

Memorial Town Hall, 1 Library Street, Georgetown, MA 01833

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BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING MINUTES

Memorial Town Hall

4/13/20

6:00PM-General Meeting-Held remotely on BlueJeans and Broadcast on Cable TV

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

Others Present: Michael Farrell, Town Administrator; Janet Pantano, Administrative Assistant; Don Cudmore, Police Chief; Deb Rogers, BoH Agent; Thom Berube, Assistant Assessor; Ann Gill, Treasurer/Tax Collector; Kerri McManus, Town Clerk

Absent: Charles Durney, Clerk

6:00PM Call to order

Invocation-Douglas W. Dawes

Pledge of Allegiance

Mr. Bonavita read the statement listed here:

Pursuant to Governor Baker's March 12, 2020 Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A, §18, and the Governor's March 15, 2020 Order imposing strict limitations on the number of people that may gather in one place, this meeting of the Town of Georgetown Board of Selectmen is being conducted via remote participation. No in-person attendance of members of the public will be permitted, but every effort will be made to ensure that the public can adequately access the proceedings as provided for in the Order. A reminder that persons who would like to listen to/view this meeting while in progress may do so by viewing on Channel 42 Verizon or Channel 9 Comcast, or on the town website at <http://gctv.georgetownma.gov/>. We will post a recording of this meeting on the town's website as soon as we are able.

Mr. Bonavita read the statement below:

Pursuant to Governor Baker's March 12, 2020 Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A, §18, and the Governor's March 15, 2020 Order imposing strict limitation on the number of people that may gather in one place, this meeting of the Town of Georgetown Board of Selectmen will be conducted via remote participation to the greatest extent possible. Specific information and the general guidelines for remote participation by members of the public and/or parties with a right and/or requirement to attend this meeting can be found on the Georgetown website, at www.georgetownma.gov. For this meeting, members of the public who wish to watch the meeting may do so in the following manner: Channel 42 Verizon or Channel 9 Comcast, or on the town website at <http://gctv.georgetownma.gov/>. No in-person attendance of members of the public will be permitted, but every effort will be made to ensure that meeting the public can adequately access the proceedings in real time, via technological means. In the event that we are unable to do so, despite best efforts, we will post on the Georgetown website an audio or video recording, transcript, or other comprehensive record of proceedings as soon as possible after the.

Mr. Bonavita thanked all who were attending the meeting. He thanked Deb Rogers and Chief Cudmore for all they has been doing.

OLD BUSINESS

COVID-19 update & COVID-19 Newsletter discussion-Police Chief Cudmore

Police Chief Cudmore and Deb Rogers Health Agent were present via BlueJeans

Chief Cudmore stated that the Governor extended the stay at home to May 4, 2020. He stated Massachusetts has the third most cases in the country. He stated that we have 18 cases in Georgetown. He stated that he has been working with Ms. Rogers on business closings, and on an update on Schools from Superintendent. He stated MEMA has delivered some PPA's. He stated they have discussed doing a video with Cable on what is happening in town and will continue to do daily updates with the Emergency Management Team.

Ms. Rogers stated that she is doing daily updates with the Police Chief. She stated that they are keeping up with all cases with the Public Health nurse and now using a second nurse. She explained they are doing all the paperwork need for the State. She stated that the second round of funding was approved today an additional \$5K to be used for the Public Health Nurses.

Mr. Bonavita thanked both for all they are doing.

Police Chief stated that there is a lot being done for staff from the public and the community and this is very much appreciated, and has been great and residents have been compliant.

Mr. Bonavita asked how are we keeping track of who has the virus and how tracked.

Ms. Rogers explained the process and the Public Health Nurses are taking care of this. She stated that people on social media put out information that is incorrect and they cannot do anything about this. Ms. Rogers stated all patients are tracked through the MAVEN software program and Public Nurse has a 3 page list that she has to make sure that all patients are following the rules. She stated all the cases in town have been following the rules.

