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MINUTES  
SELECTMEN'S MEETING  
TOWN HALL

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 21, 2020  
6:00 P.M. – EXECUTIVE SESSION  
6:30 P.M. - REGULAR MEETING  
REMOTE PARTICIPATION ONLY

RELEASED

APPROVED

**SELECTMEN PARTICIPATING:** Larry Ballantine, Michael MacAskill, Ed McManus, Stephen Ford & Donald Howell

**ALSO PARTICIPATING:** Interim Town Administrator Joseph Powers

**CALL TO ORDER**

Mr. Ballantine called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. beginning with Executive Session.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

- A. Pursuant to M.G.L. c. 30A section 21 (a) paragraph 2 to conduct strategy sessions for contract negotiations for nonunion personnel – Finance Director and Police Chief.

Mr. Ballantine reported that the Board is nearly complete on this Executive Session discussion.

**WEEKLY BRIEFING**

- A. COVID-19 Updates

Health Director Meggan Eldredge was present. Since the packet was put together, we have been notified of 1 new case, which brings our current positive case count to 148. 2 of these cases are active. Ms. Eldredge updated the Board on the positive case from Monomoy. She added that the school has been doing a great job of contact tracing and following CDC guidance.

Ms. Eldredge stated that masks will be required at Town Meeting when you are moving around and until you are seated. If people are walking by you go use a microphone, she asked that seated people put their masks on. The current gathering order indicates that if you have more than 10 people at a gathering, that masks should be worn at all times. To be on the safe side, it would be prudent for everyone to keep their masks on throughout Town Meeting.

Mr. Ford asked if it would be wise to say that we would like people to keep their masks on and that it should be mandated. Ms. Eldredge agreed but added that her only hesitation is that the Board of Health does not have Town Meeting mandated under their executive order. Mr. MacAskill feels that it would be fair for the Selectmen to take the position that they would like everyone to keep their mask on at Town Meeting. Mr. Ballantine agreed.

**Mr. Howell moved that masks be required to be worn at all times during Town Meeting, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Mr. Ford.**

Mr. Ballantine asked if volunteers would be present to help direct people. Mr. Powers responded that the CERT Team that worked the Chatham Town Meeting would be working Harwich's

Town Meeting. There will be several opportunities where people can be reminded about the mask requirement.

Mr. MacAskill commented that the Board might not want to take an official vote because of the nature of the wording on the agenda, but agreed that masks should be required. He also agreed that the Moderator could remind everyone of the mask requirement as well. Mr. Howell suggested that the Selectmen could take a vote that they affirm the language on the front cover of the warrant that states masks are required at Town Meeting.

Ms. Eldredge added that there will be a supply of masks available at Town Meeting.

**Mr. Howell moved that the Board of Selectmen affirm the printed front page of the Town Meeting Warrant that states masks will be required, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Mr. Ford. The vote was 5-0-0 with Mr. Ballantine, Mr. MacAskill, Mr. Howell, Mr. Ford & Mr. McManus all voting aye by roll call.**

Mr. Powers provided an update on the logistics for Town Meeting and reviewed the handout that will be provided in the warrant.

Mr. Ballantine asked if there would be volunteers located at the back of the ballfield to listen for any sound issues. Mr. Powers responded that there would be.

Mr. MacAskill asked if the buses would be relocated to allow for extra parking. Mr. Powers responded that the buses would be sent to another location to allow for ample parking.

Mr. Ballantine reminded the Board to arrive at 9:00 a.m.

B. Update on ongoing efforts by the Town in support of the business community

Harwich Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Cyndi Williams was present and stated that she will have an update for the next Board meeting.

Mr. MacAskill asked if there has been any direction given to restaurants regarding outdoor tents. Ms. Williams stated that they have started to look at the guidance and that she has been discussing options with the Health Director. Emails have been sent out to restaurants and there are still some details that need to be worked out.

Fire Chief David LeBlanc was present and stated that the Fire Department has been conducting courtesy tent inspections for establishments. He agreed that more information will be available shortly.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS/ANNOUNCEMENTS**

A. Update on personnel – Police Chief Guillemette

Police Chief David Guillemette was present to provide an update on personnel. Officer John Sullivan Sr. has worked for the town for over 40 years as a special police officer. This summer, Mr. Sullivan has decided to not seek re-appointment into the position. Chief Guillemette thanked him for this years of service and dedication to the Town. The Board extended their thanks as well.

Chief Guillemette reported that Animal Control Officer Jennifer Harrington has completed the police academy and will be sworn in as a special police officer as well as will continue to fulfill her duties as ACO.



The Board extended their congratulations to both Officer Sullivan and Officer Harrington.

Mr. MacAskill asked if the process has been started to hire a new dispatcher. Mr. Powers responded that advertisements have been sent out for the position.

