



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

Minutes of May 26, 2020

The meeting convened at 7:00 p.m.

Present via zoom conference from Selectboard were Phil Dowling, Maureen Dempsey, and Teri Anderson.

Others present via zoom conference were Ted Harvey (Pioneer Valley Planning Commission), Bill Jablonski (highway superintendent); Tom Martin, David Blakesley, & Robby Armenti (Board of Health); Dave White (police chief), Ginny Curtis.

Minutes were taken by Cheryl Provost.

Minutes of May 11, 2020 were reviewed and approved as amended by roll vote 3-yay, 0-nay.

Warrants were reviewed, approved by vote, and signed for:

Payroll: \$83,350.92

Vendor: \$103,062.47

- Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, Ted Harvey reported:
A program through the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) is part of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES). Funds are available for micro-enterprise (qualified small business) and/or public social services related to effects of COVID-19 such as expansion of domestic violence programs. Several towns are collaborating to apply for CARES funds through the CDBG grant to improve the chance of award. The Town of Ware will take lead on the grant. T. Harvey answered questions regarding funding for specific local needs and businesses. He is seeking for the town to determine interest in applying for these funds and does not obligate the town in any way. So moved.
- COVID action:
Board of Health, Tom Martin reported it will be very difficult for the Westhampton Board of Health to respond in the appropriate way to Covid in our community without the regional partnerships of the Foothills Health District and the City of Northampton contract tracing initiative. This monitoring work is complicated, time consuming, and delicate. There is a very good reason it is done by professional nurses. The professional nurses I have talked to do not want to undertake such duties and responsibilities without the support of an umbrella organization like the City of Northampton is providing. The public health/nursing infra-structure for Covid has been put in place and it needs to be supported. The CARES funding stream is in place to do just that financially. Public health requires political support from the town. The deadline for this round of applications was questioned; it was June 5 but there was an extension to June 12 for certain portions. Phil and Cheryl to look into it to confirm the deadline.

A memorandum of Agreement between Northampton and towns of the Foothills Health District

effective July 1, 2020 to continue the contract tracing service provided by the public health nurse.
Tom on reopening public buildings:

The Board of Health reviewed the meeting hall of the Town Hall for board and committee meeting use for those that would rather meet in person. Tables and chairs were set up to allow social distancing. The seating arrangement will hold 21, including board members, with potential for more if a board or committee are on the stage. He thinks with preparation could start allowing board meetings next week. Will need to continue to offer access to meetings through video or a conference call; the acoustics of the meeting hall may affect the quality of sound so needs to be worked out. Opening the hall windows will provide adequate airflow and the highway department was asked to do so. Training of employees/officials on social distancing and personal hygiene is required prior to public access. This can be basic and for boards/committees we can use the train the trainer (Chairs) approach. Meetings can be moved outside, weather permitting. So noted.

Board of Health local update, Tom Martin reported:

- one new case in town
- digital graduation started at the Hampshire Regional high School; Board of Health is supervising the activity
- outreach project over the next 3 weeks will provide kits with masks, gloves, and information to residents; dovetailing with the Council On Aging to distribute kits
- increased activity through church food distribution program
- campground is open; state determined recreational camping is allowed. Bathrooms, pavilion, pool, camp store are closed. No gatherings over 10. Social distancing must be practiced. Campsites not allowed to mingle.

Tom provided a COVID-19 update from the state.

Discussion returned to board and committee in person meetings. The custodian will be asked to clean bathrooms and disinfect the hall after each meeting; hours should be tracked as COVID time. Cheryl will work with the Board of Health on putting together training material for employees and officials. Boards and committees will not be required to meet in person. Those that do will be required to sign off they accepted and reviewed the training.

- Highway Department updates, Superintendent Bill Jablonski reported:
 - had a couple trucks out for repairs past couple of weeks
 - cleaning up trees and debris on roads
 - snow equipment out away
 - hung up new paper towel dispenser in town office restroom
 - removed carts of folding chairs out of town hall to elementary school and put piano on stage, at request of Board of Health to allow for additional space to enable social distancing
 - Put up flags on poles through the center of town for Fire Dept.
 - roll-off box for metal debris collection ordered for transfer station
 - heat/oil bids went out to Franklin Council of Governments
 - working on bids for products and services for fiscal year 2021 to be submitted June 1
 - attending Hilltown Resource Management Coop meeting next week. They and Franklin Council of Governments filed a court appeal to increase in driver rates for solid waste haulers. The appeal was approved by vote of the representatives. The legal costs to each member town is

approximately an additional assessment of \$300 for the current fiscal year.

- Fire Dept., Chief Antosz reported:
Update on draft ambulance agreement between the Town of Westhampton and City of Easthampton. Easthampton will not be paying Westhampton EMT's. They disagree that they are required to add Westhampton as additional insured. Waiting on Easthampton Chief to report if there is an additional cost to them to name Westhampton as additional insured. Cheryl reported counsel replied its standard language and provides the town with additional coverage should an incident occur in Westhampton. Discussion will continue when information is available from Easthampton.

