

Minutes of the Board of Selectmen Meeting

This meeting of the Board of Selectmen was called to order at 6:03PM at the North Brookfield Police Department on Tuesday, December 8, 2020. Dale Kiley and John Tripp present. Jason Petraitis absent.

Approval of Minutes: Mr. Tripp moved, and Mr. Kiley seconded, a motion to approve the minutes from 11/10, 11/24, and 12/1. Approval of 11/17 and 12/2 minutes will be next meeting.

Approval of Warrants: Mr. Tripp moved, and Mr. Kiley seconded, a motion to approve the following warrants; Payroll # 12 for \$377,358.87, # 1027 School for \$84,665.57, and # 1028 General for \$267,590.88. So voted.

Approval of CARES: Mr. Tripp moved, and Mr. Kiley seconded, a motion to approve two CARES act requests for the school, one for food services and one for speech therapy. So voted.

Tax Classification Hearing: Sheila Buzzell from the Assessors office was present to discuss the Tax Classification for North Brookfield. Sheila explained that the Board would need to determine if they wanted to keep North Brookfield as a single tax rate or a split tax rate. Mr. Tripp moved, and Mr. Kiley seconded, a motion to set a single tax rate for the town of North Brookfield. So voted.

Mr. Kiley had a question on the tax recap, shows projected revenue less than last year. Sheila said that is common, we've changed some of those figures and working with Nancy. She stated they got page 3 at over a million, she secured funds from Jason Benoit at highway, money from curb cuts, DOR said we could do that. Mr. Kiley asked what is the total we need to rescind, Sheila said she's got it to about \$415,000.00 but she will give a final number to Ashley on Thursday. Mr. Kiley stated the only line item we can take the money from is Group Health Insurance. We can \$420,000 now and try to have a quick meeting in May to put the money back in.

More discussion between Sheila and Dale about working with everyone to get the numbers as accurate as possible. Mr. Kiley said a big issue was school choice out and Charter school money. Mr. Tripp asked if \$420,000.00 was the amount we need to rescind, Sheila said yes, it's best to rescind a little extra just in case.

Mr. Kiley read an announcement from the Town Clerk regarding Annual Elections on May 3, 2021 (see attached).

Mr. Kiley stated he had a conversation with Trevor Brusco from the Board of Health regarding the COVID issue in Town. Mr. Kiley read emails from Mary Krause, David Brown and Maurice Bracken. The complaint emails accused the Board of Selectmen of not enforcing the mask policy. Mr. Kiley stated he wasn't sure what the issue was, as the Board of Selectmen never had a mask policy. Some of the emails stated that citizens were boycotting North Brookfield businesses, Mr. Kiley doesn't believe it's fair to punish local business without knowing the policy and thinks this thinking is illogical.

Mr. Kiley stated there are currently 2 current COVID orders, #54 and #55, this Board has complied to the letter of the orders. #54 discusses time limitation on meetings, section 7 states that this order shall not apply to any municipal legislative body. Order #55, pg 3 exempts face coverings due to medical conditions, you don't need to provide documentation to prove condition. Face coverings also exempt when communicating with the hearing impaired.

Mr. Kiley stated we have had four Annual/Special Town meetings since the pandemic started, not a single positive COVID test has been linked to those meetings. We've also had 30-34 Board of Selectmen meetings, not positive COVID test has been linked to those meetings either.

Mr. Kiley read an email from Martin Goulet, and stated that the fact remains, although positive tests are going up, the death rate remains stagnant.

Mr. Kiley read an email from Fitzgerald Pucci, he agrees that the numbers are spiking, it was predicted to happen. Mr. Kiley reminded everyone that the Board does not control or set policy at businesses, so boycotting local businesses doesn't make any sense.

Mr. Kiley stated we currently have 20 active cases, the spike has come, as predicted, and most cases are within a household/family. 9 cases coming off tomorrow, 5 new cases as of Sunday.

Mr. Tripp read a statement, from him personally, he cannot wear a mask for an extended period of time, and he doesn't need to explain himself. He's very careful and uses sanitizer, he does wear a mask in stores when its for a short time. He knows the guidelines, and respects that people have health issues, but doesn't need to be lectured.

Mr. Tripp also stated, as far as the Board being responsible for the COVID spike in North Brookfield, the Board are not babysitters, and they are trying to get along.

Mr. Kiley said that most positive cases are within homes and not connected to meetings or municipal buildings.

There being no further business, at 6:37PM Mr. Tripp moved, and Mr. Kiley seconded, a motion to adjourn. So voted.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ashley Barre