



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

Minutes of January 7, 2019

The meeting convened at 7:00 p.m.

Present from Selectboard were Phil Dowling, Art Pichette and Maureen Dempsey. Others present were Steve Holt, David Blakesley, Dave White, Julia Lennen, Michael Kelsey, Ginny Curtis, John Dunn, Wayne Parks, Laurie Sanders, Chris Norris, John Zimmerman, Pete Montague, Walter Marek, Michael Cahillane, Andrew Linkenhoker, Brian Mulvehill, Roy Bishop. Minutes were taken by Cheryl Provost.

Warrants were signed for: Payroll: \$74,534.72 (Maureen abstained)
 Vendor: \$37,694.57

Minutes of December 26, 2018 were approved.

- Highway Department updates, David Blakesley reported:
 - heavy rainstorms caused problems with washouts on gravel roads from leaves not cleaned up before the early snow (in November)
 - completed annual service on all highway trucks
 - received a notice from District 2 that a sign needs to be posted at the bridge at Easthampton Road over North Branch Manhan; by Hains' property
 - prepared a reimbursement request in the amount of \$22,870.19 for Chesterfield Road crack seal. On a motion and second, voted to approve the reimbursement request
 - last winter noticed a hole in the roof of the new salt shed. Something fell from the sky and a 2 x 4 was shattered. Highway department fixed it.
 - transfer station; applied for a grant for a roll-off container in the amount of \$5,500. A new container will cost \$6,500.00; the remaining \$1,000.00 will come from the balance in the RFP fund.Phil inquired of returning to double stream (recycling). There has been no discussions but David thinks will probably want to.
Phil announced that the town was approved for designation as a Green Community. One item identified in the energy reduction plan was replacing the weather-stripping on the overhead doors of the highway garage. David supported the idea of having that done.
- Smith Vocational Michael Cahillane, Trustee, Chairperson and Andrew Linkenhoker, Superintendent of Smith Vocational High School are visiting towns to keep them informed of how students are doing and what programs are offered, as well as provide the number of employees.
M Cahillane described his background and history with the school. Smith is one of two school districts in Northampton, with its own Superintendent. He spoke of benefits of Smith Vocational education and how it's changed over the years.
A Linkenhoker noted the importance of getting to Hampshire Regional District towns, being the

largest district to feed Smith. He explained that Chapter 74 (of MGL) oversees and manages vocational programs; different than Chapter 70 for academic school districts. The tuition rates are set by Dept. of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE). Enrollment trends are moving towards college-bound students. Smith is expanding their courses and now offers Spanish, a useful tool in many trades and professions, in addition to their other academic programs. There has been an increase in non-resident students the past four years. There is an increase in enrollment of females. Nearly half (42%) of Smith graduates in the Class of 2017 entered the work force. Another 28% entered into a two-year public college. Tuition rates for non-resident students decreased over four years, with a slight increase in the current year. A five year budget comparison was reviewed, with an increase high of 9.51% in FY18 and low of .99% in FY17. Little change is expected for FY20. The FY19 budget consists of 62% towards instructional costs, with insurance and benefits making up 16%. The remainder of the budget (high to low) is maintenance, administration, and student services. Westhampton's enrollment numbers and programs as of October 1 were reviewed. Discussion ensued regarding the enrollment process and the presentation concluded.

- Solar PILOT update, Roy Bishop, Consultant, reported:
He's been conversing with Alex Fox, CVE, by email. Roy suggested 14.5 thousand per mHz, with option to renew after 20 years, with a 1 ½% escalation based on cost approach. Fox had replied with a "no" with hopes for between 7 & 9. No counter-offer has been made by Fox and has replied he may move on the KTT v. Swansea decision where the Appellate Court found in favor of KTT (solar company) and ruled an exemption from personal property and granted an abatement of over \$30,000. R. Bishop spoke of other case studies including Charlton and Freetown. The laws were written over 20 years ago without an idea where solar would go and intended for individual solar use, not commercial. They're not written for today's needs. Legislation is pending that will clean up the laws; R Bishop encouraged officials to make contact with legislatures to get behind it. Mass. Municipal Assoc. and Mass Assoc. of Assessors is behind it. If passed it will be effective January 1, 2020. R Bishop was questioned about the assessment of other public utilities and why it doesn't apply to solar. He replied that utilities are assessed based on net book value. There is no full and fair cash value process for the assessment of solar, one reason he favors a pilot agreement over assessment. Discussion ensued regarding different payment options once a total price is agreed on (front-loading vs. level) and term. The SMART program runs out at 15 years. R Bishop will provide updates as they come and nothing will be final without consent of the Selectboard.
- Bill Tracy, solar building permit application fees:
Visiting to speak on behalf of Bill Bennet, a local solar developer, regarding concern of the building permit application fee; approximately \$6,000.00, for a solar installation on his property. B Tracy had spoken to Building Commissioner Tom Quinlan who told him that the application fee will not be returned if the construction is not completed. B Tracy reported that Eversource has not given their approval of the installation, holding it up. The period to begin construction from the time the Special Permit was issued by the Planning Board is up; an extension will be needed from the Building Commissioner. R Tracy has concerns that if the application fee is paid and Eversource does not give their approval of the project then B Bennet will be out the application fee; he is seeking an exception. Phil responded that there is no method that allows the Selectboard to make an exception to the fee process. The fee schedule can be reviewed as a whole and if revisions will be made it will be to the fee schedule, not an individual case. Phil would like to research other projects and discuss it with T Quinlan.

