

Board of Selectmen Meeting
Memorial Town Hall Conference Room & Go to Meeting

Feb 3, 2021, 6:00pm
Diana Szynal, Chair
Approved: Feb. 16, 2021

Present: Selectmen Brian Moriarty, Edmund Jaworski, Diana Szynal, Marlene Michonski, Town Administrator, Kerry Flaherty, COVID Coordinator, Board of Health: Bob Osley, Liz Kugler, Jeff Zgrodnik

The Board of Selectmen resumed their meeting at 6:25pm immediately after adjourning their executive session.

Historical Commission, Open Space Committee Appointment

On a motion made by Selectman Moriarty and seconded by Selectman Jaworski, Micki Sanderson was appointed to the Historical Commission and the Open Space Committee. Ms. Michonski to be in touch with her about terms. She will need to be sworn in.

Snow & Ice-

This budget line item is in deficit. Selectman Moriarty explained that the town goes into deficit for snow & ice every year which is a common practice and granted by state law because it is impossible to know how many storms will happen during a season.

Selectman Jaworski moved to deficit spend. Pursuant to M.G.L. Ch. 44, Section 31D, the Board of Selectmen authorize the Department of Public Works to deficit spend in excess of the approved FY2021 appropriation for the purpose of snow and ice removal. Selectman Szynal seconded. All voting in favor. The motion was approved.

Second Floor-

Selectman Jaworski met with Historical society, Bob Wagner, Kathie Gow, and Ms. Michonski. He said according to Mr. Scott, Building Inspector, the bathroom upstairs will be required to be ADA approved before the 2nd floor could be opened to the public. With bathroom and electrical upgrades a total cost of over \$15,000 was cited.

The Board discussed Ms. Gow's concerns about having no access to historical materials at Bensons. A brief discussion regarding costs and the wishes of townspeople followed with Selectman Szynal summarizing that there needs to be a larger, long-term look at this and a number of other spaces. Selectman Jaworski reiterated that if that space is opened for any purpose the bathroom has to be done. Ms. Michonski will look into a second storage space at Bensons.

Bob Wager will check CPA funding. The farm museum space was brought up. Selectman Szynal said this is not a decision to be made quickly. Selectman Moriarty noted that town artifacts need to be protected and preserved. Responding to a question from Selectman Szynal regarding the storage space, Ms. Michonski said Facilities pays for it.

COVID Coordinator Position

The Board of Health discussed with the Board of Selectmen the vacancy. Ms. Kugler spoke briefly about vaccine doses. Selectman Szynal said Ms. Flaherty's resignation was received. Mr. Osley suggested possibly outsourcing to someone already doing this work for other communities. Selectman Szynal said, as the elected public health Board, the Board of Health should step in because we can't have a gap when dealing with COVID. One person can't do that job if there are spikes in the numbers, even with Mr. Scott Pomeroy as a backup. Mr. Osley said to consider any Board

member doing the job is not appropriate. Not one has the training to do the tracing. No one has MAVEN access. Selectman Szynal said it was unfortunate that the Board of Health wasn't more involved. Mr. Osley said Mr. Kaniecki, suggested Claudia Sarti. She has the training and capacity and is part-time health agent for Ashfield. She feels she has the capability to do it. Mr. Kaniecki has done tracing and said he could be a back-up. Selectman Szynal asked why he wasn't Ms. Flaherty's backup and Mr. Osley said he wasn't asked.

Mr. Osley said we have a narrow time frame, and we have to have a solution. Ms. Sarti is an option. Mr. Zgrodnik noted she is highly recommended and has good credentials. Discussion followed regarding the position of Covid Coordinator. Selectman Moriarty wants someone who will do the work if they find out we have cases at 4pm on Friday. The need is for someone who can speak to town departments as well as do the contact tracing. Ms. Flaherty had directed that calls about COVID go to her. Selectman Szynal said she had hoped that a member of the Board of Health would do it. Mr. Osley said he doesn't have the time to be a Covid Coordinator. Mr. Zgrodnik said the Covid Coordinator is like a fireman: they have to be available, and willing. Selectman Moriarty said Ms. Flaherty had a full-time job and was doing double duty. Mr. Osley added that a toll is taken on people who are torn in too many directions and having to endure personal attacks. Selectman Szynal said we were spoiled with Ms. Flaherty.

Ms. Flaherty added that she knows Ms. Sarti. Ms. Flaherty said she experienced backlash by people in town who said the job was created for her. She said it is a lot of work. We have 72 hours to do the contact tracing and she also deals with the schools every day, working with the nurses. She is resigning because she has a 40 hours per week job and can't do another 30-40 hours atop that. It is not just contact tracing but also dealing with the Joint Labor Management Committee (JLMC.) Mr. Osley said there needs to be a conversation with Ms. Sarti, Ms. Flaherty and Mr. Kaniecki so all understand the level of involvement. There was a discussion around who might serve as a backup and who might be a spokesperson.

Selectman Szynal suggested a designated member of the Board of Health play a role, saying they are paid to oversee the public health of the town. Mr. Osley said it requires someone reading the DPH and Governor's briefings. Mr. Zgrodnik reiterated that is why they are looking at Ms. Sarti. Mr. Osley mentioned the Board is being asked to make a decision regarding Fall 2 sports.

Ms. Kugler asked to get a job description for the Covid Coordinator. Mr. Zgrodnik observed that when this started nobody knew much about it and Ms. Flaherty volunteered. The job description needs to be adjusted to reflect dealing with the schools. There needs to be a single point of contact. Mr. Osley said he is open to a hybrid, job sharing arrangement. Selectman Szynal asked to get as much information as possible out to the public about a new person doing the contact tracing.

Selectman Moriarty asked if Ms. Sarti has been notified about this discussion. Selectman Jaworski said the immediate issue is having someone in place. We can revisit based on what happens. Mr. Osley asked if Ms. Flaherty has an interest as the school liaison person. The value to having Ms. Flaherty still involved is she knows the town so well. Ms. Flaherty said Ms. Sarti is the best answer right now.

A "COVID Committee" meeting to include the Fire Chief, Police Chief, Selectman Moriarty, Officer Phillips, Ms. Michonski, Ms. Flaherty and perhaps with Ms. Sarti, in the Emergency Services Building maybe Monday at 3pm can be arranged.

Selectman Szynal, and Selectman Moriarty said they can't thank Ms. Flaherty enough. Ms. Flaherty noted that Geri Rodgers, Council on Aging Director has been posting lots of information about Amherst, and Northampton clinics and UMass, 3 locations that townspeople can go to. Vaccines

are currently for ages over 75 now. You can only register online. Also, some doctors' offices have vaccine. She said we can help seniors in town register if they don't have a computer. Mr. Zgrodnik noted that care providers, even under the age, are also eligible for vaccinations now.

Mr. Osley asked about the funding for the COVID Coordinator position. Selectman Moriarty answered it was through the CARES. Mr. Osley asked if it will still be funded and Selectman Szynal thinks there may be nothing for towns in the next round. There will be no vote on this tonight. The Board of Health and Board of Selectmen are to be posted for meetings on Monday.

Selectman Moriarty moved to adjourn. Selectman Jaworski seconded. All voting in favor, the motion was approved. The meeting ended at 7:55pm

Respectfully submitted,

Ki J. Eno
Executive Assistant