



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

Minutes of December 28, 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 Patty Cotton (Treasurer), Laurie Sanders (ZBA), Fred Morrison (Conservation Commission), Ira Brezinsky, Philip and Laurie Norris, Bill and Lynn Truswell, Ed Etheridge, Mark Wamsley (Kestrel Land Trust). Minutes were taken by Cheryl Provost.

- Treasurer search; Phil opened meeting to Maureen Dempsey to speak on behalf of the search committee. Maureen explained the committee spoke to Ira Brezinsky about the position. Their recommendation to the Selectboard is to consider him for the position. Moved to conduct interview with Ira Brezinsky. He described his experience and interest in the position then responded to questions. Maureen reported that the committee did not check references. Phil suggested a target start date of February 1 with training to begin in January. Maureen will check references and the board will return January 4 to review and move forward with details of filling position.
- Review of Notice of Intent to Sell Land held under Chapter 61A located on South Road, owned by Philip and Laura Norris. Phil explained that the intent to sell to William and Lynn Truswell for \$115,000.00 was reviewed by the board on December 21. The seller (Norris') must provide specific information before the board may consider first right of refusal. The exact location of the lot and the intentions of the buyer were unclear at that time. He moved discussion to the Norris'. Phil Norris explained that it is not the intent of Bill and Lynn Truswell to continue the property under Chapter 61. Truswell's concurred. P Norris explained the 11 acre lot was surveyed in 2015 and described the location. The plan was recently approved and signed by the Planning Board and will be filed at the Hampshire County Registry of Deeds. The lot does not abut conservation land. Phil requested a copy of the plan and name/contact of attorney for each party. It was noted that Ed Etheridge represents the Norris'. With all information provided discussion will continue January 4.
- Animal Control Officer. Teri reviewed an email where she reported she spoke with Chief Jody Kasper in Northampton. Animal Control is part of the police department. They are very open to shared services. They have one full-time person who is over-taxed so they had already planned to hire a part-time assistant and will advertise soon. Assistant hours will be based on our added needs. If interested, the town needs to provide them with requested amount of coverage and budget. Agreed to have Teri continue discussions with Chief Kasper.

- Discussion returned to search for Treasurer and change of officer. Phil suggested a transition period in January with a start date of February 1. Patty will continue through January while providing training. There will also be training for Tax Collector and then in the spring for Town Clerk. Discussion ensued regarding rate of pay and budget for training. Phil motioned to request \$3,500.00 from the Finance Committee to fund a new account to pay \$25.00 per hour to new incoming officials and \$29.00 per hour to trainer of Treasurer/Collector/Town Clerk. Second by Maureen.
So moved by roll vote:
Phil Dowling-aye
Maureen Dempsey-aye
Teri Anderson-aye

Discussion ensued regarding the status of Anne Marie Knox as Tax Collector. Her final day is December 31.

Phil motioned to appoint Patty Cotton as Tax Collector effective January 1, 2021. Second by Maureen. Discussion opened. Reviewed Patty's experience in municipal work. Motion called to vote.

So moved by roll vote:
Phil Dowling-aye
Maureen Dempsey-aye
Teri Anderson-aye

Patty confirmed Anne Marie Knox will provide training as needed. Patty asked what is being done to provide backup to the Treasurer. Phil reported Cheryl had suggested considering the Tax Collector serve as Assistant Treasurer and the Treasurer serve as Assistant Tax Collector. Patty agreed with the Assistant Treasurer position but does not believe backup to the Collector is necessary at this time. Discussion ensued regarding backup to various positions.

Phil motioned to appoint Patty Cotton as Assistant Treasurer effective February 1, 2021. Second by Teri. So moved by roll vote:
Phil Dowling-aye
Maureen Dempsey-aye
Teri Anderson-aye

Discussed adding Open Space Plan and forming new committee to future agenda.

Minutes of Tax Classification Hearing held December 21, 2020 were reviewed and approved by roll vote 3-yeas, 0-nay.

Next meeting: 7:00 p.m., January 4, 2021.

Adjourned meeting at 8:08 p.m.

Approved by vote of the Selectboard at virtual meeting held January 4, 2021.

Phil Dowling
Maureen Dempsey
Teri Anderson