Votes taken on April 13 authorized the sale of the ambulance. Dave Antosz has an agreement with another municipality to sell it to them. Formal votes were reviewed to authorize the sale.

Phil motioned to enter into an inter-municipal agreement pursuant to G.L. c. 40, Section 4A, in which Westhampton will gift the stretcher to another municipality and to authorize Chief Antosz to gift the stretcher to the Town of Hampden. Second by Teri. So moved by roll vote 3-yay, 0-nay.

Phil motioned to enter into an inter-municipal agreement pursuant to G.L. c. 40, Section 4A for the sale of the surplus ambulance to another municipality, and to authorize Chief Antosz to sell the ambulance to the Town of Hampden. Second by Teri. So moved by roll vote 3-yay, 0-nay.

Dave reported the Westhampton ambulance was purchased from funds of the Firefighter's Assoc. He asked the board to consider donating the funds from sale of the ambulance back to the association. So noted.

Reviewed update on request from Barbara Cook on May 11 on behalf of Pine Island Assoc. to test their roads for passage by fire apparatus. Phil explained the town does not own the roads within the association and it's up to them to maintain and improve their roads. Dave Antosz reported he did as was requested and had Bill Jablonski, an experienced and the best driver on the department, to navigate the roads, Bill had trouble doing so. Dave concluded that an additional 8 – 12 inches of width to the roads would help; it is a private road so the association needs to address it. He noted that the current condition has potential to delay a response or possibly damage a vehicle. So noted.

- Phil reported he and Cheryl are working on Town Hall roof bids.
- Town meeting warrant draft articles were reviewed.
Covid
Article to fund a contracted consultant/planner will be added.
Article to fund paving the elementary school parking lot at the cost of \$16,000 was approved as written.
Article to fund the purchase of a new generator for the highway garage at the cost of \$30,000 was approved as written.
Article to fund the position of Assistant Town Clerk was approved as written. Discussed the potential lack of support from Finance Committee to fund this position. Spoke of concerns of

possible reduction in revenue and state aid due to the effects on the economy from COVID-19. Reviewed the past situation where the Administrative Assistant served as Asst. Town Clerk without pay or acknowledgement. Agreed on the importance of the position and need for funding. Agreed the article should be brought for a town vote.

Reviewed location options to hold town meeting.

- Discussed submitting a 1/12 budget to the Dept. of Revenue as suggested by Finance Committee Chair. ~~No action.~~ It was decided instead to proceed with a proposed full FY21 budget to Town Meeting before the end of June.
- Reviewed accident & sickness renewal proposal from Volunteer Firefighters Insurance Assoc. Current year is \$14,484, proposal is \$16,668. There is an increase to police coverage including for 1 full-time (25 hours) police officer. Phil motioned to approve the renewal proposal for accident & sickness insurance from Volunteer Firefighters Insurance Assoc. for police and fire in the amount of \$16,668. Second by Maureen. So moved by roll vote 3-yay, 0-nay.
- Annual appointments review:
Reviewed the list of officials with terms ending June 30. Teri made contact with officials on her list and all will accept if reappointed.
- Stantec Consultant Services contract was reviewed. Phil made revisions (deletions) to the contract that were approved by Stantec. Teri would like to have future contracts created by the town rather than vendor b-ecause –sections of this contract are completely irrelevant to this project and not appropriate for this limited service contract. Phil motioned to approve the contract with Stantec Consultant Services in the amount of \$19,800 for Third Party Landfill Monitoring for fiscal years 2021-2023. Second by Maureen. So moved by vote 2-yay, 1-abstain (Teri).
- Reviewed Financial Statements of audits of fiscal years 2018 & 2019. Discussion was held regarding the STRAP Grant as well as OPEB expenses; to be researched and reported at another meeting.
- Phil reported there are 12 County Roads in Westhampton. While the town maintains these roads, technically they are controlled by the Hampshire County Council of Governments. The HCOG is closing and there is a bill in the State Legislature to turn the control of these roads over to Mass DOT. That hasn't happened yet. Phil has discussed this with Representative Lindsay Sabadosa. Bill Jablonski supports the bill as it will open those roads to state funding.
- Correspondence reviewed:
Ginny Curtis, regarding hearing Cotton Tree Service, Inc., et al. v. Planning Board of the Town of Westhampton, et al., Hampshire Superior Court. Teri asked if Selectboard held a meeting to direct counsel on the hearing. Cheryl reported no, not specific to the hearing. Counsel is acting under standing Selectboard direction on the case. Further discussion to be held in executive session with counsel on June 8.

Teri reported she received notice that the town website posted the date of caucus incorrectly and forwarded the misprint to Cheryl. Cheryl reported she corrected the date upon receipt of notice.

- Reviewed the position of Planning Board Associate member. Phil reported the appointment should be made in consultation with the Planning Board. Position remains vacant.

Next meeting: 7:00 p.m., June 1, 2020.

Meeting adjourned at 9:45 p.m.

Approved by vote of the Selectboard at virtual meeting held June 15, 2020

Philip Dowling, Chair
Maureen Dempsey
Teri Anderson