

Town of Litchfield, New Hampshire

Board of Selectmen

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Meeting Date: 03/16/20

Call to Order: 6:32 pm

Meeting Location: Town Hall

Meeting Called By: Board of Selectmen
Type of Meeting: Selectmen's Meeting
Facilitator: Steven J. Webber

Note Taker: Matthew Sullivan

Selectmen in attendance:
1. Steven J. Webber, Chairman
2. F. Robert Leary, Sr., Vice Chairman
3. Richard Lascelles
4. Kevin A. Lynch
5. John Pinciario

In Attendance: Troy Brown, Town Administrator
Memo: CoronaVirus Meeting

No Selectmen were absent:

Agenda Topic: Call to Order

Presenter: Chairman S. Webber

1. 5:30 pm – Paperwork Review
2. 6:32 pm – Call to Order, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance

Agenda Topic: Review and Approval of Consent Items

Presenter: Chairman S. Webber

1. None

Agenda Topic: Items Moved from Consent

Presenter: Chairman S. Webber

1. None

Agenda Topic: Items Added to Consent

Presenter: Chairman S. Webber

1. None

Agenda Topic: Business

Presenter: Chairman S. Webber

1. **Election of Chairman:**
 - a. Chairman S. Webber asked the Selectmen to make a motion for Chairman of the Board of Selectmen.
 - b. **Motion** (Selectman K. Lynch / Selectman R. Leary) Motion to nominate Selectman Steve Webber as Chairman of the Board of Selectmen.
 - c. Chairman S, Webber asked if there were any other motions for Chairman. There were no other motions.
 - d. **Vote:** (4-0-1) The motion carried. (Selectman S. Webber abstained)

2. **Election of Vice-Chairman:**

- a. Chairman S. Webber asked the Selectmen to make a motion for Vice-Chairman of the Board of Selectmen.
- b. **Motion** (Selectman J. Pinciario / Chairman S. Webber) Motion to nominate Selectman Selectman R. Leary as Vice-Chairman of the Board of Selectmen.
- c. Chairman S, Webber asked if there were any other motions for Vice-Chairman. There were no other motions.
- d. **Vote:** (4-0-1) The motion carried. (Selectman R. Leary abstained)

3. **Fire Chief Frank Fraitzl, EMD - Coronavirus - (COVID-19) Pandemic Update:**

- a. Fire Chief F. Fraitzl had just ended a conference call with Homeland Security. He reminded the Selectman that the Governor has ordered that all restaurants and bars close until April 7, 2020, as of midnight tonight (3/16/20).
- b. Chief F. Fraitzl mentioned that COVID-19 is the most fluid challenge that he has ever seen in his career.
- c. The town department heads met earlier today and discussed where the departments were at and since that meeting, the rule has changed to meetings with ten or fewer people.
- d. During the meeting, the department heads discussed having depth within the departments. The smaller departments were the concern for the department heads. These departments include the Finance, Solid Waste, and the Public Works Departments. If one or two employees are out of work, those employees may make up the entire department.
- e. The department heads discussed the possibility of having a portion of the staff work remotely. This would reduce the risk of losing an entire department of employees.
- f. The department heads are working on a program in case a first responder comes down with COVID-19. The department of Homeland Security has not come out with a place for first responders who have come down with COVID-19.
- g. TA T. Brown has put packets together for the Selectmen to review. The information within the packets will be used to help protect the employees and residents of the town of Litchfield.
- h. The Fire Department will no longer issue burning permits. These permits can now be done on-line.
- i. Chief F. Fraitzl mentioned he heard several local communities had gone to having a 'Virtual Town Hall'.
- j. Chief F. Fraitzl believes the terms 'flattening the curve' and 'social distancing' will be the new words for the 21st century.
- k. The grocer's association has requested that people come into the stores and only buy what they need. Do not go into the stores and buy a year's worth of food and other supplies.
- l. The town has given strict instructions to the staff if an employee is not feeling well, then the employee should not come into work.
- m. The department heads discussed the part-time employees who may not be feeling well, but want to work. Part-time employees do not receive benefits.
- n. The Department of Homeland Security has not told the municipalities to shut down, they have left that decision up to the municipalities. Chief F. Fraitzl believes the town would be better off being proactive.
- o. Chief F. Fraitzl mentioned that he watched the President's press conference earlier in the day. The country is looking at June or July before things get back to normal.
- p. The testing sights for COVID-19 are starting to open up. There is one in New London and one in Manchester. The Fire Chief believes that the state will start seeing more private labs performing the testing. He used the example of LabCorp.
- q. Chief Frank Fraitzl mentioned that if one goes for testing through the state:
 - i. One needs to be showing signs and symptoms before they will be tested.
 - ii. One can not show up and say they were in contact with someone who has COVID-19 and expect to be tested.
- r. Selectman R. Lascelles asked if there was something the Selectmen could tell a resident who fears they have COVID-19. Chief F. Fraitzl stated the best thing the Selectmen could do is tell the resident to call 2-1-1, call their primary-care or go to [nh.gov/covid19/](https://www.nh.gov/covid19/)