Deb Rogers exited the meeting 6:26PM

Town Election hours/Town Clerk update-Kerri McManus

Kerri McManus, Town Clerk was present via BlueJeans

Ms. McManus stated that there is new legislation and she would appeal to the board to limit the poll hours to 4 hours. She stated that this is all that is required and most of her poll workers are older and that 2 poll workers have backed out already. She stated the State is allowing towns to use absentee ballots and once they come in she can get them out to residents.

Mr. Dawes stated that he is not a fan of mailing ballots. He asked what checks and balances will be put in balance. Ms. McManus explained the process and that the ballots are still checked in and out. Mr. Dawes stated he is skeptical of absentee ballots. She explained the staff that would be needed and the process. Mr. Dawes asked how many staff for an election. Ms. McManus stated usually 18 poll workers. She stated that she is trying to see how the polls would work for 3 precincts with 6ft distancing.

Mr. Twiss asked how to get mass message out about absentee ballots. Ms. McManus stated she would have something on the website, Facebook, newspaper, sign at town hall, CATV.

Mr. Fowler stated that he feels it is too early to vote to limit hours. He stated that he may abstain as he is on the ballot. He stated that we may have to move the election to later in June if needed.

Ms. McManus stated that if there name is on the ballot they can still vote as long as voting for the safety of residents.

Ms. McManus stated that the legislation also would allow the Selectmen to lower the quorum for the annual town meeting if needed.

Mr. Bonavita asked how many people can be on Zoom at one time. Mr. Farrell stated the board has been using BlueJeans and this can do 250 people and they have another option for 1000. He stated that there is not a lot of time because we have to post the warrant for town meeting at the latest May 14th. Mr. Bonavita asked if he has talked to the Moderator. Mr. Farrell stated he is aware of the dates and talked to him when the date was changes. He stated once the warrant is posted the Selectmen lose their authority over the meeting, after posted up to the Moderator.

NEW BUSINESS

DLS Bulletin-An Act to Address Challenges Faced by Municipalities Resulting From COVID-19

DLS Bulletin-Emergency Expenditures and Borrowing

Mr. Bonavita asked Mr. Farrell to explain the bulletins.

Mr. Farrell stated that there have been a lot of changes by the legislature. He stated that the 2020-02 Bulletin relates to town meeting delays, also to do with finances and the fast coming payment of Real Estate taxes. He stated that the Selectmen can change the due date by 30 days to June 1st. He stated that the finance staff have been meeting and looking to see what the implications of this delay would be. He stated that the board has been looking to ease the burden to residents. He stated the fact that municipalities run on razor thin margin and what would happen if we move to a June 1st deadline. He stated that the town would run out of money and would have no funds for salaries, bills, and debt service. He stated we spend \$800K a week and would need another \$3M to keep the town going. He stated that there are 3 options: 1. Move the due date by 30 days. 2. There is some leeway to eliminate interest and penalties, and if we take away take the incentive to pay then residents and banks will not pay right away. 3. Extend the time to apply for exemptions and deferrals and the law allows to extend to June 1st. He stated changing the due date and extending the time will put the town in a bad place. He stated the revenue received on May 1st from banks is \$2.3M and if date changed will not receive this until June 1st and he does not recommend any waivers.

Mr. Twiss stated that this is a substantial amount from the banks and most funds come from residents.

Ms. Gill stated that the funds from the banks always come on time. Mr. Berube stated that if the date is moved the payment will not come in until June 1st. Ms. Gill stated that if we delay penalties they will wait until June 30. Mr. Twiss stated he agrees with Mr. Farrell to not make any changes.

Mr. Dawes asked about residents paying their own bills. Ms. Gill stated that she does not have exact number but a lot of residents pay their own taxes. Mr. Berube stated it is admirable of the board to want to help taxpayers, but he stated that interest on a \$2K would be \$25 for a month. He stated that it would be more of an impact to the town than the resident.

Mr. Fowler stated that agrees they want to help resident but could we give a relief later in the month. Mr. Berube stated could act on penalties later. He stated we do not know the impact to residents at this time and demographically may be in a good position. He stated no one is in jeopardy of losing their home.

