

HUDSON, NH BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Minutes of the April 21, 2020 Meeting

1. CALL TO ORDER - by Chairman Morin for the meeting of April 21, 2020 at 7:00 p.m. in the Selectmen's Meeting Room at Town Hall.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE led Chairman Morin

3. ATTENDANCE

Board of Selectmen: David Morin, Kara Roy, Marilyn McGrath, Normand Martin

Selectman Roger Coutu participated remotely from his residence due to the Covid-19 pandemic

Staff/Others: Steve Malizia, Town Administrator; Rob Buxton, Fire Chief; Bill Avery, Police Chief; Jill Laffin, Executive Assistant

4. NEW BUSINESS

Covid-19 State of Emergency Update - Chief Buxton

Chairman Morin recognized Chief Buxton who started off explaining to the Board, I've prepared three documents for you this evening. 1) is a briefing update for the Board, 2) is the financial expenses accounting 3) is a copy of the Incident Action Plan that was adopted for this working week. As of today we have 787,000 cases in the United States. Probably the detail that should jump out at you tonight is the 39,643 cases and the 1,800 deaths in the State of Massachusetts, just to our south. In New Hampshire we have 1,047 positive with 42 deaths. Hudson has fallen is now classified in the 20-49 category. So there's 20-49 cases within the community.

We continue to see community transmission. Contact points with the public along with travel and those types of things. Last week we reported the State of New Hampshire was targeting long term care facilities for testing. They are still in the process of standing up those testing capabilities. At this point they're attempting to work towards how to increase the testing numbers in the State. To date we have just north of 12,000 tests that have been given in the State of New Hampshire but they have not done any mass testing for the general public. Over the weekend, last weekend, if you did not catch it on Channel 9, they had a cluster outbreak at Easter Seals in Manchester. Probably the biggest concerning point to the outbreak at Easter Seals was they tested 28 people positive but everybody was asymptomatic. So nobody was exhibiting any signs but they were positive for covid-19. That is the first test in New Hampshire that I've heard that they've actually tested, had a positive result with no symptoms and they're obviously transmitting it through the workspace, at Easter Seals. So we take that with all seriousness and now we uptick our due-diligence here, locally.

This past week we employed a new protective clothing measure for our frontline first responders in the street. We're utilizing a mask called the ENVO N95 mask. It is basically an N95 mask that's manufactured in North Hampton, NH, but it's a change out cartridge mask so we get longer use out of it. It can be washed daily. There's a silicone ring around the outside for some comfort for the user. Probably the best scenario I can give you, if you remember some of the nursing staff in some of the major hospitals, from wearing the mask all day they had the bruising around the face? This mask is a nice gel fit. Those came from the State. Retail-wise they're \$79 apiece. They came from the State. We've issued one to every first responder in the field. Both Police and Fire. They come with five separate change out cartridges for the filtering portion. We were able to

secure an additional 400 on the backside from the manufacturer to make sure we have continuous use moving forward.

We also are looking to deploy N95 masks in our field inspectional areas. So Inspectional Services, Land Use, Assessing and those areas. Public Works that are working out in the public venue every week, every day, and give them some better protection. They'll actually start being deployed tomorrow to increase their personal safety.

Last week we took a look at our messaging. One of the things that was always a moving target for us was, was the word we're attempting to get out, getting out? I can tell you that in the last 30 days, somewhere in the range of 184 residents have used State 211 which is the informational call bank. So we're actually one of the higher users in the State. I think that's because we're actually pushing people to the right spot to get the information. I know we are not heeding those calls internally in the Fire Department, so they're obviously getting their information from somewhere and that comes from that messaging.

Our website has seen an 83% increase in use. We've had over 50,000 visits to the Town's website to get information so that is certainly a positive. The Facebook page continues to be active and is getting shared all over the place. If you go and look at where our Facebook posts are being shared, it's not just in New Hampshire. That means we're putting good information out and folks are taking it, utilizing it.

HCTV, I cannot say enough about them. They have moved mountains to make sure they're available for us anytime we want to tape something. Whether it's sharing a message we have on their own Facebook page or getting a slide or show up on the television that we get from the State. They've done a great job for us.

