

Present:

Selectman Brian Moriarty, Selectman Edmund Jaworski, Selectman Diana Szynal, Marlene Michonski, Town Administrator

Geri Rodgers, Council on Aging Director, Lydia Szych, Town Clerk, Kerry Flaherty, Board of Health, Fire Chief Robert Flaherty, Police Chief Michael Dekoschak, DPW Director Philip Genovese, Sharon Strzegowski, Collector

Selectman Moriarty opened the meeting at 6:00pm saying that a few important topics would be covered.

There were no announcements made.

Minutes-

Selectman Szynal moved to approve the Board of Selectmen meeting minutes of 2-13-20. Selectman Jaworski seconded. All being in favor, the motion was approved.

No one came forward for public forum.

Annual Appointments.

Ms. Szych explained this is a yearly process but several people are reappointed every year. She asked for a motion to make some appointments 3 year rather than 1 year, unless prohibited by statute. If anyone disagrees, they would not be forced to stay on for 3 years.

Selectman Szynal asked about some positions which must maintain their qualifications such as the inspections department. Unless prohibited by statute would be the caveat. Ms. Szych will verify the statutes. This will save time for people having to come in to take the oath.

Selectman Jaworski moved to increase the terms of offices from 1 to 3 years unless prohibited by statute, and further authorize the town clerk to make the appropriate adjustments to the annual appointments:

Tree warden, Veteran Services Officer, Veterans Commemorative Committee, Right to Know Officer, Inspector of Buildings alternate, Inspector of Buildings assistant, Inspector Electrical alternate, Inspector Gas & Plumbing, Inspector Plumbing assistant.

Selectman Szynal seconded. The motion was approved. Ms. Szych is to let the Board know if there are any prohibitions.

Selectman Szynal moved to make all appointments, not highlighted on the list submitted to the Board by the town clerk with the appropriate adjustment to terms as just voted.

Selectman Jaworski seconded. All voting in favor the motion was approved.

Board of Registrars Appointments

Selectman Szynal moved to appoint Joann Petcen and Lori Motyka to the Board of Registrars. Selectman Jaworski seconded. The motion was approved.

A letter in the Board's signature folder was notarized by the Town Clerk. It authorizes the Town Administrator and assistant treasurer/collector to access Hatfield related data on the SAM.gov site.

Brenna Duquette – Hatfield Housing Authority

Redesign of the parking area at Capawonk was approved by the Board of Selectmen, but the State has asked it be amended. A walkway/cut through is being requested because the walkway stopped abruptly. The 90 degree turn is still there as is 22 feet for the access of ambulance and fire trucks. They still plan for the same number of cars.

Selectman Jaworski moved to approve the state's mandatory requirement. Selectman Szynal seconded. All being in agreement, the motion was approved.

Pandemic Discussion-

Fire Chief Flaherty, Police Chief Dekoschak, DPW Director Mr. Genovese, Council on Aging Director, Geri Rodgers, Board of Health's Chair, Kerry Flaherty joined a discussion with the Board of Selectmen.

Selectman Moriarty said The Federal government, and the governor have declared a state of emergency. There are now daily updates, so we are trying to be on top of this, and awaiting orders from the governor as recommendations keep changing. We want residents and employees to be healthy. Schools are closed across the State.

Ms. Flaherty said today there was discussion of declaring the town in a state of emergency. Selectman Moriarty said he thinks it a good idea. Townspeople are already familiar with what is being said on television, etc.

Ms. Flaherty described ongoing emails, and conference calls. She has met with DPH, and there are changes by the hour. As of today, the governor has declared multiple bans: schools are now closed until April 7th; this is a State mandate. However, lessons have been figured out for the students missing 3 weeks of school. Amy Hutchins, of the school food service has indicated that state allowed student guidelines for reduced lunches are in place so that no child goes hungry. Ms. Flaherty said if students qualify then we will get lunches to them.

Municipal buildings are to be closed to the public effective March 17 to April 7. Selectman Moriarty said it is important for people to understand that town hall is closed. The doors are locked and people can't get in.

Council on Aging Director has put information on Facebook. Employees can come to work, but all communications must be by email or phone. For the Collectors office residents can mail in a check or pay online. If a check is mailed, residents must mail their receipt as well.

