

**Dunbarton Board of Selectmen  
Meeting Minutes  
July 9, 2020**

A meeting of the Dunbarton Board of Selectmen (BoS) was held on Thursday, July 9, 2020 at the Dunbarton Town Offices.

**Board members present:**

Dave Nault, Chair  
Mike Kaminski, Selectman  
Robert “Bob” Martel, Selectman

**Town Officials and others present:**

Line Comeau, Town Administrator  
Jon Wiggin, Fire Chief  
Don Larsen, Cemetery Committee  
Rene Ouellet, Town Moderator  
Linda Landry, Town Clerk  
John Stevens, Old Home Day Committee

**Members of the public present:**

Mark Landry

Lee Martel recorded the meeting for the benefit of citizens that were unable to attend (Linda Nickerson uploads the videos to YouTube).

Dave Nault called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

**OLD BUSINESS**

Approve Minutes

**Motion:** by Bob Martel, seconded by Mike Kaminski to approve the regular meeting minutes of June 25, 2020 as amended.

**Discussion:** none.

**Vote: (3-0).**

**Motion:** by Mike Kaminski, seconded by Bob Martel to approve the non-public meeting minutes of June 25, 2020 as written.

**Discussion:** none.

**Vote: (3-0).**

**Motion:** by Mike Kaminski, seconded by Bob Martel to approve the special non-public meeting minutes of June 30, 2020 as written.

**Discussion:** none.

**Vote: (3-0).**

**Motion:** by Bob Martel, seconded by Mike Kaminski to approve the public special meeting minutes of June 30, 2020 as written.

**Discussion:** none.

**Vote:** (3-0).

## PUBLIC COMMENT

**Don Larsen** (32 Birchview) gave an update on the work being done on the town cemeteries. Starting next week, Road Agent Jeff Crosby is going to be working on leveling and grading the road for the center cemetery, and there will also be some spraying conducted this fall for weeds around the borders.

Progress continues to be made on the mapping of all the cemeteries. This project was started 6 years ago, and Judy Stone and Judy Keefe have done a lot of work on it over the last 2 years. The mapping part has been completed, and they will now be working on accurately listing who is in what location. This information will be stored in a cloud-based system and will be accessible for people to look up on a laptop with a larger screen that they are planning on purchasing. The information will not be available online for the time being.

**Don Larsen** also gave an update on the Hearse House upgrades: The Dunbarton Historical Awareness Committee (DHAC) scrubbed the outside of the house, making the rather grey-looking house white once again. Local handyman Greg Miller will be doing some repairs on the outside.

**Mike Kaminski** asked if the town is paying for the work that the Road Agent is doing on the road for the cemetery or if the committee contracted him to do the work out of their budget. **Mr. Larsen** replied that Mr. Crosby submitted a bid for the work, but the project does involve some use of town equipment for the work (grader, etc.). **Mr. Kaminski** also asked if Mr. Miller will be paid for his work on the out of the DHAC budget, which Mr. Larsen confirmed.

**Dave Nault** commented that the cemetery committee's hard work is paying off and that the cemeteries are looking nice. **Mike Kaminski** agreed, stating they look a lot better than they used to.

## AGENDA ITEMS

### Fire Department Budget Disbursement

**Fire Chief Jon Wiggin** explained that he is looking to change the way their volunteer fire department staff are paid their yearly stipend, splitting it up into two payments (August and December) instead of one. In order to do so, he needed to come up with a pay rate system. He detailed the survey he took of the pay rates of surrounding towns within the (mutual aid) compact in coming to the pay rates that he did. The hourly rate system that he recommends for the payment of the annual (now bi-annual) firefighter/EMS stipend is as follows:

Firefighter: \$10.00

EMS Responder: \$11.00

Officer: \$12.00

Deputy Chief: \$13.00

Chief: \$14.00

These rates are to be viewed as a starting point and are open to adjustment as needed.

**Mike Kaminski** would like to check in again in a few months to see how this system works out. **Line Comeau** asked if there would be a maximum number of hours per call. **Chief Wiggin** replied that there will not be a cap on hours, but they will be paid for a minimum of one hour. **Line Comeau** asked that he detail this plan in writing so that it can be added to the personnel plan.

- *The BoS was in consensus for Chief Wiggin to proceed with this pay scale for the stipend.*

**Dave Nault** asked that Chief Wiggin work with Line Comeau to draft an addition to the personnel plan.

**Mike Kaminski** confirmed that the first stipend payment will be made retroactively to April 1<sup>st</sup>.

**Chief Wiggin** stated that they've had a slight uptick in calls, but the town's COVID-19 cases have been holding relatively steady, noting 2 recent cases that have recovered. They are doing well with their supply levels of PPE and have not incurred a lot of COVID-19 related costs recently.

