



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

Minutes of March 30, 2020

The meeting convened at 7:00 p.m.

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

Others present via zoom virtual conference were Cheryl Provost (Administrative Assistant), Tom Martin (Board of Health), Steve Holt (Emergency Management), David Blakesley (Board of Health), Don Tryon (ACO/Animal Inspector), Susan Bronstein (Planning Board), John Zimmerman., and Barbara Pelissier.

Warrants were reviewed and approved by vote. Voted to authorize Cheryl Provost to sign on behalf of the Selectboard for:

Payroll: \$78,992.10

Vendor: \$39,038.29

Minutes of March 2, 2020 were reviewed with revisions by Phil. Approved minutes of March 2 as revised by Phil by vote of 3-yay, 0-nay.

Minutes of March 16, 2020 were reviewed and revised to correct typo. Approved minutes of March 16 as revised by vote of 3-yay, 0-nay.

Minutes of March 23, 2020 were reviewed and approved by vote of 3-yay, 0-nay.

- Covid-19 action:
  - Reviewed Revisions to the COVID-19 Leave Policy and Essential Employees and voted to approve the following additions:
  - Animal Control Officer/Inspector of Animals
  - Tax Collector (remotely as much as possible)
  - Assessor Assistant (remotely)
  - Council On Aging Coordinator (remotely)
  - Custodian (supervised)
  - Finance Committee
  - Board of Assessors
  - Conservation Commission
  - Planning Board
  - Zoning Board of Appeals
  - (Meetings to follow the Open Meeting Laws allowed by the COVID-19 emergency)
  - Instructions for submitting payment vouchers to the Accountant will be provided to department heads.

Waiver of application fee for a special permit:

An application for a special permit (#216) was withdrawn due to the Covid-19 emergency. The

applicant intends to re-apply once the emergency is lifted and requested the application fee be waived. Phil motioned to waive the re-application fee for Paul Facticeau for a special permit at 43 Pine Island Lake for a special permit for an accessory structure. Second by Maureen. So voted 3-yay, 0-nay.

Rescheduling of annual town election and meeting to be determined at a future Selectboard meeting.

An account has been set up to pay for invoices related directly to Covid-19. Invoices are to be processed through the Administrative Assistant. Discussion ensued regarding authorization as an expense related to Covid-19. Teri motioned to authorize Phil, as Chief Procurement Officer, to work with the Administrative Assistant to approve purchases through the Covid-19 account. Second by Maureen. So voted 3-yay, 0-nay.

Phil reported that one item that came out of the emergency operations meeting held earlier is a need to find food delivery for those sheltered in place. Maureen asked of the status of the task group and if any volunteers took the lead on it. Cheryl confirmed that no one took the lead. T Martin explained that many of the people willing to do the work are town officials and it was understood this is not a town service. Maureen explained it's not volunteer act as a town official, its volunteer aside from that capacity, Teri agreed. Discussion ensued regarding volunteer compared to town official. S Bronstein reported she has been calling neighbors and identifying herself as such. T Martin suggested the town could find a legal way to provide delivery services. Teri opined that there are many organizations doing such services and unless it's a real emergency where no one else is providing the service it's not up to the town to do so. Organizations were mentioned as being "Community Action", "Highland Valley Elder Services", and "Food Pantry". It was so determined that town officials and volunteers can provide that information to residents.

- Animal Control Officer/Inspector of Animals, Don Tryon reported:
  - with the Covid-19 situation there is a significant increase in all volume, especially being March. Doing as much as possible by phone. Finding increase in true animal neglect. Drastic increase in calls, over 20 calls for services since January compared to 13 calls from August through December 2019. Phil asked if he knew why. Don replied he's not sure if all incidents were reported before him. He will begin monthly reports and had emailed a draft for the month of March. Also, some residents were not aware there was a Westhampton Animal Control Officer. There is typically an increase in calls in the spring and with people sheltering in place more are home, out walking their dogs or letting them run, and home to report incidents. He's working on three cases of confirmed actual neglect or disease control issues with the Department of Agriculture and the Mass. Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. Don is doing his best to protect himself when he responds to calls but he's in need of personal protection equipment. He has half a box of gloves and will start to look for some more. Phil offered a full face respirator and lightweight Tyvek suits for Don to use.
  - Don explained scheduling at his full time position is changing drastically to deal with the Covid-19 situation. He doesn't know the details and stated it could affect his response time to calls. He also explained if there is an outbreak at work they would be under quarantine which would affect response even more. Westhampton has no backup for the Animal Control Officer. Don has asked around and everyone is stretched thin, he doesn't have anyone available as

backup. He requested the Selectboard approve bringing on an assistant as backup to work under his direction and recommended a fee for response rather than a stipend. The assistant would only be required to take the next available two day course held by the Mass. Department of Agricultural Resources (MDAR) which is free. The board supported adding backup and will look into it.

-he is still looking to discuss rabies vaccination but with the current conditions will hold off.

Don was thanked by the board for all his work and the updates.

- Nomination of Inspector of Animals: Phil motioned to nominate Donald Tryon, III as Inspector of Animals for the Town of Westhampton. Second by Teri. So voted 3-yay, 0-nay.
- Land held in Chapter 61 (b) located at 9 Tipping Rock Road:  
Teri reported the property is of conservation interest and she discussed it with Laurie Sanders and Fred Morrison and would like to have more time to look at it. Teri recommended to postpone action until further research is completed. There has been contact made with two land trusts and one may be interested in the property for conversation. She would like to see if this can be accomplished without town funds. Phil suggested reviewing this again in two weeks. Teri will get what information she can and stated it's their responsibility to look into determining if this will be good for the town.
- Shared Building Commissioner:  
Phil reported he has had some interaction with John Martin, Selectman from Southampton on the matter and told him the Westhampton Selectboard approved the agreement in concept. Southampton is drafting a contract for Westhampton and a contract with Tom Quinlan (current commissioner for both towns) and it will go to KPLaw for review. A copy for Westhampton should be ready to review at the next meeting.
- Correspondence was reviewed. Treasurer Patty Cotton provided an email update from the town's tax title attorney of the status of redemption of tax title account related to foreclosure of 225 Northwest. The attorney of the occupant confirmed that their last chance to get a loan to redeem is to find a credit qualified co-signer. The tax title attorney suggested beginning eviction proceedings may force the issue to see if there are any possibilities to redeem. Discussion ensued regarding steps taken so far and time allowed to redeem. No action will be taken at this time. Topic to be revisited in two weeks.
- Teri made recommendation to research the Assessor exemptions for deferred taxes. She believes we already have a policy for low income seniors to have decrease. Any policy decisions to adopt exemptions or deferrals will need a discussion with Assessors as well. Maureen agreed.
- Phil reported that the Governor's office is holding updates for executive municipal officers on Tuesdays at 1 p.m. Phil reviewed the highlights of pending legislation reported at the update.
- Teri reported her 2020 Census form has Easthampton rather than Westhampton. She tried to change the electronic version but the system wouldn't accept it. She is concerned it will be completely wrong and Westhampton will not be counted which could impact funding sources.

Phil acknowledged he had the same experience and was informed that the –four digit coded the address to Westhampton and that the count is by district. It was agreed to look into it.

- Documents submitted (via email):  
Revisions to Westhampton Covid-19 essential employees  
Draft report of the Animal Control Officer  
Nomination for Inspector of Animals

- Next meeting April 6 at 7:00 p.m.

Meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

Approved by vote of the Selectboard at virtual meeting held April 6, 2020

Philip Dowling, Chair

Maureen Dempsey

Teri Anderson