

**SELECT BOARD MEETING MINUTES  
MONDAY, MARCH 16, 2020  
EMERGENCY SESSION  
APPROVED**

**SB Members Virtually Present:** Alison S. Manugian, Chair; Joshua A. Degen, Vice Chair; John F. Reilly, Clerk; John R. Giger, Member; Rebecca H. Pine, Member  
**Also Virtually Present:** Mark W. Haddad, Town Manager; Dawn Dunbar, Executive Assistant; Michael Bouchard, Town Clerk; Bob Colman, Groton Cable Access

Ms. Manugian called the meeting to order at 7:00pm, reviewed the agenda and provided some rules for the meeting.

Mr. Haddad said that a lot had gone on in the Town Hall with regard to actions taken on Friday. Mr. Haddad said that he had a formal declaration for the Board to vote on that he emailed them this afternoon and asked if the Board wanted it read aloud. Ms. Manugian said that posting the declaration online was sufficient adding it had come from Counsel. Mr. Haddad asked the Board to formally adopt the declaration.

*Ms. Pine moved to formally adopt of the Declaration of Emergency as worded in the email they received that day referencing the Declaration they made on Friday, March 13, 2020. Mr. Degen seconded the motion. Roll Call: Manugian-aye; Degen-aye; Pine-aye; Giger-aye; Reilly-aye*

Mr. Haddad said that he believed the change in Town Meeting the Board voted on Friday was in line with the Governors legislation. He said that this was important legislation that was submitted that day. He said that the State was going to move this forward as quickly as possible. He said he spoke with Rep. Harrington earlier that day and asked for any input and advice. He said that he asked for financial relief to help the municipalities navigate through this and whether the Appellate Tax Board could waive fees if the local Board of Assessors couldn't deal with abatements.

Mr. Haddad said that they had a full staff at the beginning of the day. He said that 4 employees had issues relative to health or age and was allowing them to home from work. He said that those employees had been in contact with the office all day. He said that he sent the Board a detailed list of what occurred within the Building Department with regard to inspections that day. He said that the City of Boston shut down all construction today and was setting up for what might happen statewide. He said that they were doing their best to work with all contractors. He said that the Board of Health was meeting as they spoke to talk about Coronavirus.

Ms. Pine said that with regard to building permits she was happy to hear that they had made efforts to accommodate people. She said that the notice sent to them sounded stricter than what they were doing. She suggested adding wording to say "they were working to accommodate construction on a case by case basis". Mr. Giger said he wasn't sure they should be opening new permits. Mr. Haddad said that they were not adding new permits adding this was for already issued permits. Ms. Manugian said that the summary provided was great. Mr. Degen suggested adding wording about existing permit holders contacting Town Hall to discuss inspections. Ms. Manugian asked if there had been any word from the State on extensions to statutory requirements on permit applications. Mr. Haddad said that he had not heard anything yet.

Ms. Pine said she wanted to talk about other Boards and Committees meeting. She said that she didn't have enough knowledge of all other Boards business. She said she didn't think they needed to be as strict as they had been and couldn't know what could happen if Committees couldn't meet. Ms. Manugian said she was concerned about minutes and taping, etc. She said that more and more things were going to shut down. Ms. Pine said that the Conservation Commission had business that needed to be ruled on as an example. Ms. Manugian said that they couldn't have a public hearing. Mr. Haddad said that he understood the concerns. He said that the vote taken last Friday was to delay all meetings for the next 2 weeks. He said that things were changing on a daily basis and thought they could revisit this in 2 weeks. Mr. Giger said that the federal government reduced the maximum number of people in one place from 25 to 10. He said he wouldn't be surprised if the state provided the same guidance the next day. He said that only allowing 10 people at a public hearing would be impossible. Mr. Degen suggested that they hold another virtual meeting next Monday to discuss this topic again. Mr. Degen said he understood the concern but wanted to keep things as they were now. Ms. Pine asked if they could ask the State what they

proposed. Mr. Haddad said that he could reach out to Rep. Sheila Harrington the next day. Mr. Haddad said that he spoke to Mr. Greeno who cancelled all Assessors meetings and would deal with the abatements on a case by case basis.

Mr. Haddad said that there had been some public feedback on shutting down Town Hall as far as paying employees, etc. Mr. Haddad said that he had a conference call with Labor Counsel that morning. He said that all employees were reporting to work with the exception of the 4 who were working from home. He said that if they shut down Town Hall they were responsible to pay employees. Mr. Haddad said that if they sent someone home because of possible exposure, they were to be paid. Mr. Haddad said that if the employee put themselves in jeopardy, they needed to use their own time citing a foreign trip as an example. Mr. Haddad said that he would deal with items on a case by case basis with advice from Labor Counsel. Mr. Haddad said that all but 3 employees were covered by union contracts. Mr. Giger asked if someone had done an analysis to see how the contracts stacked up against the advice from Labor Counsel. Mr. Haddad said that he had reviewed the Town Hall/Library and Supervisors contacts which said the employee was to be paid if the Town sent them home.

Mr. Haddad said he was not recommending a reduction of any Town staff at this time. He said that they were busy even without public access to Town Hall. Mr. Bouchard said that they could help people with birth certificates at the front door but needed to put off everything else for now. Ms. Pine asked if it was possible to mail certificates. Mr. Bouchard said that they could mail them adding people could also order copies online. Ms. Pine said that they needed guidance on issuance of marriage licenses. Mr. Haddad said that if they started making exceptions this wasn't going to be effective.

Ms. Pine said that the Water Department was working on their procedures on how people could obtain filtered water here at the Town Hall.

Ms. Manugian asked how many employees were at the Town Hall. Mr. Haddad reviewed the operations at Town Hall. Ms. Manugian asked if there were offices that they could consider allowing people to work from home. He said he was thinking about sending the HR Director home, he said he needed to see what the Land Use Department required, adding he wanted to keep the other office operating as they were. Ms. Pine asked about the Library staff. Mr. Haddad said that he would speak with the Library Director the next day for an update.

Mr. Degen asked about the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter tax bills. Mr. Haddad said that the bills would go out on March 31st. He said that all bills were generated by City Hall Systems and would still be mailed out. Mr. Degen asked if a state or federal quarantine was enacted, he asked if they should get them out earlier. Mr. Haddad said that he would ask. Mr. Degen asked if they could waive any late fees. Mr. Haddad said that the Tax Collector could waive certain fees adding they might need legislation to do so.

Mr. Giger asked what would happen if they had staff come down with the virus. Mr. Haddad said that someone else would have to pick up the duties should someone get sick. He said that closing Town Hall was a first step. He said that they were trying to address things as they came up. Mr. Giger asked that plans be established for dealing with those critical things.

Ms. Pine asked about steps public safety were taking. Ms. Haddad said that the Fire Chief and Police Chief had done an excellent job with protocols and keeping their staff safe. Mr. Reilly said that emergency situations were not new to police and fire in regard to protecting public health. He said that those doing this were most apt to handle this well. He said that the Town was doing a good job with all this and thought that some of this got lost with everything that was going on.

Mr. Degen said he wanted to thank Mike Chiasson and Bob Colman for pulling off this virtual meeting and having it work. Mr. Haddad said that they would do a virtual meeting again next Monday and would work on the agenda. Mr. Haddad read an email from Mr. Orcutt on current water operations.

The meeting adjourned at 7:52pm.

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_  
John Reilly, Clerk

\_\_\_\_\_ respectfully submitted:  
Dawn Dunbar, Executive Assistant

Date Approved: 3/23/2020