### Election Discussion

Town Moderator Rene Ouellet joined the BoS to discuss procedures for upcoming elections, the next one being the state primary in September. The Secretary of State is working with a committee to determine a set of guidelines for municipalities to use as far as what equipment they should have on hand. **Mr. Ouellet** stated that he also served on a committee put together by the NH Municipal Association. That committee put together their own set of recommendations and sent a letter with those details to the Governor and Secretary of State for review. He expects the voting space to look quite different in terms of maintaining physical distancing, anticipating that they will use the entire gym. They will also establish a long walkway leading into the gym that will maintain the 6-foot distancing requirement. The exits will be at the opposite side of the gym.

One of the recommendations of the NHMA committee he served on was that the state allow municipalities to subtract the amount of absentee ballots already sent out from the total number of expected voters in order to determine the number of voting booths they will need to set up.

**Linda Landry** confirmed that she has listed information regarding absentee balloting on the town website.

**Bob Martel** stated that on the absentee ballot application, there is no option for COVID-19 as a reason for applying. **Linda Landry** stated that via a memo from the Secretary of State, they learned that COVID-19 related reasons would fall under the option of 'disability.' **Bob Martel** asked if she would look into having that information highlighted on the town website.

**Mr. Ouellet** said that the committee also asked for permission to use more of the voting screens instead of the booths. Discussion occurred regarding the best way to set up voting booths to maintain social distancing as well as privacy. **Mr. Ouellet** is working on a map of how the booths will be set up and will bring it in for the BoS to review. **Mike Kaminski** would like Woody Bowne to attend their follow-up meeting so everyone is on the same page as far as set-up.

Regarding meals for election workers, **Dave Nault** recommended that they order individually wrapped items (sandwiches, etc.) over shared items like pizza or salads. **Linda Landry** said that there are places they can order from that will put together pre-bagged lunches for people to take.

**Mr. Ouellet** is concerned about ballot clerks. Many of the people that have been serving as ballot clerks are elderly. In terms of the virus, this concerns him and he feels they need to be thoughtful in who they appoint this year. **Dave Nault** asked if they would have enough ballot clerks to choose from if some people decided that they did not want to serve for the remainder of the year. **Linda Landry** stated that the ballot clerks are appointed, and current appointments expire in August, so it will soon be time for new ones to be appointed. The Democratic Party has nominated 3 ballot clerks and made suggestions for 8 alternates. **Mr. Ouellet** stated that he has been unsuccessful in finding a contact with the State Republican Party to speak to about their nominations. Discussion was held about getting in touch with the Republican party, though it was noted that it shouldn't fall to the town to seek out these nominations.

**Mr. Ouellet** said that experience as a ballot clerk is another factor that they need to be mindful of.

**Mike Kaminski** will attempt to reach out to a few party members in town to see if they can get the word out.

**Don Larsen** suggested that they record a video detailing the absentee ballot option as well as how the election site will be set up and post it to the town website so that people can view it and be informed ahead of time.

**Mr. Ouellet** stated that the Secretary of State will arrange to provide adequate PPE for all election officials. Masks will be a requirement of all voters and election officials. If someone does not want to wear a mask, he as the town moderator, will offer to bring a ballot to the person in their car and then deliver it inside the polling place for them when completed.

**Mike Kaminski** asked if they would have some sort of backing from the state they can rely upon when insisting that people wear masks. He would like to avoid any dramatic encounters with voters or between residents. **Linda Landry** said that as long as they don't refuse them the right to vote, then they will be fine. A voter may then decide that they don't want to follow the procedure, but as long as the right to vote is still available, they haven't done anything wrong.

**Don Larsen** suggested that they still have some tables recently purchased by the Old Home Day Committee that may work in terms of social distancing. The tables are round, which could allow two people to count ballots at one table and still maintain that minimum 6-foot distance requirement.

**Linda Landry** noted that a lot of the postage budget for the town office will be used on mailings related to absentee ballots. **Rene Ouellet** said that there should be some financial assistance coming in future weeks from the Secretary of State's office to help offset those costs.

**Rene Ouellet** stated that he will continue to work on a floor plan and return with a draft to review with the BoS at a future meeting.

