

Submitted By:

Adele Suggs 4/7/2020
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Admin Asst

TOWN OF PHIPPSBURG
SELECTMEN'S MEETING MINUTES
February 12, 2020

Oliver 4/11/20
Approved by Selectmen:

[Signature] 4/11/20
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The Selectmen's meeting convened at 5:00 p.m. for Executive Session at the Town Hall, and reconvened at 6:00 p.m. with Selectman Mixon, Selectman Young, Selectman House and Administrator Jones present.

I. Executive Session

1. Met in Executive Session per Title 30 M.R.S.A. 605 A for Position-Salary Reviews which convened at 5:00 p.m.

II. New Business

1. Discuss the rabid foxes in town and consider the remedy the City of Bath is proposing.

Administrator Jones received a courtesy phone call from the City of Bath to let the Town know what they were going to try. They have had a lot of problems with rabid foxes lately as we have in Phippsburg. Administrator Jones has received a lot of emails and phone calls during the last week from concerned citizens. She feels this is a good time to talk about what the Town knows so far. Scott Lindsay is present who is a wildlife biologist with the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife from the Gray Office, District Game Warden - Evan Franklin, and local Animal Control Officer - Norm Turner. Administrator Jones asked Mr. Turner how many rabid foxes he had responded to recently. Mr. Turner responded of one and one suspected last fall. Before that, last know rabies case was around the year 2000. Selectman Young asked how many Bath had - Mr. Lindsay responded in 2019 it was 16 and two in January for a total of 18. Selectman House asked about West Bath - they had two. Mr. Lindsay explained that there was a public meeting held in December where there were about 50 in attendance. The expectation was, that based on history that it would subside. It has continued longer than expected, given the number of positive animals as well as animals considered suspected. What Bath has decided to do since people are still having observation of these animals is to do some trapping, on the ground, in combination with continued outreach. Trapping will entail using box traps with agreement between the US Department of Agriculture and the City of Bath. Traps will be placed within a section of the City of Bath, and will be checked twice a day for a finite period. The trappers will be very well qualified. This will include gray fox, red fox, skunk and raccoon; they will be euthanized on site and tested to verify what type of rabies these animals are carrying. This is a high number for one town and we would like to see if there is any way that we can figure out why that's really happening or whether it's the nature of rabies. Sometimes you can't explain everything; they often don't continue onto the following year. There are a lot of very good people on board. Collectively we all work together well and when something happens we can respond well. If you are considered to have exposure to rabies there is a course of treatment that is very affective. The trapping would be a couple weeks in duration, possibly

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more, during the months of February and March. Next fall Mr. Lindsay encourages municipalities getting in touch with recreational trappers and figure out good places to target thru late fall and done consistently each year. Administrator Jones asked with trapping so many animals, does it disrupt the balance of nature? Mr. Lindsay responded by stating that may have come from some incorrect figures/reporting error that made it into the press, which has since been corrected. The agreement with the USDA & the City of Bath is to use 20 traps, checked twice daily for a period of ten days. Fox are difficult to catch as they are quite clever and will avoid a box trap more so than a traditional trap. It will be a challenge. It is a little work to place the traps and is labor intensive, you need to check them regularly, reset them, and relocate them to a different area if not working well in the present location. Chief Skroski added that trappers in Phippsburg have been operating here for years. Anything caught in those traps, if it's the target species they are looking for, will be euthanized. The other thing important to remember is that when rabies is in a population, an individual animal can have rabies and not be systematic; there is an incubation period. Symptoms show in the latter stages of rabies which is when the animals start acting differently and usually die in a week or so, possibly less. What they are trying to do is reduce the number of animals in this geographic area so there will less likely be contact between one animal and another, which could slow the spreading down, before they become more active and lower the number locally. Chief Skroski asked if they have a fox, they end up dispatching that has not been in contact with a domesticated animal or a human; does Mr. Lindsay want it to be tested? Mr. Lindsay responded by saying, currently the CDC is only testing animals that have been exposed to a person or domesticated animal; if the animal hasn't been exposed, look into safe disposal of the animal. Animal Control Officer, Norm Turner, stated that his biggest concern in doing the follow up around the fishing communities, Small Point, West Point, as well as Sebasco, is that they keep a lot of cats, which is a necessity in those areas. A lot of these cats are not vaccinated; if one of these cats comes into contact with a rabid animal, they could bring it into the house. Incubation period could be a couple weeks or six months down the road, you just don't know. He would personally like to see a free rabies clinic so these cats can get immunized and eliminate that threat. A normal rabies clinic is \$10/shot. If we can get \$100 in donations, that's ten animals we don't have to worry about this year as far as transmitting disease. Phippsburg is much more rural than Bath, so animal encounters will be less frequent. The domestic animals are Mr. Turner's concern. The Recreation Department discussed that a free rabies clinic is something they would like to offer. More people are aware that foxes are around. Selectman Young asked if the Rec Dept was thinking about funding the rabies clinic; the response was at least helping in some way. Selectman House feels that if donations are asked for most people will pay it with what's going on. Selectman Young stated a \$10 donation recommended and if they can't afford it, it will be free. A question was asked if a fox gets hits on the road and the brain is exposed to the air does that mean the rabies is in the air.

