

HUDSON, NH BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Minutes of the May 19, 2020 Meeting

1. CALL TO ORDER - by Chairman Morin for the meeting of May 19, 2020 at 7:00 p.m. in the Selectmen's Meeting Room at Town Hall.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE led by 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; Jill Laffin, Executive Assistant

4. NEW BUSINESS

Covid-19 State of Emergency Update - Chief Buxton

Chairman Morin recognized Chief Buxton. The Chief started his update saying, Good evening Mr. Chairman, members of the Board, I'm here for our weekly covid-19 update. In the package we've provided you this evening are a few documents. We gave you the Board of Selectmen brief, we gave you the incident action plan for the week and we gave you a copy of a memo written by the Town Administrator regarding credit card payments that are in there.

Just to get started this evening I give you the review for the week. Currently we're at 1.5 million cases in the United States. A couple things to note. We're at 3,652 for cases in New Hampshire with 172 deaths. To date we've had 1,764 for cases in Hillsborough County. We have 72 cases in the Town of Hudson. Mass numbers are at 87,000 with 5,800 deaths.

Update from last week, additional to the 2.0 piece outdoor dining has now been phased in. Yesterday the Governor announced the childcare facilities with some guidance to open along with a host of recreational type events like guided fishing trips, hiking, canoeing rentals and those types of events. To date we've had six local restaurants take advantage of the outdoor gathering permit process for the temporary outdoor seating. Those are Luk's, T-Bones, Soho, Fat Katz, Rocco's and the Northside Grill. They've all either been through the process or are in process as of today. From talking with Deputy Tice and Brian Groth the Town Planner, the process is moving quite seamlessly through the office. As people call in they are guiding them through the application process and gathering the necessary documents and getting out for the inspections and moving forward.

This past week we conducted a drive through clinic at Hills-Garrison over two days, the 14th and 15th of May. We tested a total of 345 people. Kudos to Lt. Michelle Rudolph and Lt. Mike Mallen who spearheaded that process for us. That was almost a two week pre-incident planning process to coordinate between the State, the School. The School nurses really pulled together to give us a big push regarding not only scheduling people but actually working the clinic itself. As of today I know on the test that was conducted on Thursday which had a

195 people there were zero positive tests that came out of that sampling group. I don't have the results of the Friday exam yet.

This week the command staff has started to look at the process of for what is the future hold for the reopening process for town government buildings, Town owned buildings across Town. This is a very involved piece at not only looking at the States data but implementing the guidance and the guidelines that are recommended from the Federal Government as we move forward.

We've also had one unprotected exposure of a Public Works employee that was outside of work. Unfortunately that employee did come to work so we have some additional members that are quarantining at home. If you remember their continuity of operation plan, they're a split group, so that group was not scheduled to work so there's been no impact as of yet. We're still pending those test results today. So we're trying to follow up as quickly as possible but as of today that test result is still hanging out there.

The grants group along with the Finance Director attended a funding meeting last week. It was a grants funding meeting with the State EOC. That was 2.5 hours of fun for them as they reviewed all of the protocols for the different buckets of money that have been highlighted. To date you'll note that you see a significant increase in the expenditures and that is related to the first responders stipend that has been implemented and continue to roll that forward.

Goals for the week, we have a review process for credit card efficiency that we hope to get the Board's support for tonight. Additional goal for the week is to look at the reopening plan, develop long-term solution to collecting public input during the Board of Selectmen's meetings, and develop a mass vaccination plan. One of the things that we've tasked the EMS group with is really identifying how are we going to go about the potential of mass vaccination as we move forward. They continue to roll out more and more testing opportunities for vaccines and at some point we are going to have a vaccine. So what does that look like? If they decide to use the pod distribution plan what does that mean for us and how is that going to work? There should be no surprise why chose Hills-Garrison that is our pod distribution location and that really gave us a dry run in regards to how many people we can flow in and out of there. It was quite seamless from what I heard. There was no backups, no traffic issues but when you start talking about several days of that type of process with our residents and the residents out of Litchfield, it would be a much bigger group of people that we're dealing with. But it was a good dry run for us anyway.

