



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

Minutes of August 17, 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), Ginny Curtis, and Shirl Morrigan. Minutes were taken by Cheryl Provost.

The Selectboard voted by roll call, 3-yay, 0-nay, to enter into Executive Session at 7:00 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. G. Curtis & S. Morrigan 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 Bill Jablonski (highway superintendent), Don Tryon (ACO/Inspector of Animals), Wally Marek (Local Inspector), Todd Alexander (Local Inspector & Emergency Management Director), Tom Quinlan (Temporary Building Commissioner), Brian Pichette (Plumbing Inspector), Chris Brooks, David Blakesley & Robby Armenti (Board of Health), Wayne Parks, Shelby Macri (Country Journal), Barbara Pelissier, Ginny Curtis, and Shirl Morrigan. Minutes were taken by Cheryl Provost.

- COVID-19 actions:

Robby Armenti reported the Board of Health is going to Hampshire Regional High School to discuss re-opening plans. The board provided the school with recommendations which they will go over together. Robby will send Selectboard a copy of the recommendations.

Robby also reported the Board of Health gave the public library approval of their reopening plan; all library services will be by appointment. Other activities will be held outdoors.

Phil reported the library had asked about heating system issues. They're looking to add more airflow. He asked if the inquiry was based on recommendations from the Board of Health. Robby replied probably, yes. Phil requested a copy of the recommendations. So noted.

Phil reported he talked to Dean Bates (Principal Westhampton Elementary School) concerning re-opening. Staff is in on September 2 and students on September 16. They plan to start with a hybrid curriculum splitting groups in half with some in classroom and others remote on a rotating

schedule. This method will continue at least a couple of weeks. Phil reported that he and Cheryl had a conference call meeting with the representative of FEMA to discuss procedures and qualifications for grant funding. FEMA will cover things directly related to stop the spread of the virus. Expenses incurred by schools do not qualify. Phil asked Dean Bates what additional expenses the elementary school will have. Dean reported hybrid learning will not increase costs greatly. Phil reported he received information from Commonwealth of Mass. Executive Office for Administration & Finance and it was very helpful. It was clear about requirements and timing. The town is signed up and has a case number with FEMA. He had discussed the grant application and tracking of COVID expenses with Susan Bronstein and sent the information to her. She agreed to begin work on it. Phil reported he's had communication with Heather Paul but has not been able to connect with her and get her started as COVID Coordinator. Teri and Maureen asked if he was thinking of S Bronstein as the COVID Coordinator. Phil replied he did not discuss those details with her. If she stepped up she would be great. It's not a one-person job, with potential for several hours of work in a week needed. Teri asked if she did not step up should the board call Pioneer Valley Planning Commission and ask if they can provide assistance. Phil agreed with the idea and asked Teri if she will reach out to them. Teri agreed. Phil asked Todd Alexander to add anything. Todd reported he is going to a MEMA training Thursday and can look into information on funding. Discussion ensued regarding reporting requirements, filing dates, Covid-19 expenses through June 30. Discussed a System for Award Management Account (SAM). Phil reported he did not need to enter SAM information into the FEMA portal. Teri reported there are requirements for annual reporting in SAM and she can help with it, she will need the information that Phil has from Chris Norris. So noted.

- Highway Department updates, Bill Jablonski reported:
  - the letter to Mass DOT for Montague Road speed zone request was sent by email to the board for review. Also sent were recommendations by Dave White, Chief of Police, and the traffic count strip reports conducted in November 2019. Receipt and review of documents was confirmed by board. Teri motioned to submit the letter requesting 35 mph speed zone for Montague Road and to authorize Phil to sign it. Second by Maureen. So moved by vote 3-yay, 0-nay.
  - a project agreement and contract signatory authorization form from Mass DOT regarding King's Highway Bridge Project was sent for approval. The forms are standard. Teri asked for more information on the statement of overage costs and the town's liability. It was clarified that the town is liable only for overages incurred by contract revisions requested by the town. Teri motioned to designate Phil Dowling as authorized signatory on behalf of the Selectboard. Second by Maureen. So moved by vote 3-yay, 0-nay.
  - submitted a Mass DOT Project Request for hot mix paving Southampton Road (middle section) in the amount of \$138,478.70. So approved by vote 3-yay, 0-nay.
  - had a couple big storms, been cleaning up from them
  - repairs
  - rebuilding catch basins

Phil reported the Municipal Vulnerability Grant was submitted; funds are available for things like culverts. The Shared Streets and Spaces Program grant application for paving the elementary school parking lot was declined. Phil will resubmit proposal for new drop-off and pick-up site at the school, including a canopy for bikes and waiting pupils. The project must be completed by October 8, Bill is ready to go on the project.