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Mr. Lindsay replied that generally it is not likely; contact must be made, a bite or scratch, to get contracted from one animal to another. Use PPE and avoid direct contact with the animal. Generally, the virus is no longer present shortly after the animal dies. Bath had mentioned dropping vaccines with bait to help get vaccinations, is that an option? The bait vaccines in question are about the size of a ketchup container from McDonald's. Wild animals will consume this bait with fishmeal in it, largely targeting raccoons, with the expectation that it would give the animal some immunity from rabies. This is being conducted by a branch of the USDA in Maine and in many states in the eastern United States. Currently they are licensed to be used by dropping by fixed wing aircraft, in parts of north central Maine which has been going on for many years. What this is designed to do is reduce the likelihood of spread of rabies with the expectation into the future of continuing to put the bait out and that area would be eliminated of rabies if it's done enough. They are not designed to be used in a core region where rabies currently exists. It is not best suited at a town level and there will not be a 100% uptake of the vaccine; 30% of the animals ingest it. It's also cost prohibitive to do this. It is not considered a viable option at this time. Selectman House asked how long can an animal live with rabies? Mr. Lindsay replied that it varies by the animal, not easily defined and where the animal was first contacted. Sometimes it can be very slow moving or progressively faster depending on the part of the body the animal was bitten. When they become symptomatic the animal usually dies within 4-10 days. Any mammal can potentially carry the virus. Selectman Mixon asked Mr. Turner if he knew the number of domesticated animals in town. His response was around 350 dogs and 800-900 cats. Permission will be sought on all land that the traps will be placed on, private or public. If an animal is threatening you or a domestic animal, you can kill it and report it to Mr. Lindsay's department. Question was asked about best ways to avoid contact or be victimized by a rabid animal? He responded by saying think of things that could attract fox to your property, observe these animals from a distance as much as possible and not do anything to bring the animal closer. If you have areas that are dense and brushy, they like this containment rather than being out in the open. Be visible, have adequate outside lighting. If you go outside at night have something with you, i.e., ski pole, bat, a stick or pepper spray; something that gives you a sense of security. Eliminate bird feeders and do not attempt to rehabilitate wildlife by taking it into your home; there are wildlife rehabilitation centers around the State. Mr. Lindsay also left a handout explaining who does what. He will also be providing another sheet which explains what we can do. Evan explained the other thing he would do is rearrange poultry as they attract fox and coyote specifically, eliminate feeding of pets outside, and composting, if not properly maintained, will attract animals daily. Also, trash should be put away and not accessible to animals. Scrape the BBQ grill so no food residue is left over. Resources have been put up on the Town Website and we will add to it the information provided tonight. The Rec Dept will also include this information in their Spring Newsletter

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that will be going out and see about having the Rabies Clinic at the Fire Station. They will also contact Lisa about possible vets that could run the clinic. The Maine Trappers Association and the Central Chapter is willing to work with any of the landowners to try and help them with their problems. Administrator Jones will post some information on the website to contact Town Hall if they need assistance with wild animals on their property and the Town will put them in touch with the right contacts. Animal Danger Control Agents can also be contacted outside normal hunting seasons and listed on the website under Wildlife Human Conflict. Chief Skroski thinks it's important to state that 911 should only be utilized if there's an actual emergent situation with actual contact with a dog or human being. Selectman Young wants some rabies information placed into the Town Report this year.

