

Memorial Town Hall, 1 Library Street, Georgetown, MA 01833
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BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING MINUTES
Memorial Town Hall
3/23/20
5:00PM-General Meeting~3rd floor meeting room, Town Hall

Selectmen Present: Joseph Bonavita, Chairman; Charles Durney, Clerk; Gary C. Fowler, Douglas W. Dawes, and David J. Twiss

Others Present: Michael Farrell, Town Administrator; Janet Pantano, Administrative Assistant; Police Chief Don Cudmore; Fire Chief Fred Mitchell; Deb Rogers, Board of Health Agent

Absent:

Mr. Bonavita thanked everyone for moving the meeting up to 5PM.

5:04PM Call to order with a roll call vote

Invocation-Douglas W. Dawes
Pledge of Allegiance

NEW BUSINESS

COVID-19 update

Mr. Bonavita asked for updates from the Emergency Management Team.

Deb Rogers, Health Agent updated the board, she stated that newest announcement is the Governor is shutting down all non-essential workers. She stated that they will be receiving \$5K, and she is working on hiring some additional public health nurses. She stated that she is getting prepared for what comes next.

Mr. Dawes asked who she reports cases to. Ms. Rogers stated she hears from the State and then reports to the Police Chief.

Police Chief Cudmore updated the board. He stated that the information is overwhelming and that they did not have notice from the State of the closing of all non-essential workers by the Governor this morning. He discussed his dealings with business and explained how he is handling them. He stated that Peter Durkee, Highway Surveyor has posted closed signs at the parks. He stated that he has a meeting tomorrow to see if our supplies will last. He stated that we have mutual aid in place and are a member of NemLoc if resources are needed.

Mr. Dawes asked if he had a stand by team ready if needed. Chief Cudmore stated that he has some staff out and working on a rotating schedule.

Mr. Twiss asked about cleaning and if any additional cleaning has been done. Mr. Farrell stated that we had a company in on Friday and they sanitized the town hall.

Mr. Dawes asked if any challenges the Chiefs are having. Chief Cudmore stated handling calls is an issue and some staff are nervous, but overall the challenge is the protective gear.

Chief Mitchell stated that they are limiting exposure and some staff have already had to gown up. Mr. Bonavita asked if they are responding to all calls. Chief Mitchell stated that they are and all staff are healthy, he stated that they have a machine to decontaminate equipment.

Chief Cudmore stated he has two staff members that are in self quarantine, one is coming off and the other is 4 days in, neither have any symptoms.

Mr. Fowler asked about moral, and daycare for staff member's families.

Chief Cudmore stated that he has not had any issues right now with staff.

Deb Rogers stated that there is something out there for first responder's children.

Chief Mitchell stated he has some staff with children and are handling for now.

Deb Rogers stated she is getting a lot of anxious calls from staff at town hall. She stated that other towns are closing and staff working from home.

Mr. Farrell stated that we took a hit in the Finance Office as one staff member is sick and another leaving on Thursday.

Chief Cudmore stated that a lot of towns are closing town halls and most have voice mail connected to email. He stated that the loss of the town hall employee is a heavy hit. He stated some Highway departments have limited staff. Mr. Twiss asked if someone is sick do staff have ability to work from home. Mr. Farrell stated that he needs an official policy so staff can stay home and get paid.

Chief Mitchell stated when his staff go out on a call they are asking if anyone is sick in the home. He stated that also wants to send out a press release on mixing disinfectant chemicals and calling their doctor before 911.

Mr. Bonavita thanked the team for keeping everyone safe and for their time and all they do, and if they need anything to let them know. He stated that we have worked to limit people congregating. He stated that first step was to close town hall and keep the public out. He asked Mr. Farrell to go through the document from the Governor.

Mr. Farrell explained the documents, closing businesses and organizations that do not provide essential services. He stated that some boards cannot be meeting if they cannot meet remotely. He stated that they are requiring all staff to use direct deposit and this is an issue with unions but they are working on this. He stated not sure what we can do with vendor checks. Discussion on changing how payments are made. He stated that he has asked the board to set a level 1 and have staff remote in. Mr. Twiss stated have staff set an out of office message to send questions to email. He stated that we need to limit our staff to exposure and make sure they are safe.

Mr. Twiss moved to accept the Public Health Emergency Policy related to COVID-19. Mr. Durney seconded the motion and the motion was approved by a unanimous roll call vote.