Probably the first thing I'd like to do tonight is basically talk about a funding opportunity that comes from the CARES Act and that's around the credit card memo that you got from the Administrator, Basically asking you to absorb the 2.9% cost that is normally associated with utilizing the credit card, for a specific period of time. We have the ability to capture money back from the CARES Act until August 31. That is what we're proposing this evening. I'm going to ask the Administrator just to follow up with any details that are in his memo that he may find necessary. The Town Administrator went on to say, this would be for anybody that wants to use a credit or debit card, which obviously would be beneficial to us from a processing perspective. They can actually be online, they really can't and shouldn't be coming here. Hopefully this would facilitate collections, folks would be able to pay property tax. I think one of the reasons it hasn't been more widely used is because there's a processing fee of the 2.95%. In my memo I cited an example of a \$3,000 first half tax bill which is a typical single family home, that's a \$90 processing fee. People are probably hesitant to pay that \$90 fee, this would give them an opportunity through August 31st, to have that fee waived. We would pay it then we'd get reimbursement from the CARES fund. This is an eligible expense. The CARES fund does contemplate and does allow for that. So we think for all the things that you can pay with credit or debit cards, that if the Board made a motion to waive the processing fees and have the Town pay it for them, through August 31st, we would then submit reimbursement and then be made whole.

Selectman Roy was recognized by the Chairman and she asked, is that 100% reimbursable? To which the Administrator and Chief Buxton replied, yes. Seeing no further questions, Selectman Roy made a motion, seconded by Selectman McGrath, to waive the credit/debit card processing fee for all payments for all

payments to the Town using a credit or debit card effective May 20, 2020 through August 31, 2020. The Town will pay the processing fee for credit and debit card transactions and will submit the fees for reimbursement from the CARES Act funds. A roll call vote was taken. Carried, 5-0.

Chief Buxton went on to say, the second piece we'd like to review this evening is in regards to solicitation of public input during your meetings. If you recall, I think it was in April, we really have deleted the public input piece from the Boards agenda, and how do we reinstitute bringing that back into the fold. There have been a couple things that have been explored I know by the School Board and we kind of ran those up the flagpole with the Town's legal staff to kind of say, how do we facilitate this? Really there is a pretty broad ability for the Board to do this a couple of different ways. One is to set up a separate email account that would afford the opportunity for any tax payer to send an email with their question, with some guidelines with regards to the rules that you've already established for public input and basically drop that email into an email inbox that Jill would have access to and I'd assume the Administrator would have access to, to basically bring a list to the meetings. So you could review those during your public input piece and bring those forward. One of the things that Dave was very up front with me about was the recognition that public input is not a requirement of the State law. That is something that we have traditionally afforded the public to come in and provide you with their feelings on things, there is a big ability for you to provide some scope as to how those emails come in. Asking somebody to put down their contact info. Not only their name but their address so you know exactly where they are a tax payer in Town and you're not getting an email from outside of the Town boundary and it's somebody that's trying to influence something that's happening here. His suggestion was if you went this route, to basically put it out there that it is a trial, to kind of see how this rolls and how it rolls forward and acknowledge that there's going to be some growing pains as that stuff comes if you get inundated with 200 emails in a week, well you're probably not going to get through 200 emails on a Tuesday evening during the public input session, so how do those all get separated? The next option was to set up a phone either in the breakroom or in the finance department where somebody could actually call in during the meeting and provide an opportunity for them to call in and send in a message and then bring that here, Jill could bring that forward. Then you could either call them back on the phone in here or have a dialogue regarding what their topic is. Remember that the public input piece isn't necessarily for you to take action, it's to gather information and provide some sort of direction. That was a little cumbersome. The third opportunity was to provide Go To Meeting application, which I believe the School Board is doing a little bit of that, where they provide you with an opportunity to get on the meeting itself and come in here. The Town of Londonderry had some issues with how that worked for them and regards to somebody coming in and taking charge of the meeting so it becomes a very labor intensive for the administrator or somebody to monitor or basically muting somebody if they're going down a path that isn't something within the Boards view and they're not listening. So those are three options. We had some discussion today in regards to hey, you know the email seems like the most vanilla path to go down for a trial piece and go from there. That's really my suggestion this evening. I talked to the Administrator about that earlier today but we bring that to you.

