

BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING

January 11, 2021

Chairman Jonathan R. Eaton called the meeting to order at 6:15 p.m. This meeting was held via ZOOM. Present were Selectmen Gregory B. Bendel, Kevin A. Caira, Gary B. DePalma and Jomarie F. O'Mahony. Also present was Town Manager Jeffrey M. Hull.

A motion was made and duly seconded and by the affirmative roll call vote of all, it was

VOTED: That the Board of Selectmen enter Executive Session for the purpose of discussing collective bargaining strategy with respect to the International Association of Fire Fighters Local 1370, in accordance with Massachusetts General Law Chapter 30A, Section 21(a)3, as an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the negotiating position of the Town as so determined by the Chairman and further to consider Executive Session minutes from October 26, 2020, November 9, 2020, November 23, 2020 and December 14, 2020 in accordance with Massachusetts General Law Chapter 30A, Section 22.

Chairman Jonathan R. Eaton reconvened the meeting at 7:15 p.m. This meeting was held via ZOOM and all votes taken were by roll call in alphabetical order. Present were Selectmen Gregory B. Bendel, Kevin A. Caira, Gary B. DePalma and Jomarie F. O'Mahony. Also present was Town Manager Jeffrey M. Hull.

Chairman Eaton thanked WCTV and IT Director John O'Neil for facilitating the meeting.

Chairman Eaton expressed condolences to the family, friends, colleagues and students of Anne-Marie Norman, a teacher at Wilmington High School, who passed away unexpectedly on December 15 and to the family, friends and former colleagues of Robert P. Palmer, Jr. a long time employee of the Town who, following his retirement, was elected to the Board of Selectmen and then appointed as a member of the Finance Committee. Town Manager Hull offered comments on Mr. Palmer's career with the Town of Wilmington, noting that Mr. Palmer was instrumental in creating the "W" located on Middlesex Avenue across from Town Common.

Chairman Eaton asked to observe a moment of silence for Mrs. Norman and Mr. Palmer.

Chairman Eaton stated that pursuant to Governor Baker's March 12, 2020 order suspending certain provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. Chapter 30A, Section 18, and the Governor's March 15, 2020 order imposing strict limitations on the number of people that may gather in one place, members of the public who wish to watch and listen to the meeting may do so in the following manner: WCTV (Channel 9 – Comcast xFinity; Channel 37 Verizon FiOS, and live stream wctv.org). No in-person attendance of members of the public will be permitted but every effort will be made to ensure that the public can adequately access the proceedings in real time, via technological means. Members of the public who would like to listen to this meeting while in progress may also do so via telephone by dialing 1-646-558-8656 and enter meeting ID 830 3668 5937 then press # and press # again at the next voice prompt. Members of the public attending this meeting virtually will be allowed to make comments if they wish to do so, during the portion of the meeting designated for public comment, by following the steps previously noted then press *9 on their telephone keypad. This will notify the meeting host that the caller wishes to speak. All callers using this feature will be placed in queue in the order they entered the prompt. In the event that, despite our best efforts, we are not able to provide for real-time access, we will post a record of this meeting on the Town's website as soon as we are able.

Chairman Eaton asked meeting participants to rise and he led the pledge of allegiance.

TREASURY WARRANTS

Chairman Eaton asked for a motion to accept the Treasury Warrants. A motion was made by Selectman Bendel, seconded by Selectman DePalma and by the affirmative roll call vote of all, it was

VOTED: That the Board of Selectmen accept Treasury Warrants 25, 25A, 26, 26A, 27, 27A, 28 & 28A.

MINUTES

A motion was made by Selectman DePalma, seconded by Selectman Bendel and by the affirmative roll call vote of all, it was

VOTED: That the Board of Selectmen approve the minutes of their meeting held December 14, 2020 and that all action taken is hereby ratified and confirmed.

SHELLY NEWHOUSE, HEALTH DIRECTOR, AND WILLIAM CAVANAUGH, FIRE CHIEF, RE: UPDATE ON COVID-19

Ms. Newhouse reported that Wilmington is at its highest number of positive cases since the pandemic began. She stated that the number is over 300 and that it is a chore to keep up with the reporting and contact tracing.

Ms. Newhouse stated that there will be a vaccination clinic for first responders on Thursday which she views as a step in the right direction. She expressed her appreciation at the number of first responders who signed up to receive the vaccination.

Ms. Newhouse reviewed the current schedule of the distribution of the vaccine. She expects that Massachusetts will conduct mass vaccination clinics at locations such as Topsfield Fairgrounds and Gillette Stadium. She stated it has been a slow roll out as communities wait for vaccine. Ms. Newhouse stated that Wilmington had the opportunity to be part of a collaborative but noted that she believes it may be easier not to be part of a collaborative. Ms. Newhouse stated that CVS and Lahey Clinic will have vaccines.

