

**Dunbarton Board of Selectmen  
Meeting Minutes  
March 19, 2020**

A meeting of the Dunbarton Board of Selectmen (BoS) was held on Thursday, March 19, 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  
Police Chief Dan Sklut  
Police Sgt. Christopher Remillard  
Jeff Crosby, Road Agent  
Jon Wiggin, Fire Chief  
Linda Landry, Town Clerk  
Woody Bowne, Transfer Station Supervisor  
George Holt, Conservation Commission

**Members of the public present:**

Lee Martel  
Tom & Tomi Salzmann

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

Minutes are not available for approval this week. Tabled until next week.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

None.

**AGENDA ITEMS**

Nomination of Chairperson

**Motion:** by Mike Kaminski to nominate Dave Nault to serve as Chair of the Board of Selectmen. **Bob Martel** seconded the nomination.

**Discussion:** none.

**Vote: (2-0-1).**

**Dave Nault** thanks his fellow selectmen for their support. He feels he has learned a lot from serving on the Board for the past 3 years and is looking forward to bringing new ideas and a different perspective to this position.

#### Snowmobile Use

**George Holt** from the Conservation Commission told the BoS that they noticed that a homeowner in Overlook Estates is traveling across conservation land in order to access a snowmobile trail behind that development. There is a town right-of-way that could be used instead of going onto conservation land, but they wanted to check with the BoS before approaching the homeowner to present the problem and offer this as a solution.

Discussion took place regarding the history of snowmobile trail usage in the area. There are snowmobile trails that do run through conservation land around Kimball Pond, though that use is something that was agreed upon many years ago. **Bob Martel** noted that a change had been made through the legislative body when they allowed the trail that runs from Kimball Pond through the Kuncanowet Town Forest to the state park. This trail still exists but isn't used a lot anymore. He would like to have that rescinded by warrant article in order to remain consistent. **Line Comeau** stated that this is access that was required by the Planning Board. If the road is updated to a Class V, then they would need to look at giving him access to that roadway. **Dave Nault** would like the Conservation Commission to meet with the homeowner to discuss the issue and offer the alternatives. Mr. Holt said they will meet with the homeowner before the next snowmobile season and will report back to the BoS with the results of that meeting.

#### COVID-19 Discussion

The BoS worked to determine a guideline for all town departments to follow during the COVID-19 crisis.

##### Town Offices (to include Town Clerk, Building Dept., and the Administrative office)

###### BoS

**Dave Nault** said that the BoS will begin their summer schedule earlier than they normally do, meaning that they will begin meeting every other week (so there will be no meeting on 3/26).

###### Town Clerk

**Linda Landry** said that residents can conduct motor vehicle registration renewals, dog licensing and vital records requests online and through the mail. She noted that one of the Governor's Executive Orders included an automatic extension to April 30<sup>th</sup> on all 20-day motor vehicle plates issued on or after February 6<sup>th</sup>. The extension does not apply to late renewals.

**Dave Nault** asked about using a drop-box outside the building. **Ms. Landry** said that they can make that option available as well. Any transactions that cannot be processed online (marriage licenses, etc.) will be done by appointment only on a per-case basis. She has put up a sneeze-guard in front of their window and performs constant sanitizing between each person that visits the counter. She will be in the office Monday through Thursday and encourages people to use email rather than phone communication. She monitors emails all day and checks it

remotely as well. She will need to go to the bank and the post office each day during this time.

#### Administrative Offices

**Line Comeau** said that in order to limit the traffic inside the building, it is necessary to have the outside doors locked to the public. Employees have a passcode they can use to access the building. Signs will be posted with the numbers to call. **Dave Nault** said that he asked Line Comeau to draft a notice to be posted outside stating: “the town office will be closed to walk-in traffic until further notice due to COVID-19. Office staff will be available on site to handle your transactions by telephone or by other means such as email or regular mail. Any business requiring face to face interaction will be handled by appointment.” They will also include phone numbers for the necessary town departments. He has also asked Chief Sklut for his input as well.

