

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

Ph. (978) 352-5755 □ Fax (978) 352-5727

BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING MINUTES

Memorial Town Hall

12/21/2020

6:00PM-General Meeting

Broadcast on Georgetown Cable TV via BlueJeans

Verizon channel 42/Comcast channel 9

Selectmen Present: *Gary Twiss, Douglas W. Dawes, Clerk; Peter J. Kershaw and Charles Durney, Gary Fowler.*

Others Present: *Michael Farrell, Town Administrator. Administrative Assistant, Maureen Shultz, Police Chief Donald Cudmore, Board of Health Agent, Deb Rogers, Fire Chief Fred Mitchell, James Ryan of the Town of Salisbury, Mass.*

Absent:

6:00PM Call to order

Invocation-Douglas W. Dawes

Pledge of Allegiance

D. Dawes 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 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 that.

OLD BUSINESS: COVID-19 update-Police Chief Cudmore & Deb Rogers BOH Agent:

Public Health Nurse, D. Rogers spoke on the new cases in the last 14 days which was up to 54 new cases, Georgetown is in the high-risk zone / red zone with a total of 984 test done. D. Twiss asked D. Rogers if she believes there will be another spike in cases after the Christmas Holiday. Discussion took place about the two companies on the horizon with vaccines. D. Twiss asked how these vaccines would roll out-D. Rogers stated there is a scheduled meeting to go over these questions and will update the Board at the next meeting, things changing all the time, 984 tests completed here in Town. D. Twiss spoke on household that will travel for the Holiday and some that will not and stay in quarantine.

P. Kershaw asked for an update on school sports. D. Rogers gave an update on a recent meeting held, many people in attendance, full discussion took place, different approaches, agreement for varsity only -protocols so restricted -only practices during the week -sign a pledge -only 10 games, approved, 24-30 maximum players, seniors only, medical team experts approved of this plan, the Board of health supported with the experts. D. Twiss full role out he thought it was very aggressive at the first meeting, but a better plan went forward -hopefully the Towns can get their games in and hopefully it goes well, -appreciated the Board of Health going back to the table, mentioned the Cape Ann League still in and wishes them all the best.

Police Chief Cudmore spoke on a recent meeting that was held regarding a change to the current rules on winter indoor sports at the high school. The positive COVID-19 cases have increased by 17 from last Friday. D. Rogers expressed that she has received numerous emails from many including coaches and parents that are not happy about the decision to cancel indoor sports for now. P. Kershaw asked if the Board of Health decision to cancel indoor winter sports for now was across the Board -D. Rogers stated yes, all members agree with this new change because it is too high of a risk at this time. D. Twiss asked about the meeting with the school and the Board of health and questioned why so many were not able to speak and if it was opened to the public. D. Dawes asked if the vaccine is voluntary, D. Rogers answered it was voluntarily at this time.

UPDATE: Winter Parking Band

D. Twiss spoke on the winter parking band which went in effect on December 1, 2020 until April 1, 2020. Chief Cudmore was asked if there were any recent issues with the parking ban, nothing at this time. First month educational to make sure the residents now the rules -residents very cooperative.

DISCUSSION: Health Insurance Agreement / Open Discussion:

Joint discussion / purchase Agreement for Health Insurance with NFP (National Financial Partners) James Ryan from the Town of Salisbury spoke to the Board on the following:

One entity.

- Health Insurance, localized joint Health Insurance purchasing -*
- Geographic Biases,*
- MIA primary health insurance is in Boston which is more expensive*
- Less expensive to get health insurance up in this area.*
- bigger groups are more attractive to bigger insurance companies.*
- No down sides to this plan.*

D. Dawes spoke on the Town would lose their autonomy, asked how the decision is going to be made, right now we have zero autonomy, decide what the plan is going to be just not how it can be setup so the Board can be on the Board, The Town of Georgetown can have different design plans than other communities. D. Twiss spoke about the past challenges and discussion with unions and asked M. Farrell on his working with the unions, challenges on the other end could be a factor, have to follow the state rules, have to share the saving with the employees, teacher's union controls the health insurance of the town they have 51 % of the vote, the changes in health Insurance were done once before and we went through it once was painful but we saved a lot of money for everyone.

C. Durney understand the savings, asked if on this plan is there still going to be an option to choose a medical facility and or go to the Boston Hospitals if they wish, C. Durney is sensitive to the fact or limiting the health care the families want to go to Boston Hospitals.

G. Fowler urged caution to the Board before moving forward with a definite plan, G. Fowler stated if the Town leaves MIA it can't go back for two years, stated no increase in Insurance Premiums in 2019, Joint Purchase Agreements there are time restrictions on this that can come into play. G. Fowler asked how many times a plan design be changed, also asked who the administrator of this plan will be, asked what is the date this needs to be done by, who is going to pay for any administrative fees, wants the public who may watching the meeting to know what JPA stands for (Joint Purchase Agreement). G. Fowler stated none of this is easy. Come in low one year and then go higher the next year that can happen.

MIA controls most of the health care in Municipalities, MIA needs to sharpen their pencils if this plan goes forward.

P. Kershaw asked what the objective was of this meeting. M. Farrell responded informational only at this time.

P. Kershaw spoke on the numbers, worth the changes, all about the numbers the bigger the numbers the better the bargaining can be, huge powers in numbers when talking to insurance companies, worth pursuing, spoke on collective bargaining and wants to start engaging with those groups and share the information. Reimbursement plans for employees was briefly spoken of.

D. Twiss stated that health insurance is the most expensive line item in any budget.

D. Dawes asked if this is the same plan or a better plan. The Board of Selectman will be making the decision on what the plan will be. Different plans can be for each community, M. Farrell stated the time frame for the Town to join is about a six-month window, no decision is being asked to be made this evening.

