

**NEW DURHAM BOARD OF SELECTMEN**  
**New Durham Town Hall**  
**March 17, 2020, 6:00 p.m.**

**Final Approved 04-20-20**

**PRESENT**

Chair David Swenson  
Selectman Cecile Chase  
Selectman Dorothy Veisel – via telephone

**ALSO PRESENT**

Scott Kinmond, Town Administrator  
Stephanie McKenzie, Town Clerk / Deputy Tax Collector

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Swenson called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m. He stated Selectman Veisel was unable to be in physical attendance and confirmed with her that she is alone. Chair Swenson noted all actions would be by roll-call votes.

Chair Swenson gave a statement relative to the current COVID-19 pandemic events and concerns. (*Attached to minutes*).

Selectman Veisel thanked Chair Swenson for his comments and congratulated Selectman Chase on her reelection.

Selectman Chase stated she agrees with Chair Swenson's comments, adding that we are a small community, many are afraid, and the most vulnerable of the community including the elderly and the children could suffer the most. She encouraged people to keep connected and take care of each other.

**Appointments/Announcements**

Chair Swenson stated this is a specially called meeting to address COVID-19 and address the issues being faced by employees and residents in regards to Town business.

Town Administrator Kinmond stated it is an evolving and changing process. He stated they are following guidelines in regards to distancing and limiting the number of people at a group and stated Primex has issued a notice indicating their support for personnel and compensation. Town Administrator Kinmond stated the health insurance provider has also made testing available for those possibly exposed or exhibiting symptoms. He stated the police department is supplied with personal protective equipment and steps have been taken to inform the public the PD may not be available for as much face-to-face contact for non-emergency calls to minimize risk exposure. He stated we are also set up for doing business virtually at Town Hall and the State of NH has extended new vehicle registration until the end of April. Town Administrator Kinmond stated they are also working with staff on coordinating leave and telecommuting procedures. He explained

the Governor's orders have also helped them out with the welfare side of things as well; he stated the schools are closed through at least April 3 – although it could be extended. Town Administrator Kinmond stated the library would remain closed as well. He stated they are trying to use good judgment and risk management throughout the Town.

Chair Swenson noted this is a special meeting and typically the first meeting after an election is an organizational one; he stated he assumes they will work under the same organization for now unless the Board feels otherwise. Selectman Chase and Selectman Veisel concurred that this is a special emergency meeting and to continue under the same organizational arrangement for now.

Chair Swenson stated the primary areas of business to be looked at is emergency response and Town Hall functions. He stated Town Administrator Kinmond created a draft telecommuting policy and Chair Swenson made some edits. This was reviewed by the Board.

Town Administrator Kinmond explained if the Board of Selectmen were to decide to close the Town offices for non-essential personnel it would be restricted public access approach at the various Town departments. He suggested developing a “script” for providing contact information for residents. Chair Swenson summarized the options: 1) close all facilities to the public with employees reporting to work; 2) close Town Hall facilities completely with employees working by telecommuting and arrange public interaction by appointment; 3) close all facilities completely. Town Administrator Kinmond stated they do have the ability to do option 2. He explained there is a possibility of federal funding due to the federal mandates. Selectman Chase stated Option 1 won't do enough to help flatten the curve and asked why all employees would need to report to work. Town Administrator Kinmond explained that could be discussed and they can look more closely at the options for the various positions and agreed the number could be reduced. Selectman Veisel suggested a combination of 1 and 2. Chair Swenson stated it seems to be the consensus that the option they will follow will be a hybrid of Option 1 and 2 which will designate an individual (Town Administrator) to make the decisions for daily coverage and from where. He stated he wants to be sure they have some way of ensuring productivity as well.

Ms. McKenzie stated that as Town Clerk she could carry out all business without it being in person with the exception of a couple coming in for an intention to marry. She stated she can arrange to take cash at the door and will take paperwork out to people in the car but she doesn't want any contact with people. Ms. McKenzie stated she and Tax Collector Donna Young could continue to do their full work week. Town Administrator Kinmond stated the drop-box could be readapted to accommodate more documents. Chair Swenson asked what other towns are doing. Town Administrator Kinmond replied that many are closed to the public.

**Chair Swenson made a motion to be effective March 19, 2020, to close the Town Office facilities to the public until April 7, 2020 and designate the Town Administrator to select the Town Hall employees to manage all Town Hall**

**procedures and determine which positions will be covered each day and week on-site and arrange for the public interaction by appointment-only; the Board of Selectmen will review and reassess for renewal or modification on or before April 6, 2020. Selectman Veisel seconded the motion.**

**Roll Call: Selectman Veisel – aye; Selectman Chase –aye; Chair Swenson-aye. Motion passed 3-0-0.**

Town Administrator Kinmond asked if the Board of Selectmen is supportive of sending a notice out to all residents or to post it on the website, in *The Baysider*, and at Town Hall. The Board of Selectmen concurred with public posting. The Board discussed the process of continuing board and committee meetings. Town Administrator Kinmond stated there is a meeting scheduled for Friday for the Budget Committee regarding Copple Crown Village District to review their budget. However, there may not be a quorum physically present. Selectman Chase stated many of the volunteers and elected members may fall into a higher risk category and suggested looking further at electronic meetings.

