



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

MINUTES of the MEETING

Monday, September 12, 2022, at 7:00 PM

The Westhampton Selectboard scheduled a regular meeting to be held on Monday, September 12, 2022, at 7:00 PM at the Town Offices, 1 South Road, and via video-conference.¹

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM by Phil Dowling, chair.

PRESENT: Phil Dowling, Maureen Dempsey, Scott Johndrow

ALSO PRESENT: Douglas Finn, Bill Jablonski, Susan Bronstein, Steve Holt, Chief David White.

PRESENT BY REMOTE CONFERENCING: Robby Armenti, Charles and Mary Lou Burgess

DISCUSSION – Requests for ARPA Funds

Request: Deane Bates, Westhampton Elementary School – Plumbing

Mr. Finn presented a report from Deane Bates, noting that the installation of new water fountains in classrooms has been completed. Principal Bates has requested additional ARPA funding to complete plumbing upgrades at the elementary school, specifically replacing the nurses sink and counter.

Mr. Finn suggested that, in the absence of a firm estimate, the board could approve "an amount not to exceed" in order to fund the proposed work.

In the absence of a hard estimate, Mr. Dowling suggested waiting on any decision. The board concurred.

NO ACTION TAKEN.

Request: Doug Finn, Town Hall – Stage Drapes

Mr. Finn noted that a recent concert held in the Town Hall resulted in significant feedback from residents, who were dismayed that the stage area had been used for storage of town records and FFE for the public safety building. To that end, Mr. Finn presented a proposal to outfit the town Hall stage with on-stage 'blackout' and drapery, which would allow the outside edge of the stage area to remain in use for storage, but still provide a visually presentable performance area.

Mr. Finn presented quotes from three vendors for the drapery and hardware necessary for

¹ Pursuant to Chapter 20 of the Acts of 2021, the meeting was conducted as a "hybrid" (in-person / remote) meeting. Members of the public could access the meeting in person, or connect via "zoom" teleconferencing via internet – Meeting ID#: 870 4390 0582.

the project. Mr. Finn also presented a proposal and quote from Theatrix (Belchertown) for the full installation. It was noted that doing the installation in-house would result in significant savings, and that Highway Superintendent Bill Jablonski had offered to assist with the installation.

There was some discussion as to the origins of the proposal; Ms. Dempsey noted that there had been discussion about asking a local scouting troop to construct a new backdrop for the stage; ADA concerns were noted, which would be an issue for any 'hard' set permanently constructed; it was noted that fabric drapes would not impede on ADA access or compliance issues.

Mr. Dowling suggested some time to fully consider options. The board concurred.

NO ACTION TAKEN

Request: Susan Bronstein – Payment for CARES Administration

Mr. Finn presented a list of hours provided by Ms. Susan Bronstein. Mr. Finn noted that Ms. Bronstein had agreed to administer the "CARES" grant project, with the understanding that she would be reimbursed by CARES funding. Mr. Finn noted that project administration responsibilities extended into the early days of 2022; however, State requirements prohibited submission of CARES expenses after October 26, 2021. Therefore, a significant amount of work was done by Ms. Bronstein without opportunity for reimbursement in accordance with the agreement.

To that end, Mr. Finn suggested using \$1,570 of APRA funding to reimburse Ms. Bronstein for a total of 78.5 hours worked between September 1 and February 11, 2022.

After deliberation, it was MOVED by Dowling SECONDED by Dempsey

To appropriated \$1,570 of APRA funding to reimburse Ms. Bronstein for CARES Act administration.

VOTED: 3, 0, 0.

Request: Meghan Schwelm, Westhampton Public Library Hotspots

Mr. Finn noted a request received by Meghan Schwelm, on behalf of the Westhampton Public Library, to provide funding for "hotspot" subscription costs for the next three years.

Ms. Bronstein: Isn't this something that the library would want forever? Should that not be in their operating budget?

There was some discussion relative to whether operational expenses should be covered by ARPA.

NO ACTION TAKEN

ARPA Discussion Followup

Mr. Dowling asked for ARPA balances:

- Committed or Expended: \$119,629
- Uncommitted: \$369,681

Mr. Dowling noted that an estimate of the public safety complex cost overruns is about \$220,000, which includes "pending" items. The expectation is that the total overage would be covered by ARPA funding.

Mr. Dowling noted that the interest on the bond is 1.7% - significantly lower than originally anticipated, which has resulted in a lifetime savings to the town of more than \$900,000; in his opinion, given the 'adds' to the project (including the closed-cell insulation, and etc.), the building is going to be better than originally designed, and will result in a lower operational cost to the town in the long run.

Mr. Dowling noted that more public discussion would be appropriate prior to making any further expenditures of ARPA funds, and requested that a public comment session be scheduled for later in the fall.

Department and Committee Updates

a. Highway (Bill Jablonski)

Bill Jablonski noted recent work: General maintenance; Northwest Road bridge work complete with barricades removed, and road edge graded. Roadsides mowing is ongoing; catch basins have been cleaned; a new 2' drain pipe on Tob Road is installed. The town mower was repaired (replacement bearings); the shared mower is being used through the month of September, and will be the last year for the brush mower.

Some significant storms required regrading some of the dirt roads; a new drainage system is installed on North Road, including 2 catch basins, and about 200 feet of pipe. some crew have been on vacation; some crew have taken some sick time.

