



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

Minutes of June 1, 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 Deborah (KPLaw), Tom Martin & Robby Armenti (Board of Health), unknown "Galaxy S9".

Minutes were taken by Cheryl Provost.

- The Selectboard voted by roll call, 3-yay, 0-nay, to enter into Executive Session at 7:02 p.m., pursuant to G.L. c. 30A, section 21(a)(3), as the Chair declared that discussion in a public meeting may have detrimental effect on the town's potential litigating position with respect to the following litigation: Cotton Tree Service, Inc., et al. v. Planning Board of the Town of Westhampton, et al., Hampshire Superior Court, C.A. No. 1580 CV 00112 . Open session will resume at 7:30 p.m.

Adjourned Executive Session at 7:28 and returned to Open Session at 7:34 p.m.

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

Others present via zoom conference were Patty Cotton (Treasurer), Thomas Martin & Robby Armenti (Board of Health), unknown "Galaxy S9".

Minutes were taken by Cheryl Provost.

- COVID action:
Board of Health, Tom Martin reported:
 - 1) Thanks to Phil for taking the lead on the CARE grant funding application;
 - 2) need to review reopening recommendations;
 - 3) been doing public health work for years and has never been as discouraged as now after hearing today's update from the state. The Governor's office took the lead on reopening and the Dept. of Public Health is more in the background. The focus is directed more on the economy now than public health.Phil replied that there is a division from local Board of Health and State/Federal issues. Dealing with a local issue only would find the local Board of Health has a lot of pull. Maureen agreed with Phil that the local Board of Health has a lot of authority, she sees it in Northampton. Teri agreed with Phil and Maureen and encouraged Tom to not continue to feel discouraged. Phil added that the Selectboard and town appreciates everything he (Tom) and the Board of Health has done. Tom was thankful for words of encouragement and support and hopes to have new

perspective in coming days. At the moment he feels beat down by the state; however, has satisfaction with belief they have done a good job protecting people in Westhampton.

The recommendations of the Board of Health for reopening public buildings was reviewed (copy attached). Phil asked Tom the board's thoughts on conduct of the Town Caucus June 8. Tom recommended the use of a microphone or to spread out and have people take off their mask to talk. In his experience the caucus is lightly attended and brief. Teri made recommendation to hire a professional sound crew for town meeting and perhaps caucus as well. Discussed different options to secure sound crew. Phil spoke of the need to purchase a ZOOM account for Selectboard and perhaps other departments as well to use for general public service. Teri noted a business account is \$150.00 per year and suggested the number of accounts will be determined by the board meeting schedules. Overlapping meetings may require multiple accounts. Agreed a ZOOM account is needed for the Selectboard and directed Administrative Assistant, Cheryl Provost, to purchase one. The account is an approved expenditure of CARES funding. Discussed other options for departments, such as Microsoft Team and Skype. Cheryl reported the Tax Collector and Assessor's Assistant have been conducting business by email and phone and have not reported issues. Cheryl also reported no complaints from the public. She will consult with departments on the matter and report back to board. Discussion was held regarding the capacity of ZOOM meetings. Discussion was held regarding public notification process for reopening. Options considered were Bell Tower, mailings, Town website, postings in public locations.

Cheryl made recommendation formal action be taken on reopening of buildings. The public buildings are closed to the public by an order of the Board of Health and Selectboard. The caucus will be held at the highway garage June 8. Voter registration, early voting, and absentee voting will be conducted at the Town Hall. In order to open to the public a location of business must have a Control Plan on file and posters notifying visitors of such. Cheryl notified each department head in charge of a building of those requirements. Posters were also offered to them. One requirement in the Control Plan is training for employees on personal hygiene (hand washing), sanitizing, and social distancing. Procedure and control plan taken by the highway department, fire chief, chief of police, and EMS Coordinator have been reported at the Emergency Operations Center Meetings. Cheryl asked Tom if those procedures meet the training requirements of the state.

Tom replied the state is not making it a big training. He recommended providing information to employees through department heads and chairs of boards and committees to include links to brief videos available on the state website, handouts, and a notice of receipt to be signed by the employee and held on file. Tom also suggested there is no need to take formal action on opening when the Governor has begun phased in openings. Each department can follow the state plan.

