

HUDSON, NH BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Minutes of the December 29, 2020 Meeting

1. CALL TO ORDER - by Chairman Morin the remote meeting of December 29, 2020 at 7:00 p.m.
2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE -led by Chairman Morin
3. ATTENDANCE

Board of Selectmen: David Morin, Marilyn McGrath, Kara Roy, Normand Martin, Roger Coutu
All participated remotely from their homes

Staff/Others: Steve Malizia, Town Administrator; Rob Buxton, Fire Chief; Bill Avery, Police Chief; Jill Laffin, Executive Assistant; Gary Gasdia, School Board member all participated remotely from their homes

4. PUBLIC INPUT

There was no public input this evening.

5. NEW BUSINESS

A. Covid-19 Update

Chief Buxton was recognized and he started off by saying, good evening Mr. Chairman, and members of the Board. Thank you for having me back this evening. I did send out an email to all the Board members, Steve and Jill, regarding the monthly update from December 29th for today. So just to give you a couple of snapshots to get us started this evening, currently today New Hampshire has 5,508 active cases of COVID-19. New Hampshire has 269 folks hospitalized. Hudson has 172 active cases. Accumulatively we've broken the 1,000 case mark. Since last March we've had 1,015 cases.

Chief went on to say, just to our south, Massachusetts, between yesterday and today saw an increase of 4,198. They are managing over 80,000 active cases of COVID-19 in the state. They have 2,200 folks hospitalized. Currently in the State there is 264 first responders that have test positive for COVID-19. An increase of 60 in the last week. We have as a state 155 first responders that are in quarantine. From an update standpoint, that probably the best news I have for you tonight is it appears the COVID-19 outbreak at the Inn at Fairview is finally subsiding. They have less than 45 active cases. They had a high over 60. Their full time staff is coming back to normal levels. We see positives things happening there. They actually have started with the long term care vaccination program today in that location. As the State continues to work through the 5,000 cases we have in New Hampshire, probably one of the things that caught me most off guard as of the 22nd of December the United States had 50,000 deaths in that month. We certainly are not on the right side of this as we sit here today.

From a community exposure standpoint, we continue to operate in the Continuity of Operations Plan at Town Hall and across all the departments. I need to reemphasize that Town Hall is still open for service. All departments are open for service. All non-statutory committees have been moth balled until further notice and because of our potential exposure at the Conservation Commission meeting, we've take a deeper look at how to help out with contact tracing. We actually have put into place a guidance document to collect attendance of folks that are attending those meetings. As the Board has asked we've created a dashboard that's tracking quarantine employees and sick leave of employees just to make sure we keep an eye on what staffing looks like across Town. Specifically with the three major organizations being the Police, Fire and Highway Department and tracking those items. From a vaccination standpoint, obviously we're very excited about the vaccination program, as of the 24th of the Month, we had received over 24,000 doses of Moderna vaccine in the State. 12,000

of those went to hospitals for front facing healthcare workers. Then 12,000 went to fixed sites which you'll hear me talk about in a minute. The State has taken 8,800 doses of the Pfizer vaccine and moved that over to the long term care facilities. Which is being administered through Walgreens and CVS. From a vaccination standpoint, you're going to hear on the news the State talking about 13 fixed facilities to receive and pass out vaccines across the State. They're gonna start working through Phase 1 and Phase 1A. They keep kind of moving that needle around as to who falls where and when. In Hudson we are fortunate to be able to work with the Greater Nashua Public Health Network. We're putting a plan together to do what is called a "closed pod" or a point of distribution. That can provide us an opportunity to vaccinate all of our first responders here locally in Hudson and not have to have our folks work through the fixed sites. So at this point is slated to begin next week. So we're very excited about that.

