



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

Minutes of November 9, 2020
Meeting held via ZOOM

The meeting convened at 7:00 p.m.

Present from Selectboard were Phil Dowling (Chair), Maureen Dempsey, and Teri Anderson. Others present were Bill Jablonski (Highway Superintendent), Thomas Martin (Board of Health), Susan Bronstein (Covid Coordinator), Patty Cotton (Treasurer), Jeff Brooks, Dolores Thornhill, Dale Kasal, Shelby Macri (Country Journal), and Angelica Core (The Reminder). Minutes were taken by Cheryl Provost.

- COVID-19 actions:
Board of Health, Tom Martin reported:
 - virus ramping up in our area, 300 plus cases in the commonwealth
 - situation statewide is similar to what was experienced in May
 - Governor issued new restrictions and guidelines, Tom provided an overview
 - more positive cases and close contacts within the Foothills District
 - monitoring close contacts in Westhampton
 - the district hired a monitor/enforcement officer
 - working on updated recommendations for Hampshire Regional High School for the second quarter which begins later in November
 - working on recommendations for the Westhampton Public Library
 - will be working on recommendations on activities at the town hall. Tom acknowledged that recommendations are further complicated by the revised Governor's restrictions. Discussion ensued regarding the Governor's restrictions on recreational activities. Considered what other towns may be allowing and determined inquiries to that will be helpful. Phil motioned to put off any decision on use of town hall for recreational purposes until the next meeting. Second by Teri. So moved by vote 3-yeas, 0-nay.

Tom reported that Matt Hurd will start cleaning at the Town Hall this week on Friday. Phil asked if the library was notified of the extra help and if they have any needs. Phil asked Bill if he needs extra help at the garage. Bill replied the crew is taking care of the garage and declined additional help.

Tom continued, the Board of Health extensively discussed HVAC systems at their last meeting. They reviewed the proposal from Sandri Energy. Board is in general agreement to not recommend any unproven systems, including ultraviolet. The board does believe the MERV 13 filters are proven 86% effective and recommend using them where systems will accept and increase fresh air intake as much as possible. Discussed various systems and considered changes to municipal buildings. Phil reported he will Sandri Energy for a breakdown of the individual

components and buildings.

Bill suggested no changes be made to the systems at town hall. He made note that Cheryl is the only employee working in the offices. Boards and committees meet in the hall with windows open and can continue to do that. The annex is closed to the public, he suggested it remain so. Phil

Tom continued, the food bank is open at the church Saturdays 9:00 a.m.-noon and Wednesdays 5:00-8:00 p.m., on trial through the end of the year.

Covid Coordinator, Susan Bronstein reported the town was approved to receive \$116,525.00 in CARES funding for the period through December 30, 2020.

- Highway Department updates, Bill Jablonski reported:
 - working on cleaning leaves on dirt roads
 - got plows and snow equipment ready
 - plowed on the hills
 - helped Clerk set up for voting
 - working on getting dirt roads ready for winter

Phil requested copies of invoices from the elementary school paving project for reporting requirements of the Shared Streets Grant Program. Bill reported all the invoices were submitted on one warrant, he confirmed he will send copied to Phil.

Bill continued:

-Sandri Energy is doing annual service of systems on November 16th and 17th.

- Treasurer, Patty Cotton reported she has been working with a mediator with the tax title attorney and attorney of Loretta Frietag on negotiations of payment for a lien and outstanding taxes of 225 Northwest Road. L. Frietag can make a payment of \$30,000.00 to be put against the lien of the property. The amount outstanding is currently \$35,275.00 and approximately an additional \$6,000.00 in fees they're responsible to pay. They also owe first quarter taxes of FY2021, approximately another \$800. Patty is looking at taking the \$30,000.00 payment and entering in a two-three year agreement to pay off the balance. If they default, the town will not be required to go through tax title court but can take the property. Patty requested input from the board. All agreed with the described plan.

Teri asked Patty to speak to her interest in the position of Tax Collector. Patty replied she would like to move into the position of Tax Collector and give up the position of Treasurer. Teri asked how many hours the job is. Patty replied all 3 (Accountant, Collector, Treasurer) are 10-12, but take more hours. She noted that a large part of her decision is there is no backup for the Treasurer, adding that none of the positions have backup. The Treasurer is responsible to submit payroll on time. Without backup there is no one that can cover if needed. Patty to complete an application for the position of Tax Collector so the Selectboard can go through the hiring process.

Phil opened discussion to change search from a Collector to search for a Treasurer. The board moved to close the search for Collector and open a search for a Treasurer. Posting to be

immediate with a review of the job description to follow. Patty reported that Anne Marie Knox, Tax Collector, agreed to provide training to Patty. Approved funding from the Selectboard Expense Account to pay for it, with future discussion to be considered for a Request for Transfer from Reserve Fund.

Teri made recommendation to begin a review of salaries in preparation of budget cycle. So noted.

