



TOWN OF GROTON

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Select Board

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Rebecca H. Pine, *Member*

Town Manager
Mark W. Haddad

To: *Select Board*

From: *Mark W. Haddad – Town Manager*

Subject: *Weekly Report*

Date: *March 30, 2020*

1. Since our last virtual meeting on Monday, March 23, 2020, we have closed Town Hall, the Library and Senior Center and sent everyone home. Employees are working from their homes. We are responding to emails, phone calls and holding virtual meetings on Zoom to address issues. The Senior Center continues to provide meals on wheels and rides to the grocery store for our Seniors. We have closed the Country Club until at least April 7th and significantly reduced the DPW Operations. Specifically, we will keep two employees on each day to address priority issues, as well as, have the mechanic and Transfer Station employees work normal schedules. Tom Delaney and I talk daily to ensure continuity of operations and we will adjust work schedules as needed. I would like to discuss with the Board at Monday's meeting any concerns or issues you have with regard to the closure of Town Hall. In addition, I have instituted a spending freeze for the rest of the Fiscal Year to address potential revenue shortfalls. The Town Manager has to approve any expenditure not related to COVID-19. We have also canceled all non-emergency overtime.
2. Governor Baker has closed schools and daycares until May 4th. He has instituted new protocols at Grocery Stores and Drug Stores. Hand sanitizer has to be made available and social distancing of more than six (6') feet is required. In addition, he has also revoked any single use plastic bag ban for the time being. Re-usable bags are not allowed in stores. We will not be implementing our approved ban on July 1st until the Governor rescinds the Order. I will update the Board with any additional changes at the State level at Monday's meeting.
3. As I told you by email last week, the Board of Health has declined to prohibit building construction in Town or restaurant take-out service. They did, however, reaffirm their support for actions taken by the Town Manager and Land Use Director to protect our employees and local construction workers. I have met with our Land Use Staff, and we have instituted the following Building Department Protocols:
 - a. The Building Department will continue to accept all permit applications, but will not issue any permits until at least April 7, 2020. This date will be reviewed by the Town Manager to determine if it needs to be extended.
 - b. Exterior Property Inspections will be allowed as long as a particular inspector is comfortable performing said inspection.

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3. Continued:

- c. Interior inspections in occupied buildings **ARE NOT ALLOWED** under any circumstances.
- d. Interior inspections in unoccupied buildings can be performed as long as the inspector is comfortable performing said inspection and the attached questionnaire is completed and approved by the Building Commissioner and/or Fire Chief.

We have instituted these protocols for the protection of our employees. In addition, we are reviewing the State regulations with regard to Building construction as instituted by the Governor and I will advise the Board of any action we will be taking to enforce those regulations. I will discuss this in more detail with the Board at Monday's meeting.

4. The Board had requested that we determine how the Commonwealth is dealing with paying employees who are unable to work during the COVID-19 Pandemic. Dawn Dunbar contacted the State Human Resources Offices this past Tuesday and was told the following:

As of right now anyone from the State level that can work from home is working from home and being paid. Anyone that has to be in the closed office, such as someone doing the mail, is continuing to show up and perform their duties. No one has been furloughed and to his knowledge no one has been required to apply for unemployment. They are being paid as they would if COVID didn't exist.

We will follow up with the State again prior to Monday's meeting to determine if anything has changed. That said, I can tell the Board that all of our Town Hall employees are working from home have been performing their duties as best they can under the circumstances. I have been meeting (virtually) with many of our employees on a regular basis. I would recommend we continue to pay our employees as recommended by Town Counsel and in compliance with our past practice.

5. The Board's decision to cancel all public meetings expires on March 30th. I would recommend that the Board lift the moratorium and allow Boards and Committees to meet only if absolutely necessary to conduct Town Business. If they do meet, I would recommend that meetings are held virtually on Zoom only. I do not recommend we open up Town Buildings for meetings at this time. I will work with the various Boards and Committees and our IT Department to coordinate any meetings. All meetings must be posted with 48 hours' notice in compliance with the Open Meeting Law. In addition, to allow for better public access to meetings, we will start using the Webinar Function on Zoom that allows the public to actually join the meeting and participate when called on by the Chair. We will use Monday's Select Board meeting as the first test of this technology.

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6. As discussed at last week's meeting, I would like the Board to consider delaying action on some of the Warrant Articles currently on the Warrant until the Fall. I believe only essential matters should be addressed at the Spring Town Meeting. There are a couple of reasons for this request. First of all, given the uncertainty of the Town's finances, I would like to preserve as much Free Cash and Capital Stabilization revenue as possible in the event our revenues are significantly impacted by the COVID-19 Pandemic. Secondly, I suspect that even if current restrictions are relaxed by the State, attendance at Town Meeting will be limited as residents may still not feel comfortable being in crowded places. That said, I would recommend the following with regard to the 32 Articles contained on the Warrant:

| <u>Article</u> | <u>Action Proposed</u> |
|---|---|
| 1. Hear Reports | Move Forward at Spring Town Meeting |
| 2. Elected Officials Compensation | Move Forward at Spring Town Meeting |
| 3. Wage and Classification Schedule | Move Forward at Spring Town Meeting |
| 4. Fiscal Year 2021 Operating Budget | Move Forward at Spring Town Meeting |
| 5. OPEB Trust Fund | Move Forward at Spring Town Meeting |
| 6. FY 2021 Capital Budget | Delay Action Until Fall Town Meeting, with the exception of the following items: |
| | Ambulance 2 Replacement \$325,000 |
| | Dump Truck Debt \$ 40,000 |
| | IT Infrastructure \$ 40,000 |
| | Tractor Trailer Debt \$ 40,000 |
| | Police Cruiser \$ 56,570 |
| | Triplex Mower Lease \$ 5,100 |
| 7. Police Department Generator | Move Forward at Spring Town Meeting |
| 8. Environmental Consulting Services | Delay Action Until Fall Town Meeting |
| 9. Create a Stormwater Enterprise | Move Forward at Spring Town Meeting |
| 10. Special Legislation on Town Trust Funds | Delay Action Until Fall Town Meeting |
| 11. Complete Streets Engineering | Delay Action Until Fall Town Meeting |
| 12. Acquire Parcel on Land/Station Ave. | Delay Action Until Fall Town Meeting |
| 13. Mosquito Control Project | Remove and Not Act On |
| 14. CPA Funding Accounts | Delay Action Until Fall Town Meeting |
| 15. CPA Funding Recommendations | Delay Action Until Fall Town Meeting |
| 16. Zoning – Codification | Move Forward at Spring Town Meeting |
| 17. Zoning – Site Plan Review | Delay Action Until Fall Town Meeting |
| 18. Zoning – Attached Accessory | Delay Action Until Fall Town Meeting |
| 19. Zoning – Detached Accessory | Delay Action Until Fall Town Meeting. |
| 22. Amend Chapter 128 – Dogs | Delay Action Until Fall Town Meeting |
| 21. Acceptance of Amelia Way | Move Forward at Spring Town Meeting |
| 22-32. Consent Agenda | Move Forward at Spring Town Meeting. |

We can discuss these recommendations in more detail at Monday's meeting.