Board of Selectmen members, Board of Health members, DPW, Fire Department, Police Department, or office holders can be in the building. We want to keep as much social distancing as possible. If meetings are not an emergency – then put them off –the least amount of meetings the better. Employees are not being required to work. Social gathering is now down to 10. All restaurants and bars are to be closed. There is no dining in but restaurants can do food for takeout. Board of Health member Jeff Zgrodnik contacted local restaurants. Grill & Chill will be

doing takeout but Fishtales won't at this point. The Chowder House – has already seen a big hit and has lost a lot of catering. Ms. Flaherty will reach out to the Waxwing tomorrow. They are putting together a take-out menu.

Selectman Moriarty said things change daily. We can support local business by getting gift cards or takeout.

Geri Rodgers said the senior center is closed as of today and activities suspended. There are now no congregate meals but there will be delivered meals. Van transport is still available for medical appointments. Brown bag distribution will continue on April 7, but these can also have home delivery. Her office is open from 8:30-4:30. The COA Letter and newsletter will be on the website. She said there will also be wellness checks over the phone. Highland Valley will deliver St Patrick's Day lunch to those that signed up.

Ms. Flaherty said every day something changes, people need to help each other out. Keep yourself safe. She said if people have questions or need help our numbers are out there. Selectman Moriarty stated that everybody will do their best. We just have to lay low, practice social distancing, washing of hands, and remember the elderly are most susceptible. It will be a rough couple of weeks.

Selectman Szynal noted that kids are home from school, so discourage playdates. This is very important and in fact, is the point of closing the schools.

Chief Flaherty said there is new guidance about how to dress and respond for emergency response teams. He has some supplies on order. The Police Department has asked for additional gowns and masks. FRCOG is a little delayed with supplies but will be alright within the next few weeks. He feels enough precautions are in place and knows of no confirmed cases in Hatfield. Ms. Flaherty said as of today, there are no presumed or confirmed cases in Hatfield. There has been no change in HIPA regulations at this point but information can be available to emergency personnel.

Police Chief Dekoshak said today we are ok. This is an ever-changing situation right now, but we will be here no matter what tomorrow will bring. Everyone is just trying to keep up. He then explained the difference between presumptive cases vs confirmed cases saying presumptive have had local confirmation but are not CDC confirmed.

Selectman Jaworski thanked all the department heads for stepping up and thanked Ms. Michonski as well. Selectman Moriarty asked about the readiness of mutual aid. Chief Flaherty has been in contact with Northampton. It will be a matter of if folks get sick.

He advised purchasing supplies through usual vendors but have invoices come through him as Emergency Management Director so they all go through 1 central point.

Ms. Flaherty said she tried to order hand sanitizers, and wipes but all usual supply chains are out of stock.

Police Chief Dekoshak noted it is important for people to realize this is a worldwide shortage. However, regarding personnel – mutual aid is statewide for police. If necessary, it would come down to the National Guard but, he assured there is always some sort of law enforcement.

Selectman Moriarty said this emergency can affect multiple departments.

Selectman Moriarty asked Brenna Duquette, Hatfield Housing Authority, if she had any questions. She answered that they have their own guidelines from the State.

Ms. Rodgers said Highland Valley is still doing home delivery to seniors but they are looking for volunteers.

Selectman Szynal asked about protocol regarding the open meeting law. Selectman Moriarty asked about declaring state of emergency in Town of Hatfield. This declaration on top of the federal and state government declarations would allow the costs associated with the coronavirus to potentially be submitted to the state or federal government. Selectman Szynal said maybe this is a good thing to do to put us in step with them.

Selectman Moriarty said regarding public meetings of the future, whatever the means are, we want to practice social distancing. Selectman Szynal said any meetings that aren't essential should be postponed. Ms. Michonski said and they should have less than 10 participants. Under Chpt 30a Section 20, referring to the open meeting law, the Attorney General's office has authorized remote participation. Make a conference call meeting available to the public, though telephone systems may not be able to accommodate this, or put the meeting minutes on the website as soon as possible. Meetings still have to be posted. For questions contact Ms. Michonski's office. Selectman Szynal strongly suggested minimizing the number of meetings.

Ms. Flaherty noted that the governor said the buildings are closed; but you are supposed to let the public attend. Have the minutes so people can read them or have the videos available. Department heads, the Board and Ms. Michonski will do what we need to do to keep the town rolling. We appreciate John Novak being here so the public can see this.

