



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

Minutes of September 14, 2020  
Meeting held via ZOOM

The meeting convened at 6:00 p.m.

Present from Selectboard were Phil Dowling (Chair), Maureen Dempsey, and Teri Anderson. Others present were Bill Jablonski (Highway Superintendent), Wally Marek (Local Inspector), David Blakesley & Robby Armenti (Board of Health), Susan Bronstein, and David Antosz (Fire Chief). Minutes were taken by Cheryl Provost.

- **COVID-19 actions:**

Phil reported he received a request from Dean Bates, Principal of Westhampton Elementary, for outdoor tents for school lunch. The Board of Health made recommendations that meal breaks be outside. They also recommended bus monitors to make sure students are wearing masks and staying properly seated. Robby reported the revised recommendations were sent to the Selectboard. David Antosz provided that if the tent is over 400 square feet a building permit is required. Teri requested a budget for tents and monitor before making a decision, noting salaries for bus monitors could become expensive. Discussion was held in regards to if meal breaks were expected to be held year-round. Robby confirmed that was the recommendation of their board. Phil reported what Dean seeks is \$200.00-\$400.00 for tents and money for fans to circulate the air. No figure is available for a monitor, therefore cannot be addressed. The tents can be addressed. Discussion ensued regarding year-round use of tent, Governor's orders for schools, weather, and other concerns. David Blakesley made note that these are recommendations approved by the Board of Health and sent as recommendations to the school committee. The school has authority to do as they see fit within the state's regulations.

Phil made point that the school is opening Wednesday (September 16) and motioned to approve \$3,000.00 for the purchase of tents and fans. Second by Teri. So moved by vote of 3-years, 0-nays. More information is needed for monitors and custodian.

Robby explained the monitors are to make sure masks are on. The driver needs to be driving. The Board of Health gave approval for the small bus which holds 4-5 students to run without a monitor. The school committee responded that they will consider it. Phil reported that Dean does not want to spend funds not approved. Phil had discussions with Joe Boudreau, Accountant, seeking his recommendation for spending FEMA & CARES funding before secured. Joe recommended spend what we're comfortable with taking from Free Cash if necessary.

Susan Bronstein reported that what has to be submitted to receive funds is expenses through June 30. The towns are pretty much guaranteed to get funds through December, however, the requirement is to receive the benefit of those funds by December.

Robby confirmed it's for two buses, one with 19 and one with 17 students, four days a week. Phil estimated the cost at roughly \$3200.00.

Phil pointed that Susan is moving forward with the application process and proposed she receive \$20 hourly for work as Covid Coordinator. He asked her how many hours she anticipates. Susan explained a lot of the time was front-loaded, learning the process, and estimated 5-7 hours weekly. Phil motioned to hire Susan Bronstein as Covid Coordinator at the rate of \$20 hourly, up to 10 hours weekly, through December 31, 2020. Second by Teri. So moved by vote 3-years, 0-nays.

- Cheryl asked if anyone had comments on conduct of State Primaries related to function and preparedness of COVID protection and safety. No issues were reported.
- Highway Department updates, Bill Jablonski reported:
  - working on mowing roadsides
  - culverts were plugged, flushed them out
  - awarded the Shared Streets Grant. Will be working on that. Teri and Maureen congratulated Phil.

Phil reported the town was awarded \$61,100.00 through the program to construct the Westhampton Elementary School drop-off and pick-up. The project includes a new paved drop-off and pick-up site on the North side of the school off Hathaway Road with a pavilion and bicycle rack. The project must be completed by October 9. The highway department is ready to complete the paving portion. Phil reported the supplies for the pavilion and bicycle rack will be ordered by the town in order to have timely delivery, he is seeking quotes. Phil received 3 quotes for construction of the pavilion:

1. Kurtz Home Improvement-\$36,720.00
2. D.A. Sullivan-\$9,999.00
3. Todd Alexander-\$9,375.00

Phil requested authorization to approve the contract with Todd Alexander in the amount of for construction of a pavilion at the Westhampton Elementary School. So moved by Maureen and approved by vote 3-years, 0-nay.

- Building Commissioner:  
A draft job description for local inspector of buildings was reviewed. Teri made recommendations for revisions. Revisions were approved. Voted to approve the job description for local inspector of buildings, as revised.

A draft job description for building commissioner was reviewed as revised by Teri. Voted to approve the job description for building commissioner, as revised.

A contract for the building commissioner will be reviewed next meeting.

- Town Property and Energy Assessment Committee, David Blakesley reported the committee is waiting for updated numbers from Prism Energy. Part of the delay is they are waiting for the

prevailing wage sheet. The committee meets Wednesday and hopefully will have a quote.

Discussed the schedule for the town hall/annex roofing project. David made note that someone has to choose the color of the shingles and asked if the committee is charge with that. Phil confirmed.

David mentioned the town should have been reporting in Green Communities from the start and asked if that was done. Phil replied he is doing the reporting, 2019 is being done now will then do 2020.

