



**TOWN OF DEERING**  
**Board of Selectmen**  
762 Deering Center Road  
Deering, NH 03244

**Meeting Minutes**  
**March 17, 2020**

**Selectmen present:** Allen Belouin, William Whisman and Rebecca Mitchell – via teleconference from her home  
**Other in attendance:** Diane Kendall, Interim Town Administrator; Dan Gorman, Fire Chief

Mr. Belouin called the meeting to order at 4:00pm stating the meeting convened for emergency purposes posed by the Governor's issuance of State of Emergency due to COVID-19. Ms. Mitchell joined by phone from her home. The meeting was posted on the Town Website and bulletin board on March 17 at 1:00pm. In order to expedite operational business, Mr. Belouin motioned to move the March 19<sup>th</sup> agenda items to this meeting, seconded by Mr. Whisman. Roll call vote: Mr. Belouin, aye; Mr. Whisman, aye; Ms. Mitchell, aye.

Mr. Belouin motioned to accept the public and non-public minutes of March 5, 2020, seconded by Mr. Whisman and unanimously supported.

Mr. Belouin motioned to re-appoint Mr. Michael Borden to the combined positions of Deering Health Officer, Building Inspector and Code Enforcement Official, seconded by Mr. Whisman. Roll call vote: Mr. Belouin, aye; Mr. Whisman, aye; Ms. Mitchell, aye. Ms. Kendall commented Ms. Trisha Whisman, Police Department Administrative Assistant expressed interest in serving as the Deputy Health Officer and Mr. Borden supported the nomination. Having a Deputy will build necessary redundancy and capacity especially in time of crisis. Fire Chief and Emergency Management Director Dan Gorman supported the nomination of Ms. Whisman as Deputy Health Officer. Mr. Belouin motioned to appoint Ms. Trisha Whisman to the position of Deputy Health Officer, seconded by Ms. Mitchell. Roll call vote: Mr. Belouin, aye; Mr. Whisman, abstain; Ms. Mitchell, aye.

The towns emergency management team including the appointed Health Officer Michael Borden and Fire Chief Daniel Gorman have recommended, pursuant to the Governor's Executive Order 2020-04 "all residents and visitors of the state are to heed the advice of health and emergency officials with regard to this emergency in order to protect their safety", that the Selectmen and Town Clerk/Tax Collector restrict access to all town buildings to essential employees and officials and others by emergency appointment only. Mr. Borden consulted with Ms. Baker, Town Clerk/Tax Collector who agreed to restrict walk-in access to the public. Ms. Baker has made arrangements to conduct all business via phone, email, internet payment transactions, mail and drop box. Ms. Kendall will also conduct all other town business via the same. Mr. Belouin shared the Selectmen should take proactive steps to protect the public and employees and maintain the continuity of government operations in accordance with instructions from the Center for Disease Control, Homeland Emergency Management and the Governor's office and local health and safety officials to stop the spread of infectious disease.

While all employees are considered valued and essential, some positions are essential to public safety, continuity of services, human resources and satisfaction of state and federal labor laws and include Police Department, Fire/EMS, Highway, Town Administrator, Town Clerk/Tax Collector. Mr. Belouin motioned to:

1. restrict access to all town buildings allowing access to essential employees and those deemed essential by department heads; elected officials; and visitors by emergency appointment starting March 18 through April 11 or until the State of Emergency is lifted
2. cancel all town public meetings, gatherings and events from March 19 through April 11

Mr. Whisman seconded the motion. Roll call vote: Mr. Belouin, aye; Mr. Whisman, aye; Ms. Mitchell, aye

The Selectmen discussed the safety of all employees and the importance of reducing spread among employees and community to protect public health and maintain continuity of operations. Non-essential employees are encouraged to modify work schedules to avoid contact with others to prevent spread of infection in the office and

other town buildings. Mr. Belouin motioned to allow a temporary excused absence policy whereas all employees will be eligible for excused absence from work if:

1. the employee has a current diagnosis of COVID-19;
2. the employee is quarantined (including self-imposed quarantine), at the instruction of a health care provider, employer, or government official, to prevent the spread of COVID-19
3. the employee is caring for a family member or dependent who has COVID-19 or is under a quarantine related to COVID-19; or
4. the employee is caring for a family member or dependent who is unable to care for themselves due to the COVID-19 related closing of their school, child care facility or other care program.

Mr. Whisman seconded the motion. Roll call vote: Mr. Belouin, aye; Mr. Whisman, aye; Ms. Mitchell, aye

Selectmen discussed consequences of administrative employee absences. Some of the work will backlog until employees return to work or other employees will carry out essential work services. Ms. Kendall can maintain human resource and payroll management remotely. Public Safety will rely on State and Mutual Aid for back-up.

