

Town of New Scotland
Special Town Board Meeting
09/18/2020

The following Town Officials were in attendance:

Supervisor:	Douglas LaGrange
Councilperson:	Adam Greenberg
	Bridgit Burke
	William Hennessy
	Daniel Leinung
Highway Superintendent:	Kenneth Guyer
Town Clerk:	Diane Deschenes
Town Attorney:	Michael Naughton

1. Call to Order

Supervisor LaGrange called the meeting to order at 1:02 PM. This is the Town Board's semi-regular COVID-19 update meeting. This was noticed in the Enterprise, and he has that in front of him. The Town Clerk has given me that notice. We are meeting through Zoom per the Governor's Executive Order 202.1 which includes not having public meetings. To get started, a roll call attendance was taken.

Supervisor LaGrange said that the purpose is to give an update. We have been receiving the County updates which differ a little. The Sheriff's update seems to lag a couple of days. The last update he has from the Sheriff's office is from the 16th which was Wednesday. There has been a little uptick, and some of it's been from the university. Right here in the town on the 13th, which was Sunday, we had three positive cases and we had three contacts which were quarantined. On the 16th that jumped to three cases and 11 quarantines. Countywide it went from 159 cases and 358 quarantined to three days later on the 16th there were 164 cases with 595 quarantined. So that's a quick update. Some of the quarantines in town are in three households. So there are a couple of people in each of those households that ticks that number up so it looks a little higher than it normally would. Councilperson Greenberg asked if we know what that number would have to be for our County to not be meeting the threshold to be open? Supervisor LaGrange said that he didn't. They usually talk about that in the County release from Mary Rozak but he doesn't know it off the top of his head. Councilperson Leinung said that he thinks we are still fairly far away from that. He thinks it's also on a regional basis, not county by county. He thinks it's the capital region in general. We are still at about 1% of all tested coming back positive. It might be a little above that but for closing schools it has to be like 9%. Even though there is an uptick, he thinks we were so low that now where getting back to 1% or something like that. Supervisor LaGrange said we have wiggle room but he doesn't know the criteria exactly. Councilperson Burke said three is the largest number we've had, right? Councilperson Green said in the town. We were higher in the spring. Councilperson Leinung added that it was like 10 at one point. Councilperson Greenberg said 10 or 12. Councilperson Burke said that she does know that most of this is coming from SUNY. SUNY said if they get to 200 they plan on going to all online. Councilperson Leinung said, looking at the releases, it looks like three quarters of all the new cases are tied to SUNY Albany. Councilperson Burke added, "If not higher."

Supervisor LaGrange said that we did implement the new welcoming of people up front. Diane can probably comment on how that is going. We started that on Friday of last week. We were able to get a new chart to list printed name, telephone number, a checklist of do you have a fever, do you have a cough, so on and so forth. It also has time in and time out along with the department. It seems to be going fairly well. Diane, do you have anything to add? Town Clerk Deschenes replied no, we are really happy. Not everyone always fills out everything on the log. Sometimes they just draw a line through it but at least we know they've looked at it. Councilperson Greenberg asked if everyone is wearing masks when they come in? Town Clerk Deschenes replied absolutely. There is no problem with that. Supervisor LaGrange added that we are trying to do a better job especially when there are people not being met at the door coming in. We are trying to emphasize to keep you're mask with you even if you're just heading to the bathroom or kitchen. Have it with you in case people come in. Then you don't have to wait and hide in the hallway until they leave. You can just mask up and get back to your office. That's been working out well too. Just the general stuff. Everything else is pretty much going the same here. Seems to be going well.

