

ALTON BOARD OF SELECTMEN
Minutes
May 11, 2020

Approved – June 1, 2020

Chairman R. Wentworth convened the meeting at 6:00 PM and P. LaRochelle led the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag and a Moment of Silence. The following staff members were present:

Reuben Wentworth, Chairman
Virgil MacDonald, Vice Chairman
Philip V. Wittmann, Selectman
Paul LaRochelle, Selectman
Bob Holt, Selectman
Elizabeth Dionne, Town Administrator

R. Wentworth announced:

Until further notice: To keep our members and staff safe, and to comply with RSA 91-A, the State of Emergency, and Governor's Orders, restrictions on public gatherings, The Town of Alton is moving from "in-person" meetings to "remote audio participation meetings". To remotely attend the meeting (audio only) visit our website: www.alton.nh.gov for telephone access and remote access instructions listed under News and Announcements on the home page or telephone the Selectmen's Office 603-875-2113 or 603-875-0229 between 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM for the Dial-in Code and Meeting ID for each Selectmen's Meeting. There continues to be no Public Input at this time. If you wish to have something read into the record, please call the Selectmen's Office at 603-875-2113 or 603-875-0229 or email the Selectmen at selectmen@alton.nh.gov, or mail a letter to the Board of Selectmen at PO Box 659, Alton, NH 03809. Your comments, questions or concerns will be read at the next available meeting and answered at that meeting or the next available meeting.

Agenda Approval

R. Wentworth requested to amend the agenda changing the date from May 4, 2020 to May 11, 2020.

R. Wentworth made a motion to amend the agenda changing the date from May 4, 2020 to May 11, 2020 and seconded by B. Holt. Roll call vote:

B. Holt, yes	P. LaRochelle, yes	P. Wittmann, yes
V. MacDonald, yes	R. Wentworth, yes	

Announcements

- Submission of Public Comments - Questions - Concerns

None

Appointments:

None

New Business:

1. Request for Sales and Solicitation License - Stage Road Farm

A license application was filed by Stephen Bell from Stage Road Farm. This is to sell his fresh produce in the Bay area from May to October on Wednesdays and Saturdays. His request is asking to have a half-year fee opposed to the annual fee. It was noted that the area is in the parking area by the new gazebo. The Board agrees that this would be a good thing for the residents of the Town. The request is for Wednesday 3:00 PM to 6:00 PM and Saturday 10:00 AM to 1:00 PM. This request would fall under the Sales and Solicitation Policy. Years ago, Mr. Bell was part of the original Farmers Market that was in Alton. The Board suggested that L. Dionne get together with J. Dever, Code Officer to see where the best place would be to set up a Farmers Market possibly where the new

parking area is down to the entrance to the campground; this would allow parking. Most markets are usually open 3 or 4 hours at the most. This item will be tabled for one week to allow L. Dionne and J. Dever to look at the area and have L. Dionne look up the Agricultural Law. In addition, it will allow B. Holt to review the Policy pertaining to this matter.

B. Holt made a motion to table the request from Mr. Bell for one (1) week and seconded by P. Wittmann. Roll call vote:

B. Holt, yes	P. LaRochelle, yes	P. Wittmann, yes
V. MacDonald, yes	R. Wentworth, yes	

L. Dionne offered to inform Mr. Bell.

2. Request for a "Slow Children" Sign - Youngtown Road

P. LaRochelle asked if Youngtown Road has become more populated recently and was informed it has. This sign would be beneficial.

V. MacDonald made a motion to approve a "Slow Children" sign on Youngtown Road and P. LaRochelle seconded.

Further discussion: B. Holt has some issues with the town "signing itself to death"; they don't look good, but they don't do any harm, he urged caution, feeling that they just don't look good. This is for safety.

The motion on the table was called. Roll call vote:

B. Holt, yes	P. LaRochelle, yes	P. Wittmann, yes
V. MacDonald, yes	R. Wentworth, yes	

3. 154 Main Street Sidewalk Discussion

Pictures were provided to the Board of the location of discussion. Some patching has been done, but not all. The problem is that the whole crosswalk area is broken up and is in need of constant repairs. This needs to be ground and replaced working with the State. We need to work with the State, have L. Dionne contact District 3 Engineers to grind out the area down to the base to the white line to the private property cutting a line along the Village Store over to the sidewalk while straightening out the crosswalk. B. Holt feels that the Road Agent should deal with the State and if they don't want anything to do with it then the Town needs to do something to fix this. The money can come out of the Road Reconstruction Fund or the Sidewalk Fund noting that this fund will be used this year to seal all of the sidewalks in Town. We need to deal with District 3 as this is more administrative. R. Wentworth would like for the Town Administrator to speak with them. L. Dionne will contact District 3. The consensus of the Board will be for L. Dionne to contact District 3 to speak with the District Engineer.