Mr. Farrell stated that the second is the Town Closure Plan. He explained the plan and what it pertained too. Mr. Dawes asked if KP Law has reviewed documents. Mr. Farrell stated that he did not have time for that. Mr. Dawes asked how to deal with non-payment of staff if they cannot work. Mr. Farrell stated that through no fault of their own they should be paid, the funds are budgeted, the law reads if they do not work do not have to pay. He stated that we plan to pay, and in the document it states staff that if working from home staff should be available to come in, in 30 minutes.

Mr. Twiss stated says several weeks should we have a set date make such as April 7th same as the school. Mr. Bonavita stated that the next Selectmen's meeting is Monday, April 13th. Mr. Dawes stated that the Governor has set the date to stay closed to April 7th.

Mr. Bonavita stated that closing until April 13 should be ample time to be out of town hall.

Chief Cudmore stated that in regard to Police and Fire and his staff and if they become ill on the job it would be an 111F Claim. He stated that would mean no loss of time or pay.

Mr. Bonavita stated that they want staff to stay home and be safe. He asked what the best practices are. How do we know the job is getting done?

Mr. Farrell stated that he will be checking in with department heads and keeping the balls in the air. He stated that the residents will let them know if they are having issues.

Mr. Bonavita stated have to tell staff this is not a vacation and to give expectations to staff. Mr. Farrell stated that he expects them to get the job done. Mr. Twiss stated that Mr. Farrell will have to stress to staff and supervisors that the job has to get done. Mr. Fowler stated that he has the documents, going to minimum services and for some there will not be a lot to do. Mr. Twiss stated that for inspectional services they will have to reach out and let people know what the policy will be. Mr. Farrell stated that they have been issuing permits and now on a limited bases. Mr. Twiss stated that they have to put something out on social media so the public knows.

Mr. Bonavita stated for Highway are we limiting exposure. Mr. Farrell stated that we have a small crew. Mr. Bonavita stated that he could limit shifts.

Mr. Durney moved to accept the document with Town Closure Policy, and to reassess on April 13, 2020. Mr. Dawes seconded the motion and the motion was approved by a unanimous roll call vote.

Mr. Farrell stated that 3rd document is for a Flexible Work policy which works best for the town.

Mr. Durney moved to accept the Flexible Work Policy and to reassess on date April 13, 2020. Mr. Fowler seconded the motion.

Mr. Bonavita stated the hours are Mon-Thursday 8-4. Mr. Farrell stated this may have to be flexible. Mr. Bonavita stated that there has to be a plan to make sure that staff stay away from each other. Mr. Dawes asked who will do this. Mr. Farrell stated he can do this. Mr. Durney stated that you could have a shared calendar and staff look at the calendar to see who is in and when.

The motion was approved by a unanimous roll call vote.

Mr. Bonavita asked how is he going to roll out the document what are the expectations. Mr. Farrell stated will meet with department heads tomorrow and the documents will go into effect at noon tomorrow March 24, 2020.

The Annual Town Meeting and Special Town Meeting Warrants for May 4, 2020

Mr. Bonavita stated that they have to have a discussion on when to move the Annual Town Meeting, Special Town Meeting, and Elections. He asked for feedback.

Mr. Twiss stated that Mr. Bonavita and Mr. Fowler are both on the ballot and should not vote on moving elections.

Mr. Durney asked how long it takes to plan for an election and a Town Meeting. Mr. Farrell stated that had a discussion with Town Council and will have to start voter registration again before elections and could move to June 1st and June 8th, but have to have before end of June. He stated either the first two Mondays in June or the last two Mondays in June. He stated that if held after June 30th then they would need special legislation. Mr. Durney stated that we will have to educate the public on using the absentee ballot. Mr. Dawes stated he is inclined to go with the recommendation of the town clerk. Mr. Fowler asked if we need to do a date. He asked if we can do later and move at next meeting. Mr. Farrell stated that the more time we have to

schedule the better. Mr. Fowler stated does not see how his abstention to voting on moving the election has to do with his name on the ballot. Mr. Twiss stated that there are 3 candidates and for transparency should abstain. Mr. Durney agreed. Mr. Bonavita stated that he does not want to give any leverage to anybody that if they did not get in that it was because of the change of date. He asked Ms. Rogers if the same conditions would she recommend holding the election. Ms. Rogers stated that she cannot predict what will be happening. Discussion on election and options if things have not improved. Ms. Rogers stated that this will give us time to look into other options. Mr. Durney asked if we should have Kerri McManus, town clerk come to the next meeting with options.