Chairman Eaton expressed his appreciation to Ms. Newhouse and her staff. He asked about the response to the request for volunteer nurses. Ms. Newhouse stated that she has a list and noted that the need for their assistance will be ongoing for months.

Chief Cavanaugh recognized that this time of year is cold and flu season and reported that when responding to a patient exhibiting flu systems, precautions are taken as though they are responding to a COVID call.

Chief Cavanaugh recognized the efforts of Lt. David Woods and Deputy Chief Chris Pozzi for their diligence in ensuring the department is supplied with personal protective equipment (PPE). He also recognized the work of Senior Clerk Rebecca Sanderson who has been coordinating the reporting relative to CARES and FEMA. Chief Cavanaugh stated that CARES funding has been extended although eligible costs are more stringent. He noted that reporting is done quarterly.

Chairman Eaton asked if there were any questions or comments from the Board. Selectman DePalma asked whether Ms. Newhouse, or her staff, have received the vaccine. Ms. Newhouse advised that if there are vaccines available on Thursday she will get the vaccine.

Selectman Bendel asked which vaccine would be distributed, Moderna or Pfizer. Ms. Newhouse advised that Wilmington will receive Moderna vaccine and noted that the Pfizer vaccine must be stored at a temperature lower than can be accommodated.

Selectman Bendel asked if Ms. Newhouse will be relaying the number of vaccinations. Ms. Newhouse stated that it is an elaborate system to sign up to receive a vaccination. She stated that she would know how many vaccines Wilmington has distributed.

Selectman DePalma asked if Ms. Newhouse is confident that the vaccines may be secured and was assured that she has the vaccine.

Selectman Caira asked whether the general public will be eligible to receive the vaccine following first responders. Ms. Newhouse advised that the general public will not be eligible to receive the vaccine until the third phase which is expected to be approximately May. Ms. Newhouse reviewed the different phases and which groups of people will be eligible to be vaccinated.

Selectman Caira asked about the necessity of residents needing to sign up and whether they would be able to walk in. Ms. Newhouse advised that walk-ins would be allowed as the exception. She stated that she understands there may be individuals that do not own a computer or are not computer savvy.

Selectman O'Mahony reminded residents of their responsibility to be vigilant, wear face masks, need for social distancing and adhere to gathering guidelines.

COMMUNICATIONS

Town Manager Hull reviewed a letter from Edward L. Sousa to Christine Touma-Conway, Town Clerk, wherein he submitted his resignation from the Board of Registrars.

Town Manager Hull reviewed a memorandum from Christine Touma-Conway, Town Clerk, advising of the vacancy on the Board of Registrars effective December 31, 2020 as a result of the resignation of Edward L. Sousa. She advised that there is a balance as required in the statute, therefore the replacement may be either a Republican or Democrat. She recommended that the Board of Selectmen solicit nominations from the Committee chairs of both the Republican and Democratic Town Committees. Members of the Board asked that a letter thanking Mr. Sousa for his many years of service be sent on their behalf.

Chairman Eaton stated that absent any objection from the Board he would like to take up agenda item 7. A motion was made by Selectman O'Mahony, seconded by Selectman Bendel and by the affirmative roll call vote of all, it was

VOTED: That the Board of Selectmen solicit nominations from both the Republic Town Committee and the Democratic Town Committee.

Town Manager Hull reviewed an email from Hirak Shah advising of his resignation as a member of the Finance Committee. Town Manager Hull reviewed the appointment process and advised the different venues that notice has been made of the vacancy. Letters of interest and/or applications will be accepted until January 29. Members of the Board asked that a letter thanking Mr. Shah for his years of service be sent on their behalf.

Town Manager Hull reviewed correspondence from Jeffrey Nussbaum, Chairman, Board of Library Trustees; Valerie Gingrich, Director of Planning and Conservation; Christine Touma-Conway, Town Clerk, and John O'Neil, Director of Information Technology, responding to Chairman Eaton's request for comments relative to the draft Remote Participation Policy.

Town Manager Hull noted comments from IT Director John O'Neil relative to concerns that conducting meetings in a hybrid manner consisting of in-person and remote attendees may be technologically problematic. He stated that the web camera and microphone cannot be used to capture individual board and/or committee members, only the whole room. Mr. O'Neil advised that this may be an issue when there are in-person presentations that a remote participant needs to see and hear. In addition Mr. O'Neil asked the Board to consider defining "required equipment" as the Town currently has limited equipment that can be loaned. Mr. O'Neil also expressed concern regarding meeting remote accommodations 48 hours before a meeting starts and cited his previous concern relative to limited equipment and personnel.

