

**Board of Selectmen
Regular Meeting
August 25, 2020**

MINUTES

Present: First Selectman Dan Jerram, Selectman Alesia Kennerson, Selectman David Rosengren, Administrative Assistant Christine Hayward; others present via ZOOM.

First Selectman Jerram called the meeting to order at 7:06 PM.

Operations Updates:

First Selectman Jerram began his updates by talking about the recent windstorm that hit the area in early August. He expressed his frustration with the handling of the power outages by Eversource. He felt that communication and ineffective dispatch by Eversource was an issue. This was a big storm with over 700,000 outages in the State. He stated that it was his opinion that the way the repairs are handled are not always the best way. They look for numbers and try to get a larger area back on when there are some smaller, more immediate fixes that could be done in the interim.

Carpenter Road Bridge paperwork has been submitted to the State, as discussed at the last meeting. There has not been any response yet to the submittals. Selectman Rosengren asked if there has been a release received from the contractor. Mr. Jerram replied that the contractor has not followed the contract and the last communication received was in March. They sent a demand for payment, however, the town is assessing late fees. The matter is in the hands of the attorney who is guiding the town through the process.

Mr. Jerram informed the Board that an offer has been extended to an individual who interviewed for the vacant evening police position.

FEMA COVID filings are being worked on with a FEMA Specialist for school COVID related expenses.

Mr. Jerram stated that there is a shortage in certified Assessors and the town continues to seek an Assessor who can provide instruction to the individual currently working as the clerk in the Assessor's office. This person is interested in becoming a certified assessor but does need oversight in the interim during the training period.

First Selectman Jerram reviewed data related to the tax collections. He stated that the collections look like the town will be ok. There was uncertainty due to COVID as to what the effect might be on tax collections, but it all appears to be fine.

Mr. Jerram informed the Board that the Regional 7 School has decided to do a hybrid form of instruction when school resumes in September. Half of the school population will attend in person on 2 days while the other half receives virtual instruction on those 2 days and they will swap and do the opposite on 2 days with Wednesdays being a day used to disinfect the schools. Splitting the classes allows for more social distancing and adequate spacing while in the school buildings. The local elementary schools will be in person instruction on site at the schools 5 days.

Selectman Rosengren asked who is keeping track of the number of COVID cases in the area. Mr. Jerram responded that Farmington Valley Health District is the entity charged with keeping track of the numbers and following up with quarantine procedures.

Mr. Jerram stated that due to the guidelines in place for social distancing and the increased need for cleaning and sanitizing currently in place, it might be best to have an alternate community get together in lieu of the traditional New Hartford Day celebration in September. He suggested that a concert with

some food trucks might be a viable alternative. Ms. Kennerson agreed. The concerts have been a hit this summer as they provide an opportunity to gather safely in an outdoor setting. Mr. Jerram suggested that this event be held on a Saturday rather than a Sunday and suggested September 19. The Selectmen agreed to this alternate celebration.

Mr. Jerram informed the Board that the STEAP grant application is due this Friday. He stated that there had been past discussion about applying for STEAP funding for a charging station in the downtown area. However, due to not being able to get approvals finalized for an additional parking lot near the Post Office due to complications caused by COVID restrictions on public meetings, Mr. Jerram would like to consider requesting funds for bathroom facilities at Brodie Park instead. He stated that this project is already co-funded due to having capital funds in the budget to go towards the expense of the construction of this facility. This project would be considered “shovel ready” and might have a better chance of receiving Grant funding.

Mr. Jerram informed the Board that the American Red Cross will be using the Senior Center on Friday to hold a blood drive. He stated that since the Senior Center is not currently active, the Red Cross is able to use this for their drive.

The First Selectman informed the Board that there were no excessive expenditures incurred as a result of the recent windstorm. There was some overtime, but nothing extraordinary. Mr. Jerram stated that there may be some storm damage expenses incurred at RRDD# 1 and some expenses incurred by the WPCA, but he will need to look into that further.

