



## Office of Board of Selectmen Town of Mason

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Selectmen Meeting 10/27/2020  
Approved Minutes

**Present:** By roll call, using the Zoom platform – Charles Moser, Louise Lavoie, Pete McGinnity, selectmen; Kathy Wile, AA; Brenda Wiley, bookkeeper; Dave Morrison.

**Called to Order:** The meeting was called to order 7:30 PM by Chair Louise Lavoie. Louise moved to waive the requirement to read the Right to Know checklist aloud, as there were no members of the public attending. Roll call vote Charlie-aye, Pete-aye, Louise-aye to waive the reading. She then proceeded to take attendance by roll call, reflected above.

### **Approvals:**

- Noted that the accounts payable and payroll manifests had been reviewed and approved prior to the meeting by selectmen.
- Minutes of 10/13/20 and 10/20/20 had not been received by selectmen in time for review. The approvals were tabled until the next meeting on Nov 10, 2020.
- An administrative abatement had been prepared for \$14.51 for lot G-3, which had recently been donated to the town. Noted the abatement request had been signed by all selectmen prior to the virtual meeting.
- Citizen Ron Dube had proposed names for four brooks, two bogs and a pond local to his property. Louise noted they were all connected to Black Fly Brook, which Mr Dube had named earlier in the year through USGS. The proposed names were noted to follow the pattern of identifying flora or fauna found there, with the exception of Marshall Pond (proposed), which had been informally called that in honor of the Marshalls who lived there and worked for the Town in many ways.  
Charlie moved to accept the proposed names, second from Pete. Roll call vote Charlie-aye, Pete-aye, Louise-aye to approve the proposed names.
- A letter of request to DRA to move the town's next scheduled Assessment review from 2023 to 2021, to coincide with the cyclical update. The review covers all properties with any kind of tax exemption or credit attached, updated forms should be provided by owners every 5 years. Noted that this letter of request had been signed by all selectmen prior to the virtual meeting.
- Contract with Brookline Ambulance Service had been negotiated, signed by Brookline BOS, and signed by Mason selectmen prior to the virtual meeting.

### **New Business:**

Broadband was up for discussion – specifically, whether the Town should continue the split service through the school, or look into separate service when available. It was agreed that new options should be explored for all town buildings. Brenda noted that is fine with the school, and the contract is not binding to either side.

- A draft of the proposed contract with Hollis Communications for 2021 through 2023 had been received and reviewed. There is a proposed increase of \$1000/year, to remain steady throughout the contracted years, over the last contract. Selectmen agreed the town was served well by Hollis, and agreed to approve the contract as proposed. It will be signed in Hollis and then returned for signature by Mason.
- A request from the Broadband Committee to list the names of electricians available to help people who had questions regarding their conduit service in advance of Broadband connection. Selectmen are hesitant to make blanket recommendations on contractors for residents, and concluded that the Committee has done a fine job of “getting the word out” to residents on their own already. Mason businesses are welcome to list themselves under the local businesses tab on the website by contacting the webmaster.
- Tax overlay amount was discussed. DRA proposed an 8.2% increase in our budget for 2021, which the selectmen could choose to reduce by applying part of the fund balance to offset the increase. Brenda had prepared various options to consider within the range allowed by DRA.
- After discussion, Pete motioned, second from Charlie, to use \$210,000 from the fund balance as overlay to reduce the amount of increase for 2021 to 2.7%. Roll call vote Louise-aye, Charlie-aye, Pete-aye, vote to use that overlay amount of \$210,000.

Further discussion about the increase was so large – Brenda said it was based on last year’s budget increase, which included the one-time technology upgrade, the large amount for Fairpoint abatement settlement and other expenditures approved last year. These amounts are not anticipated in the 2021 budget; the second/final (lesser) payment to Fairpoint will be included in the budget within the abatement line.

- As part of the renewal process and recent claims for insurance, the selectmen realized the short-term disability benefit maxed out at \$450/week, below the 66.67% of anyone’s salary, and had received a quote from HealthTrust to increase the maximum weekly cap while maintaining the benefit at 66.67% of salary. Pete commented that amount of \$450 had likely been set 20 years ago. Annual increased cost to the Town would be \$888/year, and would maintain more equity to all employees. Louise moved, second from Pete, to accept the quote from HealthTrust for the increased weekly maximum for short term disability. Roll call vote Louise-aye, Pete-aye, Charlie-aye. Kathy was asked to communicate that with HealthTrust.
- In response to a request from the Mason Elementary School to hold their annual photo shoot with Santa at either the Gazebo or the Town Hall Parking lot, Charlie motioned to approve the school use of town property for pictures provided the school requires social distancing recommendations are followed. Three ayes by roll call to approve.
- Brenda offered that she had been informed that the Dec payment of Rooms and Meals tax from the state will be approximately \$9000 more than anticipated. Also, a budgeted salary amount of \$25,000 will be reimbursable by GOFERR funds. Brenda will clarify with DRA what the restrictions on the use of these funds will be.
- The auditors had sent a draft review letter and report, which seemed standard and no surprises. One comment regarding the chart of accounts had already been addressed in Jan 2020, but as it was not in place by the end of 2019 was included in the report. The other comment was around GASB 54, and the town not having a policy in place of how it will

apply the fund balance each year. Selectmen agreed they would draft a policy to follow state guidelines in applying the fund balance.

**Old Business:**

- Website posting policy was tabled to be continued at a later date.
- Broadband Update – no one from the committee was in attendance, but it was noted that the postcards have been received around town, Trucks seemed to be everywhere and work continuing to move along.

**Informational Items/Communication:**

- Discussion on the sale of the town truck to the private sale for cash. Charlie motioned to authorize Road Agent Dave Morrison to sign off on the title and sell the truck “as is” for \$1000. Second from Pete. Roll call vote Louise-aye, Pete-aye, Charlie-aye.
- The Souhegan Lionesses requested an outdoor location for a clothing collection box that was typically housed in the Library. Potential locations were discussed without reaching agreements, discussion concluded by offering to advertise the nearest drop off location via signage and the website.
- Town report format was briefly discussed. The printer had supplied the office with a few size and binding options, along with their cost. Decision made to continue with the traditional format.

**Public Forum**

**Non-Public:**

**Adjournment:**

There being no further business, Louise motioned to adjourn, second from Charlie. Roll call vote to adjourn – 3 ayes. Meeting adjourned at 8:29 PM, zoom meeting forum closed by Louise.

Next regular meeting will be Tuesday November 10, 2020 via the Zoom platform, at 7:30 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Kathy Wile  
Administrative Assistant