



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

Minutes of June 29, 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 Bill Jablonski (highway superintendent), Dave White (Chief of Police), David Blakesley and Robby Armenti (Board of Health), Patty Cotton (Treasurer), Thomas Quinlan (Building Commissioner), Todd Alexander, Walter Marek, Michael Demary, Mary Powers, and Ginny Curtis.

Minutes were taken by Cheryl Provost.

Phil opened meeting by giving thanks to Bill Jablonski and his crew (highway dept) for all their work at town meeting. Maureen and Teri concurred. Phil added it was a remarkable experience to see when everyone pulls together.

- **COVID-19:**
 - Dave White reported he is waiting to see what schools come out with for reopening plans.
 - Phil reported grant process is ongoing
- **Building Commissioner and Inspectors:**

Phil reviewed appointment of Thomas Quinlan on temporary basis as commissioner and Todd Alexander and Walter Marek as temporary Local Building Inspectors. Cheryl explained what is needed for Todd and Walter to begin. There needs to be a job description of Temporary Local Building Inspector, swearing in, and an agreement. They will be required to complete new employee forms before receiving pay. The Town Clerk is required to file a New Employee Report Form with the state. They also need to complete the online Mass. Conflict of Interest Training and submit Certificate of Completion to the Town Clerk. She encouraged them to begin working with Tom to start the process. Patty Cotton requested receipt of salary amount to pay them. So noted. Wally asked if the town will be pursuing online permitting. Phil replied, yes, Cheryl and Tom will work together and look into it. Temporary agreements and job description to be reviewed July 20.
- **Phil asked for any other matters under discussion of COVID-19:**

Robby Armenti reported there is one more confirmed case in town.
- **Highway Dept. Updates, Superintendent Bill Jablonski reported:**
 - Phil reported that the Highway Crew Search Committee met and interviewed two candidates for the position. Both are qualified. The committee recommends Michael (Mike) Demary. Phil checked his references and all were excellent. The interview went well, with his skill sets and

what he can bring to the department. Bill added that Mike has a lot of skills on his application that fits with the department. He should be an asset to the town. Teri asked Mike why he is interested in the job. Mike replied he wants a stable job to stay at, grow, and learn new skills where he can apply the skills he has. Maureen reported she read through his resume and with Phil's report of good reference checks she is in favor of employing Mike. Phil motioned to hire Michael Demary, with his acceptance of offer. Mike accepted the position and reported he will need to give two weeks' notice at his current position. So noted. Second by Teri. So moved by vote 3-yay, 0-nay.

-Reviewed a draft schedule to search for permanent Highway Foreman. Scott Tirrell is Acting Foreman until August 13. Approved to post the position internally. Deadline for submittal of interest is July 16. Names will be reviewed July 20. Phil Dowling, Bill Jablonski, and Cheryl Provost will continue as the Foreman Search Committee.

-Phil reported the water line between the Public Safety Complex and Hampshire Regional High School needs to be identified for size and pressure. The water pressure at the complex was low. The engineers believe there is not enough water volume to supply the complex. Phil provided the contact information of the engineers to the highway department.

- Town meeting results were reviewed. Phil expressed town meeting was pretty clean. The budget went through; will have to revisit after state numbers are in.

Article 27 on the protection of pollinators and their habitat was the most discussed. He asked Teri and Maureen how they would like to proceed to gain information on the matter. Town meeting discussion expressed interest in having town hearings on the subject. Maureen replied that people approached her with interest in working on it. Pheobe Mitchell, Barbara Pelissier, and Marilyn Witherell. Phil asked Maureen to get people together who this will impact the most. Everyone he spoke to is open-minded about it. Maureen will get names together of people to start a committee and talk more on it July 6.