Phil agreed the Selectboard should make a statement to this, particularly to the Town Hall and Annex.

Cheryl made recommendation the officials working remotely continue to do so, the annex remain closed to the public until staggered hours are established, conditions for distancing are established, and training is complete. There are five offices in that building and only the Assessor's office has a door, distancing will be the biggest challenge. She also made recommendation to purchase acrylic barriers to be used for election workers and any other office that makes request for one. Cheryl suggested that being the only staff working in the

Town Hall it's easy for her to open offices safely and maintain distance with minimal hours; 2 hours/week for Clerk and 2 hours/week for Administrative Assistant on separate days, or by appointment.

Phil invited Patty Cotton to join discussion.

Patty reported her concern is mostly for Tax Collector Anne Marie Knox. While conducting business with individuals they sit at the side of her desk.

Teri made recommendation for a staff rotation in the Annex.

Patty made recommendation the Annex take visitors by appointment only.

Cheryl suggested the Annex remain closed until reopening details are established.

Teri motioned to authorize Cheryl Provost to open the office of the Town Clerk and Administrative Assistant to the public as of June 3; masks required, social distancing required. Second by Phil. So moved by roll vote 3-yay, 0-nay.

Discussion was held regarding the opening of the highway garage with the caucus June 8. Attendees will be required to wear a facial mask or covering and maintain distance. They will be notified to refrain from using the department restroom.

- Annual Town Meeting Warrant review:

Polling hours of election to be 8a.m. to noon.

Article to fund shared services for a Building Commissioner. Phil reported Southampton voted to put on hold interviews for commissioner and enter discussions with Easthampton for shared commissioner services. Early discussions included Easthampton hiring an additional local inspector to cover their own overflow, Southampton, and Westhampton, with nothing conclusive from meetings. Phil received opinion from Tom Quinlan on the activity of Easthampton Building Department and the preliminary discussions for shared services. Phil is not confident the arrangement will work for Westhampton, leaving us faced with the difficulty of finding a commissioner. Teri mentioned taking a second look at the option to join Franklin Council of Government inspector program where they provide a commissioner with a local inspector. Discussion ensued regarding the role of commissioner. Teri will follow up with FRCOG with additional questions about the program.

Phil motioned to stop agreement with Southampton. Second by Maureen. So moved by roll vote 3-yay, 0-nay.

Teri motioned to approve article as amended to remove "agreement with Southampton". Second by Phil. So moved by roll vote 3-yay, 0-nay.

Discussed location and agreed to hold outdoors. Considered the athletic field of the regional high school. Options will be investigated.

Discussed the need for sound equipment adequate for an outdoor meeting. Teri will inquire with two sound companies she knows about a sound system for the meeting.

Phil motioned to accept all articles as presented, with location and time to be determined. Second by Maureen. So moved by roll vote 3-yay, 0-nay.

- Review of appointments:

Phil made recommendation to extend all current appointments until after Annual Town Election,

July 25. Teri disagreed, seeing no reason to wait, the seats could be filled as usual. Phil noted that appointments usually take place after the elections, with the newest elected Selectboard member having opportunity to participate. Teri reported she reached out to her list of officials and all confirmed an interest to be reappointed. Phil is hesitant to reappoint Wayne Parks for concern, in his opinion, that his actions have not always been in the best interest of the town and could potentially put the town in a position to defend such actions. Phil would like to publish the list of appointments to give opportunity to others to submit interest. Discussion ensued regarding forms of publishing the list. Options discussed were bulk mail, tax bills, Bell Tower, and town website. Further discussion to be held next meeting.

- Reviewed Financial Statements from and Representative Letters to Tom Scanlon and Associates for fiscal years 2018 & 2019. Research was completed on the STRAP grant. Payments are made through the state Cherry Sheet assessments and has been repaid in the amount of \$12,000.00 annually since 2019. It's included in the assessment budget line item. Payments are booked in the accountant's records and can be found in the annual report. Phil motioned to approve the Representative Letters to Tom Scanlon and Associates for audits of fiscal years 2018 & 2019. Second by Maureen. So moved by roll vote 3-yay, 0-nay

Teri suggested the need for a contingency plan in anticipation of potential reduction in state aid of up to 20% and if a proposal should be submitted to the Dept. of Revenue to allow a 1/12 budget until state aid is known. No action taken.

