

TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
MARCH 31, 2020
VIRTUAL MEETING VIA ZOOM/FACEBOOK

Open Town Council Meeting: Councilor Ketch opened the Town Council meeting. Councilors in attendance (virtually) were Councilor Ketch, Councilor Lugdon, Councilor Richard, Councilor Wade and Councilor Clemons. Town Manager Melissa Doane was also present.

Review of Minutes: Councilor Ketch made a motion to accept the minutes of the March 17, 2020 meeting, seconded by Councilor Wade. Vote 5/0

Citizen's Request: none

Manager's Report: Melissa reported that things are going well with the closure. Even though the office is closed to the public, staff is able to assist residents via phone, mail and email. They are even able to leave items such as burn permits taped to the front door for residents to pick up. There is the obvious concern regarding the decrease in daily revenue due to the office closure. Staff hours have been reduced and the staff is currently not working together as much as possible to maintain social distancing. The office is cleaned on weekends, so there is no contact at that level.

Mike Smith has been working in the municipal building installing a glass barrier on the counter. The frame is complete and the glass is expected to be installed within the next week.

Melissa has been in contact with Heidi Gifford at the Viola Rand School. They will be suspending the bicentennial celebration that had been scheduled. She will also be speaking with Chief Gifford to cancel the pancake breakfast that had been planned for the same day. The celebrations may be reassessed later in the year if warranted.

Melissa submitted a draft memo given to the staff regarding COVID-19. These are guidelines to maintain social distancing for town staff. The office staffers will be alternating days so that they are not working in the building together. Melissa has also provided the staff with information regarding the Families First Coronavirus Response Act, which details benefits should an absence be necessary due to COVID-19. Hours worked vs. hours paid are also being tracked. She is still waiting on guidance from Maine Municipal Association to determine essential vs. non-essential employees in the town structure.

Melissa received a phone call from Terry Coulter regarding the automatic foreclosure that occurred on his property located at 43 Highland Avenue. He would like to be given until May 30 to pay the remaining outstanding taxes. These taxes include 2018 and 2019 taxes in the amount of \$1555.45. He had received the civil service notice over the weekend. She thinks it would be appropriate to extend the date since he does intend to remain in the property and it isn't abandoned. Councilors agreed and determined that they would allow waiting until May 30, 2020 to have the complete payment. They requested that she arrange to have Terry pick up a letter confirming this extension.

Nomination papers are now available for the two Town Council seats that will be open on July 1. There has been no guidance from Maine Municipal Association or the Governor's Office regarding this process, so the Town will be moving forward with existing practices. New pens have been purchased and will be provided to any citizen requesting nomination papers. Hopefully the process can be done using social distancing and a new pen for each signature. Councilor Ketch and Councilor Richard have requested the nomination papers, and Melissa will be mailing those to them due to the office closure.

A discussion was held on the decreased revenue due to the office being closed to the public. Melissa indicated that there is still a \$1.5 million fund balance that could be used if necessary. Should the shutdown last longer than anticipated, the Town may need to reconsider delaying schedule road projects. State revenue sharing is expected to decrease even from the projections a month ago.

Chief Gifford has placed two separate orders for PPE (personal protective equipment) for the department, but has yet to receive either shipment.

New Business: none

Unfinished Business: The individual scheduled to present on a solar project is still interested in appearing at a council meeting once the office is reopened to the public. The State of Maine may have extended the hearing dates for this project.

Spring clean- up stickers are available and can be mailed to residents. The cost is \$15.00. Councilors have agreed to a cost of \$14.00 for residents paying by phone with a debit/credit card as there is an automatic \$1.00 fee associated with the transaction.

Budget discussions continued. Councilors agreed to Melissa's suggestion to keep the budget estimate of \$300,000.00 for excise tax rather than increase it as discussed at the last council meeting. Melissa indicated that she was comfortable with this amount for excise tax collection, but had more concerns on municipal revenue sharing amounts. This discussion was based upon the current COVID-19 environment which will impact budgeting going forward. Councilor Ketch recommended keeping the budget for State Revenue Sharing in addition to maintaining the excise tax at the lower level and see how things develop moving forward. Further discussion on

the budget will be held at the next council meeting and should be finalized by the April 28, 2020 meeting so that it is available for the scheduled public hearing.

Municipal Warrants: Councilor Ketch made a motion to accept the following warrants, seconded by Councilor Lugdon: Vote 5/0

#68 in the amount of \$926.00

#69 in the amount of \$6024.00

#70 in the amount of \$6566.60

Warrants have been emailed to councilors and approved via the meetings. They have been flagged and will be signed when the council meets in person.

The next Council Meeting is set for April 14, 2020.

Motion to adjourn was made by Councilor Lugdon, seconded by Councilor Clemons. Vote 5/0