

Submitted by:

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Approved by Selectmen:

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**TOWN OF PHIPPSBURG
SELECTMEN'S MEETING
April 29, 2020**

The Selectmen's Meeting convened at 5:01 p.m. at the Town Hall with Selectman Nixon, Selectman Young, Selectman House and Administrator Jones present.

I. Adjustments

Administrator Jones would like to add accepting two donations to the Goodwill Fund under New Business.

II. New Business

1. Meet with Ellen Winchester, Chair of the Community Garden Committee to hear an update.

Ellen Winchester remotely reported that the committee would like to continue with the community garden. Maine Community Gardens has very careful protocol to open which the committee has gone over with the Brunswick/Topsham Land Trust Garden. There was an article published in the Portland Press Herald stating the benefits from gardening; most municipalities have decided to go ahead with the gardens, but the State says it's up to each town to make their own decision. The committee reviewed safety guidelines that have been published all around the country for dealing with COVID-19 which states there will be no sharing of tools; people can bring their own tools. Limit gardeners in the garden to 5 at one time, maintain the 6' safe distancing and recommend gardeners wear face masks. There are nine families this season that are interested in the garden beds. They have not publicized as the committee wasn't sure if they were going to be able to be open or not. If there are no other families that come forward, the committee would like to ask the Board to open it up to other town gardeners given the original funding came from KELT and hope to get funding from the Bath Rotary this year and they have been working closely with other towns. If by June 1st there are no additional Phippsburg residents who show any interest, would it be ok to open up the gardens to other towns. Her proposal to the Board is it OK to open the gardens this year using special safety guidelines, and second is it OK to open the beds to gardeners in other towns if all 19 beds are not taken by June 1st. Selectman Nixon asked what day the committee was planning to open the gardens. Ms. Winchester responded May 15th for Phippsburg residents and June 1st for other town gardeners'. This is to make sure everything is ready; the handwashing stations are in place and have time to be able to advertise. Selectman Young asked if the regulations were going to be posted on the fence and if there is a non-resident that takes a garden bed this year are they grandfathered for next year or does it open up again to a resident. Ms. Winchester said there would be an enlarged poster behind plexiglass and also posted on the website. Gary Morong can post it on Cable TV as well. The plots will be deferred to Phippsburg residents first for next year. Selectman Young recommends that if it does open up to non-residents next year that the previous year's non-residents get first refusal.

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Vote: Selectman Young motioned to authorize Ellen Winchester to open the community garden as of May 15th with the safety rules in place as discussed and to allow non-residents to acquire a bed as of June 1st if there are any left which was seconded by Selectman House.

Selectman House asked if each person that has a bed would get a written copy of the safety guidelines. Ms. Winchester responded by saying that was the protocol last year and they will hand them a copy this year and also have a face to face conversation to make sure they understand the guidelines.

Vote passed by a vote of 3-0.

Potentially there could be eight beds available. Selectmen Mixon asked how one goes about requesting a bed. Ms. Winchester replied that both email address and phone number will be posted on the Town's webpage. Posters will also be hung at Center Store, Pine Tree Service Station and the Post Office.

2. Amend recommendations on the Salary budget and Benefits & Insurances budget. *Selectman Mixon explained that some rounding errors were fixed and the addition of the LPI alternate. The Transfer Station hours were also increased. Administrator Jones stated that the total is \$583,028, which is approximately a \$10,000 difference than before. The benefits and insurance request increases by \$710. These new figures will have to go back to the Budget Committee.*

Vote: Selectman Young motioned to approve the increased salary request for \$1,200 for the LPI alternate and increasing the Transfer Station attendant's salary by \$53,000 as well as the increase in benefits and insurance for a bottom line amount of \$583,028 for the salaries and \$129,760 for benefits and insurances which was seconded by Selectman House and passed by a vote of 3-0.

3. Consider the Shellfish Committee's recommendation for setting the allocation and fees for Commercial Shellfish Licenses for the upcoming year.

The committee met via Zoom on Tuesday. The allocation for 2019 was 22 resident licenses, 3 non-resident, 5 student resident licenses, 600 resident recreational and 60 non-resident recreational licenses. This year's request is the same as last years.