Mr. Bob Wagner said the Planning Board is required to have hearings for Annual Town Meeting items. Ms. Flaherty asked if they are considered an emergency. They should be held off until April.

Selectman Moriarty said the governor talked about town meeting and local governments – understand that this is affecting everybody and they are looking at pushing everything out anyway. We just don't know. Selectman Moriarty suggested cancelling CPA meetings. Ms. Michonski said this is extraneous situation. Selectman Szynal said the governor has filed legislation to postpone. Selectman Moriarty said we have to have a little bit of faith in the process. It's all about getting through this.

Fire Chief Flaherty talked about the possibility of recovering funds or the ability to deficit spend. He informed there is a line item, in which \$25 is kept, and that once a declaration of a state of local emergency is made, would allow the town to reallocate funds to emergency management, or Board of Selectmen, for supplies, without having to go through town meeting.

Mr. Genovese thanked everyone for all their help during this crisis. Regarding deficit spending he suggested putting everything into that line item. He said also, the School is looking for guidance about that.

Ms. Flaherty said the opportunity should be taken to arrange a company to come in and do cleaning while the schools are closed. She gave an example of de-germing at the barracks. She said we should also be taking care of the church basement where our seniors are having lunches. She also informed of volunteers who are offering to clean our playgrounds. Selectman Moriarty suggested getting this rolling sooner rather than later. Police Chief Dekoshak said it is important for the public to know that there are costs to these activities and we may get reimbursed at 75%, not 100%.

Anyone who incurs expenses related to this emergency needs to pass those costs through to Chief Flaherty. Selectman Jaworski reminded that the highest risk is to seniors. He asked that people help them out, and take care of each other. Try to help the businesses if you can.

Selectman Szynal announced the declaration that the Board was making a motion to accept. Whereas a sudden generally unexpected occurrence of circumstances demanding public action has arisen within the Town of Hatfield, and whereas the Board of Selectmen of the Town of Hatfield, Massachusetts upon advice from the Board of Health, the Mass Department of Public Health and their designees have determined that the Covid19 Corona virus incident poses a present, reasonable and imminent danger to public health, safety or general welfare of the people of the Town of Hatfield or their property so that it has become necessary for the Mass Department of Public Health to utilize and coordinate the services, equipment, supplies and facilities of existing depts, offices and agencies of the community for the purposes of management and emergency functions, and whereas the Governor of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts has determined that the immediate public action is needed to prevent, minimize or mitigate damage to public health, safety or general welfare of the people of the Town of Hatfield or the property which may otherwise result from the above described incident and that taking the time required to comply with the various State and local procurement laws would endanger the health or safety of the people or their property, and whereas the Governor of the State of Massachusetts has recommended that a state of emergency be declared in the community of the Town of Hatfield and whereas the people of the community of the Town of Hatfield should be able to depend upon guidance from their chief municipal officials now, therefore, we the Board of Selectmen of the community of the Town of Hatfield, Massachusetts hereby declare that as of 7:15pm, on March 16th, 2020 a state of emergency exists in the community of the Town of Hatfield. This declaration of emergency shall remain in effect until notice is given pursuant to our judgment that the state of emergency no longer exists.

Selectman Jaworski seconded. All voting in favor, the motion was approved.

Police Chief Dekoshak commented, the Board of Health is the governing body when it comes to an outbreak. If the Board of Health issues an order, by law, it has to be followed.

Ms. Strzegowski asked about contracts and if the State would be forthcoming with some sort of game plan. Ms. Strzegowski said that with construction going on currently there should be consideration for the Collector to have a drop box. Excise bills were due on the 12th.

Selectman Moriarty said we have not received a directive from the State, but we will figure something out. Selectman Szynal said the last thing we want people to worry about is getting

paid. Selectman Moriarty said since the governor has indicated that the state understands things are happening, basically there is going to be some dispensation though he doesn't know specifically what that will be.

Selectman Szynal these circumstances have direct impact on certain departments, like the Council on Aging. Police Chief Dekoshak offered the Police Department as a bill payment site where resident can slip payments under the window at the Police Department. Ms. Strzegowski said they can pay their bills online.