Further Discussion: B. Holt asked if this would come back to the Board; it will. In addition, Line painting was brought forward. Roll call consensus:

B. Holt, yes	P. LaRochelle, yes	P. Wittmann, yes
V. MacDonald, yes	R. Wentworth, yes	

4. Revenue Discussion

Updated revenues were provided to the Board by the Finance Officer and the Town Clerk. L. Dionne informed the Board that the report is only a couple of days old. Revenues were discussed with differences reported from last year to this year; more than likely the differences will continue as the year continues which is a bit concerning. Revenues or lack of revenues, is L. Dionne's intention is to go through the budget line by line to see where the Board could not expend to save appropriated monies. The Board needs to think about revenues that will be decreasing and we are not allowed to over spend the entire bottom line budget. Some things are necessary with everything needing to be looked at. She hopes to have recommendations to the Board in the very near future for which line items that could be frozen or partially frozen for spending the appropriations. It is unknown as to how the tax bill revenues will come in next month and will be a key factor. There is some concern on this matter. The

Tax Collector is giving 49 days to pay the tax bills that will be due by July 1st. There will be a better outlook after that date. We need to prepare or be prepared for not receiving all of the revenues that we should be receiving. L. Dionne recommends letting her provide a list of line items that could be frozen for the Board to approve. R. Wentworth believes that each Department Head should be consulted so that there is no unnecessary spending in order to cover the necessities. The Board should give the Town Administrator at least a couple of weeks to prepare and recommend to the Board. B. Holt has concerns with \$57,239.70 being the current deficit compared to last year and is not in favor of freezing spending. All departments should be made aware of unnecessary spending. V. MacDonald voiced his opinion on the Capital Reserves. P. LaRochelle feels that there should not be a freeze at this time but all department heads should be spoken to regarding spending. P. Wittmann agrees that speaking with the departments then the Board can make the determination. It was the consensus of the Board to allow L. Dionne the time to look into this and report back to the Board with the findings then the Board can make recommendations. V. MacDonald questioned the revenues opposed to the uncollected revenues; R. Wentworth would like L. Dionne to request L. Parker, Finance Officer to remotely attend the meeting to explain to the Board in detail, in order to avoid confusion.

Old Business:

1. Blue Planet Funding - Proposed Solar PILOT Agreement

R. Wentworth would like to discuss this briefly before bringing A. Funk into the meeting. V. MacDonald feels that this should be fully reviewed by the Town Attorney in detail and that he is just agreeing with something that someone else has reviewed or recommended. B. Holt is confused as this is private property and assumes that someone else owns and that person must be getting funds through the project. He further asked if the area that the array is on if it will have the current use status removed and the penalty paid; L. Dionne confirmed it would. L. Dionne explained the PILOT program which stands for Payment in Lieu of Taxes. The amount that is within the agreement is \$10,000 per year. A memo was provided with the agreement from the Assessor who has some concerns with the provided agreement. The agreement should be a mutual agreement between the parties involved and not written by the proposer and in the best interest of the Town. P. LaRochelle asked if the current owner will pay the taxes on the remaining property; they will and what amount of tax would be paid as it stands; L. Dionne will obtain the information and report back to the Board members. Many questions/scenarios were posed and discussed. L. Dionne feels that the 10K dollars for a 3MW solar array is good but agrees with the Assessor's concerns. There could be some slight modifications and feels that the company wants to get up and running in order to bring in revenues and won't drag on and on. Assessor to look at this and figure out exactly what the taxes would be on the property then send this to Attorney Sessler to review and recommend opposed to the Assessor. It is L. Dionne's opinion that the money is a decent amount to begin and possibly modify the term from 20 years to 10 years. R. Wentworth feels 5 years would be more appropriate. Again it was voiced that the contract should be written by the Town's Attorney not the proposer. Much discussion ensued amongst the Board members regarding the taxes/PILOT agreements and requirements for solar arrays, incentives, tax breaks, who writes the contracts, etc. At this time, Allen Funk from Blue Planet Funding remotely joined the meeting via telephone. A. Funk responded to some of the questions that were posed by the Board during the discussion. Specifically the 20 year term was addressed. We want a long term relation and prefer to stay in one spot for a length of time due to expenses incurred for setting equipment. Financing becomes an issue for a shorter term. NH is a less forgiving environment. To build the project it could be upwards of 5 million dollar investment. This would give a steady stream of income with a PILOT agreement. This is a financial investment. Solar is a unique situation. V. MacDonald questioned the megawatts from the array; 3 megawatts will be delivered within the grid. P. LaRochelle mentioned the other agreements in various states who have property tax abatements verses a PILOT Agreement which he has been dealing with for approximately eight (8) years. B. Holt again questioned the 20 year term if it was a must or negotiable. A. Funk voiced that 20 years is a must and doesn't want it to be a challenge for the Board however the investors want that with an ability to extend the program as mutually agreed upon and compared them to a bond. They want a long-duration investment vehicle and a solar project is attractive from that standpoint. It delivers income over a long period of time. The income is matched against the expenses. L. Dionne voiced and agreed with concerns that the Town Assessor brought forward that this should be a mutual agreement opposed to an owner agreement. There is no opt out clause and other items of concern were mentioned; these can be discussed at a later date in the near future with approval of the Board. A. Funk was thanked for his time.