#### Discussion Regarding COVID-19 Grant

**Linda Landry** told the BoS that she reviewed the footage from the June 25<sup>th</sup> BoS meeting that included some discussion regarding the COVID-19 GOFERR grant. She was dismayed that she had not been told that this would be discussed at the meeting so that she could have planned to attend to offer her point of view. Only one point of view was shared during this discussion which she feels resulted in suppositions and assumptions about her role in this situation.

The shutdown has had a large impact on the workload for her department.

On May 15, she was given the grant paperwork so that she could sign off on it and include the appointment papers for the BoS. She turned this around right away.

On June 23, she was informed that their grant application was rejected due to some missing paperwork. She received this notification when she was out of the office but intended to address it upon her return to the office the next day.

She came in on Wednesday the 24<sup>th</sup> to 38 emails, 28 phone messages and 6 appointments that she needed to attend to in addition to her regular duties. In addition, the police department had just sent out email notifications regarding unlicensed dogs.

She came in on June 25<sup>th</sup> to 28 emails, 23 phone messages and 5 appointments. This is an example to highlight the increased workload she is facing in light of COVID-19. She was not aware that there was a timeline to complete these items. She would appreciate in the future, when there is a topic to be discussed at a meeting that involves the work of her department that she be invited to the meeting so that she may speak on the subject.

**Line Comeau** said that she agrees with Linda. The Covid-19 closure has put a lot of stress on everyone. Everyone is trying to work at their own desk in their own space, but still trying to work together in the building. When the initial application was rejected, she tried to give Linda as much information as she could so that it would make her part easier. She understands that she is under a lot of stress as is everyone in the office. The guidelines from the state were rather vague, but they made it sound like they did not have a lot of time to resubmit their application. She was expecting that it would be ready the next day because that is what Linda had told her.

Linda's husband **Mark Landry** stated that he took exception to Selectman Martel's comment from the last BoS meeting that seemed to insinuate that Linda is "hitting the door" when she reaches her 40 hours for the week. **Mr. Landry** stated that Linda is at work from 8 a.m. until 5 or 6 p.m. every day. If she doesn't fall asleep as soon as she gets home, she's usually online answering emails for another couple of hours.

**Bob Martel** said that he has been an elected official and he has worked well into the evening 7 days a week if needed to get the job done that he was elected to do. He put in the time it took to get the job done. **Mark Landry** said that he agrees with him about the requirements of such a position and does not feel that Mr. Martel meant his comments in a mean-spirited manner, but maintained that the context in which this was said in open forum at a public meeting unfairly cast a negative light on Linda. He does not feel that Mr. Martel is not seeing the whole picture in terms of the work that Linda does even when not in the office. He has never seen an elected official take their job as seriously as she does.

**Dave Nault** suggested that perhaps Linda send them a monthly email detailing the extra hours she is putting in, just so they have an idea of the time she's putting in.

### Old Home Day Cancellation

**John Stevens** told the BoS that the Old Home Day committee decided at their last meeting that they needed to cancel the event this year. Their decisions were based in part upon survey results that indicated a low expected turnout for both vendors and attendees.

The committee was wondering if they could either roll the money over for next year's event or if they could use at least a portion to purchase something else that could be used by the community (for example, they used some of their remaining money last year to purchase some tables to replace their old dilapidated ones to use at future events, and one suggestion was that they could look at chairs this year).

After much discussion, the BoS feels that because the state is in a rather precarious position in terms of severely decreased state revenues uncertainty as to how quickly they will receive town property tax revenues, they should err on the side of caution at this point in time. They have asked department heads to go as lean on their budgets as they can, and not to spend money on anything other than operations/necessities at the moment. The committee made the wise decision to cancel the event, and so the money that the taxpayers set aside for that event will return to the general fund.

### Review Policy on Staff Exposure to COVID-19

The BoS reviewed a draft of an employee policy regarding staff exposure to Covid-19. It lists the different symptoms of the virus and also tells the employee that they will not lose their sick time if they miss work due to the virus. **Line Comeau** stated that she attended the most recent joint-loss meeting and it was mentioned that the library was drafting policies that cover the different scenarios should a staff member be exposed to or have symptoms of the virus. She realized how important it would be for the town to have this in place as well, in the event the scenario takes place. The BoS will need to decide if they will cover salaries for the period of time the employee may need to miss work to quarantine or recover. There is a grant available that will cover the payroll taxes for any wages paid to employees that are out of work due to the pandemic.

**Bob Martel** would like to take some time to review the policy and come up with recommendations for any changes. The BoS decided to table this issue for until the next meeting.