Mr. Twiss moved to postpone the Annual Town Meeting from Monday, May 4, 2020 to Monday, June 1, 2020. Mr. Durney seconded the motion and the motion was approved by a unanimous roll call vote.

Mr. Twiss moved to move the Annual Town Election from Monday, May 11, 2020 to Monday, June 8, 2020. Mr. Durney seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a roll call vote 4-0. Mr. Bonavita abstained.

Mr. Fowler stated that this is being done in conjunction with the town clerk and because of the COVID-19 declaration we are under.

Ms. Rogers stated that the town will be getting some funds and can they authorize Mr. Farrell to sign for the board as it is difficult to wait for Selectmen's meetings to get the signatures.

Chief Cudmore stated he will continue to send out emails from MEMA and if the board has any questions to call him.

Chief Mitchell stated that they have canceled their inspections to commercial businesses and have new guidelines for CO and Smoke detectors.

Mr. Farrell stated that he needs the chair to come in or for the board to allow him to sign for the emergency grant for COVID-19.

Mr. Durney stated that we can also use DocuSign if needed. He stated that this should be in effect for Mr. Farrell for duration of COVID-19 pandemic. Mr. Dawes stated he is okay as long as the board is updated on what is signed.

Mr. Dawes moved to a give the Town Administrator authorization to sign documents that pertain to and for Emergency COVID-19 funding with notification to Selectmen. Mr. Durney seconded the motion and the motion was approved by a unanimous roll call vote.

Mr. Bonavita asked if there were any other dates to move out. Mr. Farrell stated not at this time and that FinCom can take their foot off the gas on the budget and this will give us some time to review.

Mr. Farrell stated he will talk to FinCom to see if they will postpone their meeting for this week. He stated that there have been no discussions on CIP. Mr. Bonavita stated that Mr. Twiss has some discussion on an article. He stated that after the joint meeting the School Committee is very disappointed about how the School budget was handled and what the cuts mean to their

budget. He stated that the School Committee chair has asked to come before the Selectmen and go over their budget and he would like to give them the opportunity. He stated he would like to add to the next agenda. He stated could be a workshop or wait until April 13th. Mr. Dawes asked Mr. Farrell what authority the Selectmen have over the School Committee budget. Mr. Farrell stated none. Mr. Bonavita stated that we could still communicate. Mr. Dawes stated that the board is not going to strong arm the FinCom. Mr. Bonavita stated that FinCom is an advisory board and this does not mean the Selectmen cannot add feedback. Mr. Farrell stated that he has wanted to have the Selectmen more involved in the budget process. He stated that it would be better for the School Committee to have a discussion with the FinCom. Mr. Bonavita stated that the School Committee did not feel the FinCom had enough time to review their budget. Mr. Durney asked if there has been another discussion by FinCom and the School Committee. Mr. Twiss stated that they can all meet together. Mr. Fowler stated that if the School Committee meet with FinCom the Selectmen could also attend. He stated that he goes to all FinCom meetings and they go over items carefully. Mr. Fowler asked if we have any funds to go into the STAB, Sped and Capitol Funds. Mr. Farrell stated that this has not been discussed just the automatic Excise Tax from marijuana will be going in, when this starts. Mr. Twiss stated that he does understand the FinCom approving the library being open on Thursday's he has heard rumblings. Mr. Bonavita stated that \$70K for library and \$30K for firefighter is a lot and does not want to let people go at the School. He stated that he was not sure if this is the year to add these items. Mr. Dawes stated that it has not been the year for the Library for a while. He stated that he was surprised by the extra Firefighter. He stated that this is a tough budget and the schools have dropped student enrollment and there has been no adjustment in staff, and not that there should be but stating a fact. He stated that they will be getting funds from Mission and what we do when it goes away. He stated that he has always stated these funds should not go into the budget. He stated that the funds are for 5 years and in the 4th year have to renegotiate. He stated that instead of host agreements he would like to have an excise tax. He stated that we can earmark these funds. Mr. Farrell stated that they can for capital projects. Mr. Dawes stated like a Public Safety building. Mr. Bonavita stated they have to have a plan for the future. He stated that there are other marijuana projects out there that will be coming in but these are still a way out. He stated that it will look better a few years out. Mr. Bonavita asked what are the changes on the Affordable Housing article. Mr. Twiss and Mr. Farrell stated that he has not received any changes. Mr. Dawes stated that the N.S Realtors are not in favor of this bylaw and they will take government action if approved and he is also against the article. He asked if the board can take the article off the warrant. Discussion

Mr. Durney moved to adjourn for 5 minutes at 7:52PM. Mr. Twiss seconded the motion and the motion was approved by a unanimous roll call vote.

