

Board of Selectmen Meeting
Memorial Town Hall Conference room & Teams

Nov. 17, 2020, 5:35pm
Diana Szydal, Chair
Approved: Jan. 5, 2021

Present: Selectmen Brian Moriarty, Edmund Jaworski, Diana Szydal, Marlene Michonski, Town Administrator, Kerry Flaherty, Sharon Strzegowski, Treasurer, Officer Edward Kennedy, Hatfield Police Department, Lydia Szych, Town Clerk

Selectman Szydal called the meeting to order @5:35pm. She read the public participation policy.

Announcements-

Selectman Szydal reported the town is getting a 100% CPA match, or \$169,578. She suggested that Bobby Betsold attend the next meeting to give information about Luminarium. Selectman Jaworski thanked Veteran's Day ceremonies participants.

Public forum-

Resident Mike Cahill asked to speak about his submitted questions when the Board takes up topic 7.

Minutes presented for approval were Nov. 4, 2020, Oct. 20 and 27, 2020, and May 19, 2020. Selectman Moriarty moved to accept the minutes as mentioned by Selectman Szydal. Selectman Jaworski seconded. All being in favor, the motion was approved.

Police Department appointment - Officer Kennedy, representing the Police Department, noted that part time officer, Brandon Iavecchia, was on the call. Selectman Szydal welcomed Officer Iavecchia and suggested an introduction when we can get together. Selectman Moriarty moved to appoint Brandon Iavecchia to the Hatfield Police Department. Selectman Jaworski seconded and welcomed Brandon to Hatfield. All voting in favor, the motion was approved.

Covid Coordinator Report –

Ms. Flaherty said a letter went out yesterday. There have been 16 positive COVID 19 cases since last Monday, the most we have had. All contact tracing has been done. Schools are fully remote since Thursday; students were affected in both buildings. Classes will be fully remote for this week and Thanksgiving week, but could go back to hybrid the 30th. Selectman Moriarty said 16 new cases in a 1-week period is a serious matter. Everyone needs to understand that this thing is real so take it seriously. Be proactive. Avoid situations where you can't social distance. 24 cases over 8 months, and 16 cases in 1 week.

Selectman Szydal doesn't want people to be scared but to have a healthy amount of fear for the virus. Some information won't be made public due to Hipaa regulations. Residents were urged to follow guidelines, social distance, wear mask, and wash hands. Ms. Flaherty is doing contact tracing so you would have been notified. She was thanked for her great work in communicating. Schools are closed for the next 2 weeks but will be serving lunches free to all students. Pickup lunches 12-12:45 at Smith Academy.

Assessors Stan Pitchko, Jimmy Lavalley, Scott McCoy, and Assessor's Clerk, Jenni Polverari were present for the tax classification hearing. Ms. Polverari read the hearing notice. The Board of Selectmen must determine the following:

1. Allocation of the tax levy (factoring) against the property classes for FY2021.
2. A tax burden shift from the open space class to the residential class.

3. Granting of a residential exemption of up to 10% of the average Value of all owner-occupied properties.
 4. The granting of a commercial exemption of up to 10% to certain small commercial properties.
- Mr. Pitchko said it's wonderful to do this in November ahead of the curve. He hoped to have a tax rate shortly. Selectman Jaworski thanked the Board and Ms. Polverari. It was recommended the Board vote the items individually.

Selectman Moriarty moved to vote the allocation of the tax levy against the property classes for FY2021. Selectman Jaworski seconded. The motion was approved.

Selectman Moriarty moved a tax burden shift from open space to residential class. Selectman Jaworski seconded. The motion was approved.

Selectman Moriarty moved granting of a residential exemption of up to 10% of the average value for owner occupied properties. Selectman Jaworski seconded. The motion was approved.

Selectman Moriarty moved granting of a commercial exemption of up to 10% for small commercial properties. Selectman Jaworski seconded. The motion was approved.

Ms. Polverari will prepare the document for the Board of Selectmen signatures.

The Board returned to Ms. Flaherty who spoke about remote learning. It was necessary to close town offices including the library, to the public. Residents were urged to use the drop box, the phone or email or the website. Guidelines changed on 11-6, and everyone is to wear a mask in public at all times. She said COVID is a real public health situation that can hit as close as Hatfield. She said the town will continue to give out information and the rumor mill needs to stop giving false details because it is not fair to our citizens and adds more stress. Fines can be issued for violations and though she doesn't want to issue fines, this is everyone's warning.

