

**TOWN OF FRANCONIA
BOARD OF SELECTMEN'S REGULAR MEETING
JANUARY 11, 2021 AT 3PM HELD REMOTELY VIA ZOOM**

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

OTHERS PRESENT: Kim Cowles, Jenny Monahan, various online attendees.

The meeting was called to order at 3:02pm.

APPOINTMENTS:

None

TO SIGN/APPROVE:

The January 11, 2021 transaction list was reviewed and signed by the Selectmen remotely.

The December 28th, 2021 and January 11, 2021 meeting minutes were approved as amended.

TO DISCUSS/REVIEW

NHDOT Transportation Alternatives Program Grant: Chairman Brewer said the town is going to apply for funding for the sidewalk project through the NHDOT's Transportation Alternatives Program. Chairman Brewer said the funding requires a 20% match from the applicant. Town Administrator Cowles has sent a letter of interest to the program requesting \$400,000.

Local Covid-19 Data Update: Chairman Brewer said the board has drafted a letter to Governor Sununu requesting that vaccines are provided to staff and residents at Lafayette Center as soon as possible as there are some cases of Covid there currently. Health Officer Dr. Charles Wolcott said there are two residents and one staff member that have tested positive and the facility is scheduled for the first vaccination on January 28th. Dr. Wolcott spoke with personnel at the Dept. of Health and Human Services to hopefully accelerate the process for getting the vaccines at Lafayette.

As part of the Local Covid-19 Data Update, Chairman Brewer acknowledged the loss of revenue local eating establishments have experienced and suggested the board consider what can be done to assist them, using financial assistance by way of tax relief or a local stimulus from the fund balance as examples. Chairman Brewer also said that a way to help these businesses is to relay recommended actions in order to help control community spread. She said this would decrease the likelihood of another statewide shutdown that would further devastate eating establishments and help to increase the number of people who feel comfortable eating indoors. She said the state's dashboard website and covidactnow.org can be used to track community spread and those websites show that community spread is increased in the North Country region. For Grafton County, the website states the following: "These recommendations match the guidelines set by the White House Coronavirus Task Force, Harvard Global Health Institute, and the CDC. Based on Grafton County, New Hampshire's new cases per 100k in the last 7 days (155.8) and positive test rate (6.6%), people in Grafton County, New Hampshire are

advised to adhere to the following recommendations: Travel should be avoided unless necessary, masks should be mandated in all indoor spaces and worn by everyone outside their home, gyms should max at 25% capacity, schools should enable remote learning for all students. All government levels should invest in remote learning. Gatherings should be limited to 25 people and physical distance should be maintained. The CDC also recommends that gatherings take place outdoors. Bars should be avoided and required to close. Restaurants should create outdoor dining opportunities, with the assistance of local governments. Customers should use take-out, outdoor dining, or indoor dining when strict social distancing can be maintained.”

Chairman Brewer asked Town Administrator Cowles to put a link to covidactnow.org on the website.

Town Administrator Update: Town Administrator Cowles said Pam Oakman has resigned as the Deputy Emergency Management Director effective immediately. She has been promoted at her full time job and will not have the time to devote to the position.

Town Administrator Cowles also has a request from Town Clerk/Tax Collector Carol Wills to issue an \$80 refund for a vehicle registration that was done incorrectly. She will send the form to the selectmen for signature.

Town Administrator Cowles also has a Land Use Change Tax form that the selectmen previously signed remotely but must sign in person for the Dept. of Revenue Administration. This will be left at town hall for the selectmen to come in and sign.

Town Administrator Cowles said she is predominantly working on year end tasks currently and on budgets.

Selectman Meth said he has reviewed Senate Bill 2 regarding town and school meeting postponement and a comprehensive article on the bill by Steven Buckley of NH Municipal Association. The bill has passed the Senate and is currently in the House of Representatives.

CORRESPONDENCE: None.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Cable Consortium: Selectman Meth said the Cable Consortium is hoping to schedule a meeting the third week in January with Representative Tim Egan in attendance. Selectman Meth also said Chris Jensen of Bethlehem’s Select Board has written something up for the Bethlehem newsletter and Selectmen Meth is hoping we can do the same to attract more volunteers. The Grafton County Broadband Internet Committee meets January 27th and Selectman Meth is hoping to attend via Zoom. He is hopeful the town will be invited to join that committee in coming months.

Chamber of Commerce: Selectman Blodgett said the next meeting should be January 20th but that has not been announced yet.

Conservation Commission: No update.

Energy Commission: The next meeting is January 19th at 4:30pm via zoom.

Planning Board: Selectman Meth said the Planning Board meets tomorrow the 12th at 7pm via zoom.

CIP: No update.

OTHER DISCUSSION

Mittersill Sewer Odor Issue: Two residents of Mittersill discussed the issue of sewer odor from a manhole near their residences with the board. The residents are hoping that the town will lend support in helping to get the resort to address the issue. The issue has been discussed previously and Health Official Dr. Wolcott had investigated the odor and asked Mittersill to develop a plan to fix the issue and respond to the board of selectmen but there was no response to that letter. Dr. Wolcott said it is a very significant nuisance and needs to be fixed.

Chairman Brewer said Kevin Kaveny of the Department of Environmental Services had previously advised the board to proceed with RSA 147:10 - Nuisances. Chairman Brewer quoted the following: "The health officers of towns may make regulations for the prevention and removal of nuisances, and such other regulations relating to the public health as in their judgment the health and safety of the people require". Selectmen Meth suggested revisiting the topic in the spring and that the board supports Dr. Wolcott's authority to mandate that the issue is fixed at that time.

PUBLIC INPUT:

An attendee asked about whether three of the four Covid cases in Franconia were at Lafayette Center. Chairman Brewer said no, the nursing home cases are not part of the four cases that were previously reported.

Mary Grote asked what the cutoff date is for submitting a warrant article in light of the possible delay of town meeting. Mary was advised that the date is February 2nd.

With no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 4:09pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jenny Monahan
Administrative Secretary