

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

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BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING MINUTES

Memorial Town Hall

4/27/20

**6:00PM-General Meeting ~ Broadcast on Georgetown Cable TV via BlueJeans
Verizon channel 42/Comcast channel 9**

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 Donald Cudmore; Health Agent Deb Rogers; Town Clerk Kerri McManus; Derek Stewart, VP Mission

Absent:

6:03PM Call to order

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 meeting.

Mr. Bonavita took a roll call vote on attendance and all members were in attendance. He stated that Deb Rogers and Chief Cudmore were joining the meeting.

Invocation-Douglas W. Dawes

Pledge of Allegiance

OLD BUSINESS

COVID-19 update-Police Chief Cudmore & Deb Rogers BoH Agent

Chief Cudmore stated that the EMT committee has met weekly more or less as instances have come up. He stated that they did a video for the public and started a blog on what is happening in town in relation to Covid 19. He thanked the Board of Health for funding the blog. He stated that he has been working with Superintendent of Schools and GAA on how to move forward with sports. He stated that he will let the Town Administrator and the Town Clerk discuss the election and town meeting. He stated that he is grateful that our departments are healthy. Our

community overall has taken the pandemic seriously and this has helped. He asked the community to obey the rules and this will help to keep us safe. He stated that May 4th is coming soon and we have to decide on how to move forward.

Ms. Rogers stated that they are working together as a team and have been attending many remote meetings. She stated that as of today the School Nurses have volunteered to help and are taking classes on the Mavin software program. She stated that she called all the food establishments in town and they have either widened their counter to keep 6ft, some added Plexiglas, and some will wear masks. She stated all are keeping the 6ft distance. She stated that we are following the Governor's orders.

Mr. Bonavita thanked both for their dedication and opened to any questions. Mr. Twiss asked how many cases. Chief Cudmore stated 28 cases in town. Mr. Dawes stated that the video has had good feedback. Chief Cudmore stated that the Superintendent recommended the blog and Guilfoil edited and it came out very good. He discussed getting more residents to sign up for Georgetown Connect. Board members thanked the group for doing email.

Mr. Durney stated that some towns are requiring masks at all time. Ms. Rogers stated that this is up to the town Selectmen or Board of Health.

Mr. Fowler stated he had a call about an establishment not wearing masks and Ms. Rogers worked with all the restaurants. Ms. Rogers stated that they are not required to wear masks but to keep the social distancing. Mr. Fowler stated that he is not in favor of mandatory masks, but up to the board. He stated that it looks better if staff is wearing a mask. Mr. Bonavita stated he wanted to bring this up, he asked the board how they want to handle the masks. Mr. Twiss stated he has had some delivery and they have had masks and/or kept their distance. He stated he would support if the team thinks we need this. Mr. Durney stated that he has seen all businesses owners have been careful and what he is seeing is the public is not as careful and not wearing masks. He stated that he is wearing and hopes others will and does not feel we should mandate. Mr. Dawes explained what he has seen at the restaurants. He stated that they are doing a good job and when he goes into a building he wears one and outside he does not and wants to leave to the public. Mr. Bonavita stated that he wears a mask and he does not feel we should take the option from the public.

Mr. Bonavita asked Ms. Rogers about the 28 cases and if this is all. Ms. Rogers stated that this is the confirmed list but may not be all as not all tested. He asked why we are seeing more cases after 5 weeks into quarantine. Ms. Rogers stated that some may be nurses or doctors who were exposed, others who were in the hospital for other reasons, and first responders who were exposed, also essential workers. He asked if we have the information on how people are infected. Ms. Rogers stated she will ask the nurses for this information.

Chief Cudmore stated that he does have a mask rule for his officers and staff outside of the cruisers and in the building. He stated that he likes that they are not mandating masks at this time.

Mr. Twiss stated that we have had a lot of rain and this is helping to keep people in. Ms. Rogers stated that this has helped and when weather does get nice the public will want to get out.

Mr. Fowler asked if we are doing anything on tracking. Ms. Rogers stated that we have been tracking since the beginning and that is what they use the Mavin software, and she explained the process.

Chief Cudmore in the after action report we have to discuss the Board of Health position as it is a 20 hour a week employee and should be full time. He stated if this continues he would want to steal Ms. Rogers from Newbury as full-time, and she is a former town resident.

Mr. Bonavita thanked all of the emergency management staff, town hall staff, school staff, highway, water, light department for all they are doing.