- **Building/Zoning:**
  - review of enforcement at 0 Main Road. Tom reported he and the two local inspectors conducted a site visit with renters of the property. Over 50% of junk is removed. They have a salvage permit in Vermont through April 2021. Before they can operate there they have to construct a bridge. Salvage people are coming in and grabbing parts. When the bridge is complete they will work out of the Vermont location. When they leave 0 Main Road there may be 3 trailers left behind from the property owner. No pictures were taken. Teri requested the item be added to an executive session to update town counsel. So noted. Shirl Morrigan and Wayne Parks asked questions answered by Tom Quinlan. Wayne reported activity of cars and repairs at Sacharczyk's home, 70 Main Road. Some have plates from Vermont. He is troubled by people driving into his property looking for Sacharczyk's, which is next door. Teri replied they don't have a permit then they shouldn't be doing that. Tom reported he has not been able to determine if Vermont plates are registered or attached. Discussion ensued regarding how to determine if Sacharczyk is operating out of his home and what steps to take. Tom agreed to another inspection at their house.
  - proposed 3-year contract between the town and Tom Quinlan as Building Commissioner was reviewed as submitted by Tom. Phil approved the general terms. Revisions are needed to finalize. To be revisited at future meeting.
  - proposed gas and plumbing permit fees were reviewed. Phil motioned to approve inspection fee of \$60.00 per permit, broken down as \$50.00 to the inspector and \$10.00 retained by the town, effective September 30. Second by Teri. So moved by vote 3-yeas, 0-nay. Per fixture fee of \$15.00 still applies.
  - proposed electrical permit fees were reviewed and will be revisited next meeting.
  - reviewed local inspector job description. Tom will make recommendations to be reviewed next meeting.
- **Town Property and Energy Assessment Committee, Chris Brooks reported:**

The committee requested Energy Efficiency Proposals from three vendors for and were asked to provide quotes with a breakdown of services and to separate lighting projects. World Energy Efficiency Services submitted quotes for lighting projects at the highway garage, blacksmith shop, public library, town hall, and annex. Prism Energy did not submit a proposal for lighting only. The committee recommends entering a contract with World Energy Efficiency Services. Phil suggested seeking more quotes for just lighting from additional companies. Teri recommended requesting Prism Energy to separate out lighting projects. Chris expressed concern of going back and having vendors redo figures and resubmit for risk of losing their interest or business. Phil noted that another piece of the project is energy use needs to be entered into Mass Energy Insight as required by Green Communities. Someone needs to be designated to do this. Phil suggested a committee consider volunteering to do it.

Chris Brooks reported the committee is looking at insulation for the town hall and how that would be timed with the roofing project.
- **Animal Control Officer/Inspector of Animals, Don Tryon reported:**

He has recommendations to create an Asst. ACO position, with two possible candidates. He understands a budget is needed. Phil asked Don what his thoughts are for hours and pay. Don described options as pay per call-out; pay a stipend; pay a lesser stipend up to so many calls per year then pay per and additional calls. Phil asked on a monthly basis projected numbers Don is

called out. Don replied that during warmer months normal call volume is 15-20 monthly on average. Phil asked what his expectations are for an assistant to cover. Don replied 5-10 calls during high volume months. Discussed call out rate. Don made recommendation of \$20-\$25 per call up to 2 hours with additional pay over two hours. Phil made calculation to budget \$200 per month for 8 calls monthly at \$25 per call for the remainder of the fiscal year. Teri and Maureen concurred. Phil made note that at some point there will be a special town meeting after final state numbers come out. Teri asked Don if he's still busy and Don replied yes, he had 4 calls that day. Teri asked if an assistant could start sooner. Phil was unsure how it could. Discussed possible funding options without resolve. Phil motioned to create the position of Assistant Animal Control Officer and fill it through June 30, 2021 and fund it by town meeting or other available funds. Second by Teri. So moved by vote 3-yay, 0-nay.