Ms. Flaherty also warned about not traveling, nor gathering in large groups for the holiday season. She stressed she is just 1 person and there are 16 cases currently positive, 11 in quarantine in town. 1 positive case in the school was responsible for 14 being quarantined because of exposure to that 1 person.

Selectman Szynal thanked the school administration and said anyone interested in doing contact tracing should give their name to the Board of Selectmen or Board of Health. The Board discussed with Ms. Flaherty the role of the Board of Health regarding COVID. Selectman Moriarty suggested having a conversation with them as this is a public health issue. Board members praised Ms. Flaherty for educating herself about protocols. When the CARES money is no longer available the COVID Coordinator position falls back on the Board of Health. The role of emergency management is not for public health emergencies. Chief Flaherty has taken on a significant role in the CARES funding.

Ms. Flaherty said hopefully students can get back to hybrid learning. Selectman Szynal noted the school committee has had to make difficult decisions.

Selectmen Szynal and Moriarty commented on the chat feature as a distraction, the same as someone speaking out of turn in the meeting. Selectman Jaworski expressed an interest in hearing from Liz Kugler about a way to help Ms. Flaherty with some of her responsibilities.

Town Administrator Financial Update-

Ms. Michonski updated the Board on free cash submission, and the tax recap, the town is continuing to update. Collector/Treasurer, and Assessors are reconciling FY21.

Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) – Williamsburg/Hatfield

Ms. Michonski reviewed with town counsel, and Mr. Genovese revisions to an agreement in place for 10 years pertaining to plowing of roads accessed through Williamsburg. Selectman Moriarty moved to approve the MOA between Williamsburg and Town of Hatfield for snowplowing. Selectman Jaworski seconded. The motion was approved.

Holiday Schedule-

Town employees were granted the Friday after Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve day and a half day New Year's Eve, on a motion made by Selectman Moriarty and seconded by Selectman Jaworski. Town employees were thanked. Selectman Szynal said that town employees have been working under tough conditions this year.

Special Town Meeting Warrant/Quorum

Ms. Michonski noted that the Board of Selectmen approved the warrant and motions at the last meeting. The town clerk and moderator were notified of the Board's vote. There will be a handout at town meeting to include a map.

Selectman Szynal reminded that Special Town Meeting is this Saturday at 11:00am at the pavilion.

Selectman Szynal said, regarding Article 2, that the financial piece of this was done at town meeting. The Operating budget includes 1 year of lease payments. Selectman Moriarty clarified that this is a rent to own lease that the town has been doing for 10 years which saves the town money in the long run. It's a way of keeping the fleet up to date. Mr. Genovese will be at Special Town Meeting to take questions and there will be a handout.

Town Hall Renovations

Ms. Michonski reported the control panel for the fire pump is not completely functional and needs some wiring to be done. Selectman Szynal appreciates Selectman Jaworski being the point person for town hall renovation. The Council on Aging looks fantastic and people will be amazed. Selectman Moriarty thanked Selectman Jaworski and Geri Rodgers, Phil Genovese and Cooky Zygmunt.

Selectman Moriarty reminded about the Special Town Meeting and that attendees need to wear a mask. It wasn't anyone's preference to have a cold, Special Town Meeting, but the Board is doing what the townspeople entrusted it to do.

Board of Health's Liz Kugler did a demonstration of how to handle masks. She agrees the Board of Health should be more involved in COVID contact tracing, but said it seems there was a misunderstanding and the Board didn't know Ms. Flaherty was asking for help.

Selectman Moriarty described Monday team meetings and noted now is the time to get another person on Board. Selectman Szynal thanked the Covid response team. The mask demo is important as she sees a lot of touching of the masks, or wearing masks wrong.

Selectman Szynal wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving. Selectman Moriarty thanked everyone and hoped everyone has a safe Thanksgiving and also mentioned that he hoped to see everyone on Saturday.

Selectman Jaworski moved to adjourn. Selectman Moriarty seconded. All voting in favor the motion was approved, and the meeting ended at 7:00pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Ki J. Eno
Executive Assistant