

**COVID-19 Task Force Sub- Committee #1**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**Draft-May 12, 2020**

**Members present:** BOS liaison Paul O'Brien, BOS liaison Dave Senecal, Town Manager James S. Pineo, Parks and Recreation Assistant Director Justin Chaffee, Police Chief Dean Rondeau, Fire Chief Norm Skantze, Health Officer Schelley Rondeau, Wolfeboro Chamber of Commerce Director Mary DeVries and American Legion Post 18 representative Harold Chamberlin.

**Recording Secretary:** Amelia M Capone-Muccio

**Guests:** N/A

**1. Call to order:** Justin Chaffee called the meeting to order at 10:00 AM.

**2. New Business**

**a. Introduction**

Mr. Pineo stated the purpose of this Task Force is to discuss the annual Independence Day Parade and the 4<sup>th</sup> of July fireworks display. He stated out of this meeting the Task Force should come to a conclusion of whether to hold the parade and fireworks this year due to the unknown state of the public events resulting from COVID-19. He stated the recommendation by this Task Force will be forwarded to the Board of Selectmen.

Mr. Chaffee stated that he and Recreation Director, Christine Collins, have daily discussions and attend virtual meetings with surrounding communities to address how to handle public events for the summer. He noted that Portsmouth, Rochester and Wakefield have canceled their firework celebrations already and Alton and Ossipee have not yet, but he expects they will be making decisions soon. He stated that the discussion on how to proceed with Wolfeboro's celebrations will be impacted by the cancelation of surrounding community celebrations and noted that the Task Force should decide what to do in the best interest of the town.

**b. Independence Day Parade on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July**

Harold Chamberlin stated that he typically puts the applications out for the parade entries June 1<sup>st</sup> and he needs at least two weeks to plan the parade in a normal year, but this year he would defer to the Police Department on how long they would need to prepare.

Mary DeVries stated the Chamber of Commerce helps with the entry forms and will help in anyway needed.

Paul O'Brien stated he thinks that they should start the discussion with if they should even be holding the parade this year.

Mrs. DeVries stated that she just listened to the recent updates from the Governor this morning and he stated right now he does not recommend having people come in from out of state at this time. She

stated today holding such event is not allowed and it is unknown if and when it would be allowed and then if that notice would allow them time to plan. She stated she understands not being able to do the parade or the fireworks because of the current executive orders, but feels they could do something different to celebrate that is within the orders.

Mr. Chamberlin agreed with Mrs. DeVries and would be in favor of a celebration of some sort in a safe manner. He stated that he feels they should cancel the parade this year and do an alternative celebration.

Dave Senecal stated that he agrees with both above and suggested doing something along the lines of a tour around the town, like they have done at Halloween, and people decorate their homes and businesses.

Mr. Chaffee agreed they could plan an event to celebrate in a safe and smart manner and he also likes the idea of decorating homes and businesses around town.

Paul O'Brien stated that he has been doing his own research seeing what other communities are doing, even in Massachusetts there are towns that do not want an influx of people to their community. He thinks they can do something in a safe and reasonable manner.

Chief Skantze stated he is new to this community but agrees they should follow the Governor's orders and even if they were lifted in the future he does not feel it would provide time to plan the parade. He likes the idea of an alternative celebration as well as moving the celebrations to later in the year. He feels by doing this it gives people something to look forward to and people need that. He does have a concern about the fireworks and the repercussion of canceling them increasing the number of private shows to compensate for it.

Paul O'Brien stated he likes the idea of moving the celebration to December 31, 2020.

Mrs. DeVries replied she loves that idea, a new celebration for people to look forward to. She stated she also did some research on Independence Day celebrations and in the past it was a tradition to play the Star Spangled Banner and thought that would be a great idea to get people to play the Star Spangle Banner at 10:00 AM when the parade would normally start. She also loved Mr. Senecal's idea of doing like they did in the past for Halloween and having some awards.

Mr. Chaffee stated he and Christine had discussed the idea of moving the celebration to December 31<sup>st</sup>, noting the Last Night Event does not have funding for fireworks this year. He stated that it is winter so the crowd would be smaller than a summer event.

Mr. O'Brien noted that local hotels and businesses will suffer a crimp in their revenues and this could help that. He reminded everyone when the Food Network food trucks came people came and stood in line in the cold to eat from the food trucks. He stated he has seen a lot of talk on social media about a block party and in the winter there is less people, less traffic which would make it is easier to do.

Paul Vivian of Legion Post #18 suggested some other dates such as Veteran's Day or Thanksgiving.

Schelley Rondeau stated as Health Officer she does not feel the town should host the parade or the fireworks because neither can be done in a social distancing manner. She does not feel this will be gone by the summer.

Chief Rondeau echoed the statements of Mrs. Rondeau and the only historical model to go by was in 1918 and that model had a second wave of the virus and he feels it would be reasonably prudent to cancel all events to the end of the year. He suggested hosting an Independence Parade celebration bigger and better next year.

Mr. Chaffee stated it looks like there is a consensus of this Task Force to recommend to the Board of Selectmen not to hold the parade or fireworks this year. The Task Force is in favor of an alternative celebration in a safe manner. He suggested that the Rec Department work with both the Chamber and the American Legion to plan an event. He stated it seems the Task Force is agreement to possibly do an event on December 31, 2020 if the Governor's orders allow. He thanked everyone for their time and input.

Mrs. DeVries questioned if Chief Rondeau's comments would be forwarded to the Board of Selectmen and a decision would be made one way or another regarding events.

Mr. Pineo replied yes he would provide that information to the Board and at the end of the day the goal is to keep the citizens safe.

Being no further business before the Task Force, Mr. Chaffee adjourned the meeting at 10:41 AM.

**Respectfully submitted,**

Amelia Capone Muccio