

APPROVED

**MINUTES
SELECTMEN'S MEETING
REMOTE PARTICIPATION ONLY
TUESDAY, April 7, 2020
6:30 P.M.**

RELEASED

SELECTMEN PARTICIPATING: Ballantine, Ford, Howell, MacAskill, McManus.

ALSO PARTICIPATING: Interim Town Administrator, Joseph Powers and Meggan Eldredge, Health Director

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Ballantine opened the meeting at 6:30PM and called to order the Board of Selectmen. Roll-call: Mr. MacAskill – Here, Mr. Ford – Here, Mr. Ballantine – Here, Mr. Howell – Here, Mr. McManus – Here.

Mr. Ballantine said before the business of the meeting is conducted, he expressed thanks to Channel 18, Jamie Goodwin and Caleb Ladue, for all their efforts.

CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Minutes for approval**
1. June 17, 2019
 2. June 24, 2019
 3. July 15, 2019
 4. March 19, 2020
 5. March 23, 2020
 6. March 26, 2020
 7. March 30, 2020
 8. April 1, 2020

Mr. Ballantine said action on items 1-3 will be delayed to a later date. Mr. MacAskill moved, Mr. Ford seconded, to approve items 4 through 8 with the following edits:

- 3/19/20 minutes, under New Business, Item H, the vote should read 4-1.

- 3/26/20 minutes, delete Mr. Howell's name from the adjournment motion.
- 3/26/20 minutes, under Selectmen's Report, the spelling of Amy Usowski, Conservation Agent, is corrected.

Mr. MacAskill will Email his concerns with the 7/15/19 minutes to the Chairman, who will email them to Robert Lawton, Interim Assistant Town Manager. Mr. Howell will communicate his concerns with items 1-3 to Mr. Lawton as well. Mr. Howell offered to look over meeting minutes to ensure their accuracy. Mr. Powers said that Danielle Delaney will assist in identifying the backlog of meetings that need minutes, adding that Mr. Lawton is prepared to work on the minutes as well.

Mr. Ballantine said there is a motion and a second. Roll-call vote: Mr. McManus – Yes, Mr. Ford – Yes, Mr. MacAskill – Yes, Mr. Howell – Yes, Mr. Ballantine – Yes. Motion carried unanimously.

B. Vote to approve – Class II Used Car Dealer – Goodson's Motor Cars, 2010 Queen Ann Road, Harwich

Mr. Ford moved to approve item B. Mr. Howell seconded. Roll-call vote: Mr. McManus – Yes, Mr. Ford – Yes, Mr. MacAskill – Yes, Mr. Howell – Yes, Mr. Ballantine. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

C. Vote to approve – Seasonal, All Alcohol License – Phoenix Park, Inc., DBA The Irish Pub, 126 Route 28, Harwich, with any pre-existing restrictions.

Mr. Ford moved to approve item C. Mr. Howell seconded. Roll-call vote: Mr. McManus – Yes, Mr. Ford – Yes, Mr. MacAskill – Yes, Mr. Howell – Yes, Mr. Ballantine. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

NEW BUSINESS

- A. Discussion and possible vote to affirm roles of Interim Town Administrator and Public Health Director during entirety of Public Health Crisis related to COVID-19

Mr. Powers said he wanted to clarify communications during the public crisis caused by COVID-19. He said he has been relying on the direction of the Public Health Director Meggan Eldredge.

Ms. Eldredge said COVID-19 is different from other kinds of State emergencies, adding that the pandemic is still evolving. She said the types of decisions she has been making in conjunction with Mr. Powers relate to the closing of town buildings to the public, activating remote work environments, restricting gatherings and events, and closing non-essential businesses. Ms. Eldredge reiterated we all must be sure we are paying attention to social distancing requirements. She said as Health Director her role is essentially as a crisis manager at this point and to interpret orders from experts above her. She said as she is in regular contact with Mr. Powers, under a unified command structure. Ms. Eldredge said Mr. Powers implemented the plan for employees to work remotely, adding that he has worked tirelessly with her, hoping for the best.

Mr. Powers said since Ms. Eldredge's role is Health Director, he has been relying on her guidance. He advised the Board that Ms. Eldredge is Chairperson of the Cape and Island Health Directors Association. Mr. Powers said he appreciates her presentation at this meeting.