- Julia Lennen, Council On Aging Coordinator:
Julia submitted the FY19 cycle State Formula Grant Standard Contract Form in the amount of \$5,776.62 to be approved and signed. This is an annual grant that offsets expenses incurred by the Council On Aging for events and partial salary for the coordinator. Maureen motioned to approve the FY19 Cycle State Formula Grant Contract for Council On Aging in the amount of \$5,776.62. Second by Art. Motion approved 3-ayes, 0-nays.
Julia reported she submitted her resignation as Council On Aging Coordinator, effective June 30, 2019; or sooner if a suitable candidate comes forward. Julia reported she has been in the position two years and looks forward to volunteering on tasks she's good at; later adding she will be requesting to join the Council On Aging after she's done as Coordinator. Member enrollment to the COA is down and it's an ongoing challenge to find individuals interested in joining. Two more members plan to leave at the end of their terms. Julia shared some of her ideas for moving the COA forward; Phil asked her to write them down to be shared with the oncoming coordinator. Julia also spoke of the alternative of making the job easier and reducing projects. In all, Julia reported it's been a great experience. The board thanked Julia for her service and accepted her resignation.
- Green Communities update, Phil reported:
With the application approval the town was awarded a grant in the amount of \$129,135.00.
- Zoning Bylaw Review Committee updates, Ginny Curtis reported:
The committee distributed a Westhampton Resident Survey for commercial marijuana establishments. An informational meeting on the subject will be held at the Westhampton Public Library at 6:30 p.m. on January 15, surveys will also be available there. Completed surveys can be dropped off at the Library, Town Hall, or at the informational meeting. There will be an article in the Gazette and Country Journal to announce the meeting. Their next meeting is at 6:00 p.m., January 9.
- Library Trustees, review of Personnel Policies and Procedures:
Brian Mulvehill reported that the Library policies are under review by the Trustees. They found that their policy for comp time is different than the town's policy. Brian explained that the Trustees were working out how to compensate the Director and Aide for extra hours volunteered for events. Discussion ensued regarding exemptions, hourly pay, and comp time off. The board supported the Trustees management of it.
- Public Safety Complex Review Committee, Steve Holt reported:
The committee met prior to the Selectboard. Members were assigned tasks for more details on various portions of the project. The committee meets again on January 28.

Dave White spoke of options for the Police Department. The door has been installed at the bottom of the stairway at the safety complex, restricting public access. He is holding hours at the Annex in the back room and asking questions in public; no privacy. He has concerns this will be considered normal and questioned what will happen to the Police Department if the project (safety complex) doesn't move forward. Dave provided options for office space he has considered for the department until a permanent situation is available; the stage of the Town Hall, space at the highway garage, or rental of office space. The board agreed the stage was not a

feasible option. Dave is just beginning discussion on the matter. David Blakesley has not been approached about space at the garage and Dave would want him completely on board and understand that renovated space could be utilized by the highway department in the future. Phil agreed to discuss it with D Blakesley.

- Eric Weiss, Pioneer Valley Planning Commission; District Local Technical Assistance Program FY2019:

Eric Weiss reported that small towns are being inundated by applications for solar facility installations. Developers are looking to install solar facilities on land that may otherwise be able to serve other purposes, potentially at a decrease of what other uses could be assessed at. The Pioneer Valley Planning Commission is proposing a group of communities get together to consider shared resources to develop revised solar bylaws for the long term. The District Local Technical Assistance Program awards an average of \$5-10 thousand for various projects. Shared services falls into the categories. The commission is seeking consideration to sign an interest in evaluating solar array proposals and bylaws in collaboration with other Towns as part of the application to the District Local Technical Assistance Program.