Town Election hours/Town Clerk update-Kerri McManus

Ms. McManus stated that she hoped we would be ready by June 8th, but we may want to move to June 29th with warmer weather. She stated that we could make a decision tonight or May 4th. She stated that the town can get a waiver to limit election hours to 4 hours. She explained the 3 check in and check out precinct tables, and with these she would need 13 people to run the election. She stated that she will look at shifts and will have to clean booths between voters and will need to have PPE for staff, maybe take temperature at door.

Mr. Twiss asked if there is an uptick in absentee ballots. Ms. McManus stated that she has seen an increase. Mr. Twiss asked the process. Ms. McManus stated residents just need to fill out the application and send to her and she will send them out a ballot. Mr. Twiss asked if we should put out a message to the residents to vote by absentee. Ms. McManus stated that she has started to advertise. Chief Cudmore stated he could do a Georgetown Connect message.

Mr. Dawes asked about early voting. Ms. McManus stated no early voting for municipal election. She stated that it is just the absentee ballots. Mr. Durney asked how would know received ballot. She stated that they could call or drop off at the drop box at town hall and that is emptied daily. Mr. Fowler asked if towns have pushed out their elections and is she asking for June 29th.

Mr. Bonavita stated if quarantined is still in effect, then could not be having residents go out and vote. He stated he does not want to put anyone at risk and push out as far as we can. He stated that he does have a concern that if the election is late people will have gone on vacation. Mr. Durney asked if any risk holding so late.

Mr. Bonavita asked about the town meeting.

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

Mr. Farrell stated right now the ATM is June 1st and have to post on May 14th and once posted then up to the town moderator. He stated that legislature is allowing a 1/12 budget for the next months until a town meeting. He stated that there are a lot of one time payments in the beginning of the fiscal year. Mr. Bonavita stated that the next meeting is May 4th. Mr. Farrell stated that he would recommend waiting until May 11th for the next meeting. Mr. Fowler stated should we move out the town meeting 2 weeks. Mr. Farrell stated June 15th ATM and June 22nd Elections would be good. Ms. McManus stated that she would be good with this.

Mr. Fowler moved to move the Annual and Special Town Meetings to Monday June 15, 2020 and Election to June 22, 2020. Mr. Twiss seconded.

Mr. Twiss stated that we have to make sure to get the word out to the public. Ms. McManus stated she will and asked that they limit the hours.

Roll call vote was unanimous.

Mr. Twiss stated that he would like to wait to vote on hours for election until May and see what the State comes out with. Mr. Bonavita asked the latest Ms. McManus would need a vote on hours. Ms. McManus stated that she would like to give a months' notice.

NEW BUSINESS

Mission Payment-Derek Stewart, VP, Retail Operations

Mr. Bonavita stated that Mission has requested a brief delay on their payment to the town because of the current COVID-19 situation. He stated that Mr. Stewart had a conversation with Mr. Dawes and Mr. Farrell.

Mr. Stewart stated that he is a resident and VP at Mission. He stated he had an agenda and his business is an essential business and all employees have kept their jobs. He explained all the new processes that they are using to sanitize the building and PPE for staff and no staff has been sick. He stated that they have increased salary by \$2 per hour. He stated that they have a \$200K payment and had \$8M in sales so that will increase the payment.

Mr. Bonavita thanked him for the update and glad they are doing so well. He also thanked them for donation to Georgetown Cares. He stated additionally they have helped other charities in town and shows that they are part of the community. He stated that they are asking to push back 30 days to the end of May, which is in their contract as a grace period. Mr. Durney stated that he likes the partnership and if it is in the contract for a 30 day delay, do we need a vote. Mr. Bonavita stated that we would not need a vote. Mr. Fowler stated that he had a point of order that the request was for 60 days. Mr. Stewart stated after discussions they are fine with 30 days.

Mr. Bonavita asked if he could explain how this is effecting the business. Mr. Stewart stated that they are a national business and some of their other offices have had more issues. He stated that they are going for a recreational marijuana business and the CDC is not holding inspections and they have been waiting since last April and hope to be approved for recreational in the next 60 to 90 days.

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

Mr. Farrell stated that the warrants have not changed and with the change of date may need to make changes to Special Town Meeting warrant. He stated that they have lost a whole quarter of Meals tax and will be short \$20K and at the meeting on May 11th he will give a soft landing. He stated that he had a meeting with Finance Directors and Mayors and they have been talking with DOR and not a lot of optimism for budgeting for this year and FY21. He stated that it may require more cuts to the budget and looking like FY09. He states we hope to weather the storm. Mr. Twiss asked if a way to move some staff to part-time positions before any layoffs. Mr. Bonavita stated that Mission will have more funds then anticipated with the extra 3%, and where is that money going. Mr. Farrell stated it will be \$124K and will be excess revenue and was not

in budget but will show up as free cash in the fall. Mr. Bonavita stated that next year look at this and any way to pull this money into the budget. He asked if we can have a discussion on having STM in the fall and look at numbers in a way so we do not have to have layoffs. Mr. Farrell stated that you would have the FinCom sign on to use Free Cash for budget. Mr. Bonavita stated that this is not a typical situation. Mr. Farrell stated that he would have recommendations on May 11th. Mr. Dawes asked if there has been any discussion with the Affordable Housing on their Article. Mr. Farrell stated he will check in with Mr. Cashell.

