

HUDSON, NH BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Minutes of the August 17, 2020 Meeting

1. Call to Order by Chairman Morin the meeting of August 17, 2020 at 5:00 p.m. in the Selectmen's Meeting Room at Town Hall.
2. Attendance
Board of Selectmen: David Morin, Marilyn McGrath, Kara Roy, Normand Martin, Roger Coutu
Staff/Others: Steve Malizia - Town Administrator; Rob Buxton - Fire Chief; Brenda Collins - Dir. of Greater Hudson Chamber of Commerce; Jill Laffin - Executive Assistant
3. Pledge of Allegiance led by Chairman Morin
4. New Business

A. Small Business Grant for Covid Expenses

Chairman Morin started off by saying I call up Chief Buxton for a small business grant for covid expenses. Chief Buxton came forward and said, this is a follow up item to the Board's last meeting. I believe you wanted to revisit the funding for the small business grant. I believe the Finance Director provided that, which the Town Administrator gave you this evening.

Town Administrator Steve Malizia then said, if you're looking to look at the funding, the Finance Director had given you a recommendation in a packet, I don't know if you saw that? I'm making a different recommendation. We're so early into the fiscal year I'm not comfortable taking money out of some of those accounts. But I can recommend that the Supervised Play account had \$115,000 in it. You took \$4,000 out for the roof at Benson Park. I think you could take another \$50,000 out. I did inform Chrissy Peterson. We'll have enough money to start the program up next summer if we need to. We'll have another allocation next July and August. I just think it's much more prudent to take \$50,000 from that program, which you know you're not going to spend this year. So that's my recommendation.

The Town Administrator went on to say, so what we think, Chief and I were talking about it. In order to implement the program we probably should have a review committee because Londonderry had a modest review committee to look at the applications because we're responsible. So we're recommending myself, the Finance Director and the Fire Chief be the review committee. So when an applicant puts in an application we just go through the forms and make sure that everything's tied out and then we would give the go-ahead for it. Chief Buxton will tell you, when we submit our GOPHERR package, the funding package, it's eighty-something pages long. So we just want to make sure we don't miss any detail, and I think the three of us are pretty familiar with how that grant works. And, should it not go through the grant and just come out of this budget, we can handle that too.

Chairman Morin then said, any questions for the Chief or Mr. Malizia? Any questions for Brenda before? Selectman Coutu spoke up and said, I have a question. Are you talking two sources of money? Mr. Malizia replied saying, so originally there was the GOPHERR money which is the government, federal government, but I think Londonderry is not doing GOPHERR or the possibility that we don't do GOPHERR we do it on our own. That's why we'd be transferring this money. If you want to do it no matter what GOPHERR says. In other words, I don't know if Londonderry got approval. I know you talked to them last week, just to be clear.

Chief Buxton came forward again and said, sorry, I tried to escape (laughter). So I talked to Londonderry, the Assistant Town Manager over there. They have not put their program through the GOPHERR account yet. The project for the week was to identify possible funding if the GOPHERR funds could not be used to cover the account. That was the suggestion this evening was how to come up with the \$50,000 out of the Town's operating budget if we couldn't utilize GOPHERR or it was rejected. Selectman Coutu then asked, so we're gonna attempt to go through GOPHERR, if that fails we revert back to this? You'll have identified say, 50 businesses or 1,000 or whatever. Some may have less expenses than others. Mr. Malizia said, they may have \$800, they don't need a \$1,000. Selectman Coutu said, I know I spoke to a couple of other small businesses, I know one business is definitely gonna apply, he has spent thousands of dollars. People don't understand. And others spent less than \$300-\$400 then they ask me if it's reimbursable and I said what is it and he said, masks, hand sanitizers, shields but it was less than \$500. I said, yeah you can apply. I don't guarantee anything I figured it was gonna go through a review committee which I support. The Town Administrator said, we emulated Londonderry, so if you look at what Londonderry did they used their Town Manager, Assistant Manager and Assistant Town Solicitor, their assistant Town Attorney. So we're capable here of doing that. Chief is well versed in it, Kathy is well versed in finance and I am too. Selectman Coutu asked, how many assistant town attorneys do we have? Mr. Malizia laughed and said, it caught me off guard when it said, assistant solicitor, I thought, wow, they have a solicitor and assistant solicitor? That's pretty good. We don't even have either one. We're using outside council.

