



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

Minutes of February 1, 2021  
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 Robby Armenti & Tom Martin (Board of Health), Susan Bronstein (Covid Coordinator), Ben Warren (Moderator), Patty Cotton (Tax Collector), Eric Weiss (PVPC). Minutes were taken by Cheryl Provost.

- COVID-19 actions:
  - Board of Health, Tom Martin reported:
    - currently 3 households with 4-5 cases
    - 50 positive cases in 25 households in town overall since tracking began last year. Total amounts to 5.5% of total households and 3% of total population.
    - the public health nurse conducting contact tracing for the district complained more the past couple of weeks about problems with the state Community Tracing Collaborative. The program assists with overflow of public health nursing requirements of municipalities throughout the state. It handles health departments that did not set up their own community tracing public health nursing operations and overflow where limited resources exist. The Foothills Health District board reached out to local representatives seeking strong messaging moving forward to Dept. of Public Health and state officials that the program is not working for us. Representative Lindsay Sabadosa was helpful getting the message out. A meeting was held with Community Tracing Collaborative last Friday to address the problems.
    - Westhampton Elementary School proceeding with pool testing through a pilot state program. No other schools in the district opted in.
    - vaccination information was posted to town website by Cheryl with information provided by Robby
    - stage 2 of vaccinations started today. Tom is observing Northampton Senior Center Wednesday where many of Westhampton residents are expected to go.

Phil reported he is meeting at Hampshire Regional High School at 1:00 on Friday (Feb. 5) with head custodian and sound company to discuss town meeting set up. Bill Jablonski, highway superintendent will also be there. Phil asked if someone from the Board of Health wants to join. Tom accepted offer.

Robby Armenti thanked Cheryl for posting vaccination information to the website. The information is accurate and up-to-date. Updates to come weekly. Vaccination appointments still available. Amy Landau, COA Coordinator has also posted a lot and stays in contact for updates.

Tom reported local legislatures secured a lot more vaccinations for western Mass then were

originally slated for us. Robby added that an additional 1,500 at UMass and 1,000 at Northampton vaccinations were received. She also reported Northampton is seeking volunteers. Volunteers are eligible for a vaccination.

Covid Coordinator, Susan Bronstein reported need all invoices through December 31 at end of the month.

- Treasurer and Tax Collector updates, Patty Cotton reported:
  - doing a lot of catch up still. Anne Marie putting hours.
  - Ira Brezinsky was starting today but did not make it in due to snow. He has been shadowing Patty/training past couple weeks.

Maureen asked for an update on the issues with the tax bills and if a lot of tax bills are effected or just a few. Patty replied they're still working on it.

Phil reported he had a conversation with the engineer of Montague Road solar. It's up and running as of December 31. They need to notify the town within 14 days. Discussion ensued regarding the notice requirement. Cheryl will follow up with the Assessors.

- Eric Weiss, Pioneer Valley Planning Commission presented information on the Compact Community Cabinet and District Local Technical Assistance Grant Programs. There are two portions of the Compact Community Cabinet; 1) Efficiency and Regionalization, 2) Best Practices. Pioneer Valley Planning Commission offers assistance to municipalities with the application process through their District Local Technical Assistance Program. Discussion ensued regarding assistance with financial structure and human resources. E Weiss confirmed that Pioneer Valley Planning Commission is providing municipal services to fill in the void following the dissolvent of Hampshire Council of Governments and made note they offer an accounting service. Two other municipalities are interested in regional human resources services and he expects interest to come from more towns. E Weiss explained the District Local Technical Assistance Grant Program application deadline is extended to February 12.
- Ben Warren was recognized. He asked if there's anything he can do to help with town meeting plans. Phil told him of the meeting Friday and invited him. Ben is looking forward to getting started as Moderator.
- Special Town Election hours were reviewed. Maureen made a motion to have polling hours from 8:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m. Second by Phil. So moved by roll call vote:  
Phil-aye  
Maureen-aye  
Teri-aye
- Special Town Meeting schedule and warrant was reviewed. Phil made motion to hold the February 27 Special Town Meeting at Hampshire Regional High School, in the parking lot. Second by Maureen. So moved by roll call vote:  
Phil-aye  
Maureen-aye

