

**Minutes of the BOARD OF SELECTMEN
May 11, 2020 7:00 PM
Virtual Attendance Due to Coronavirus Pandemic**

Present Remotely: Barbara Jessel, Mary Anne Nay, Peter Perkins, Al Vaz, Chuck Costello

Absent: None

Others Present Remotely: Town Administrator Alan Benson, Assistant Town Administrator Susan Inman, Minutes Secretary Judi Stickney, Director of Finance Kathleen Benevento, Chris Wakeman, Lance Cluster, Chief Jim Riter, Brian Hubbard, Carol Hubbard, Elementary Superintendent Scott Morrison, Asst. Superintendent Steve Greenberg, Wendall Waters, Carolyn Miller, Library Director Kevin Bourque, and others

Chair Barbara Jessel called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM. Roll call proceeded with all Board of Selectmen members present.

7:02PM ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **Purchase Trash Stickers Online:** Selectman Perkins announced that our offices continue to respond to Trash Sticker orders received through our online payment portal and mail order. Please allow one -week turnaround time as we receive, fill, and mail orders. In addition to online and mail options, stickers are still available for purchase at Boxford Community Store, West Village Provisions and Nason's Stone House Farm.
- **Board of Health Update:** Selectman Costello announced that in their update on May 8th, the Board of Health announced that Covid-19 total cases in Boxford have grown by 4 since last week, to a total of 32. This includes 28 cases in recovery and out of isolation, and 4 cases in isolation. As of May 6th, Topsfield has increased from last week's 87 to 100 total cases, Middleton from 109 to 128, and Georgetown from 29 to 35. These increases are significant and show us that the epidemic is still with us. After your Board passed our Order requiring face coverings last week, the state followed with a statewide requirement for face coverings. It is very critical that our residents follow the BOH Order: wear a face mask/covering when you go into any town or commercial building in town, including post offices. As the numbers show, we're not out of the emergency period yet. A reminder to the real estate community that open houses continue to be prohibited. Do your part and let's continue to keep our Covid-19 case numbers as low as possible.
- **Council on Aging Programs to Help Seniors and Those in Need:** Selectman Vaz announced that the COA is currently offering the following:
 - **NON-PERISHABLE DONATIONS:** The Police Station is continuing to accept donations of nonperishable grocery items. Please drop off donations at the garage between 8am and 4pm daily.

- MASK DONATIONS: The Council on Aging will accept donations of sewn or store-bought masks to distribute to residents in the community as needed. With the new BOH Order, we expect we will receive requests for masks.
- SENIOR GROCERY SHOPPING PROGRAM: The Council on Aging's weekly shopping run for seniors is on Tuesdays; please call the Council on Aging at 978-887-3591 by 4PM on Monday to place an order. For those with transportation, items will be picked up Tuesdays at the Council on Aging by scheduled appointment. Home delivery will still be available for those who need it. At this time, we will not be accepting payment, but those who wish may make a donation to the Covid-19 Account should visit our website ONLINE PAYMENT section or mail checks Payable to the Town of Boxford to the Boxford Town Hall, 7A Spofford Rd., with a note specifying Covid-19 donation.

7:05 PM DISCUSSION OF DELAY OF ANNUAL TOWN MEETING: Members of the Elementary School Committee and Finance Committee were invited and in attendance for this discussion. Chair Jessel noted that the Superintendent had responded to the Town Administrator's request for input if the town should have to postpone the Town Meeting.

- **Report from Elementary School:** Superintendent Scott Morrison advised the Board that a delay of the annual town meeting wouldn't be a disaster, unless the budget was not approved at a September meeting. In that case, the school committee would have to meet to decide how to handle the budget. He added that he's got a call into the AAB to see how they would handle another extension. He will let the Board know as soon as he hears from them.
- **Report from Non-School Departments:** Town Administrator Alan Benson advised the Board that a delayed town meeting would be an inconvenience, but not impossible. He noted that the fire turnout gear was 50% funded by a state grant and the request was for the remaining 50% to be funded by the FY21 capital budget. The first half was already ordered and are scheduled for delivery June 1st. The department will inspect the remaining older sets for any damage and may replace one or two sets with current funds and utilize the remainder until the second part of the order can be placed in the fall. He added that the Town Hall/Library HVAC replacement, envelope repair, interior Library renovation project might have added costs for winter construction conditions if approved in September. A brief discussion ensued on whether the construction should take place in the winter. After discussion, the Board took the following action:
On a **MOTION** made by **Costello**, second by **Nay**, the Board of Selectmen **VOTED** unanimously by roll call vote to move the date of the Town Meeting to a date to be determined in September.
- **Draft Warrant for June 16th:** In consideration of the previous vote, the Chair felt they could pass over the discussion on the draft warrant. A brief discussion ensued on what might be eliminated or added to the warrant before a September Town Meeting. The Town Administrator thought the Warrant would look very much the same as it does now. He doesn't anticipate any changes, other than the budget.

- **Revenue Review Next Week:** The Town Administrator advised the Board that they would be doing a revenue review again next week. A brief discussion ensued on revenues in general and how they relate to the now-completed school budgets, as well as when the town will know what the state revenues will be.

