TA now)
- Personnel Administration - \$25,000 (\$18,000 from Health Insurance, \$7,000 from Retirement)
- Legal - \$6,000
- Buildings & Grounds - \$9,000 (Wages saved from having one employee currently and portapotties not being rented due to Covid)
- Police - \$10,000 (Chief Cashin will report back on the specific line items)
- Highway - \$40,000 (Mostly gravel, other items to be determined)

Town Administrator Cowles said these reductions still allow for the Personnel Administration – Employee Retirement budget to fund the proposed 5% match by the Town towards employee's retirement.

Chairman Brewer made a motion that effective August 1<sup>st</sup> the Town contributes an up to 5% match towards employee's retirement plans. Selectman Meth seconded the motion. All were in favor.

**Motion passes.**

**Town of Franconia Health & Safety Manual:** The Selectmen briefly discussed the Health & Safety Manual that they had reviewed prior to the meeting.

Selectman Meth suggested that employees should initial sections of the manual after reading. The other Selectmen and Town Administrator Cowles agreed.

Chairman Brewer made a motion to adopt the Town of Franconia Health & Safety Manual. Selectman Meth seconded the motion. All were in favor. **Motion passes.**

**Correspondence:**

**Fox Hill Cooperative Request:** Selectman Meth received an email from Victoria Stauches, Operations Manager for Fox Hill Cooperative regarding four abandoned mobile homes in the park that the Cooperative would like to demolish. The Cooperative is requesting that back taxes on the abandoned mobile homes be forgiven. The Cooperative hopes to clear the lots of the uninhabitable abandoned homes to make way for new residents.

Tax Collector Carol Wills said the Board can abate the taxes and forgive the interest at its discretion. She said the Town did not tax deed these properties in previous years because they would be a financial liability to the town. Carol said that former Town Administrator, Holly Burbank, had been discussing the demolition of the units with Presby Construction when they were considering buying the park and was thinking of selling the abandoned properties to them for a nominal fee so they could demolish them without the town's involvement.

Selectman Meth said there is one lot in particular, lot 50, that the Cooperative wants to demolish now and requested that the Board allow the Cooperative to proceed with the demolition of that unit and consider the others later. The other Selectmen agreed to allow the Cooperative to move forward with the demolition of lot 50.

**Additional Discussion:** Chairman Brewer said it's looking great throughout town with the new ArtWalk installations and the new gate at the cemetery and thanked the FAA and the Cemetery Trustees and Cemetery Sexton Penny Keeler.

A Right to Know request was received from Dawn Steele asking for Kim Cowles contract and final 2020 employee wages.

Chairman Brewer said her kids have been having a lot of fun with Geocaching and thinks having a few of them in town (Riverwalk Trail and other town trails) could be a good way to bring people to town to enjoy the trails. Kim and Jill will discuss this at a later date.

There was an issue at the Transfer Station with the compactor on Sunday June 14<sup>th</sup> and they could not accept trash for a few hours. Corey Rush was able to fix the compactor this morning so normal operations have resumed. Town Administrator Cowles thanked Tim Blake for his handling of the compactor situation and said it still needs to be determined whether we will need to hire a full-time or part-time employee there as we only have two employees there currently. Selectman Blodgett asked if

we had a maintenance contract on the compactor. Town Administrator Cowles was not sure and said she will find out.

Town Administrator Cowles said based on the new guidelines released by the Governor, we can start holding meetings at Town Hall again while observing distancing recommendations and limiting the number of people in attendance. She would like the Selectmen's Office to stay closed to the public until we have installed the glass window over Jenny's desk.

**Committee Reports:**

**Cable Consortium:** Selectman Meth said there has been no recent activity with the Cable Consortium.

**Chamber of Commerce:** Selectman Blodgett said the Chamber will meet again next Wednesday.

**Conservation Commission:** Chairman Brewer said the Conservation Commission is planning to meet on June 16th at 4:00pm.

**Energy Commission:** Selectman Meth said there are no meeting updates at this time but the Energy Commission is pleased that Article 6 regarding Profile School's Solar Project was passed by voters.

**Planning Board:** Selectman Meth said he chatted with Planning Board is planning to meet next week.

**Additional Discussion:** Chairman Brewer said now that things are normalizing a bit the Board may wish to begin meeting bi-weekly again for the summer. This will be revisited in a week or two.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

None.

With no further discussion, the public hearing was adjourned at 3:40pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jenny Monahan  
Administrative Secretary