

Town of Newington, NH
Board of Selectmen Meeting Minutes
Monday, January 11th, 2021 Remote Via Zoom

Attending Meeting by Phone: Chair Ted Connors, Selectman Mike Marconi, Selectman Ken Latchaw, Paul Deschaine, Moderator Jack O'Reilly, Town Clerk Laura Coleman, Martha Roy, Town Administrator and Eleanor Boy, Recorder.

T. Connors called the meeting to order at 9:30am followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

T Connors read the following statement; Due to the COVID-19/Coronavirus crisis and in accordance with Governor Sununu's Emergency Order #12 pursuant to Executive Order 2020-04, this Board is authorized to meet electronically.

Minutes Approval: M. Marconi moved to approve the minutes of December 1st, 2020, December 2nd, 2020, December 28th, 2020 and December 31st, 2020. K. Latchaw seconded the motion. T. Connors asked for a roll call vote: M. Marconi-Yes, K. Latchaw-Yes, T. Connors-Yes. All were in favor.

Manifest Approval: M. Marconi moved to approve the manifests for \$1,036,929.17 dated 12/10/2020, \$134,809.82 dated 12/17/2020, \$30,005.99 dated 12/24/2020, \$573,244.54 dated 12/31/2020 and \$194,887.66 dated 1/7/2021. K. Latchaw seconded the motion. T. Connors asked for a roll call vote: M. Marconi-Yes, K. Latchaw-Yes, T. Connors-Yes. All were in favor.

Donor Towns/Education Funding-Paul Deschaine:

T. Connors thanked P. Deschaine for all his hard work on behalf of the town on this issue.

P. Deschaine explained that the State Education Commission was formed in the early part of 2020. The commission hired the American Institute for Research (AIR) to do a model for school funding in the state and the distribution formula to fund adequate education. The model showed that the average cost per student in NH exceeds the national average, however the distribution of the funds is the problem. Some towns are exceeding the average and some towns are below the average. The more money spent on education the better outcome. The average cost per student is approximately \$18,000. The model would suggest that Newington would have to raise \$8.6 million, keep \$1.4 million and turn over \$7.3 million to the state. T. Connors stated that if this model goes through then it would double the municipal budget and double Newington's taxes. This could happen in 2021 or 2022. T. Connors asked P. Deschaine

to give the Board the names of the people on the commission so the Town can do a major lobbying campaign against the action.

J. O'Reilly offered his help on this matter. He was a Selectman the last time this subject came up. This affects towns that are "property" rich and not the towns with the highest average income. T. Connors thanked J. O'Reilly for his offer of help. The State may revisit the homestead exemption issue again after 20 years. M. Roy asked P. Deschaine to send the list of people to her and she would distribute it to the Selectmen. P. Deschaine explained that the commission is now done and lobbying them would have not effect. T. Connors said that the Town should contact their local legislatures. The list of donor towns now has 72 towns on it. The Town should hire a lobbyist. M. Roy said that she is currently putting together an MOU now and will bring it to the Board soon.

K. Latchaw asked if the same arguments from 20 years ago could be used again. T. Connors said that Jane Ferini has a good handle on the issue and should be setting up a meeting soon. M. Roy said that there was an article in the January newsletter about this issue. J. O'Reilly said that the last time this was an issue, the town had to pay for 3 or 4 years before it could get out of it. M. Roy said that Newington's taxes were \$15.88 during this time. P. Deschaine thought that the town's action shouldn't get too far ahead of the coalition. We can make more noise as a group. K. Latchaw said that he is very pleased that P. Deschaine is on our team.

2021 Election and Town Meeting Discussion:

T. Connors inquired whether the Budget Committee's public hearing would be via Zoom or in person. M. Roy said that the Budget Committee Chair would be the one to make the decision about the public hearing.

J. O'Reilly said that if the town decides to have the town meeting virtually it would have to send a notice to all registered voters to let them know. J. O'Reilly thought that the March election should be by ballot. The 2020 elections went very well and he doesn't see the need to change the election.

Discussion ensued about the different options for the town meeting. J. O'Reilly thought that the town garage would be a good option but the Fire Chief said that it was not safe. Drive thru voting for the Town Meeting has been discussed. The Air National hangers and the old Sears space have been discussed as an option. J. O'Reilly wants to take another look at the Town Hall to see if it could work because everyone wouldn't have to be 6 feet apart because families could sit together. K. Latchaw said that a good back up plan is very important and it is vital to have a location that will bring the most residents out to the meeting. T. Connors suggested that J. O'Reilly and M. Roy meet every week before the election to come up with a plan. J. O'Reilly said that it is important to have the meeting in March because the school teachers' contract is

approved right after to town meeting so that it can go into effect in April. K. Latchaw thought that the parking lot could be used like a drive thru theater for town meeting.

Facility Use Request:

M. Marconi moved to approve the following request.

Mike Sullivan-Town Hall-January 15th-Training

K. Latchaw seconded the motion. T. Connors asked for a roll call vote: M. Marconi-Yes, K. Latchaw-Yes, T. Connors-Yes. All were in favor.

Adoption of the new FEMA Maps and Study-Resolution:

M. Marconi moved to approve the following resolution.

Pursuant to RSA 674:57, by resolution of the Board of Selectmen, all lands designated a special flood hazard area by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) in its "Flood Insurance Study for the County of Rockingham, NH" dated January 29, 2021 together with the associated Flood Insurance Rate Maps, dated January 29, 2021, are declared to be part of the Town of Newington Zoning Ordinance and are hereby incorporated by reference.

K. Latchaw seconded the motion. T. Connors asked for a roll call vote: M. Marconi-Yes, K. Latchaw-Yes, T. Connors-Yes. All were in favor.

K. Latchaw moved to amend Article 17, item 2, of the Town of Newington Zoning Ordinance. M. Marconi seconded the motion. T. Connors asked for a roll call vote: M. Marconi-Yes, K. Latchaw-Yes, T. Connors-Yes. All were in favor.

Birchtree School Emergency Evacuation Plan:

M. Roy explained that this agreement between the Town and the school has been in place for years. **M. Marconi moved to approve the Birchtree School Emergency Evacuation Plan. K. Latchaw seconded the motion.**

K. Latchaw is concerned that if two schools have the same emergency plan to the same building it could be an issue. M. Roy said that the Fire Chief and Police Chief have looked over the plan and both recommend it. M. Roy said that the maximum occupancy of the building can easily accommodate both schools. **M. Marconi moved to table this item until the next meeting. K. Latchaw seconded the motion. T. Connors asked for a roll call vote: M. Marconi-Yes, K. Latchaw-Yes, T. Connors-Yes. All were in favor.**

Legal Budget:

M. Marconi moved to put in writing that all groups can use the general legal budget without getting the Board's approval. K. Latchaw seconded the motion. T. Connors asked for a roll call vote: M. Marconi-Yes, K. Latchaw-Yes, T. Connors-Yes. All were in favor.

M. Roy said that the town could rent a tent for additional space at Town Meeting.

Adjournment: M. Marconi moved to adjourn at 10:31am. K. Latchaw seconded the motion. T. Connors asked for a roll call vote: M. Marconi-Yes, K. Latchaw-Yes, T. Connors-Yes. All were in favor.

Respectfully submitted,
Eleanor Boy
Recorder