Selectman Rosengren asked if the new roadside mower has been received. Mr. Jerram replied that it has been delivered. Mr. Rosengren asked if quotes were obtained from various distributors prior to purchasing the mower. Mr. Jerram replied that there were quotes provided and stated that the quotes were available for review if Mr. Rosengren wanted to see them.

Review/update of various resolutions – Affirmative Action, Fair Housing Resolution, Fair Housing Policy Statement, Certified Resolution re: Emergency Services and Public Protection:

Mr. Jerram read the following into the record:

“Resolved, that the Board of Selectmen of the Town of New Hartford may enter into with and deliver to the State of Connecticut Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection, Division of Emergency Management and Homeland Security any and all documents which it deems necessary or appropriate; and Further Resolved, that Daniel V. Jerram, as First Selectman of the Town of New Hartford Board of Selectmen, is authorized and directed to execute and deliver any and all documents on behalf of the Town of New Hartford and to do and perform all acts and things which he deems to be necessary or appropriate to carry out the terms of such documents, including, but not limited to, executing and delivering all agreements and documents contemplated by such documents.”

MOTION: by Kennerson to approve the resolution as read, seconded by Rosengren.

Unanimous.

Mr. Jerram stated that the Affirmative Action, Fair Housing Resolution and the Fair Housing Policy Statement were all included in the packet of resolutions to consider and asked for a motion to approve the resolutions as submitted.

MOTION: by Kennerson to approve the policies that were just listed by Mr. Jerram; seconded by Rosengren.

Mr. Jerram noted that these resolutions and policy statements are longstanding policies of the town and are worthy of being renewed.

Unanimous.

Opportunity for Public Comment:

No comments received.

Any Other Business to Come Before this Board:

Selectman Kennerson stated she had some business to bring before the Board. She stated that she had read in the newspaper that the Town of Canaan is considering adopting 3 different ordinances. Blight, Food Trucks and a Tax Abatement Ordinance are being presented for consideration in Canaan. Ms. Kennerson would like to follow the progress of these ordinances and talk about these in the future. Mr. Jerram commented that a blight ordinance had been considered many years ago and it did not go well. More recently, the Board of Selectmen had briefly discussed looking into this again. Mr. Jerram stated that since the documents were not posted for the public to be able to view, it would be best to hold off on discussion of these items and address them at a future meeting.

Mrs. Kennerson gave a brief overview of a proposed tax abatement ordinance that Canaan is considering. Mr. Jerram stated that there is an ordinance (06-02) already in place that requires a town meeting approval which makes it a cumbersome process. Selectman Rosengren commented that one needs to be careful of unintended consequences of such an ordinance. The Selectmen agreed that this discussion should be held at a future meeting.

Executive Session regarding negotiations related to the potential sale of the water and wastewater assets of the Town of New Hartford:

First Selectman Jerram stated that this item was placed on the agenda in response to a request made by Selectman Rosengren.

Selectman Kennerson stated that she did not feel that a virtual meeting was not an appropriate setting for an Executive Session discussion due to the fact that she was not comfortable with not being assured that there were no unauthorized attendees present in the rooms where discussion was taking place.

Mr. Jerram stated that he had spoken with Freedom of Information Commission to see if these Executive Sessions are allowed during a virtual meeting setting. The FOIA Commission does not have an issue with holding them as long as they are approved by the Board.

MOTION: by Rosengren to go into Executive Session for the purpose of discussion related to the negotiations for the proposed sale of water and wastewater assets at 8:13 PM, seconded by Kennerson.

Unanimous

Jerram, Rosengren, Kennerson entered into Executive Session

No action was taken during Executive Session which ended at 8:31 PM.

MOTION: by Kennerson to adjourn at 8:31 PM, seconded by Rosengren.

Unanimous

Respectfully Submitted,

Christine Hayward, Administrative Assistant

Attachments (available from the Town Clerk upon request)
Resolution – Emergency Management and Homeland Security
Affirmative Action Policy Statement
Fair Housing Resolution
Fair Housing Policy Statement