

Board of Selectmen Meeting  
Via MS Teams

May 19, 2020, 6:00pm  
Brian Moriarty, Chair  
Approved: Nov. 17, 2020

Present: Selectmen Brian Moriarty, Edmund Jaworski, Diana Szynal, Marlene Michonski, Town Administrator, Lydia Szych, Town Clerk, Joe Lavallee, Town Moderator  
Finance Committee members Sean Barry, Darryl Williams, Betsy Rider, Diane Brzozowski, Kim Baker, Treasurer/Collector Sharon Strzegowski

#### Announcements

There will be no Memorial Day Parade this year, but vets will be honored at The American Legion. Selectman Moriarty thanked DPW for doing the flags.

Activities are altered for the May 31<sup>st</sup> 11:30am activity for the 350<sup>th</sup> which will be a brief presentation and is not designed to be a spectator event. It will be filmed and available to watch on HCTV. Selectman Szynal thanked Cher Nicholas. Town Clerk, Lydia Szych mentioned early voting by mail with ballot applications available at the post office or the Center Store.

Selectman Moriarty read the public participation policy.

#### Public Forum-

Resident, Mike Cahill asked for 5 minutes at the Finance Committee portion of the meeting.

Selectman Moriarty asked to move the Board reorganization to later in the meeting.

#### COVID19 Update-

The Board of Health was asked for an update. Selectman Moriarty thanked groups that have been keeping everybody up to date, and working with the State and other municipalities, saying the Board of Health and Ms. Kerry Flaherty in particular have done a fantastic job.

Ms. Flaherty reported 10 cases as of today, 8 having been released from quarantine, with 2 continuing to quarantine for a couple more days. C&S is being watched and keeping excellent documentation. The Governor gave out new orders for a 4-phase set up over the next few months. The town is working on phase 1. The big priority is to keep employees safe, Screens will be put in place for the Clerk, Treasurer/Collector, Assessors and Secretaries' offices. Monday, June 8 is a tentative date to have in place all the supplies to keep employees and the public safe. Internal training will also be necessary. This is all new to all of us.

Ms. Flaherty read the following orders from the Board of Health on how the municipal offices will be opening and responsibilities that must be followed on a daily basis per the Governor's reopening phase plan.

1. Offices will be open to the public starting the week of June 8 for 4-hour blocks only two days a week. Those days will be Tuesday 9am-1pm and Thursdays 1pm-5pm.
2. Offices will not be open to the public any other days of the week, only office staff will be allowed in the building.
3. One customer per office at a time for any business.
4. Disinfecting of office counters regularly after each customer is the responsibility of each office.

5. Offices, door-knobs of all building doors interior and exterior, bathrooms, will all be cleaned and disinfected daily by janitorial staff.
6. Masks will be worn by customers when being in the building.
7. 6ft distance of office staff must be met at all times and if it can't be, then masks must be worn.
8. Disinfectant and hand sanitizer will be supplied by the Board of Health for the initial opening, but once those supplies are depleted, it will be the responsibility of the office or facilities management to re-supply those products. (BOS need to make this decision)
9. Employees will be responsible for taking their own temperatures and keeping an employee health screening form that will be checked regularly by a BOH member or the EMD.
10. Everyone entering the Town Hall will be required to enter/exit the south door and will be screened by someone assigned to the door checking temperatures and asking health questions. Anyone who has a temperature, or refuses to follow this process, will not be allowed to enter the building.
11. Office staff that is of the age of 70 or older: it is recommended that these employees do not work on-site during the two days the building is open because of age and potential health risks, but can be present in the building the other days of the week that it is closed to the public.

Selectman Szynal asked that Board of Selectmen and Board of Health members be specified as people allowed to be in the building.

Guidelines from the Governor's statements yesterday were discussed. In response to a question from Selectman Szynal, Ms. Flaherty said the guidance applies to all municipal buildings. She will talk to John Robert further about this. Ms. Flaherty said people need to understand we must follow what we've been doing, less in and out of buildings, less interactions. Eliza Langhans has set up a great process for the library.