**Chief Wiggin** noted there are still people in town that don’t have a computer, so they are still going to have a lot of people showing up. **Dave Nault** said that they will still allow people to conduct face-to-face business by scheduled appointment.

**Chief Sklut** suggested they add a sign that asks people to consider the following questions: “Have you been sick?” “Have you recently traveled?” “Have you been exposed to anyone who has?” with instructions to return to their car and call so that they can make alternative arrangements to conduct business with the town.

**Dave Nault** said that most of these measures are already in place, but everything will be fully in effect tomorrow. He feels that when people call to make appointments, then that would be the proper time to ask about their potential recent exposure risk. **Linda Landry** suggested mentioning that they are only asking these questions due to town protocol.

#### Transfer Station

**Dave Nault** said that because this is a high traffic area, they are looking at suspending their recycling program for the next 2 weeks (this may be extended as needed) as well as accepting any items over the counter. All trash can be placed in a main dumpster. They plan to have two employees overseeing the dumpster area to ensure things are moving smoothly (but they will not be handling any trash). **Woody Bowne** said that he does have some other work that can be done, but not quite enough to keep all of them busy.

**Mike Kaminski** referred to the language used by the town of Rollinsford at their transfer station asking people not to stop and chat with their neighbors, etc. at the transfer station in order to help keep things moving along, and also explaining that transfer station employees will not be able to assist people with physically disposing of their items.

They do not expect the hours of the Transfer Station to change at this point. Transfer Stations in other towns are only open for trash at this time and are not

accepting recyclables, electronics, or any items they charge for. **Mr. Bowne** said they should be able to allow people to bring in brush, as they can move that around by machine, but he would really like to put limits on the other items for now in order to cut down on interactions and handling of cash. He pointed out that there will be a financial aspect to consider as they will be making more hauls, and there will be an overall increase in what is brought in, especially if people choose to throw in the trash what they would otherwise recycle. He is planning on having at least 3 employees on hand.

Discussion occurred regarding extending the operating hours of the transfer station to cut down on the larger crowd they tend to see on Saturdays. It was decided that they will keep their regular hours for now but will be open to changing/extending them as demand dictates.

**Chief Wiggin** feels they should keep the burn pit open, as closing it will put a large burden on the fire department as far as issuance of permits or investigating illegal fires.

**Jeff Crosby** cautioned against completely shutting down their demo disposal area and mentioned the possibility of simply not charging for those items temporarily. Because more people are home and not working, they may use this time for cleanup around their properties. Closing it down without sufficient notice may aggravate or upset a lot of people.

**Woody Bowne** is ok with waiving fees on some demo items for now. **Dave Nault** suggested they waive the fees on demo items for 2 weeks.

**Mr. Bowne** would like to stop having the commercial hauler come in for the next few weeks as well. **Dave Nault** said if he would like to call the hauler and let him know that, that is fine.

Discussion occurred over the best way to avoid having to cut hours from their transfer station staff. **Woody Bowne** suggested that for at least the next two weeks, they continue to pay their employees for the number of hours they would normally work (despite whether or not they work those hours). He feels that the money has already been budgeted for their wages and is well worth avoiding the potential loss of employees. **Dave Nault** expressed concern that they may end up interfering with the employees being able to file unemployment claims. **Bob Martel** noted it wouldn't affect their ability to file because even if they lose a portion of their hours, they are still able to file for unemployment. **Jeff Crosby** suggested that another task that could be done is to use the trucks to go out and do roadside cleanup. It is a good time of year for it, the snow is gone, and there is no poison ivy to speak of at this point. **Dave Nault** would like to double check and ensure that there are no liability issues involved in changing their work environment in that way.

#### Highway Department

**Jeff Crosby** does not feel that his department is largely impacted at this time. Having discussed the situation with his employee Pete Gamache, they feel relatively secure at this point. Due to the nature of their work, they do not deal with a lot of public interaction in the course of their duties.

#### Fire Department

Fire Chief **John Wiggin** said that their building is currently closed to the public (this is the case with most departments across the state). They are facing some challenges in finding protective equipment for their first responders. They have put an order in through the state. He has been coordinating with Mutual Aid in their preparations as well. Their dispatch center has been completely closed to the public. No mail or food deliveries are allowed.

