

Town of Seymour ~ Board of Selectmen
MINUTES
Regular Meeting
Tuesday, April 7, 2020 at 7:00pm
Zoom Teleconference Call #8272949049

COPY RECEIVED
DATE: 4/13/20
TIME: 11:05 AM
TOWN CLERK'S OFFICE

Members Present: Trisha Danka, Robert Findley, Annmarie Drugonis, Kurt Miller, Al Bruno, Rob VanEgghen, and Chris Bowen

Members Absent: None

Others Present: Richard Buturla, Rory Burke

Item #1 – Call Meeting to order

First Selectman Kurt Miller called the meeting to order at 7:05pm.

Ground Rules for On-line Meetings:

- Only the Selectman and the Town Attorney will be able to speak during the meeting; everyone else is on MUTE.
- The meeting is being recorded and minutes are being taken. The recording will be uploaded to the website as soon as possible and the minutes will be posted as soon as possible.
- If you would like to speak on a topic or have a question, please say your name ONLY, then Mr. Miller will call on you so multiple people are not talking at once.
- Anytime you speak, please say your name so everyone knows who is speaking.
- Anytime you make a motion or second a motion, please say your name so it is clear who is speaking.
- If you would like to provide PUBLIC COMMENT for this meeting, you have until 12:00pm tomorrow to submit your comment to Rory Burke (rburke@seymourct.org) in order to be included with the minutes for this meeting. All Public Comment MUST include your name and home address to be included in the meeting. For future meetings, all Public Comment received prior to the meeting will be read into the record as presented AT the meeting.
- For MOTIONS: only say your name if you are voting NO or ABSTAINING

Item #2 – Pledge of Allegiance

Everyone saluted the Flag and recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Item #3 – Public Comment

None

Item #4 – Approve Minutes from March 3, 2020 Regular Meeting

Motion to approve Minutes from March 3, 2020 Regular Meeting

Motion: Al Bruno

Second: Chris Bowen

Vote: 7 – Yes

0 – No

0 – Abstain

Trisha Danka – Yes

Robert Findley – Yes

Annmarie Drugonis – Yes

Kurt Miller - Yes

Al Bruno – Yes

Robert VanEgghen – Yes

Chris Bowen – Yes

Item #5 – First Selectman’s Report

- a. This report will be much longer than normal as there are several things that I would like to review with the board based on the current state of affairs of the town due to the COVID-19 issues. As of 3pm today, we have 33 residents that have been diagnosed and as I announced yesterday, one person has passed away due to complications of the virus.
- b. As you all know, I signed an Emergency Declaration declaring a state of Emergency in Seymour that will stay in effect as long as necessary.
- c. Based on information to date, this will continue until at least April 30, but we are expecting and planning for it to last substantially longer.
- d. Office, Building and Staff Updates
 - i. The Community Center, Library, all town parks and sports fields are closed and will remain closed until further notice. The Community Center staff is working remotely setting up virtual classes and activities as well as sending out a newsletter to the 500+ members of the Senior Center. Within a few days of the center being shut down, two staff members started calling seniors to check in on them and ask what assistance they might need. This process has been going very well. The library staff has been working to provide as much online content and programming as possible. The Food Bank has remained open but is segregated off from the rest of the building. We have added a room for additional food. Some days servicing up to 16 families a day.
 - ii. DPW is open and working a full modified schedule and the Transfer station remains open on a regular schedule, but with no access to staff for the public. You each received Tony’s detailed report for the month of March and his plan for the month of April.
 - iii. Town Hall is closed to the public. All staff is set up to work remotely and have both email and telephone capabilities and are able to respond to both daily. Most departments are in the building two days a week on staggered schedules. We are trying to limit the exposure of our staff to each other. Every day from 8a-4:30p we do have a staff member positioned at the front door to assist anyone who may come to the building for service. Department heads are determining the service needed and are scheduling appointments as needed. We are not really taking walk ins of any kind. Mail is being received and sitting untouched for 3 days prior to being distributed. Payroll is running without any issues and bills are being paid as quickly as possible.
 - iv. We have a 9am call each morning with Department heads to discuss any issues or concerns that they may have, and we are constantly reviewing our structure and staffing to determine if any changes are needed. Each department also sends to Rory and me an email at the end of the day to provide a recap and to provide specific updates and concerns. I would like to thank the staff we have in place; they are all going out of their way to be accommodating, offering to do what is necessary – come in on the weekends, work different shifts – truly an “all hands on deck” attitude to be able to put these schedules in place to continue to be able to serve the public and keep them safe.

