

Strafford Selectboard Meeting Minutes

March 25, 2020

Justin Morrill Homestead Education Room

Members present: Toni Pippy, Brian Johnson, Patrik Kelly, Rett Emerson, and Mary Linehan

Others present: Josh Kahan, Jere Linehan

Participating via zoom meeting: Shawn Harlow, Bill Burden, Beth Preston, Aaron Dotter, Peter Jeffries, Lisa Bragg

Meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m.

Minutes of the Selectboard meetings of 3/11 and 3/17 were accidentally not included on the agenda. Selectboard will approve the minutes at the next meeting.

COVID-19 – Incident Command System (ICS) Update

Toni noted that the task of Incident Command (IC) is quite challenging and that she has been bombarded by questions in the last few days. Would like to shift away from this reactive stance to empowering her ICS team to propose solutions that can be reviewed and approved or disapproved. She additionally noted that the Emergency Management website is not a discussion platform site, rather a place to post notices and directives. Observed that the ICS is oriented toward discreet events (floods, fires, hurricanes), and raised the question: what are we preparing for, and is this the best system?

Jere Linehan clarified that ICS is useful for when an incident occurs and our purpose now is to have it ready for when we do need it. While it may feel like we are giving it too much emphasis right now, we will be glad that we have it established and functioning when there are sick people in town as a result of the pandemic. He also noted that realistically, the IC will not be involved in the most likely scenario; sick individuals will be dealt with by Fast Squad and taken to the hospital. The IC won't be involved in any specific health care emergency response. As a result, he recommended that we limit the ICS to focusing on allowing EMS and the Fire Department to do what they do and to come to the IC when they need permission or authority (for example, to requisition the gym for quarantine or shelter).

Agreed that Toni will be the sole IC, providing approval or disapproval of plans and proposals from her ICS team leads. Planning and management of the plan will be done by the team. Jere described specific roles on the ICS team, and provided handouts with job responsibilities for reference.

Additional positions on the ICS are as follows (and can be easily downsized if nothing is needed):

- Safety: Pat Kelly
- Liaison: Kate Siepmann was proposed. Jere will follow up with her to confirm her willingness
- Operations: Shawn Harlow, noted that as Fire Chief he already has the required authority
- Community: Sandy Preston proposed. Jere will follow up with her to confirm her willingness

- Planning—Jere Linehan, assisted by a team (John Lloyd, Aaron Dotter, Mary Linehan, Shawn Harlow).
- Public Information: Josh Kahan
- Finance: Lisa Bragg
- Logistics: Rett Emerson

Planning and Communications. The Planning team will meet Friday morning, and prepare the Plan (IAP), which will be updated daily. Jere will provide daily IAP to Toni, which is not a public document. Our goal is to limit the number of decisions the IC needs to make, and make use clear, limited communications to allow the IC to supervise to ICS.

The Emergency Operations Center (EOC) is up and running at the Town Office. The building is locked, but Lisa and Regina will be able to access the phones. During non-office hours the phone line is directed to Toni.

Josh Kahan clarified that permission for all directives and notices comes from the IC (Toni). Generic PSAs can be posted, but all other info needs to go to Toni for approval.

Public Concerns

None.

Town Highways and Equipment Update

Brian reported that the equipment is fine; the road crew expects the new truck late in the year. Lisa noted that the bid has not gone out yet, due to delays resulting from the pandemic, but it is on her to-do list with Jon.

The estimate for the costs to repair Miller Pond has not yet been received. Need to follow up with Jon MacKinnon

Toni noted that 2 grants, for paving and bridge work, need to be completed by April 15.

Correspondence

- Daily email updates from the State Emergency Operations Center Situation Reports, RE: COVID 19
- Updates from Tim Briglin, RE: COVID 19
- Email from Ed Hathaway, EPA letter authorizing continued work at the mine.

Dog Licensing deadline

During the most recent Selectboard meeting ad motion was passed to extend the dog license deadline to May 15, but it was discovered that this was not within the authority of the Selectboard. Motion rescinded. The dog licensing date remains April 1st, and we will maintain the April 1st deadline, however, late fees will be waived until May 15th to give those owners time to have their dogs vaccinated if needed.

Recycling Center

The Town recycling center remains open but is not accepting deposit glass bottles or plastic bags.

Other

Lisa Bragg announced that the Town Office will be closed until April 15.

The Homestead Declaration deadline has been delayed till July 15, which could result in Strafford tax bills going out in July with non-residential tax rates, which are higher, and may cause an overestimation of town tax revenues.

Closure of Town Office will potentially cause some real estate purchase challenges. Land record research currently needs to be done at the Town Office. During the next few weeks, buyers who need data will have to be dealt with on a case-by-case basis. Land records for 20 years of data have been scanned and could be made available online, allowing people to do their own research online. If this is allowed, the Town Office will forego the \$1 page revenue (approximately \$2000 annually). Recommended that Town Clerk consider a way to charge a nominal fee for access to re-coup this loss.

Coburn's Store and other town businesses need to be supported in whatever way they need to accommodate coronavirus directives. Noted that businesses have the right to restrict access as needed. The Selectboard and ICS can support as needed to comply with state directives and safety requirements.

Selectboard was requested to provide funds to Sharon's food shelf. The Town cannot provide such funds, and it was noted that Strafford also has a food shelf. Available funds should be directed to support the Strafford food shelf.

Brian will remind Jon MacKinnon about driveway permit application and a building permit application.

The Selectboard went into an Executive Session at 7:20. Discussion regarding personnel issues. No decisions were made. Motion was passed to come out of Executive Session at 8:00pm

Discussed whether future meetings should be held in person or on line using zoom. Agreed that in the coming days this decision can be made by the Chair.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Linehan
Recording Clerk