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Utility Bill Relief

That's really all I have directly to COVID but indirectly Michael sent out a late email today with a suggestion that we pass something to address the Governor's order, for lack of a better term, on a relief for utility bills and stuff if you want to give a quick overview on what your thought is now. Attorney Naughton said that there is a little-known rule that was adopted by the Governor requiring all municipalities that have water customers to file with the Public Service Commission their plan with respect to how to deal with water customers that are delinquent on their payments for their bills. It stops the town from cutting off service where there are unpaid bills and it also requires you to notify customers who are having difficulty paying their bills because of COVID-type issues that there can be payment plans, etc. It also requires that you put a special notice in with the water statements or invoices when you're mailing those out to water customers. No one seems to really have known about this but apparently it came to the attention of one of our clients. We represent a number of municipalities. So, one of our associates looked into it and started preparing notices. Today is the deadline for filing these. You can file what your plan is and how you are going to handle this. Mostly it's the notices part that wouldn't apply to us because we already mailed out all the invoices and we even mailed out second invoices so we're not required to do a third mailing to all town water customers. That really won't kick in until January. We don't really cut off water. If it's unpaid we just add it on to the tax levy and that happens in the spring, right? Town Clerk Deschenes said that right now we'll be doing the relevy. Attorney Naughton added that we're not going to cut off anyone's water. It will show up on their taxes. Attorney Naughton said it basically says what our plan is and because we're doing it for six other municipalities he thought it would be a good idea to do that. Altamont, for example, is one of them. He prepared a draft letter for that and just circulated it a few minutes before this call to everyone. My assistant noted while we were on this call that there are a couple of other things we need to modify. Attorney Naughton then said that he sent Diane an email asking approximately how many customers total. Town Clerk Deschenes responded that there are 878. Attorney Naughton said that we will make that modification. All he's really asking is if everyone is okay if he sends in this plan? What we do in terms of current notices would be that we would put something on the website about this and have a link to what our policy is for this. You could probably tie it in with one of our COVID sections. He doesn't think we need a resolution for this. We're just kind of complying with the law and he's going to put this plan in so we're on record and we're in compliance.

Does anyone have any questions? Councilperson Leinung had two questions. Number one, it doesn't look like the Executive Order dealt with the relevying or late fees or anything. It's just about disconnecting. Attorney Naughton said that that's right. Councilperson Leinung said that we don't do that anyway so that doesn't really apply to us. Attorney Naughton said that there may be something about late fees that he has to double check. Councilperson Leinung said okay. We do have late fees so that would be good to double check. Second, we already sent ours out. Was it June or July? Supervisor LaGrange said that we sent them out in early July and then we just sent out the penalty reminders. Councilperson Leinung asked if anything else goes out? Supervisor LaGrange added until the first of January. Councilperson Leinung said that he was just going to say that he thinks posting it on the website for now and then keeping it ready for the next billing cycle is practically what we would need to do. Supervisor LaGrange said that he skimmed just a little bit and only sees where it jumps out as water. Is this both water and sewer, and is it somehow defined that way? Councilperson Leinung asked if we can cut off someone's sewer? Attorney Naughton said that he would have to look at that. Supervisor LaGrange said that that's why he's asking. Attorney Naughton asked how many customers we have for sewer? Town Clerk Deschenes said that she would have to check. Attorney Naughton said that she could just email that to him if she gets a chance. Attorney Naughton said he would double check that. Councilperson Hennessy said that it's probably less than 100. Supervisor LaGrange added that he was going to say it's about 100 and it doesn't include Kensington Woods yet because we haven't taken that over yet. It's mostly in the Heldervale neighborhood. Attorney Naughton said that he would check to see if sewer is involved. It's not like we're going to cut off their sewer. Supervisor LaGrange added, "Water either." Attorney Naughton asked if the sewer bill shows up with the water bill? Town Clerk Deschenes said that it does. Attorney Naughton asked if there is some kind of deadline in here that this policy is in effect through October 4th or something? He assumed that would be extended. He just doesn't know. Attorney Naughton said that he doesn't think it's something we need to spend a lot of time on. He just wanted to let us know what we are doing and make sure it looks okay. He'll revise it and send it on to Diane for one last look. Town Clerk Deschenes asked if we would put the notice to residents up on the website once we get that revised too? Attorney Naughton agreed.