- v. I am in contact with our service chiefs on a daily basis and the emergency services team has a minimum of two conference calls schedule for each week to review and discuss options and concerns.
- vi. Town and Board of Ed Custodial staff are working together to make sure our buildings are being kept up. Town Hall, Central Office and DPW are being cleaned and sanitized each day while the Police Department, Fire Departments and Ambulance are being cleaned multiple times each day based on call volume. They are also assisting NVHD with sanitizing and cleaning as needed.
- vii. I am in constant contact with the Executive Director of NVHD and a daily public email blast is going out to provide updates and information as to the virus and its impact on the Valley as a whole. This email also provides stats on those infected. We will not be releasing any names or addresses of those who have been infected due to HIPAA rights. If you need any further information, please reach out to Jessica @ NVHD directly. She is very overwhelmed right now; I offered administrative help, but because of privacy issues and training, we could not help.
- viii. All Executive Orders from the Governor are being monitored and reviewed by Rich and Bryan as well as me receiving a break down daily from CCM.
 - 1. We do have a plan in place to address the budget. Tomorrow I will be cancelling the in-person town budget meeting. At our next meeting, we will have an item on the agenda to discuss the process that was created by the Governor's executive order 7i which will allow the Board of Finance to vote on the budget. You received today a memo from Rich outlining the process that is to be followed as we wanted to give you time to review and ask any questions that you might have so that we can have a vote take place on the 21st. Please route all your questions through me, so that I can provide the information to everyone.
 - 2. As you saw in your packets under correspondence, Rich has produced draft resolutions regarding the potential options for payment of taxes... one reducing interest, the other deferring payments. We had been waiting on guidance from OPM as to how these options might work as the Executive Order was not specific. That guidance came in last night. At our meeting on the 21st, this will be an agenda item for discussion and possible action. The big question is how we would enact this order. We will send an update on this that I will be sending out to you.
- ix. We have done a cash flow analysis of the current budget to get an understanding of where we stand with some basic assumptions due to the COVID-19 virus. For the current year, we should be able to finish with our current staff in place and no need for layoffs or furlough days. We have also done projections of the FY 21 budget and how it might look, again using certain assumptions do to the COVID-19 virus. The biggest one being the potential deferment of taxes for up to 90 days for certain individuals. Based on the analysis, today I spoke with our financial team about obtaining the authorization

for the town to be able to go out and get up to \$4 million in Tax Anticipation Notes. This authorization would allow us to move quickly should the need arise, and cash flow becomes a problem. If we defer the payment of taxes (don't get the influx of tax revenue in July) we would need this extra money to run the Town. We have some reserve, but not enough to last us the 90 days. We usually have not only the residential, but also the business and motor vehicle taxes due on July 1st. The \$4million should be enough to carry us through the 90 days. We don't necessarily have to use the full \$4million. But it would be there if we need it. With the expectation that most towns and cities in CT will be doing this, we wanted to get an early jump on things to get the best possible rate. We will have an item on the agenda at our next meeting for the resolution to allow this to take place. These are required to be paid back within 13 months.

- x. I tried to cover as many areas as I could to give you a broad overview of what has been going on, but I am sure many of you have additional questions.

