



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

Minutes of April 13, 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 Bill Jablonski (highway superintendent), David Blakesley 7 Robby Armenti (Board of Health), Patty Cotton (Treasurer), Barbara Cook (Property Committee) and Shelby Macri (Country Journal).

Minutes were taken by Cheryl Provost.

Minutes of April 6, 2020 were reviewed and approved by roll vote 3-yay, 0-nay.

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

Payroll: \$78,467.72

Vendor: \$86,899.00

- Highway Department updates, Superintendent Bill Jablonski reported:
 - HRMC submitted quotes for waste hauling, Bill made recommendation to go with Waste Management for hauling for the next three years. They were lowest bid at \$48,000 for first year of hauling with \$10,000 increase coming. There will be annual increases. Working on transfer station budget, numbers will be low because of the increases. Working on that with Finance Committee.
 - Zachary Pruzynski's probation will be ending April 20. Bill recommended he be established as full time regular crew member. Good employee, outstanding worker, good mechanic, taken on the job well. So moved by roll vote 3-yay, 0-nay.
 - working on spring cleanups; plow digs, getting parking lots pushed out in corners, in contact with street sweepers.
 - second fuel tank delivered last week, heard contractor is shut down as of Friday. Installation may have to wait until after the states essential services order is lifted.
 - working on paper work for speed signs for Montague Road. Trying to get that finished up in time for when people return to work.
 - Phil asked if there was any research on the layout of Stage Road. Bill will look into that. Phil reported there's a question if the layout of the road was recorded at the county deeds and deferred to David Blakesley. David reported what he recalled of the matter. More research to be done.
 - Teri asked Bill about the waste hauler and if HRMC recommended them to all communities. Bill replied yes, every town has a different price. A contract will need to be signed. Phil supports Bill's recommendations.

- Treasurer Patty Cotton reported she will need copies of the DA-82 (borrowing authorization

form), town vote, and the special legislation validating the votes. She asked what the intentions are for the term of borrowing. Phil recommended borrowing for a term of one year and explained the intent is to roll the debt into the construction bond, if that phase is approved. Discussion ensued regarding the invoicing schedule.

- Town Property & Energy Assessment Committee, Barbara Cook reported:
Sent Cheryl two requests to submit bids; one for town hall floor the other for town hall roof. The floor does not require the same process as the roof. David asked Phil if there is any info on the town hall doors.
- Board of Health, member Robby Armenti read recommendations to the Selectboard:

At the April 13, 2020 meeting of the Westhampton Board of Health the Board voted to make two separate recommendations to the Westhampton Selectboard for the duration of Westhampton's Declaration of Emergency. Both recommendations are made to help slow the spread of the Covid19 virus within our community.

First Recommendation: Burials.

The Board of Health voted to allow burials to occur at the Westhampton Cemetery under the following conditions:

Burial services be kept private and limited to 10 individuals. Social distancing measures must be practiced including the maintenance of 6-foot separation between individuals. Face masks should be worn. Individuals of different households should avoid close contact. Public Memorial Services or Funeral rites should be scheduled for a time later in the year when the Covid19 crises has subsided and the State of Emergency lifted.

Please take joint action with the Board of Health and forward this action to the Cemetery Caretaker and Cemetery Commission.

Second Recommendation: Playgrounds/ Athletic Fields/ Library Property

The Board of Health voted to recommend that the Westhampton Selectboard act jointly with the Board of Health to work with School and Library officials to close the playground areas of the Westhampton Elementary School, the athletic fields of Hampshire Regional High School and Library Property to public use for the duration of the State of Emergency. The Board of Health sees public health benefits in discouraging outdoor gathering at these locations.

Phil responded that the first recommendation is a Board of Health issue and can be taken up with the Cemetery Commission. So noted.