One of the Governor's Executive Orders is that the amount of licensed EMT's required to be in an ambulance during patient transfer has been reduced to one. They have changed their policies and protocols to limit their exposure risk (fewer people responding to calls, fewer people assessing each situation). They are encouraging people to do online fire permit applications. He noted they are still having their meetings as they

#### Police Department

Police Chief **Dan Sklut** said they have put procedures into place to follow in the event they are interacting with someone that has been exposed or is sick. They have a decontamination procedure in place. Their building is not closed to the public at this point, though they have posted a sign asking people to assess their risk factors before entering. They are handling what they can electronically. They have changed the way they communicate with the courts, and in the way they handle criminal investigations and traffic stops. Should they end up with cases in town, they will make the decision to close the building and take further steps to protect themselves and the public.

#### Library

**Line Comeau** reported that the library has already closed their building.

**Line Comeau** said that she would like to link the protocols for each department to their home page on the town's website to make it easy for people to access or review if they have town business they need to conduct with any department. **Linda Landry** suggested including a sentence stating that these protocols are subject to change as circumstances require.

**Dave Nault** noted that they will be keeping a file of all of this information on hand at the town office. He also noted that their health officer has given them a list of the protocol they are following, as well as a list of the recommendations by the state regarding limiting gatherings and social distancing guidelines. Welfare Director Jeannie Zmigrodski also submitted information on her procedures as well.

**Linda Landry** thanked the BoS for holding this meeting and for coordinating the departments. She has noticed that everyone has been working well together in the midst of this, keeping distances and respecting personal space as much as possible.

#### Police Department Hours

Tom and Tomi Salzmann submitted a letter to the BoS regarding concerns over the hours of the police department overnight stemming from a problem they experienced at their home. Mr. Salzmann is concerned that relying on the state police as backup coverage is not sufficient, and he would like to know what the agreement is with the state system and how quickly they can expect help to arrive in an emergency. .

**Dave Nault** said that full nighttime coverage isn't something that the town is going to have for several years. Their backup coverage is primarily the State Police. They have very limited resources, and while they are trying to grow their town, they also have to look out for their residents and ensure that their tax rate can sustain that growth. They have also had changes occur with personnel turnover and replacing an officer can take quite a bit of time.

**Chief Sklut** explained that their town has a part-time police department. They run from approximately 7 a.m. to 12 a.m. or later depending on the day of the week. When they sign off for the night, dispatch notifies the State Police, and all calls are directed there for the rest of the night. There are few of them and they cover a larger area, so depending upon the nature of the call, there may sometimes be a delay. Very often, the town police are not aware of what occurred the night before until they call and get that information from them. **Chief Sklut** said that in 2019, the state police responded to 19 calls in Dunbarton during the overnight hours, 34 in 2018 and 17 in 2017. Most of those calls are alarms. The problem that occurred the night that the Salzmann's requested help appeared to be a problem in communication.

**Sgt. Remillard** explained their scheduling system and that they have to schedule their staff during the times when they receive their largest volume of calls from the public. Sometimes they will receive a log sheet from dispatch that details anything that happened overnight.

**Mr. Salzmann** asked how far away they can realistically expect help to be if needed in the middle of the night. **Sgt. Remillard** explained how the mutual aid system works during regular hours between Dunbarton and surrounding towns. The State Police try to remain local to the area of Interstates 89 and 93, but they do cover a large area in Merrimack County during the overnight hours. The coverage they have for their town is actually better than towns that are larger than them.

**Mr. Salzmann** asked about scheduling a rotating on-call shift for overnights. **Chief Sklut** said that they did this up until about 2017. One issue that affects this is that he is the only full-time officer that lives in town. They have another full-time officer that lives 15 minutes away. Their other full-time officers live 40 to 50 minutes away. Another

factor is that waking up from a dead sleep to respond to a call is not a safe situation for the officer or residents.