Questions/Discussion:

- Trisha Danka: wanted to clarify the number of deaths. Mr. Miller said there was one.
- Chris Bowen: wanted to ask if there is an estimated time frame for the State of Emergency past April 30th? Do we have an expected date? Mr. Miller said we do not. We need to protect our staff and keep the residents safe. I expect will be at least into May, possibly June. We will provide updates in May.
- Bob Findley: with the \$4 million, how many other cities have already applied for this money? Mr. Miller said that as far as he knows no one has yet applied for it; it is something new. But in speaking to our bond counsel had said that two other towns had contacted him about this. We will see this process happening in June and it will affect the market; because it is not just Connecticut. I would rather be prepared and have things ready to go (resolutions approved, etc.) so we can act right away when the time comes, have the authorization in hand. We have the resolutions to make this happen on the agenda for the next Board of Selectmen Meeting on 4/21/20. They were included in your packet and I ask that you review them for the next meeting. As part of the normal budget process, I am authorized to purchase \$2 million in Tax Anticipation Notes, but we wanted to increase that to \$4 million just to have a little extra coverage and we are going through the process because we would rather be on the side of total transparency. We will do it now, before there is any rush and then will be based on the Cash Flow Reports that Doug (Thomas) is looking at daily.
- Trisha Danka: one of the Executive Orders is offering the ability for people to have someone live in Connecticut notarize. Is anyone in Town Hall doing this? Kurt Miller said he could not speak to this 100%. There are multiple people in the building at any given time, so if Lianna (or anyone) need to notarize something, the other person could social distance and watch the person notarize the document. We could certainly find out the situation and send an e-mail to everyone.

Item #6 – Appointments

Item #8 – Transfers

None

Item #9 – Correspondence

- We have two pieces of correspondence; one is memo from Town Counsel Rich Buturla providing information on Executive order 7S dealing with deferment of tax payment and reduction of interest on outstanding balances. The other are draft resolutions for your review for our discussion and possible action at our April 21st meeting.

Item #10 – Public Comment

E-mailed in by Fred Stanek, 22 North Benham Road @ 10:32am on 4/7/20

Good Evening Mr. First Selectman and Board Members,

I hope everyone is healthy. I appreciate your conducting this evening's meeting in accordance with the provisions of the Governor's Executive Order 7B as the same relates to the FOIA requirements for public meetings.

I hope that the Town of Seymour is still planning a public hearing regarding the 2020 - 2021 proposed budget. If so, the same could be conducted by telephonic or video using Zoom. for example, or other electronic means. Once the budget is available for public review, I would appreciate if you would inform me how to view the same or forward the same to me by email. Thank you for your consideration of my comments. Stay healthy!

Item #11 – Selectmen's Public Comment – Same order

- Chris Bowen – Would like to thank the entire community; the vast majority of the people have come together; it's such a wonderful place to live. Thank you to Seymour Pink for putting out more signs; thank you to everyone at Public Works for continuing to run the Town very effectively; thank you to the people working at the grocery stores & fast food places. You do not make the money you should for the risk that you are taking. We are very thankful to you for taking the risk and serving your community. Thank you to everyone who has been working with TEAM, the food bank, and other local charities. Thanks for being the wonderful Town that I intentionally came back to a few years ago!
- Rob VanEgghen – Thank you to everyone who is working so hard – making the adjustments they need to; for anyone who is not, they better start because the sooner we all do what we are supposed to the sooner this will all be over. Support our local businesses; if you are not doing take-out, buy gift cards. Contact TEAM if you need assistance or if you are able to help. Chris, Bob, Annmarie have all been helping out. Let me know if you can. For the people who have contracted the virus – people are asking who and where – it doesn't matter. We should all be using social distancing. Use the best practices that you can. Also, you may be aware of what has been happening at Sushi & Wok. There is no place for the negativity that has been happening there. I love seeing the support for them. Tom Haynes had ordered \$1,000 worth of food for meals for the first responders. Also, Alberto's called and said that they had received a donation for food. Kurt Miller put them in touch with the food bank. It is great to see the community come together!
- Al Bruno – Thank you to Chris & Rob for making those comments. The behavior of the people in the Sushi & Wok situation is reprehensible. But the GOOD far outweighs the BAD in our community. We are all rallying together. Kristen & I have ordered a sign from Seymour Pink which should be arriving at

the end of the week. I am missing Spring Sports, but we are doing the best we can. There is a light at the end of the tunnel. A majority of people are doing the right thing.

