Virtual Selectmen’s Meeting Minutes

Monday, May 18, 2020, 10:00 a.m.

Virtual through Zoom at CMH

Chairman Ruth Mooney called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

Present at the Corner Meeting House was Chairman Ruth Mooney, Selectman Claude Patten, Selectman Jon Pike, Town Administrator Jeanne Beaudin, Fire Chief Mike Newhall, General Assistance Director Donna Gilley, Police Chief Lewandowski, and Assistant Town Administrator Alicia Jipson. Present virtually was Carmen Lorentz and Sal Steven-Hubbard from LRCD, School Superintendent Michael Tursi, Business Administrator Deb Thompson, and School Board Chairman Sean Embree.

Those present stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Abatements, Manifests, Exemptions & Credits

The appropriate abatements, exemptions, credits, and manifests were signed by all attending Board members.

Selectman Patten moved to approve the minutes of the meeting held on May 12, 2020 as written; seconded by Selectman Pike and the motion passed unanimously.

New Business

Carmen Lorentz of Lakes Region Community Developers gave the Board packets of information and presented a presentation on the background of LRCD and what they do as a business. They were approached a few years back by the Save our Gale School Committee to see if LRCD would be interested in the building. If the SOGS can move the building off site to a new location, then they would be interested in redevelopment of the old school. SOGS believes that they can get the school moved this summer to its new permanent home. LRCD will work to assemble financing for renovations now through 2021 with historic preservation considerations. LRCD will remain the long-term owner and landlord. They are currently looking at having the Boys & Girls Club of Central NH operate a daycare on the 1st floor serving low to moderate income
communities in the area. Still searching for a tenant for the 2nd floor. Construction will likely be 2022. LRCD will be looking to apply for a Feasibility Study Grant through CDBG for $25,000. Selectman Mooney asked if they were to apply and receive the funds from CDBG will that limit any other applicants from getting the grant money. Carmen replied that yes it would, and if we knew of any other plans, we might have coming forth then they would work with us on application filing timing. TA Beaudin asked what their intentions of the tax status would be on the building. Carmen replied that currently all of the buildings that LRCD owns we have chosen to pay the local taxes. **Acceptance of Funds in Accordance with RSA 21:-43**

We have been advised under RSA 21-P:43 to accept the Corona Relief Funds in the amount of $173,771. These funds have been allotted to Belmont for the reimbursement of funds occurred and not budgeted for towards the COVID-19 pandemic. If we do not use them the funds will lapse back to the State. TA Beaudin has reached out to the State asking if we can also use these funds for additions to the Mill and PD to make it safe for the public and employees. Prior to the end of the meeting TA Beaudin received a response from the GOEFFR Committee that the funds could be used for improvements to existing space to ensure safety of staff and visitors, however they would need to be expended by August 31. The funds could not be used on a capital project such as the Police Station.

Selectman Pike moved to accept the grant funds from the Governor’s Office for Emergency Relief and Recovery in the amount of $173,771 to be used for reimbursement of COVID-19 related expenses incurred by the Town from March 1, 2020 through August 31, 2020, seconded by Selectman Patten and the motion passed unanimously.

Selectman Mooney moved to allow TA Beaudin to sign on behalf of the Board the applications for reimbursement, seconded by Selectman Pike and the motion passes unanimously.

**Public Hearing**

Chairman Mooney opened the Public Hearing at 10:30 a.m., Selectman Mooney read the following statement: Community Development Block Grants are awarded by the New Hampshire Community Development Finance Authority (NHCDFA). Up to $500,000 annually is available on a competitive basis for housing and public facilities, economic development and emergency activities that directly benefit low- and moderate-income persons. Up to $25,000 is available for feasibility study grants.

This is a proposed application to the Community Development Finance Authority for up to $25,000 in Community Development Block Grant feasibility funds. The funds will be used to examine the renovation of the historic Gale School Building into a daycare center that will serve the regional workforce. A majority of the clientele of the daycare center will be of low- and moderate-income so the future implementation of the project will provide a majority of services to low- and moderate-income households. This project conforms with Belmont’s Housing and Community Development Plan’s Goals. Funding request: up to $25,000. Selectman Mooney
opened the floor to take public comments, there being no public comments Selectman Mooney closed the Public Hearing at 10:32.