Vote: Selectman Young motioned to approve the Shellfish Committee's recommendation of licenses at 22 resident commercial at \$350 each, 3 non-resident commercial at \$525 each, 5 student resident licenses at \$75 each, 600 resident at \$25 each and 60 non-resident at \$30 each which was seconded by Selectman House and passed by a vote of 3-0.

4. Consider accepting the following donations:

- \$100.00 from Judith & Tip Newell for the Goodwill Fund
- \$500.00 from Brent and Pamela Spooner for the Goodwill Fund

Vote: Selectman Young motioned to accept the above Goodwill Fund donations which was seconded by Selectman House and passed by a vote of 3-0.

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III. Unfinished Business

1. Reconsider strategies to maintain a safe and healthy work environment and public services in response to the pandemic Covid-19: Town Meeting Calendar.

Selectman Mixon reported that some new details have been released. The June Town Meeting is not likely since the community gathering numbers will still be low; possibly hold it in September. Selectman House talked with Bill Brewer about his thoughts regarding Town Meeting. He suggested adopting this year's budget going forward for this year or holding Town Meeting in September or October. Selectman House feels we should adopt this year's 2020 budget, not have Town Meeting, move forward and look at it again in six months. A special town meeting could be held. Selectman Young questioned how the Town would adopt the other warrant items. A lot of discussion was held about conducting a Town Meeting and when this might be able to occur. If a town meeting is held, only items that are absolutely necessary will be discussed and it will be kept simple. What the Town can and can't do needs to be figured out. MMA will be contacted to clarify what is in the Town's control and what isn't. Selectman Mixon stated that there is some work being done to conduct town Meetings by secret ballot. Selectman House feels we should put this topic on hold until further clarification is received. Selectman Young asked about the elections - July 14th? A 30 day public notification would need to be announced. Municipal elections still could be held on June 9th, by possibly absentee ballot, but notice would have to go out next week. Selectman Mixon would like to find out what constitutes a public hearing and if that could be held remotely. Administrator Jones will call the Elections Office to obtain information on what we are allowed and not allowed to do, what the best thing to do is, and to receive further clarification. In order to change the elections from May to June or a date to be determined, the Notice of Postponement Warrant would have to be posted.

Vote: Selectman Young motioned to approve a notice of postponement of secret ballot of municipal officer elections until a date to be determined by the municipal officers through the posting of a warrant, which was seconded by Selectman House and passed by a vote of 3-0.

Administrator Jones will also reach out to Allison Hepler for her assistance and advice. Selectman Young summarized the stages of Phase I of opening up the State to the public and what the Town would need to consider. May 1st - postponement of elections and Town Meeting, Town Hall will continue to be closed to the public for the month of May, employees will continue to work from home, meetings will continue to be held by Zoom, if needed, and keep Totman Cove closed for another month. Selectman Mixon would like to consider installing a plexiglass barrier for the front office before allowing people back in the building. Administrator Jones will contact Coastal Glass and find out about getting this taken care of. Until more clarification is received, Stage 2 decisions will need to be made about elections, Town Meeting, opening of Town Hall to the public standing 6' apart and limit the capacity of how many people are in the building at one time. Selectman Mixon stated that employees should be brought back into work a week prior to opening up to the public. People working from home can continue to do so during this phase but allows

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employees in certain fields to re-enter the office as needed, including State employees. BMV services will be very limited with only a skeleton crew working in the office and will not be at full capacity June 1st. Meetings may need to continue to be by Zoom to adhere to the ten people but less than 50 and keep social distancing; possibly a bay in the Fire Department could be used for meetings. Also during this phase the reopening of Totman Cove with social distancing as well as coastal state parks. All of these items will continue to be revisited.

Selectman House spoke with Charlie & Steve at the Transfer Station and they are fine handing out the new stickers and they understand that if people do not feel comfortable getting them the current ones will be extended to September 1st. The new stickers have been ordered.