**Chair Swenson made a motion to cancel the meetings of all boards appointed by the Board of Selectmen to include but not limited to Conservation Commission, Parks and Recreation, Boodey Farmstead, 1772 Meetinghouse, Ethics and Water Quality. Selectman Chase seconded the motion. Roll Call: Selectman Veisel – aye; Selectman Chase –aye; Chair Swenson-aye. Motion passed 3-0-0.**

**Chair Swenson made a motion to recommend that the elected boards which the Board of Selectmen do not have jurisdiction follow those guidelines and actions taken by the Board of Selectmen tonight. Selectman Chase seconded the motion. Roll Call: Selectman Veisel – aye; Selectman Chase –aye; Chair Swenson-aye. Motion passed 3-0-0.**

The Board reviewed and discussed the telecommuting policy. Edits were made.

**Selectman Chase made a motion to approve the temporary telecommunication policy as amended. Selectman Veisel seconded the motion. Roll Call: Selectman Veisel – aye; Selectman Chase –aye; Chair Swenson-aye. Motion passed 3-0-0.**

**Selectman Chase made a motion to add an effective date to the telecommunication policy of Thursday, March 19, 2020. Selectman Veisel seconded the motion. Roll Call: Selectman Veisel – aye; Selectman Chase –aye; Chair Swenson-aye. Motion passed 3-0-0.**

#### **Future Meetings**

Selectman Chase suggested holding the meeting but all will call in. The Board concurred. Chair Swenson stated he would be present at Town Hall, noting quorum requirements are waived due to the situation. Town Administrator Kinmond noted there are items that need to be addressed per statutes.

March 23, 2020, 7:00 p.m. – New Durham Town Hall.

**Adjourn**

**Chair Swenson made a motion to adjourn. Selectman Veisel seconded the motion.**

**Roll Call: Selectman Veisel – aye; Selectman Chase –aye; Chair Swenson-aye.**

**Motion passed 3-0-0.**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:28 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jennifer Riel, Recording Secretary

STATEMENT  
Read By  
DS

March 17, 2020

### **Opening Thoughts For Current Health Pandemic Concerns**

The events over the past month or so have caused all of those living on earth and especially all Americans to become dramatically mindful of our individual responsibilities and awareness of our often unthinking relationship to each other. Such terms as social distancing and self-quarantine, etc. have become terms that heretofore have been rarely thought of or used.

Concern for the health of others as well as our own awareness of our daily health status have raised new, or at least an enhanced, meaning to the idea of Christian and other religious, moral, or ethical basics of recognizing that we are human. As humans we rely on respect, caring, and love of others to live our lives in safety, economic wellbeing, and continued health to the extent possible.

Along with the recent events have come fear, uncertainty, and significant concern for the future. We cannot always control or manage the future to the outcome we desire. However, we must always recognize that a Higher Power knows the future and, I believe, can guide us in wisdom and enhance our ability to make decisions for the betterment of our employees, residents, and others we may influence. All leaders, whether they be elected, are in for-profit or non-profit entities, or are living lives that influence others must recognize that there is no more precious gift for a leader than the wisdom that can apply relevant values to give meaning to our lives and those we are elected to represent. This is especially true for us as the Select Board for New Durham. What gifts we have been given determines the success or failure of those we lead. Often, as in this case, we do not know and cannot always see clearly enough in the future to assure our decisions are those that will be correct.

Many, if not most, Americans have varying degrees of fear from the unknown outcomes of the pandemic we are experiencing. We all must recognize, however, that this fear must not be an immobilizing terror but only a nagging anxiety that prompts appropriate action for the desired outcome. This is what we can hope and pray for all those that lead both locally and nationally.

For those that are prone to criticize please understand that I believe most people in leadership roles want to utilize their wisdom and experience to the best possible outcome. "Wisdom alone will not automatically make our plans easy to adopt or implement. Wise planning requires us to act before it is completely apparent that we need to do so." (Richard Kriegbaum). However, I believe that the outcome of our current pandemic will result in lessons that are important for all to learn. God's word has said as much in Jeremiah 29:11 that "For I know the plans I have for you...They are plans for good and not disaster, to give you a future and a hope." This future may not be exactly what we envisioned or when we envisioned it but it is a promise that we must grasp tightly.

The Select Board in New Durham is not necessarily just the ultimate legal entity but it is the means by which provides the Town with the elected leadership the voters felt was appropriate for the time. God's word again provides interesting insight in this from Romans 12:6, 8 "God has given each of us the ability to do certain things well. If God has given you leadership ability, take the responsibility seriously."

Leaders live for the action and it is for this the Select Board has been elected. To act in ways that benefit the Town and its employees / residents / citizens. It is under this responsibility that the Select Board looks to provide guidance and decisions to address the current health situation and looks to make appropriate decisions that address the needs of the Town, its employees, and its residents.

In this polarizing political time in which we live further exacerbated by the pandemic we face, I am indebted to one of my favorite authors, E.G. White writing in the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries for triggering the following concluding remarks. I believe that God has not given to any one person all the wisdom. Those placed in positions of trust should regard the opinion of others as worthy of respect and likely to be as correct as their own. We are each created like other individuals and are just as valuable as they are. Honor, integrity, and truth must be preserved even at any cost to self. It is under this belief that we continue our responsibilities.