

TOWN OF WENHAM
Board of Selectmen
Meeting of March 31, 2020
Town Hall, 138 Main Street

Pursuant to the Open Meeting Law, M.G.L. Chapter 30 A, §§ 18-25, written notice posted by the Town Clerk delivered to all Board members, a meeting of the Board of Selectmen (BOS) was held on Tuesday March 31, 2020 at 6:30 pm virtually on Zoom.us.

The Town of Wenham has a three-member Board of Selectmen elected for three-year terms with one seat up for election each year. Catherine Harrison (2020); John Clemenzi (2021); Jack Wilhelm (2022)

The Board of Selectmen serve as the chief executive body of the Town. The board's duties include in part appointing the Town Administrator and other board/committee members, developing goals and policies, preparing the town report, the annual budget, and presenting the warrant for Town Meeting.

The Board typically meets the first and third Tuesday of each month at 6:30 pm in Town Hall. The BOS meetings are posted on the Town calendar. All meetings are open to the public and may be viewed on local cable channels HWCAM.org or You Tube HWCAM.

Due to the COVID19 Virus, and restrictions for gatherings, this meeting took place virtually on Zoom. This meeting was identified as being recorded, all could be heard, and votes would be taken by roll call.

Call to order: *With a quorum present, Mr. Wilhelm called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm.*

Board of Selectmen present: Jack Wilhelm, Chair; John Clemenzi, Vice Chair; Catherine Harrison, Clerk Anthony Ansaldi, Town Administrator; Jackie Bresnahan, Director of Administrative Services; Recording Secretary Catherine Tinsley; Dr. Andrew Ting, Board of Health Chair; Maribeth Ting, Public Health Nurse; Margaret Hoffman, Planning Coordinator; Fire Chief Stephen Kavanagh and Deputy Chief Jeff Baxter; Dianne Bucco, Town Clerk, Shawn Timmons, HW Recreation Director; Sherrie LeBlanc, Treasurer/Collector; Chris Holak, Interim Finance Director

- Public Input - It was noted that anyone wanting to make public input may use the chat feature on Zoom or email/call in their questions/comments prior to the meeting.

Mr. Wilhelm expressed his concern regarding the town finances during the COVID19 virus pandemic and suggested the BOS meet weekly to discuss what the Town is doing to reduce expenses and mitigate potential budget deficits. Mr. Wilhelm went on to suggest the BOS also review the proposed FY21 budget, citing it was prepared under "business as usual" before the state of emergency and shelter in place was declared, and prepare to delay, defer, or eliminate FY21 budget items if necessary.

Ms. Harrison agreed the finances need to be reviewed and monitored but questioned the ability of the BOS to make changes to the FY21 budget and requested that the BOS be kept updated. Ms. Harrison opined it was early to make changes to the FY20 budget before the quarter's real estate taxes are due (May 1), then pending any changes to the projected tax revenue adjustments could be discussed.

Mr. Clemenzi supported the FY21 budget be reviewed and cited the current situation as "unchartered territory."

Mr. Wilhelm opined the Covid19 virus could go on an extended period of time according to projections and in an effort to be fiscally prepared to make decisions on town finances, recommended the BOS meet weekly to discuss the town's financial status. A budget update will be on each BOS meeting agenda.

New Business

- Appointment
 - Board of Registrars – Dianne K. Bucco & Roney H. Ebling
 - Town of Wenham Appointment Requests

Vote: The BOS voted unanimously by roll call vote to appoint Dianne K. Bucco and Roney H. Hilliard as Board of Registrars for a term beginning April 1, 2020 and ending March 31, 2023.

- Discuss & Potentially Approve Intermunicipal Agreement with Hamilton for a Shared Fuel Station in Wenham
 - Intermunicipal Agreement Between the Towns of Wenham and Hamilton for Shared Fuel Station at Wenham Yard - Signed by the Hamilton Board of Selectmen dated March 17, 2020

Mr. Ansaldi spoke on the proposal to share a fuel station for municipal vehicles with the Town of Hamilton. Both towns need to repair/update their aging fueling station at an estimated cost of \$250,000-\$300,000 each. The proposal would be for an Intermunicipal Agreement for a shared joint fueling station with Hamilton, located in Wenham. The agreement was proposed for April 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021. This pilot program will allow each municipality to see if they can jointly exist using a single fueling station in Wenham.