Call back to order 7:57PM

Cyber Security Policies-to be adopted

Mr. Bonavita stated that the policies have been reviewed and the documents and the comments have been accepted and included. He asked if there were any further comments. None

Mr. Durney moved to approve the Access Control Policy, Acceptable Use Policy and Email Policy. Mr. Dawes seconded the motion and the motion was approved by a roll call 4-0 vote.

Mr. Bonavita stated a lot of time went into these policies and this was a tall task and thanked them both for their work. Mr. Farrell stated Ms. Pantano put a lot of time into editing the document.

ITEMS NOT REASONABLY ANTICIPATED BY THE CHAIR 48 HOURS IN ADVANCE OF THE MEETING

SELECTMEN'S REPORT

FY21 Budget

Mr. Dawes asked about the flag funds and if we need to vote these in. Mr. Farrell stated that \$1500 is in the budget and does not need a vote. Mr. Dawes stated that the Fire Chief stated that they were not replacing flags but did say they would raise and lower. He stated that he has made an agreement with light department to put up flags on the street.

Mr. Farrell stated that he will talk to Chief Mitchell and will get the funds in the budget. Mr. Dawes stated that we have 25 flags.

APPOINTMENTS and APPROVALS

Set up a Gift Account for the Park & Recreation/GYCC

Mr. Durney moved to set up a Gift Account for the Park & Recreation/Georgetown Youth Community Center. Mr. Twiss seconded the motion and the motion was approved by a unanimous roll vote.

Request to postpone the Laurie Hodges 5K to Sunday, June 28, 2020

Mr. Durney moved to approve the date change for the Laurie Hodges 5K to Sunday, June 28, 2020. Mr. Dawes seconded the motion and the motion was approved by a unanimous roll vote call.

WARRANT and MINUTES

Minutes of March 9, 2020 for approval

Mr. Durney moved to approve the minutes of March 9, 2020. Mr. Twiss seconded the motion and the motion was approved by a unanimous roll call vote.

Mr. Bonavita stated that with town hall shut down and more residents making credit card payments if we could look at reimbursing residents for the fees. Mr. Twiss stated that we could limit payments to lock box. Mr. Durney stated that he does not know what this dollar amount would be but that he has seen this done in other towns.

Mr. Farrell stated he talked to the Treasurer and she was not in favor as this could be a lot of money and we do not have a way to fund. Mr. Durney stated other towns may process in house and have a different system. He stated that if easy to do it would be a good gesture.

Mr. Twiss asked about an extension. Mr. Farrell stated we do not have control on extension of tax payments. Mr. Bonavita stated that the State has not issued any extensions for hardship. He stated that we should be exploring options. Mr. Farrell stated he would talk to the treasurer and assessor.

Mr. Twiss asked about filling the position open in the Treasurer/Collector's Office. Mr. Farrell stated that we have advertised the position and have hired someone to come in part-time. Mr. Dawes stated that he wanted to thank the Town Administrator and Emergency Management Team for all they are doing. The board all agreed.

Mr. Bonavita thanked everyone for attending and asked that residents stay home and be safe. He stated that we will keep residents posted. Stay well, support local businesses, and stay home.

NEXT MEETING

April 13, 2020 at 7:00 PM, 3rd floor meeting room, Town Hall

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Durney moved to adjourn. Mr. Dawes seconded the motion and the motion was approved by a unanimous roll call vote.

Meeting adjourned at 8:27PM.

Minutes transcribed by J. Pantano.

Minutes approved April 13, 2020.

Documents used in this meeting:

- Minutes of March 9, 2020 for approval
- COVID-19 update
- Review BoS Procedures, Policies, and Regulations
- The Annual Town Meeting and Special Town Meeting Warrants for May 4, 2020
- Cyber Security Policies-to be adopted
- Review BoS License and Permit Fees
- FY21 Budget Update
- Set up a Gift Account for the Park & Recreation/GYCC
- Request to postpone the Laurie Hodges 5K to Sunday, June 28, 2020