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Lighting Law

Supervisor LaGrange said that we don't have any agenda and there is no acting on this necessarily but there has been some discussion about changing the lighting law. Bridgit has been working on that a little bit. Nan and Michael have some other broader things. Do you think we can incorporate a lot of those changes that Nan suggested, that are taking place in other towns, by our October meeting or should we get the small amendment out of the way to help with the current problem and then explore further on the changes later? What is everybody's opinion on that? Councilperson Greenberg said that he'd like to if we have the time, and Nan thinks she can do it and he thinks she does, including what we've described as low-hanging fruit because she has some of those for the lighting law. If we can just go through this and do it once it will save us time and move everything forward quickly. He doesn't want it to slow down the change to the issue we are having now. So, if that ends up being the case then he would say let's just move ahead with that, but as long as it doesn't his opinion would be to include as much as we can. Supervisor LaGrange said that that would be great. He just didn't know and he hasn't talked to Nan about whether or not it's something she can pull together reasonably quick and we can introduce it in October. That would be great. Councilperson Greenberg added that he thinks she has most of it done. Attorney Naughton said just to keep in mind that this is part of like when you get into lighting it becomes a planning and zoning type of thing and we'll have to refer it over to the Planning Board for their comment. Councilperson Greenberg said that if we get it to them by the beginning of October do they have a week to comment and get it back? Supervisor LaGrange said let's go for it and see what we can do. Councilperson Burke said that she's in complete agreement with what he just said. She doesn't quite understand the difference between the dark sky and the hybrid. Attorney Naughton said that he doesn't know a lot about it. The email from Nick said that the dark sky is very involved. I think you're retroactively trying to eliminate a lot of lighting that already exists in town and that was done. The example she provided was because it was near an air force base up north near Plattsburg and they needed to darken things up for the airport. She thinks the idea with ours is that it's a new building and maybe you can say also major renovations but it's mostly new stuff. We're not trying to change all the lighting within the town. It gives a tool to the Planning Board to try to impose some smart lighting design into the process of the approval before we have these new subdivisions. Councilperson Burke said okay.

Supervisor LaGrange asked if there is anything else before we go into Executive Session. We do have a personnel hiring type of discussion to have. That would be a quick Executive Session hopefully. Is there anything else for the moment?

Highway Department Hire

Highway Superintendent Guyer asked if we have one of these meetings planned for next Friday or before our October Board meeting? Supervisor LaGrange said we have potentially one next week and also on October 2nd. Highway Superintendent Guyer said that if it comes to fruition would anybody have an issue if he put a highway hire on next week's COVID meeting as opposed to waiting until the 14th of October? Councilperson Greenberg added that we also have a subdivision workshop meeting we could do it at. Highway Superintendent Guyer said that if we get it squared away by then nobody would have any issue with him bringing that up? Councilperson Burke replied no. Highway Superintendent Guyer said that other than that we are good at the highway. We started this week no longer taking temperatures in the morning. We have our checklist. The majority of people check off their own name as they punch in. There are about four employees that come in that don't have a thermometer at the house and they utilize ours. It's sitting out with disinfectant wipes. They use it every morning and they check themselves off. That's working well. Supervisor LaGrange commented that that was good.

Upcoming Meetings

Supervisor LaGrange said that as far as those other meetings we do have our subdivision discussion on the 23th. He asked Superintendent Guyer what is the hire date you were hoping for potentially? Highway Superintendent Guyer said that he doesn't know if we have a date yet. The gentleman has not been offered a job yet. Supervisor LaGrange asked if it would matter if it was next Friday or the following Friday, the 2nd of October? Highway Superintendent Guyer said either way it would be before the 14th. It would buy him a few weeks either way. He'll schedule a meeting for the 25th but if we find on the 23rd we don't feel it's necessary we can skip over it and go to October 2nd. We'll see how it all shakes out. He'll schedule it.

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Resolution 2020-202

Supervisor LaGrange offered the following and moved its adoption:

Resolved that the Town Board of the Town of New Scotland does hereby approve an Executive Session regarding a hiring personnel decision.

Councilperson Greenberg seconded the motion.

A roll call vote was taken:

Supervisor LaGrange	<u>Aye</u>
Councilperson Greenberg	<u>Aye</u>
Councilperson Hennessy	<u>Aye</u>
Councilperson Leinung	<u>Aye</u>
Councilperson Burke	<u>Aye</u>

Executive Session began at 1:25 PM.

Supervisor LaGrange made a motion to adjourn Executive Session, seconded by Councilperson Burke.

Executive Session adjourned at 1:50 PM.

No action was taken during Executive Session.

2. Adjourn

Councilperson Hennessy made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Councilperson Leinung. The meeting adjourned at 1:51 PM.

Diane R. Deschenes, Town Clerk