



SELECTBOARD

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

Selectboard Minutes of December 6, 2021

The Westhampton Selectboard scheduled a regular meeting on Monday, December 6, 2021, at 7 PM.

Pursuant to Chapter 20 of the Acts of 2021, attendance was by remote access only. Members of the public attended the meeting via "Zoom" conferencing. Meeting ID Code: 8704 390 0582. There was no in-person attendance by the public. The meeting was audio/video recorded for purposes of minutes only.

Call to Order – Call of Role

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

Present: Phil Dowling, Teri Anderson, Maureen Dempsey. Quorum declared.

Also present: Marilyn R Witherell, Bill Jablonski (Highway Dept), Barbara Pelissier, Susan Bronstein, Roberta Armenti, Douglas Finn.

Scheduled Business

Department and Committee Updates

Highway Department

Mr. Jablonski noted that the highway department had been busy with sealing cracks, leaf-cleanup; training for staff on snow and ice management. A recent rainstorm resulted in significant washouts, and the crew worked on Saturday.

Town Property & Energy Assessment Committee

Mr. Dowling noted that Barbara Cook, and Dave Blakesly had resigned from the committee, leaving only two remaining members; Mr. Dowling encouraged interested parties to consider joining the committee.

Other Boards / Committees / Project updates

Municipal Vulnerability Plan – Teri Anderson

Ms. Anderson noted that the committee had its kickoff meeting, and requested formal appointment of committee members. A list of members were reviewed.

It was MOVED by Dowling, SECONDED by Anderson

To appoint Katch Bacheller to the MVP Core Working Group:

VOTED: Dempsey: Yes; Anderson: Yes; Dowling: Yes. (7:12 PM)

Ms. Anderson noted that the proposed diversity training was scheduled for January and/or February. Mr. Jablonski noted the difficulty with adding hours for highway crew in the winter, and the potential for conflicts with ongoing training.

There was discussion about the training schedule, and the need to have participation from employees and as many board members as possible. The need to compensate employees

for their time was also discussed.

Ultimately, the board agreed that coordination with anticipated participants would be needed in order to schedule the training in a way that suits everyone's schedules.

There was some discussion in regard to the potential use of ARPA funds to provide reimbursement for paid employees.

Public Safety Building Update – Phil Dowling

Mr. Dowling noted that a bill about to be passed at the state level that could provide additional funding for the Public Safety Complex project. While not earmarked for such, the potential still exists, with a generally positive response received from the state's board of public health. Mr. Dowling noted that it was critical to provide local support for the proposal. Estimates for the build-out of the second floor, including the elevator, are being developed.

Work continues on the facility: Floors are being poured; areas for walls will be 'tented' in order to build the cement-block walls; Finished paving will wait until after winter. Details are still ongoing, with work continuing on a daily basis. Poles, lights and utilities are being installed. Due to the after-effects of the Covid-19 Pandemic, the project has seen delays in delivery of essential components, including the main structure, underground tanks, and other essential building materials. Mr. Dowling noted that the same phenomena was seen in the cost of residential goods and services.

Mr. Dowling noted his appreciation for the work of D. A. Sullivan as Owners Project Manager ("OPM").

Ms. Armenti noted that the Board of Health wanted to suggest adding a kitchen to the second-floor plan; Ms. Dempsey asked the purpose; Ms. Armenti noted that it could be used for food bank purposes, etc. Mr. Dowling suggested that this late in the design process it might be impractical to add a commercial kitchen into the design.

Ms. Anderson suggested that a broader conversation about the potential use of the second floor should be conducted. Mr. Dowling noted that the expected use of the second floor space would be principally by the Board of Health, EMTs, Emergency Management, etc. Dedicated training space for the fire department would be an added benefit. Additionally, the proximity of the facility to Hampshire Regional School would be added cause to centralize emergency response and management.

Mr. Dowling reiterated that there were a lot of moving parts related to the second-floor build-out, and that no firm decisions had been made at this point, and that the discussion and potential planning was ongoing.

Mr. Dowling noted that the next Building Committee meeting will be Wednesday, December 8, at 6:30 PM, at Town Hall, and that the meeting was open to the public.

CARES Update – Susan Bronstein

Ms. Bronstein noted that, given reporting and invoices being processed, there is still \$65,000 left unspent.

Mr. Dowling noted that the Town Hall 'video conferencing' project was ongoing, and that he and Mr. Finn continue to pursue equipment. About \$6,000 had been spent on the system thus far, with about \$16,000 ordered and left to be received or invoiced.

There was some discussion about the air filters for the library. Mr. Dowling spoke about the “owl” teleconferencing cameras, and the benefits of the projection system in the main Town Hall.

Board of Health Update

Ms. Armenti noted that there were 10 Covid-19 cases reported. Those infected are in 3 households. 1 household - 2 vaxed adults; 1 household - 2 vaxed adults, 1 1yo unvaxed child; 1 household - 2 unvaxed adults, 3 unvaxed very young non-school aged children. No serious symptoms and no hospitalizations are reported. Robby noted that she would ask the PHN if he needs help in any way, and will provide further updates.

