

Board: Board of Selectmen/ Water Commissioner's Meeting
Date: Monday, April 13, 2020
Location: Online Video/Audio Conference Pursuant to Governor Baker's Executive Order in Response to the COVID-19 State of Emergency

Selectmen Present: William Bembury, Peter Sanders, Jacob Smith
Also, Present: Bryan Smith, Glenn McCrory
Press:

At 6:34 PM **Chairman Smith** called the meeting to order.

Chairman Smith explained that the meeting is being recorded and provided an overview of the functions of the video/audio conferencing platform.

Discussion Regarding the Town Response to COVID-19

Chairman Smith explained that the Town is continuing to monitor guidance from the State and that recent announcements do not require changes by the Town at this time. **Chairman Smith** explained that a recent law that was enacted would allow for fees to be waived for late tax payments as well as the option to delay the due date for tax payments. **Chairman Smith** explained that feedback has been received from the Town's financial team and that to date there have not been any requests from taxpayers for deadline extensions. The Board discussed revisiting the topic by the April 27, 2020 meeting in the event that further feedback is received from taxpayers and the financial team believes that an extension is necessary. The Board discussed that the tools that the Tax Collector has to work with taxpayers when necessary. The Board agreed to revisit the topic before the end of April 2020.

Chairman Smith began a discussion about how to handle the disclosure of COVID-19 counts, explaining that originally the State was providing County level data of positive cases and had discouraged individual towns from disclosing counts. **Chairman Smith** noted that recently the State has amended that guidance and is leaving it to each town to determine how to proceed. **Chairman Smith** asked the Board how they would like to proceed with the topic. **Chairman Smith** expressed concern about the Town releasing Town level counts, noting the level of anxiety that exists and concern about increasing that anxiety and exposing residents to stigma and potential harassment. **Chairman Smith** added that the locations of positive COVID-19 cases have been provided to dispatch so that first responders can be informed if called to a location. **Selectman Bembury** discussed the importance of dispatch being informed of positive cases so that first responders can adequately prepare. **Selectman Bembury** encouraged all members of the public to take the COVID-19 situation seriously and to take precautions that assume that all people may have been exposed to it. **Selectman Bembury** explained that if everyone operates with the understanding that all people may have been exposed, then the actual Town specific counts are not as necessary to publicize. **Selectman Sanders** expressed agreement. **Selectman Bembury** also expressed concern that community members may use the counts to ostracize community members that they suspect may have contracted the virus out of fear. It was agreed that the Town will share Countywide data. **Selectman Bembury** expressed support for sharing Town specific data at the conclusion of the State of Emergency.

Library Construction Project Update & Review of Erving Public Library Furniture, Fixtures & Equipment Procurement and Proposed Change Orders

Chairman Smith explained that feedback and information regarding the construction project and the updated list of furniture, fixtures, and equipment is still being collected for the Board's review. The Board agreed to discuss this topic at a future meeting.

IP Mill- Hazardous Materials Clean-up Project Update

Bryan Smith, Town Administrator, explained that a pre-construction meeting occurred with representatives from Tighe & Bond, Air Quality Experts Inc, and Glenn McCrory, Highway Superintendent, and Mariah Kurtz, Assistant Town Planner. Bryan explained that the vendor's COVID-19 compliance procedures were reviewed. Bryan explained that Air Quality Experts Inc. has stated that they plan to begin work at the IP Mill on May 1, 2020 and that Glenn is available to work with their team to mobilize to the site. Bryan added that Mariah is working with MassDevelopment to request an extension on the Brownfields Grant work and final reporting that is required. The Board had no concerns.

Discussion Regarding the Town Response to Covid-19 (revisited)

Chairman Smith explained that the Town has been notified from MassDOT that C&A Construction will be returning to complete sidewalk work on Route 63. **Chairman Smith** explained that C&A staff members will be conducting work in accordance with the COVID-19 guidelines. Bryan explained that site preparations are already underway and that the Highway Department has assisted with placing jersey barriers on Lester Street. Bryan added that the Town will be reviewing concerns that have been observed throughout the winter months with C&A Construction and the MassDOT resident engineer.