- B. Discussion and consensus from the Board of Selectmen for the Harwich Fire Department to collaborate with Barnstable County Fire Academy for facility training located at 175 Sisson Road, Harwich

Fire Chief David LeBlanc was present and provided background to the Board of what is being requested. For a variety of reasons, the training facility on Mary Dunn Road has been closed to the fire academy, so they are looking for a new home. There has been a grant written and received for the construction of a new training facility and now it needs a home. There was a suggestion put forward of putting the training facility behind the public safety building on Sisson Road. After talking with town departments, it was determined that this would be an appropriate location and would be a benefit for not only Harwich, but Cape wide. Chief LeBlanc reviewed the details of the grant money that was received.

Mr. Howell stated that this would not only bring back a lost service, but that we won't have to send our staff off-site for training.

Mr. McManus & Mr. Ford voiced their support of this request.

**Mr. MacAskill moved to support the request from the Harwich Fire Department to collaborate with Barnstable County Fire Academy for facility training located at 175 Sisson Road, Harwich, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Mr. Howell. The vote was 5-0-0 with Mr. Ballantine, Mr. MacAskill, Mr. Howell, Mr. Ford & Mr. McManus all voting aye by roll call.**

### **CONSENT AGENDA**

- A. Minutes for Approval
  - 1. July 6, 2020

**Mr. MacAskill moved to approve the minutes of the July 6, 2020 meeting as printed, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Mr. Howell. The vote was 5-0-0 with Mr. Ballantine, Mr. MacAskill, Mr. Howell, Mr. Ford & Mr. McManus all voting aye by roll call.**

### **NEW BUSINESS**

- A. Joint meeting with Monomoy Regional School Committee – Discussion and possible vote on FY2021 Monomoy Regional School Budget

Mr. Powers stated that this would not be a joint meeting of the entire school committee but rather a couple of their members, Superintendent Scott Carpenter & Business Manager Michael MacMillan. The school committee is set to vote on Thursday relative to the proposed budget.

Chair of the Monomoy Regional School Committee Tina Games was present and joined by Terry Russell.

Dr. Carpenter commented that the Town of Harwich truly has a gem in their Health Director Meggan Eldredge. His experience in working with Ms. Eldredge during the pandemic has been seamless.

Dr. Carpenter reviewed the budget based on the August draft assessment sheet that was sent to the towns. Harwich will see a 1.19% change from FY20. Dr. Carpenter went on to review running schools during a pandemic, which required staffing virtual classrooms with teachers, increasing



some staffing to reduce the density of students in brick and mortar classrooms and having 2 full time nurses or CNA in each building to handle regular duties, staffing an isolation room when needed, constant monitoring of all illnesses of students or staff and liaising with town Health Departments and VNA contact tracing. The district has also had to purchase additional chrome books, digital technology for teaching as well as PPE and other health related items to protect students and staff. Also included was a focused maintenance effort particularly to have HVAC systems functioning as well as the day the buildings first opened or better.

Also reviewed was the relief grant funding that was received to address added COVID-19 costs. To date, \$340,000 has been spent on PPE, cleaning supplies, HVAC, medical supplies, Plexiglas, signage, student computers, classroom technology, software applications & tents.

Dr. Carpenter stated that there is a need to maintain adequate capital/technology funding for schools. The main items in Monomoy's FY21 capital request are HVAC work, chrome books for students across the grade levels and teacher computers and instructional technology. He added that Monomoy teachers have connected face to face with every child every day during COVID. Monomoy teachers are providing the most in-person instruction of any school district in the region. Monomoy's ongoing proactive maintenance of its buildings finds our students being able to stay in classrooms.

Dr. Carpenter shared the fund balances for each of the town and the regional school district. As a proportion of its budget, Monomoy has far less of these funds to provide long term fiscal stability. He went on to review the school districts finance subcommittee and superintendent revised FY21 budget recommendation. The current budget is \$41,449,432. A proposed reduction in staffing budget (grants/staffing changes/retirement incentive) would reduce the budget by \$188,298. A revised budget would be \$41,261,134 (1.25% increase in Monomoy's budget over FY20). This will reduce Harwich's assessment by an additional \$140k and Chatham's by \$48,298. Also reviewed were the final FY21 assessments heading into Harwich's Town Meeting. The total assessment for Harwich would be \$26,820,046 with is a 0.66% change from FY20.

Ms. Games added that Monomoy school buildings have been open this entire time. Harwich Elementary school has also offered childcare from the end of March through June and then through the summer. The schools have been a wonderful partner with our residents.

Mr. Ballantine commented that he is proud of how Monomoy has handled the pandemic and also appreciates the adjustments that have been made to the proposed budget.

