

Town of New Haven Special Selectboard Meeting
7:00 pm
Tuesday, November 10, 2020
Town Offices

**** Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, this meeting was held via GoToMeeting****

Selectboard: Chair, Steve Dupoise, Vice Chair, Kathy Barrett, Taborri Bruhl, John Roleau and Jim Walsh
Town Administrator / ZA: Aaron Brown
Selectboard Assistant: Pam Kingman

Visitors: MAUSD Superintendent, Patrick Reen, Dean Gilmore of the NHVFD, Cheryl Mitchell, Erin Ruble, Margaret Benn, Sara Kaeck, Polly Darnell, Amanda Bodell, Morgan Pratt, Eva Doane, Ruth Penfield, Eric Neil, Jen Russell, Stephanie (last name unknown) and Sam (Last name unknown)

ADJUSTMENTS TO THE AGENDA: Re-Adopt Traffic Ordinance / clarification of family plans under health insurance in personnel policy / Blood Drive / War Memorial Park motion revision

VISITORS BUSINESS:

1. MAUSD Superintendent, Patrick Reen: Discuss Beeman Elementary

School: Reen has been meeting with the 5 Town MAUSD District Selectboards to inquire what Beeman means to the Town, and what the potential impacts would be to New Haven if Beeman closes. The District is facing challenges with declining enrollment in each of the 5 town's elementary schools. Reen explained the MAUSD Board has been working on this for 18 months, doing community engagement meetings and then working with a consultant. The concepts they have come up with are: **1) Keep things as is. 2) Close some schools. 3) Merge with the Addison Northwest District (Vergennes area schools).**

If we keep going the way it is; projecting out 5 years out we will exceed the spending threshold by \$6.5 million causing the town to raise an additional \$6.5 million in penalties. Reen said there is a survey going out; one of the questions asks if people are interested in paying the penalties when they exceed the threshold. He does not foresee many being interested in that. Reen is looking for the role the school plays in town, and does the town own the building. In the end he will make a recommendation to the MAUSD Board, and it then goes to the

voters to decide. There are stipulations with Beeman that they are looking into, the deed says it has to be used for “educational purposes.”

The New Haven Selectboard is in receipt of a letter signed by a significant number of residents in support of keeping Beeman open. Steve Dupoise said he can't imagine any of the towns voting to close their schools. Reen said there are currently 73 students attending Beeman, compared to 106 six years ago.

Beemans' enrollment is comparable to Monkton and Starksboro. Going back 10 years; enrollment in the District was 1632 compared to 1320 now. Cost per pupil is just under \$20k; multiply that by 300, this would be the approximate financial impact of the decline in student population. The District has been reducing staff positions over the years, 75% of the budget is personnel related. If Beeman were to close, New Haven K-6 would be bussed to Bristol Elementary. District wide, all K-6 would fit into Bristol elementary. Reen was asked if they have considered opening Beeman up for a Pre-school or day care. They are in the process of looking at scenarios such as this. They are concerned about the impact an in-school day care would have on private day care providers in the area. We can't take away their lively hood. He added day care providers make their money on the 3-4 year olds, not infant/ toddlers. Reen was asked for enrollment numbers in each of the 5 Town elementary schools: Beeman 73 / Robinson (Starksboro) 119 / Lincoln 82 / Monkton 120 and Bristol 256. With numbers so low and projected to decline; we need a long range plan. Discussed renting space to help with costs, however this would mean they would have to rent out 150 classrooms district wide to cover school closures or high pupil costs. Part of the issue with renting space is taking into consideration the school's monitoring who comes and goes, and it adds new dimensions to becoming landlords.

If the MAUSD district were to merge with Addison Northwest and close some schools it could mean \$6 million dollars in savings. The impact of doing nothing, and the voters agree to pay the penalties would mean a 70% increase in the next 5 years. Several in attendance spoke out in favor of keeping Beeman open, many of whom were among the 100 people who signed a letter of support. Reen encouraged townspeople to continue to send letters of support for Beeman, there is no timeline. The Selectboard thanked Patrick Reen for coming; this is not an easy task.

