



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

Minutes of June 8, 2020

The meeting convened at 6:00 p.m.

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

Others present via zoom conference were Dave White (Chief of Police), David Antosz (Fire Chief), Robby Armenti (Board of Health), and Bill Tracy (Moderator).

Minutes were taken by Cheryl Provost.

- **Ambulance Agreement:**

Discussed the clause that states Easthampton will name Westhampton as additional insured. Easthampton discovered they will be charged by their insurance company to do so, therefore will adjust the cost to Westhampton accordingly if the clause remains. Discussion ensued regarding past ambulance agreements and insurance coverage for EMT's and paramedics. David Antosz reported that past agreements did not include the additional coverage. It's the only portion of the agreement holding up approval. Westhampton town counsel had made recommendation to add the clause for additional coverage if an incident occurs within Westhampton, as standard language. Other revisions to the agreement made by counsel were accepted by Easthampton. Phil made recommendation to remove the clause that would require Easthampton to name Westhampton as additional insured.

Teri motioned to approve the agreement and authorize Phil to sign on behalf of the Selectboard. Second by Maureen. So moved by roll vote, 3-yay, 0-nay.

- **COVID action:**

David Antosz reported he has daily conversations with MEMA. They are trying to get communities to go through their regular vendors for purchases of masks, gloves, and sanitizer.

Dave White reported the state released the requirements for schools to open in the fall. Class capacity is reduced and masks will be required. He questioned if the elementary school will receive support from the regional office in securing masks or if the town should begin to secure them.

Phil provided an update on the CARES grant application. He asked if emergency officers are being compensated for time. The Town Accountant set up receipt and expenditure accounts for CARES and FEMA funding. Phil suggested a financial team be in place to track the funds and expenditures. Maureen reported she spoke with COA Coordinator, Amy Landau. She is putting more time into the job and asked how she will get funds. Phil remarked that she should be told to track time spent on COVID issues. Teri added the same should be done with all employees. So noted. Phil suggested to move forward with Assistant Town Clerk position to be paid through the COVID account. That person could assist with election process and other COVID related

tasks and perhaps become interested in staying on if the position develops into more. Teri noted that only COVID related tasks can be paid from the Cares Act funds.

- Annual Town Meeting Warrant review:

Discussion was held regarding location for the Annual Town Meeting. Phil made a recommendation not to use the regional school and move forward with outdoors at the Westhampton Elementary School. So moved.

Discussed logistics of holding an outdoor meeting; topics included parking, seating, restroom facilities, and sound. Teri has two contacts for sound, Phil has one, and Bill Tracy made recommendation to contact a fourth. One of Teri's contacts is providing sound for town meetings, has all the equipment, uses wireless mics and sanitizes and replaces the windscreen on them between uses, can offer a stage for officials. The other has not done this type of event and may have to rent some equipment. Phil's contact installed the sound system in the Town Hall and is providing sound for town meetings. His usual business is concerts and large venues. He uses wired mics and will wipe them between uses. Phil knows him and has faith he will do a good job. All of the vendors will be asked to give a price upon receipt of event details. Phil will review Westhampton Elementary School with Bill Jablonski and Bill Tracy and design the meeting set and seating arrangements to be used to seek quotes for sound.

Phil made recommendation that the school will be closed and portable toilets be provided rather than restrooms in the school. Cleaning between uses will be necessary.

Discussion ensued regarding date and time of meeting. Once the warrant is posted the Moderator holds the authorization to open the meeting and postpone to a later time if needed due to weather. Phil made a motion that the Annual Town Meeting be held at 10 a.m. on June 27, outdoors at the Westhampton Elementary School, with a rain date of 6 p.m. on June 29. Second by Teri. So moved by roll vote 3-yay, 0-nay.

- Phil returned discussion to CARES funding. He sees a need for additional janitorial services with re-opening. He suggested using funds from the program for additional janitorial services at the elementary school and other public buildings; and perhaps cleaning restrooms during Annual Town Meeting. Phil will look into how it would work. Phil suggested a Select Board and Finance Committee member manage the CARES Act funding and asked Teri to take on this role. To hold further discussion at a future meeting.

Adjourned meeting at 7:00 p.m. and will return in person at 8:00 p.m. at the Westhampton Highway Dept. garage, 58 Hathaway Road, following the town caucus.

Meeting resumed at 8:00 p.m.

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

Others present were Bill Jablonski (highway superintendent), Brigid O'Riordan (elementary school committee), Bill Tracy (Moderator), John Zimmerman, Steve Holt (emergency management).

Minutes were taken by Cheryl Provost.

