

Town of Corinth
Board of Selectmen
P.O. Box 461
Corinth, VT 05039

Minutes of Emergency Meeting
November 19, 2020

Attending for the Board: Chris Groschner, Steve Long, Rick Cawley.

The meeting was held as a Zoom call. Groschner read a notice authorizing this public meeting to be conducted by remote access, in accordance with a special provision of Vermont's Open Meeting Law. It was called to order at 10:00 a.m.

Groschner explained that we were holding the emergency meeting to respond to immediate concerns brought on by recent surge of Covid cases in Orange County.

Online access to land records

The board discussed providing an online option for people searching the Town's land records. This would reduce the need for visitors to seek entry to the Town Hall. Town Clerk Nancy Ertle had researched the possibilities and recommended that we use NEMRC to provide these services at a cost of \$1200 a year. The one-time setup fee would be \$800. They could get the town up and running very quickly.

The board agreed to enter into this contract with NEMRC.

Phone system

Long noted that staffing in the town office is reduced in response to Covid and the need for keeping all staff members safe. Given the reduced hours, he said that he thought it important that the town answering machine take messages from callers. Nancy Ertle has said that she just wanted an outgoing message and that people would call back if it was important. Treasurer Dick Kelley had expressed interest in having a phone with message-taking capability to provide for good customer service in the treasurer's office. The board directed Long to contact Kelley to have him assess whether the current phone system was capable of providing an option to have separate messages for the clerk and the treasurer. The treasurer's would take messages.

Communication with citizens

The board discussed various ways to convey the urgency of the Covid situation to citizens. The LRN list serve is one way that we have used in the past. Long offered to explore whether Front Porch Forum would be useful as well. Groschner said he would talk to Anne McKinsey to see whether the town could use Facebook.

The board agreed that Governor Scott's recent messaging about the need for precautions was particularly apt. Here is a transcript of the governor's message:

"I also want to speak to the skeptics again. Make no mistake, I understand that if you want to ignore the science or choose not to believe it for one reason or another, there's not much we can do to stop you.

"But I want to be clear: The number of people in hospitals is growing because some care more about what they want to do rather than what they need to do to help protect others, keep kids in school, keep people working and prevent the healthcare system from being overwhelmed to the point where care is being delivered in makeshift hospitals. It's a fact that the consequences of an overwhelmed healthcare system will have a far greater impact on our economy and our well-being than all the prevention and mitigation measures in place across the country.

"So, again, the skeptics are right. They can do what they want. But please don't call it patriotic or pretend it's about freedom. Because real patriots serve and sacrifice for all, whether they agree with them or not. Patriots also stand up and fight when our nation's health and security is threatened, and right now, our country and way of life is being attacked by this virus, not the protections we put in place."

Long also provided figures from the Agency of Human Services. Orange County had 68 cases for an incidence rate of 23.5 per 10,000 people – twice the state incidence rate of 12.6. The numbers continue to climb since that report on Monday, Nov. 16.

Groschner reported on a conversation with Peter McMurray, president of the Historical Society. McMurray said that a Cookeville resident had contacted him with an offer to pay for removing dead trees behind and to the side of the Academy Building in Cookeville. Matt Nola would do the work. Cawley and Long were in general support, but asked that the trees to be removed be marked with flagging tape so they could see the extent of the proposed work. Groschner said that he would flag the trees.

The meeting adjourned at 10:35.