2. New Haven Volunteer Fire Dept., Dean Gilmore: Discuss status of Fire

Truck: The new firetruck will arrive in the coming days; the Fire Dept. needs a check from the town to pay for it. It was decided to go through the municipality for the savings. Kathy Barrett made a motion to approve of signing the paperwork for the Fire Truck and to cut a check from the Fire Dept. Truck Fund held by the town, amount not to exceed \$36k. Motion seconded by Taborri Bruhl. Bruhl made

an amendment to allow Dean Gilmore to sign the paperwork, accepted by Barrett and seconded by Bruhl. Vote by roll call 5 yes / 0 no

ADJUSTMENTS TO AGENDA:

1. **Traffic Ordinance:** It was originally decided to warn both the Traffic Ordinance and the Dog Ordinance at the same time. However, the Dog Ordinance has taken a bit longer. The Traffic Ordinance must be published within 14 days of Selectboard approval. John Roleau made a motion to approve the Traffic Ordinance as previously approved. Motion seconded by Taborri Bruhl. Vote by roll call 5 yes / 0 no
2. **Clarification of family plans under health insurance in the personnel policy:** The Personnel policy only covers families under a Cobra plan. The Board suggested making the change as a draft for the Board to look over.
3. **Red Cross Blood Drive** was forced to cancel their Halloween Blood Drive. They would like permission to reschedule January 2nd or 9th. The Board is ok with it.
4. **War Memorial Park:** Cindy Hill asked the Board to amend the motion in the minutes of September 15, 2020. It is not clear in the motion that the curbing will be installed on Town property. Kathy Barrett made a motion that the Selectboard hereby moves to erect curbing within the Town-owned lands, north of the property line, to demarcate the area where parking is permitted; in doing so, the Selectboard does not in any way transfer, license, release or assign any interest in the real property owned by the Town between the curbing and the surveyed property line. The Selectboard further notes that such demarcation is in the Town's interest, as the Town benefits from parking availability both for the historic Village Green Market and for War memorial Park and Town Green. Motion seconded by Taborri Bruhl. Vote by roll call 5 yes / 0 no

TOWN ADMINISTRATORS REPORT:

1. **COVID-19 Response:** Social gatherings have been restricted to no more than 10 people. Aaron is looking ahead to the Planning Commissions hearing on the Energy Plan, and the Selectboards Hearing to follow. The Selectboards will likely be in Mid-January. Aaron is offering appointments to those who would like to view the document in person.
2. **Road Update:**
 - The Road Crew is looking to replace the culvert thawing machine; the heating element was replaced a few years back. Aaron will look at the small equipment fund. Cost will be approximately \$2-\$3k. They will not need it until 2021.
 - Sargent Cross Road was recently graded

- Line Stripping on River Road, Plank Road and Pearson Road on November 12th
- The Brush cutter is operational, they have done East Street so far
- **Gravel Inventory:** Discussed how much of the large pile is left in the pit. Aaron commented that we still owe Bristol for borrowed gravel. Best solution is to talk to Road Foreman; Tim Rich to find out how much is left.
- **Transportation Alternatives Grant:** Aaron met with Larry Buck and Doug McKain to discuss what is best scenario for this grant, as it prioritizes bike/pedestrian for the village center which could mean new sidewalks in town. They are looking for feedback on the last sidewalk project. The Selectboard discussed how the last sidewalk project was extremely expensive and it was not voted on. The Selectboard at the time just put it in the budget; general consensus was the town's people would not approve of more sidewalks. Aaron said there is painting and signage to apply for instead.
- **Better Road Grant:** This is for hydro-connected roads. This can be used towards ditching Halpin Road and engineering study for the south end of Pearson Road.