Mr. Dawes stated that people who have lost their jobs can apply for unemployment and an additional \$600 check. He stated if someone has an issue they can work on a payment plan with the Treasurer. Ms. Gill stated that her door is always open if someone needs help.

Mr. Farrell stated that a notification has to go out if delaying the dates. Ms. Gill stated that we can do a reverse 911 and post on the website. Mr. Farrell stated no additional cost for Georgetown Connect. Chief Cudmore stated they can do the Georgetown Connect.

Mr. Berube stated that there will be a decline in meal tax, excise tax may not be paid on time, and if 10% do not pay real estate tax we will have shortfalls and be in a situation already without any delays.

Mr. Bonavita agrees and that we have to look at a broad spectrum. He stated a red flag to not meet our debt payments.

Mr. Fowler stated he agrees to leave as is and look at in May.

Mr. Bonavita stated we are an affluent community and should meet the majority of payments.

Mr. Dawes agreed knowing we can make an adjustment as we go forward.

Mr. Bonavita asked Ms. Gill to come up with some guidelines for anyone who cannot pay, such as out of work, etc.

Mr. Dawes stated there was a bulletin on borrowing. Mr. Farrell stated that is for the Selectmen if they need to borrow without going to town meeting. He stated if not changes then this should not be needed.

Board agreed to not make any changes at this time.

Ms. Gill and Mr. Berube left the meeting 7:14PM.

WARRANT and MINUTES

Minutes of March 19 & 23, 2020 for approval

Mr. Dawes moved to approve the minutes of March 19, 2020 as amended. Mr. Fowler seconded the motion and the motion was approved by a unanimous roll call vote.

Mr. Fowler moved to approve the minutes of March 23, 2020. Mr. Twiss seconded the motion and the motion was approved by a unanimous roll call vote.

SELECTMEN'S REPORT

Open Meeting Law Complaint Response letter

Mr. Farrell stated that an individual filed a complaint to the attorney general that we violated the open meeting law and they did not understand the law. He stated that the meetings in question were not held under open meeting law. He stated one complaint was about a ZBA meeting, a Selectmen's meeting, and staff meeting.

Mr. Fowler stated that he has the packet and he has not seen the actual complaint and does not know how to respond without the original complaint. He stated he has a complaint that he has not seen the complaint and the Selectmen are named. Mr. Farrell stated that the letter was sent to the Attorney General and our attorney has dealt with Attorney General. Mr. Farrell stated that he would get a copy and legal must have a copy.

Mr. Fowler stated he wants to read the complaint before responding.

Mr. Dawes stated that when they file a complaint with the attorney general and then they should notify the Selectmen. He asked when we received from town counsel. Mr. Farrell stated last week and attorneys have been working with staff which has been difficult with staff out. Mr. Dawes stated that would have been nice to see complaint but the letter is pretty explanatory.

Mr. Bonavita stated that town council has answered the complaint.

Mr. Dawes stated that it was known in town hall that a complaint had been filed, and moving forward the Town Administrator and board members and at minimum the chair, should be informed.

Mr. Bonavita stated that the response was in the packet sent out on Thursday. Mr. Bonavita asked the deadline to respond.

Mr. Fowler stated that he was not comfortable with voting.

Mr. Farrell stated that March 9 he was copied and KP Law contacted Les Godin, Building Inspector, John Cashell, Town Planner, and Steve Przyjemski, ConCom Agent.

Mr. Twiss asked if he should abstain as his name is in the document. Mr. Farrell stated that he was not sure that is a legal question.

Mr. Bonavita stated he has a text from Jeff Moore that the deadline was May 1st. He stated he would advise hold off and check whether David could vote. Mr. Farrell stated that there is a specific time limit. Mr. Bonavita asked to review later in the meeting.