Selectman McGrath said, I just want to clarify. You mentioned Dave that is Dave Lefevre, the Town Attorney, he gave you that advice. I just wanted to clarify in case anybody out there is watching and want to know who Dave is.

Selectman Roy was recognized and she said, so, I just want to be clear that we have not restricted access for the public to come to the meeting, we have set it up so that there's some social distancing but if somebody still wants to come they can come and sit in one of the few seats provided. I know, I guess we'd have to have another conversation with Attorney Lefevre, but I know the first meeting the School Board had, they had a bunch of emails about similar issues and they kind of balled them all together and just did sort of a recap. They didn't read every single email during the meeting. Chief Buxton responded saying, great point. One of the things that Attorney Lefevre was very up front about is what is the goal of the Board during the public input session. So you do have the ability to scope that conversation and your rules to say if you got, 100 emails on opening Town Hall then you could scope and develop that into a conversation. To your point, you have not limited access for the public to come down and view the meetings. They're televised, they have the ability to come sit in the space behind me. That was really the one of the things that Attorney Lefevre was very up front with me on in regards

to the public access is for them to come down and view you conducting the business of the government and that is being met and that is the intention of the rule. The public input piece is something that has been afforded over time and this just gives it a different scope. That is all. Chairman Morin added I just want to make it clear that we do allow, but we will be staying within the 10 people limitation, so we're not going to have a whole gang of people down here in this room if there's some type of issue.

Selectman Coutu asked, am I hearing that public access has been available all this time? To which the Chairman responded, yes, we have had people in. We've not had public input but public access we have had. We've had somebody in the in audience every meeting until tonight. Selectman Coutu said, that's news to me. Chief Buxton then said, from talking with the IT Director, this is something, the email account and advertisement is something that can be started as soon as tomorrow, if that is the will of the Board. The other two options need a little more exploring but the email piece is certainly available quickly.

Selectman Martin said, as was stated, we haven't closed Town Hall for people to come down and talk to us. I'm more inclined to go with having them email it in and somebody can review it or if you want one of us to review it and help lump it into a conversation but we haven't shut anything down. You're more than welcome to come down here. We'll provide a seat for you but if there's more than 4 of you, we can't accommodate the excess because of the 10 people rule. But again, we haven't shut anything down. They're able to email everybody. Establishing that email would be my way to go. Chairman Morin asked, do we need a motion on this? To which the Town Administrator responded, well, I believe you suspended the original public input so if you want to do something different if the Board wants to consent to that that's fine, if the Board wants to make a motion, you can do it either way you want. I don't believe you did a motion to do away with it. After we got the information from Attorney Lefevre you as your prerogative as Chairman redid the agenda.

Selectman Coutu added, again, isn't it a fact that up until now public input has been suspended. To which the Town Administrator and Selectman Roy responded, yes. Chairman Morin said, yes but we have not stopped anybody from coming down to the meeting. We have had a member of the public in the audience every single meeting except for tonight. Selectman Coutu said, that's not relevant. What's relevant is whether or not public input was available. It was not. To which the Chairman responded, correct. Selectman McGrath added let me point out that we've gotten a number of emails from residents whether it's concerning Benson's, whether it's concerning the development that Green Meadow is going to be discussing next week. They've been able to reach out to us and express their concerns and questions. We haven't shut down our email. Chairman Morin added, correct. We have still be been getting public input through emails. But basically what you're saying Chief is these emails are going to be directed to this meeting. Selectman Roy added, to reiterate what the Chief said, although we've done it traditionally, it is not a requirement of the law to have public input. Which would say ot me that we can start it and stop it at the pleasure of the Board. The Town Administrator added, as opposed to public hearings where you are required to. That's where you had a large donation, or another program that required a public hearing, then you are required to have it. But just generic public input you are not required to have. Selectman Roy said, I'm inclined to go the email route too. I think the phone thing would be a little too disruptive. Go to Meeting is something we might want to keep on the table if somebody wants to present a public input presentation to us, but that would be reaching out to us asking us for that kind of thing. Then we can make that work. Chairman Morin then said, basically where it is our prerogative we don't need a motion it's just a basic. A consensus of the Board agreed to go to the email system. Selectman Coutu then said, I want to pick up on what Selectman Roy just stated. Would you be receptive Mr. Chairman, if any citizen were to want to come in and hopefully it won't be about the proposed project, because that was going to be handled separately next Wednesday evening and they'll have ample opportunity to come in. But would you be receptive if a citizen were to call in and speak to Jill or the Town Administrator and they wanted to talk about something totally something that we haven't thought of and they want to come in and they want to talk about it, not Benson's not, they just want to come in and make a presentation and it would be beneficial for them to come in and show graphics or whatever. I'm not saying that's going to happen, no one's approached me about it but would you be receptive to entertaining that for public input? And as well as the emails. Selectman Roy said, although they do it all remotely that's what the School is doing. They were doing sort of those kinds of presentations by

