

TOWN OF JEFFERSON
SELECT BOARD MEETING MINUTES
March 30, 2020

The regular meeting of the Board of Selectmen for the Town of Jefferson was held remotely on Monday, March 30, 2020 at 7:00 p.m. Due to the COVID-19 virus and safety precautions required for meetings, the town added a conference call capability program to their phone service to allow meetings to continue and to afford the public the opportunity to join in by phone.

PRESENT: Tom Brady, Chair; Cindy Silver and Kevin Meehan, members comprising a quorum of the board

OTHERS PRESENT: Kathi Marshall, Assistant to the Select Board.

Tom Brady opened the meeting at 7:00 pm., and Kathi led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Warrants, Permits to be signed: Kathi said she had a building permit for 87 Albert's Drive where there is currently an antenna or cell tower the applicants want to replace. Kathi said they have submitted a multi-page explanation of what they intend to do. The company name is *Solutions*. Kevin said he doesn't believe they need a new variance because they are replacing what is already existing there. Kathi asked if she should check with Charlene first. She said the company was very thorough--they enclosed a check for the permit application, their building permit, construction drawings, construction analysis and a structural analysis report. Kathi said she would check the files to see if we had a copy of the initial antenna permit. If we have nothing she will run it by Charlene.

There were two other building permits, one of which they spoke about the last time they met. Since the board had not met since town meeting due to COVID-19, the board had approved the permit, but it was not yet signed. They instructed Kathi to tell the applicants it should not stop them from beginning their project even though the permit was not signed—the structure is a garage with no heating system in it.

Kevin made a motion to approve the building permit for the garage, so construction could begin immediately and with the knowledge that signatures would have to be added at a later date. Cindy seconded the motion, and the motion carried. Tom told Kathi to go ahead and notify the applicants they were approved and that their copy of the permit would come at a later date.

Another permit had a note attached to it that mentioned a trailer on the property that had a family relative living there. The applicants wanted permission to keep the trailer on the property until the relative passed away in order to keep them from having to go into a nursing care facility. The board approved the permit, but wanted Kathi to draw up a more legal-type agreement that board members and the applicants could sign to make certain everyone understood the same thing. Kathi said she would compose the agreement, run it by the board, then send it to the couple to sign. Kathi would supply a self-addressed, stamped envelope for them to return it in, and then the board could sign it.

Public input

There was no public input.

Reports of Departments

Highway Department: Mark was not present.

Town Office: Kathi informed the board that since the offices were closed she had instructed employees to e-mail their time cards or phone in their hours. She is now doing payroll and mailing their checks to

them, as opposed to them coming into the office to get them. She told everyone to hang onto their original time cards so they could turn them in later.

Kathi said she is being overwhelmed by e-mails. The vast majority of them deal with COVID-19 and they come from a multitude of government agencies, including the governor's office. She feels like everything she has done lately has to do with the virus, and she is concerned about getting reports into the capital. She said employees in Senator Shaheen's office, the Department of Revenue, and most other government entities are all empty. They are working remotely. Cindy asked if those departments have extended deadlines for certain reports, and Kathi said to date she has not seen anything saying that. She mentioned her concerns to Linda and she told her not to get worried about it, since those departments don't need those reports until tax time. Tom said he thinks the state is going to have to cut everyone some slack because of the situation. Kathi said if she sat and read every government e-mail that is coming, she would never get anything else done.

Tom added there was one important thing he wanted to make sure Kathi was aware of, and that was keeping track of any expenses we incurred that were associated with COVID-19. Most of those expenses were going to be reimbursed by the government. Kathi said she did receive a worksheet from the Department of Revenue to keep tally of those expenses. She also mentioned the new program of *A+ Conferencing* they were now using to meet remotely would be one of those expenses incurred due to the virus. The board also agreed Kathi should work from home whenever she could.

Kathi said she is also beginning to receive unemployment papers, and she needs quiet time to absorb the new legal guidelines that have been implemented temporarily due to the virus situation.

Cindy asked if extending Kathi's hours would help her get through the paperwork right now. She said she would be willing to authorize more hours for Kathi if it would help her. Tom asked Kathi how many hours she was supposed to be working each week, and Kathi told him 36 hours. She did let him know that since she had been working there her week was usually around 38 hours. Cindy made a motion to increase Kathi's hours to forty a week during this time of dealing with the issues surrounding the COVID-19 virus. Kevin seconded the motion and the motion carried. Tom mentioned that the extra hours may be refundable because they have been added due to the work generated by the virus.

Approval of Meeting Minutes

Kevin made a motion to approve the minutes of March 9, 2020 as recorded. Cindy seconded the motion, and the motion carried. The approval of these minutes brought the minutes up-to-date.

Conference Call Meetings

Tom asked Kathi to publish the remote conference passcode on the town website so townspeople can join the remote meetings each week if they desire. Tom also asked her to remind people they can print their own permits and forms right off the website, since the town office is currently off limits.

Unfinished Business

CAI Technologies: At town meeting the budget was approved. In the budget was a line-item for CAI Technologies that allows the town to upgrade their current map system to a digitized format. Kathi informed the board members that she received the contract, but members had not had a chance to sign it. She told members she called Franco at CAI and asked him if he would accept the contract with her (Kathi) signing for each member and initialing it. Franco said he has done business with the town for many years and if it was okay with board members to do that, he would accept the contract that way. Cindy made a motion to authorize Kathi to sign on behalf of the Select Board Chair and two members, in order to move ahead with accepting the CAI Technology tax map contract. Kevin seconded the motion, and the motion carried. Tom added that once the minutes were approved Kathi could send a copy to CAI for their files that would show the authorization permission.

