



## Board of Selectmen

Date of Meeting: Monday, April 6th, 2020  
Time: 6:30 PM – 7:47 PM  
Members Present: Chair Jim Woods; Selectmen Matt Mecum and Jamie Underwood; April Steward, Town Administrator; Assistant Town Counsel, Brian Falk and Alison Mack, Administrative Assistant to the Board  
Not Present: Town Counsel, Stephen Madaus

The meeting commenced at 6:30 PM.

Financial Warrants were signed in agreement.

Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

\*Pursuant to Governor Baker's March 12, 2020 Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A, §18, and the Governor's March 15, 2020 Order imposing strict limitation on the number of people that may gather in one place, this meeting of the Boylston Board of Selectmen will be conducted via remote participation. 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.

The meeting will be livestreamed from the Zoom Application:  
[https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_g11BVEfRFSaA\\_wPBHWBiA](https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_g11BVEfRFSaA_wPBHWBiA)

### *Confirming Member Access:*

April Steward, Town Administrator recited the following:

Members, when I call your name, please respond in the affirmative.

- Jim Wood: Yes
- Jamie Underwood: Yes
- Matthew Mecum: Yes

Staff, when I call your name, please respond in the affirmative.

- Assistant Town Counsel, Brian Falk: Yes
- Alison Mack: Yes

### *Introduction:*

Jim Wood started off the meeting by stating the following: Good evening everyone. This Open Meeting of the Board of Selectmen is being conducted remotely consistent with Governor Baker's Executive Order of March 12, 2020, due to the current State of Emergency in the Commonwealth due to the outbreak of the "COVID-19 Virus."

In order to mitigate the transmission of the COVID-19 Virus, we have been advised and directed by the Commonwealth to suspend public gatherings, and as such, the Governor's Order suspends the requirement of the Open Meeting Law to have all meetings in a publicly accessible *physical* location. Further, all members of public bodies are allowed and encouraged to participate remotely.

The Order, which you can find posted with agenda materials for this meeting allows public bodies to meet entirely remotely so long as reasonable public access is afforded so that the public can follow along with the deliberations of the meeting. Ensuring public access does not ensure public participation unless such participation is required by law. This meeting will feature public comment.

For this meeting, the Board of Selectmen is convening by video conference via Zoom App as posted on the Town's Website identifying how the public may join. Please note that this meeting is being recorded, and that some attendees are participating by video conference. Accordingly, please be aware that other folks may be able to see you, and that take care not to "screen share" your computer. Anything that you broadcast may be captured by the recording.

#### Meeting Materials

All supporting materials that have been provided members of this body are available on the Town's website unless otherwise noted. The public is encouraged to follow along using the posted agenda unless The Chair notes otherwise.

#### Meeting Business Ground Rules (Jim Wood)

We are now turning to the first item on the agenda. Before we do so, permit me to cover some ground rules for effective and clear conduct of our business and to ensure accurate meeting minutes.

- I will introduce each speaker on the agenda. After they conclude their remarks, the Chair will go down the line of Members, inviting each by name to provide any comment, questions, or motions. Please hold until your name is called. Further,
  - Please remember to mute your phone or computer when you are not speaking;
  - Please remember to speak clearly and in a way that helps generate accurate minutes
- For any response, please wait until the Chair yields the floor to you and state your name before speaking.
- If members wish to engage in colloquy with other members, please do so through the Chair, taking care to identify yourself.

#### For Items with Public Comment:

After members have spoken, the Chair will afford public comment as follows:

- The Chair will first ask members of the public who wish to speak to identify their names and addresses only;
- Once the Chair has a list of all public commentators, I will call on each by name and afford 3 minutes for any comments.
- Finally, each vote taken in this meeting will be conducted by roll call vote.