coordination. So they would call up in our case they'd call Jill and say can you put me on the agenda for public input? To talk about blah blah blah. Selectman Coutu said he got pieces of what Selectman Roy has said, she's been breaking out tonight. Selectman Roy explained again, what I was saying is the School would coordinate to have the presentation done by Go To Meeting, they're doing everything remotely. But if we're not breaking the number of people in a room rule, I don't see why we can't have somebody come by exemption if they wanted to do that. The Chairman confirmed that Selectman Coutu heard that and went on to say, that would be limited as our rules state to five minutes, no more. Selectman Coutu said, absolutely, I agree, we have to abide by the rules. That's a rule and if there's two people and it's repetitive, they get shut off I mean I know the rules. I agree. I don't think you'll get a request, somebody might ask. I know a lot of people that have fancy phones and they don't know how to use them so, most people know how to use email so hopefully that will work. Hopefully they'll be no need to have people come in. We'll open up soon enough I would hope. Depends on what the Governor says. I'm good with the emails for now as long as you're open to having somebody come in.

Selectman McGrath said, so before we agree to that, if someone wants to come in and sit in this room, all of us, we take our temperature when we come in here. We're signing in so that everybody knows that we're healthy and able to be here and we're wearing masks. As opposed to the people that are sitting at home. So is that going to be a requirement for anybody coming in to sit in this meeting and present information to this Board? Chairman Morin responded saying, that is the rule we have set up and that's what everybody will follow. Selectman McGrath added, just so it's clear, because you send out a message like that, that oh yeah, great you can come in and then they show up without a mask and they may be running a temperature and you don't know where they've been or they've been around. What's good for one is good for all.

Chairman Morin said, okay Chief, we're good with that. Thank you. Chief Buxton added, just an informational piece. For the last week or so the information line has been running. We've had one request come in that got filtered out and it was basically to cancel an appointment. It wasn't really for information. We filtered it out. So it is up and operational. Just so you are aware. I check every day and there were no inquiries. That sits there ready.

Chief Buxton went on to say, third piece, really is concentrating on how we develop a reopening effort for public buildings, what our reopening plan looks like, all the different areas we touch. FEMA has started to put out some guidance this past week in regards to how to put a plan together and what that plan looks like. Taking into account resurgence. Your high risk population, still encouraging telework, social distancing, what are your hygiene practices by cleaning the building, the self-monitoring piece coming in. What are the ventilation practices for the structure itself? So there's a lot of infrastructure that needs to be reviewed and how do we really highlight taking care of our employees, taking care of the public, taking care of our facilities and messaging that as we move forward and highlighting really how do we flex this opening? My recommendation to you would not be to draw a line in the sand that says on Monday we're opening everything up. That's just not achievable. Tomorrow we will start putting some separation in work spaces to increase the number of employees that can work within an area where we can't maintain social distancing to try to give some relief. The goal tonight with the credit card piece was to continue to push folks to use the online permitting and payment options to go down that path. The Department Heads have a significant amount of work out in front of them to say, okay how are we going to continue sanitizing, purchasing things to make sure that we're safe and when you start loading the building with 100 people a day that filter through here, whatever the number turns out to be, how are we making sure we're providing them an environment where they can come in and get their business done, and then move forward. So that's really going to be the goal here of the next week to start talking about those things. FEMA has started, like I said a highlight process together for us to examine those areas. I need to emphasize one thing, when we highlight a need to go out to purchase signage, remember we're one of several states that are trying to purchase signage. Again today we were told on a call with the State that the N95 mask volume in the State of New Hampshire is still very fragile because they're having more difficulty getting more masks in. They got how many hundreds of thousand gowns today but no N95 masks. So these are all challenges obtaining that stuff so we can get back to the reopen so everybody is operating safely. So that's truly one of the challenges as we move forward. So I just want to bring that to your attention this