Town Manager Hull stated that there is concern that the policy will not be able to be fully implemented as intended. He stated that it is his recommendation to defer until the policy may be further reviewed.

Chairman Eaton stated that absent any objection from the Board he would like to take up agenda item 8. A motion was made by Selectman Bendel, seconded by Selectman Cairra and by the affirmative roll call vote of all, it was

VOTED: That the Board of Selectmen take no action relative to adopting a Remote Participation Policy.

Selectman Kevin Cairra reviewed his email relative to the selection process for an Owner's Project Manager for a Town Hall/School Administration Building. Proposals were received from 15 firms and the selection committee chose four firms to interview. The committee reviewed reference information on the four finalists and members ranked their choice. The committee recommended P-Three and Town Manager Hull will contact them to negotiate terms of a contract. Selectman Cairra listed the individuals who served on the committee and noted Town Manager Hull participated in each meeting.

Town Manager Hull reviewed his memorandum regarding the dates the Finance Committee will meet with department heads to review their budget. The meetings will be held via Zoom.

Town Manager Hull reviewed information regarding the 2021 Annual Town Meeting and Fiscal Year 2022 Budget Calendar. He noted that important dates to be aware of include January 25, budget presentation; February 5, the last day to submit a petitioned warrant article; February 8, last day for submission of departmental and committee zoning articles; February 12, last day for submission of departmental and committee articles; March 8, Board of Selectmen sign the Warrant; March 16, Finance Committee/Planning Board Public Hearing; April 24, Town Election and May 1, Annual Town Meeting. Town Manager Hull noted that as a result of action taken at the 2020 Annual Town Meeting, the meeting will begin at 9:00 a.m.

Town Manager Hull reviewed his memorandum regarding the location of Town Meeting. He noted that the general population will not have access to the vaccine until May or June and though it is hoped the holiday surges of COVID-19 cases will abate and cases decline, the pandemic is likely to remain through the summer. Town Manager Hull stated that it is unlikely that the Annual Town Meeting can be safely held in the high school auditorium again this year. Other communities are presumably engaged in planning for their annual town meeting, graduations, etc including renting tents or reserving meeting spaces. Town Manager Hull advised that George Hooper, Public Buildings Superintendent, contacted representatives from the Shriners Auditorium to hold the space for May 1, 2021. They graciously agreed to accommodate the request. Renting a tent once again is an option but he noted due to demand, there may not be any available or the cost will be astronomical. He expressed concern that attendance at an Annual Town Meeting on May 1st under a tent will likely be impacted by the weather which in late April/early May can be quite variable.

Town Manager Hull advised that the Board of Selectmen should make a decision relative to the use of the Shriners no later than their January 25 meeting. Chairman Eaton noted that the facility was being offered at no charge. Selectman DePalma asked what the charge was for the tent used at the Annual Town Meeting held in June of 2020. George Hooper, Superintendent of Public Buildings, stated that the cost was \$11,500, including set up. He advised that the cost was covered under the CARES Act. Selectman Cairra acknowledged that the Shriners is offering use of their facility at no charge but recommended that the Town make a donation to the organization. Selectman O'Mahony stated she was in agreement that the Shriners generosity should be acknowledged. She noted that the Town had schematics from the Annual Town Meeting that can be adapted for use at the Shriners.

Town Manager Hull reviewed his memorandum advising the Board of Selectmen that in a previous memorandum he indicated that Coleen O'Brien, General Manager, Reading Municipal Light Department, would be before the Board to discuss a property exchange. Town Manager Hull stated that he was advised that discussions between RMLD and representatives of the property owner reached an impasse and it was no longer necessary for Ms. O'Brien to appear before the Board at this time.

Town Manager Hull reviewed a letter to Maria Garay-Dodd, Assistant Vice President, Bank Manager, **LowellFive** Bank, expressing appreciation for the generous donation of \$5,000 to the Town of Wilmington. He advised that funds will be used to cover costs associated with the Town's response to COVID-19.

Town Manager Hull reviewed correspondence from Verizon regarding a programming change. Verizon's contract with MGM HD expired on December 31, 2020 and because they were unable to reach an agreement, they are unable to provide MGM HD programming after that date. Customers are advised that similar programming is available on Turner Classic Movies.

BOARD TO CONSIDER REQUEST OF GINNY ALLEN FOR THE INSTALLATION OF A TREE OR BENCH AT WILMINGTON TOWN COMMON IN MEMORY OF ROBERT ALLEN, JR., RETIRED TREE FOREMAN OF THE WILMINGTON DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

Town Manager Hull advised that he asked Jamie Magaldi, Operations Manager, Department of Public Works, to reach out to Ms. Allen to ascertain a clear understanding of her request. A motion was made by Selectman O'Mahony, seconded by Selectman Bendel and by the affirmative roll call vote of all, it was

VOTED: That the Board of Selectmen take no action.