Approved 04.21.2020

If this pilot program proves to be successful, both communities can share the expense of a single (new) fueling station (in Wenham) saving the taxpayers \$125,000 - \$150,000. The Hamilton Board of Selectmen voted to approve the agreement at their meeting on March 16, 2020.

Mr. Clemenzi questioned how the fuel would be monitored for each town and Mr. Ansaldi explained that every user has a key and the consumption of the pump would be computerized and reported to the appropriate towns.

Vote: The Board of Selectmen vote unanimously by roll call vote to approve the Intermunicipal Agreement with the Town of Hamilton for a shared Fuel Station from April 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021.

- Discuss & Potentially Approve Annual MIIA FY21 Property & Casualty and Workers Compensation
 - FY21 MIIA Insurance Renewal Letter: Town of Wenham - Property, Liability & Workers Compensation March 19, 2020
 - Renewal Summary for Town of Wenham March 19, 2020

Mr. Ansaldi reviewed the cost for FY21 increased 5.3% over the prior year; the total cost is \$100,411. He went on to recommend the Town take advantage of MIIA's 3% prepay premium discount if paid before August 1, 2020.

The (proposed) FY21 budget for MIIA Insurance is \$145,000.

Mr. Clemenzi observed that this was a sizable bill and questioned if the town has compared rates with other insurance companies. Mr. Ansaldi explained MIIA is used by every city and town unless self-insured as this is the municipal insurance agency. MIIA offers additional benefits specifically for municipal employees.

It was agreed to approve this payment and look into other options for next year for the Town's insurance.

VOTE: The Board of Selectmen voted unanimously by roll call to approve the MIIA insurance renewal for property (\$53,096), liability (\$20,272) and workers' compensation coverage (\$27,043) for FY21.

COVID-19 Discussion

- Update from the Board of Health & Public Health Nurse

Maribeth Ting, Public Health Nurse spoke on the COVID19 and how the Town of Wenham is approaching public safety.

Ms. Ting explained that the Town uses a virtual epidemiologic network set up by the state, which has been used for years, to track infectious diseases that are reported by medical providers. The Public Health Nurse can then follow up with residents.

Ms. Ting has been using this network. She will discuss issues with the school district and colleagues in Hamilton of how best to inform the public to take all precautions necessary to minimize exposure to others.

Ms. Ting said that a number of cases were reported in Wenham that she is following. Ms. Ting checks in with all individuals each day, provides guidance, and confirms they have necessary supplies.

Ms. Ting identified that three people have been tested positive; two have recovered and are no longer in isolation. There is one presumed case as well. Ms. Ting reiterated that test results are limited by testing availability and when more tests become available it is anticipated the statistics (potentially) would increase.

A discussion followed on what information is appropriate to communicate to the public. At this time, state information is reported by the county, leaving small communities to decide how, when, and what format is best to be shared in their community. Ms. Ting opined that the COVID19 statistics do not change how people need to take care of themselves.

Ms. Harrison observed that there is a call for information from residents in town and it may help people understand the magnitude of the situation.

Mr. Wilhelm did not see the value of publicizing this information and cited that would not change what is going on and how people need to practice social distancing, washing of hands, etc.

Mr. Clemenzi asked if the town has adequate equipment for the public responders and if the town had access for COVID19 test kits. Ms. Ting reported that NEMA has put funding in place and the town submitted a request for additional supplies. She further stated that testing continues to be done by primary health care providers and hospitals, at this time, but this protocol could change.

Deputy Chief Baxter reported that the Town is up to date in procuring supplies but needed to make requests regularly as supplies are limited.

Relative to the number of cases in Wenham, Dr. Ting echoed the seriousness of this pandemic, and that everyone needs to follow recommendations to i.e. quarantine, hand washing, and social distancing regardless of the numbers.

Dr. Ting referred to the Town website that is updated regularly and said the Board of Health would discuss issuing a reverse 911 call to residents. The Board of Health is meeting tomorrow night and will further discuss recommendations.

