

**SELECT BOARD MEETING MINUTES
VIRTUAL MEETING
MONDAY, MAY 11, 2020
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; Jason Kauppi, Town Moderator; Melisa Doig, HR Director; Patricia Dufresne, Town Accountant; Michael Bouchard, Town Clerk; Jonathan Greeno, Principal Assistant Assessor; Michael Hartnett, Tax Collector/Treasurer; Steele McCurdy, Fire Chief; Mike Luth, Police Chief; Nik Gualco, Conservation Administrator; Bud Robertson, Finance Committee Chair

Mr. Degen called the meeting to order at 7:00pm and reviewed. Ms. Manugian was not present for the start of the meeting due to connectivity issues.

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

1. Mr. Haddad reviewed some of the work that the office had completed last week. Among that, he said that they issued 3 press releases; one on the election encouraging people to vote by absentee ballot, one on action taken by the Board of Health and Select Board, and one on the change in the date and location of Town Meeting.
2. Mr. Haddad said that relative to Town Meeting, *Section 4(d) of Chapter 53 of the Acts of 2020 required that within 10 days after the initial declaration of recess and continuance of a town meeting pursuant to this section, a local public safety or public health official designated by the Select Board shall submit a report to the Attorney General providing the justification for the declaration.* Mr. Haddad recommended that the Select Board designate their Police Chief as the reporting officer. Mr. Haddad asked the Board to vote to ask the Police Chief to send a letter to the AG's office notifying them of the change in Town Meeting date and location.

Ms. Pine made that motion. Mr. Reilly seconded the motion. Roll Call: Degen-aye; Pine-aye; Reilly-aye; Giger-aye

3. Mr. Haddad said that they were continuing to work on an MVP Grant from the State to alleviate flooding on Broadmeadow Road. He said that he had been working with their DPW Director, Land Use Director, Planning Board, Conservation Administrator and their Engineers from Weston and Sampson on submitting a Grant application by June 11th. He said he would keep the Board apprised of their progress.
4. Mr. Haddad said that he had reached out to the Park Commission about their plans for sports programs, parks and playgrounds. He said that the Park Commission at their meeting of May 5th, voted to keep everything closed until May 19th when they will meet and revisit the issue. He said that the Park Commission had reached out to the Board of Health for guidance. Mr. Haddad said that he asked their Police Chief, Fire Chief and DPW Director to join him at that meeting to discuss the issue in more detail. He said his recommendation to the Park Commission was that they keep everything either closed or canceled for this summer as they did not have the resources necessary to assure safe and sanitized facilities. Mr. Haddad asked the Board if there were any issues with this course of action. Ms. Pine said that she wanted to make sure people were aware they were going to use a field for Town Meeting. Mr. Giger said that they should word this to say that any exceptions to the use of fields should come from the Select Board.

Ms. Manugian joined the meeting at 7:10pm and assumed as Chair.

5. Mr. Haddad said that chairs and a sound system were secured for Town Meeting and thought they should be in pretty good shape.
6. Mr. Haddad said that they were down 2 employees within the DPW. He said that they had brought in Robert Hall as a summer worker in years past. Mr. Haddad said that they would like to bring him back this summer adding they were falling behind on things like mowing. He said that there was a hiring freeze but asked for permission to bring

Mr. Hall back at 16 hours per week. Ms. Manugian asked if that was a reduction from past years. Mr. Haddad said that it was adding he typically worked 40 hours a week during the summer. Ms. Pine asked if there was an end date on this. Mr. Haddad said it was through October 1st.

Mr. Degen moved that they authorize the Town Manager to lift the hiring freeze to hire one DPW employee not to exceed 16 hours per week until October 1. Ms. Pine seconded the motion. Roll Call: Pine-aye; Degen-aye; Manugian-aye; Giger-aye; Reilly-aye

7. Mr. Haddad said that he had asked Fire Chief McCurdy and Police Chief Luth to attend Monday's meeting to discuss the possibility of performing COVID-19 IgG serology testing which would show past exposure and potential immunity to the disease. He said that the State currently provided symptomatic testing to first responders who may have the active virus but that as part of their return to work protocols, he thought it made sense to conduct the serology test. He said that it could provide them with an idea of how wide spread this disease may be among their employees and help with planning. He said that Quest Diagnostics would perform these tests for the Town adding he would like to be able to test all full-time and permanent part-time employees. Mr. Haddad said that the estimated cost was about \$4,000 (it could be less once total participation of all members of the Minuteman Nashoba Health Group decided if they also want the testing). He said it was something he would like to be able to do. Mr. Haddad said that the town of Brookline was already doing this as an example.