Public Hearing

Chairman Mooney opened the Public Hearing at 10:33 a.m., Selectman Mooney read the following statement: Residential Anti-displacement and Relocation Assistance Plan. Although this project does not involve any displacement or relocation of persons (or businesses), if the Town were to undertake a CDBG project which involved displacement or relocation they would follow this plan. The plan outlines the measures they would take to find comparable, suitable housing for persons (or businesses) displaced or relocated. Selectman Mooney opened the floor to take public comments, there being no public comments Selectman Mooney closed the Public Hearing at 10:35.

Selectmen Pike motioned to adopt the Residential Anti-displacement and Relocation Assistance Plan, seconded by Selectman Patten and the motion passed unanimously.

Selectmen Pike motioned to approve the submittal of the feasibility application and vote to authorize the Chairman to sign and submit the feasibility application, and upon approval of the CDBG feasibility application, authorize the Chairman to execute any documents which may be necessary to effectuate the CDBG contract; seconded by Selectman Patten and the motion passed unanimously.

Other New Business

Beaches- TA Beaudin asked if the Board would like the TC/TC office to still hand out beach stickers. They had already been previously ordered before March. This year the beach will not have a gate attendant or lifeguards, so there will be no one there to police the visitors. Other towns are opening up their beaches with some guidelines set in place. We can get one porta potty there for use and have it cleaned 1 to 2 times a week depending on need. We will remove the dumpster and lock the bathhouse. Building & Grounds can continue to maintain the grounds. Alicia will come up with some signs to place at the beach reminding the guests of the social distancing guidelines still in place. The Board agreed to hand out the stickers since we already have them.

LCHIP Donation- Selectmen Mooney motioned to accepted the donation of $200.00 from the LCHIP fund in accordance with RSA 31:95-b and designated that it would be forwarded to the Conservation Commission for acceptance (RSA 36-A:4 gift), seconded by Selectman Pike and the motion passed unanimously.

Old Business

Shaker Regional School District- Discussion with Superintendent Tursi. The Board over the past few weeks has gathered some questions and concerns regarding budget concerns. Tax bills have gone out, tax money is coming in on a steady basis, and a major portion of the bills come in
through escrow. We are very concerned about the fall bills and taxpayer's inability to pay. The town has been watching our finances closely. Cutting spending when and where we can. We have put on hold certain projects and spending and furloughed a few employees to cut down costs. We are lucky enough that we have very little debt. The Board received the budget analysis from the school board and from what they can see they are anticipating a $800,000.00 in potential funds that they are able to return to the tax ratel. Selectman Mooney asked if they have an idea on the projected added cost that they are going to have to incur due to the COVID-19 situation. Mr. Tursi responded that we are going to have an increase in meals as we are extending the food service program through the summer, which we anticipate will be reimbursed. There will be an increase in transportation costs that we are looking at getting reimbursed. TA Beaudin asked if they have heard from the Governor if they will still receive the same State Education funds as anticipated. Mr. Tursi has not heard any thing to say otherwise. The school has also seen savings since the remote learning in negotiated contracts for transportation, no stipends for spring, savings in staff turnover and supplies. There have been utility savings and savings in professional development. Selectman Mooney asked why the decided to keep employees whole and not furlough them. Mr. Tursi responded that the decision to keep them whole was a Board decision. We were unsure how long this would last and wanted to keep the staff as whole as possible. Some positions are extremely hard to fill and we did not want to lose employees in those difficult hard to fill positions. Job duties to certain positions have been shifted or modified. Selectman Mooney expressed that we hope that the school and town can work together and share information when needed. This is going to be especially important and important that we look out for the taxpayers.

Mill Plans- TA Beaudin distributed to the Board some design plans that Steve had made up for possible solutions to space needs at the Mill. TA Beaudin is seeking direction as how they want to proceed. Selectman Pike would like Steve to take a second look at putting the Town Clerks office along with Land Use and General Assistance on the 1st floor. They are the most heavily visited offices and should have easier access for visitors and for the PD to access in an emergency situation.

Interviews- Reminder that on Wednesday we start our 1st interview for the Construction Management Firm.

Non-Public

Chairman Mooney moved to enter non-public session in accordance with RSA 91: A:3 II (b) at 11:34 a.m. Those present and voting were Ruth Mooney, Claude Patten and Jon Pike. Also present was TA Beaudin and Fire Chief Newhall.

The non-public session concluded at 12:20 p.m.
Ruth P. Mooney, Chairman

Jon Pike, Vice-Chairman

Claude B. Patten, Jr., Selectman