**Sgt. Remillard** said that they have been fortunate that the number of overnight calls dealing with serious crimes are few to none. **Tomi Salzmänn** said that the dynamics of their population are changing with regard to opiates, etc. **Sgt. Remillard** said that the department fully understands their concerns, and feels that a lot of this problem comes down to communication because there was an officer on the way, but was then called off because the situation appeared to have been resolved, but the Salzmänn's should have received a follow-up call to let them know this. **Sgt. Remillard** offered to speak with the other party involved in the situation, as there are services and resources that he can direct them toward.

**Mr. Salzmänn** said that he has a better understanding of how they work

**Chief Wiggin** noted that the fire department has been involved in some of the calls after midnight, and he has always been very impressed with how swiftly the state police is able to respond.

**Chief Sklut** has been in contact with the Chief Commander to talk about the situation and will make his staff aware of the situation and the concerns surrounding it in the hopes that perhaps any future calls will stand out.

#### DRA Form MS-232

Line Comeau explained that this form is letting the DRA know what was decided upon at town meeting regarding what their approved operating budget is and which warrant articles passed.

- The BoS signed form MS-232.

#### BoS Summer Schedule

The BoS decided to begin their summer schedule now due to developments with COVID-19. They will meet every other week (there will be no meeting on March 26<sup>th</sup>). **Dave Nault** also suggested keeping this schedule through October. **Line Comeau** suggested closing the meetings to the public (unless someone has specific business with the BoS) and having them available by video. **Dave Nault** said that meeting closure can be decided on a case by case basis. He would like to proceed for now limiting the amount of people in the room and adhering to the necessary social distancing measures. **Mike Kaminski** suggested that people notify Line Comeau by email of any topic they need addressed by the BoS, and they can answer it at the meeting. Meeting minutes will be done by transcription from the recording for the time being.

**Line Comeau** said that she is on vacation next week but will make sure they have what they need for the next meeting.

#### School Generator

Fire Chief **Jon Wiggin** spoke with the BoS a few months ago about the emergency generator for the school. They had gotten a repair estimate of \$6,000+ and it was something they had been looking to do when school was out in the summer. He has been in contact with Ed at Quality Equipment Repair, who took a look at it a few weeks ago. Because school is out now, he will have some time, and was wondering if they could do it now instead of this summer. He is thinking that the repairs may be lower than initially thought (less than \$3,000). Chief Wiggin checked with the school principal, and he doesn't have a problem with the repairs being done now. **Line Comeau** asked for a quote or estimate in writing.

#### Transfer Station

**Dave Nault** suggested to Woody Bowne that he work on keeping his employees employed at their average hours, and schedule trash pickup along the town roads from 10 a.m. -3 p.m. They do have some spring clean up they need to do as well as some other projects. Discussion took place regarding gloves and safety equipment for trash pickup, as well as which roads they should begin with.

Bids for the truck will be opened at the next meeting.

**Mr. Bowne** explained their increased cleaning procedures, and changes in how they handle cleaning/sanitizing and new protocols in utilizing/cleaning safety equipment. Discussion occurred regarding tracking increases in their tonnage amounts, etc. in order to possibly obtain federal relief.

#### TOWN BUSINESS

The BoS signed off on a letter to the Governor regarding the unanimous vote on the resolution for fair redistricting.

#### Mailbox Items

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

- Letter from FEMA discussing emergency disaster declarations. Line has asked departments to track any expenses associated with this.
- Line applied the 3% pay raises for all the employees. They have been making sure the employee rate of pay forms are signed off on for the increases. The BoS will come into the office to sign off on these forms so they can be filed in the personnel files.

#### PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

#### BOARD MEMBER ISSUES

**Motion:** by Mike Kaminski, seconded by Bob Martel to enter into nonpublic session in accordance with RSA 91-A:3 II (a) at the request of the Town Administrator.

**By roll-call vote:**

**Kaminski-yes. Nault-yes. Martel-yes.**



BoS entered nonpublic session at 9:14 p.m.  
BoS reentered public session at 9:40 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

**Motion:** by Bob Martel, seconded by Mike Kaminski to adjourn the meeting.  
Meeting adjourned at 9:41 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