Chief McCurdy said he was fully in agreement that this was worthwhile for the Town. He said that it would give them a good idea of how many of their employees have had COVID and have the antibodies to it. He said that with antibodies, people would be more resistant to it should they get it again. Chief Luth said he would echo what the Fire Chief. Ms. Manugian asked about PPE and assumed the results would not be used to make personnel decisions on PPE and asked how long the results would be valid for. Chief McCurdy said that they were in a good place as far as PPE went adding he would not make personnel decisions for PPE based on that. Chief McCurdy said that the first test was a good baseline but another test or two down the road would be worth doing. Ms. Pine said she had concerns about this based on what she had been hearing on the news. She said that some tests were not proven to be reliable and was concerned about the lack of clear understanding of what it meant to have antibodies. She said it might be premature to do this now. Mr. Degen asked if it would be mandatory testing for all employees. Mr. Haddad said it would not be mandatory but if an employee did agree to do it, the Town would ask that the results be shared with HR. Mr. Degen asked if this was just for Town employees or all boards and committees. Mr. Haddad said it would just be town employees. Mr. Giger said that if this was something they wanted to do and have a meaningful benchmark, they needed to stick with it. He asked if they could inquire which test would be the most reliable right now. He said he too thought it was early to do this. Mr. Giger said that the tests he was aware of were giving them a snapchat in the moment and could not tell them when it began. Mr. Reilly said that free testing was offered for first responders and wished that something was done for this type of thing. He said he was in favor in the testing in general but wanted to make sure they used the best test.

Chief McCurdy said that the serology test was looking for the development of antibodies a couple of weeks after someone may have been sick even with no symptoms. He said that the accuracy of it was very high. Ms. Manugian said that she conceptually was in favor of getting a baseline. She asked what the thoughts were on doing it now or a couple of weeks from now. Mr. Haddad said he was okay waiting a few weeks and see if more information became available. Chief McCurdy said he saw an advantage to waiting a few weeks adding the cost may be reduced but that the information was invaluable to them now where they were still dealing with cases in Groton. He said that something had gone through his department in February with the same symptoms and would be helpful to have this information sooner rather than later. Mr. Degen said that he was very interested in this and agreed with the Chief's concerns. He said he thought the public safety departments should be tested right away and the other town employees done in a second wave. Mr. Giger said that he was in agreement with Mr. Degen and didn't think they should get in the way of the Chief's having their staff tested now. Ms. Pine said she still had concerns that this test wasn't going to provide them immunity information that they were looking for. Ms. Manugian asked for a motion to authorize the Chief's to have the decision-making power of when to test their staff.

Mr. Degen moved that they authorize the Town Manager through the HR Director to schedule antibody testing through Quest for testing of fire, police and dispatch with a second wave to include all town employees. Ms. Manugian seconded the motion.

Ms. Pine reiterated her statement of finding out what this testing was going to provide them. Mr. Giger said he was fine leaving that decision up to the Chiefs adding they were involved in this every day. Mr. Degen asked if this violated any collective bargaining agreement. Mr. Haddad said that it did not.

Roll Call: Pine-aye; Manugian-aye; Giger-aye; Degen-aye; Reilly-aye

8. Mr. Haddad said that \$1,700 worth of memberships had been sold this past weekend at the Country Club and \$854 in greens fees. He said that a new order was issued that day by the Governor that allowed persons with disabilities to use golf carts.

Mr. Degen moved to ratify the Town Manager's decision under the guidance of the Governor's Office to open golf course operations. Ms. Pine seconded the motion. Roll Call: Pine-aye; Degen-aye; Manugian-aye; Reilly-aye; Giger-aye

9. Mr. Haddad said that the Governor provided a 4-phase approach earlier that day to reopen the state that appeared to be in line with what he was looking to do. He said that they had an employee at town hall who might be infected adding he had closed down town hall until Thursday at the earliest and were having a company come in the following day to do a deep clean of the building. Ms. Manugian asked for an estimate once he received it for the cost of the deep clean. Mr. Reilly asked if this was going to be done prior to reopening the building also. Mr. Haddad said he had not planned on it adding his custodial staff had done a great job cleaning thus far.
10. Mr. Haddad provided a list of holidays that they board might want to consider adding to their Meetings on Holiday Policy. Ms. Pine said she was not in favor of the proposed list of holidays adding some had never heard of some of them and because she was afraid, they were boxing themselves in. Ms. Manugian said that there was no perfect solution but needed some sort of a list. Mr. Degen said that the proposed list was a big list. Ms. Manugian said she was happy to do a little more leg work on this to define the holidays. Mr. Giger said that one could Google the holidays for their definition if they weren't sure what it was. Mr. Robertson asked where they stood with state and federal holidays. Mr. Haddad said that there were 11 state and federal holidays. Mr. Robertson asked how they went from 11 to 30 holidays and asked why they wanted to jump away from the standard holidays. Ms. Manugian said that most of the list only included Christian holidays and no other religions like Jewish, Islamic and Hindu holidays. Ms. Pine said she didn't think that they needed to include those that were on Sundays. Ms. Manugian said she could do more legwork and bring it back.