Warrants were reviewed, approved and authorized Cheryl to sign by vote 2-yay, 0-abstain (Teri) for:

Payroll: \$80,263.81

Vendor: \$97,057.54

- Brigid O’Riordan requested on behalf of the Westhampton Elementary School Committee to access town counsel. The school lawyer is shared with the entire district. The committee is seeking guidance on behalf of the town in response to notice that Southampton is considering leaving the union. Such action will change percentage of their vote in the district. Options are being discussed with Williamsburg to balance the votes. The school committee is seeking town counsel to see the whole matter and provide opinion as to the benefit to Westhampton’s best interest. So granted.
- Reviewed the contract for recyclables and solid waste hauling and disposal from the transfer station. Teri asked if there’s provision that that the price will reduce if the prevailing wage is lowered. Bill provided clarification that if the appeal to the prevailing increase holds and the hourly rate is reduced then the fee will be reduced per trucking by that same amount. Phil motioned to approve the contract between the Town of Westhampton and Waste Management of Massachusetts, Inc., 600 New Ludlow Road, South Hadley, MA 01075, for recyclables and solid waste hauling and disposal for a period of 3 years beginning July 2020 and ending June 30 2023. Second by Maureen. So moved 3-yay, 0-nay.
- Town meeting logistics continued:
Seating to include sections:
 1. with folding chairs
 2. accessible seating
 3. for those that bring chairs
 4. for those not wearing facial covering
 Minimum of two portable handicap accessible toilets, cleaned between uses
 Use of microphones, cleaned between uses
 Facial covering required; face masks to be provided by the Board of Health for those without
 Volunteers to assist with parking, seating, signing in
- Phil reported Southampton and Easthampton continue negotiations for a shared building commissioner and made recommendation to continue discussion at next meeting. Discussion was held regarding Westhampton’s role in an agreement for shared services between Southampton and Easthampton. Teri had submitted written notes via email to the board from her follow up conversation with Bob Dean and reported on inspection services from Franklin Regional Council of Governments; permit and inspection records are needed to request an assessment. That data is available and will be collected to send to FRCOG. It was clarified that FRCOG would need to perform both the Commissioner and the inspector role. It is too hard to supervise a remote inspector. Also they would likely need to charge for travel due to the distance. Also discussed revisiting the former set up with a commissioner, potentially Tom Quinlan, on a stipend overseeing a local inspector; this arrangement could be utilized on a temporary basis while moving forward to seek options. Another option to be investigated is Pioneer Valley Planning Commission.
- Correspondence:
-an email from Stacey Jenkins was read into the meeting as follows:

“Thank you for all that you are doing during this challenging time in our

world. It appears that our country continues to experience more and more challenges.

Perhaps this has happened and it simply has not made it to my eyes yet, but I'm writing to ask if the Westhampton Select Board, and perhaps other town departments, would consider making a statement that denounces the brutal and deadly actions taken by the Minneapolis Police Department that led to the death of George Floyd. As I have seen more and more organizations make public statements regarding this, including some of our neighboring towns and police departments, it occurs to me the importance of our town weighing in.

Our town officials' silence is a message. And I don't believe that is the message that needs to be sent, or that is intended by our town. This is not the time for town officials to shy away from a statement with fear it will be seen as a political statement. This is how we model moving this conversation forward.

If such a statement is made by either the Select Board or police department, I am happy to share it on the Facebook page that many residents use to share information. (...and while I'm at it, I'd also suggest that a social media presence can be very helpful for towns to communicate with its residents! I've seen some very effective use of Facebook accounts by Williamsburg town officials.)

Thanks for your time, and thanks for your willingness to give your time to support our town.”

Discussion ensued regarding appropriate action. Teri made recommendation the Selectboard make a statement in collaboration with the Westhampton Police Department. She suggested the statement include a town policy that addresses functions of the town related to the topic, if one exists. Phil confirmed the police department has a policy from 2005 that needs to be updated. Phil made recommendation to make a statement that we, the Selectboard, denounce use of excessive force by our police officers. He added that Westhampton has an incredible police department. Maureen and Teri concurred and agreed the statement is to be in the form of a resolution by the board. Teri will draft such.

-reviewed the audit management letters from Scanlon and Associates for fiscal years 2018 & 2019. Questions and recommendations in these letters and regarding the audit to be reviewed with Town Accountant. He will be asked to attend the next Selectboard meeting via Zoom to discuss.

- Next meeting: 7:00 p.m., June 15, 2020.

Meeting adjourned at 8:52 p.m.

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

Philip Dowling, Chair
Maureen Dempsey
Teri Anderson