Mr. Jablonski presented three Ch. 90 reimbursement requests for review and approval.

It was MOVED by Johndrow, SECONDED by Dempsey

To approve and sign the reimbursement requests as presented.

VOTED: 3, 0, 0. (7:22 PM)

Mr. Jablonski noted that he had investigated a possible problem related to the high school well; he noted that the pump was 'hammering', indicating a possible problem with a backflow preventer. He noted that the High School staff were made aware of the problem and would be addressing the issue.

b. Health (Robby Armenti)

Robby noted that the wasp nest on the wires on Stage Road has been removed.

Also noted: Mike Archibald reported six positive Covid Cases at the Westhampton Elementary School. Mark Bushey (FHD health director) is getting test kits and masks for the town, as well as other PPE.

The 'clinic' started this past week, and she requested continued public notice of same. The clinic would be two Thursdays per month, at the Westhampton Library.

c. Public Safety Building (Phil Dowling)

Mr. Steve Holt (committee chair) reported six subs working on parts of the project; painting and sheetrocking is ongoing; sheetrock is up in nearly all areas; pump-house room is started and petitioned off; overhead doors are scheduled to come in this week, with prep work ongoing; site grading, seeding and blacktop is being scheduled.

Mr. Jablonski noted that he was waiting on site cleanup in order to prep for site grading and parking lot prep.

There was some discussion related to the safety and security of the site.

Mr. Holt noted that progress was being made, and ongoing.

d. MVP (Teri Anderson)

Mr Finn noted that a meeting of the MVP "Core" Committee was scheduled for September 22.

e. Administrative Assistant

Mr. Finn noted that he had submitted an application for a Community Compact IT Grant in the hopes of upgrading and improving the town's website; the proposed project would include an ad hoc committee to oversee the process, solicit public opinion on the existing and new site, and provide time and funding for department head training.

Mr. Finn noted that he was planning to solicit a second Community Compact Grant later in the year to fund a Municipal Fiber Network, which would provide a private, high-speed connection between the town hall, library and public safety building; the network would provide for reduced costs for internet services more secure off-site backup options, and expanded capacity for Town Hall staff.

Other ongoing projects include enrollment in MIIA's newly launched "Unemployment Services Program", which may provide for labor and cost savings to the town, continued participation in the PVPC-led effort to provide a scope of work for multi-town HR services, and ongoing assistance to the Planning and Zoning Boards. Mr. Finn noted that a recent decision by the ZBA had been appealed; town's counsel has been informed, and anticipates that, as the applicant is leading the defense, the town will take a passive role.

New Business or Board Comments

Mr. Johndrow noted receipt of a proposal for the road closure for the fall festival. After review, it was MOVED By Dowling, SECONDED by Johndrow

To approve the road closure in accordance with the plan as presented.

VOTED: 3, 0, 0. (7:37 PM).

Information / Correspondence

Mr. Finn noted a letter from Melissa Redwin, announcing her resignation from the Westhampton Cultural Counsel, and an announcement from Joshua Rapp, Conservation Scientist for Mass Audubon, about an upcoming presentation on "Climate Smart Forestry", to be presented at the Westhampton Public Library on September 24.

Review of Payroll and A/P Warrants

Payroll Warrant WP23-06 was reviewed. It was MOVED by Dempsey SECONED by Dowling

To approve as presented.

VOTED: 3, 0, 0.

Accounts Payable Warrant W23-06 was reviewed. It was MOVED by Dempsey

SECONED by Dowling

To approve as presented.

VOTED: 3, 0, 0.

Review / Approve Minutes

Minutes from August 15, 2022 were presented for review and vote. One minor error was corrected.

It was MOVED by Dempsey SECONDED by Dowling

To approve the minutes of August 15, 2022 as amended.

VOTED: 3, 0, 0. (7:44 PM)

Minutes from August 29, 2022 were presented for review and vote. It was MOVED by Dempsey, SECONDED by Johndrow

To approve the minutes of August 29, 2022 as presented.

VOTED: 3, 0, 0. (7:45 PM)

Set date for next meeting(s)

The next meeting was tentatively scheduled for September 26, 2022, 7 PM.

Executive Session

The Selectboard may enter into executive session to discuss the discipline or dismissal of, or complaints or charges brought against, a public officer, employee, staff member or individual, including deliberation as to the causes relative to disciplinary action that may be taken.

It was MOVED by Dowling, SECONDED by Johndrow

To enter into executive session to discuss the discipline or dismissal of a staff member, including deliberation as to the causes relative to disciplinary action that may be taken.

Mr. Dowling noted that the board may conduct further business upon conclusion of the Executive Session.

VOTED: DEMPSEY: YES; JOHNDROW: YES; DOWLING: YES (7:50 PM)

EXECUTIVE SESSION (minutes separate)

It was MOVED by Dowling, SECONDED by Johndrow

To leave executive session.

VOTED: DEMPSEY: YES; JOHNDROW: YES; DOWLING: YES (8:34 PM)

Other items not reasonably anticipated at time of posting.

No business was raised.

Adjourn

There being no further business, it was MOVED by Johndrow, SECONDED by Dempsey
To adjourn.

NO OBJECTION. (8:35 PM)

Respectfully submitted,

Douglas C. Finn

Approved by a vote of the Selectboard at a regular meeting, held on _____, 2022.

Phil Dowling



Maureen Dempsey



Scott Johndrow