The Command Staff continues to meet and move forward. We're reviewing the two surveys that were conducted last week. We'll actually have them on the agenda tomorrow for our Command Staff meeting. As of today we've spent \$47,547 on this incident. We have put in for a grant through the State of New Hampshire to recover \$34,598. \$10,000 of that will be utilized to purchase some new cleaning equipment to do some deep cleaning in the apparatus, the cruisers, and the Town owned vehicles. Along with two cart style deep cleaning machines to be utilized in the facilities, so for larger areas. The rest of that money, if awarded, will actually cover what we have spent to date in overtime costs. So we went after it to get as much as we could up front. Went after the 100% funded project first, get the overtime costs back, then move on with additional request through other grant programs in the recovery effort.

One of the concerns that was highlighted, and I shared with the Administrator earlier today, my biggest concern is making sure the recovery monies that the State is pushing out to us is done in a timely manner. Maybe we feel a little bit more anxiety here locally because we're a July to June budget. Try to have everything nicely cleaned up for the folks coming in to do the budgetary review, so we're trying to make sure we're identifying funding mechanisms that are going to be put back into the budget before the end of the budget season. So we're going after those first. The FEMA money is right now still at 75%. There was a request put in by the State to the Federal Government to increase that to 100%. But there's been no action on that yet.

Unfortunately, we have seven members of the Police Department that are in quarantine. They went into quarantine this past week. I know that Chief Avery is utilizing his Continuity of Operations Plan that was highlighted for you folks in the middle of March, to cover those openings. To the best of my knowledge everybody is continuing to quarantine at home. They have one positive case and they continue to move down that path of recovery.

Our goals for the week, or things we've accomplished for the week. We talked about the survey. If you didn't have an opportunity to catch the HCTV show last week, Brian Groth did a tremendous job on economic development and getting the information out that he is tracking. We've put him in contact, gathering information from the State and they're attempting to identify an additional stimulus package for business on the other side

so they get more funding. I believe Brian reported that the pay check assurance program actually is out of funds already. That is the second distribution of that program. They're actually attempting to fund that for a third time. That is a Federal program. To which Selectman Roy said, I believe that bill went to the President today. Selectman McGrath informed the group, it passed the Senate. It has to go before Congress on Thursday. They're not coming back until Thursday they've got enough time to waste.

Chief Buxton continued with his update stating, concerns for us, obviously we're seeing an increase in activity. Our call volume continues to escalate. We continue to see more cases. One of the things that was highlighted as a concern, at least in my world, is the Food Pantry cases have started to increase. So that is a concern as we watch that program. The School is dealing with remote learning through the rest of the calendar year. From speaking with the Superintendent, that is a challenge. It's not an easy thing to get accomplished. So they continue to deal with those things. They did move the end of the school year date, yesterday, to June 5th. They have a hybrid situation going on for April vacation.

One of the major things that we've started to ask for in the EOC as of late, obviously with the unemployment, CMC just had another layoff today of staff. We've actually asked them to put together a mapping algorithm to show communities in regards to where they're at with unemployment claims within the community. So we hope to get that spun around sometime quickly and then get that available for us for consideration, what the impact is here, locally.

Recreation program review this week is a priority for us. Wellness program for Town employees as we head into the 5th week. Teleconferencing efforts and short term and long term solidification of workspaces. So guards and separation type stuff. So we continue to work those programs and gather those pricings as we move forward. Selectman Martin asked Chief Buxton, do they happen to give you numbers of the, I know they give you the full number of deaths in New Hampshire, do they give you where they're from? Chief Buxton replied, I don't have that. Selectman Martin said he was just wondering.

Chairman Morin asked the Board if they had any questions. Selectman Coutu said, Chief, I'm sure the Chairman of the Board of Selectmen, Chairman Morin, advised you about each and every one of our concerns. I'm sure we all gave him different questions. I'm not privy to what other people asked the Chairman. I was concerned primarily about a situation here in Town, where we have a food market where employees were not wearing gloves, handing food. Employees congregating very close together, not social distancing at all. Face masks were sporadic. I asked about it. I noticed today that the company sent out an email to its customers advising us that they were going to have a directive tomorrow. I was under the impression that the directive was going to be earlier this week and if so, has anybody been monitoring the store that I mentioned in my email, in my message to the Chairman?