Mr. Howell said this is a universal crisis and we need to recognize that Harwich has a major problem. He said he wants the public to know that the Board and the Town is working in their best interests.

Mr. Ford said we should affirm to everyone in this Town that we have strong support offered toward Mr. Powers and Ms. Eldredge and we are grateful for their professionalism. He added that everyone on this Board wants to give the strongest support to these two – and to everyone else who works for the Town.

Mr. Ballantine said he didn't feel a vote was required as it appears obvious that there is a consensus among the Board members concerning the roles of

the Interim Town Administrator and the Public Health Director during the entirety of the Public Health Crisis related to COVID-19.

OLD BUSINESS

A. Coronavirus – COVID-19 Update

Ms. Eldredge reported that the number of positive COVID-19 cases in the state have grown since her last report. She said we are still climbing up a steep curve, adding that New York State is a few weeks ahead of us. Ms. Eldredge said if we follow New York's trajectory, we may see that curve flattening as well. She said there are three new deaths in Barnstable County. She said numbers in Harwich will be discussed at the April 9th meeting. Ms. Eldredge dispelled the rumor that a person who worked in a local grocery store had died from the virus. From her contact with the grocery store, she said she learned that there had been an employee who left their employ on March 15, before any virus could have been spread, but who has since passed away. Ms. Eldredge said guidance is given by email and phone to the grocery stores and pharmacies that are open now. She urged everyone to practice good personal hygiene; she said everyone should wash their hands as soon as they get home and observe the 6-foot social distancing directive.

Mr. Ballantine said he observed many cars in the Red River parking lot. Ms. Eldredge replied she has been in touch with Eric Beebe, Recreation Director, and the Police Department. She said the beach parking lot is being monitored; however, she said she is trying to keep recreation areas open because the opportunity for persons to exercise is so important.

Mr. Ford mentioned an article he has seen which mentioned 1,000 new persons in Massachusetts to assist with contact tracing. Ms. Eldredge said they are volunteers through public health schools being trained by the Department of Public Health and will support local Health Boards. She said Harwich has the VNA; however, she added that we can tap in to the volunteer pool if we get overwhelmed.

Mr. Howell said to some people this is not a big problem and some are treating it like a game. He urged everyone to listen to Mr. Powers and Ms. Eldredge and observe what they are saying.

Mr. McManus asked if a gathering is observed as flagrantly violating the social distancing norms that we are all trying to obey, what the suggestions are. Ms. Eldredge suggested first having a conversation and if that is not effective, to contact the Police Department as they are ready to breakup any gathering.

OPEN PUBLIC FORUM

The Chairman opened the Open Public Forum. The public was invited to call in and participate in the meeting to offer comments and/or questions. Scott Tyldesley reviewed the procedure for remote participation. The appropriate phone number was displayed. He said no emails were received, and following a two-minute waiting period, no one dialed in.

TOWN ADMINSTRATOR'S REPORTS

Mr. Powers said the minutes of the Selectmen's meetings were addressed earlier in the meeting.

Mr. Powers said he took the opportunity to visit the Transfer Station and see the single-stream recycling configuration in action. He said the public reaction is very positive.

SELECTMEN'S REPORT

Mr. MacAskill said even though there are priorities dictated by the COVID-19 crisis, we still have a Town to operate. He asked if there is guidance as to what that means; he asked should we be doing normal business. Mr. MacAskill said he would like to hear from the Town Administrator Search Committee and he would like a discussion of overtime at the Transfer Station. He asked the chairman to get back to him. Mr. Ballantine said the Board has to work on continuing activities, including how the Board is going to proceed when we do have a Town Meeting. He said he will try to put actions before the Board that need to be taken care of.

Mr. Howell said if it is an item that can wait, it should wait. He said the public needs to know that the Board is focused. Mr. MacAskill thanked Mr. Howell for

clarifying, adding that it is nice to know that he will look at facts. Mr. Ballantine said he will identify items that the Board should take on as they move forward.

Mr. Powers noted that Mr. McManus dropped out of the meeting at 7:22PM.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Howell moved to adjourn at 7:24 PM. Mr. Ford seconded. Roll-call vote: Mr. MacAskill – Yes, Mr. Ford – Yes, Mr. Howell – Yes, Mr. Ballantine – Yes. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Dorothy G. Hemmings
Recording Secretary
Pro Tem