Review of FY2021 Budget Draft

The Board passed over this agenda item.

Review of Annual Town Meeting Warrant Draft

The Board reviewed a revised draft of the Annual Town Meeting warrant. Bryan reviewed revisions to the draft warrant.

Article for Annual Town Elections: Bryan explained that after consulting Richard Newton, Town Clerk, the article for the Annual Town Election has been modified to include the March 30, 2020 Board of Selectmen vote to move the date of the election. Bryan added that the full copy of the language from Chapter 45 of the Acts of 2020 has been included at the end of the warrant in the appendix in case voters want to understand the provisions that allow the Board to move the election. **Selectman Bembury** expressed support for the vote and the appendix being included as a historical note for the events that have occurred in 2020. The Board agreed to the revisions.

Article 6: FY2021 General Operating Budget: Bryan explained that Article 6 has proposed revisions after further review from Deborah Mero, Town Accountant. Bryan explained that the \$300,000 for the Other Post Employment Benefits (OPEB) line item had been unintentionally included in the Benefits line item as it was already included in the special article for recurring annual appropriation. Bryan explained that a similar change was made for the around town newsletter appropriation that was included in the General Government line item for \$7,500 unintentionally, as it is already included in the special article for recurring annual appropriation. Lastly, Bryan explained that the Town Moderator's stipend of \$208 was inadvertently left out of the total for the General Government line item and that has been corrected. The Board had no concerns with the revisions as presented.

Article 19: Appropriation for the General Stabilization Account: The Board reviewed the revisions to the article information explanation that had been requested to clarify that this appropriation is the first of five (5) planned deposits into the General Stabilization Fund. The Board had no concerns with the revision.

Article 20: Amended Revolving Accounts: The Board reviewed the revision to the article by changing “Board of Library Trustees” to now read “Board of Selectmen.” The Board had no concerns with the revision.

Article 26: Rescind Town Meeting & Election Dates Article: The Board reviewed revisions to the article. The language “Submitted by Town Clerk” was revised to now read “Submitted by Board of Selectmen.” Additionally, the words “no recommendation” was added to the Finance Committee recommendation. The Board had no concerns with the revision.

Article 27: Town Meeting & Election of Town Officials: The Board reviewed revisions to the article. The word “first” was revised to read “second.” Additionally, the words “no recommendation” were added to the Finance Committee recommendation. Lastly the article information was revised to include the following rationale for the proposed bylaw: “This bylaw is proposed so that elected officials would serve terms that begin and end with fiscal years, would allow for the continuity in service after an election until the start of a new fiscal year, and would allow the compensation of elected official to be amended on the floor of Town Meeting in accordance with the Town’s grade and step compensation schedule. A majority vote is required to adopt or amend the general by-laws.” The Board discussed the revisions and noted that Richard Newton, Town Clerk, had wanted to do additional research about any potential conflicts. Bryan explained that the issue had been reviewed by the Town Clerk and Donna MacNicol, Town Counsel, and that no conflict was identified. The Board discussed the fact that if approved at the Annual Town Meeting, the change would not take effect until the following year and that it should allow for a transition in an office if someone new is elected to serve. The Board had no concerns with the revisions as presented.

Chairman Smith made a motion to approve the Annual Town Meeting Warrant as written. **Selectman Sanders** seconded. **Vote:** Unanimously approved.

Review of Meeting Minutes for February 24, 2020

The Board passed over this agenda item.

Review of Meeting Minutes for March 02, 2020

The Board passed over this agenda item.

Review of Meeting Minutes for March 23, 2020

The Board passed over this agenda item.

Adjournment

At 7:15 PM **Chairman Smith** made a motion to adjourn. **Selectman Bembury** seconded. **Vote:** Unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,



Bryan Smith
Town Administrator