

**TOWN OF FRANCONIA
BOARD OF SELECTMEN'S REGULAR MEETING
MONDAY, MARCH 7, 2022 AT 6:00PM AT TOWN HALL**

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Dan Walker, Jill Brewer, Eric Meth

OTHERS PRESENT: Kim Cowles, Jenny Monahan, Lynn Terres, Dawn Steele, Jan Cole, Mary Grote, Peter Grote, Monica Laflamme, Karen Foss, Jayne O'Connor, Larry Plate, Pat Garvin, Ann Foss, Jeremy Hall

The meeting was called to order at 6:00pm

APPOINTMENTS/WORK SESSIONS

None

TO SIGN/APPROVE

The March 7, 2022 transaction report was reviewed and signed by the selectmen.

The February 7, 2022 minutes were approved as amended and the February 14, 2022 were approved as written on a motion from Chairman Brewer and a second from Selectman Walker.

A driveway permit application for Map 24 Lot 66, Timber Lane was approved by the board.

A septic permit application for map 14 Lot 34, Fox Hill Cooperative lots 50 & 54 was approved by the board.

TO DISCUSS/REVIEW:

Town Wide Mask Mandate: The board discussed the town wide mask mandate and that the metric they decided to use to continue or discontinue the mandate when the mandate was created was local hospitalizations. Chairman Brewer said she had reached out to Health Officer Dr. Duffy and he said the ICU at Littleton Regional Hospital was no longer inundated and having to send patients elsewhere. There was discussion about the governor's recent announcement that masks are no longer recommended in all indoor spaces and that Cannon Mountain Ski Area has overridden the town's mask mandate at this point. After the discussion, Chairman Brewer made a motion to rescind the town wide mask mandate effective tomorrow, March 8, 2022. Selectman Walker seconded the motion with all voting in favor. **Motion passes.**

Correspondence: Dave Woodward of Avitar Associates wrote the board to let them know that Map 30 Lot 2-6, a seven-acre parcel on Easton Road that was allowed to be in current use because it was contiguous with another property owned by the same person has been sold so is therefore no longer eligible for current use status. He said a Land Use Change Tax should be sent to the new owner for \$9,900.

Chairman Brewer made a motion that Map 30 Lot 2-6, a seven-acre parcel is taken out of current use per the recommendation of the town's assessor and a Land Use Change Tax is levied against the

property owner for \$9,900.00. Selectman Walker seconded the motion with all voting in favor. **Motion passes.**

Town Administrator Update: Town Administrator Cowles said she had a discussion with the Governor's Office on Disabilities about helping residents with hearing impairment at public meetings. She said microphones are now in place for town hall meetings and for town meeting, tomorrow at the school, the sound system is much better and there will be microphones there and people that would like to speak will be required to come to the podium to use the microphone.

Town Administrator Cowles said that as previously discussed, a highway truck has been located and a refundable down payment was put on that vehicle to hold it by a private resident. She said she spoke with town counsel about having a special town meeting and counsel instead recommended that instead, a motion be made to amend the proposed budget at town meeting and increase it by the amount of the truck, to be raised by taxation. Then a motion would be made to amend article five (money being raised for capital reserve funds) to take the funds for the highway truck from Unassigned Fund Balance instead of raising it through taxation. Town Administrator Cowles said this could cause some confusion for voters at town meeting and some residents disputed the accuracy of counsel's recommendation. The board asked Town Administrator Cowles to seek clarification from counsel and the auditors.

Town Administrator Cowles said there is an error on the warrant with the numbering of some articles and this will have to be explained to voters tomorrow.

Town Administrator Cowles said a resident had requested that committee reports be taken monthly rather than weekly.

ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION:

Chairman Brewer initiated a discussion with the board about public input. She said that while she is very interested to hear comments from the public the intention of the meeting is for the board to be able to conduct town business. She said while the public is entitled to attend meetings it is not entitled to speak unless invited to do so by the board and there has been commentary that is not constructive and lengthy issues have been brought up during public comment. The board discussed setting time limits on comments. Secretary Jenny Monahan commented that the public commenting throughout the meeting rather than in public comment period has been difficult to work with when doing minutes and that she had researched public comment in minutes and learned that putting detailed public comment in the minutes is not recommended by Roberts Rules of Order. The board also discussed that lengthy comment or issues should be appointments with the board rather than comments. The board decided to move public comment from the end of the meeting to directly after the meeting appointments.

Selectman Meth commented on SB249, an act prohibiting planning and zoning ordinances from prohibiting short-term rentals. He read comments from State Representative Tim Egan who said that while he supports homeowners' rights to use their properties as they wish, he has concerns about housing stock for workforce and families and supports strict noise, trash and parking ordinances to protect neighboring properties.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Broadband Initiative: Selectman Meth said there is a meeting coming up with the Franconia Broadband

Committee on the 1th via Zoom. The Northern Grafton Communications District meets this Wednesday the 9th to discuss how to reach out to New Hampshire Electric Co-op and to see if they can be of help preparing for the middle mile.

Chamber of Commerce: Selectman Walker said the COC meets next Tuesday at Woodsville Guaranty at 9am.

Conservation Commission: No new update at this time, continued work on purchasing Map 17 Lot 3.

Energy Commission: Selectman Meth said there is no meeting scheduled at this time but a ten-year strategic plan has been discussed and is expected to be a meeting topic in the near future.

Planning Board: Selectman Meth said the next meeting is scheduled for March 29th at town hall at 7pm.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Public comment was given by Larry Plate and Ginny Jeffryes on the rescinded mask mandate.

With no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 6:52pm on a motion from Chairman Brewer and a second from Selectman Meth with all voting in favor.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jenny Monahan
Administrative Secretary