

Minutes of the East Montpelier Selectboard

June 15, 2021 Selectboard Emergency Meeting

This meeting was conducted remotely using the Zoom conferencing platform. Participation options were provided to the public.

SB Attendance: Chair Seth Gardner, Carl Etnier, Judith Dillon, Jon Jewett and Amy Willis; Town Administrator Bruce Johnson

Public Attendance: Road Foreman Guthrie Perry; Planning Commission Chair Zach Sullivan; David Delcore, Times Argus

Chair Gardner called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

Public Comment: None

Consideration of Alterations to Selectboard Order Regarding Municipal Operations During COVID-19 Pandemic in Light of Governor Scott's Decision to Lift His Declaration of State of Emergency in Response to COVID-19 at Midnight on June 15, 2021

On June 7, 2021 the Selectboard issued an order governing municipal operations during the pandemic that was designed to serve as a bridge between the 15-month full closure period and resumption of pre-pandemic normal operations. The expectation at the time was that Governor Scott would move the state to Step 4 of the Vermont Forward reopening plan in the near future while also extending the state of emergency beyond June 15, 2021. On June 14th the Governor did move to Step 4, removing most restrictions in place due to the pandemic, but also announced that he would allow the state of emergency to expire on June 15th. The lifting of the state of emergency also ended the suspension of certain aspects of the VT Open Meeting Law, in particular the requirement that all meetings have a designated physical location where the public could attend and participate in the meeting.

Board members explored various ways to phrase the revisions to the June 7th order necessary to meet the dictates of the VT Open Meeting Law while maintaining, at least for the near-term, limited utilization of the town office building. After a spirited debate, the board settled on the following language (with alterations to the June 7th order in italics):

March 16, 2020 East Montpelier Selectboard Order Regarding Municipal Operations During Covid-19 Pandemic As Amended June 7, 2021 *and Revised June 15, 2021*

By motion made by Mr. Etnier, seconded by Mr. Jewett, and passed unanimously, in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, for the health and safety of town residents and the community at large the East Montpelier Selectboard orders the following:

As of June 16, 2021, the March 16, 2020 East Montpelier Selectboard order and subsequent amendments are replaced by the following order designed to guide municipal operations moving forward:

- The town office building will be open for limited access to the public until further notice; unless all persons present in a room are known to be fully vaccinated, mask use and social distancing are required.
- The town office staff will continue to maintain the normal office schedule, will provide services to the public by email, telephone and, on a limited access basis, in person, and will allow limited, one-at-a-time access to the land records.
- The front door of the town office building will be unlocked during normal business hours; the public may enter the vestibule and request service from the temporary front counter; movement within the town office remains restricted; the back door will remain locked.
- The road crew will continue to provide necessary services while limiting contact with the public.
- The town office building will remain off-limits for *fully in-person* town committee/commission/board meetings and public events; town committee/commission/board meetings and public events may be held at other facilities, subject to the rules of those facilities, and may be held outdoors without limitation.
- *Remote meetings in compliance with the Vermont Open Meeting Law may be hosted at the town office building; further, the town office building can serve as the required physical meeting location for members of the public to attend and participate in a remote meeting.*

The board will hold its June 21, 2021 meeting utilizing Zoom remote conference services, in accordance with the VT Open Meeting Law, and will revisit the issue at that time.

Other Business

Ms. Willis announced that she would not be available to attend the June 21st board meeting.

Town Administrator Report

- Meeting Schedule:
 - June 21, 2021 6:30 pm Selectboard regular meeting
 - July 12, 2021 6:30 pm Selectboard “special” regular meeting

Motion: To adjourn. Made by Ms. Willis; second by Mr. Etnier. Passed unanimously.
Meeting adjourned at 1:43 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Bruce Johnson, Town Administrator

Approved: June 21, 2021 East Montpelier Selectboard meeting