### Town Hall Renovations Update

**Dave Nault** said that Jeff Trexler did his last structural meeting on 7/9. The drywall patches will be completed on 7/10. Mr. Trexler also finished his last inspection on the metal gussets and plates. There were a couple of rotted beams that they had put larger brackets on. They did make use of the fire escape, and it is a lot more rugged and secure than previously thought. The project will be complete after tomorrow. They will need to have the second floor cleaned at some point. He said that the contractor (CCI) was wonderful to work with. Things were completed in a timely manner. They were provided with testing on all materials used in the project.

**Dave Nault** noted for the record that it was brought to his attention that some of the materials used in this project were purchased from Belletetes, which is the company he works for. He was not involved in or aware of any sale of products used in the project.

**Dave Nault** also noted that they should be able to call and schedule the dumpster pickup next week. They are paying for one full dumpster as a part of that project. It is not even one-quarter full, so anything that they would like to add to it as a town will be accepted.

#### COVID-19 Pay

The BoS received a letter from Sheryl Kehas-Comeau, who provides cleaning services for the town office. She detailed the extra work, particularly surface cleaning, she has been putting in during her normal hours due to the Covid-19 pandemic and was wondering if there was any added compensation that she may be eligible for due to current circumstances. **Line Comeau** added that Sheryl has also taken it upon herself to try and come in an hour or two before meetings to ensure that the space is clean and sanitized before people arrive.

- *The BoS was in consensus to authorize the addition of 5 extra hours a week for the remainder of the period of the pandemic/state-of-emergency to Sheryl Giles-Comeau's schedule to allow for more time for the extra cleaning required as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.*

#### Employee Promotions

As a result of last week's nonpublic session, the BoS voted to authorize the promotion of two employees at the transfer station.

**Motion:** by Dave Nault, seconded by Bob Martel to approve the promotions of Ed Wootten to the position of part-time Transfer Station Manager I, and Ryan Tacy to the position of Transfer Station Attendant II. Both employees will be accepting increased responsibilities along with their increased hourly rates, which were effective as of June 30<sup>th</sup>. They are also currently in a 6-month probation period for their new positions.

**Discussion:** none.

**Vote:** (3-0).

### TOWN BUSINESS

#### Mailbox Items

**Dave Nault** shared the following correspondence received since the last meeting:

- A notice from Treasurer Pam Milioto asking that the payroll and payables are signed off on by Tuesday afternoon, July 14.
- Notice from the Secretary of the Interior regarding payment in lieu of taxes in the amount of \$3,373 (instead of \$3,302).
- The Conservation Commission held a public hearing regarding the trimming of trees by Eversource along the scenic roads in town. They also discussed some problems they are having around Kimball Pond. There was a group camping out on one side of the pond that the police were called to disperse. This is an issue that they are going to attempt to fix by barring off the area.

- ZBA agenda for a meeting on Monday July 13 on a Gary Road property. Request for variance for non-conforming lot line. The meeting starts at 7 p.m.

## PUBLIC COMMENT

### Transfer Station Update

Transfer Station Supervisor **Woody Bowne** reported that there was a minor accident last week at the transfer station. The police department did respond and filed a report. Someone's vehicle was over-height and they struck the building. The damage was minor, but a piece of siding was broken.

They are in the beginning stages of planning their annual household hazardous waste day with the town of Bow. It will be set up differently this year, and they will be looking for some volunteers.

**Mr. Bowne** would like to start looking at planning for a basic storage building for some of their equipment.

It was determined that they will continue with their reopening plan and begin accepting cash and bulk items beginning on Tuesday, July 14.

**Line Comeau** asked how they would handle people that bring in heavy items. Will they be helping people unload? **Mr. Bowne** replied that they will ask people to at least drop the item off the vehicle and onto the ground if possible, and they will handle it from there.

## BOARD MEMBER ISSUES

**Bob Martel** said that the joint-loss committee brought up an old request that **Mr. Bowne** had made a couple of years ago regarding lighting for the employee parking area. He asked him to find the quotes he had gotten previously so they can make some progress on the project.

**Bob Martel** also mentioned a request for ventilation for the box truck. **Mr. Bowne** said that he had gotten a quote, but everything fell apart once the pandemic happened.

**Bob Martel** mentioned a point of order regarding the public comment session of their meeting. That session is for public comments and should be used only for that. Any department heads with matters to discuss should be placed on the agenda ahead of time.

## ADJOURNMENT

**Motion:** by Dave Nault, seconded by Bob Martel to adjourn the meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 9:19 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

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Jennifer King, Recording Secretary

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Dave Nault, Chair



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Mike Kaminski, Selectman

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Bob Martel, Selectman