



SELECTBOARD

TOWN OF WESTHAMPTON
TOWN HALL
1 SOUTH ROAD
WESTHAMPTON, MASSACHUSETTS 01027

Selectboard Minutes of October 25, 2021

A regular meeting of the Selectboard was held at the Westhampton Elementary School, 37 Kings Highway, Westhampton, MA 01027

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM.

Present: Phil Dowling, Maureen Dempsey.

In accordance with the Attorney General's Regulations 940 CMR 29.10, and Chapter 20 of the Acts of 2021, Ms. Teri Anderson remotely participated via video conferencing.

Also present: Cheryl Provost, Administrative Assistant; Bill Jablonski (Superintendent of Highways); Julia Lennen (Council on Aging), Robby Armenti (Board of Health); Susan Bronstein (Covid Coordinator); Caitlin Marquis (Mass in Motion, Collaborative for Educational Services); Barbara Pelissier (Finance Committee); Marilyn Witherell (Board of Assessors); Susan O'Rourke, John Zimmerman (Residents); Douglas Finn.

1. Department and Committee Updates

a. Highway Department.

Mr. Jablonski reported that as of the end of September, mowing was completed. Austin Norris (New Employee) started on October 4, and has obtained his CDL as of October 15. Mr. Jablonski reported on regular activity (road grading, drainage clearing, etc.). Hazardous waste day was a success. Mr. Jablonski noted that the highway department was gearing up for heavy rain anticipated in the next couple of days.

Report accepted as given.

b. Public Safety Complex Committee (Mr. Dowling)

The concrete floor was supposed to be poured this week, but will likely be delayed by rain. The project remains within budget, but that internal transfers from FFE to the main project may be inevitable.

c. Town Property & Energy Assessment Committee (Mr. Dowling)

The Town Hall floors have been sanded and refinished by Mike Labrecque at no cost to the Town except materials. Painting is ongoing, and wainscoting paint will be finished after the floor is complete. New doors on front and side are installed.

The town continues to work with "Energy Resources" on a potential upgrade to the heating system at the Elementary School. Insulation services are expected to be completed at the School and at the Town Offices.

d. Administrative Assistant

Mr. Dowling introduced Mr. Finn as the town's Administrative Assistant, noting that Ms. Provost would be concluding her term as Town Administrator at the end of the week.

Mr. Dowling further noted that the document management project, enabled by a state grant, is not complete due to circumstances beyond the Town's control, and that Ms. Provost is hoping to make every effort necessary to ensure completion of the work.

It was MOVED by Dowling, SECONDED by Dempsey

To authorize Mr. Dowling to coordinate with Ms. Provost to determine the best path to complete the Document management project, and to report back to the board at the next regular meeting.

VOTED: 3, 0, 0.

e. Other boards or committees

Ms. Robby Armenti noted that there were two active cases of Covid-19 in Westhampton, but that they were being treated.

Mr. Dowling noted that there were now two vacancies on the Planning Board, and encouraged anyone interested to contact the Town Offices.

Ms. Pelissier noted that minutes of the Public Safety Complex committee had not yet been posted on the Town's website. Mr. Dowling noted that he would look into the matter, and see that any outstanding minutes were posted as soon as possible.

2. Collaborative for Educational Services

The board received a presentation from Caitlin Marquis, coordinator of Healthy Hampshire, an initiative of the Collaborative for Educational Services, discussing the "Mass in Motion" program. Ms. Marquis noted that the Department of Public Health would be reopening procurement of "Mass In Motion" grant opportunities for the next ten years. Ms. Marquis noted that the grant had previously not been much money, enough to staff one position, or provide supplies. Ms. Marquis is hoping to sign on communities to collaborate on the grant opportunity. Healthy Hampshire is looking to submit a regional application for the grant funding, in order to better serve the towns.

Ms. Marquis noted that smaller towns would be precluded from applying on their own (minimum community size of 25,000 is required). Funds would staff 1.5 full-time staff, language interpretation services, child-care services and meals for meetings, and other resources.

Ms. Marquis noted that the grant's purpose is to address the social determinants of health; recently the scope had been expanded to a broader scope – e.g., housing as a factor.

The application is due December 15. The goal is to get municipal partners signed on well in advance. Amherst and Ware have signed on already, with other communities considering the request.

Ms. Anderson: What is needed from the town? Ms. Marquis: endorsement of the Town's participation through execution of an agreement form (a sample copy was distributed).

Ms. Susan Bronstein spoke in favor of the town's participation in the program.

Ms. Robby Armenti also noted the potential benefits of the partnership.

Ms. Anderson noted that the partnership seemed to make sense, and offered to make a motion.

Mr. Dowling asked to see the application; Ms. Marquis noted that it had not yet been written. Mr. Dowling suggested that the matter be tabled to the next regular meeting, in order to receive and consider additional information.

Mr. Dowling also noted that there are very few resources for aging residents, and asked whether this grant could provide resources in that regard. Ms. Marquis noted that there was some possible room in the scope of the grant to that effect, and encouraged members to use the HealthyHampshire.org website to learn more.

Ms. Dempsey noted that Healthy Hampshire's encouraged clients served by programs also help

to organize and administer such programs, and her appreciation of the same.

Ms. Marquis was thanked for her time.

3. Selectboard Business

a. Renewal of Farm winery/brewery license Outlook Farm

The Board considered an application for a renewal of a Farm Winery / Farm Brewery License submitted by Outlook Farm. Mr. Dowling noted that the operation had not changed since last approved (June, 2021). There was no comment from members of the public.