**Selectmen's Meeting Minutes:** The minutes of 03/09/2020 were presented.

*Matt Mecum made a motion to approve the meeting minutes for 03/09/2020. Jamie Underwood seconded. Voted all in favor. Roll Call Vote: Jim: Yes, Matt: Yes, Jamie: Yes*

## **Town Administrators Report:**

1. *Tower Hill:* If you recall, Tower Hill representatives came in a few months ago to discuss parking lot expansion, ADA accessibility to the Visitor Center and a redesign to the front entrance. It looks like they are abandoning any entranceway changes onto French Drive now “due to budget issues”. Would the board like to ask Tower Hill to come in and discuss concerns about traffic issues on French Drive with the increased parking lot capacity? Jim Woods stated yes. Jamie Underwood and Matt Mecum agreed. April stated that she will send out an invite for them to come in.
2. *Charter Internet:* Charter is offering a 60-day free internet package to new 6-12 and college student households during the COVID-19 crisis. If you are eligible and would like to enroll, please call 1-844-488-8395.
3. *MassDot project #608492:* MassDOT Project #608492 – Shrewsbury – Boylston: Resurfacing and Related Work on Route 70 has been deactivated. Some sections of Route 70 have already been paved under other statewide projects. Compared to needs in other parts of the state, this section of road remains in decent condition and has not been deemed necessary for resurfacing at this time. MassDOT will continue to monitor the roadway for future projects.
4. *Flagg Estate and Police Department Projects:* Our Facilities Technician is staying busy with improvements to the Police Station and to the Flagg Estate. I have included drawings for you to see the work he is currently undertaking. Improvements on File in the BOS Office.
5. *FedEx Appraisal:* The Board of Assessors is coming along with securing a firm to conduct a second appraisal on the FedEx Building. I believe they are voting on which firm they are going to go forward with.
6. *Annual Town Meeting and Town Elections:* As you are well aware, the COVID-19 pandemic is causing closures and delays throughout the Commonwealth. I recommend that the Board vote to push back the dates of our ATM and Elections to either Tuesday, June 2<sup>nd</sup> and Monday June 8<sup>th</sup>, or Monday, June 15<sup>th</sup> and Monday, June 22<sup>nd</sup>.
  - a. – After speaking with Town Counsel, we don’t actually have to put a date if we don’t want to right now. We can just say that we are going to put it out for a date to be determined., or we can set a date.
    - i. Jim stated that a certain date might be better but due to the circumstances it might be better to wait.
    - ii. Matt asked if there is a certain amount of notice that must be given.
      1. April responded that for the Annual Town Meeting – 2 sabbaths (Sundays prior to the Annual Town Meeting)
      2. Election:
        - a. Jamie brought up a point that if we set a date and then Governor Baker changes things, we have to change it again. He suggested that we keep it open ended until the next meeting; Jim agreed.
        - b. Assistant Town Counsel, Brian Falk stated that the Special Legislation that allows a Town to postpone the Town Election, there is a requirement that you can’t do it inside the 20 days before the currently schedule Town Election. You

would have to decide to postpone the Election, not later than 20 days before May 11<sup>th</sup>.

- c. Brian Falk stated that you must hold the Election prior to June 30<sup>th</sup>.
  - d. Bill that was passed on last Friday allows for Town Meetings to be held later than June 30<sup>th</sup>.
- iii. Matt stated that he would like to have the Annual Town Meeting before the Election.

*Jamie Underwood made a motion to postpone the Annual Town Meeting and Town Elections to a date to be determined at our next meeting, Matt Mecum seconded. Voted all in favor. Roll call vote: Matt: Yes, Jamie: Yes and Jim: Yes.*

*Absentee Voting:* Jim suggested waiting until the day has been set.

7. *Covid-19 is causing closures and elections:* The current health crisis continues to impact the Commonwealth. The board had previously voted to close downtown buildings until March 30<sup>th</sup>. I would like to recommend that the board vote to extend the closure of town buildings until the statewide stay at home order has been lifted. At this time, the Town Hall remains closed to visitors/residents but is open for business, with the exception of the Police Department. We have employees distancing themselves but working in most departments. Our DPW department has split their staff into two rotating groups. Town Hall functions are continuing, including Health, Building, Planning, Zoning, and Conservation. Payments and Plans are accommodated with a drop box located to the right of the front doors of the entrance to the Town Hall. Visitors/residents have access to the foyer of Town Hall as well where they can meet with town hall employees by appointment and drop off/pick up materials as necessary. Social distancing remains in place at all locations. I would recommend that the board take a look at the Telecommuting Policy I drafted to have in place in case we have to decide to close Town Hall for a period of time.

