

**MINUTES: Killingworth Board of Selectmen Special Virtual Meeting (via GoToMeeting) P1
Monday, April 13, 2020 at 7:00 p.m.**

In attendance: C. Iino, L. Annino Jr., R. Regolo

Visitors: K. Zandi (BOE), M. Nuhn (Tax Collector), D. Mooney (Town Clerk), Annie Stirna (BOF)

1. The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m.

2. Approve Declaration of Health Emergency

On March 16, 2020, Iino declared a state of emergency to protect the health and general welfare of Killingworth citizens. This order authorizes non-budgeted expenditures incurred as a result of the COVID 19 emergency. Related expenses, which will be up to 75% reimbursable, include:

- Additional hours for health director
- IT upgrades to provide remote access for 7 staff members
- Subscription to Everbridge emergency alert service (shared with Haddam)

Iino and Regolo will meet to produce required documentation for reimbursement.

Blewett moved to approve the state of emergency issued on March 16, 2020, for as long as the Connecticut State of Emergency is in place. After brief discussion, Blewett moved to amend the above motion to extend the state of emergency until June 30, 2020. Iino seconded the motion as amended. The motion passed unanimously.

3. COVID-19 planning

BOE report: Liaison Kathy Zandi reported on actions involving superintendent's preliminary budget presentation and subsequent BoE workshops (summary attached). The former was completed before school closings from Covid-19. In anticipation of residents' financial difficulties imposed by the developing crisis, the BoE asked the administration to return a revised budget equal to or less than the 2019/2020 budget. Selectman Blewett, as chair of the BOE Finance Committee, noted that she felt that more work needed to be done on the budget and that the BOE would be seeking direction from the boards of selectmen from both towns. Iino asked what the flat budget would mean for Killingworth, and for an accounting of the district's current audited fund balance and contractual obligations to date. There was extensive discussion.

Iino next introduced Executive Order # 7S.6, describing two state-imposed options for tax collecting during the COVID-19 crisis, one involving 90-day deferral and the second a lower-interest program for delinquent payments. Tax collector Nuhn was invited to elaborate on the governor's order to select one or both plans (see <https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/Office-of-the-Governor/Executive-Orders/Lamont-Executive-Orders/Executive-Order-No-7S.pdf?la=en>.)

Escrow payments will not be affected by these programs; they would still be due August 1st.

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The Office of Policy and Management recommends the first option, open to all, as does the attorney for the Tax Collectors Association. Nuhn elaborated on the challenges presented by any option that would involve an application process; communication, distribution and processing of applications while the town hall is closed would impose significant delays. She noted that tax bills would still have to go out by June 30 and taxpayers would have until July 1 to apply.

There was further discussion about which program would best result in prompt payment and better cash flow. lino requested a cash flow analysis and added that the BOF will need to be prepared to discuss the two options, and the inevitable reduction in revenue for the town. A decision must be reported to the state by April 25.

4. Budget process

Discussion of the budget process continued and lino stated that given a very lean operating budget, the capital budget would need to be reexamined in light of potential revenue loss. This would have to take place in upcoming Board of Finance or joint BOS/BOF meetings. Blewett emphasized that all areas, including the operating budget, need to be readdressed.

Blewett reiterated that the BoE would be seeking direction from the town boards and urged the BOS to examine potentially reduced revenue projections, current budgets, and any savings opportunities in advance of Wednesday's joint meeting. lino and Annino said that they were not in a position to speak to the details of the school budget. Blewett agreed that the administration could best determine cuts, but hoped that, for example, the BOS could indicate the degree to which further budget reduction, if any, would be required.

lino, along with other municipal CEOs, has requested local unemployment information from the state in an attempt to project potential revenue loss. All agreed that the schedule of payments needs to be examined by both the towns and the district with cash flow challenges in mind.

There was further discussion about staffing, current contracts, and other areas for consideration.

For further deliberation and action, lino called a Special Meeting of the Board of Selectmen for Monday April 20, 2020 at 7:00 p.m.

5. The meeting adjourned at 8:03 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Elizabeth Doyle Disbrow on 4/16/2020

Summary of March 2020 Board of Education Meetings

RSD 17 2020/21 Budget

Superintendent's Preliminary Budget Presentation - The first week of March, before schools were closed due to Covid-19, Superintendent Hageman presented her 2020/2021 budget to the HK Joint Boards of Education, Selectmen and Finance. Her budget proposed a gross increase of 2.46% with the largest increase associated with Special Education expenses. Other notable changes include adding a High School Gym teacher due to a change in state credit requirements, replacing the sunsetting accounting system and updating the website for ADA compliance. Four Middle School teacher positions would be eliminated. After revenue and reimbursements the proposed final increase to the towns would be 1%.

BoE Budget Workshops - In March the BoE held several workshops to focus on each area of the budget. With appreciation for the work Dr. Hageman put into the budget, the Board acknowledged the new realities of a Post-Covid economy and asked the admin team to identify ways to present a Gross Budget equal to, or less than, the 2019/2020 Gross Budget which had been approved by the community in the last referendum. At the end of March Superintendent Hageman proposed over \$1 million in various cuts for the Board's consideration including: reducing purchases in textbooks and classroom libraries expecting no or little impact, removing High School and Middle School late busses and after-school monitors, sharing Kindergarten Paraprofessionals between classrooms, and a change in the Capital Fund Contribution. The Board will hold their next Budget Workshop on April 14th to continue their work.

Covid-19 Effects on RSD17

Distance Learning - On March 14th RSD17 closed schools due to the Covid-19 virus. Staff shifted to provide distance learning opportunities for all students. On March 16th, RSD 17 Food Services staff began providing bagged breakfast and lunch needed for any child under the age of 18 in Haddam and Killingworth. Additionally the District's IT department started lending computers and guiding families who needed internet access. To date, teachers and students have completed two weeks of online learning, forty families have taken advantage of the bagged meals program, and over 200 computers have been handed out to aid our students in their education.

Governor's Orders - Since closing our schools Governor Lamont issued several Executive Orders directing the BoE on how to continue running public meetings and passing a 2020/21 budget. Per the Governor's orders. BoE meetings are now held by video conferences which can be watched live or recorded on our website. Statutes requiring town meetings and referendums have been suspended and a budget is to be adopted at the board level. Finally, the Board has been granted a thirty day extension to complete the budget. All information including how to access our meetings, our new budget timeline and how to participate in public comment can be found on our website. The Board is planning a budget vote on June 2nd.

Capital Improvements:

HKHS Field House - This project has been approved by the state and will move forward during school closure.

BES Carpet - The Facilities Committee recommended, and the Board agreed to, an alternative to replacing the damaged carpeting at Burr. While schools were closed, new carpet tiles were installed with a Permalink covering placed in between the existing and new layers of carpet. This system eliminated the need to remediate, shortened the time to install, and resulted in significant cost savings.

On our Website - The 2019 Annual Audit Report, which was presented to the BoE in March, can be found under "Business Office".