

RELEASED

APPROVED

**MINUTES
SELECTMEN'S MEETING
REMOTE PARTICIPATION ONLY
THURSDAY, March 30, 2020
6:30 P.M.**

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

ALSO PARTICIPATING: Interim Town Administrator, Joseph Powers; Meggan Eldredge, Health Director; Carol Coppola, Finance Director; and Dana DeCosta, FinCom.

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.

OLD BUSINESS

A. Coronavirus – COVID-19 Update

Mr. Powers asked Ms. Eldredge to provide updates. Ms. Eldredge reported that there is an increase in the number of cases in Barnstable County. She urged everyone to maintain social distances, wash their hands frequently, and cover coughs. She said everyone is responsible for their own actions. Ms. Eldredge reiterated Governor Baker's advisory to leave home only for essential needs.

Mr. Ballantine asked if there is an adequate number of beds in Cape Cod Hospital. Ms. Eldredge said they are doing well; they triage and do the testing outside of the hospital.

Mr. Howell asked about summer visitors renting earlier this year. Ms. Eldredge said the real estate business is designated an essential business; therefore, locally we can discourage early visitors but we cannot prohibit them.

Mr. Ford asked about the availability of testing. Ms. Eldredge said tests are widely available with a doctor's order.

B. Discussion and possible vote regarding non-discretionary spending

Mr. Powers asked Mrs. Coppola to address the Board. Mrs. Coppola reviewed her March 30 memo to the Board concerning the FY20 Budget and made the following points:

- Revenues, which had been estimated optimistically, will be lower than projected
- Municipalities have the option to waive late-payment penalties for the 4th quarter tax bill currently due May 1, 2020; the due date can be extended to June 1
- Revenues are not recognized until received
- Tornado reimbursement monies have not been received
- Cost of managing the COVID-19 virus is unknown
- A spending freeze for all non-essential spending would be a prudent initial measure

Mr. Powers suggested the Board discuss the proposed spending freeze, adding that he recommends the action. Mr. Ballantine asked if the freeze would impact seasonal workers. Mr. Powers said yes.

Mr. Ford asked that a non-essential expense be defined. Mrs. Coppola gave the example of a department wanting to replace a printer but their printer was still working. That proposed purchase would be considered non-essential.

Mr. Ford asked what kind of savings would result. Mr. DeCosta said he had reviewed the numbers and had an amount that he felt would be potential savings.

Mr. Howell asked if the freeze would be across all funds or tax-derived funds, noting that there is \$1 million in Revolving Funds. Mr. Ballantine asked if Revolving Funds are protected. Mrs. Coppola said they are. She said she will put together the information requested by the Board.

Mr. McManus was asked about the reimbursement for tornado costs, and he said no special action has been laid out.

Mr. DeCosta said departments may need to appeal a blanket spending freeze order because of summer activities. Mr. MacAskill agreed with Mr. DeCosta. Mr. Ballantine said the first answer would be No; the appeal process would follow.

Mr. Powers said there is already an appeal mechanism in place. He said he recommends that the Board set the standard in this crisis right now by adopting Mrs. Coppola's suggestion. More frequent Board meetings will allow the Board to react quickly to changing circumstances.

Mr. Howell moved to institute a budget freeze effective March 31, 2020, for all non-essential spending, excluding payroll costs and costs associated with the areas of public health and safety. Mr. MacAskill seconded.

Mr. MacAskill asked if the hiring freeze applies to the Police Dispatcher and Patrolman, which positions were budgeted for and being paid for when these employees left their positions before the freeze was voted. Mr. Ford asked if this item could be placed on the next Board agenda. Mr. McManus said we should continue Police and other essential personnel for the safety of the Town even if there is a hiring freeze. Mr. Powers said the item will be on the April 3d meeting agenda.

Mr. McManus asked how health and safety are being considered – by department or by activity. Mrs. Coppola said by activity.

Mr. Ballantine said we have a motion and a second. Roll-call vote: Mr. Ford – Yes, Mr. MacAskill – Yes, Mr. McManus – Yes, Mr. Howell – Yes, Mr. Ballantine – Yes. Motion passed by unanimous vote.

C. Discussion regarding rescheduling of 2020 Annual Town Meeting and 2020 Annual Town Election

Mr. Powers said this item will be on the agenda for April 1st meeting. Mr. Ford said since the Board will make the decisions about ATM and the Election dates, the Town Moderator is not relevant to the discussion. Mr. Howell said changing the dates of ATM and the Election has to be done in conjunction with the Moderator and the Town Clerk since their availability has to be known. Mr. Powers said the Board will have a copy of the special law in advance of the discussion.

D. Modified Meeting Board of Selectmen meeting schedule:

- a. Wednesday, April 1, 2020 at 6:30PM
- b. Friday, April 3, 2020 at 6:30PM
- c. Tuesday, April 7, 2020 at 6:30PM

TOWN ADMINSTRATOR'S REPORTS

A. Phase 2 – Weekly Sewer Update

Mr. Powers said there are no updates on this item.

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. Scott Tyldesley said he received one email. The appropriate phone number was displayed; however, following a two-minute waiting period, that person did not dial in.

SELECTMEN'S REPORT

Mr. Ford said there is pending legislation that would allow the Selectmen to lower the quorum at ATM if necessary.

Mr. MacAskill thanked Scott Tyldesley for coordinating the remote participation of the Board meetings and for implementing and coordinating the opportunity for public participation. He also thanked Ms. Eldredge for her input and Mr. Powers for keeping everything together. Mr. Ballantine said the entire Board agrees.

ADJOURNMENT

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

Respectfully submitted,

Dorothy G. Hemmings
Recording Secretary
Pro Tem