evening and really talk about that as you start theorizing okay, how do we flex open this piece and bring you forward a proposal after Memorial Day and basically saying here's where we think we should go. But this is probably going to be a week-long to ten day process to get the Department Heads to start thinking about how do we reengineer some of our practices to make it more efficient? So you're not spending copious amounts of time coming into the building and needing to hang around in lobby areas. You come in with a mission. You come in, you have your task, you get to whatever department you need to go to, you get serviced efficiently and out the door you go and how does that get accomplished. That's really where we're heading with the reopening effort and what that looks like. So I wanted to put that on the Boards radar screen as we start talking about that moving forward this evening.

Chairman Morin said, my only concern is on the news tonight there was 6,000 tests for antibodies in the State and only 4% came back with antibodies. Which tells us that there's a lot of people in this state that have not got it yet and that is going to be a long term problem opening up anything in this Town. So that's just something we need to look at. 4% that's not many. Selectman Martin asked, when you say that that's an indication that not many people have gotten it? The Chairman responded, out of the 6,000 plus tested only 4% came back confirmed that they had it with the antibodies. Selectman Martin then said, 4% of the people that had the infection came back with the antibodies. Chief Buxton added, right, which means there's still a vulnerable population. Selectman McGrath stated so out of the 6,000, 240 came back with the antibodies. Chairman Morin added, we still have possibly a long road ahead of us. Chief Buxton added, that's a great comment, I'm not comparing one state to another state here when I say this, but when you look at the plan that Governor Baker established yesterday and you talk about the reopening plan that we've seen to date in New Hampshire from Governor Sununu, one of the things that Governor Baker is very up front about is hey, if we start seeing numbers slipping in the wrong direction, we not only stop our progression, we actually go backwards. He pushed it right down that if we see a resurgence of some sort that I'm not hesitating to go back. Chief went on to say, I have the utmost respect and trust in Governor Sununu he would do the same thing. It's just the plans not written the same way and that was one thing that really caught me in the dashboard they're creating that will show the green buttons as we move forward. I know it's a very slow process in Massachusetts as it will continue to be in New Hampshire as we deal with the summer challenges.

Selectman Roy then asked, as part of the reopening plan, is there going to be an overall plan about things like sanitizing work spaces and how often that's done? Chief Buxton said, that is a huge piece for safety and health to start getting their arms around to look at the polices we have in place today and how do you establish those for the long-term effects. One of the recovery money grants that we're looking at is basically getting cart style disinfectant matching that you can put into an office area and set it and go overnight. I'm going to use the Town Clerks office because that's one of the most used spaces in Town. What is the rotation for that to get set up on say Monday and Friday nights to make sure we're disinfecting the workspace and capturing out sanitation levels where we want them to be. It has a fogging device with it. It moves through the air and disinfects the surface. It is the same device we'll be utilizing on the ambulances with a hand held product because the cart style is too big to haul around day in and day out. Selectman Morin said, just to clarify, this is going to be probably a ten day event just to get a plan then depending on availability and what we need, we could be talking weeks here, not days. Just so everybody understands that. Chief Buxton replied correct, if I'm highlighting out here, I'm really hoping to be back here the first meeting in June, I think its June 2nd. A week and a half away to say this is what we're forecasting we can do and what it looks like. There are going to be training requirements to come back as you reload the buildings with all the employees. How do we deal with, as simple as it sounds, the break room? You can't load the break room at noontime with 10 employees. It's just too small and not enough room for social distancing. Fortunately, we're in good weather now, the picnic table will be out. You can offer the employees some different areas to go to socially distance. Those types of plans need to be reviewed and developed. There's quite a bit of work there to pitch and do.