BOARD TO CONSIDER PROCESS TO FILL BOARD OF REGISTRARS VACANCY

This agenda item was taken up under communications.

BOARD TO CONSIDER ADOPTING REMOTE PARTICIPATION POLICY

This agenda item was taken up under communications.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Chairman Eaton asked if there were members of the public wishing to comment and was advised there were not. Chairman Eaton reminded viewers of the process to make public comment and advised that he would wait a moment in the event someone wishes to comment.

Chairman Eaton asked Mr. O’Neil whether there were any callers wishing to speak and after confirming no additional speakers he declared Public Comments closed and continued with the remainder of the agenda.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chairman Eaton provided information on how residents may watch the interviews for the Owner’s Project Manager for Town Hall/ School Administration Building as referenced earlier by Selectman Cairra.

Selectman Bendel wished his colleagues and residents a Happy New Year.

Selectman Bendel encouraged residents to watch the Finance Committee meetings where department budgets will be reviewed. He noted the meetings are a crucial part of the process and he expressed his appreciation to members of the Finance Committee who will devote a great deal of time over the next couple of months. Selectman Bendel also expressed his appreciation to members of WCTV and the Town’s IT Department who work to ensure residents are able to watch remotely.

NEW BUSINESS

Town Manager Hull recognized the extra effort of Mr. O’Neil and the staff of the IT Department in organizing and hosting the various ZOOM sessions. ZOOM meetings have been held day and night.

Town Manager Hull advised that he received communication from Senator Tarr’s office today. The communication was announcing a webinar to be held January 13 from 4 p.m. to 5 p.m. to help residents who may have lost employer sponsored health insurance learn about their health coverage options through the Health Connector. Town Manager Hull advised that the information will be put on the Town’s website.

IMPORTANT DATES

Town Manager Hull reviewed important dates including:

- January 4 -
- January 15 – Curbside Collection of Christmas Trees
- January 18 – Martin Luther King Day – *Town Offices Closed*
- January 25 – Board of Selectmen – Virtual – 7:00 p.m.
Town Manager’s FY 22 Budget Presentation
- January 26 – Finance Committee – Virtual – 7:00 p.m.
FY 22 BUDGET OVERVIEW; REVENUE; GENERAL GOVERNMENT
- January 28 – Finance Committee – Virtual – 7:00 p.m.
PLANNING & CONSERVATION, BUILDING INSPECTOR/BOARD OF APPEALS, BOARD OF HEALTH
- February 2 – Finance Committee – Virtual – 7:00 p.m.
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS
- February 4 – Finance Committee – Virtual – 7:00 p.m.
VETERANS’ SERVICES, ELDERLY SERVICES COMMISSION
- February 5 – Last Day to Submit Petitioned Warrant Articles for Inclusion on the
Warrant for the Annual Town Meeting – May 1, 2021
- February 8 – Board of Selectmen – Virtual – 7:00 p.m.

- February 9 – Finance Committee – Virtual – 7:00 p.m.
PUBLIC BUILDINGS DEPARTMENT
- February 11 – Finance Committee – Virtual – 7:00 p.m.
PUBLIC LIBRARY, RECREATION, HISTORICAL COMMISSION
- February 22 – Board of Selectmen – Virtual – 7:00 p.m.
- February 23 – Finance Committee – Virtual – 7:00 p.m.
POLICE DEPARTMENT, PUBLIC SAFETY CENTRAL DISPATCH, FIRE DEPARTMENT
- February 25 – Finance Committee – Virtual – 7:00 p.m.
TOWN CLERK, INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
- March 2 – Finance Committee – Virtual – 7:00 p.m.
SHAWSHEEN TECHNICAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
- March 4 – Finance Committee – Virtual – 7:00 p.m.
WILMINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

SALUTE TO SERVICE

Chairman Eaton recognized Brooke Green, a Veteran of the US Army and the Massachusetts National Guard. Brooke earned three Army Good Conduct Medals, the Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal and many other awards. Brooke was a 2nd LT when she deployed to Iraq in 2013-2014. Brooke is extremely involved in Wilmington Youth Hockey and has assisted the young players raising funds and items to donate to the Soldiers Home in Chelsea, the VA Hospital in Bedford and also sent items overseas to the men and women currently deployed. Brooke is a volunteer member of the Commission on Disabilities and currently serves as a Lieutenant on the Wilmington Fire Department and I would like to thank Brooke for her service to our country and our community.

A motion was made by Selectman DePalma, seconded by Selectman O'Mahony and by the affirmative roll call vote of all, it was

VOTED: That the Board of Selectmen adjourn.

Meeting adjourned at 8:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Recording Secretary