*Matt Mecum made a motion to continue to close the Town Hall to the public through the Statewide Stay at Home Order, currently May 4<sup>th</sup>. Jamie Underwood seconded. Voted all in Favor: Roll Call vote: Matt: Yes, Jamie: Yes, and Jim: Yes.*

*Other Departments:*

- Town Hall is open and running business as usual; closed to the public until May 4
  - Drop Box is located outside of the Town Hall to the right of the front door
- Police Department is not closed to the public
- DPW: staff is rotating shifts; 2 different shifts

*Telecommuting:*

April stated that right now, the way that the rooms are set up, employees can close the door and not interact with each other

- Employees who work in the same office together can work opposite shifts
- Hoping that we do not have to telecommute

- Town Clerk, Treasurer and Building Department cannot do everything online (Bills, Taxes, Notarization of documents)

Jamie Underwood asked what different options to work from home were, and April responded that she has been looking at LogMeIn, however the contact has not gotten back to her from last week.

Matt stated that we can wait until the next meeting to see how things are going and, in the meantime, gather the information needed if we do need to get go to Telecommuting.

### **Housing Choice Designation and Grant Discussion: Dr. Richard Baker**

Boylston qualifies for the Housing Choice Application; we have a chance to renew it. The designation really just gives us the opportunity to apply for a grant. Last cycle we did get our grant funded; Intersection traffic study for Sewell Street Intersections.

1. Planning Board thinking it's a good idea to renew the application
  - a. One additional requirement on this cycle: every town is supposed to have done an ADA self-value transition plan; In order to qualify for the Housing Choice Designation and Grant Discussion.
    - i. April stated that she can check and see if they have anything on file
    - ii. Dr. Baker stated that it is quite possible that we already have this plan
    - iii. Self-Evaluation and Transition Plan: all you have to do is agree to do it within the next 5 years if we have not already done it.

Jim Woods stated that it's definitely worth doing. Last one we received \$83,000. Due to the Coronavirus, they have pushed everything back. It's a two-year grant cycle so if you applied the first year, you can not apply the second year.

- Dr. Baker stated that we would need Jim's signature on the paperwork and the rest is ready to
- Deadline had been pushed to May 8<sup>th</sup>.

*Matt Mecum made a motion that we apply for a re-designation of the housing choice grant, Jamie Underwood seconded. Voted all in favor; Roll Call vote: Jamie: Yes, Matt: Yes, and Jim: Yes*

Dr Baker stated that Nina dropped off paperwork with April and asked if April could get that sent over to him after Jim signs it. April stated that she will get that right over to him.

#### *Leftover Grant Money:*

Dr. Baker asked the board if they had any thoughts on what they should be doing with the \$13,000 of unspent grant funds for the Sewell Street Intersections. The board, after learning the potential for the 40-B project on the corner of South Sewell, the board was concerned about moving forward with any kind of traffic improvements on South Sewell, not knowing what was going to happen with that apartment development. Since the board has no further information on that we recommended that we not move forward with the South Sewell intersection. Jim Woods asked if there is a deadline and Dr. Baker responded that it has to be spent by the end of the fiscal year. Dr. Baker had suggested to ask WSP to consider how much the development at South Sewell would affect the North Sewell improvements. They said they could do that for \$3,500; can we move

forward with this? If we decide to move forward with Sewell, we could use the remaining \$10,000 to write the bids and so forth. Even if it's not going to be done this year, the big books are pretty standard and we would have them in our back pocket so if we decide to move on North Sewell, everything would be ready.

Jamie stated that he believes it is a good price for the survey. Dr. Baker said that they could get that in within two to three weeks and then decide what to do with the \$10,000; a concept design for South Sewell Intersection if the apartments were built. Matt stated that having that information would probably be a good thing for us. Dr Baker asked if it was okay to pass along that the Board is enthusiastic about having the \$3,500.00 spent on seeing how the North Sewell intersection and open to the idea of having them look at potential alternations of South Sewell in the event that the apartments would be built. Jim, Jamie and Matt all agreed that they are okay with that.

Dr. Baker ended with stating we will get our town designated as a Housing Choice Community!

### **Boylston Public Library Foundation:**

*Jamie Underwood made a motion to approve the \$1,326 donation for purchasing of new seating from the Boylston Public Library Foundation, Matt Mecum seconded. Voted all in favor. Roll call Vote: Matt: yes, Jim: Yes and Jamie: Yes.*

### **Federal Disaster Declaration for COVID-19:**

Dennis Costello, BOH Agent joined the meeting to give a quick update as to what is going on in Boylston.