The school has set up an organized procedure for students picking up/dropping off belongings and materials. The Fire Chief will have an answer tomorrow regarding the building construction. The building won't open to the public until the fire suppression system, and pump are in place and functioning. This will have to be confirmed by the Fire Chief. A slow opening at Town Hall will begin June 8, possibly Tuesdays and Thursdays. Ms. Flaherty noted once we set the guidelines then, they must be followed. We can't let people in the building and everybody needs to practice these same rules.

#### FY21 Department Budget Submissions-

Mr. Williams led a discussion focused on the possible impact of the pandemic on revenues and what should be done with free cash. Free cash has been approved at over \$500,000 and how to handle it was discussed. This may not be the year to take care of capital items depending on how the revenues come in. They discussed not using Free cash right away, but once July 1st comes it has to be certified again. Mr. Barry explained that money put in Finance Reserve wouldn't require a town meeting to spend. Access to the funds is necessary though we may not know what we need them for yet.

Finance Committee members discussed the budget for FY21. It is anticipated that it will be a level budget, however, level budgets represent a significant cut for the schools. Ms. Rider found

narratives from departments to be very helpful. Mr. Barry expressed concerns about cutting budgets without knowledge of revenues, to try to figure it out now is really just guessing. There was agreement that budgets would be re-evaluated in the fall. In November we may have to make further cuts.

Increases in expenses were discussed including wages to unions, and the town clerk election. Ms. Strzegowski informed that health insurance premiums will not increase until July 2021. Also, a 2% increase for non-union employees amounts to \$16,000. Ms. Michonski was asked to put the numbers on the spreadsheet for the Finance Committee to look at. Town meeting is June 16. Mr. Williams asked for spreadsheet numbers and a meeting with the Board a week from tonight. Capital purchases were discussed. A priority list may have to wait until Fall. The Route 5 & 10 project would be on the warrant but can be put on as a general borrowing if it fails as a debt exclusion. Selectman Szynal said we can't risk losing a grant that big, especially considering the long-term benefit to the town.

Ms. Michonski enjoyed a demonstration by Clear Government and thinks it's what the town needs. She wishes to keep it as an option. Ms. Rider agreed we should look at some kind of budgeting software.

Ms. Strzegowski informed of incorrect bookings and postings to the wrong accounts, many being posted to miscellaneous revenue. Free cash was also discussed. Moderator, Joe Lavallee advised that at other annual town meetings people meeting outside won't pass over 10-12 articles so the warrant must be slimmed down. Some items can be tabled until we can meet safely in the fall. Mr. Williams asked to review the operating budget plan next Tuesday and asked if Melanson Heath would help.

The Board will meet with the Finance Committee on May 26 to go over the budget spreadsheet and warrant. The Finance Committee was thanked before leaving the meeting at 7:35pm.

The 350<sup>th</sup> parade is rescheduled to May 30, 2021, which will be the last actual day of the 350<sup>th</sup> year. Selectman Szynal thanked Mike Paszek, Ed Lesko, Paul Labbee, Bobby Betsold for their planning. Townspeople have been supportive of the changes.

Mr. Wagner explained the ag committee request regarding the State DOR preservation restriction program. A tracking system is needed so that when properties are sold the restriction is clear. Town officials or employees should be certifying this. Mr. Wagner will work with Ms. Michonski to modify #2. This may not need Annual Town Meeting approval since it's just an internal policy.

Planning Board will require that any request be accompanied by a statement from the Assessor's Office, not the owner or applicant. Ms. Michonski is waiting to get back with town counsel about this. Selectman Szynal is fine moving forward with the approval of town counsel, and a double check that the Assessor's office backs up what the landowner has certified. Selectman Jaworski would like it verified, perhaps with language that the Assessor's Office has verified the property. This can be approved after town counsel review. The Board thanked Mr. Wagner.

Minutes –

Selectman Szynal moved to approve the minutes of 11-19-19, 11-5-19, and 10-15-19 with one amendment. A reference to a Finance Committee member not being present can be removed. Selectman Jaworski seconded. The motion was approved.

Selectman Jaworski moved to approve the minutes of 4-7-20, and 4-21-20. Selectman Szynal seconded. The motion was approved.

#### Appointments/Resignations

Selectman Szynal moved to accept with regret the resignation of Anthony Gibbs from the Police Department and thank him for his service to the town. Selectman Jaworski seconded. The motion was approved.