It was reported that the Town of Hamilton has closed public playgrounds, parks, ball courts and authorized the police department to issue warnings and fines, effective April 2. The Town of Wenham also has parks, playgrounds and trails.

The BOH will discuss how to best communicate clear information to residents at their meeting tomorrow.

Concern was noted about the number of people seen using the Rail Trail as well as parking along Route 97.

Wenham already has closed play structures and posted signs to practice social distancing at various public locations i.e. playground, playing fields. The BOH will take this up at their meeting tomorrow night.

- Discussion on Use of Reverse 911 Call

Mr. Ansaldi reported that he used the 911 reverse calling twice to update residents regarding the COVID19 virus and town protocols.

A discussion followed if another 911 reverse call should be made to update residents just on statistics but agreed 911 reverse call be used if the town was asking residents to do something different i.e. closing of parks, new testing options etc.

Future 911 calls would be considered on a case by case basis as decided by the Board of Health and allowed under M.G.L.

Ms. Ting expressed that she would first communicate with the BOS / Town Administrator.

- Discussion & Potential Approval of Deficit Spending – M.G.L. c. 44 §31
 - Memo from C. Holak, to A. Ansaldi re COVID19 Deficit Spending, March 25, 2020
 - Bulletin from DLS (Division of Local Services) to Local Officials re. Emergency Expenditures Related to COVID19 under G.L.c 44, § 31 and Emergency Short-term Borrowing under G.L. c. 44, §8(9)

Mr. Holak spoke on G.L.c 44, § 31 approval to deficit spend. In response to the COVID19 virus the Governor has allowed municipalities to deficit spend (in excess of FY budget appropriation) during the state of emergency; this is similar to how snow and ice is handled in budget. The BOS must request approval to deficit spend from the Director of Accounts of the Division of Local Services. This is restricted to deficit spending related to the (COVID19) emergency such as overtime, equipment, technology, etc.

Mr. Wilhelm explained that any deficit spending is deferred to the following fiscal year and would increase the tax rate; he was hopeful this would not need to be enacted.

Mr. Holak will create a separate account for costs associated with COVID19.

VOTE: The Board of Selectmen voted unanimously by roll call vote to approve deficit spending (for FY20) as described by the Interim Finance Director and Town Administrator.

Regarding the BOS required signatures on documents, Mr. Wilhelm did not want to change the written approval process at this time and asked that the BOS continue to sign necessary documents.

- Update on use of video conferencing for other Board/Committees

Ms. Bresnahan gave an update on virtual meetings and said there have been many meetings on zoom, all successful.

Given the governor's extended stay at home order through May 4, 2020, Ms. Bresnahan requested the Board allow committees and boards to continue to meet via zoom. Ms. Bresnahan noted HWCAM is still recording the meetings and recognized Bill Melville for his work with the town.

Ms. Hoffman spoke on the land use public hearings noting the larger cases have been continued into May to better allow the public to attend.

- Update on Town Hall Continuity of Operations Plan

➤ Memo to BOS from A. Ansaldi re Town Hall Continuity Plan Update March 26, 2020.

Mr. Ansaldi referenced the meeting packet that included all the Department Head reports on operations during the town hall closure. Mr. Ansaldi noted he is in the building every day. Some employees are working remotely, and some both from home and town hall. The chair noted the BOS should address this again if the town hall closure continues.

- Annual Town Meeting

Mr. Wilhelm reviewed the annual town meeting (April 4) was postponed indefinitely. He went on to caution that town meeting may be postponed into the next FY (post June 30) and questioned if the town would get a quorum at later date. Annual Town Election

Mr. Wilhelm also spoke on concern with not voting on schedule even though there are no contested races.

Ms. Harrison noted that there are overrides on the ballot and without the information of a town meeting voting was premature.

Ms. Bucco reminded the Board that elections need to be announced 20 days in advance and a Town Meeting must be announced 35 days in advance.

Adjourn - The Selectmen voted unanimously by roll call vote to adjourn at 8:10 pm.

Respectfully Submitted By

Catherine Tinsley

4.6.2020