



Town of Abington

OFFICE OF BOARD OF SELECTMEN

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ABINGTON, MA 02351

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Minutes

Board of Selectmen

April 13, 2020

6:30 p.m.

Via Remote Participation

Participating Members: Tom Connolly, Chair, Tim Chapin, Ken Coyle, Jim Connolly, Kevin DiMarzio, John Clifford, Town Counsel

- Meeting opened with **Pledge of Allegiance**
- **Discussion of possible postponement of Town Meeting** – It was Town Manager's recommendation that town meeting be postponed indefinitely with a date to be determined at a later date. Kevin – can they get update from Moderator for the next meeting? Jim – can they vote for the date to be determined at a later date? Yes. Motion by Jim to postpone the 2020 Special and Annual Town Meetings scheduled for May 18, 2020 to future date to be determined, seconded by Kevin, unanimous.

Warrant has opened and closed. Should it be opened again if there are any last-minute articles? It was closed March 31st. Jim – that would seem fair to re-open. Ken – could be opened for a short window. Tom called for a roll call vote to postpone the 2020 Special and Annual Town Meetings scheduled for May 18, 2020 to future date to be determined – Tim yes, Ken yes, Jim yes, Kevin yes, Tom yes.

- **Discussion and possible vote to offer extension of contract of Town Manager Richard LaFond.** Tom – Employment Agreement and Amendment to Separation Agreement was done in executive session last week and needs to be signed by the Board. Rick will continue as Town Manager as an employee-at-will, with same salary, but no benefits, after April 30.
- **Discussion and possible vote to accept Section 10 of Chapter 53 of the Acts of 2020 to extend the due date for 4th quarter real estate and personal property taxes from May 1, 2020 to June 1, 2020 and to extend the due date for property tax exemption applications from April 1, 2020 to June 1, 2020.** Tom had concerns about property tax exemption applications to June 1, 2020 and would like input from Treasurer for next meeting. John Clifford – communities are tabling this for a couple of weeks because banks have escrow payments they are making. Suggested holding off on decisions until bank payments are in and see if citizens are having hardships making payment. Discussion will be tabled for next meeting.
- **Discussion and possible vote to accept Section 11 of Chapter 53 of the Acts of 2020 to waive the interest and any other penalties for late payment of any excise, tax, water use, or sewer usage bill with a due date on or after March 10, 2020 if payment is made after its respective**

due date but before June 30, 2020. The board was in favor. Motion by Jim to accept Section 11 of Chapter 53 of the Acts of 2020 to waive the interest and any other penalties for late payment of any excise, tax, water use, or sewer usage bill with a due date on or after March 10, 2020 if payment is made after its respective due date but before June 30, 2020, seconded by Kevin, with roll call vote – Tim yes, Ken yes, Jim yes, Kevin yes, Tom yes.

- Town Manager Report – Tom read Rick's report.

Police Operation and Management Analysis – Ken reported that their meeting with MRI went well. Kevin agreed. Video is on YouTube. MRI is very qualified and has done good work in other towns. Kevin – there are no other meetings scheduled. Ken – the subcommittee offered help if there was anything MRI needed. There is a little extra money if anything else needs to be done.

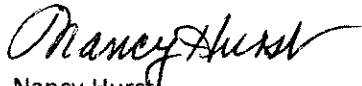
Tom – re budget – will have more budget information for next meeting. Ken – commended all department heads for their hard work in these unprecedented times. Tom – they are all pulling together working for the good of Abington, going above and beyond during this crisis.

The next Selectmen's meeting is 4/21.

Motion to go into Executive Session – to conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with the Town Manager and to conduct contract negotiations with the Town Manager, pursuant to General Laws, c. 30A, Sec. 21(a)(2) and not to return to open session. Roll call vote: Tim yes, Ken yes, Jim yes, Kevin yes, Tom yes.

Tom thanked Kevin Tocci and his crew.

Respectfully submitted,


Nancy Hurst



Town of Abington

500 GLINIEWICZ WAY
ABINGTON, MA 02351

TO: BOARD OF SELECTMEN
FROM: TOWN MANAGER
DATE: April 10, 2020
SUBJ: GENERAL UPDATE

The following is meant to be a general update of activities of the Town Manager and staff. Should any member desire more information regarding any particular matter please contact me personally.

In addition to the update information below from last week please be informed of the following:

- Senior Center Roof – after the procurement process the roof replacement project began this past Monday. Per the contract the job is to be completed within three weeks barring weather or other factors beyond the control of the contractor.
- Police Operation and Management Analysis – On Wednesday April 1 Ken, Kevin and I spoke to MRI President Alan Gould regarding the ongoing project. After discussing the status and process going forward Mr. Gould agreed that an email update on the status of the project would be sent to us every 2 weeks (or so). The conversation was amicable and productive.

In recognition of these extraordinary times please see the following actions/concerns:

1. Municipal Finance – The current public health crisis is have far reaching and possibly severe fiscal implications for cities and towns. My Financial Officers Group discussed our following concerns this morning:
 - a. State of current FY 21 budget planning – closing our final budget gap
 - b. Possible reductions in State Aid over the current projection – this could create significant hardship that may require consideration of reserves and reductions in force
 - c. Capital Budget Planning – my goal is to forego any capital expenditures in FY 2021 other than essential public safety requirements. With yet another very healthy free cash certification my target is approximately \$1,000,000.00 to appropriate to Stabilization.

- d. Regional School Implications – potential requirements over and above the current scheduled assessment for FY 2021 due to reduction in state aid to regional districts
- e. Extended tax deadlines/penalty & interest waivers
 - Cash flow implications?
 - Revenue reduction?
 - Staffing challenges?
- f. Recommendation as to possible delay of Annual/Special Town Meetings – I am speaking to the Finance Committee Chair and Moderator this week to discuss this matter. Due to our later town meeting date a decision is not yet necessary but should begin to be considered. This has financial planning and administrative implications that need to be assessed.

All of the above will continue to be discussed multiple times this week. Depending on direction that we receive from the state this week it may be a consideration to consider bargaining possible pay freezes and furloughs.

- 2. Business assistance/relations
 - a. We have notified all businesses of the Small Business Assistance Program promulgated by the state
 - b. As you saw over the weekend all on-premises alcohol licensees have been notified of the legislation passed on Friday allowing for sales of beer and wine with take out.
- 3. Task Force – our collective group managing this crisis continues to meet. The number of matter and details necessary to planning are myriad and some not suitable for this document.
- 4. Listing of Abington statistics – Marty and I have had many discussions pertaining to whether or not to show the town's specific positive tests on-line. The consideration initially was:
 - a. do the relatively low number of positives per the population of Abington create a dismissive attitude by the public?
 - b. the state lists these positive tests daily per county – and town borders are not relevant to the spread
 - c. the Department of Public Health advised cities and towns NOT to publish this information for the same reasons above and to not risk any possible invasion of privacy (first responders are notified of the address of any individuals who test positive)

However, most towns are now publishing the number of residents within their town that have tested positive and we simply do not want to create a problem that we don't need distracting us

from the management of the emergency.

**** Due to the subject matter of tonight's Board of Selectmen meeting I plan to attend the Board of Health meeting at the same time unless otherwise directed by the Chairman.