Don requested an official email address for Animal Control. Brief discussion was held on process to do so, there would be a monthly cost of approximately \$5. Phil motioned to create an official email for Animal Control. Second by Teri. So moved by vote 3-yay, 0-nay.

- Town Clerk, Cheryl Provost requested authorization to pay for assistance with processing vote by mail ballots. Susan Bronstein has already stepped up and provided assistance with the first bulk mail out. Specific procedures for processing the ballots are mandated by the state. Doing so takes a lot of extra time. Cheryl suggested the pay come from the Town Clerk Expense account the same as election workers and expenses do. The account will likely be spent before the end of the year in part because the annual town election was moved to July which adds to an already busy election year. Additional postage expenses are also being incurred by the vote by mail requirement and PPE purchased for election workers. Teri asked if any of the expenses are eligible for FEMA or CARES reimbursement. Cheryl replied that the Elections Division could not confirm or deny and recommended Clerks track additional expenses in the event reimbursement is available. Discussed seeking funds through town meeting. Cheryl noted that if the account runs short it should be a small amount and suggested she will let the account run as long as it lasts and then seek a transfer from Reserve Fund by Finance Committee. So noted. On a motion and second, voted to authorize payment of \$20 hourly to Susan Bronstein for assistance with processing vote by mail ballots.

Shirl Morrigan stated she is concerned about voting in town and asked what rule is set for those that did not identify a party. Teri asked what the solution is and suggested written notice be sent to the voters. Cheryl replied that there are no requirements for Clerk's to follow up on those. She reported she has tried to contact the dozen or so voters by phone and either received a response or left a voicemail. Phil asked Cheryl if she can send letters to the voters that did not respond by phone. Cheryl agreed. Discussion ensued regarding voter responsibility to complete applications and provide proper information.

- Appointment review postponed.
- Anti-racism action:  
Teri reported that this is a standing item on the agenda. Officials need time to respond to the memo, deadline September 15.

- Designation of Chief Procurement Officer to be reviewed August 31.
- Teri requested motion to resolve conversation of vote by mail application inadequacies and motioned to have Cheryl send a letter to voters. Second by Maureen. So voted by vote 3-yay, 0-nay.
- Teri requested search for Tax Collector be added to agenda August 31. So noted.
- Minutes of July 20 were reviewed. Maureen requested a revision to the members of the Protection of Pollinators Committee, Marilyn Witherell is not a member. So noted. Minutes approved as amended by vote 3-yay, 0-nay.

Minutes of July 27 were reviewed as revised by Phil. Minutes approved as amended by vote 3-yay, 0-nay.

Minutes of August 3, 2020 were reviewed with revisions by Phil and Teri. Minutes approved as amended by vote 3-yay, 0-nay.

- Phil allowed Ginny Curtis to speak regarding Code Red policy, followed by brief discussion.
- Maureen inquired of status of Highway Superintendent Review. The Personnel Policies and Procedures requires annual reviews of employees. Phil suggested it be done with Bill and one member of the Selectboard and offered to do so. Bill noted that he's been an employee on the highway department for 12 years and feels he already served his probation period. If he has a review than others should also. He noted that the Fire Chief, Emergency Management Director, and Emergency Medical Services Coordinator did not go through a review and feels he's being singled out. The board concurred that everyone should be subject to the same treatment and a review. Discussion ensued regarding procedures and form of review. Voted to authorize Phil to conduct the review and report back on August 31.

Warrants were reviewed and approved by vote 3-yay, 0-nay for:

Payrolls: \$80,006.63

Vendor: \$257,344.66

The Selectboard voted by roll call, 3-yay, 0-nay, to enter into Executive Session at 10:08 p.m., pursuant to G.L. c. 30A, section 22(f)(g), to review and consider approval of the minutes of the Selectboard executive session meetings held July 20, 27, & August 3, 2020. Open session will resume following close of executive session.

Adjourned Executive Session and returned to Open Session at 10:29 p.m.

- Administrative Assistant, Cheryl Provost requested September 8, 9, 10 as vacation days. So approved.

- Next meeting: 6:00 p.m., August 31, 2020.

Meeting adjourned at 10:31 p.m.

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

Phil Dowling  
Maureen Dempsey  
Teri Anderson