- Annmarie Drugonis

First, thank you to our Fire, EMS, Police, Postal Carriers, and Grocery Store Workers! The Fire and EMS had quite a day yesterday with the brush fire. At 8pm Friday, Saturday, Sunday the Fire Department is ringing the bell. The community is coming together. Thanks to Rob for putting me in touch with TEAM – looking forward to coming there on Thursday. Nicole was able to get a list of the elderly people in Seymour. She has been calling people to check on them as well. We will all coordinate with the Mary @ the Community Center on the list, so we are not duplicating efforts.

The Public Works Department has been going crazy lately keeping up with everything. They are ramping up. We are keeping the bulk pickup for the end of April.

Kurt Miller said that the First Responders chiefs are working to collaborate with each other to come up with ways to segregate their staff to make sure they are limiting their close proximity with each other. The First Responders do know which houses have been affected by the virus so that they can take the proper precautions. There are protocols in place for if someone should feel sick. Public Works is keeping to one person per truck. They are working in two different shifts.

The Transfer Station is closed on (Good) Friday, open on Saturday, and then closed Sunday and Monday. Tony DePrimo said if anyone has any questions on anything, feel free to call him.

- Robert Findley – We have never been through anything like this before and I am very impressed with the change management and the rapid response from all the departments. We can't ask for any more than we have done at this point. Thanks to Rob for putting teams together for volunteering. Mary Deming also went out and promoted more community with Seymour Pink. This Town rallied together very quickly. Everyone has done a great job. Kurt Miller said that is something that cannot be said enough, we are truly Blessed. Our professional staff has taken to heart everything going on and our volunteers have been exceptional: Fire, Police, Ambulance. So much love & support.

- Trisha Danka - I have the same sentiments as all the selectmen who have previously spoken. My thoughts and prayers are with all the residents. Hoping for anyone who has contracted the virus a quick recovery; and for everyone else to just stay safe and healthy. That goes also for all the First Responders as well. I know that all of the selectmen on this Board have been helping the community in some way – I reached out to Kurt a little while ago. Everyone is doing their own thing, and it makes me incredibly proud to be a part of a Board where we care so much outside of just the meetings, doing whatever we can to help our neighbors and the Town to get through something that none of us have ever been through before. I wanted to thank Paul for e-mailing everyone with ideas that he had while everyone is staying home. Everyone's house at the end of this will be spic and span. We will all get through this and be stronger for it. Lastly, now that I am no longer on the Strategic Planning Committee, once things are back to normal, if there is a need for a Selectman to be on the Board, I will be happy to assist in a greater capacity of needed.

- Richard Buturla – it is a privilege to serve the fine people of the Town of Seymour; this is an outstanding Board; you have great community leadership. You have great administrators, fire, police, ambulance services. You are working together. It is my honor to work with you.

Item #12 – Adjournment

Motion to adjourn at 7:57pm

Motion: Annmarie Drugonis

Second: Chris Bowen

Vote: 7 – Yes

0 – No

0 – Abstain

Trisha Danka – Yes

Robert Findley – Yes

Annmarie Drugonis – Yes

Kurt Miller - Yes

Al Bruno – Yes

Robert VanEgghen – Yes

Chris Bowen – Yes

Submitted by:

Reviewed by:

Monica Dimon
Recording Secretary

W.Kurt Miller
First Selectman