Dave White suggested applying for assistance under the program to research, and possibly secure a regional resource officer; between the Hampshire District towns. E Weiss responded with it's a fantastic idea. Discussion ensued regarding the status of the current Resource Officer and how that could be developed.

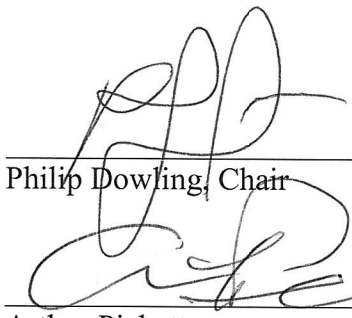
The deadline is January 11. Maureen motioned to authorize Phil Dowling to sign and submit an application to the District Local Technical Assistance Program. Second by Art. Motion passed 3-ayes, 0-nays.

- Annex gutter replacement:
The quote from Mr. Gutters was reviewed. Proof of insurance and certificate of tax compliance and non-collusion have been provided. No other quotes were received. Art motioned to accept the quote of \$1,651.60 from Mr. Gutters to remove and replace the existing gutters at the Town Hall Annex. Second by Maureen. Motion passed 3-aye, 0-nay.
- FY20 budget request review:
The budget proposals were reviewed for Selectboard Expenses, Town Offices Expenses, Counsel Fees, IT Support, Memorial Day, and two new accounts with one for prints of revised zoning bylaws and the other for a 250th Anniversary Fund. An IT inventory list was reviewed to determine a replacement schedule. A quote from Northeast IT is expected by January 22 for an email conversion. Discussion was held regarding maintenance and repairs to the Town Hall and Annex. Projects for the Town Hall reviewed were roof, bathrooms, and doors of main hall. Proposals will be reviewed again January 22.
- Request for Transfer From Reserve Fund:
A request for a transfer from the Reserve Fund into Counsel Fees was considered. Phil motioned to request a transfer in the amount of \$10,000.00 from the Reserve Fund to Counsel Fees. Second by Maureen. Motion passed. Finance Committee meets January 8.
- Green Communities grant application, additional discussion:

Discussion was held regarding what projects to move forward with for this application. It was agreed that the weather-stripping at the highway garage should be included. The boilers at the elementary school and annex will need to be replaced. Lighting can be changed. Art agreed to look into the condition of the two burners. Funds are available for engineering studies when they're required. A list will be made from items identified in the Energy Audit of Criteria 3.

- IT updates:
Joel Mollison is attending the meeting on January 22 to provide current status updates and discuss an email conversion.
- Planning Board Alternate procedures:
Procedures to add an alternate to the Planning Board were reviewed. One alternate may be allowed when the Planning Board has been designated as the special permit granting authority for uses specified in Section 3.0, Schedule of use Regulations in the Zoning Bylaws of the town; under the provisions of Mass. General Laws c. 40A, §9. Phil motioned to have counsel prepare an article
- Correspondence was reviewed:
 - Pioneer Valley Planning Commission-DLTA grant program
 - Catherine Hondorp, Selectboard copied in letter to Zoning Enforcement Officer regarding outdoor lighting trespass and signage.
 - Mass. Interlocal Insurance Assoc. overhead bolted basketballs backboards hazard alert
 - Office of State Representative, Lindsay Sabadosa reached out to organize a tour of farms in Westhampton. The Agriculture Commission has been given the information and is planning to arrange a date in March during the maple sugaring season.
- Administrative Assistant updates, Cheryl Provost reported:
 - attending an OPEB workshop Tuesday, January 15
 - attending Mass. Municipal Assoc. Annual Meeting and Trade Show January 18 & 19. Several workshops are offered.
- Next meetings: 7:00 p.m. January 22, & February 4, 2019.
- Documents submitted:
 - Expense Report through 12/27/2018
 - draft budget FY20 budget proposals: Selectboard Expenses, Town Offices, Counsel Fees, IT Support, Memorial Day, Copies of Zoning Bylaws, 250th Anniversary
 - Smith Vocational "Power Point"
- Documents signed:
 - (2) reimbursement request in the amount of \$22,870.19 for South Road crack seal
 - Council On Aging State Formula Grant in the amount of \$5,776.62
 - Contract between the Town of Westhampton and Mr. Gutters in the amount of \$1,651.60 to replace the existing gutters at the Town Hall Annex, 3 South Road.
 - Request for Transfer From Reserve Fund to Counsel Fees in the amount of \$10,000.00
- Meeting adjourned at 9:35 p.m.

Approve: _____


Philip Dowling, Chair


Arthur Pichette

Maureen Dempsey