



Lamoine Board of Selectmen

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Minutes – Special Emergency Meeting – March 12, 2020

Chair Kathleen Rybarz called the special meeting to order at 4:08 PM

Present were: Selectmen Kathleen Rybarz, Nathan Mason, Robert Christie, Gary McFarland, S. Josephine Cooper; Administrative Assistant Stu Marckoon, Lamoine 150! Committee members Gordon & Cynthia Donaldson, Marion McFarland, member of the public Carol Korty and Town Clerk Jennifer Kovacs.

Kathleen said the purpose of the special meeting was to discuss the occurrence of town meeting and some special events prior to the town meeting by the Lamoine 150! Committee in light of the COVID-19 (Coronavirus) outbreak. She noted that the first presumptive positive case was reported in Maine earlier in the day, and that's relevant. Jo said the recommendation from Governor Janet Mills is to postpone large gatherings. She said she would recommend postponing town meeting. Stu said there is no provision in law to be able to do that. A brief discussion followed about how to table the meeting when it convenes to a future date.

Nathan said the other events – food served by the 8th grade and a skit planned by the Lamoine 150! Group – would tend to draw more people. He said he's not sure the town meeting will draw all that many people. Selectmen discussed the desire for greater participation in the town meeting with that of avoiding mass gatherings.

Cynthia Donaldson said they would still like to tie the Lamoine 150! Activities and the 8th grade food sale to a town meeting – perhaps to the school budget town meeting in May. Gary asked if town meeting still has to be held at the school. Stu said that's where the posted town meeting warrant has indicated. Discussion followed about when, if postponed, to hold the town meeting and whether passing the budget was needed next week. Stu said a current year funding item for the cupola repairs has some urgency.

Stu reported he had prepared a statement on behalf of the board, if that is the board's desire and read it as follows (as edited after reading):

The worldwide pandemic of COVID-19, better known as Coronavirus, has resulted in a recommendation from the State of Maine that non-essential mass gatherings be postponed or canceled. We recognize the need for public health safety and the effort by governments at all levels to try to limit the spread of the virus. Today, Thursday, March 12, 2020, the Maine Center for Disease Control announced a suspected case in Maine. It has not yet been confirmed.

The Town of Lamoine operates with a town meeting form of government. The annual town meeting is essential to the operation of our local government, and many months ago the town meeting was set for Wednesday, March 18, 2020 at 6PM at the Lamoine School. The recommendation from Maine Governor Janet Mills is that gatherings of 250-people or more for non-essential purposes does not necessarily conflict with the annual town meeting process. Rarely do that many people attend the annual meeting,

and nothing on the warrant has generated any amount of controversy that would likely draw a large crowd for the town meeting itself.

Prior to the meeting, the Lamoine 150! Committee has planned to serve sandwiches and other food to those attending, and to perform a short skit commemorating the town's first town meeting 150-years ago. While of historic and social significance, the meal and the skit are not considered an essential part of town governance.

It is with a heavy heart that we have decided to postpone the 8th grade meal and skit. We will proceed with the annual town meeting beginning at 6:00 PM at the Lamoine School Gym. It is properly up to our citizens to choose whether to attend the annual meeting. There are no provisions under state law to cancel a town meeting. During the course of a meeting, it is possible to postpone it until a date certain. We are not recommending that to occur unless the situation in Maine escalates so quickly that continuing with the meeting is not practical.

Discussion followed about the desire for better attendance and anxiety about COVID-19. Carol Korty asked what date in May the school budget might be. Stu said that has not yet been set; it will depend on the school department.

Selectmen said if there is little to no attendance, the meeting could be tabled. Discussion followed as to what minimum attendance might be tolerated. Bob said the statement has to be communicated to citizens. Stu said he intends to post it on Facebook, share it on his personal account, post it on the website and e-mail it as soon as the meeting ends.

Nathan moved to approve the statement as edited. Gary 2nd. **Vote in favor was 5-0.**

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 4:30 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Stu Marckoon, Adm. Asst. to the Selectmen