Administrator Jones will call on the compactor and try to set something up next week and let Charlie know. Charlie is prepared and Thursday would be the best day. The Transfer Station is getting low on hand sanitizer. Selectman House is going to try and get some.

Selectman Young announced a couple emails had been received. One was from the Portland Press Herald with some questions about closing Popham State Park and Fort Popham and the impact that has had on the town and complaints or concerns from home owners and visitors and what the town is telling them. The Administrator is encouraging people to call her or Chief Skroski if something needs to be dealt with. The Popham closure is not impacting as much as the current Executive Orders. Need to clarify that it was the States decision to close Popham not the towns if that is what is being asked. The town is telling folks to do their part, self-quarantine and check the State of Maine website for updates.

IV. Selectmen/Administrator Comments and Announcements:

Tuesday July 14th - State Primary Election

Selectman House still has food bags; she's continuing to receive them from the Bath Food Bank. If you know of anyone that needs one please reach out to any of the Selectmen, leave a message at Town Hall or the Fire Department, and we will make arrangements for pick up or delivery.

Dogwill in Bath is providing pet supplies.

Clean up day was cancelled. People have been cleaning up on the side of the roads. Let Shana know at the Fire Department what has been cleaned up so people can go to other areas. Trash bags are in the black tote on the bench at the Fire Department.

Selectman Yong announced that the Comp Plan Meeting was held via Zoom. Unless there is an urgent matter that comes up no other Zoom meetings will be held. Bill Najpauer is going to use the two interns from Bates to help with all the background and research that needs to be done this summer. There will not be a questionnaire until they can meet face to face again and when the committee has more information. The officers for the Board are Mike Young as Chair and Lee Rainey, Vice Chair.

Selectman Young attended an online budgeting course. A lot of it was bigger city material for bigger towns that rely on revenue sharing. The towns of Biddeford and Brunswick were also represented at this meeting as well as an MMA legal representative and the MMA State and Federal Liaison. The meeting started off with a quote "if you are not comfortable being wrong,

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you will be when this is done." Another quote was "Plan your budget through past experience and future expectations." They expect a decrease in revenue sharing, excise tax could be a 12% decrease as people are waiting to buy cars, an increase in deferred taxes, watch cash flow, GA costs will be up, keep a healthy surplus, people's mindset for social distancing could go on for 6-9 months. There will be no impact on worker's compensation for 2021 uncertain for 2022. It's a good time to put capital projects out to bid. They recommend municipalities start tracking monthly and do a comparison with 2019 for excise tax, property tax and GA; Phippsburg could add the moorings to their tracking. Revisit budget and surplus prior to Town Meeting to see if anything can be cut back to reduce the tax rate.

Selectman Mixon encouraged those listening to take part in businesses that are opening, pledge your patronage as a lot of folks have been hurt from COVID-19. We need to assure that our small, local businesses are able to bounce back quickly to help the rest of the economy.

Selectman House stated Sebasco Harbor Resort has donated 200 pounds of flour which they re-bagged in two pound bags if anyone is interested. She also heard that the Resort may also start take-out orders.

V. Review and/or Sign:

1. Selectmen's Meeting Minutes for March 23rd and 25th, 2020

Vote: Selectman Young motioned to approve and sign the above Selectmen Meeting Minutes which was seconded by Selectman House and passed by a vote of 3-0.

2. Letter to Gary Best Manager, Bureau of Parks and Lands, and Parking Enforcement Invoice.

Vote: Selectman Young motioned to authorize the Town Administrator to sign the letter to the State Bureau of Parks and Lands above which was seconded by Selectman House and passed by a vote of 3-0.

3. LPI Alternate - Job Description

Vote: Selectman House motioned to table this job description, as it won't go into effect until July 1st which was seconded by Selectman Young and passed by a vote of 3-0.

Selectman Young reminded Administrator Jones that the commercial shellfish license letters need to get mailed out within the next few days. He also stated that he would be absent from next week's Selectmen's Meeting.

Adjournment

Vote: At 6:25 p.m. Selectman House motioned to adjourn which was seconded by Selectman Young and passed by a vote of 3-0.

Review of the latest draft of Annual Town Warrant will be done individually from home.