Selectman Coutu asked, Chief, relative to the cost recovery summary page, the first responders' stipends, let's talk about the column in general. Total expenses \$245,782. There's no indication. It says you submitted two grants so I'd assume you have no answer as of yet, correct? Chief Buxton responded, no, the DOJCEFS Grant

has been awarded. You actually accepted that last Tuesday evening for the cost of \$38,000. So that is money that we're going through the contract process right now to recover those monies. Can I talk about the stipend for one second? Selectman Coutu went on to say, the reason I raised the stipend was because I thought that as 100% reimbursable. Chief Buxton responded it will be 100% reimbursable. The Police Chief and myself have filled out the required paperwork and the State will cut one check. The Finance Director and I agreed to show it here for transparency so you see that number blossom over the 8 week period. But it is funded. As soon as we receive the money you'll see it listed down below underneath the grant section. We just have not physically secured the funds yet. Selectman Coutu then said, what I don't understand when I look at this, why are we charging for example \$111,527.29 for the fire department for covid? Chief Buxton responded saying, because everything that we're purchasing right now is being charged to the emergency management account which shows up underneath my budget. So you'll notice all the protective clothing at \$61,000 is being charged to the fire department account whether that's a true fire department purchase or a highway purchase because we've logistically are charging it through that account so we can efficiently go get the money back on the backside. Selectman Coutu, said, okay, I get that. Is the payroll the time that was spent from employees working specifically on covid? Like people who worked on the management team and things like that? Chief Buxton responded, correct. That is also any overtime that was expended when we had the six employees that were quarantined. So any of the cost that was associated to covering their emergency response shifts. Selectman Coutu replied, good, that answers my questions, I'm good with that.

The only other question I have is, I know you're working on a lot of plans and I know that it's not an easy task. I want to first say, kudos to you and the management team. My wife and I were two of the participants who were fortunate enough to be able to be tested last Thursday. We were in and out of the whole process in about ten minutes then Chairman Morin stopped and talked to me for about fifteen. So that really stalled us back, only kidding Dave! It went flawless, it was an uncomfortable test but we survived it, an outstanding job Chief, I was so impressed. You know how I've been pushing for testing and I know you have as well. Hopefully we'll be able to reach out to our community with more testing in the near future. But, my question is this, with all due respect, I'm not looking for an argument from you or any other member of the Board of Selectmen, in the process of making any plans at all, is Benson's in the works? Chief Buxton responded, last week you folks chose to keep Benson's closed as far as I'm concerned. I know that there's available options to look at but that is not on my radar screen as we sit here today. The plan was presented last week with some options from the Administrator, if we want to expand that I just need direction from this Board if we want to revisit that. Selectman Coutu said, okay, so four members of the Board are stopping the opening of Benson's good enough, thank you Chief. Chairman Morin responded, just remember Selectman Coutu, that's why we're here. We all have a vote. Selectman Coutu added, that's fine, the majority rules.

Chairman Morin asked the Chief if he had anything else. Chief Buxton said, I do have one point. Regarding the expansion of the testing process it appears that I've been a squeaky wheel long enough. It appears that they'll be establishing a regional fixed testing site in Londonderry over by the highway. That will be available, once we get that information we'll certainly push that out to the public. The drive through clinic that we had literally took ten days to stand up and that's just a lot of hours to put into getting that established. The State would love us to run more based on the fact that how efficient it was but I struggle to be in the testing business where that is really their responsibility to provide to us. So I've kind of pushed that back in their direction and said, you need to make that available here locally and it appears we're going to have a regional site finally set up on the border here for us.