R. Wentworth made a motion to allow the Town Administrator to work with A. Funk from Blue Planet Funding for a proposed Solar PILOT Agreement that is suitable to all parties and P. LaRochelle.

Further Discussion: V. MacDonald noticed that the taxes won't begin until they get into the commercial setting and feels that that should be worked on, there could be up to a two (2) year wait. This should be investigated. P. Wittmann mentioned that this also has a federal subsidy. This should all be worked out with all parties and have the Town Attorney involved.

The motion on the table was called. Roll call vote:

B. Holt, yes P. LaRochelle, yes P. Wittmann, yes
V. MacDonald, yes R. Wentworth, yes

Selectmen Reports

B. Holt had nothing to report.

P. Wittmann had nothing to report.

P. LaRochelle had nothing to report.

V. MacDonald had nothing to report however he had a couple of items he wanted to mention. The Fireworks, Memorial Day Parade and Harmony Park and the Boat launch (next agenda) has issues. They all need to be discussed.

R. Wentworth reported on the EMT meeting held today. Concerns were voiced from the Parks and Recreation Director on programs. The team has decided that for now everything stays in place until the end of May. Currently there are no summer programs taking place. K. Troendle will need to know by June 11th at the latest for the programs, fireworks, hiring, etc. Fireworks need to be cancelled 30 days in advance for a refund; the EMT Team is looking into this. Porta-Potties will be placed by the restrooms, 2 on the men's side, 2 on the women's side and 2 over by the Beach; one of each will be handicap assessable. They will be placed at a strategic location and cleaned twice a week. Supplies are the issue with theft and availability which is why the restrooms are not being opened. The Police Chief will be reaching out to the American Legion about the Memorial Day Parade and will be cancelled due to the Governor's orders with a thought of coming up with something to honor the veterans. It was noted that the Old Riverside Cemetery looks terrific, beautiful, kudos to J. Andersen! The public swim wharfs will have signage "No Lifeguard on Duty" as they don't meet the COVID19 CDC Guidelines for cleaning. The picnic table next to the ladies restroom will be moved back with the others. Milfoil spraying was unknown and will be looked into. All expenditures due to COVID-19 will go under the Emergency Management line item; it will be over-expended and will be accounted for, for reimbursement through the CARES Act or FEMA.

