



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

Minutes of January 6, 2020

The meeting convened at 7:00 p.m.

Present from Selectboard were Phil Dowling, Maureen Dempsey, and Teri Anderson. Others present were Bill Jablonski, Patty Cotton (Treasurer), Dave White (Chief of Police), David Blakesley, Scott Tirrell, Steve Holt, Barbara Cook, and Shelby Macri (Country Journal). Minutes were taken by Cheryl Provost.

Warrants were reviewed, approved by vote, and signed for:

Payroll: \$81,422.09

Vendor: \$50,732.53

Minutes of December 23 were reviewed and approved by vote of 3-yay, 0-nay

- Highway Dept. updates, Superintendent David Blakesley reported:
 - continue to have difficulties getting salt delivered. Reported it to Ellen Batchelder from Franklin Council of Governments again. She's looking into it. Shipments come from Albany and may try to get the shipments from Boston area instead.
 - ice storm last week kept department busy cleaning up debris on roads and sanding
 - working on highway and transfer station FY21 budget proposals with Bill. Highway almost done. Scheduled to meet with Finance Committee February 4.
 - completed all easements required for MassDOT King's Highway Bridge Project, all three owners signed as donation. All easements are permanent except one temporary construction for five years. Needs to be recorded at Hampshire County Registry of Deeds (David will do). Teri noted the generosity and thanked David.

Phil motioned to accept the donation of permanent easement (X-U-3 1,994+ sq. Ft) from W.D. Cowls, Inc. Second by Teri. So voted 3-yay, 0-nay.

Phil motioned to accept the donation of permanent easement (X-U-2 252+ Sq. Ft and X-E-1 100+ Sq. Ft) from Gary Guilbault and Lauren Guilbault. Second by Teri. So voted 3-yay, 0-nay.

Phil motioned to accept the donation of permanent easement (X-S-1 3,457+ Sq. Ft and X-U-1 100+ Sq. Ft), and temporary easement (5 year/ X-TE-1 2,177+ Sq. Ft) from David Blakesley and Laura Blakesley. Second by Teri. So voted 3-yay, 0-nay.

- David noted that the fees at the Registry have gone up, it's eligible for Chapter 90 funds. The project is estimated to cost approximately \$1 million. Phil reported he will set up a meeting of the Capital Improvement Planning Committee and would like to talk with David and Bill about highway capital. David replied that he and Bill have gone over it.

- Property and Energy Assessment Committee updates, Barbara Cook reported their fourth meeting is coming up and they're making progress. Mass SAVE does municipal buildings. Bob Haines, Eversource Energy Assessor, is coming January 9 and will complete a review of the town hall and report what we'll need to reduce energy use. Mark Rabinsky, Green Communities Regional Coordinator and Brian Sullivan, Green Communities Director are attending the committee meeting January 9. Barbara also reported that on the top of the committees list is a new roof for the town hall. Leaks are getting inside the walls. Calling contractors to look at it and give a price for budgeting purposes. She will report back estimates.
- Police Dept. updates, Chief Dave White came to seek support and approval to send a request for a grant through the District Local Technical Assistance from Pioneer Valley Planning Commission to write a proposal for a Shared Resource Officer for the Hampshire District towns. Dave explained there's a need to sort out regionalization of the position, rather than being supported by individual towns as Westhampton and Southampton have been doing. Phil motioned to sign the letter requesting District Local Technical Assistance (DLTA) Grant Funding support from the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC) to explore making the funding and Memorandum of Understanding for the position of School Resource Officer (SRO) a formal part of the structure of the management and budget operation of the HRHS community. On a second the motion passed 3-yay, 0-nay.

Dave also reported he has the Police Dept. FY21 budget proposal almost done and asked if anything should be added to it, board provided no recommendations. Dave continued that he's looking at offices, if budget submittal doesn't allow for a P.D. office then could go back in the spring for funding. Phil added that the Public Safety Complex Building Committee is moving forward with the consultant and design and if construction moves forward offices should be in next (fiscal) year. Dave gave a reminder that he didn't want the new normal to be the office space in the Annex being used and that it has become normal.

- Phil recognized Treasurer Patty Cotton to discuss the property at 225 Northwest Rd. Cheryl reported that she spoke to attorney from KPLaw and they handle these types of action regularly. They can send a notice to quit to the "tenant"/previous owner which will order them out. The notices typically run on tenancy dates, such as the 1st of a month, and provides for so many days to vacate the premises. If the premises is not vacated by that date then an order can be issued giving the tenant a span of time to vacate before action is filed in court. Phil suggested further discussion be held in executive session.
- The Selectboard voted by roll call, 3-yay, 0-nay, to enter into Executive Session at 7:30 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 enforcement action for property at 225 Northwest Road. Open session will resume after executive session.
- Adjourned Executive Session and returned to Open Session at 7:40 p.m.
- Public Safety Complex Building Committee, Phil reported the committee is meeting on January 9 with the consultant.
- Procedure for search for highway dept. foreman: Bill Jablonski and David Blakesley joined discussion. Phil asked if Scott Tirrell is interested in