Selectman Martin said, I'm amazed that you as the Fire Chief are running the Emergency Operation Center, and running a fire department that is running emergency calls every day and still getting your guys training on different parts of their job. Not just you, you have a team. You also have a team on the EOC but you're running it. And from me to you and my family to you, thank you for all the hard work you put in for this town and thank your guys for being there training and doing everything to keep our citizens safe. Chief Buxton replied saying, I appreciate those kind words. I've said this more than once publicly, I'm spoiled, I have a great staff, I have great people. One thing we're very fortunate about is, we hire good people. We have them in the right place, doing the right jobs and I'm very, very blessed. I appreciate their efforts and your support so thank you.

5. SELECTMEN COMMENTS

Selectman Coutu- I'm all set, thank you very much

Selectman McGrath - No, I don't have anything either

Selectman Roy - I'm all set

Selectman Martin - I'm all set, wait a minute, let me take this mask off for a minute. We've all received several emails throughout the course of this week and over the past few weeks regarding several things, one being Benson's Park being closed and then the development of the site down south, on the south end of town. I have to say there's a lot of good things coming out of those emails the Planning Board needs to see those emails, I'm sure they will get those emails and I'm sure that the Planning Board will do a great job planning this. People like to send emails to the Board of Selectmen but it's not the Board of Selectmen's job to tell somebody they can't have a project on their property. It's not my job, I don't think it was my job, it's the Planning Boards job, which I think they do a great job at doing.

Secondly the park, which we call Benson. I'll give you an instance where we can't control people. At work, where I work there's a sign on the employee entrance door that says if you have a fever, a cough or any form of some of the covid-19 symptoms please go home. We had an employee that had to be sent home two days in a row because he had flu like symptoms. You can't teach people or think people are going to do what the sign says because I've experienced it in real time. That's why I will not vote to open this park at this time. There's other passive recreations spots in this Town. There's the Town Forrest, right up the road from Benson's. There's plenty of walking trails in this Town that you can go and walk through. You have to drive to Benson's, you can drive to those. Thank you.

Chairman Morin - I've got several things. First an update on Zach's Field and Liberty Field. Zach's Field we had voted earlier to go in there and store some materials and they were going to take care of all those stones. That company is in there an operating so everybody's aware. Liberty Field, talking to the Engineer today. There may be a possibility, it was found that it was constructed wrong. They're looking into that and what our options are and how that's going to get taken care of so we're just at that level. But the report they got back today, that's what came back on it. So we'll take that. The Town Administrator and the Engineer will work on that and we'll see where that goes.

A month ago the Police Department had determined that there was a considerable need to supply some funding to the Food Pantry due to the increase of families that we have in Town that needed assistance. They went forward, they each paid a sum of money to have a beard for a month. Due to the fact that they have to wear the N95 masks the beards had to be trimmed and all that. Well we've seen an increase continue in the Food Pantry and they have again requested and my opinion is to let it go, to continue that and pay that fee which will all go to the Food Pantry. But increase it for two months. What is the Boards? The Board did not have a problem with that. The Board agreed that this was okay and praised the PD for their efforts for the Food Pantry.

If you've driven by Library Park, the Legion and some members from the VFW were out there Saturday and they put up the Field of Honor, honoring our Town veterans. They've added 35 flags to the flags they had last year. It looks outstanding. They did add two additional flags over by the war memorial for Officer Thyne and Captain Phaneuf who were killed while serving the country. That will remain up until the weekend after Flag Day.

I want to echo Selectman Martins words. I attending the testing for both days. It was unbelievable how quick it went. The State told them this is the standard, this is how many people you get, and that's why they scheduled the number. They could have done a lot more because it went that smooth. They did an outstanding job with that, they really deserve the credit. They did a nice job with that.

I'd like to thank all of our EMS personnel. This is EMS Week. I appreciate everything they've done on top of their normal duties. They've had to deal with this virus and we appreciate them.