The State EOC continues to hold weekly meetings. We continue to secure protective clothing to provide for the different departments. We continue to work implementing the pod plan and the vaccines and continue to provide support to stakeholders across the community. I need to make sure I'm reemphasizing the tremendous work your First Responders are doing in this community. On the 17th of this month your Fire Department had already surpasses its monthly average. I know when Chief Avery has an opportunity certainly will speak to the Police Departments activity which is also extremely elevated. It is very busy. Your healthcare system is at work here and I am very proud of the work that our folks have done. I'm certainly open to answer any questions. Selectman Roy asked when they start their vaccinations will they be able to do that also or will they have to go to a fixed site. Chief Buxton replied, we are working with the Greater Nashua Health Group to try to make a closed pod to take care of all the critical infrastructure of all the cities and towns inclusive of the schools. We have worked to get the school nurses vaccinated and they actually moved the school nurses up in the vaccine program because they're going to be able to give us support in the closed pod if we need them for distribution. From a timing perspective actually provides a great opportunity where they're on winter break with remote learning the week after. That's going to give them an opportunity to get the school nurses vaccinated. As we continue to prepare for Phase 2 which has the teaching staff in it.

Selectman Coutu was recognized and said my question had to do with the pod, whether or not we would be able to sustain it so that we could inoculate beyond the first responders and the school system and the elderly. Is it your hope that the pod would stay in the community as an active resource for the vaccination? Chief Buxton replied, the only piece that is unclear at this point is if they're going to provide us an opportunity to do an open pod which would actually be residents of the community. Right now we're doing what is called a closed pod where that is specific to employees and first responders. They're really working to try to get residents to move through the fixed sites that the National Guard is running. They believe that will actually be more efficient because they'll have more numbers there. Our closed pod we would actually have to take up a parking lot or a school and staff that ourselves. It looks like they're going to put their efforts for the average citizen into these fixed sites and try to get them globally established across the State. Our closest fixed site location will be Nashua High School South. They're also working with Walgreens and CVS to assist with situations where maybe you can't get out of your home and go to a site to get vaccinated. I see the public health networks really reaching out to us to be a partner in that portion of the vaccination process. Selectman Coutu replied saying, okay, thank you.

Chairman Morin asked, anyone else have questions for the Chief? Selectman McGrath was recognized and said, the employees, are they going to be eligible to get the vaccine? Especially those that deal with the public? Chief Buxton replied, so the State is definitely putting in a phased in approach to vaccination. First responders will fall into Phase 1A and then you go into critical infrastructure which comes at the end of Phase 1 which will be inclusive of your Public Works Department. Those things. Once we hit the critical infrastructure piece we'll start picking up Engineering, Inspectors, Town Clerks office and those types of things. Chief Buxton added, the speed at which vaccination takes place is truly dependent on the rate in which the State receives vaccine. The State receives the vaccine in and distribute it out.

Chairman Morin asked if there were any other questions. Seeing none he thanked Chief Buxton for his update.

B. Tax Collector/Town Clerk Resignation

Chairman Morin recognized Town Administrator, Steve Malizia. Mr. Malizia said, in your packet there's a letter of resignation from Patti Barry the Town Clerk. She is leaving the Town of Hudson's employ effective January 15th. She'll be going over to Nashua to I believe, work as the Deputy Tax Collector. Which creates a pretty big void over here in Hudson. Per the RSA's, if a vacancy in that office occurs the Selectmen are the appointing agency. In a nut shell, the deputy Town Clerk/Tax Collector can do the roll for 30 days but then the Board has to appoint within 30 days of the Town Clerk's resignation which I timed out to be February 14th. Now don't forget the election is coming up March 9th so the seat will be open so folks can run for it. But in the interim we should have an interim Town Clerk appointed. So put this on the agenda for the timeliness of it and to figure out how the Board would like to proceed. You can certainly appoint someone that's in the office now to serve in the roll or you can appoint someone from the outside. It's the Board's choice because the Board is the appointing agency. So I put it on for a minimum the Board's discussion. Chairman Morin then asked, we'll just be making a decision tonight and then waiting for people to submit their requests if they would like to do it and then take it up at the next meeting. Is that what you're looking at? The Town Administrator said, if you choose to appoint from outside or solicit candidates, yes, you wouldn't be able to do that tonight because obviously nobody's applied it would have to be at the 12th. The disadvantage of doing it that way is the Town Clerk will be leaving the 15th. So that's a difficulty right there if you appointed from within you could have somebody that's birdogging, shadowing, maybe getting more up to speed on some of the responsibilities of the Clerk. That's another option. As you're aware there are folks that work in the office, I believe I sent out a document that Patti forwarded to me. We can certainly discuss it in nonpublic because it involves names. But if the Board is interested in possibly doing something from within you have that option. Timing is not great but on the other hand there will be an election in March and folks will run for it I'm assuming. Again we have to do something because you have a responsibility, 30 days after she leave you have to put somebody in that spot. Which I figure is February 14th.

