

*New Durham Board of Selectmen
June 1, 2020*

**NEW DURHAM BOARD OF SELECTMEN
New Durham Town Hall
June 1, 2020, 9:00 a.m.**

Final Approved 07-09-20

*In accordance with Governor's Executive Order #12, pursuant to RSA 91-A: 2 Attendees log into: Join
Zoom Meeting: Join Zoom Meeting
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82591465577?pwd=R3N4TGRRpUjJDUmFmcGRtSGpUeFUxUT09>
Meeting ID: 898 4071 2919 Password: 572474
Or via telephone number: 1-646-558-8656;
Technical difficulties contact Town Administrator Scott Kinmond at skinmond@newdurhamnh.us or by
phone at 603-556-1516.*

*Note: Town of New Durham offers no security assurances to those connecting via PC to a third party
software and hardware not configured or controlled by our IT Service provider.*

PRESENT

Chair David Swenson – via Zoom, at Town Hall
Selectman Cecile Chase – via Zoom
Selectman Dorothy Veisel – via Zoom

PRESENT

Scott Kinmond, Town Administrator – via Zoom
Peter Varney, Fire Chief – via Zoom
Donna Young, Tax Collector – via Zoom
Stephanie MacKenzie, Town Clerk – via Zoom

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Swenson called the public session of the meeting to order at 9:18 a.m.

Chair Swenson stated that due to the State of Emergency declared by Governor Sununu and pursuant to Executive Order #12, the Town is authorized to meet electronically. He stated there is no physical location to observe this meeting. However, in accordance with the Executive Order it was confirmed that they are providing public access to the meeting by telephone, with additional access possibilities by video (Zoom); all members of the Board of Selectmen and Town Administrator have the ability to communicate contemporaneously during this meeting; the public has access to contemporaneously listen and participate via links posted on the agenda. Chair Swenson confirmed the meeting was posted appropriately with access numbers. He stated that in the event the public is unable to access the meeting, the Select Board meeting would be adjourned and rescheduled. Chair Swenson stated all motions would be taken by roll call; roll call attendance was taken for those participating in the Zoom meeting. Chair Swenson confirmed all participants, including the Board of Selectmen members, are alone; he confirmed he is alone as well. Chair Swenson stated that in the event they need to go into non-public session a separate phone number will be used for the Board of Selectmen members to use and they will then reenter nonpublic session.

Appointments / Announcements

Selectman Chase stated the Town Clerk and Tax Collector asked for modifications to be made in regards to employee protective measures and increased convenience for residents to access services at Town Hall. Chair Swenson stated this was discussed at the last Board of Selectmen meeting. Selectman Chase felt there were a lot of questions unanswered. Selectman Chase stated she emailed Town Administrator Kinmond after thinking about the processes and anticipated increase in business coming with the summer season to discuss increasing efficiency. She stated this meeting was requested by Town Clerk and Tax Collector to address their concerns.

Stephanie MacKenzie, Town Clerk, stated she has contacted ANS about moving a computer and printer to the window and was assured that could be done without major rewiring, etc. In addition, an exterior awning could be added; she stated there won't be running back and forth and will minimize exposure for Town Hall employees. In the event a customer cannot go to the window the Town Clerk or Tax Collector will go to the customer's car as they currently do. Ms. MacKenzie explained the difficulties with getting work done and the extra amount of time tasks take due to difficulties in communication under the current system. She also explained the difficulties in maintaining 6' distancing within the Town Hall building.

Donna Young, Tax Collector, stated they have had increased business by being the only boat registration office in the New Durham area. She also noted they have been successful in converting cash customers to checks or money order and anticipates that to continue. Ms. Young stated they are obligated by the NH Vitals system to conduct marriages and have done that during this time as well. She stated they have been working most days from 9 a.m. – 7 p.m. as they don't leave until the work is done for that day. Ms. Young explained the extra amount of time that is taken when having to go back and forth between the vehicle and office.