Discussion on cyber security initiative/email

Mr. Bonavita stated that personal emails are still being used by board members and this throws up a red flag. Mr. Farrell stated that he asked legal counsel and they sent an email policy. Mr. Bonavita asked the penalties. Mr. Farrell stated \$1K and \$5K depending on the violations.

Mr. Farrell stated that he has a text from legal counsel and April 27 is the deadline for the reply on the Attorney General complaint.

Mr. Farrell stated that he recommends the policy and that only 50% of board members use the town email and we pay a hefty price for the emails. Mr. Bonavita asked why they do not. Mr. Farrell stated that they do not want to login to a different platform. Mr. Bonavita stated this has to happen and not an option. He asked Mr. Farrell to get word out to department heads to let their board members know to use the town email.

Mr. Fowler stated he does not do email and he is falsely given an email and those sending to him are not getting a response. Discussion on people not using the town email and why they do not.

Mr. Dawes stated that this should be an addendum to the policy that we already approved.

Mr. Fowler asked if people could be violating Open Meeting Law using their own email. Mr. Farrell stated that they could be and we do not know.

Mr. Bonavita stated that this is wrong and a cost to the town when funds could go elsewhere.

Mr. Twiss moved to adopt the email policy for Elected Officials, Employees, and members of Boards and Commissions from KP Law. Mr. Dawes seconded the motion and the motion was approved by a unanimous roll call vote.

Mr. Bonavita asked for this to be sent to boards to comply.

Synergy Cannabis Industrial Park-Host Agreement update

Mr. Farrell stated that the town has to do the RFP to general public for this property. He stated that once done they will have to decide on use. He stated that they could decide to lease the property, and then pick someone to lease the property and then a Host Agreement if that is applicable. He stated that they have to go out to bid.

Mr. Bonavita asked why. Mr. Farrell stated that has to be a public process and you have to give others the option to bid.

Mr. Fowler stated that there was no response on the last RFP and there was a cost. Mr. Farrell stated that the cost has been spent to put the document together. Mr. Fowler stated that we have to decide if this is the best use of the land. He stated that does not want to do this just for this company as there may be a better use of the land.

Mr. Dawes stated that the just had to amend the RFP, and is not sure if we will come to a consensus of what the best use of the land will be.

Mr. Twiss stated have to get this out there and move on this. He stated that we need to do something and there are no other takers out there. He stated if others come forward all the better.

Mr. Bonavita stated that we have owned this property for 2 years and with all due respect we have to get it on the tax roll. He stated that we don't have people lined up for it. He stated we have someone interested and have to get revenue on the books.

Mr. Dawes stated this is a draft and will need a second RFP for the other side of the property.

Mr. Farrell stated that he is Chief Procurement Officer and his authority to make sure all numbers are correct and RFP is done. Mr. Dawes stated he would like to see the completed document.

Mr. Bonavita asked if the RFP is to purchase or lease. Mr. Farrell stated that it is for either.

Mr. Fowler stated that the board can go forward or not they have final decision on the bid.

Mr. Bonavita asked if Synergy has been involved. Mr. Farrell stated that only with the cannabis side and cannot discuss with them as we cannot show favoritism.

Mr. Bonavita stated just want them to know the process. Mr. Farrell stated that this will be the shortest part of the process.

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

FY21 Budget Update

Mr. Farrell updated the board on the final budget.

Mr. Farrell stated that on April 2 the FinCom met and balanced the budget. He stated we were \$80K ahead and then looked at the revenue side and were \$150K in deficit. He stated that they had to eliminate the additional day at the Library, took the extra firefighter out, reduced ConCom budget \$20K replacing salary funds from general fund to ConCom revolving fund and stated that we have done this before but cannot do all the time or would deplete the fund. He stated that they eliminated one of two assistants of the GYCC, and took \$23K from the Park & Rec Budget, he stated these funds have been in their budget for salaries and not used. He stated that this totals \$120,740 and added an additional \$31K into budget to add to the Reserve Fund. He stated that the budget is now balanced.