2. Consider appointing J. Michael Young to the Center Pond River Herring Committee as per Title 30 M.R.S.A. § 2253 as an Alternate member with a term expiring June 30, 2024.

Vote: Selectman House motioned to approve the above appointment which was seconded by Selectman Mixon and passed by a vote of 2-0.

III. Correspondence

1. Harbor Commission request to increase Harbormaster stipend.

There is an email from the Harbor Commission requesting increasing the Harbor Master's stipend from \$5,500 to \$6,500 due to the added time required to enforce the updated Ordinances. Administrator Jones added that they are requesting this specifically to begin this fiscal year and will add a warrant article to fund it and keeping it at that level going forward. Selectman Young asked where the money would be coming from; Administrator Jones replied from the Harbor Commission Budget - the Harbor Master salary will come out of the Harbor Commission Account. Monies received for mooring fees will cover this and expect to increase fees received over time.

IV. Selectmen/Administrator Comments and Announcements:

Administrator Jones announced that the Town Office will be closed on Monday, February 17th, for President's Day.

Nomination papers are available as of today. If anyone is interested, please call Lisa Wallace, the Town Clerk. Positions open in the election are one three-year term on the Board of Selectmen and two three-year terms (Ethan DeBery and William Foster) on the Budget Committee.

Deadline for filing nomination papers is Friday, March 27th, by 5:00 p.m.

All Election Caucus information is available on the Phippsburg Website and caucus information is posted around Town.

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Selectman Young wanted clarification that there will be a workshop next week with Juanita on the assessing position and continue with finalization of the budget.

Selectman Mixon spoke to Charlie McKenney at the Transfer Station. We have just gone through the second Monday of having Transfer Station hours. There was an increase over last week and the traffic is subsiding a little bit on Wednesday. The word is getting out there, is effective and staying busy.

V. Public Forum:

Marie Varian stated that the Planning Board is going to have a workshop on February 18th, at 5:00 p.m. at Town Hall for discussion on any possible amendments to the Ordinances.

Selectman Young announced that the Harbor Commission is also working on an amendment.

VI. Review and/or Sign:

1. Payroll and Accounts Payable Warrants

Vote: Selectman Young motioned to approve Payroll Warrant 81 and AP Warrant 82 which was seconded by Selectman House and passed by a vote of 3-0.

Vote: Selectman Young motioned to approve AP Warrant 83 which was seconded by Selectman Mixon and passed by a vote of 2-0.

2. Letter to Regional Manager, Bureau of Parks and Lands: Parking Enforcement Grant

Vote: Selectman Young motioned to table this letter until they can gather more information/statistics, which was seconded by Selectman House and tabled by a vote of 3-0.

3. Harris Local Gov. Quote for SQL conversion

Vote: Selectman Young motioned to approve and sign the Harris Quote for SQL Conversion for \$2,649.95 which was seconded by Selectman House and passed by a vote of 3-0.

4. Municipal Quit Claim Deed for Town of Phippsburg, formerly owned by Michale D. Lemont and Theodore LeMont (Map 043 Lot 26-8), for tax lien year 2017.

Vote: Selectman Young motioned to sign the Quit Claim Deed above which was seconded by Selectman House and passed by a vote of 3-0.

VII. Executive Session

1. Meet in Executive Session per Title 30 M.R.S.A 405 6A to continue Position-Salary Reviews.

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Vote: At 7:38 p.m. Selectman Young motioned to adjourn into Executive Session and then adjourning to a quick budget workshop, which was seconded by Selectman House and passed by a vote of 3-0.

Adjournment