- s. Selectman R. Lascelles asked Chief F. Fraitzl if the town had beds to set up a triage. The chief responded by saying the town did not have cots and the town would not be equipped to handle the situation. The town would need to tell the residents where to receive help. If the situation escalates, the state would start setting up sites geographically located.
- t. The Board of Selectmen, TA T. Brown, and Fire Chief F. Fraitzl agreed that a lot of the information being received is redundant. The information on COVID-19 is coming from the New Hampshire Municipal Association (NHMA) and Homeland Security.
- u. Selectman K. Lynch mentioned the Planning Board had canceled their meeting for Tuesday night.
- v. The town has limited supplies of disinfectants. TA T. Brown informed the Selectmen that the town had ordered sanitary wipes and other cleaning supplies. The order is already back-ordered.
- w. TA T. Brown has asked Jerry to come in every night and disinfect the common areas of Town Hall and the Police Station. The Fire Station, Solid Waste, and the Highway Department are disinfecting their buildings and equipment.

4. **Public Meetings:**

- a. All unnecessary public meetings have been canceled until further notice. The Board of Selectmen and the Emergency Operations meetings will still meet using a 'Virtual Meeting'. If the other committees and commissions have an emergency, the Board of Selectmen agreed that the situation would be dealt with on a case by case basis.
- b. The Attorney General's Office has stated that committees may have meetings if the Chairman of the committee deems it necessary to have a 'Virtual Meeting'.
- c. 'All members of the public body can meet electronically if they comply with RSA 91-A(2). And the presiding officer declares the meeting to be an emergency. However, the public body is still required to provide a physical meeting space where the public can attend to hear all participating board members. Practically speaking, this would generally mean that at least one board member, usually the Chair would be present at the meeting space to run the meeting. However, given extraordinary circumstances, someone other than a board member, for example, the Town Manager or Administrator could be present to run the meeting space and ensure that the electronic meeting is operating in a manner that the meeting is still open to the public who do attend.'
- d. Chief Engineer of LCTV Russell Blanchette confirmed that questions could be asked through YouTube feed. He also said LCTV could record the meetings with the speakerphone.
- e. Fire Chief Frank Fraitzl mentioned the 'Virtual Meetings' could continue as long as the Board of Selectmen had a quorum.
- f. IT Director, John Brunelle confirmed the town has the technology for a 'Virtual Meeting'.

Discussion: None

Motion: (Selectman J. Pinciario / Selectman R. Leary) Motion to suspend all public meetings, except for emergency Board of Selectmen meetings and Emergency Operations meetings. All other meetings will be dealt with on a case by case basis.

Vote: (5-0-0) The motion carried.