Mr. Fowler asked if he has heard from the State on their budget. Mr. Farrell stated that he has not heard anything, the State is only dealing with COVID-19 right now and will probably be July or August until we know. He stated that we may have to wait for Fall Town meeting for adjustments.

Mr. Twiss stated that it has not been a small feat balancing this budget and it shows we need more revenue. Mr. Farrell stated that three of the marijuana businesses have been moving forward. Discussion on host agreements and property taxes on new businesses.

Mr. Bonavita asked for an update on Free Cash. Mr. Farrell stated that Snow & Ice is at \$100K in deficit. He stated we have \$720K and will go down to \$620K.

Mr. Bonavita asked if there were any recommendations on where to spend these funds. Mr. Farrell stated that he recommends to wait for the Fall Town meeting with the COVID-19 should wait to see what needs are.

Flags

Mr. Dawes stated that he went around and counted 18 flags on town property. He stated that it is an average of \$50 to replace a flag and should have a fund of \$3K to replace and have spares. He stated he talked to Fire Chief Mitchell and he stated that he will raise and lower and put up new flags. He stated we need a line item in the budget. Mr. Farrell stated that he talked to the Fire Chief and the Fire Department has two lines, salaries and expenses. He stated that we do not budget that minutely and he has the funds for the flags in the Fire Department Budget.

Discussion.

Mr. Dawes asked for a conference call with Mr. Farrell and Fire Chief Mitchell to discuss.

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

APPOINTMENTS and APPROVALS

North Shore Tour de Cure 8/16/2020

Mr. Twiss moved to change the date of the North Shore Tour de Cure to August 16, 2020. Mr. Fowler seconded the motion and the motion was approved by a unanimous roll call vote.

The Annual Town Meeting and Special Town Meeting Warrants for June 1, 2020

Mr. Farrell stated no changes. Mr. Bonavita stated that no changes, so when do we vote. Mr. Farrell stated before the posting of the warrant.

Open Meeting Law Complaint

Mr. Bonavita asked if the board would vote tonight or meet again before April 27th. Mr. Dawes stated the notice is explicit on the document with what the complaint was. He stated going forward he would want to know right away about a complaint naming the board. He stated that the letter is enough for him to vote.

Mr. Dawes moved to approve the response letter from KP Law, Town of Georgetown – Board of Selectmen, Zoning Board of Appeals, Planning Board Open Meeting Law Complaint from Amy Smith dated March 6, 2020. Mr. Bonavita seconded the motion and a roll call vote was taken. Mr. Dawes-yes, Mr. Twiss-yes, Mr. Bonavita-yes, Mr. Fowler-no the motion was approved by a 3-1 vote.

Mr. Dawes wanted to thank Mr. Farrell and the Emergency Management Team for all they the time they are putting in. Mr. Farrell stated thank him and the board, and stated that Chief Cudmore and Deb Rogers have put in a lot of time.

Mr. Bonavita thanked all the first responders. He wanted to also thank Crosby's MarketPlace for all they are doing.

BoS Minutes
April 13, 2020

Mr. Dawes stated residents need to eat out twice a week to help the restaurants. Mr. Bonavita stated that they can buy gift cards to help out. He also thanked all at town hall and staff for what they do.

NEXT MEETING

Monday, April 27, 2020, 7:00PM

ADJOURNMENT

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

Meeting adjourned at 8:58PM.

Minutes transcribed by J. Pantano.

Minutes approved April 27, 2020.

Documents used in this meeting:

- Minutes of March 19 & 23, 2020 for approval
- DLS Bulletin-An Act to Address Challenges Faced by Municipalities Resulting From COVID-19
- DLS Bulletin-Emergency Expenditures and Borrowing
- COVID-19 update & COVID-19 Newsletter discussion
- The Annual Town Meeting and Special Town Meeting Warrants for June 1, 2020
- Town Election hours/Town Clerk
- Open Meeting Law Complaint Response letter
- FY21 Budget Update
- Synergy Cannabis Industrial Park-Host Agreement update
- North Shore Tour de Cure 8/16/2020