Ms. Manugian suggested language be added to the Town Manager Review Policy that stated *"To be eligible to submit an annual evaluation for the Town Manager, a member of the Select Board must have been a member of the board for more than 120 consecutive calendar days IMMEDIATELY prior to completing the annual evaluation."*

Mr. Degen moved that they adopt the Town Manager's Review Policy with the 120-day addition as explained by the Chair. Ms. Pine seconded the motion. Roll Call: Pine-aye; Manugian-aye; Giger-aye; Degen-aye; Reilly-aye

11. Mr. Haddad said he had provided the Board with the final drafts of the protocols for the re-opening of Town Hall, the Center in West Groton and the Groton Country Club for the Board's review and hopeful approval. He said that he had also enclosed the final draft of the protocols for the Farmers Market adding that the Library Trustees were meeting on Tuesday evening to approve their protocols.

Mr. Degen moved to approve the reopening protocols for the Town Hall, Center and Country Club as drafted by the Town Manager. Ms. Pine seconded the motion. Roll Call: Pine-aye; Manugian-aye; Giger-aye; Degen-aye; Reilly-aye

12. Mr. Haddad said that they had made some changes to the Farmers Market protocol as discussed by the Select Board. Ms. Pine said that it wasn't clear to her if the customers were supposed to wear masks and asked if they should include language to that effect. Mr. Gualco said that it was a health requirement to have one available. Mr. Gualco said that they were going to have a non-traditional farmers' market this year adding it would only be for essential supplies such as food. There was a discussion about whether to allow people into the building. Ms. Manugian said she was struggling with this adding she enjoyed the farmers market. She said that just the cleaning of the porta toilet was an issue for her. Mr. Gualco said that there was a core group of 10-18 vendors of whom a small portion of them would still like to participate. Mr. Giger asked who the market organizers were and thought they should be defined. Mr. Degen said that the toilet should be used by the vendors only and locked by the organizers. Mr. Degen said that he loved the Barn but thought the Barn should be left for use by the organizers only. Mr. Degen suggested inviting Mr. Wyatt, Chair of the Williams Barn Committee, into the meeting next week to discuss this. Mr. Giger suggested limiting the hours. Mr. Gualco said that the hours would be limited to 3-7pm.

Ms. Manugian left at 8:18pm and rejoined at 8:20pm.

13. Mr. Haddad said that he reached out the Karen Chapman on the Housing Production Plan and would have it to the Board by early June. Mr. Degen said that they had a deadline in which they needed to have a plan. Ms. Manugian asked if they could look into the ability to extend their current plan for a few months if need be. Mr. Haddad said he would look into that.
14. Mr. Haddad reviewed the upcoming agenda schedule.
15. Mr. Haddad said he was asked to discuss with the schools the possibility of a 1/12th budget adding the district was ready for it. Ms. Gilbert said that they met with Dunstable adding there was little chance of them having a budget before the start of the FY adding Dunstable were looking toward a 1/12th budget. She said that they explained to Dunstable that most of their spending started in August and moving forward. She said that even though the District was using \$800K of E&D, Dunstable still had a \$160K issue. She said that they explained to Dunstable that they would not be cutting staff or resources especially having to get the students back to adequate learning levels in the fall due to remote learning. Ms. Gilbert said that their assessment may decrease even further because the district was able to prepay some special education costs 3 months in advance which would help Dunstable.

ON-GOING ISSUES

Mr. Haddad said that the piloting trailer had been mobilized at Baddacook last week and would keep the Board updated.

MINUTES

Ms. Pine moved to approve the meeting minutes of May 4, 2020 as presented. Ms. Manugian seconded the motion. Roll Call: Pine-aye; Manugian-aye; Giger-aye; Reilly-aye; Degen-aye

Ms. Manugian said she would entertain a motion to enter in Executive Session at 8:40pm Pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws, c.30A, §21(a), Clause 7 "To comply with, or act under the authority of, any general or special law or federal grant-in-aid requirements." Purpose – Review, Approval and Potential Release of Executive Session Minutes. Mr. Degen made the motion. Ms. Pine seconded the motion. Roll Call: Roll Call: Manugian-aye; Giger-aye; Reilly-aye; Pine-aye; Degen-aye

Approved: _____
John Reilly, Clerk

_____ respectfully submitted:
Dawn Dunbar, Executive Assistant

Date Approved: 5/18/2020