D. Twiss mentioned it is not an easy process, agrees with G. Fowler and respects his position since he has been through this before, a lot that goes into this, wants to save some money but wants to see that everyone gets the plan they want, urged M. Farrell to investigate and get more info and invite Mr. Paicos of NFP to the next agenda, nothing worthwhile is easy, would like to hear more about this feels there is not enough information at this time to firm an opinion.

C. Durney stated that no one disagrees with these numbers feels there is no communication and getting thrown a bunch of information no context, no summary and it is frustrating and having to fudge through things like this at a meeting is not good. Continuation of a lack of communication very frustrating, M. Farrell stated there were only two meetings that had taken place. D. Dawes asked about how many conversations there has been prior to this meeting. Mr. Farrell stated there was only two meeting as informational meetings -

D. Dawes spoke about any offline conversation not trying to catch up a at a meeting and requested any information be given to the Board so they can stay in the loop.

D. Twiss commented that communications issue exists, prudent to continue to hear more at the next meeting.

Health Insurance Agreement discussion will be added to the next Board of Selectman's agenda on January 11, 2021 with Kevin Paicos, NFP Corporate Services.

WARRANT AND MINUTES:

D. Dawes moved to approve the meeting minutes from November 9, 2020, as updated seconded by G. Fowler. The Board voted unanimously on a roll call vote.

D. Dawes moved to approve the new bowling Alley permit for the year of 2021 to expire on December 31, 2021, for Georgetown Flatbread, LLC, Black Swan Country Club, seconded by G. Fowler. The Board voted unanimously on a roll call vote.

D. Dawes moved to appoint Christopher Ruest to the Parks and Recreation Commission to a term to expire 12/31/2021, seconded by G. Fowler. The Board voted unanimously on a roll call vote.

REVIEW OF TOWN'S COMMITTEE'S COMMISSION AND BOARDS HANDBOOK.

D. Twiss mentioned that some were searching for taped meetings and meeting minutes. D. Twiss spoke on subjects such as posting of meeting minutes, open meetings, times of scheduled meetings, having meetings during the day where some cannot attend, and having some at Town Hall when Town Hall is closed to the public, questioned about Zoom meetings and if they have the capability to be taped, D. Dawes suggest a town policy on meeting minutes. D. Dawes suggested an e-mail to be sent to the Chairperson of all the Boards & Committee to remind them of their responsibility to complete meeting minutes and post in a timely manner to the Town's website. D. Twiss will look at the email prior to it being sent out. Spoke of the possibility of making some changes after review of the handbook. It was suggested that each member take a look over the handbook and give their edits and or suggestions. Timing -and access to those meeting minutes

D. Twiss spoke about Page 15-16 in the handbook, some further description more precise information. C. Durney asked if there are any specific state time line on meetings minutes and, asked what would happens if a public records request came in and we didn't have those meeting minutes available. D. Twiss read aloud the record keeping section of the handbook, questioned the online training on page 9-State Ethics training, M. Farrell replied the training is handled out of the Town Clerks office and has been done. G. Fowler suggested the Town Clerk hand out the Board and Committee Handbook to all appointees.

G. Fowler asked where are we on the use of the second& third floor at town hall, spoke on old meeting minutes that were not complete and suggested the Board sharpen our own pencil, public access was questioned, thinks it is more difficult for the public to access -suggested to add a message to the agenda to call the Selectman office if they would like to participate in the meeting and the Board will do their best to get that done. Wants to make it easy for Boards and volunteers.

D. Twiss stated that anyone can call the Selectman office to be invited to the Board of Selectman's meeting.

P. Kershaw spoke on 100% transparency, we need to put meeting minutes up period, it's all about honesty, transparency, and communication, feels the community will think something is

trying to be hidden which is farthest from the truth and can set in paranoia and anxiety, in favor of putting a timeline, open honesty to the people in the community.

C. Durney mentioned the second floor at Town Hall where meetings used to be held and mentioned there are so many resources available for taping of a meetings.

Proposed changes -maybe timeline to upload meeting minutes (reasonable timeline), C. Durney what happens if we have don't have the documents if a public information request came in – on a board been appointed take meeting minutes then post them -D. Twiss thinks meeting should be videotaped.

SELECTMEN'S REPORT:

P. Kershaw asked about the Laserfiche program that Kerri McManus was looking into and suggested it be added to a future agenda and thinks the Board should support that program.

TOWN ADMINISTRATORS REPORT:

Town Administrator, Mike Farrell spoke on recent responses for the position for the Assistant Treasurer's position that brought in twenty-five (25) responses, the Town will now try to advertise the position on the Indeed website, a lot of applicants do not have municipal experience. Retirement of Les Godin, Building Inspector was mentioned. D. Dawes asked about retirement dates and asked if employees are required to give a notice, M. Farrell replied no they do not have to give a notice, an update was given regarding the recent snow storm handled by Peter Durkee, Highway Surveyor and his staff at the Highway Department, update given a recent National Avenue Task Force meeting, Host Community Agreement-Mello Corp was briefly spoken of.

APPOINTMENTS:

D. Dawes moved to appoint Gary Fowler, Officer Heather Lefebvre and Peter Durkee to the Traffic Study Committee for a term to expire December 31, 2021, seconded by C. Durney. The Board voted unanimously on a roll call vote.

NEXT MEETING:

January 11, 2021

The Board wished everyone a happy holiday.

ADJOURNMENT:

C. Durney moved to adjourn with G. Fowler seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken all in favor.

Meeting adjourned at 9:30 PM. Minutes transcribed by Maureen Shultz

Documents used in the meeting: meeting minutes from 11/9/2020.