Mr. Ford stated his appreciations on how hard they have worked on bringing in this budget and thanked the Monomoy staff for working closely with the Selectmen to get the budget where it needs to be. Mr. MacAskill agreed.

Mr. Ballantine would like to go into Town Meeting with a unified position on the budgets.

**Mr. MacAskill moved to support the FY21 Monomoy Regional School District budget as presented, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Mr. McManus. The vote was 5-0-0 with Mr. Ballantine, Mr. MacAskill, Mr. Howell, Mr. Ford & Mr. McManus all voting aye by roll call.**

Finance Committee Chair Dana DeCosta was present and stated that the Finance Committee would be meeting to review the numbers. As long as the Finance Director can report that the numbers work, the Finance Committee will be asked to support them. They also hope to go into Town Meeting unified.

- B. Discussion and possible vote to waive the Free Cash policy requirements to allow for Free Cash to be used for the operating budget



Mr. Powers was hoping to provide an update to the Board and town on the numbers that have been received last week relative to free cash, which was certified as of July 1. The state has advised Harwich that the certified free cash is in the amount of \$5,453,040. A significant portion of that amount is from FY19. We will need to back out that amount because every cent of that has been used to fund the capital plan for FY21 as well as certain items in the operating budget.

Mr. Powers asked if the Board would want to consider the use of free cash in place of the stabilization fund. He added that if article 4 doesn't pass at Town Meeting, then article 5 would be out of adjustment. If so, he would be compelled to come back to the Board and say that in order to balance the budget, the only other source would be from free cash. Mr. McManus added that the \$574,000 that we are currently looking at does not take into consideration the Board's previous discussion with the school board.

Mr. Howell stated that part of our dilemma moving forward is that we haven't been able to peg what our receipts were in certain areas, but we will by the time we get to the next Town Meeting, which is why he would be willing to take a risk. The stabilization fund was a conscious effort to put money away for a rainy day. He would rather see us use free cash knowing that it was money that we had actually banked for this year. If we take funds out of the stabilization fund, Mr. Howell worries that the funds would not go back into that fund.

Finance Director Carol Coppola was present. When the Board discussed this topic 2 weeks ago, the free cash has not been set yet. Harwich was \$146,000 over allocated in free cash which is the reason why the school committee and staff engaged in conversations. Ms. Coppola stated that the Board should continue funding the school districts with the new free cash and reduce the stabilization fund.

Mr. MacAskill stated that we have a stabilization fund for a reason as a rainy day fund. The Board could easily make a commitment tonight that the first order of business with the Town Administration would be to replenish the stabilization fund. He added that the free cash money should be used to get us through FY22. Mr. MacAskill believes that we would be getting ourselves into a continued hole in the next 5 years by using our free cash every year.

Mr. Howell added that he is in favor of pulling back, not pulling from somewhere else to address a shortfall.

***Mr. McManus made a motion to (video cut out from 1:26-1:28), Mr. Howell seconded the motion. The vote was 5-0-0 with Mr. Ballantine, Mr. MacAskill, Mr. Howell, Mr. Ford & Mr. McManus all voting aye by roll call.***

Mr. MacAskill asked if the intent would be to use the stabilization fund as a backup.

*Video cut out from 1:29-1:29:30.*

#### C. Discussion – Goals and objectives for the Interim Town Administrator

The document in the packet is what the Board has previously discussed. Mr. Powers was hoping that the Board would have a general discussion tonight and make a formal vote at the next meeting.

Mr. Howell stated that if these are the goals, then what number within them constitutes average, below average or above average. The goals in themselves have to be expressed by something that they are tethered to.



Mr. Ford commented that the Board did extensive work on how to break down and look at goals, including how the goals are rated. He would like to take a little more time to look at these and come back for further discussion.

Mr. MacAskill asked if the Board could extend this for another week to allow for more time to review. He would like to get Mr. Powers' thoughts on what is being presented and if what the Board is proposing is constructive. Mr. MacAskill commented that he doesn't think that developing a FY22 operating budget with a 0% tax increase is possible. He added that there needs to be a lot of emphasis on wastewater, considering the mistakes that have been made so far. Housing also has a significant amount of money that has been put away and breaking ground on these projects would be great.

Mr. Ballantine wondered if some of the goals might need to be shortened.

Mr. McManus also stated concerns over the 0% tax rate increase goal. One of the other projects that he would like to see is developing a plan and getting an appraisal for the former fire station property. Mr. Ballantine responded that he has asked Mr. Powers to have this put on a future agenda for discussion.

Mr. MacAskill asked Mr. Ford to please redistribute the scoring sheet to the Board members. He also asked that all other Board members send any comments to Mr. Ballantine.

Mr. Ballantine stated that he would work with Mr. Powers on coming up with a deadline to complete this.

