

Select Board
Meeting Minutes
December 8, 2021, 5:30 p.m.
59 Main Street, Hatfield, MA
Virtual GoToMeeting

Present: Select Board Chair Diana Szynal and Members Edmund Jaworski and Brian Moriarty. Also present were Marlene Michonski, Town Administrator; Phil Genovese, DPW Director; Robert Flaherty, Fire Chief; Robert Osley, Chair, Board of Health; Christopher Smith and Brenna Duquette of the Hatfield Housing Authority; John Wilkes and Kerry Flaherty

CALL TO ORDER Chair Szynal called the meeting to order at 5:35 p.m.

PUBLIC FORUM No one

ANNOUNCEMENTS Chair Szynal reminded everyone that luminarium is Saturday, December 18 beginning at 5:30 p.m. There is a Schedule of Events which can be found on the Town website and Facebook. Fireworks will begin at 6:30 and Billings Way will be closed from the barn back. You cannot park in the Elementary school parking lot. Chief Flaherty informed the Board that traffic will be stopped right before 6:30 p.m. on Main and School Streets as well as Prospect and Maple Streets as a safety precaution. They want to limit moving vehicles while the fireworks are going off. The fireworks will take less than 10 minutes. Chair Szynal wanted to remind everyone that you need to keep your headlights on while driving around Town. It's the prettiest night in Town.

Chair Szynal wanted to let everyone who ordered a 350th Commemorative book know that they will be available for pick up on Tuesday, December 14 between 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. at Town Hall. If you cannot get to Town Hall on December 14th, you can pick them up at the Collector/Treasurer's office during normal business hours.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES Selectman Moriarty made a motion to accept the meeting minutes of November 16, 2021 and November 30, 2021, Selectman Jaworski seconded, all in favor, aye, motion approved.

POSTED BUSINESS

COVID-19 Report Update: Chief Flaherty informed the Board the COVID team is meeting weekly. As of the past Monday there are ten positive cases in town. There are multiple cases in different households. He informed the Select Board that with the agreement with the City of Northampton, we get our information a bit differently now. It will take a couple of weeks to iron out all the details because the agreement was entered into four days ago. We are hopeful to have COVID information on Mondays to inform the residents. Claudia Sarti's last day of keeping track of COVID numbers was a week ago Thursday. Chair Szynal mentioned that we trust Chief Flaherty but this should be on the

Board of Health. Chief Flaherty informed the Select Board that the system with Northampton is highly secured and there are only a few individuals who would get the email listing case numbers. The Fire Chief asked if Bob Osley, Chair, Board of Health could be added to that email as Charlie Kaniecki, the health agent, is too busy with other towns. Chief Flaherty explained to the Board how the testing occurs in the schools. The school is using the binax testing. If that comes back positive then those individuals are asked to get a PCR test which is a more accurate test and those results go into MAVEN. The recommendation is to get yourself a PCR test on day 5 after exposure. Chair Szynal asked if people are testing too soon? The Chief replied yes. Chair Szynal said there is so much information out there which confuses people. Chief Flaherty said the CDC information changes every couple of hours. Chair Szynal said the fact that we are still learning 1 to 1½ years later tells you a lot.

Board of Health – Discussion of MOU with Northampton regarding transition and COVID coordinator duties: Chair Osley, Chair, Board of Health informed the Select Board that the Board of Health signed an agreement with Northampton so that the Northampton Board of Health would provide services to Hatfield at no cost for the next 3 years. The agreement can be terminated at any time with 15 days notice. The whole idea of shared services came out when the State and DPH realized that there are hundreds of towns scrambling to put together a coordinator, funding, testing, information and personnel. In March the DPH came up with money to fund a program that would allow for smaller towns to share services and get the benefits the larger municipalities have. By the end of June when the governor declared the emergency was over, the funds dried up and left the towns in a bad position. Chair Szynal stated that we had the CARES Act funds; we always had the money. It was this past Thursday when Northampton took over and Claudia Sarti stepped back in monitoring. Chair Szynal asked if Northampton got the grant and the Board of Health entered into an agreement with Northampton, Northampton will do all of this for Hatfield at no cost? I want to make sure that I understand and that town people know what we are getting. Chair Osley replied that Northampton assumes all administrative costs and personnel and keeps Town Hall administrative from dealing with this and dealing with auditing and costs. Chair Szynal asked if they will do the contact tracing, monitoring MAVEN, reporting those cases so that we can get that out to the public on Mondays? Chair Osley informed the Board that at this time they do not have enough personnel to do contact tracing and testing in the schools. Selectman Moriarty asked are they ramping that up? Chair Szynal asked what happens if there is a huge outbreak? Chair Osley said that Northampton would have to find the personnel. Chair Szynal asked if there is someone dedicated to Hatfield? Chair Osley replied yes and Chair Szynal said I hope it would be someone from the Board of Health. Chair Szynal mentioned that she hopes that this happens quickly as the holidays are coming and that Northampton has a big job and not a lot of people doing it. Chair Szynal was concerned after reading the agreement that there is no end date. Selectman Moriarty said Northampton is doing more than COVID, they are doing tick born illnesses, etc. Chair Osley said overall it seems like a win-win scenario for small towns like Hatfield - we get more services. Selectman Moriarty agreed that this is a win-win situation. Chair Szynal mentioned that any time we can collaborate in sharing resources we don't normally have is a good thing. There may be some bumps in the road but in the long run it should be a very good thing. Chair Szynal's concern is who residents call with their COVID questions. Chair Osley said once they have a definite person, the calls would be referred over to that person.