Town Administrator Kinmond stated one of the concerns of the Board of Selectmen at the last meeting was the inefficiency of the process and outlined these in a memo presented for Board review. He stated social distancing will be the focus for reopening and with the Town Hall being an old building it makes it a bit more challenging to minimize exposures.

Selectman Veisel stated she doesn't see any of these suggestions as being a hardship to any residents and it seems to be a reasonable request on the part of the staff. Selectman Chase concurred. Chair Swenson stated he doesn't see the work load changing whether there is a window or not; he stated it may place undue workload on the walk-up windows with back-and-forth between the window and current offices.

Ms. Young noted the Governor had initially extended the deadline for titles and registration but as of May 31 they now need to process all those templates. Ms. MacKenzie noted the difference in the number of boat registrations between May 2019 and May 2020 as being over \$6,000. Surrounding Towns are not issuing boat registrations which accounts for the increase. She explained the process Wolfeboro is

following which is only submission by a lockbox and there is no contact whatsoever. Chair Swenson noted work was started on the window before this Board of Selectmen meeting despite unanimous consensus action at the May 18, 2020 meeting to not proceed until the next meeting of 06/08/20. Selectman Veisel stated she would like to see action taken on this issue to keep staff and residents safe. Selectman Chase concurred.

Chair Swenson outlined several reasons of concern with installation of a drive-up window as follows:

- 1) Decisions by the Select Board on some issues appear to not make any difference to some individuals when it crosses their agenda or bias. On 05/18/20 the Select Board unanimously agreed by consensus to not take any action on this until our 06/08/20 scheduled meeting. Yet purchase orders, work authorization, and other activities occurred directly contrary to the Board action,
- 2) There has been no change in situation from the 05/18/20 Select Board meeting, There is the same State Executive Order, same motor vehicle and other Town Hall transactions needed,
- 3) Installation of the window may place undue additional workload on person at the employee at the walk-up window,
- 4) The installation may create additional time delays and work for person in Clerk's or Tax Collector's office, and
- 5) One week delay to the Select Board's next scheduled meeting of 06/08/20 would not overly burden or change projected workload from current levels.

Selectman Chase made a motion to authorize the Town Administrator to make modifications to the building in order to increase efficiency and provide protection during the COVID-19 pandemic. Prior to a second Chair Swenson indicated that this motion was not specific enough in defining what the Board is authorizing. Selectman Chase then rephrased as follows:

Selectman Chase made a motion to authorize the Town Administrator to make modifications to the building in order to increase efficiency and provide protection during the COVID-19 pandemic including a walk-up window, installation of an intercom and buzzer at the front door, social distancing markings on the pavement and in the foyer and hallway. Selectman Veisel seconded the motion. Roll Call Vote: Selectman Veisel –aye; Selectman Chase – ave; Chair Swenson – ave. Motion passed 3-0-0.

Chair Swenson stated he has several other concerns he would like to address. However, some may need to be done in nonpublic. Chair Swenson stated he came to Town Hall on 05/21/2020 and saw work nearly complete on the window.

Chair Swenson stated that in almost eight (8) years serving as a Selectmen including five of those years as Chair; involving seven (7) different Selectmen (Jarvis, Kratovil, Bickford, Anthes, Doherty, Chase, Veisel); and six different Select Board member combinations; this is the first time he have ever experienced two Selectmen going ahead with scheduling a Select Board Meeting without the third Select Board

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member's agreement. He noted that this is one of the more disappointing events over his almost eight years of service on the Select Board.

Chair Swenson stated only coincidentally he happened to come to Town Hall on the afternoon of 05/21/20 and unexpectedly saw the window had been installed [(to about 95% of the total installation work complete)] without any Select Board approval. To remind all, the Town Hall is the taxpayers' property and not any one single person. As the governing body of the Town, the Select Board may have authorization to make these decisions on Town Hall property provided they align with the legislative body's (voters) budgets / actions.

