

Submitted by:

Approved by Selectmen:

Adele M Suggs

TOWN OF PHIPPSBURG

EMERGENCY SELECTMEN'S MEETING MINUTES

Adele M. Suggs

March 16, 2020

Admin Asst

Olson 4/22/20

Wright 4/22/20

Mc 4/22/20

An Emergency Selectmen's meeting convened at 6:02 with Selectman Mixon, Selectman Young, Selectman House and Administrator Jones present.

I. New Business

1. Consider strategies to provide a safe and healthy work environment and public services in light of the pandemic COVID-19.

Selectman Mixon thanked everyone for coming on such short notice. He wanted to get everyone together to discuss the possible infectious disease that could come into town, what resources you have available, running out of those resources, and having the EMA involved to help us out as to where to get those resources if we don't have them.

Represented at the meeting were: Police Department (Chief John Skroski), Health Officer (Lee Rainey), Fire Department (Chief Andy Hart), Rescue Department (Sandy Hart and Ben Huebler) and the EMA (Director, Gary Morong). Selectman Mixon would like to hear their ideas, what their plans are, and make sure that everyone was on the same sheet of music.

As far as Rescue goes, if a patient has a cold or respiratory illness and looking to get the Coronavirus Test, they cannot call Rescue to take them to the hospital to be tested. Right now before they take a patient to the hospital, they have to call the hospital first. Mr. Mixon asked if any departments present have to change the way they are doing business today to protect their employees. Lorana Pierce had relayed to Selectman Mixon that the Rescue Department is well stocked on masks, for both patients and the crew. They have identified a supply point should they run out. Rescue present responded they do have plenty of gowns, goggles, masks and gloves.

The EMA Director added that the CDC has a contact point where you can order more supplies; they may be shorthanded, but you could get on the list. Administrator Jones asked if the hospital had changed their protocol of patients that Rescue can or cannot bring. Rescue responded not that they know of but the hospital did ask that they only bring the patient and no members of the family or anyone else. They had a meeting today and asked that we call ahead if we have a possible C-19 patient. The Fire Chief commented that his department was told that the hospital has an isolation room, where if a patient is suspected, they go into a different area rather than directly into the ER. Dispatch questions the patients related to that and if it sounds like it's C-19 then it's dispatched as a different code and that sends the signal that mask, gowns and PPE need to be worn. They are kind of pre-screened beforehand by dispatch; once they arrive Rescue can do their own screening and they will know what it is. People are scared. It will go through a couple of people before Rescue actually gets it and then to the hospital. Protocols are changing every day. This has been talked about in the Ambulance Meetings so they have everything in

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place and they have all the PPE required. Any upcoming community events have been cancelled.

Administrator Jones commented with a bunch of people being out of work and children being home from school, people will go through food more quickly and some are concerned about their children relying on school lunches and food from school. Selectman House stated that breakfast and lunch will still be provided at the Phippsburg School with pick up from 10-1 and other RSU 1 schools for all RSU 1 students.

Administrator Jones hoped that people have been identified with respiratory illnesses on their Emergency Applications. Doug Alexander was going to check in on some elderly residents today. Mr. Mixon also asked if there was still a list of people to conduct Welfare Checks on; there is one at the Fire House; they are all set with resources/PPE as well. Wash your hands, stay away from big groups and use social distancing. Lee Rainey, Health Officer, stated we need to be thinking about the "when" and not "if;" controlling and minimizing exposure.

Need to get the word out to all the little groups in town not to be holding meeting or events for a while; a lot of them have already cancelled and will continue to do so. Question was raised if this decision was being left up to the department heads or are the Selectmen saying no to all meetings. Selectman Mixon stated that most of the committees have met so there wouldn't be a need for them to meet again and it would be less than 10 people, except for the Comp Plan and that has been cancelled. Selectman Young added that the committees should be encouraged, unless it is time specific, that they not meet. Selectman Mixon would leave it up to the Committee Chairs, realizing that not much will be happening until further notice. Administrator Jones announced that MMA is working on giving councils and select boards the authority to vote on items remotely.

John Skroski did an assessment a couple weeks ago on what PPE he had on hand; he has some coverall suits, M95's, goggles and 5 boxes of latex gloves, so he is all set for now. He did order some M95 masks 3 weeks ago which are back ordered and should be in the end of March. Chief Skroski has cleared his schedule and notified the County to contact him outside of normal hours, if he was needed. Kehl is not available due to pretty hectic on-line college classes; some possible limited weekend time if the town got in a pinch. Chief would also be willing to help if someone needs help, food delivery, etc., and between all of them there, that can be arranged.

EMA Director Morong said we will work through this like we have in the past and hopefully this won't be anything too drastic. Health Office Rainey stated this Phippsburg is not an isolated

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On 4/22/20

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island; there are many people coming in from other counties; the town is influenced by the outside world, more than we realize. Selectman Mixon stated that if anything is identified by any of the departments/organizations communicate it to the Board as soon as possible so they can react to it.

Chief Skroski stated that if there is a resident who is really having a hard time and cannot come into to register their vehicle, the police department will not be looking to write them up for expirations during this time. He doesn't want them to have to worry about making that trip from home to come in. The digital sign will be updated in Town and the Fire Department will also put something on Facebook.