Mr. Dowling encouraged residents to pursue regular testing. It was noted that there is a walk-up testing center that just opened in Easthampton, with daytime and weekend hours available. Tests can be pre-scheduled, but walk-ins would be welcome as available.

Selectboard Business

Discussion / Second Reading: Key Policy

The board reviewed the proposed “Key Policy”. There was discussion regarding who would be ‘eligible’ to receive keys. Mr. Finn noted that would remain within the Selectboard’s purview.

There was discussion about access by town hall employees, other town employees, and emergency responders.

After further discussion, it was MOVED by Dowling, SECONDED by Anderson

To approve the policy as presented.

DOWLING: Yes. ANDERSON: Yes. DEMPSEY: Yes.
(7:57 PM)

Discussion / Second Reading: Credit Card Policy

Mr. Finn noted concerns raised by the Collector, and requested tabling consideration pending significant revision. Tabled by general approval.

Discussion / Second Reading: Public Posting policies

Mr. Dowling noted that the public posting policy mirrors current practice, and seemed to make sense. A requirement for submission of agendas in PDF format was removed. There was some discussion related to the use of the Town website as the principal posting location; however, Mr. Dowling noted significant logistical concerns that might preclude implementing such a policy. Ms. Anderson noted that efforts continue to be made to get every agenda, and minutes of meetings, posted on the website.

It was MOVED by Dowling, SECONDED by Anderson

To approve the policy as presented.

DOWLING: Yes. ANDERSON: Yes. DEMPSEY: Yes.
(8:03 PM)

Discussion: Town Report Dedication

The board briefly proposed and discussed suggestions for the Town Report dedication. Floyd Fisher, Bob Miller and Lee Douchkoff. After some discussion, the matter was

tabled, to be taken up later.

Review Correspondence

From MIIA – Grant Award

Mr. Finn noted that the town had received a grant for tree-cutting safety equipment.

From MassDFW – Notice of potential land purchase

A notice was received regarding a possible purchase of land by Mass Division of Fisheries and Wildlife.

From Maza – Invitation to submit article

A letter from Chris Maza, inviting the town to submit news and information for publication in *The Reminder*.

From DTU – Marking Poles

A letter from the DTU encouraging owners of private poles to mark them as such.

From Pelissier - (2) ARPA suggestions

Ms. Pelissier suggested the use of ARPA funding for PFAS remediation for private wells, and for transportation services for seniors, whether it be the purchase of an electric van, and the cost of a driver/insurance costs or some incentive program that would encourage a few, residents in town to become drivers, similar to UBER or LYFT, or encourage resident participation in, a ride sharing initiative.

There was extensive discussion about potential ways to provide services to Westhampton residents. Services provided by PVRTA and FRTA to various towns for ride-sharing and ‘on-demand’ ride services, were discussed.

Ms. Anderson noted that she would follow-up with FRTA to determine what options might exist. Ms. Anderson also noted that transportation did appear to be a vulnerability that could be taken up and addressed by the Master Plan process.

Ms. Bronstein concurred, adding that public transportation and broadband were of critical importance to the long-term sustainability of the town.

From Finn: Town Meeting Warrant – Unpaid Bill from Library

Withdrawn - No action taken.

Other items not reasonably anticipated at time of posting

Mr. Finn noted receipt of an application for the position of Animal Control Officer. After brief discussion, it was MOVED by Dowling, SECONDED by Anderson

To authorize Maureen Dempsey to contact the application, conduct a preliminary interview and report to the board.

DOWLING: Yes. ANDERSON: Yes. DEMPSEY: Yes.
(8:21 PM)

Review of warrants

The warrants were reviewed. It was MOVED by Dowling, SECONDED by Dempsey

To approve the warrants as presented.

Ms. Anderson asked about Chapter 291D; Ms. Dempsey noted that it was a part of the monies that were commonly referred to Chapter 90 funding for highway purposes

DOWLING: Yes. ANDERSON: Yes. DEMPSEY: Yes.
(8:23 PM)

Review of minutes of November 22, 2021

The minutes of November 22, 2021 were reviewed. Ms. Anderson noted that Mr. John Zimmerman was omitted from the list of members appointed to the MVP “Core Group”, and asked for the name to be added.

It was MOVED by Dowling, SECONDED by Dempsey

To approve the minutes, adding Mr. Zimmerman to the Core Working Group as noted.

DOWLING: Yes. ANDERSON: Yes. DEMPSEY: Yes.
(8:24 PM)

Schedule Next Meeting and Adjourn

Mr. Dowling noted that the next meeting would be held at 7:00 p.m. on December 20, 2021.

It was MOVED by Dowling, SECONDED by Dempsey

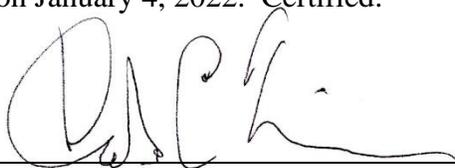
To adjourn.

VOTE: Dowling: Yes; Anderson: Yes; Dempsey: Yes. (8:25 PM)

Respectfully submitted,

Douglas Finn

Approved by a vote of the Selectboard at a regular meeting held on January 4, 2022. Certified:



Douglas Finn, Administrative Assistant