Chief Buxton replied saying, the Chairman brought your concern to me with the store name. We pushed that up through Public Health. Whether they have received a visit or not I can't confirm. Regarding private industry utilization of the CDC guidance, they're in charge of food prep type laws which come underneath the restaurant area which is not in my prevue. That is strictly licensed through the State. So they'll come out for a visit after they review our concern. So they may have gotten a visit today, they may not have. I can't confirm or deny that. Selectman Coutu then asked, so we have, as a governing body, we have no jurisdiction when we find that the employees are not social distancing and employees are handling food without gloves in a situation like the corona virus, we have no jurisdiction whatsoever? Chief Buxton responded to Selectman Coutu saying, so you are a non-self-inspecting community. That means that you have given all your rights for inspecting food prep areas to the State of New Hampshire. Where they come in and do the licensing. We don't do that locally here. So that's where that regulatory authority comes from. Regarding social distancing in the workplaces and those types of things, that is on the company themselves. That is not on us as a municipality. Selectman Coutu responded, thank you.

Upon no further questions from the Board, Chairman Morin thanked the Chief for his update.

5. SELECTMEN COMMENTS

The Selectmen did not have any comments this evening.

Chairman Morin - I've got two things real quick. A Budget Committee member got ahold of me last night. They were wondering if this Board would allow them to have a Budget Committee meeting in the near future in reference to possible budget deficiencies because of the covid-19 situation. I asked them to hold off until we get a presentation next week, Chief, with all the expenditures and everything. At this point we really weren't too bad. Hopefully with all the grants and funding from the Federal Government, at the 75%, we should come out pretty good. So they're going to wait. But is this Board's feeling on allowing that meeting to take place if they need it? Selectman Roy asked, how many members are they talking about? To which the Chairman replied, it would be the full Board, 11. Selectman Roy responded, I would suggest that if they're going to do that, they do it remotely. The Chairman said, we put a stop to all meetings, that's why they were asking. Selectman Martin said, my only comment is, statutorily, they're time to handle the budget is during budget presentations in the fall. Once it goes to the voters and the voters bless it and vote on it and say yes, this is yours, it comes back to the governing authority. I think, I'm not assured, but I think that anything to do with, we can show them, it's certainly not to hide anything, but statutorily it's the Board of Selectmen's budget again and we control it. The thing we got to be concerned with, which is cash flow, and that's being done. So I don't see the need to have that type of meeting. Selectman Morin replied, and I asked them to wait until after the presentation next week. They may get all the answers they need from that meeting.

Selectman McGrath responded saying, if they want to come in, I think they need to do it remotely. I think all of us are trying to do the right thing and protect ourselves and protect others. For them to come I think would be. Selectman Coutu agreed with the Chairman.

The Chairman went on to say I got a call from a couple residents who want to do a project to commemorate this pandemic. What they want to do is get tiles out to families to draw or put messages on. They'll collect all the tiles and then pick a location, a wall specifically somewhere, and put all these tiles up so they'll be a remembrance type of thing of this whole incident. At this point they're still working on that. But they asked me to run it by the Board to see if it's something that the Board would support so they can get moving on it. The Board agreed that they'd need more of a plan.

6. NONPUBLIC SESSION

Motion by Selectman Martin seconded by Selectman Roy, to go into non-public session under RSA 91-A:3 II (a) The dismissal, promotion, or compensation of any public employee or the disciplining of such employee, or the investigation of any charges against him or her, unless the employee affected (1) has a right to a meeting and (2) requests that the meeting be open, in which case the request shall be granted. A roll call vote was taken. Carried 5-0.

Chairman Morin entered Nonpublic Session at 7:21 p.m., thus ending the televised portion of the meeting. Any votes taken upon entering open session will be listed on the Board's next agenda. The public is asked to leave the room.

Selectman Martin made a motion, seconded by Selectman Roy to exit nonpublic session. A roll call vote was taken. Carried 5-0.

Chairman Morin entered open session at 7:53 p.m.

7. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn at 7:53 p.m. by Selectman Martin, seconded by Selectman Roy. A roll call vote was taken, carried 5-0.

Recorded by HCTV and transcribed by Jill Laffin, Executive Assistant

David S. Morin, Chairman

Kara Roy, Vice-Chairman

Marilyn E. McGrath, Selectman

Roger E. Coutu, Selectman

Norman G. Martin, Selectman