- Town Hall Roofing Project, Cheryl reported there is no sign of the contractors at town hall. Phil will contact Art Pichette for an update.
- Town Property and Energy Assessment Committee. Phil reported the committee reviewed proposals of lighting upgrades and voted to recommend the Selectboard accept the proposal from Earthlight. The town portion may come from funding through Green Communities or paid to Eversource over time. Phil noted that the town cost in Prism's proposal is much greater than the other two proposals. Results of proposals are:

Lighting Upgrade Estimates

	Highway Project			Town Hall & Annex Project			Library Project		
	Cost	Eversource	Town Cost	Cost	Eversource	Town Cost	Cost	Eversource	Town Cost
Prism	49,425.00	6,618.00	42,807.00	22,337.00	1,644.00	20,693.00	28,642.00	1,818.00	26,824.00
World Energy*	33,334.00	11,666.00	21,667.00	10,151.00	3,727.00	6,423.00	10,521.00	2,630.00	7,891.00
Earthlight	33,521.00	22,696.00	10,825.00	10,810.00	9,410.00	1,399.00	11,379.00	9,705.00	1,674.00

*World Energy Highway proposal includes the Transfer Station

- Green Communities, Phil reported he submitted a request for funds through Green Communities for lighting upgrades to the town hall, annex, library, and highway garage.
- Town Clerk updates, Cheryl Provost reported the election went smoothly with no complaints received during polling hours. There are 1312 registered voters and 1199 ballots were cast. Of those, 645 were early votes. One vote by mail ballot was received after November 3 and is included in total, having been postmarked mailed on November 3. Cheryl acknowledged the Elections Division and Secretary of the Commonwealth for their support and dissemination of information. She also gave credit to Patty Cotton and Susan Bronstein for their assistance with the initial processing of vote by mail ballots, the highway department for their assistance with set up, and all the workers and volunteers to make the entire election process a success.

- Administrative Assistant, Cheryl Provost reported she continued to increase hours over the past couple of weeks; many spent on election, with over 80 hours total. She is at full duty.
- Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Program update, Phil reported he is attending a meeting Thursday with Weston & Sampson and the state. Amanda from Weston and Sampson submitted the required quarterly report which was due the end of September. Reported was that the town received funding and hired Weston & Sampson.
- Request for hearing on nuisance dog at 225 Northwest Road. A hearing will be scheduled around the availability of the Animal Control Officer and required timing of notification to the complainant, dog owner, and public. It is not to be scheduled at a routine meeting of the Selectboard.
- Sustainable Materials Recovery Grant notice of award and contract were reviewed. Bill reported he is working with Kathleen Casey from Hilltown Resource Management Coop. to use some of the funds to purchase another shed to store styrafoam to decrease the number of pickups needed. Teri motioned to accept the Sustainable Materials Recovery Program Municipal Grant for \$5,600.00 and approve the contract. Second by Phil. So moved by vote 3-yeas, 0-nay.
- Designation of Special Employee to be discussed at future meeting.
- Anti-racism Resolution action:
No public input has been received. The request for public input is currently published on the Selectboard page of the Town website and is to be moved to the home page.
- Safety Complex Building Committee, Phil reported the committee is meeting Wednesday night. They have a target to have plans open for bids on November 20. Bidders will have until mid-January for filed sub-bids. Once numbers are in hand they will look to go to town meeting and election for funding approval. There are three things the committee is spending time letting others know; interest rates are down, contractors are looking for work, and the timing of construction meshes with the onset of Montague Road Solar PILOT. If the project is delayed interest rates and cost of construction will likely increase.
- Correspondence was reviewed:
 - Mass trails grant round, no discussion
 - Mass Interlocal Insurance Association Employee Assistance Resources. A notice received as a reminder the program is offered free through the town's insurance. Information how to receive counseling services or sign up for various trainings was provided.
 - Hilltown CDC notice of Transportation and Climate Initiative: Clean Transportation for Rural Communities, a multi-state compact to reduce carbon emissions and invest in better, cleaner, more equitable transportation at 7:00 p.m., November 10.
 - Pioneer Valley Planning Commission notice that the Housing Choice Small Town Capital Grant Program is open to towns with population under 7,000. Teri offered to talk to PVPC about a feasibility study for construction of affordable housing in town. So moved.

- Teri reported she is interested in attending the Mass Municipal Assoc. Annual Meeting and Trade Show, being held virtually. Registration will be paid through the Selectboard Expense Account.
- Phil reported he and Tom Quinlan, Building Commissioner will conduct a site visit at 0 Main Road Friday and will report back an update at the next meeting.
- Additional discussion was held regarding heat/ventilation systems.

Items approved for signatures:

- Chapter 90 Reimbursement Request in the amount of \$127,475.98 for paving Southampton Road
- Chapter 90 Reimbursement Request in the amount of \$40,154.67 for chip seal of various roads
- Sustainable Materials Recovery Program Municipal Grant Contract for \$5,600.00

Minutes of October 13, 2020 were reviewed and approved by vote 3-yay, 0-nay.

Warrants were reviewed and approved by vote 3-yay, 0-nay for:

Payrolls: \$83,694.22

Vendor: \$35,587.20

- Next meeting: 7:00 p.m., November 23, 2020.

Meeting adjourned at 9:08 p.m.

Approved by vote of the Selectboard at virtual meeting held November 23, 2020

Phil Dowling
Maureen Dempsey
Teri Anderson