Selectman Martin was recognized and said my question was more towards staffing that we have now so I'll wait til nonpublic. Thank you. Chairman Morin asked, anybody else, how do we want to go about doing this? Selectman Coutu asked, can we discuss it in nonpublic? Chairman Morin said, yes absolutely. So we'll move this to nonpublic. Everybody good with that?

6. OTHER BUSINESS/REMARKS BY SELECTMEN

Selectman McGrath - I'm just happy to be back and hope that I can contribute as much as I have in the past. I'd like to thank everybody that has sent flowers, cards, well wishes, emails, I very much appreciate all of the outpouring of support and concern for me. Thank you.

Selectman Coutu - Thank you Mr. Chairman. Welcome back Marilyn. You look a lot better than the way you describe yourself. You look good on camera. It's great to see you. We missed you. I had nobody to browbeat with except you. I need you back. I respect your opinions and I know you have the Town at heart at all times. You've always been that way and I truly, truly missed you. So welcome back. I hope you have a very fruitful year and the out years there are going to be many more for you. Keep up with those exercises, finger twists, very important. You know they're putting you through the routine so you're doing well.

Aside from that MR. Chairman, I want to seize on the opportunity to wish you, my fellow Board members and Gary and the two Chiefs, Rob Buxton and Bill Avery, the Town Administrator. Jill, I know you're out there in a cloud somewhere, I want to wish you all a very happy new year. It's definitely going to be better than 2020.

Selectman Martin - Thank you Mr. Chairman. Welcome back Selectman McGrath. We've missed you so much. Sorry that this had to happen to you. I hope you're quick recovering. It looks like you're doing great. Welcome back.

To the rest of the Board members, everybody, happy new year to everybody and be safe.

Selectman Roy - Selectman McGrath, again, it's really nice to see you. Glad to have you back and I just want to wish everyone a happy and safe new year. Social distance, wear a mask, wash your hands.

Chairman Morin - Selectman McGrath, welcome back! We did have a lot of discussions while you were out, keeping you up to date on the Town. We appreciate that with what you were going through you kept on top of things. Appreciate it and welcome back. I also want to thank Chrissy and her husband for making Santa's visit to Hudson an outstanding event. It went very well. Fire Department and Police with the escorts. Things went very well and all the people that came out to see Santa.

The last thing I'd like to wish everybody a happy new year.

7. NONPUBLIC SESSION

Motion by Selectman Roy seconded by Selectman Martin, 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. & (b) the hiring of any person as a public employee. A roll call vote was taken. Carried 5-0.

Chairman Morin entered Nonpublic Session at 7:18 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 8:23 p.m.

Selectman Martin made a motion, seconded by Selectman Roy to exit nonpublic session at 8:23 p.m. Carried 5-0.

Selectman Coutu made a motion, seconded by Selectman McGrath to hire Matthew Drolet as a full time technician at the Hudson Police Department with a starting salary of \$20.52 per hour (step one), per hour, in accordance with the Hudson Police Employee Association Contract. A roll call vote was taken. Carried 5-0.

Consensus to have a follow up discussion regarding COVID vaccine at the second meeting in February.

8. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn at 8:24 p.m. by Selectman Martin seconded by Selectman Coutu. 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

Normand G. Martin, Selectman