



Board of Selectmen Emergency Meeting

In accordance with Massachusetts General Law, c. 30A, §20B, the Board of Selectmen shall convene an emergency meeting to confirm the Town's intentions to take certain precautions in response to the evolving public health emergency.

Date of Meeting: Monday, March 16th, 2020
Time: 6:00 PM – 6:48 PM
Members Present: Chair Jim Woods; Selectmen Matt Mecum and Jamie Underwood; April Steward, Town Administrator; and Alison Mack, Administrative Assistant to the Board
Members Not Present: Town Counsel, Stephen Madaus
Dept Heads Present: Police Chief, Anthony Sahagian, Light Department Manager, mark Barakian, Fire Chief, Joe Flanagan,

The meeting commenced at 6:00 PM.

Financial Warrants were signed in agreement.

Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Dennis Costello started off the discussion by stating that we need to make sure residents are aware of how they can get ahold of people during this time period. April mentioned that we will be posting information on our website and leaving information at the Town Hall doors; contact numbers, and email addresses.

Matt Mecum stated that we need a unified statement for residents so that they are getting the correct information from one place and not from multiple sources.

Chief Flanagan asked that if anyone thinks that they may be affected, to call and warn the first responders prior to them showing up; depending on the emergency call of course.

Closing of the Town Hall to the Public:

Jim Wood mentioned that we will be closing the building to the public effective Monday, March 16th – Friday, March 27th. Meetings will continue as usual; the public will not be allowed in the building. There will be a lock box placed out front for anyone dropping off tax bills, excise tax bills or permits.

April mentioned that they are thinking of keeping the double doors at the Town Hall locked but keeping the foyer open, so they are still able to see the board; posted meetings. They can also put other things out there such as permits so residents/contractors can fill them out there and leave them in the drop box.

Jamie asked what was happening with the Police Academy and April responded that they have been designated a critical need and are not shutting down. The training upstairs is

continuing and would like access to the gym upstairs; Parks and Rec reached out to April with questions regarding their use.

Jim Wood mentioned that we are all here and have representatives from multiple departments that are all on board to make sure everyone is safe and know who to call if they need anything.

Dennis Costello wanted to throw out there that public meetings can still happen but asked how they should go about this without allowing the public into the actual meetings and not breaking the open meeting laws. April stated that she has been in discussion with WBAC and also looking into the technology ZOOM. ZOOM would allow people to see physically what is going on, ability to call into the meeting remotely, and ask questions in real time. Matt Mecum was hesitant to say that it will be used immediately and should test it out first.

Jamie mentioned that with the Board of Selectmen' meetings it wouldn't be as drastic of a change but with other boards such as the planning board and having drawings that might want to be shown; it would be hard for the public to take part in the meeting or be able to see the plans in real time.

Bill Manter stated that something that he is dealing with is people making a monetary investment in order to hold a Public Hearing and loosing out on that money they have already invested into having these meetings. He is open to hearing different options that may be available but does have his concerns regarding how a Public Hearing can take place remotely. Postponed the April 6th meeting date; if things return to normal, we can hold a meeting at the end of April; just have to allow the people enough time to prepare the legal notices. Matt suggested that he will come into the office on Wednesday to work on Zoom to see if they can get it going for the meeting on Thursday. We will make it work, figure it out.

Jamie asked to keep the closing dates consistent with everyone; schools. Matt stated that we should close for the 2 weeks and then see where we are at. April stated that if you wanted to, the BOS could designate herself or the Chair to be able to extend it. Matt stated that we want everyone to be safe and we can always extend it; its harder to back off.

Police Chief asked if something changed today as far as when the school was closed till? Matt responded that the Governor stated three weeks. He is good with the two weeks and they can reevaluate where they are at after that. Jamie asked if there would be a drop box available to residents. April responded that depending on what you need to do, you can call the Town Clerks Office.

Chief Sahagian stated that the police station is open 24/7. If they need anything, please feel free to call and let them know of any issues they are having. They are discouraging walk-ins; asking residents to call first. They want to maintain the same level of services and are still available to help with anything needed.

Matt Mecum stated that it is really important that we get a unified statement out to the residents. Light Department Manager, Mark Barakian stated that residents can call them if they need anything; make an appointment first and consider calling prior to coming in.

April mentioned to the board that she provided them with a document of what surrounding towns have done regarding the COVID-19 relief; varies greatly and things are changing daily. The curve of spreading the virus will not flatten if people do not follow the social distancing guidelines.

April suggested closing Town Buildings to the Public. Matt asked that the statement on the building closure and be separate from the statement the BOS releases.

Matt Mecum made a motion that we close the Town Municipal Office Building to the public effective March 16th – March 27th, 2020. Jamie Underwood seconded. Voted all in favor.

Meals on Wheels:

- Still available. Please call if you are sick. They will drop off food outside of your home.

Excise Taxes are Due:

Matts concerned that if people are unable to pay their excise taxes because they cannot leave their house, please call the Treasurer of Collectors Office and let her know if you are in that sort of situation.

Jamie Underwood made a motion to accept the press release for closing Town Hall closure as written, Matt Mecum seconded. Voted all in favor.

Matt Mecum made a motion to accept the Coronavirus for Employee Safety document and the Staying Home and Sending employees home document, Jamie Underwood seconded. Voted all in favor.

Parks and Recreation and Town sports:

April stated that the Parks and Recreation Coordinator was asking if Town Sports need to be pushed back. Matt responded that a lot of leagues have handled that themselves; soccer and lacrosse have moved, and baseball and softball is the same.

April mentioned that the Police Academy is open, and she is going to send an email to the Director Joanne that they are allowed to use the gym. Jamie mentioned that the Boylston Public Library is closed completely and will deliver books if you want.

Matt asked if there was anything that the Board of Selectmen could do to help out the Department Heads; he mentioned to please reach out if anything is needed. He also asked them if they have everything, they need to stay safe. Joe mentioned that they can handle about 10 patients right now, after that, we need more help. On Ambulance calls, Police will stay outside while EMS goes in and determines if the police need to come inside. Dispatchers have a questionnaire that will triage the calls for us.

Matt mentioned that one thing residents should take away from this meeting is to not hesitate to call. Just because we are closed to the public doesn't mean that we are not available to help. He also brought up that some small businesses are still open so please feel free to order food to go, buy gift cards, or do whatever you can to support them.

April thanked everyone for coming out tonight on such short notice.

At 6:48 PM, Jamie Underwood made a motion to adjourn, Matt Mecum seconded. Voted all in favor.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:48 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Alison Mack, Assistant to the Board of Selectmen

Meeting Materials

Agenda

Order: Town Building Closure

Police Chief Packet

On File in The Board Of Selectmen's Office

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