Next discussion was what to put in place at Town Hall. Administrator Jones handed out a draft contingency plan that was prepared that morning. Lisa Wallace expressed she feels that Town Hall should close to foot traffic, but still work inside to answer phone calls, emails, etc. It is recommended that only excise tax be collected for registrations and then send them to the BMV in Topsham to finish it; the town doesn't like sending them to Topsham, but this is for the health and safety of the employee's that are working, not just the customers; if one of the employee's gets sick, we are all quarantined. Discussion was held about opening up the office one day a week for registrations, but you if you open it you open it, if you don't you don't. You would have to do either/or. If it continues, it will be on the verge of going from an involuntary shut down to a mandatory one at the national level. Whatever decision is made tonight, could change in the next 24 hours; this will be considered Phase I. Selectman Young added that if we do the full town closure his issue is that we cannot do it tomorrow morning; he feels the public needs a day or two notice. If we wait one more day we can get the word out on Facebook and other means. Mr. Rainey feels that it would be an extremely busy day in the office. Selectman Young responded by saying that he would rather have it busy now than in a week and a half or two weeks when the virus has spiked. Selectman Mixon asked Lisa Wallace about her concerns with the drop box which she said explained would entail multiple trips/coordination/phone calls/emails/double the work for everyone on new registrations; re-registrations can be done on-line. What Lisa recommends is for the customers to take a picture on their phone or scan a copy of the title and that's how she will know how much their excise tax will be. She could then contact them and let them know what the amount is and she could leave it in the drop box for them to pick up and go to Topsham or wait until the office reopens. Selectman Mixon would like to give them the option of finishing the transaction here if they do not feel comfortable going to the BMV in Topsham. Unfortunately, you cannot put plates and stickers out in the Drop Box. Administrator Jones feels that Topsham will have protocols in place whereby not too many people are in the building at the same time. Ms. Wallace knows the Town wants to be accommodating,

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and she does too, however you need to look out for the employees who are at risk and the comfort of the employees.

Ms. Wallace doesn't feel this is going to work. All towns are feeling the same thing. Chief Skroski added that the virus can live 3-4 days on a surface. Selectman Young stated that it's not the Board's choice to keep the counter open; it's Lisa Wallace's because she's an elected official. Someone can ask our representatives if the grace period can be extended for registrations; EMA Director Morong will bring this up during his county EMA conference call tomorrow; the Governor may have special authority to do something like this on a temporary basis, without changing the law, given the emergency civil declaration. Selectman Mixon asked what other services are provided that has hurdles that can't be done on line. Ms. Wallace responded that nothing now - it was marriages and death certificates, but that can be done through the State of Maine.

Any type of permit application that is needed would be difficult, but Mr. Rainey responded it could be done through the Drop Box or through e-mail; there would be a lot of back and forth and would slow things down. He would still have to conduct onsite inspections and compliance checks. As far as Assessing, that can be done all through the telephone, faxing and scanning. Selectman Mixon asked Chief Skroski if there would be any administrative disruptions for him; only pause would be the Concealed Weapons Application process and that can be done with minimal exposure. Selectman Mixon also asked Administrator Jones about services provided by her office - almost everything she does can be done by email or phone; all her meetings have been cancelled, but that does not hamper what she does on a day to day basis. GA can be done by drop box and phone.

Selectman House asked what was doing to be done at Town Hall - Selectman Young responded he would like to see it closed starting on Wednesday morning. Selectman House also agrees. To recap, Town Hall will be closed to the public starting Wednesday morning, until further notice, but the employees will still be working and answering the phones.

Discussion was held about holding Selectmen's Meetings. They will still come in to sign Warrants, will do away with the Public Forum, use telephone call in as well as e-mail, and make sure it is televised. They will take any comments or questions via e-mail. Meetings will be held at 5:00 p.m.

Discussion was held as to when the Town Hall situation should be re-evaluated; it will be put on the March 25th Selectmen's Agenda and then will be re-evaluated each week with any new information that is received.

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Selectman Young stated that it's important to make sure that the citizens know that the Town of Phippsburg is not closed; just public access to Town Hall and communicate with them what they can and can't do, and encourage them to do as much as possible on-line.

Vote: Selectman Young motioned for the Selectmen to meet on Wednesday evening at 5:00 p.m., which was seconded by Selectman House and passed by a vote of 3-0.

Vote: Selectman Young motioned to close the Town Office to public access until further notice, effective 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday, March 17th, which was seconded by Selectman House and passed by a vote of 3-0.

The Transfer Station hours of operation will remain the same. The Swap Trailer will be closed to public access, attendants and supervisors will limit contact as much as possible and are prohibited from handling trash coming in, and the public will not be allowed inside the office.

Administrator Jones will send out an email to all the Committee Charis stating that it is the Board of Selectmen's recommendation that they do not meet unless it is absolutely necessary or there is critical business to address.

Gary Morong will reach out the Library Trustees to see how they want the Library to proceed. If someone would like to take out a book they could call and use the After Hours Box to pick it up.

Selectman Mixon fixed the Lifebreath in the basement of town Hall so it is now introducing fresh air into the building 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and removes stale air.

Adjournment

Vote: At 7:24 p.m. Selectman House motioned to adjourn which was seconded by Selectman Young and passed by a vote of 3-0.