Phil looked to Teri and Maureen for input on the second recommendation. Discussion ensued regarding the use of the track; scholastic athletics are cancelled and kids are congregating in groups looking for things to do. David Blakesley reported it's his understanding the school committees are in charge of the school properties. The thought was to get the joint support of the Selectboard and have the Selectboard, through Cheryl, make the recommendations to the committees. Further discussion was held regarding closing track and library property to groups

while allowing individual use. Dave replied discussion was it doesn't make sense to close one, it's easier to close all and that's the recommendation of the board. Others added concerns of increased activity. There is concern of use of the playground equipment at the elementary school where families have been getting together. Dave White reported that he worked with Kristen Smidy and a "No Trespass" sign is in place at the regional school with added language "may be asked by police dept. to leave". Phil concurred the biggest threat is the elementary school and shared use of playground equipment. Voted to support the recommendations of the Board of Health, place signage, and post to website.

- Fire Dept, Chief Antosz reported:

There were emails circulated regarding disposal of the ambulance. He (Dave) will let the ambulance license run out this year. The EMT's requested to him that the ambulance be kept for supplies, but not for transport of patients (as a rehab vehicle). Meanwhile, East Longmeadow inquired about the possibility of use of the ambulance during the COVID-19 pandemic. They're operating with one and delivery of a new second one is on hold. He declined the request for complications of insurance and liability. East Longmeadow is now considering purchase of the ambulance, if it's available, pending approval on their end. The stretcher was obtained through a grant and cannot be sold, however it may be gifted. The ambulance was leaking tranny fluid so the highway dept. looked at it. Dave's perspective after discussion with highway dept. and Mark Gould the department will have a 25 year old vehicle sitting for most of the time. It will need some work. He determined it would be difficult for a small town to maintain a rehab vehicle. Furthermore, the new plans for the safety complex does not include a bay for the ambulance. Phil asked when the license runs out, Dave confirmed April 30. Reviewed the concept from EMT Bob Miller to use the ambulance as a rehab vehicle. Phil asked Dave's recommendation. Dave replied he does not see the use as a rehab vehicle. It would require maintenance and insurance, much of the equipment can be on the rescue truck. He noted that the rescue truck is not fully conducive for what it could do and he would like to reconfigure it. Dave concluded with his opinion that selling the ambulance is best for the town. Teri suggested the department get together and come to an agreement and come back to the Selectboard. Maureen agreed, adding she would want to be sure conversations included the EMT's. Phil noted that Dave has had discussions with Mark Gould who supports the idea and Phil is comfortable with Dave's opinion as Chief. Maureen and Teri were unsure if there's been communication. Phil motioned to go forward with selling ambulance. Second by Maureen; she added there needs to be better communication with EMT's. Phil suggested no vote be taken. Dave noted that this was happening quickly and with the COVID situation there was a lot happening with both him and Mark working regular jobs. Maureen took a moment to tell Dave he's doing a great job and she understands the plan. Teri agreed and added she would like to see the issue worked through in the department; it's not criticism. Dave replied he will reach out to Mark Gould (EMS Coordinator) and have him reach out to the EMT's and get back to the Selectboard. Phil amended his motion and moved to go forward with selling the ambulance pending that Chief Antosz reach out to Mark Gould to have a conversation with the EMT's and barring any major change to this discussion authorize the sale with a report coming back to the Selectboard. Second by Maureen. So moved by roll vote 3-yay, 0-nay.

- Covid 19 Actions:

Reviewed Chapter 45 of the Acts of 2020.

The date of annual town meeting was reviewed. Phil made recommendation to move the meeting later in June. Discussion ensued regarding which date to select.

Phil motioned to rescind the vote taken April 6 to postpone the Annual Town Meeting to June 13. Second by Teri. So moved by roll vote 3-yay, 0-nay.

Teri 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 27, 2020 at 9:00 AM at the Town Hall. Second by Maureen. So moved by roll vote 3-yay, 0-nay.

Discussion ensued regarding moving forward on the extension of deadlines and waiver of interest, fees and penalties, as Chapter 53 of the Acts of 2020 provides for the Board to take such action at its discretion.

Teri moved that the Board vote, in accordance with Section 10 of Chapter 45 of the Acts of 2020 entitled, "An Act to Address Challenges Faced by Municipalities and State Authorities Resulting from COVID-19", to extend the date real estate and personal property taxes are due to the Town and the deadline for application for abatements, until June 1, 2020, all as set forth in said Section 10. Second by Phil. So moved by roll vote 3-yay, 0-nay.