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Update on the National Ave RFP

Mr. Farrell stated that the RFP was posted last week and have had five individuals pulled the RFP. He stated that bids are due May 27th. Discussion

WARRANT and MINUTES

Minutes of April 13, 2020 for approval

Mr. Twiss moved to approve the minutes of April 13, 2020. Mr. Dawes seconded the motion and the motion was approved by a 4-0 roll call vote. Mr. Durney abstained

CORRESPONDENCE

Letter regarding utility tree clearing

Letter from Robert Bancroft

Mr. Dawes asked if the Highway was copied. Mr. Farrell stated that they were not. He stated that he talked with Steve Przyjemski, ConCom Agent and National Grid has the authority to clear the lines and do not town approval. Mr. Dawes asked if Mr. Bancroft was responded to. Mr. Farrell stated that the ConCom will respond and Mrs. Bancroft is on ConCom and aware of the law.

Mr. Twiss stated that he knows someone who does the cutting and they have a lot of leeway to make the cuts. Mr. Fowler stated that there was a meeting and the cutting was asked for and they have an arborist who goes through the neighborhoods and they leave some brush and trees. He stated that this clearing was asked for because of all the power outages. He stated that they were hesitant to come to Georgetown because of the ConCom. Mr. Twiss stated leave to the ConCom to deal with. Mr. Bonavita stated as long as they notify the right people we are okay.

Acceptance of Donation to Fire Department from VFW

Mr. Durney read the thank you from the Fire Chief to the VFW. Mr. Dawes stated that the donation was made in the memory of Mr. Whitney.

Mr. Twiss moved to accept the \$1,000 donation from the Georgetown VFW for protective wear for the Georgetown Fire Department. Mr. Dawes seconded the motion and the motion was approved by a unanimous roll call vote.

APPOINTMENTS and APPROVALS

Request for appointment of Patrick Gordon to the CATV committee

Mr. Farrell stated that there is no one on the committee and Mr. Gordon has a lot of experience. Mr. Bonavita read the letter of request.

Mr. Twiss moved to appoint *Patrick Gordon* to the *Cable TV Advisory Committee* term to expire June 30, 2021. Mr. Durney seconded the motion and the motion was approved by a roll call vote.

SELECTMEN'S REPORT

Mr. Bonavita read the letter from Marlene Ladderbush, Water Department Utility Director on the retirement of Robert Dash.

Mr. Fowler asked about the flags. Mr. Dawes stated that the Fire Chief stated he will take care of the flags.

Mr. Bonavita stated he wanted to wish John Cashell well on his road to recovery.

Mr. Bonavita stated he had a discussion with GAA on when things will open and to let them know so they can have some direction on opening the season, if possible. He stated that he has been in contact with School Committee and does not want to cancel anything Prom or Graduation if we can. He stated that he wants to have some conversations and no promises, but just to keep in touch. He stated that once this is over maybe have a Georgetown Days celebration. He stated just an idea and would be nice to get together again.

Mr. Dawes stated a lot of this is going to be dependent on the Governor. He stated that the Georgetown Concerts are planned for July if possible.

Mr. Fowler stated that Park & Rec have a meeting on Wednesday and he will bring the GAA letter. He stated good to hear some positive comments on opening.

NEXT MEETING

Monday, May 11, 2020 at 6:00PM

ADJOURNMENT

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

Meeting adjourned at 8:34PM.

Minutes transcribed by J. Pantano.

Minutes approved May 11, 2020.

Documents used in this meeting:

- Minutes of April 13, 2020 for approval
- Letter regarding utility tree clearing
- Mission Payment-Derek Stewart, VP, Retail Operations
- Acceptance of Donation to Fire Department from VFW
- COVID-19 update-Police Chief Cudmore & Deb Rogers BoH Agent
- The Annual Town Meeting and Special Town Meeting Warrants for June 1, 2020
- Town Election hours/Town Clerk update-Kerri McManus
- Update on the National Ave RFP
- Request for appointment of Patrick Gordon to the CATV committee