Ms. Flaherty advised the superintendent that the school musical can't go on as planned. It might be able to be postponed, as would softball, and baseball.

Ms. Szych said it is a bylaw that dog licensing is due March 31st. Selectman Szynal moved to extend the time for getting dog licensing to May 15th for this year only and that no late penalty will be incurred until June 15. Selectman Moriarty seconded. All being in agreement, the motion was approved.

Ms. Szych gave her telephone number as 247-0492 and said that people with questions about birth or death certificates or marriage intentions or running for office can contact her.

Selectman Moriarty said no one should be in Memorial Town Hall beginning tomorrow. Ms. Szych said information about the town clerk's office will be on the website. Selectman Szynal asked if the contractors are coming in. Ms. Szych will be posting a notice that will go out to everyone registered on the e-alert. Selectman Moriarty asked the public to be patient. Information will keep changing and we want to keep everybody safe.

There was short break from which the Board returned at 7:45.

Bob Wagner, Planning Board, came before the Board to discuss two potential zoning changes. Both have been approved by the Planning Board for advancement to the Board of Selectmen. In discussion with town counsel, it was recommended to change a solar bylaw for large and medium ground mount solar arrays currently under accessory uses. It would consider moving those 2 to a more appropriate area/category, out of the accessory category, without changing any of the special permit requirements or zoning.

The second one, he explained, was more complicated as it dealt with cultivation of recreational marijuana. He said the town received its first application for recreational marijuana which proved to be a concern for a lot of local people. He gave some background about Hatfield as a farming town, but farming is conducted in residential areas. He said the Planning Board is revisiting bylaws for marijuana and how to address setback differences between residential and cultivation establishments, recognizing that some farmers live on their farms. They may wish to take advantage of the opportunity to grow marijuana, which is legally an agricultural product, though not really the same as growing tomatoes or corn.

So it was decided not to have a residential setback but in light of discussions with Town Counsel, the proposal is a 500' setback from any residential unit or greenhouse grow facilities in certain

zones, 300' in agricultural zone and no setback for facilities within a light industrial, or industrial zone. This will go to town meeting for a 2/3 vote.

The Board thanked Mr. Wagner for looking into this and coming up with new regulations. Responding to a question from Selectman Szynal, Mr. Wagner said that at the moment there were currently no other candidates for marijuana cultivating.

Mr. Wagner talked about the Ag Commission's desire to have a policy around the agricultural preservation restriction program. He noted that the State matching grants, at a value of 5 – 20% of the value of the easement as an in-kind contribution from the town. In addition to having an ag commission, and right-to-farm bylaw there needs to be a tracking policy to mark properties with such restrictions in order to get the lower, 5% in-kind contribution. Mr. Wagner will work with Assessor's Clerk, Jenni Polverari, about an additional checkbox on the property card to indicate a restriction on the property. Selectman Szynal said it appeared there could be an APR inventory. Mr. Wagner gave the Board a copy of the proposed policy for review. Selectman Moriarty said the Board would look at it and can have a conversation about this.

The Board next addressed the resignation of Mr. Joseph Lavallee from the Cemetery Commission, which is an elected position. A letter from the Cemetery Commission was received, acknowledging the resignation and indicating their wish to fill the position for its remaining term. Selectman Moriarty said anyone interested should contact Fire Chief Flaherty, Jonathan Bardwell, or Ms. Michonski.

Selectman Szynal moved to accept Mr. Lavallee's resignation from the Cemetery Commission with regret. Selectman Jaworski seconded, also with regret. All being in agreement, the motion was approved.

Memorial Town Hall Renovation Project Update-

Ms. Michonski explained that Change Order 04 consisted of several items. She described the code compliant cabinet that was being installed. Also, she said the architects estimated costs for disposal, trucking, equipment, and a dumpster, costs that all added up. She asked the Board to approve these costs with the exception of the landing grade, a cost she feels the town should not bear.

Selectman Jaworski moved to approve everything on the change order except the landing until more information is received from the architect. Selectman Szynal seconded. The motion was approved. Selectman Moriarty said all 4 of us picked up on the sink cost, but at least now it makes a little more sense.

Selectman Jaworski moved to adjourn. Selectman Szynal seconded. All voting in favor, the motion was approved and the meeting ended at 8:10pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Ki J. Eno
Executive Assistant