- **Animal Control Officer:**  
Cheryl reported Don is looking for persons interested in being an assistant. He understands funding will be needed. He will speak to the Selectboard again at their request or with any updates. Cheryl reported the official email address for the animal control officer is set up and functioning.
- Wally Marek returned discussion to the tents at the elementary school. He looked in the code book for temporary structures. Tents cannot be left up for winter. Phil asked Wally to have that conversation with Principal Dean Bates, he's in the center of this and is between the Board of Health, the state, and parents. Wally agreed to do so.
- Teri asked if there is an update to Cherry Sheets. Cheryl reported she has not seen updates but will look into it.
- **Appointments:**  
Review of vacancies postponed. Phil motioned to appoint Paul (Buddy) Nevins to fill a vacancy on Board of Assessors until town election, June 5, 2021. Second by Maureen. So moved by vote 3-years, 0-nays.
- **Anti-racism resolution action:**  
-reviewed an email from Sheila Marks, a volunteer at the Westhampton Public Library. Sheila described a program called Fresh Air. It provides kids some respite from the city summer, but also introduces families to kids who are from different backgrounds, cultures, and races. She noted the program alludes to Friendly Towns, a program she admits she doesn't fully understand, but suggested it might be a way of providing outreach to families about how to host a child. The email suggesting this ties in with the anti-racism resolution. Teri reported she will discuss it with Sheila and revisit it at future meeting. Maureen will talk to Meaghan (library director) about a book.  
-reviewed an email received from Barbara Pelissier requesting the board seek and accept external input on the resolution. Teri reported it was her intention to seek external input once employees and officials had opportunity to do so. She made recommendation to give them until the end of September to respond to the request then open comment to the general public. So moved.
- **Municipal Vulnerability Grant (MVP),** Phil reported he contacted Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC) inquiring about whether PVPC might submit a letter of interest to serve as the town's certified provider for the MVP planning process. Emily Slotnick, Senior Planner at

PVPC, responded with a suggestion of an alternative/hybrid arrangement where PVPC can play an important stakeholder role, while Weston and Sampson leads the charge. They would ask that \$2,000 of the grant award be carved out for PVPC, either as a sub to Weston and Sampson or a separate hire by the town. PVPC would commit to attending the stakeholder kickoff meeting, workshop/s, and the Public Listening Session, offering regional perspectives and supporting the Weston and Sampson planning team with note taking, virtual meeting support, etc. PVPC has led 15 communities through the MVP Planning Grant process since the program's inception, and have also participated as regional stakeholders for 8 other communities in an arrangement similar to the one I described above. Phil reported that Amanda Kohn from Weston and Sampson replied they are open to working with Pioneer Valley Planning Commission and have done so with similar organizations. She looks forward to the opportunity to work with Emily. Phil motioned to offer Pioneer Valley Planning Commission a sub-consultant position under Weston and Sampson in the amount of \$2,000.00 to be paid through the grant award. Second by Teri. So moved by vote 3-years, 0-nays. Phil motioned to be authorized to complete the contract. Second by Teri. Motion approved by vote 3-years, 0-nays.

- Correspondence:
  - inquiries on the annual household hazardous waste collection have been received by email. Information is on the transfer station page of the official Town of Westhampton Website. The information will be posted as a news story on the home page for easier access.
  - an email was received just prior to meeting from Kate O'Connor. In the email she speaks of pesticides and their effect on pollinators and public health. She asks the board to support the friendly pollinator resolution. Maureen recommended the email be forwarded to the Agricultural Commission being the body that makes recommendations to the protection and rights of agricultural and farming business. Maureen spoke to some of the pesticides named in the email and their functional use and importance to those businesses. She will also have the pollinator committee look at the email.
  - Teri opened discussion on the Community Compact IT Grant Program. Application period ends on October 15. She asked if there are other departments that have IT needs that may qualify for funding through the program, such as the school. Specifically, she asked if the electronic permitting software is eligible and if a hold should be placed on entering into a contract. Notice of the grant is to be sent to other departments and a grant application is to be considered for electronic permitting.
- Cheryl reported her first date of leave remains September 29. She will be out of the office two weeks but working remotely by the second week in increasing amounts of time. She will continue to work a combination of remote and on site for another three to four weeks until at full capacity. She expects to be available to conduct in person early voting and Election Day procedures. Patty is prepared to process mail in ballots once they arrive and take care of agendas and any pressing matters in the Clerk's office. Susan is available to assist with mailing of ballots once they arrive. The state has a deadline of October 9 to distribute materials to municipalities. Cheryl has FMLA paperwork that she will give to her provider to fill out their section. Discussion ensued regarding operations of day to day business and how that will be handled. Cheryl reported that most public business is with the Clerk's office which can be handled by Patty. Cheryl reported confidence in the administrative office being managed remotely, with email and voicemail checked regularly and items disseminated as needed. The board approved the plan with note that someone will be brought in if needed.

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

Payrolls: \$82,471.25

Vendor: \$53,066.83

- Next meeting: 6:30 p.m., September 28, 2020.

Meeting adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

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

Phil Dowling

Maureen Dempsey

Teri Anderson