After brief deliberation, it was MOVED by Dowling, SECONDED by Anderson

To approve the Farm Winery / Farm Brewery License for Outlook Farm for the Calendar Year 2022.

VOTED: 3, 0, 0. (7:34 PM)

b. American Recovery Act

Ms. Susan Bronstein noted that a one-page summary of the American Recovery Act had been produced, and was available for review.

Mr. Dowling noted that the town was slated to receive a total of about \$489,000, and was looking to determine the best means to expend the funds. Mr. Dowling noted that it was the intent of the Board to hold at least two public forums to determine how best to use the funds, and how the town could potentially benefit from the use of the funds.

Ms. Bronstein noted that, unlike Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act of 2020 ("CARES") funds, American Recovery Act funding could be directed towards capital projects.

Ms. Anderson suggested putting the one-page summary on the town website, and ask for ideas be submitted to the Selectboard for use of the ARPA funds; in that way, ideas in addition to the public safety complex could be considered prior to the public forums.

Ms. Pellisier noted that the one-page description had been noted at the last Selectmen's meeting, and that input from department heads should be solicited. Mr. Dowling noted that all ideas would be welcome and considered.

Ms. Bronstein further noted that the "CARES" funding had to be expended by the end of the calendar year. There was some discussion relative to past expenditures, expenses from the school, and other sources.

c. "Hybrid Meeting" electronic systems options

Mr. Dowling noted that devices from Owl Labs were being considered; a dual-device option was being considered; in addition, a projection system was being considered, including LCD projectors, a mechanized projection screen, and other equipment. Mr. Dowling suggested also that electrical work on the meeting room was also in order.

A rough price estimate would be about \$12,000. The system would facilitate remote access by participants, allow for screen sharing, and allow in-person participants to see and hear remote participants.

Ms. Anderson also suggested a monitor in the Selectboard office to serve the same purpose.

The need to conclude the purchases by the end of December was noted.

There was brief discussion about the potential for an HVAC system upgrade for the library, and the possibility to pay for the upgrade through CARES funding. Mr. Dowling noted that filtration, air exchange improvement and other options had been considered for the library, and other buildings. The potential to purchase air purifiers for the annex was discussed.

d. Schedule Tax Classification Hearing

It was MOVED by Dowling, SECONDED by Dempsey,

To hold the annual tax classification hearing at 7 PM on November 8, 2021.

VOTED: 3, 0, 0.

e. Consider authorizing Douglas Finn to sign/submit Selectboard invoices to Accountant

It was MOVED by Dowling, SECONDED by Dempsey

To authorize Mr. Finn to sign and submit invoices and vouchers to the Accountant.

VOTED: 3, 0, 0.

f. Review application for Animal Control Officer and Inspector of Animals

It was MOVED by Dowling, SECONDED by Dempsey

To authorize Mr. Dowling and the Administrative Assistant to act as a screening committee relative to all applications for Animal Control Officer and Inspector of Animals.

VOTED: 3, 0, 0.

4. Review correspondence

a. Wade Clement, inquiry/recommendation for town planner

A letter from Mr. Wade Clement, a former member of the Westhampton Planning Board, requesting that the Town immediately Mr. Dowling noted that the role of Consultant Planner was unfilled, and that Mr. Finn had extensive planning experience.

It was MOVED by Dowling, SECONDED by Dempsey

To appoint Mr. Finn as Consultant Planner.

VOTED: 3, 0, 0.

5. Review and consider approval of minutes of September 12, 2021

Ms. Provost noted that minutes from September 12 would be ready for review at the next regular meeting.

6. Review and approval of warrants

It was MOVED by Dowling, SECONDED by Dempsey

To approve the warrants as presented.

VOTED: 3, 0, 0.

7. Any other issues to come before the board not reasonably anticipated at time of posting

There was some discussion relative to the future of remote meeting options, hybrid meeting options, and other matters. It was noted that computers dedicated for the purpose of remote meetings might be purchased.

There was ongoing discussion about hybrid meeting options, other meeting options, and other board / committee experience with the "owl" system.

Municipal Vulnerability Grant

Ms. Anderson noted that plans were moving forward for a kickoff meeting to happen in mid-November. Ms. Anderson requested feedback from the board on the planned diversity/inclusion workshops planned for staff and board members which was originally planned as a 12 hour

training. Given limited time of part-time staff and volunteer board members, it seemed unrealistic to ask members to sit through a three 4- hour meetings. Ms. Anderson suggested a six-hour program, split across multiple days. Further, the workshop could be repeated, to allow for more participation. The board agreed the alternative plan is more suitable.

Ms. Bronstein asked if the program could be recorded; Ms. Anderson noted that the program was participatory, and not suitable for simply observing.

Ms. Anderson noted that two sessions – one focused on staff and board members, and a second focused on the community – were in progress. Multiple community meetings were being considered.

Ms. Anderson noted that the staff meeting would likely be in late January or early February; the community presentation would be in mid-February or later.

8. Schedule Next Meeting and Adjourn

Mr. Dowling noted that the next meeting would be held at 7:00 p.m. on November 8, 2021.

It was MOVED by Dowling, SECONDED by Dempsey

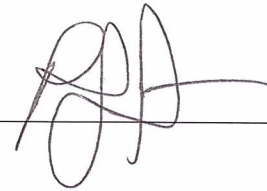
To adjourn.

VOTED: 3, 0, 0. (8:21 PM)

Respectfully submitted,

Douglas Finn

Minutes approved by a vote of the Selectboard at a regular meeting held on November 8, 2021.



Phil Dowling



Maureen Dempsey

Teri Anderson