applying for the position, Bill and David replied yes. Cheryl suggested Scott Tirrell move into the position as acting foreman for the 6 month period that Bill Jablonski will be on probation as superintendent. Doing so leaves the position open for Bill if needed and also provides the opportunity for Scott to try out as foreman. Phil noted that moving two people up leaves an open crew position. If for some reason Bill steps back as foreman filling opening for crew could leave us with someone we have to lay off. There was discussion of getting by with 3 in the interim, with Phil noting that it would be until August, or hiring a temp with potential for permanency. David spoke of concerns of advertising for a temp being conditioned on whether someone higher up gets bumped rather than on their performance. He believes quality candidates will not apply. Phil argued that if a crew position is posted as temporary we can seek applications and explain the situation. He also noted that the board should meet with Scott at next meeting to go over the position as acting foreman. Teri asked David if that's his recommendation. David replied he was uncomfortable giving a recommendation for the department for time that will be after his retirement, he was asked to provide his opinion as current superintendent. He recommended acting foreman be Scott Tirrell and not hire a crew member until 6 month period is up. Better qualified people will apply for a permanent position. It will still get them in time for next winter storm season. Maureen asked how the department would handle February and March storms this year. David replied himself and Rick Tracy will be available to plow. Teri asked for Bill's opinion, he agreed with what David said. He also added that the department was down to 3 for much of the past fall and things got done, a little slower, but they got through it.

The Superintendent Agreement was reviewed with Bill Jablonski. There was discussion that some of the material was also stated in the Personnel Policies and Procedures. Bill Requested that under personal time leave that the portion to require prior approval be removed, arguing it has been practice to notify a supervisor as soon as possible when a personal day is needed, but not prior approval. So approved. Voted to approve and sign the agreement.

- Annual Town Report dedication to be determined. Phil motioned to dedicate the 2019 Westhampton Annual Town Report to David Blakesley, retiring from the Westhampton Highway Department. Discussion was held regarding history of past dedications and term of report. Teri noted that Chris Norris retired as Fire Chief in 2019, point was duly noted. With no second to previous motion, Phil motioned to dedicate the 2019 Westhampton Annual Town Report to Chris Norris. Second by Teri. So voted 3-yay, 0-nay. Phil and Cheryl will work on Selectboard report.
- Capital Improvement Planning Committee needs to meet and needs members to have a quorum. One member needs to be selected by the Finance Committee since no one has replaced Joe Pipczynski. Potential candidates and qualities needed were discussed. Phil motioned to nominate Barbara Cook to the Capital Improvement Planning Committee and if accepted make such appointment. Second by Maureen. So voted 3-yay, 0-nay.
- The proposed Public Meeting and Hearing Rules were reviewed. Phil motioned to accept the Public Meeting and Hearing Rules as drafted dated 12-23-2019 and recommend other boards and committees do the same. Second by Maureen. So voted 3 yay, 0-nay. Copies to be posted to Selectboard page of town website and distributed to boards and committees.
- Discussion returned to procedures of Tax Takings, Tax Titles and Foreclosures. Cheryl explained the steps that the Collector has taken to update the books and collect on back taxes

prior to tax takings. The Collector had met with a former Selectboard and provided an update of overdue accounts and the steps being taken to collect them. She can be asked to come in and provide similar information, so agreed.

- Correspondence:
Hampshire Power updates were provided by email for review. No action needed.
- Administrative Assistant updates, Cheryl Provost reported:
The elevator lift was inspected December 24 and passed, good for two years. Associated Elevator should receive the certificate in a couple of weeks to be displayed at the lift.
- Next meeting: 7:00 p.m. January 21, 2020 and propose budget to Finance Committee February 4.
- Documents submitted:
 - Agreement Between the Town of Westhampton and the Highway Superintendent
 - Public Meeting and Hearing Rules
- Documents signed:
 - Agreement Between the Town of Westhampton and the Highway Superintendent (Bill Jablonski) for the period of February 14, 2020 until August 14, 2020.
 - business license to Jeffrey & Bradford Morse for Farmer Series Pouring Permit located at Outlook Farm, Main Road
 - business license to Mark Gould, Main Road for machining for 2020
 - Certificate of Donation of permanent easement (X-U-3 1,994+ sq. Ft) from W.D. Cows, Inc.
 - Certificate of Donation of permanent easement (X-U-2 252+ Sq. Ft and X-E-1 100+ Sq. Ft) from Gary Guilbault and Lauren Guilbault.
 - Certificate of Donation of permanent easement (X-S-1 3,457+ Sq. Ft and X-U-1 100+ Sq. Ft), and temporary easement (5 year/ X-TE-1 2,177+ Sq. Ft) from David Blakesley and Laura Blakesley.

Meeting adjourned at 9:10p.m.

Approve:

Philip Dowling, Chair

Maureen Dempsey

Teri Anderson