Selectmen discussed the potential financial impact of lost wages and depleted time-off allowances for employees affected by absence from the COVID-19 Emergency. Mr. Beloin suggested adopting a temporary policy to compensate COVID-19 excused absences. Ms. Kendall said compensation for COVID absences of regularly scheduled employees would not cost the town more than budgeted as those employees would have been paid anyway if worked and the number of additional service hours will be minimal. The work will either be distributed to other employees, deferred, delayed or completed at a slower rate.

Mr. Belouin motioned to adopt a temporary paid time off policy for employees regularly scheduled to work weekly hours regardless of their full or part-time status and exempting on-call, occasional and employees without at least five consecutive weeks of regularly scheduled weekly hours preceding the absence. Whereas employees will be eligible for compensation at their regular rate for the average number of weekly regular hours worked in the four preceding weeks; and whereas employees can demonstrate the excused absence meets the following criteria:

1. the employee has a current diagnosis of COVID-19; or
2. the employee is quarantined (including self-imposed quarantine), at the instruction of a health care provider, employer, or government official, to prevent the spread of COVID-19; or
3. the employee is caring for a family member or dependent who has COVID-19 or is under a quarantine related to COVID-19; or
4. the employee is caring for a family member or dependent who is unable to care for themselves due to the COVID-19 related closing of their school, child care facility or other care program;

and whereas the compensated time off will be categorized and reported as such separately from the existing sick time benefit and no eligible employee will be caused to deplete existing sick or vacation time benefit. All other benefits outlined in the Personnel Policy will remain in effect. Eligibility will be determined by the immediate supervisor and town administrator. The temporary policy to remain in effect through April 11<sup>th</sup> or until explicitly rescinded by the Board of Selectmen. Mr. Whisman seconded the motion. Roll call vote: Mr. Belouin, aye; Mr. Whisman, aye; Ms. Mitchell, aye

Chief Gorman is monitoring information and guidelines pertaining to the virus. He is working with the State Department of Emergency Management to procure personal protective equipment and decontamination supplies of which there is a national shortage. Protocols for responding to patients with respiratory conditions are updating frequently.

Ms. Kendall has created a special page on the town website for information, links to services and updates regarding COVID-19. Mr. Whisman will organize a non-perishable food collection effort. The Police Department will work with GHHS and others members of the community to identify people that may be at risk, isolated, or food insecure to connect them with services. The Selectmen unanimously supported utilizing fire/EMT, police and highway personnel staff and vehicles to deliver food to isolated Deering residents. SAU34 has arranged for food delivery to students using the school busses and drivers. The Selectmen urge all town residents to refrain from gathering in groups of more than 10 people and to follow CDC guidelines. They also urge residents to check in on elderly and health compromised neighbors and offer help where needed.

Selectmen discussed options for providing greater access for the public to hear and participate in public meetings. Hardware and software applications such as Skype, Zoom, GoToMeeting, Facebook live will be considered. Selectmen will also accept written statements from the public to be considered for reading at public meetings.

**To Be Approved or Signed:**

•	Veteran's Tax Exemption			
•	Yield Tax Timber	M215 L007	03/05/20	\$ 545.59
•	Employee Payroll	Week 11	03/11/20	\$ 10,913.76
•	Employee Payroll	Week 11 Monthly	03/11/20	\$ 5,772.14
•	Employee Payroll	Week 12	03/18/20	\$ 12,692.74
•	AP Manifest	Voucher 1078		\$ 17,023.28
•	AP Manifest	Voucher 1081		\$ 7,337.16

**Continued Business:**

Mr. Beloin motioned to enter non-public session under RSA 91-A:3, II(a), seconded by Ms. Mitchell. Roll call vote: Mr. Beloin, aye; Ms. Mitchell, aye; Mr. Whisman, recused. Mr. Whisman at that time excused himself from the meeting. The motion passed and Selectmen Beloin and Mitchell entered non-public session at 5:00pm. Public session reconvened at 5:04pm.

Selectmen Belouin and Mitchell will reconvene at Selectmen meeting scheduled for Thursday March 19<sup>th</sup> at 6:00pm.

**Pending Items:**

- ☐ Chimney RFP award
- ☐ Roof RFP issue
- ☐ Lease Fire Engine
- ☐ Technology upgrades to allow livestream and video conferenced meetings.
- ☐

**Adjourn**

There being no further business to come before the Board, Mr. Beloin made the motion to adjourn seconded by Ms. Mitchell and unanimously approved. The meeting adjourned at 5:07pm

Respectfully Submitted,

\s\ Diane Kendall, Interim Town Administrator