Fire Chief Flaherty, Future of the Fire Department: Chief Flaherty informed the Board that the Fire Department needs more full-time personnel as the number of calls is up. He informed the Board the EMS is getting busier and there are many times that he is out taking emergency calls after his work

hours for lack of personnel. He believes that if he could staff the EMS with an additional 16 hour shift, he may be able to get by. The Chief said nights and weekend are a problem because there is not enough staff to cover the calls. After some discussion Selectman Moriarty suggested the Chief lay out a plan on what the costs would be for filling that 16 hour daily shift and what the cost would be for him to have staff to get by. Once budget talks begin next month he should have those figures available at that time.

Open Space Committee, Chair Rich Abbott – Discuss pavilion construction project: POSTPONED

Hatfield Housing Authority Member, Christopher Smith – Discuss safety of Capawonk residents accessing crosswalk on School Street: Christopher Smith informed the Board about the issues the elderly have been facing when using the new crosswalk on School Street. Selectman Moriarty stated that this topic was discussed at the last Select Board meeting. Mr. Smith had three suggestions he thought would help with this situation; 1) the signs and flashing lights are too high, if they could be lowered; 2) change the flashing lights to red; 3) elevate the crosswalk or put in a speed bump. Selectman Moriarty said he is guessing there are guidelines on the flashing light. Mr. Genovese informed the Board that when the state did the project, they followed the State guidelines. Mr. Genovese said that under MassDOT guidelines, the crosswalk, the signs and lights are all under those guidelines. To change it to red is impossible; to lower it - impossible. Chair Szynal suggested that Mr. Genovese speak with the Police Chief and figure something out.

DPW Report: Water misbilling 139 West Street, Lot 8: Mr. Genovese informed the Select Board that there was a mechanical issue with the water meter at that location. Mr. Genovese told the Board that because the bill was never sent, he cannot seek an abatement but rather misbill it. Selectman Moriarty made a motion to adjust the water and sewer commitment previously approved by \$46,027.24 due to a misbilling; Selectman Jaworski seconded; all in favor, aye, motion approved. The Select Board asked Mr. Genovese about the Route 5 water sewer project. Mr. Genovese informed the Board that all the equipment is gone except the barrels over the well heads.

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR REPORT:

2022 Annual License Renewals: Marlene Michonski, Town Administrator advised the Board that they need to review the licenses for renewal. Selectman Moriarty made a motion to approve license renewals for 2022 as presented; Selectman Jaworski seconded; all in favor, aye, motion approved.

Master Plan Update: Ms. Michonski updated the Board regarding updating the town's master plan. The draft copy supplied to the Board would be published on the website and in Town Hall soon and they would need to create a master plan committee. They will be addressing climate control in the master plan and will be submitting a letter of interest. This won't be done until spring. We are updating the master plan and executing an action plan in the spring/early summer. Between now and then we need to get the word out there and ask people to volunteer for this committee. There would be subcommittees and focus groups and a few at-large members.

Ms. Michonski informed the Select Board that the accountant closed out and filed FY21 this week. Selectman Moriarty stated that the new tax rate was set and approved by the Department of Revenue. He believed the tax rate has gone down about 52 cents but was uncertain at this time, he would have the figure at the next meeting.

ARPA Project Request Form: Ms. Michonski reminded the Board that the Town contracted with Melanson to oversee the ARPA funds. The Town has received some funds and Melanson will need departments to submit requests and she will compile a spreadsheet but Melanson wants each department to sign off. Ms. Michonski will be distributing these forms to the department heads.

The Select Board wished everyone happy holidays, Happy New Year. We got through a tough year. Thank you everyone for all your hard work and everything you do. What a pleasure it is to serve with all of you. Happy and safe holidays.

OLD BUSINESS

UNANTICIPATED NEW BUSINESS

ADJOURN

Selectman Jaworski made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:28 p.m., Selectman Moriarty seconded, all in favor, aye, motion adjourned.

Respectfully,

Karen Brodeur
Executive Assistant