Teri moved that the Board vote, in accordance with Section 11 of Chapter 45 of the Acts of 2020 entitled, "An Act to Address Challenges Faced by Municipalities and State Authorities Resulting from COVID-19", to waive the payment of interest and other penalties in the event of the late payment of any excise, tax, betterment assessment or apportionment, or any other charge added to a tax for any payments with a due date on or after March 10, 2020, all as provided in said Section 11, provided, however, that such payment is made no later than June 30, 2020, all as set forth in said Section 11. Second by Phil. So moved by roll vote 3-yay, 0-nay.

Teri moved:

That, whereas the rapidly-evolving public health issues associated with coronavirus Covid-19, including the swift spread of the disease, present lack of containment, and the risk to the most vulnerable populations inherent in public gatherings;

Whereas the World Health Organization has identified the current crisis as a pandemic and the Selectboard, Board of Health, Governor and President have declared a State of Emergency; and Whereas there is currently a gubernatorial order prohibiting gatherings of more than 10 people, and the Town is taking action consistent with recommendations from federal and state agencies and officials to limit the spread of this disease amongst the residents and voters of the Town, its officials and employees, and visitors, including, closing schools and public buildings, limiting in-person meetings and other gatherings in Town office buildings, and encouraging residents to communicate with Town staff by e-mail and telephone to the extent possible.

For all of these reasons, the Selectboard votes to:

- (1) Immediately request the Governor to file emergency legislation on behalf of the Town, a so-called "Governor's bill", seeking authorization to allow the Town to delay the Annual Town Caucus and Annual Town Election; and
- (2) Authorizes the Chair to sign a letter to the Governor requesting the filing of such legislation and calls upon its legislative delegation to support the filing of this special legislation, and
- (3) Also provides direction to its legislative delegation that it supports the filing of generally

applicable legislation allowing for the postponement of all municipal elections this fiscal year.

Second by Maureen. So moved by roll vote 3-yay, 0-nay.

- **FY21 Budget:**
Finance Committee is meeting April 14. Phil made recommendation to Steve Holt and Tom Cleary that the proposal from the Town Property & Energy Assessment Committee to include a line item to refinish the floor of the town hall should be added to the budget.
- **Annual appointments review:**
The members of the Selectboard and the Administrative Assistant will contact officials who's appointments are ending June 30 to determine which positions there is interest in and which will be published as vacant.
- **Building Inspector shared services update, Phil reported:**
Building Commissioner, Tom Quinlan, took another job. He will be leaving Westhampton and Southampton. They asked Phil if Westhampton is still interested in shared services, Phil confirmed. Southampton is posting an ad for the position. Tom is done around May 4. Phil is having discussions with Southampton and Tom to work out what Westhampton will do for the interim. Phil suggested that the FY21 budget should include funding for e-permitting.
- **Administrative Assistant updates, Cheryl Provost reported:**
The Board of Health will need a laptop and official town email for training on the MAVEN program. A refurbished laptop is available from Northeast IT for \$399. The Board of Health approved funding from their expense account. Cheryl recommended the purchase be funded through the IT Support Account as all other IT equipment has in the past. She reported there are funds available in the account. So moved by roll vote 3-yay, 0-nay.

The Assessors program conversion is under way. A purchase for software and a single Client Access License is required to proceed at the cost of \$1,777; this was not included in the agreement and is a one-time cost. Without the software and licensing the conversion cannot proceed. Recommendation by Cheryl to purchase the software and licensing needed to proceed with the Assessors software to Vision from the IT Support Account. So moved by Phil. Second by Maureen. Approved by roll vote 3-yay, 0-nay.
Motion was made by Phil to authorize Cheryl to sign for purchase. Second by Maureen. So moved by roll vote 3-yay, 0-nay.
- Phil reported a kickoff meeting for solar siting of solar projects in rural communities through UMass Clean Energy Extension. Grant participants will be reviewed for locations; Wendell, Blandford, Westhampton. Recommendations for bylaws and the process for solar sightings to include criteria to assist small towns with the process.
- Next meeting: 7:00 p.m., April 27, 2020.

Meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

Approved by vote of the Selectboard at virtual meeting held May 11, 2020

Philip Dowling, Chair

Maureen Dempsey

Teri Anderson