

Town of Goshen
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
REGULAR MEETING

Tuesday February 16, 2021

This meeting held and recorded via Zoom.us and is available as a recording

PRESENT: Robert P. Valentine, Mark S. Harris, Dexter S. Kinsella

OTHERS: Cindy Barrett, Virginia Perry; Pat Reilly; John Calkins – Bozzuto Associates Insurance

1. Call to order: Robert P. Valentine called the meeting to order at 5:05 p.m.

2. Approval of the minutes of the meeting of February 4, 2021, Special Meeting:

In a **motion** made by Dexter S. Kinsella, seconded by Mark S. Harris, it was **voted** to approve the minutes of February 4, 2021 as submitted. Voted unanimous.

Approval of the minutes of the meeting of February 9, 2021, Regular Meeting:

In a **motion** made by Dexter S. Kinsella, seconded by Mark S. Harris, it was **voted** to approve the minutes of the February 9, 2021 as submitted. Voted unanimous.

3. Matters Arising Out of the Minutes: None

4. Approval of the Payroll and Warrant – February 18, 2021

In a **motion** made by Mark S. Harris, seconded by Dexter S. Kinsella, it was **voted** to approve the total warrant and payroll of February 18, 2021 in the amount of \$38,5341. Included in this warrant were the payroll in the amount of \$19,962.07 and the warrant in the amount of \$18,579.52. Voted unanimous. Invoices highlighted: Firematic, (rescue equipment Fire Comp.) -\$788.33; USA Hauling (Recycling) -\$7330.50.

5. Public Comment: Pat Reilly stated that the Goshen Public Works road crews are doing a great job.

6. First Selectman's Report:

Previously, the board agreed to compare the town's current employee health insurance plan, which is a high deductible plan and Health Reimbursement Account (HRA) and high deductible Health Savings Account (HSA).

Bob introduced John Calkins of Bozzuto Associates, the towns insurance agent. Mr. Calkins began by explaining the differences between an HRA and an HSA accounts. Both have monies set aside for the payment of deductibles. In the case of an HRA, funds are town funds held and

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contributed by the town to cover deductibles. An HSA also has funds that pay for deductibles but once the Town contributes funds to the account, the funds belong to the employee.

John explained other differences between the two types of accounts but in the end, after a complete review, even though there would be some savings, those savings would be limited and for only two years after which the cost would be greater. Therefore, it is not advantageous for the town of Goshen to move to an HSA at this time.

After receiving more positive news of declining COVID 19 cases in Goshen and declining hospitalizations in Litchfield County as well as consulting with Town Hall staff, it was decided to ***“open” Town Hall to the public.*** The wearing of face masks and the protocol of social distancing, etc. will still be in place.

At a meeting of the Citizens Advisory Committee for Recycling and Trash (RATS) the current recycling contract was reviewed. That contract ends on June 30, 2021. After review, it was agreed to go out to bid for a new contract with minor changes to the current contract.

Bob reported on the meeting of three town leaders invested in the Regional Animal Control Facility – Mayor Elinor Carbone -Torrington, First Selectman Denise Raap - Litchfield, and First Selectman Bob Valentine of Goshen. A year ago, this group went out to bid for a new animal control facility, with the lowest bid being \$1.9 million dollars – far exceeding their estimate of 1 million. The current facility is in poor condition having been built in the late 1950s. Prior to bidding the project each municipality agreed to budget their portion of the projected cost. Goshen appropriated \$60,000 for its share. Now that it is clear that the project will be closer to 2 million dollars, based on current population data Goshen’s share would be \$134,000. Bob explained that having a regional animal control facility has served Goshen well over the past eight years and that it would not be practical for Goshen to build its own facility given the costs. Having an animal control officer and a place to keep animals is a state mandate for every municipality. The fact that Goshen doesn’t have the number of dog related issues as a larger municipality doesn’t relieve Goshen from this mandate. After discussion, it was agreed that Bob would ask the Board of Finance for their support in appropriating the additional funds necessary to build a regional animal control facility.

In a conversation with Barry Hall, Fire Chief, Bob was advised that it is becoming more difficult to get “volunteers” to turn out to emergency calls. Discussed was the possibility of creating a tax abatement system as a means to encouraged more volunteers to turn out to calls. Goshen is not unique in having difficulty in responding to calls, many of our neighbors have the same issue. Some of them have initiated a system to incentivize volunteers. Some have also found it necessary to hire EMS staff to cover weekday calls, due to the lack of volunteers. The Board agreed that looking into incentives would be something we should do.

7. Correspondence: None

8. Old Business:

a. Town Continuation of Operations RE: COVID-19 Governor Lamont's Executive Orders:

Positive news, there are no additional cases of COVID-19 in Goshen over the past week. In Litchfield County, the number of hospitalizations were down to 8. Senior citizens age 65 yrs. and over can now sign up for vaccinations.

b. Appointments: None

c. Budgets: The following budgets were reviewed and discussed:

Board of Assessors	Selectmen	Elections
Civil Preparedness	Street Lights	Building Official
Conservation Commission	Tax Collector	Welfare

In a **motion** made by Dexter S. Kinsella, seconded by Mark S. Harris, it was **voted** to accept the above listed budgets for 2021-2022, along with previously reviewed budgets, for presentation to the Board of Finance for their review and consideration. Voted unanimous.

In a **motion** made by Dexter S. Kinsella, seconded by Mark S. Harris, it was **voted** to add to the agenda under **9. New Business**, 9a. Tax Collector Reports – January 31, 2021 and February 14, 2021. Voted unanimous.

9. New Business:

a. Tax Collector Reports- January 31, 2021 and February 14, 2021:

In reviewing the Tax Collector's Report for February 14, 2021, the collection rate- collections less refunds vs. total budgeted is 98.52%

In a **motion** made by Dexter S. Kinsella, seconded by Mark S. Harris, it was **voted** to accept the Tax Collector's Report for January 31, 2021 and February 14, 2021 as submitted. Voted unanimous.

In 10. Any Other Business: None

11. Adjournment:

In a **motion** made by Dexter S. Kinsella, seconded by Mark S. Harris, it was **voted** to adjourn the meeting at 6:12 p.m. Voted unanimous.

Lucille A. Paige, First Selectman's Aide