



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

Minutes of July 27, 2020
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 Deborah Ecker (KPLaw) and Ginny Curtis. Minutes were taken by Cheryl Provost.

The Selectboard voted by roll call, 3-yay, 0-nay, to enter into Executive Session at 7:02 p.m., pursuant to G.L. c. 30A, section 21(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 Cotton Tree Service, Inc., et al. v. Planning Board of the Town of Westhampton, et al., Hampshire Superior Court, C.A. No. 1580 CV 00112. Open session will resume at 7:30 p.m. Ginny Curtis disconnected.

Adjourned Executive Session and returned to Open Session at 7:30 p.m.

Present from Selectboard were Phil Dowling (Chair), Maureen Dempsey, and Teri Anderson. Others present were Dean Bates (Westhampton Elementary School Principal), Robby Armenti (Board of Health), Barbara Pelissier, and Ginny Curtis. Minutes were taken by Cheryl Provost.

- The board reorganized with Phil Dowling as Chair, Maureen Dempsey as Clerk, and Teri Anderson as member.
- COVID CARES & FEMA funding update:
 - Phil reported that he reviewed information with Bobbie Jones, Business Administrator of Hampshire Regional School District, and discussed who will be applying for FEMA and CARES funding for the elementary school. Phil invited Dean Bates to provide a recap of the schools needs for reopening.
 - Dean reported the reopening plan began with the district and is now focused on Westhampton Elementary School. Any FEMA funding available to the school will be applied for collaboratively with the town. The school applied for a competitive tech grant through CARES funding, waiting for results. Items needed are PPE, acrylic barriers, outdoor tents, portable desks. Also needed is technology for distant learning. Dean reported he sent updated reopening plans to families, there is a scheduled ZOOM meeting to take questions. Dean continued that the next step is receiving recommendations from the Local Board of Health, school administration, and the state.
 - Phil reported Council On Aging and Town Offices spent funds due to COVID. He asked Dean how he is handling the school purchases. Dean replied his receipts are going to Bobbie Jones to be paid through the school.

Phil explained his understanding is FEMA funds pay first, up to 75% of cost on eligible items. Also available to Massachusetts communities under the federally-enacted CARES Act, distributed through the state, is reimbursement for eligible COVID-19 response expenses. The town has a total of \$145,000 in CARES funding available. At the opening of the CARES grant application in June it was reported that it was for expenses through June 30 to cover items not eligible for FEMA funds and another round will come out for the remainder of the year. He submitted for \$28,150.00 through June 30 then was later told it was for the remainder of the year (December 30). He is still working on Fiscal Year 20 expenses for CARES. Fire, highway, Board of Health received items through MEMA at no charge.

Phil reported he initiated the procedure to set up a FEMA account. Teri asked Dean if the school has a FEMA account. Dean replied his understanding is FEMA goes through the towns. He and Phil had discussed hiring a temporary day-time, shared custodian to provide additional cleaning of the school and town offices and asked if that is under CARES funding. Phil reported FEMA may pay up to 75% and the remaining costs will be covered by CARES.

Phil reported there are three ways to submit for funds, apply for: 1) Things that we completed, 2) things that we are doing, 3) things we plan to do. No one has received pay through grants. Phil reported the state has not defined what is covered by CARES. He told Dean to continue to search for a custodian.

Dean reported approximately \$7,500 will be needed for all items the school is looking at.

Phil reported the grant application for the parking lot was denied. Another application can be submitted. He will work with Dean to get logistics of number of people entering the building. The project goal is to establish an additional drop off/pick up location to reduce the number of people entering the main entrance.

-Covid Coordinator

Phil reported Heather Paul, a resident of Westhampton, is interested in the position and may join the meeting. She is a business owner and does work on computers. The job description needs to be finalized and approved.

Phil read into the meeting a draft job description:

“Westhampton Covid-19 Coordinator:

Part time, estimated at 5 hours per week through December 31, 2020

Hours are flexible and can be expanded. Basic Computer and organizational skills required.