[He further noted that clearly the current Select Board can act in the disjointed fashion of how this meeting was called acquiescing to the one's whims. However, he believes we were elected to provide a governing entity for the Town that provides the best management practices for its taxpayers and residents.]

Chair Swenson stated that should the Select Board choose to undermine our own guidelines and disrupt the enormous cultural change we have created over the past several years by acting in the way it did in calling this meeting it may choose to do so. However, working in this fashion in which mutual respect and trust among the Select Board has been violated would prompt him to be opposed to such an approach.

Selectman Chase stated she appreciates the cooperation of the Board of Selectmen over the last three years and wants that to continue. She stated she was concerned when there was no reply to her request for a meeting and that perhaps Chair Swenson was unwell. She stated she feels the lack of response was a way to limit discussion on a topic that she felt was important enough to ask for the meeting.

Selectman Veisel stated Chair Swenson suggested two members asked for a meeting but she does not believe that is accurate. Selectman Veisel indicated she felt there were two issues 1. Town Employee request 2. Board Communications, and wanted to treat them separately. Selectman Chase stated she asked for the meeting. Chair Swenson confirmed it was scheduled without his input. Town Administrator Kinmond stated there was no response from the emails sent in the early part of the week; the only responses from Chair Swenson were relative to the newsletter going out for tax bills. Chair Swenson indicated that is inaccurate.

Selectman Chase reiterated that the window was discussed on May 18th. She spent two days observing the process at Town Hall then on the 21st sent an email with suggested process improvements to the TA to be forwarded to the other selectmen with a request to meet. She checked with the TA each day for a week for a response from the Chair. There was no response. Only then did Selectman Chase ask for a meeting to be posted.

Selectman Veisel asked of the Board of Selectmen members have time to discuss the Town Beach. The Board concurred with adding it to the agenda. Chair Swenson noted

the last Board of Selectmen meeting left off at having the Town Administrator gather information on how other communities are handling beach openings. He stated the consensus of the Board was the beach could be opened with a chemical toilet with signs indicating “use at your own risk” to ensure there is not undue liability and swimming ropes installed. Selectman Veisel stated the Commission would like to have the port-o-potty available during the four week swim lesson session; she explained the actions the Director would be taking to ensure social distancing on the beach and in the water. Selectman Veisel stated since that time she has received a lot of feedback, including the Merrymeeting Lake Association, the lack of port-o-potty would encourage possible contamination of the lake. She asked Town Administrator Kinmond to see if it is possible to have the port-o-potty there and not maintain it after each use along with a disclaimer sign. She stated that is possible along with the option of having it serviced twice per week instead of once. That would be an additional \$40 per week from the operating budget. Selectman Chase stated she believes it is important to have the beach open and available to residents with the port-o-potty there.

Chair Swenson made a motion to have Parks and Recreation, from their budget, spend the additional money for the additional cleaning and installation at the Town Beach, with anticipation the costs will be reimbursed by the CARES Act, and to go ahead with the planned swim lessons under the revised procedures to address the COVID-19 pandemic issues. Selectman Veisel seconded the motion. Roll Call Vote: Selectman Veisel –aye; Selectman Chase – aye; Chair Swenson – aye. Motion passed 3-0-0.

Town Administrator Kinmond will work on getting signage prepared for the Town Beach. He noted the GOFERR grant documents are ready for signature by the Board and will be submitted at the end of June; there are other submittals due in August and October. Town Administrator Kinmond stated they have started receiving the first responder funds as well as reimbursement for FEMA.

Adjourn

Chair Swenson made a motion to adjourn. Selectman Chase seconded the motion. Roll Call Vote: Selectman Veisel –aye; Selectman Chase – aye; Chair Swenson – aye. Motion passed 3-0-0.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:17 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jennifer Riel, Recording Secretary