3. **Town Buildings and Land:** Waiting on Heat Pump for the Town Hall Cafeteria

AUTHORIZATIONS:

1. Taborri Bruhl made a motion to approve payroll for the week ending 10/24/20, in the amount of \$4,223.17, seconded by John Roleau Vote by roll call 5 yes / 0 no
2. Kathy Barrett made a motion to approve payroll for the week ending 10/31/20, in the amount of \$4,847.19, seconded by Taborri Bruhl Vote by roll call 5 yes / 0 no
3. Taborri Bruhl made a motion to approve payroll for the week ending 11/7/20, in the amount of \$5,482.07, seconded by Kathy Barrett Vote by roll call 5 yes / 0 no
4. Taborri Bruhl made a motion to approve the pay orders for the week ending 11/4/20, in the amount of \$562,336.65. This includes the payment to the State Treasurer. Motion seconded by Kathy Barrett Vote by roll call 5 yes / 0 no
5. Taborri Bruhl made a motion to approve the pay orders for the week ending 11/9/20, in the amount of \$21,240.20, seconded by Kathy Barrett Vote by roll call 5 yes / 0 no
6. John Roleau made a motion to approve the **Road Access Permit** for Scott Hardy at 1374 Pearson Road for his 3 lot subdivision. Motion seconded by Taborri Bruhl Vote by roll call 4 yes / 1 abstention (Barrett because it is a DRB conflict)
7. **Salt Purchase:** Discussed how things are different at the State level this year. Cargill Salt cost is \$ 70.50 per ton / American Rock Salt is \$76.00 per ton

Taborri Bruhl made a motion to purchase winter salt from Cargill Salt seconded by Kathy Barrett. 4 yes / 1 abstention (Walsh) Vote by roll call

8. Steve Dupoise made a motion to accept with regret the letter of resignation from Karen Gallott as the DRB minute taker. The Selectboard appreciates her 16 years of dedication to the Town. Motion seconded by John Roleau Vote by roll call 5 yes / 0 no
9. Taborri Bruhl made a motion to allow Aaron Brown request reimbursement from VTRANS for Beaver Brook culvert project. Motion seconded by Kathy Barrett Vote by roll call 5 yes / 0 no
10. **Town Hall Application:** Larry Buck would like to host a 5 member walking group in the town hall on Monday, Wednesday and Fridays from 9 – noon during the winter months. The Selectboard discussed this, and feels with COVID-19, it is just not safe to have any unnecessary activity in town hall where the school kids have gym class. COVID numbers are on the rise, the Board feels bad about their decision. Kathy Barrett made a motion to deny the walking group to use the town hall due to COVID conditions. Motion seconded by John Roleau. Vote by roll call 5 yes / 0 no – With Regret!

OTHER BUSINESS:

1. **Riverside Cemetery Plot costs / Sexton:** The Riverside Cemetery has many family lots available, some of them as large as 18 x 18 these days, most people would not want because they are so big. All the lots currently cost \$400 no matter the size. In Addison County the “going rate” for a 4 x 8 (single casket or 2 urns) with a range of \$400 - \$500. The Board discussed raising rates or just dividing up the larger lots. The Board seemed to favor dividing up the lots. Riverside Cemetery is also in need of a Sexton, which the Board agreed to budget for next year.
2. **VELCO Update:** VELCO has applied for a zoning permit for their laydown yard, where they will rent equipment to other utilities.
3. Recycling at the Town Office went smoothly on the first day, R & L is very happy and appreciates being in a safer location.
4. Taborri Bruhl made a motion to approve the minutes from 10/6/20, seconded by John Roleau vote by roll call 5 yes / 0 no
5. Kathy Barrett made a motion to approve the minutes from 10/13/20, seconded by Jim Walsh. 3 yes / 2 abstentions (Bruhl & Roleau were not able to attend)
6. John Roleau made a motion to approve the minutes from 10/20/20, seconded by Kathy Barrett Vote by roll call 4 yes / 1 abstention (Bruhl)

MISC. CORRESPONDENCE:

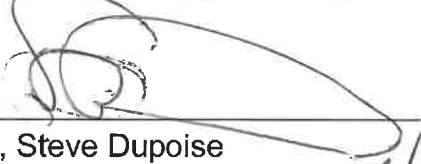
1. Sheriff's Activity logs

Adjourn: 9:02 pm

Respectfully submitted:

Pam Kingman

Approved on 11-23-20



Chair, Steve Dupoise



Vice Chair, Kathy Barrett



Taborri Bruhl



John Roleau



Jim Walsh