New Office Computer: Kathi said Linda and John Trumbull would like the computer Kathi is currently using since it has all their tax and assessing programs already loaded. Kathi said it didn't bother her which computer she had, but the one she is using definitely needs to be cleaned up.

Tom asked what Kathi would do if the current computer went to Linda and John. Kathi said she'd have to get a new one and her programs would have to be transferred. She said the computer tech expert would have to do that for her. She imagined it might be a day-long affair. The accounting program especially would have to be moved to the new computer.

Tom asked if she wanted to have someone come in and work on her computer now, or would she prefer to wait until the virus-related issues were over. Cindy said hopefully it will be in May that things will work back into a normal cycle. Kevin said if she wanted to wait a month that was okay, and if she wanted a new computer now, she could also do that. Kathi said she could wait because everything is so busy right now she would hate to shut down for the day to get everything set up. In addition, Linda and John might have to be present to make certain everything they needed was intact. With the IT technician it might not be a good idea at this time with the virus.

Tom said when she ordered a new computer to make sure it had video so they could do remote video meetings in the future.

Grants: Kathi mentioned she e-mailed Stuart Arnett and asked him about the grant process. Kathi has downloaded several tutorials on writing grant proposals and would like to tackle the issue so the town always has a template on hand should grant opportunities present themselves. She told Stuart that there were twenty hours left on the Feasibility Study, and she thought perhaps his services would be best utilized working on the grant that had to do with the generator and showers at the school. That project will involve the Fire Marshal's office, and she felt she wasn't quite ready for that. Stuart told her not to worry about the twenty hours that he would like to work with her on a grant proposal and that they could work by phone. Kathi said you can't apply for a grant without knowing what you want and what it will cost. She felt there were some relatively high-ticket items she would like to see if she could acquire through the grant process. Those included an expanded parking lot, a new sign for the Community Center, energy-efficient windows all around, as well as others.

Cindy said it would be great if we could extend the parking lot into the old soccer field to the left of the school (as you face it from the road). Kevin added it should work into the current parking lot and that parking lot should be upgraded to match the new section. He suggested that Central Paving go out and give us a quote on the complete job. Kevin also mentioned the parking lot at the current town hall that has quite a dip in it that needs to be repaired and repaved. Kathi said she will call Stuart and let him know what they had in mind. Tom said to let Stuart know she has Central Paving right here in town so he could assist Stuart with a price. Kevin told Kathi that when she speaks with Central Paving to let them know it is for grant purposes.

Moving to the School: Kathi asked the board members if they thought the actual move to the school would be delayed due to the virus. She asked if they were looking at the end of this year, or the beginning of 2021. They agreed we were being moved back right now because it was difficult to have meetings to make certain plans and to work with contractors with the safety concerns. Kevin said the delay wasn't necessarily a bad thing in that it would allow Kathi and Stuart to work on the grant process and finalize that in between so we could be prepared for future grant opportunities.

Tom said it also gives us time to plan out the final layout for the offices. He said the virus has made us more aware of how we should set up these work areas for the future without having people so close to each other. He said he didn't want plastic hanging down in front of the desks in order to protect people. Kathi asked the board, if in their spare time, they might check out **vari.com**. The company is the one that invented the *varidesk* that allows people to work at their desk standing up or sitting. They have expanded and now offer free delivery and set up of office cubicles that have clear or frosted panels.

They snap together and are installed for free. They looked like they might be an efficient way to set up work areas that are relatively private and convenient. They may work for the area that does not include the three offices.

Website: Cindy has been dealing with CivicPlus, the government website company that the town is considering going to for a new website. Cindy wondered if the board members had a chance to look at the contract. Kevin said he would rather hold off on that at this time because he felt the \$3,000 annual price tag was a little high. He mentioned that other companies offer website templates that can be edited and set up on your own without the high cost. Cindy asked if other sites offered the same amenities as CivicPlus. She wants to be cautious with cost, but wonders if the offers are the same. She admits you pay a little more for the government site, but they offer a great deal in return, including ongoing tech support at no extra cost.

Kathi said the website we currently have is not acceptable. The town needs a website that allows you to upload pictures, write a letter to everyone, focus on particular events, and especially one that is user-friendly. She said the government website was very attractive, but she did feel the price was high. She also mentioned we may be under contract with our current website and she will check to see if that's true. Kathi said she would absolutely love to design a website, but admitted right now she is so busy with other projects she didn't feel she could do it justice. She knew Cindy was active on her own social website, and Kathi thought down the road maybe the two of them could work on it together. In either case she was happy for Cindy to take the lead on the project.

Cindy said she would check around with local towns who currently use this company for their website and see if they had feelings pro or con about their experience with it. Kathi said you would have to do a comparison of what you get with the government site and what you get with a "build your own" site. Cindy said she would do a little more research on other sites.

Tom said Cindy should check with the towns that use CivicPlus and Kathi could do a little research on her own as well. He added that he didn't feel the \$3,000 annually was that high, since he had websites for his business that were \$2,000 and higher. Cindy asked Kathi to check in the files to see what our existing website has cost us over the years—especially adding in each instance that the website host had to make a change for us. Kathi said she would check the past couple years to find the costs.

New Business

Tom said most every town has posted a date when their offices will be re-opened. It is a Select Board decision to close the offices and to open them as well. He wanted a record of the vote to set a date to open the offices again, as well as a date for reconsideration in case the virus is still prevalent.

Kevin made a motion to open the town offices again on Monday, May 4, 2020 with a reconsideration date of no later than May 1, 2020. Cindy seconded the motion and the motion carried. Tom asked Kathi to make sure it was posted on the website.

Adjournment

Cindy made a motion to adjourn and Kevin seconded the motion. The motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

The next meeting will be Monday, April 6, 2020 at 7:00 p.m. by remote conference call.

Respectfully submitted,

