



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

Minutes of April 6, 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 Karl Norris (Cemetery Commission) and Shelby Macri (Country Journal).

Minutes were taken by Cheryl Provost.

Minutes of March 30, 2020 were reviewed and approved by roll vote 3-yay, 0-nay.

- Phil invited Karl Norris to speak. Karl reported Rick Tracy, Thomas Warren, and himself make up the Cemetery Commission. They are seeking guidance on cemetery maintenance in regards to essential work. The board agreed maintenance of the cemetery grounds is essential. The committee is also seeking guidance on burials, which is closed from December 1 through April 1. Ed Thornton, cemetery caretaker, should be receiving calls soon. Karl asked if Ed can do normal burial work. The highway dept. assists with burials by operating equipment to dig the hole, Ed works alone otherwise. The board agreed burials are essential, however, ceremonies should not be allowed. Cheryl reported that the Board of Health is seeking guidance from the state on attendance of a burial. Karl asked if the committee can meet via zoom. The board confirmed. Karl asked if bringing in a contractor to trim trees should wait. The board agreed if the trimming is not urgent, as an imminent threat to property or the public, then it should wait until after the Covid 19 emergency order is expired. Cemetery discussion complete.
- Covid 19 Actions:
The list of essential emergency officers was reviewed from the Continuity of Operational Procedures (COOPS). The backup for Cheryl Provost's role as Administrative Assistant and HR is Selectboard or a designee. The intent is that in Cheryl's absence the Selectboard could either share specific duties and/or designate another individual to complete any of the duties.

The dates of town caucus and annual election were reviewed. An act signed by the Governor authorizes the Selectboard to postpone either if the original scheduled date is between March 10 and May 30. Town election is scheduled for June 6, outside that perimeter. The caucus qualifies but must be scheduled no less than 38 days prior to election and posted no less than twenty days prior to the rescheduled date. Postponement of the election will require special legislation. If the June 6 date stays then the caucus must be held no later than April 29. The quorum required to hold the meeting is 15. The Governor's order through May 4 of gatherings of no more than 10 does not apply to town meetings, however the recommendations to follow the guidelines for social distancing do. Phil suggested the election be postponed so that the caucus can be held later in the year in hopes that the worst of the Covid event will have subsided. Also discussed was the

timing of town election to town meeting. Phil proposed to postpone the caucus until June 8 and the town election to July 25. Maureen and Teri agreed to the dates. Procedure to postpone the election and file special legislation will be reviewed and brought to the next meeting for a final vote.

The date of annual town meeting was reviewed. Phil made recommendation to hold the meeting sometime in June, again in hopes that the worst of the Covid event will have subsided. Discussion ensued regarding which date to select. Phil motioned in pursuant to section 9 of Chapter 39 of Massachusetts General Laws, due to the state of emergency declared by the Governor pursuant to Executive Order 591, Declaration of a State of Emergency to Respond to COVID-19, that the date of the Westhampton Annual Town Meeting, currently scheduled for May 9, 2020 at 9:00 AM, shall be delayed until June 13, 2020 at 9:00 AM at the Town Hall. Second by Teri. So moved by roll vote 3-yay, 0-nay.

- **FY21 Budget:**
Line items of the budget spreadsheet were reviewed. Finance Committee is beginning deliberations April 14. Teri recommended an explanation be provided for line items increased over 2%. Cheryl will complete a line item summary for the Finance Committee. Discussed budgeting for the Animal Control Officer backup. Voted to run call fees for the backup through the Covid 19 account. Reviewed capital expenditures. The amount to be paid towards the design and engineering of the public safety complex is unknown as the funds have yet to be borrowed. Timing of the borrowing and amount borrowed factor into planning of capital budgeting for FY21. Options are to pay down a portion of the debt in FY21 and budget the payoff in FY22. Another option is to roll the entire debt into FY22 and move off any payment decisions until the next fiscal year. An update from the Treasurer on this debt is needed before recommendations can be made. Other debt is for the highway loader for the amount of \$147,220.00. This is the remaining balance of the combined debt of the loader and a highway truck scheduled to be paid off in September. Other Capital items are replacing the town hall roof, a new generator for the highway garage, and a new pickup truck for the highway dept. Discussed the method of funding the pickup truck and determined it will be a borrowing article at town meeting contingent on passage of a debt exclusion ballot question. The roof and generator could be paid from available Free Cash, other options were also discussed. The Finance Committee will be asked for recommendations to handle the debt.
- **Other issues, 9 Tipping Rock Road sale of chapter land.**
Teri learned from the buyer's attorney that buyer intends to keep the property in 61B. She reviewed the law and Dept. of Conservation and Recreation manual and found a notarized affidavit stating this for Selectboard and Assessors is required to verify no right of first refusal to the town is required. Cheryl received such an Affidavit of Intent signed by the buyers regarding their intent to keep the existing property at 9 Tipping Rock Road, Westhampton, in Chapter 61B and has a copy on file. Teri motioned to acknowledge a notice of right of first refusal is not necessary on the property given the affidavit submitted and on file. Second by Phil. So moved by roll vote 3-yay, 0-nay.
- **Next meeting: 7:00 p.m., April 13, 2020.**

Meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

Approved by vote of the Selectboard at virtual meeting held April 13, 2020

Philip Dowling, Chair

Maureen Dempsey

Teri Anderson