Teri-aye

- Public Safety Complex Building Committee update, Phil reported: Committee meeting Wednesday. Working on flyers, postcard, video, and setting up dates for Zoom and in person informational meetings.
  - Budget items for fiscal year 2022 proposals were reviewed:
    - Selectboard Expenses \$5,800.00. Request is level from FY2021. Phil motioned to propose the request to Finance Committee as submitted. Second by Maureen. So moved by roll call vote:  
Phil-aye  
Maureen-aye  
Teri-aye
    - Town Office Expenses \$28,610.00. Request is an increase of \$37.00 from FY2021. Phil motioned to propose the request to Finance Committee as submitted. Second by Teri. So moved by roll call vote:  
Phil-aye  
Maureen-aye  
Teri-aye
    - Miscellaneous:
      - Counsel Fees \$20,000.00. Request is level from FY2021.
      - Memorial Day \$200.00. Request is level from FY2021.
      - Reserve Fund \$10,000.00. Request is a decrease of \$5,000.00 from FY2021. Finance Committee controls the Reserve Fund and will make a recommendation.
      - Town Hall and Annex Repairs \$0.00. Request is a decrease of \$600.00 from FY2021.
      - 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary \$0.00. Request is level from FY2021.
- Phil motioned to propose the requests to Finance Committee as submitted. Second by Maureen. So moved by roll call vote:  
Phil-aye  
Maureen-aye  
Teri-aye
- IT Support \$15,272.00. Request is an increase of \$4,164.00 or 37%. Request includes an additional \$4,000.00 for scheduled equipment upgrades. Phil motioned to propose the request to Finance Committee as submitted. Second by Teri. So moved by roll call vote:  
Phil-aye  
Maureen-aye  
Teri-aye
- pay rates were reviewed. Phil supported an overall 2.5% increase, others concurred. Department requests received from Town Clerk, Building Inspectors, COA Coordinator were reviewed. Further review of pay rates will be held February 16.
- Animal Control Officer & Inspector of Animals shared service update: Teri reported the proposed Northampton Animal Control Officer Assistant salary increased to \$28.10/hourly. Based on 10 hours weekly the total for Westhampton would be \$14,000.00 annually. The approximate 46 barn inspections take about 1-2 hours each costing a range of \$1200-\$2500.

Combined total \$15,000.00-\$16,000.00. Discussed having a small base fee for cost sharing of payroll expenses and pay for hours used up to so many hours. Questions if on-call person it may be harder to hire someone based on demand services.

Also need to consider what happens when that person is not working. In Northampton the police officers pick up stray dogs and bring them to the shelter.

Impoundment fees are incurred for animals held. Owners are responsible for the fees when they pick up dog. The town is only responsible if the dog is not claimed.

Position will not be posted right away in Northampton until their budget is worked out. Pay in area towns to be researched and further discussion to be held in future meetings.

- Annual Town Report. Phil and Cheryl will work on Selectboard report. Phil motioned to dedicate the 2020 Annual Town Report to David Blakesley. Second by Maureen. So moved by roll call vote:

Phil-aye

Maureen-aye

Teri-aye

Phil made recommendation for cover photo (winter scene of center). So moved.

- Town Clerk search update. Scheduled an interview for 7:00 p.m., February 8.
- COA grant for Fiscal Year 2021 was reviewed. Teri motioned to accept the grant. Second by Maureen. So moved by roll call vote:  
Phil-aye  
Maureen-aye  
Teri-aye
- Anti-racism resolution: Teri reported she attended the MMA Annual Meeting and workshops on diversity. She intends to type up some notes from the workshop to share with board and incorporate what was learned into the document.
- Correspondence was reviewed:  
Discussed method of response to letter from Cathryn Hondorp. Teri proposed to draft a response and review with board. Phil would like the opportunity to thoroughly go through the response and made recommendation to discuss in executive session. The letter from Hondorp is to be sent to town counsel for review.
- Follow up from grant discussion with Eric Weiss. Discussed whether to move forward with application for District Local Technical Assistance for HR services or apply directly to the state for a grant to do a manual and salary scale. Discussed current condition of HR within school and town and what services may be needed. Agreed to have Teri draft an application for District Local Technical Assistance to be reviewed for approval at the next meeting.
- Cheryl reported that if winter storm weather continues the highway department will need authorization to deficit spend the snow removal account.

Minutes of January 19, 2021 were reviewed and approved as revised by roll vote 3-yeas, 0-nay.  
Minutes of January 26, 2021 were reviewed and approved as written by roll vote 3-yeas, 0-nay.

Warrants were reviewed and approved by roll call vote:

Phil Dowling-aye

Maureen Dempsey-aye

Teri Anderson-aye

Payroll: \$88,104.11

Vendor: \$432,211.72

Special Town Meeting February 27, 2021

Next meeting: 7:00 p.m., February 16, 2021.

Adjourned meeting at 9:20 p.m.

Approved by vote of the Selectboard at virtual meeting held February 16, 2021.

Phil Dowling

Maureen Dempsey

Teri Anderson