7:39 PM INITIAL REPORT ON PREPAREDNESS FOR REOPENING TOWN BUILDINGS TO PUBLIC

- **Initial Plans for Each Building:** Assistant Town Administrator Susan Inman provided the Board with a memo outlining all of the procedures they are ready to implement to reopen Town Hall, including installing sneeze guard barriers at each desk, rotating desks in Town Hall to face the public, better protecting the employees, Tempered Glass on department windows will be installed prior to opening, and there will be a dedicated exit and entrance to the building. Inman also presented information on PPE requirements for visitors and employees, as well as what is being done to better allow for social distancing. They are also working on determining which services can be conducted virtually. Inman provided a brief review of what each department, board and committee is doing to encourage online meetings and services. A lengthy discussion ensued on the preparations presented and whether the Town should implement the changes permanently, for the long term, or just the short term. It was determined that the Town is working, employees are working – some from home, some in the office. Residents are being serviced, mostly remotely. But work is getting done.

Discussion turned to what other town buildings are doing to prepare for opening. A lengthy discussion ensued on the COA and how they might be able to offer classes remotely.

As discussion turned to what the library is doing to prepare for a reopening, the Library Director, Kevin Bourque, was in attendance and provided additional details on the information that was provided to the Board from the Assistant Town Administrator before the meeting.

8:46 PM REPORT OF THE TOWN ADMINISTRATOR

- **Update on Status of Annual Town Election:** The Town Clerk's office should not have adjusted the due dates for the candidate nomination papers to be in line with the delayed election. Town Counsel said the Town was only allowed to change the date of the election. The Town Clerk disagreed with Town Counsel and will go forward with the election as planned. There will be special legislation later to confirm the election. The Town's legislative delegation came through for the town very quickly to resolve this issue. Nomination papers are due this Thursday. There is a race for moderator.

8:48PM ROUTINES

- **Correspondence:** The Board briefly reviewed a letter from the Masconomet School Committee regarding their FY21 budget. Carolyn Miller, a member of the Masconomet School Committee, was in attendance and notified the Board that they will be

reviewing their budget again at this week's meeting to discuss the health department employee status.

- **Appointments:** The Chair advised they have a letter from Elizabeth Mullard who is resigning from the Board of Library Trustees. The Town Administrator advised anyone interested in volunteering should contact the Library Trustees.
- **Approval of Minutes:** After a brief review of the minutes of May 4, 2020, the Board took the following action:
On a **MOTION** made by **Nay**, second by **Costello**, the Board of Selectmen **VOTED** unanimously by roll call vote to approve the Minutes of May 4, 2020 as amended.

9:00 PM ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- **Will Flags Go Up for Memorial Day?** At Selectwoman Nay's inquiry, the Town Administrator advised that the DPW will be putting up the flags for Memorial Day. He advised Nay that the DPW will be moving forward with getting them in time for Veteran's Day.

9:03 PM EXECUTIVE SESSION

On a **MOTION** made by **Jessel**, second by **Perkins**, the Board of Selectmen **VOTED** unanimously by roll call vote to go into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing strategy on negotiations with represented employees and non-represented employees, and declared that an Executive Session is necessary since an open public discussion may have a detrimental effect on the negotiating, bargaining or litigating position of the Board of Selectmen, and upon completion of the Executive Session to return to open session and immediately adjourn without conducting any further business.

9:25PM ADJOURN

With no further business, on a **MOTION** made by **Costello**, second by **Vaz**, the Board of Selectmen **VOTED** unanimously by roll call vote to return to open session and adjourned at 9:25PM.

NEXT MEETING: Monday, May 18, 2020, Virtual Meeting 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Judith A. Stickney
Minutes Secretary

Documents either distributed to the Board of Selectmen before the meeting in a packet or at the meeting:

- Agenda: May 11, 2020

- Announcements:
 - Pay for Trash Stickers Online
 - Updates from the Board of Health 5/8/20
 - COA Programs to Help Seniors and Those in Need
- E-Mail from School Superintendent to Town Administrator et al, Re: Annual Town Meeting, 5/6/20
- E-Mail from Town Administrator to Board of Selectmen, Re: Non-School Departments and Town Meeting Delay, 5/8/20
- Draft Warrant for Annual Town Meeting June 16, 2020
- E-Mail and related material from Town Administrator to Assistant Town Administrator, Re: FW: Proposed Noise Ordinance, 5/1/20
- E-Mail and related material from Conservation Director to Town Administrator et al, Re: Marijuana Ban Zoning Bylaw, 4/24/20
- Memo and related material from Assistant Town Administrator to Board of Selectmen, Re: Reopening Considerations for Town Hall, 5/8/20
- E-Mail from Town Administrator to Board of Selectmen, Re: Town Election – June 30th, 5/8/20
- E-Mail and related attachments from Town Clerk to Town Administrator, Re: Update, 5/7/20
- Letter from Masconomet Regional School Committee to Board of Selectmen, Re: Budget, 5/7/20
- Copy of Letter from Elizabeth Mullard to Board of Library Trustees, Re: Resignation, 3/25/20
- Memo from Town Administrator to Board of Selectmen, Re: Outstanding Appointments FY 2020, 5/8/20
- Draft Minutes: 5/4/20
- Motion to go into Executive Session: To discuss strategy on negotiations - represented and non-represented personnel