The last thing I've got, the Chairman of the Conservation Commission contacted me today in reference to Merrill Park. That is conservation land. There is no playground in there. It's actually a very small area and basically it's a boat ramp for kayaks. But it did get closed because it's considered Merrill Park. Do we want to leave that as it is or do we want to open that one up for people so they can get access to the Merrimack River? Selectman Roy said, I'd support opening that up based on there's limited parking, no playground, it's not a huge area. Selectman Roy and Martin all agreed with this. Selectman Coutu said it's very close to the neighborhood, it's limited parking, at this stage I'm not in favor of opening Merrill Park. Chairman Morin responded, say that again. Selectman Coutu responded, at this stage I'm not in favor of opening the park. I think it's too close to the neighborhood, very limited parking, they get more than 4-5 cars there, the neighborhood is going to complain. Been that route before, so I would say, keep it closed for the time being. Chairman Morin said, okay, so you want to keep Merrill Park closed, just so I'm correct because I don't understand how we're going to keep Merrill Park closed which is a less danger than Benson's but you want to open Benson's. So I guess I need a clarification. Hopefully I'm misunderstanding what you're saying. Selectman Coutu responded saying, I've been to Merrill Park several times it's a close knit neighborhood. There are a lot of homes all around that park on both sides and it borders all the way to the end of Merrill Park. There's just houses a lot of houses there and it's an intrusion on their property, their privacy, people go down there and they throw beer cans all over the place and stuff. It's been disrespected so many times, it's been cleaned up by the Public Works Department on several occasions, they no sooner clean it up, I've been there after a week's clean up and gone down the following week and found out it's not quite as dirty as it was but it was violated so I don't see the merits of opening up a park that small to accommodate 4 or 5 people because there's only 4 or 5 parking spaces. Chairman Morin responded, okay, who was discussing earlier about cars parking on Bush Hill Road and all of the litter around the neighbors around Bensons earlier. Would you like to talk about that a little Selectman McGrath? Selectman Coutu interjected saying, do I have to be questioned about everything I'm opposed to? You go to question me and put me in the fourth degree? You're trying to embarrass me publicly and it's not going to work. Chairman Morin said, Selectman Coutu, earlier you made the statement when you were asking about Benson's opening, you didn't want to have any conversation about it but then you made a snide comment towards the rest of the Board because we voted to keep it closed. So the four of you are keeping it closed. You made the same statement. So why is this any different than we're trying to understand what you're saying and when you're throwing information out there about one park but we can't do it about your park. You need to answer that question because you know it's your way or the highway. Selectman Coutu said, I asked the Chief to let us know whether or not Benson Park was in the plans in the future. He said no, no plans to open Benson Park because the Board decided not to. So, my interpretation of that is four of you voted against doing it so that's the reason why he's not planning to open Benson Park right now. I just wanted a clarification. You asked for a clarification from me, twice I gave it to you and you still want to persist saying that I'm contradicting my position on Benson Park with this one. I didn't ask anybody to open Benson Park. I asked them if it were in the works and he said no because the Board does not want to go in that direction. I wanted to, four of you didn't. That's a fact.

Chairman Morin then asked, would anybody like to do a motion for Merrill Park? Selectman Roy made a motion to open Merrill Park for the boat ramp and walking trails. This was seconded by Selectman Martin. A roll call vote was taken. Motion carried 4-1 with Selectman Coutu in opposition. Selectman McGrath then said just to add a comment, Merrill Park does not have a playground or playground equipment that can cause illness or harm to little ones.

6. NONPUBLIC SESSION

Motion by Selectman Martin seconded by Selectman Roy, to go into non-public session under

RSA 91-A:3 II (c) Matters which, if discussed in public, would likely affect adversely the reputation of any person, other than a member of this board, unless such person requests an open meeting. This exemption shall extend to include any application for assistance or tax abatement or waiver of a fee, fine or other levy, if based on inability to pay or poverty of the applicant. A roll call vote was taken. Carried 5-0.

Chairman Morin entered Nonpublic Session at 7:55 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.

Chairman Morin entered open session at 8:55 p.m.

Selectman Martin made a motion seconded by Selectman Roy to seal the non-public minutes of this evenings meeting. A roll call vote was taken. Carried 5-0.

7. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn at 8:56 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