#### Disclosure Statement to the Cemetery Committee-

Ms. Michonski asked the Board to approve a disclosure statement from Lucinda Williams, as her husband is on the Finance Committee. This will be filed with the town clerk's office.

Selectman Jaworski moved to approve this. Selectman Szynal seconded. The motion was approved. Selectman Szynal thanked Lucinda.

#### Treasurer/Collector Vacancy –

Ms. Michonski drafted a posting for this position as Ms. Palmisano will step down at the end of May. The job description is to be updated and a screening committee formed to include a member from the Finance Committee. Selectman Szynal said she would be willing to serve on this committee.

#### Memorial Town Hall Building Renovation Update

Selectman Jaworski reported everything is basically done, except for fire pump and checklist. A modified completion date is June 25<sup>th</sup>. Ms. Szych asked to be on the Board's next agenda if the fire pump is not in place as election may have to be moved. Ms. Michonski presented revised change order #5 with a new figure of \$32,649.14. Selectman Szynal moved to approve the amount.

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

Selectman Jaworski and Ms. Michonski were thanked for being point on this as well as the employees in the building working under difficult and constantly changing circumstances. Ms. Michonski said Mr. Genovese and Mr. Scott have been very helpful.

Additional work by Architecture EL for \$3397.50 was presented in a letter dated March 3, 2020.

Selectman Jaworski moved to approve the amount. Selectman Szynal seconded. The motion was approved. Ms. Michonski will send the AAB another report at the end of the project.

#### Abatement requests from DPW

Selectman Szynal moved to grant abatements for 114 Prospect, 115 Elm St, Unit 9B, and 7A.

These were old meters that needed replacing, reading in gallons not cubic feet. All voting in favor, the motion was approved. These can be signed on Thursday.

Ms. Michonski asked to defer the topic of Solect Energy to the next meeting. The payment in lieu of taxes for this project at Smith Academy was never resolved. Municipal vulnerability plan workshops were extended by the State for another year because of COVID. Ms. Michonski is contacting town employees and town businesses about how climate would affect operations

Ms. Michonski confirmed with Mike Ohl that the town will need to acquire some easements for the Route 5 & 10 water/sewer project. That article has been added to the warrant. Comprehensive Environmental is putting it out to bid in August.

Under New business, carryover of vacation for employees was discussed. Employees have been unable to use vacation/time off for the last 6 months of the fiscal year. Normally they can carry over 2 weeks, but DPW has asked to carry over all in their bank into the next FY. Selectman

Selectman Szynal moved employees be allowed to carry over the balance at the e/o the FY to be used by the end of June 2021. Selectman Jaworski seconded. Selectman Szynal said, under the circumstances it's the only fair thing to do. All voting in favor, the motion was approved.

Ms. Michonski brought up the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission's community development block grant with funding available for COVID19. Application must be submitted by June 5<sup>th</sup>, for assistance to low/moderate income businesses. She asked to hold off on the special employees and HR Review.

Selectman Moriarty thanked Selectman Jaworski and Selectman Szynal for their support in the last year. The Board chose liaisons to departments. Selectman Szynal will take Police Department, Schools and Town Administrator. Treasurer/Collector, and Town Accountant will go to Selectman Moriarty. Selectman Jaworski has Council on Aging, Fire and Ambulance and Building Inspector. Selectman Moriarty is to take DPW. Representatives to committees were chosen. Selectman Moriarty will be the rep to FRTA, Selectman Jaworski for PVPC and Emergency Management Planning and Selectman Szynal to have Capital Improvement Planning.

Selectman Szynal talked about the Facebook post regarding the town brush pile. This is being disrespectful of employees. She said let's find out who's doing it. Selectman Moriarty will get with Mr. Genovese and Garrett Barry.

Real Folks Society is not doing the election day bake sale. This is sad but they were thanked for doing the right thing. Selectman Jaworski said at Annual Town Meeting: will only have just a few, important articles. Selectman Szynal agreed.

Selectman Moriarty moved to adjourn. Selectman Jaworski seconded. The motion was approved and the meeting ended at 8:56pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Ki J. Eno  
Executive Assistant