- The Selectboard voted by roll call, 3-yay, 0-nay, to enter into Executive Session at 9:17 p.m., pursuant to G.L. c. 30A, section 21(a)(3), as the Chair declared that discussion in a public meeting may have detrimental effect on the town's potential litigating position with respect to the following litigation: Cotton Tree Service, Inc., et al. v. Planning Board of the Town of Westhampton, et al., Hampshire Superior Court, C.A. No. 1580 CV 00112 . Open session will resume at following executive session.

Adjourned Executive Session and returned to Open Session at 9:34 p.m.

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

Minutes were taken by Cheryl Provost.

- Next meeting: 6:00 p.m., June 8, 2020.

Meeting adjourned at 9:35 p.m.

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

Philip Dowling, Chair
Maureen Dempsey
Teri Anderson

Westhampton Board of Health Reopening Recommendations

Intro: The purpose of this document to guide the Town of Westhampton through the process of opening Town buildings to the public while mitigating the risk of Covid 19 transmission to Town employees and the public.

The Board of Health stresses three important factors: 1) many carriers of the virus are asymptomatic 2) viral spread is significant before one becomes symptomatic 3) the risk of disease transmission is directly related to “viral load” exposure. “Viral Load” is best understood as being related generally to a number of factors, including total time of exposure, proximity to the exposure, exposure environment, and size of gatherings. It is worth noting that the State has placed a limit on gatherings of more than 10 people indoors. It is anticipated that this threshold will change when we enter Phase 2 around the middle of June.

Given these assumptions the Westhampton Board of Health makes the following suggestions:

Recommendations:

- Close the Town Annex buildings to all Board Meetings.
- Close the Select board/Administrator’s Office to all Board Meetings.
- Hold all Board Meetings in Large Room at Town Hall. Limit to 10 participants in the Hall and all others participating by phone. (Likely Phase 2 limit to 21)
- Provide a way to open Town Hall windows.
- Limit Town Hall activities to Board Meetings only (no extracurricular activities)
- Encourage phone or email contact with the public for routine business whenever possible
- When in person work business is to be conducted allow only a single person (or single household) into Town Offices at a time, requiring masks and all social distance measures for these interactions
- Provide sanitizer stations at multiple locations.
- Provide gloves and masks for the public who do not bring their own.
- Encourage Board Meetings be held outside when possible ,while maintaining all social distancing measures.
- Provide Professional teleconferencing services for Board members and the public to participate in Board Meetings from home.
- Consider limiting Board Meetings to 1 hour.
- Begin stepped up cleaning/sanitizing protocols following all Board meetings
- Follow State guidelines to keep closed to the public all non-essential town buildings (Library, Blacksmith Museum)
- Consider Public Health nurse for Town Meeting with temp check, mask and glove requirement, temp check and information outreach. Consider how this could be done quickly to minimize time contact.
- Have Boards designate a single person to access files in other offices (temporary clerk)
- Boards should not share office supplies.

- All Boards must keep a record of names and contact info for participants of public meetings for contact tracing purposes.
- Encourage use of bathrooms before coming to Town Hall for meetings (bathrooms are confined areas of potential high transmission).
- Place posters provided by DPH to inform the public of distancing practices and safety protocols
- Require Board chairs to sign a statement that they understand the State/Town protocols, have looked at the State website to train themselves on proper distancing practices and will take responsibility for ensuring that they are followed during their respective meetings.

To Do:

Get a professional teleconferencing system in place to be used by all Boards.

Remove grates from windows for opening.

Mix toxic sanitizing solutions in a large batch (for safety).

Work out best traffic flow for meetings in Town Hall(remove extra chairs/piano) and place directional arrows on floor.

Place on floor chair boxes to ensure six-foot distancing.