Teri made recommendation to ask departments to constrain spending until state numbers are in. She has concerns there will be cuts to state aid which may result in making cuts to the budget approved at town meeting. Teri asked if purchase of the highway dept. pickup truck can wait. Bill replied that he will be ordering off the state bid and delivery is backed up 6-8 months which puts delivery in late winter/early spring. Dave White reported that the three department heads (highway, police, and fire) got together about three months ago and discussed controlling their budgets and agreed to restrain from unnecessary year-end spending. Funds will be turned back to the general fund. Cheryl concurred, and added that approximately \$170,000 of non-appropriated free cash left over from FY19 will roll into the FY20 certification. There are also funds in the stabilization account. She gave reminder that the purchase of the truck cannot proceed until passage of a debt exclusion question at annual town meeting July 25. Teri referred to a notice from the Dept. of Revenue that the state is maintaining spending in July and August at the FY20 rate. She thinks the town should heed that warning. Discussion ensued regarding where cuts may be made. Cuts from state aid may be seen in education (chapter 70) and/or unrestricted general government aid. Chapter 90 funds are a bond and presumably won't be affected. Local revenue is residential, the town does not rely on local food or gas taxes or revenue from business. Local cash flow is reportedly steady. No further discussion.

- Bids for replacement of roof of town hall and annex are due July 6. Maureen will open and read aloud into the meeting.

- The following appointments were reviewed and approved for terms ending June 30, 2021, unless otherwise noted:
Fire Chief and Forest Warden, David Antosz
Emergency Management Director, Steve Holt
Emergency Medical Services Coordinator, Mark Gould
Chief of Police, Dave White
Police Officers, Floyd Fisher, Spencer Hotz, Matthew Malo, Jeff Fish
COA Coordinator, Amy Landau
Board of Health, David Blakesley (3 years)
Highway Superintendent, William Jablonski (with probationary period ending August 13, 2020)
- Mary Powers was recognized and she asked what the executive session was for. Phil replied it is to approve minutes from previous sessions, however, no minutes were submitted so there will be no executive session.
- Teri revisited discussion held June 22 regarding parties at Tob Hill Road. She reported she ran into a resident and talked about it. There are 20-30 cars that go by 10 p.m. to 3 a.m. There's screaming, yelling, and trash left behind. The resident reported picking up beer cans. There's a fire pit and fireworks have been lit off. Would like to see them clean up. Teri is concerned about fires and doesn't want the situation to get out of control. Phil noted that Chief White left the meeting but would like his input. Maureen gave reminder that Chief White directed the resident to the Selectboard. Bill reported that the fire department removed a bunch of pallets from there. The police department is trying to crack down on it. Parties there go in cycles and Chief White is working on it. There are different spots and if the parties aren't there then they're at Rhodes Road. Teri asked what the property is designated as. Bill replied that the old reservoir was up there. Phil added that when the water commission dissolved the property was turned over to the town. Discussion ensued regarding the status of the property and road maintenance. Teri has concerns of liability. Phil confirmed it will be looked into. Maureen explained that there are three parcels associated, with one on the left and two on the right. Robby expressed concerns from public health perception with people getting together and potentially getting sick. Ginny Curtis reported the property is conservation land as shown on Assessors map. Discussion to be continued.
- Review of Anti-Racism Resolution:
Teri asked where the resolution is to be displayed. She would like to include boards, committees and department, ask for their input, and consider an advisory committee. It is posted to Selectboard page of the official Westhampton website. Phil supports posting it to the home page as well and it will be published in the minutes. Phil suggested having employees attend diversity trainings. Cheryl suggested that Mass. Interlocal Insurance Assoc. (MIIA) may offer webinars or trainings on the subject. Discussion to continue.
- Phil reported to Bill that he had a conversation with Dept. of Transportation regarding county roads. They want nothing to do with them. Considering to contact KPLaw and ask if they have previous experience converting county roads to town. Bill concurred. No further discussion.
- Cheryl asked the board to consider an additional final FY20 warrant to be processed July 13,

outside of normal meeting schedule. Phil motioned to authorize a warrant for processing final FY20 invoices on July 13 and to make determination for authorization of approval on July 6. Second by Maureen. So voted.

- Chery reported she has 3 vacation remaining from fiscal year 20 and requested authorization to take on July 1. So moved.
- Next meeting: 7:00 p.m., July 6, 2020.

Meeting adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

Approved by vote of the Selectboard at virtual meeting held July 20, 2020

Philip Dowling, Chair
Maureen Dempsey
Teri Anderson