The Covid-19 Coordinator will have the following responsibilities-

1. Communicate State and Federal Covid-19 Emergency Declaration information and updates with the Selectboard, Board of Health, Fire Department, Emergency Management, Police Department, Highway Department, Council on Aging, Elementary School and Hampshire Regional School District.
2. Track purchases and receipts related to Covid-19 expenditures including labor, materials and equipment.
3. Work with the Selectboard and Administrative Assistant on FEMA, MEMA and Cares Grants”

Cheryl made recommendation that #2 identify “for the Town of Westhampton”. Teri questioned if #1 suggests this person is connected to receive this information. Phil confirmed, yes. He does not want this person to take over anyone’s job. It’s to provide support and assistance to the Board of Health, Fire Dept., etc. with tracking funds related to COVID expenses. Also to keep up with

information being provided by the state regarding grant funding and reporting it to those departments. Discussed the hourly rate that the state will reimburse for pay; to be confirmed. In response to questions Phil explained that the person would work some from home but will also meet with department heads in person. The person will report to Cheryl as she has knowledge of the day to day business, the accounts, and the departments. Discussion was held regarding pay rate. Teri suggested a range of \$20-\$25 hourly, based on experience. Phil noted the pay rate will need to be confirmed for rate allowed by state.

Maureen motioned to accept the COVID Coordinator job description as amended. Second by Teri. So moved by roll vote 3-yay, 0-nay.

- **Administrative Assistant/Town Clerk:**
Cheryl reported she will be taking time out for medical leave on August 21. She will be out of the office for two weeks but will be capable of working some hours from home. The following two weeks she will be able to work a combination of at home and on site at reduced hours. Resuming full duties should be possible by 4 weeks. The most important duties that will require coverage is mostly related to the State Primaries, September 1. There will be early voting and voter registration hours. Agendas will need to be posted and mail checked. Patty Cotton has offered assistance with some of the duties. Cheryl can check emails from home and either respond or disseminate to another department or official. She is working with Patty to get FMLA forms and discuss procedure. Teri mentioned that Wendy Foxman is a former administrator and if the board wants to consider asking her if she'd be interested in filling in on some administrative duties. Phil made recommendation to Teri to have that conversation with her.
- Highway Crew Agreement was reviewed. Phil made motion to approve and sign the three year agreement. Second by Maureen. So moved by roll vote 3-yay, 0-nay.
- The school union is entering into negotiations with the Hampshire Regional School District to discuss safety and curriculum reopening plans under COVID-19. Maureen motioned to appoint Phil to represent the Westhampton Selectboard in the selection of a town representative. Second by Teri. So moved by roll vote 3-yay, 0-nay. Two nominees are Francine Tishman from Southampton and Trish Colson-Montgomery from Chesterfield. Maureen reported she is familiar with Trish from when she was on the school committee and thinks she'll do a good job representing the towns. Maureen motioned that Westhampton Selectboard recommend Trish Colson-Montgomery from Chesterfield be nominated as representative for the towns in the negotiations. Second by Teri. So moved by roll vote 3-yay, 0-nay.
- Appointments were reviewed. Phil noted that Wayne Parks and Dave Loven will be on the agenda August 3 to discuss the seat currently held by Wayne Parks. It's reported that Wayne has not attended a meeting in 2 years and Phil wants the Selectboard to hear why he is interested in continuing service. He also wants Dave Loven to tell the Selectboard why he is interested. So noted.
- Cheryl reported the results of annual town election produced 2 vacancies on the Board of Assessors, with no person receiving a majority of votes. The seats can be filled by appointment until the next town election. There were write-ins for the third seat of the Finance Committee and a seat on the Westhampton Elementary School Committee. Cheryl will contact the persons with

majority votes to see if they're interested in accepting the vote. She is contacting winning candidates to arrange swearing of oath of office.

- Next meeting: 7:00 p.m., August 3, 2020.

Meeting adjourned at 8:57 p.m.

Approved by vote of the Selectboard at virtual meeting held August 17, 2020

Phil Dowling
Maureen Dempsey
Teri Anderson