Chairman Morin spoke up at this time saying, just so it's clear, we're going to move forward with this with the Town, where the Town found money and apply for the grant and pay it back if we get it? The Town Administrator then said, can I give you a recommendation? Here's a motion just to think about "To implement a Small Business Grant Program of up to \$50,000 to help assist Hudson small businesses affected by the Covid-19 pandemic and to request reimbursement of these funds from the GOPHERR grant program. The grant award committee shall consist of the Town Administrator, Finance Director and Fire Chief. The proposed funding of \$50,000 will come from Supervised Play, Seasonal Salaries account 5821-104 going to the Community Relations account 5110-345". After reading the proposed motion the Town Administrator went on to say, GOPHERR first. If they don't approve GOPHERR, for some reason it doesn't go through, we've committed \$50,000 of Town funding coming from Supervised Play to Community Relations. Chairman Morin then said, okay so we're gonna wait til we get an answer back from GOPHERR before we do anything? Okay. Selectman Roy then said, but each max grant would be \$1,000 right, per business? The Town Administrator replied, correct, so you theoretically could do up to 50 businesses, but if they're lesser, great. We'll look at somebody for \$400-\$500.

Chairman Morin then said to Brenda Collins of the Greater Hudson Chamber of Commerce who was in the audience, Brenda, you're all set, you understand that we're going to apply for the grant first and see what happens. So it's gonna delay it a little longer than what we had talked about last meeting. Ms. Collins then said, okay so you would not be seeking applications right now? Chief Buxton spoke up and said, we would need to start the applications for sure. Selectman Coutu then asked, what's the process for the application? Chairman Morin then asked Ms. Collins to come up and explain. As Ms. Collins was coming forward Selectman Coutu said, how we're going to...again, Brenda, many thanks for your volunteering to do this and for bringing it to my attention. Not a single businessman member or non-member of the Chamber, matter of fact a couple of people said maybe I should join the Chamber, I said it's not a bad idea, but I'm not soliciting for the Chamber. I'm just saying, it's available and they were very excited about the fact that the Town and the Chamber are working cohesively to do something for the business community. Something that we've never done in the past. We obviously support our small businesses but we've never gone this far and the opportunity is there and I have to say, Kudos to Londonderry for putting it together so we can ape them and hopefully we'll be as successful as they were. So, again, thank you Brenda. Ms. Collins then said, so, based on our conversation before you were very concerned about making sure it was under 50 employees for the small business portion. That was in the app under the definition but I moved that and I revamped the app to be identical to the Londonderry one to save you from staff time and everything. Putting your seal on it and I also incorporated their EIN number, their taxpayer number so that way it's also an added verification process to make sure that it's a verified business

in the community, along with their authorized signer in putting all that information on there. That's clearly defined in the application. So I did put that together and I knew that time was of the essence because you have the October 15th deadline to get the reimbursement in. So I put together, all in draft form that can be adjusted, that say you guys approve that today, we could roll it out by the end of the week and then four weeks from Friday would be September 17th and that's when the apps would be deadlined for. Then they could be collected and then the committee could look at them and then move forward from that point.

Chairman Morin asked if there were any questions to which Selectman McGrath was recognized and said, so, why couldn't, if we're not awarded the grant, the GOPHERR grant and we're gonna take the money out of this account, the special play account, why can't we, if they apply for the grant and the committee looks at it and they meet all of the requirements, why wait until to some point we find out that the GOPHERR grant wasn't awarded, or was, I mean, if it's awarded we could put the money back into the accounts. Chairman Morin said, that was my understanding, that's why I asked the question because that's not what I was hearing. I agree with you. Mr. Malizia, just your thoughts? Mr. Malizia said, Chief Buxton is much more familiar with the GOPHERR grant. There's no reason why I don't think you couldn't do it that way. You could certainly do it that way. Selectman Roy said, they're gonna get their money either way so it's just you know. Selectman McGrath then said, giving it to them sooner, they may have a real need for it now. Not six weeks from now. Selectman Roy added, it might be too late six weeks from now for some of these small businesses. Selectman McGrath said, that would be something I think that we should do that. Selectman Coutu was recognized and said, are you going to work something out with Brenda for the timeline and things like that? The application process is going to be ongoing, I'm sure she's not going to want to hand carry or mail every application as they come in. You guys going to get together and set a deadline and work with Brenda? Mr. Malizia said, yes, we can certainly do all that. Selectman Coutu said, alright, that's all I need. Selectman Coutu went on to say, with that said, Mr. Chairman, the motion that Steve read, I'm proposing. Selectman Roy said, I'll second it. Chairman Morin said, motion on the floor by Selectman Coutu, seconded by Selectman Roy, and just so we're clear, we're going to go move forward with the funding from the Town and just reimburse if we get the grant? So everybody understands that? Selectman Coutu then added, again, that's with our thanks and appreciation to the Chamber and Brenda Collins. The Chairman asked if there was further discussion. Seeing none, motion carried 5-0.

The Chairman then said, unless nobody has anything else, motion to adjourn?

Motion to adjourn at 5:11 p.m. by Selectman Roy seconded by Selectman Martin. 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

Normand G. Martin, Selectman