Town Administrator Report by L. Dionne

The FEMA reimbursement will not be received this year; it is up to 75%. The CARES Act under the GOFERR Fund is 100% reimbursed for Hazard Pay Stipends for Emergency Responders and will be reimbursed this year. The proposal in the CARES Act which is funding that the State has received is to pay a stipend to the emergency responders. It is a weekly stipend for those who work over 30 hours at \$300 per week and those that work under 30 hours it would be \$150. If someone is on the roster and available they could receive \$50. If someone works for more than one municipality they can only receive it from one. The Board needs to either approve or deny these stipends. L. Dionne has not seen any municipality that has denied this stipend. A rough calculation for this with approximately 33 personnel in the Fire Department would be \$3,300 per week out of the budget and approximately 17 personnel in the Police Department would be \$4,200 per week out of the budget so it equates to roughly \$7,500 per week which comes out of the budget and reimbursed out of the CARES Act. There are certain time frames that this can be applied for. For those that are in the NH Retirement system, this does not qualify towards the retirement system, FICA and Medicare do apply and is reimbursed. R. Wentworth believes the reimbursement timeframe is 2021/2022. There are three (3) phases, March 1 to April 30, May 1 to June 30 and July 1 to August 31. The money is available in the State Treasury. L. Dionne understands that the Finance Manager will create a new line in the Emergency Management budget specifically for these stipends so that it will not confuse the stipends with FEMA reimbursements. FEMA has a minimum that needs to be reached. The CARES Act stipends do not qualify for FEMA and is out of the GOFERR Fund, FEMA is totally separate and takes a long time to obtain and will be from 0% up to 75% of any expense for the emergency. The money obtained can be used to reimburse the Emergency Management line and is only during the three (3) phases if approved by the Board and is only available if the employees are

available for work during the time frames allowed. We have until June 1st to request reimbursement for this stipend. This information just came in last week. You need to wait for each phase to complete before you can submit for the phases.

R. Wentworth made a motion to approve the First Responders COVID-19 Stipend Program paid for by the State of NH through the CARES Act for the Police Officers and the Fire/Ambulance Personnel.

Further Discussion: Noted is that Retail businesses can apply as well as other businesses. L. Dionne informed the Board that President Trump has declared that Public Works personnel are eligible however NH has not declared them eligible. If this does happen then our department will be eligible. On another note, L. Dionne feels and recommends that the Board consider wearing masks at the meetings, not knowing who has been in contact with who. The Board understands. B. Holt stated where is all this money going to come from.

The above motion on the table was called and seconded by P. Wittmann. Roll call vote:

B. Holt, yes P. LaRochelle, yes P. Wittmann, yes
V. MacDonald, yes R. Wentworth, yes

Approval of Minutes

None

Consent Agenda Approval

P. LaRochelle made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda as submitted on May 11, 2020 and B. Holt seconded. Roll call vote:

B. Holt, yes P. LaRochelle, yes P. Wittmann, yes
V. MacDonald, yes R. Wentworth, yes

1. Fire Department:

- a. Rebekah Lehouillier, FF/EMT to FF/EMT-A, \$15.10/hr to \$16.60/hr, effective 3/23/20
- b. Scott Magoon, FF/EMT to FF/EMT-A, \$15.75/hr to \$17.25/hr, effective 3/27/20
- c. Heather Luby, FF/EMT to FF/EMT-A, \$15.30/hr to \$16.80/hr, effective 7/12/19
- d. Heather Luby, FF/EMT to FF/EMT-A, \$16.80/hr to \$17.33/hr, effective 1/1/20

Heather Luby changes listed above are to replace previously approved wage increases, not yet issued or issued incorrectly. Previous requests were incorrect. These changes listed here are the correct wage rates, certification levels, and effective dates, and will replace anything that was previously put into effect. This is more of a housekeeping change which needed to be recorded in the Consent Agenda for the approval record and will now be recorded in her permanent payroll records in the Finance Office. I felt you should know that these were simply corrective measures being taken.

Discretionary Action on Requests for Appointments (No discussion, majority vote required to allow/not allow appointment)

Justin Cooper - Request to make repairs and maintain a section of a Davis Road (Class VI)

R. Wentworth stated Mr. Cooper previously came to see him after he spoke with K. Roberts, he is actually not requesting an appointment. K. Roberts has given his recommendation and is in favor of his request. L. Dionne feels for consistency he should have a brief appointment. If the Board agrees to move forward with this then he suggests that K. Roberts goes out and inspects the upgrades to be sure that they are done, and done to his satisfaction and done correctly.

B. Holt made a motion to approve the request from Justin Cooper to upgrade the section of Davis Road and have K. Roberts inspect to his satisfaction and V. MacDonald seconded. Roll call vote:

B. Holt, yes
V. MacDonald, yes

P. LaRochelle, yes
R. Wentworth, yes

P. Wittmann, yes

Non-Public Session:

None

Adjournment

R. Wentworth made a motion to adjourn at 7:49 PM and B. Holt seconded. Roll call vote:

B. Holt, yes
V. MacDonald, yes

P. LaRochelle, yes
R. Wentworth, yes

P. Wittmann, yes

Respectfully submitted,

Mary K. Jarvis

Mary K. Jarvis
Recording Secretary