- 5 positive reported cases in Town

#### *Reporting COVID-19*

- Public Health Nurse calls Dennis and gives him a number and address
- Address is given to Police Dispatch
- Number is given to Chairman of BOH, BOH Office to update their webpage, and Town Administrator

Right now the office is checking emails and voicemails to make sure we do not miss anything; doing good at keeping up with everything. To date the BOH has received \$5,000 for help; Currently on another phone call to try and get more money for the town.

#### *Declaration of Emergency:*

Declaration paperwork in front of you; After speaking with Town Counsel and a few people from the BOH department, Dennis does not believe at this point the Declaration is necessary for the Town of Boylston.

Jim Wood asked if this was the feeling from the BOH in general? Dennis responded that the BOH does question if it is needed for the future, if funding does become available.

April stated that some towns are moving to make an emergency declaration and that was before the State and Federal level Emergency occurred; now that those have been put in place it doesn't seem to be as big of a need.

Brian Falk stated that there is no harm in doing it and that there could be a possibility of it helping the town out in the future. Dennis' recommendation would be to take the Declaration of Emergency off of the table; but if the BOS does believe that it will help us out in the future, he is okay with it. Dennis doesn't want to make a point that we need to do this in order to get through the emergency. Matt stated that his only hesitation on not doing it is that he doesn't want the town to miss out on funding if there is some. Jim Wood asked if they should table this until the next meeting to see what direction this takes. Matt, Jim and Jamie agreed to table this topic.

Matt asked Dennis what is covered by the funding and Dennis stated he doesn't know; they are having discussions on that currently; looks like that is going more towards public health nursing. They are not sure what that bill is going to look like, so they have not finished looking at the funding mechanisms.

#### **Review of Draft Warrant:**

Skipping over this topic until a future date. Waiting to see how this is all going to pan out so we can have an accurate budget.

#### **Memorial Day Discussion:**

Jim Wood stated that it looks like we should postpone the Memorial Day Parade. Jamie stated that the school has cancelled all their graduations and other activities. Matt asked if he felt they should cancel or just postpone, and Jim responded postpone. He would like to see it happen in August/September. Matt stated that this is something we should reach out to the Memorial Day Committee about and ask their thoughts; April stated she would reach out to see what they are thinking. April stated some concerns she has is that the committee tends to plan this event a year in advance so it may be hard to postpone it, they may rather cancel due to the tight timeframe.

*Jamie Underwood made a motion to postpone the Memorial Day Parade to a future date to be discussed with the Memorial Day Committee, Matt seconded. Roll Call vote: Jim: Yes, Matt: Yes, and Jamie: Yes.*

#### **Comments from Residents:**

Mark Antilla, Resident, asked how this is going to affect all the other board meetings coming up that he has interest in. Jim Wood stated that it is probably going to be very similar as to what is happening now. Mark stated that he and others have ongoing questions from the Compass Pointe Community and wants to know what the plan is for other departments who have meetings. April stated that posting requirements will remain the same. This may be the way we have to conduct town business for the next 4-8 weeks; each department is required to follow the same requirements.

#### **Contract Bid:**

Matt asked April if we are good to go on the paving contract bid. April stated that she believes we are good to go. Matt stated that he doesn't want to lose sight of it with everything going on, he would like to keep moving forward.

At 7:47 PM Matt Mecum made a motion to adjourn, Jamie Underwood seconded. Voted all in favor. Roll call vote: Jim: Yes, Jamie: Yes, Matt: Yes.

The meeting adjourned at 7:47 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Alison Mack

Administrative Assistant to the Board of Selectmen and TA

### **Meeting Materials**

Agenda	On File in The Board Of Selectmen's Office
Town Administrator's Report	On File in The Board Of Selectmen's Office
Remote participation Meeting Checklist	On File in The Board Of Selectmen's Office
TOB Declaration of Emergency	On File in The Board Of Selectmen's Office
Meeting Minutes 03/09/2020	On File in The Board Of Selectmen's Office
Housing Choice Application	On File in The Board Of Selectmen's Office