5. **Public Buildings and Facilities:**

- a. TA. T. Brown mentioned that Town Hall is in good shape to adjust and become a virtual Town Hall. The Clerk's office performs most of the town's commerce. Residents will be able to go online and pay for almost anything one needs with a credit card.
- b. TA T. Brown believes the state will give anyone who purchased a vehicle an extension to register the vehicle. This is not official, but he believes the statement is coming.
- c. Effectively immediately, the following facilities shall be closed until further notice:
 - i. Talent Hall - Rec Commission is on board with the decision
 - ii. Fire Station Community Room

- iii. Darrah Pond Playground Equipment (Park to remain open)

Discussion: Fire Chief F. Fraitzl requested the Fire Station and Police Station be included in the motion for continuity purposes. Selectman R. Lascelles asked what the School Board was going to do with the playground equipment at Griffin Memorial School. Chairman S. Webber mentioned the School Board was meeting to discuss the playground equipment.

Motion: (Selectman J. Pinciario / Selectman R. Leary) Motion to make effective immediately the closure of Talent Hall, the Fire Station Community Center, Fire Station, Police Station, and the Darrah Pond Playground Equipment, until further notice.

Vote: (5-0-0) The motion carried.

d. Town Hall:

- i. Town Hall will close to the public on Wednesday, March 18, 2020.
- ii. Town Hall will be closed until further notice. However, all departments will still be working to serve the residents of Litchfield. The town will do its best to operate as a 'Virtual Town Hall'.
- iii. Residents will be encouraged to conduct business online, by email, by phone, or in special cases, an individual appointment may be scheduled with town employees to complete a transaction.
- iv. Although access may be restricted to minimize person to person spread of COVID-19, there are no current plans to close the Highway, Solid Waste & Recycling, Police, and Fire Departments.

Discussion: None

Motion: (Selectman J. Leary / Selectman R. Lascelles) Motion to close Town Hall on Wednesday, March 18. The town will do its best to operate as a 'Virtual Town Hall' until further notice.

Vote: (5-0-0) The motion carried.

6. Town Employee Safety:

- a. Policy set forth by the town of Litchfield:
 - i. 'Town employees shall not be allowed to travel out-of-state on town business until further notice. Employees who have been exposed to a person infected with COVID-19, quarantined by a federal or state mandate or returning to work from a vacation or out-of-state travel shall not be allowed to return to work without the Board of Selectmen's approval. In such cases, employees shall be paid their base wages in full without the use of earned time. Informational signs are to be put up at town building entrances to keep people informed.'
- b. One employee came back from an international trip and was informed to go home until the Board of Selectmen approved the employees' return. The employee is still receiving their pay.
- c. Another employee went out of state for a job-related training course and will not be allowed back to work until the Board of Selectmen approves the employee's return.

Discussion: None

Motion: (Selectman R. Leary / Selectman J. Pinciario) Motion to enforce the Town Employee Safety Policy as written.

Vote: (5-0-0) The motion carried.

Agenda Topic: Public Input

Presenter: Chairman S. Webber

- 1. None

Agenda Topic: Other Business

Presenter: Chairman S. Webber

1. Selectman R. Lascelles asked if the town has a list of senior citizens to check on. Chief F. Fraitzl said the fire department does not have a list, but if a list was provided the fire department personnel would check in on the residents.
2. TA T. Brown agreed to reach out to the police department and see if they will perform wellness checks.
3. Selectman R. Leary asked the Board of Selectmen to add the PFOA topic on the March 23 meeting agenda. The north end of town, off of Hillcrest, has high PFOA levels.

Agenda Topic: Administrator Report

Presenter: Town Admin. Troy Brown

1. **Next Meeting:**
 - a. March 23, 2020 @ 6:30 pm

Agenda topic: Selectmen Reports

Presenter: Chairman S. Webber

1. None

Agenda Topic: Adjourn the Public Portion of Meeting

Presenter: Chairman S. Webber

Motion Made To Adjourn:

Discussion: None

Motion: (Selectman R. Leary / Selectman J. Pinciario) I move to adjourn the meeting.

Vote: (5-0-0) The motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 7:51 pm

Approved by the Board of Selectmen:

Steven J. Webber, Chairman

F. Robert Leary, Sr., Vice Chairman

Richard Lascelles

Kevin A. Lynch

John Pinciaro