#### D. License Agreement – Bob Miller Golf – Request for reduction of payment

At the request of Bob Miller, the Golf Committee met last week to discuss the request for reduction of lease payment given the impacts to his business relating to COVID-19. Mr. Miller is seeking a reduction of his lease payment to a total amount of \$2700. Golf Superintendent Roman Greer and the Golf Committee are recommending that the lease payment be reduced for the season.

Mr. MacAskill commented that he doesn't see any information provided that Mr. Miller's business was down. Every outdoor activity that he has seen has shown an increase. Given COVID-19, he doesn't have a problem voting to support this request, but added that he has a lot of questions for the Golf Committee if this comes back forward.

The Board and Mr. Powers reviewed the dates of the lease agreement.

**Mr. McManus moved to approve the request for reduction of payment for Miller Golf Lessons with a payment of \$2700 due for the season, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Mr. MacAskill. The vote was 5-0-0 with Mr. Ballantine, Mr. MacAskill, Mr. Howell, Mr. Ford & Mr. McManus all voting aye by roll call.**

#### **OLD BUSINESS**

A. Discussion and possible vote on Monomoy Regional High School rooftop solar project

##### 1. Recognition and Acknowledgement agreement

Mr. MacAskill asked what the benefit is to the school and town. Liz Argo was present and responded that this will be a smaller installation on the school roof which will feed the school power so it would be a voided cost of electricity. The approximate amount each year is \$40,000 that it would save the school in typical electrical costs. The \$40,000 is a net benefit. For each

kw/hour of production, there is a payment to the developer, but they would be off settings with electricity. Mr. MacAskill asked for a copy of the full proposal.

**Mr. McManus moved to authorize the Chair to sign the recognition and acknowledgement agreement dated September 10, 2020, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Mr. Ford. The vote was 5-0-0 with Mr. Ballantine, Mr. MacAskill, Mr. Howell, Mr. Ford & Mr. McManus all voting aye by roll call.**

## **2. Rooftop lease agreement**

**Mr. McManus moved to approve and authorize the Chair to sign the rooftop lease agreement as presented, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Mr. Ford. The vote was 5-0-0 with Mr. Ballantine, Mr. MacAskill, Mr. Howell, Mr. Ford & Mr. McManus all voting aye by roll call.**

## **CONTRACTS**

- A. Discussion and possible vote to execute agreement with Colonial Municipal Group for the purchase of a 1 Ton Dump Truck for the Department of Public Works for \$79,917.65

Mr. Powers reviewed the request. This request goes back to a procurement that was authorized at the 2019 Annual Town Meeting. What was provided in the Board's packet does not include the Finance Director's signature, however the agreement was signed by the Finance Director late in the day on Friday.

Going forward, Mr. MacAskill would like to make sure that the Board is provided the Town Administrator's recommendation and Finance Director's signature in the packet.

**Mr. MacAskill moved to execute agreement with Colonial Municipal Group for the purchase of a 1 Ton Dump Truck for the Department of Public Works for \$79,917.65, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Mr. Howell. The vote was 5-0-0 with Mr. Ballantine, Mr. MacAskill, Mr. Howell, Mr. Ford & Mr. McManus all voting aye by roll call.**

## **TOWN ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT**

Mr. Powers reported that the next steps for the Bank Street Fire Station are to work on the abatement of the asbestos and lead paint in the building. He hopes to have the abatement completed before the frost comes in and have the demolition completed after any snow and ice has melted. He has already directed staff to start cleaning out the building.

Mr. Powers provided the Board with an update on custodial staffing. Greg Bailey will be starting on October 14, 2020 and we now will have a full complement of custodians.

Mr. Powers stated that he has signed an agreement with Structures North for work to be done on the Brooks Academy Museum.

## **SELECTMEN'S REPORT**

Mr. MacAskill commented that several of the committees that he is the liaison to sometimes struggle to make a quorum. Because of the pandemic and remote participation, people are leaving committees because they are not able to attend remotely. He asked if there is anything



planned for the future so that these boards and committees can meet in person. Mr. Powers responded that he would turn to the Health Director for guidance on the public health orders. Another option would be for the members to participate via phone for the meetings.

Mr. Howell stated that the Waterways and Zoning Board of Appeals are in need of members.

Regarding remote meetings, Mr. McManus added that some of the older members are able to understand the technology, the problem is being able to hear all that is going on at the meeting.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

**Mr. MacAskill moved to adjourn the meeting, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Mr. Howell. The vote was 5-0-0 with Mr. Ballantine, Mr. MacAskill, Mr. Howell, Mr. Ford & Mr. McManus all voting aye by roll call.**

Respectfully submitted,  
Jennifer Clarke  
Recording Secretary