

**Minutes of Regular Meeting
Select Board
Tuesday, March 11, 2020
Select Board's Meeting Room – Town Hall
Called to Order at 7:00 p.m.**

Present were Board members Laurie Bent, Harvey Boshart, and Christopher Houston, Chair. Also present were Assistant Town Manager/Human Resources Director Lisa Yanakakis and Recording Secretary Kara Fleming. Videographer – James Tremble, Weston Media Center

Item 1 – Resident Comments

Ms. Terry Eastman of Conant Road asked the Board to consider postponing the April Special Town Meeting in light of the novel coronavirus outbreak and the state's recommendation to avoid large crowds. Mr. Houston said the situation is being closely monitored and the Board will make a decision when more information becomes available due to the rapidly evolving situation.

Item 2 – COVID-19 Update

Ms. Lauren Goldberg, Town Counsel

Mr. Houston said the schools are handling the situation well and the Board will be assessing the town side of the situation. Mr. Gaumond said he has been meeting with the Local Emergency Management team and in light of positive cases in Weston, he and Ms. Yanakakis are reviewing emergency plans for town government to continue public operations and be safe. Ms. Bent asked since Town Hall and other municipal buildings are still open if there is a sanitizing protocol in place. Mr. Gaumond said there is.

Ms. Goldberg informed the Board of its options for the April Special Town Meeting, as well as the May Annual Town Meeting and added that the public health concern is rapidly changing on a daily basis, so municipal relief could be made available. She added that emergency legislation is currently being drafted in the event the public health concerns worsen. Ms. Goldberg then explained the protocol for calling an emergency meeting of the Select Board. Ms. Davenport, Town Clerk, asked if there has been any mention of how Annual Town Elections should be handled, since there is no leeway for postponement. Ms. Goldberg said the state is aware of it being an issue and is hoping the Secretary of State can get some legislation in place to provide some flexibility for municipalities.

Mr. Houston said it is premature to make any decisions at this meeting, but the Board is taking the situation seriously. Ms. Goldberg added that since the Governor has declared a state of emergency, it will allow the Board room to plan for the future.

Item 3 – Property Tax Deferral Recommendations

Susan Kelley, Finance Director

Ms. Kelley said she reviewed the income eligibility limits of the Board's annual consideration and recommends increasing the income eligibility limit from the current \$82,720 to \$90,650, which is the moderate-income limit used for Community Preservation Act affordable housing eligibility criteria. It was the Board's decision last year to follow this income limit in determining the property tax deferral income limit. Ms. Kelley also recommended keeping with the 4 percent interest rate again this year. Mr. Houston

asked the Board if this item could be moved to the consent agenda for next year, since the income limit will be following that of the Community Preservation Act's criteria. The Board agreed to this request.

MOTION: Ms. Bent moved to establish an income eligibility limit of \$90,650 for the fiscal year 2021 property tax deferral program, as permitted under Chapter 421 of the Acts of 2004; and further, moved to keep the interest rate for all deferrals initiated in fiscal 2021 at 4 percent. 2nd by Mr. Boshart. **Approved unanimously**

Item 4 – Meet with Moderator, Town Counsel, and Town Clerk for April 6, 2020 Special Town Meeting

Doug Gillespie, Moderator, and Rip Hastings, Acting Moderator

Mr. Gillespie said he will call the Special Town Meeting to order but since the proceedings will be dealing with a former 40B development, he will seek consent for Mr. Hastings to serve as an acting moderator to avoid any appearance of a conflict of interest. Ms. Davenport asked if she should be ordering the electronic handsets for this Town Meeting. Mr. Houston said he is not anticipating a large crowd for this session and there is a potential to save some money, but the decision is up to the Moderator. Both Mr. Gillespie and Mr. Hastings said it will be cumbersome using placards in the event of a standing count but it could be managed in the Town Hall Auditorium. Ms. Bent thought it was not prudent to order the handsets given the uncertainty of the meeting occurring on the 6th.

Item 5 – Street Opening Request at 14 Pollywog Lane

Tom Selldorff

The Board discussed past requests and reviewed a map showing the house in question is located at the end of a cul-de-sac. After additional discussion and consideration of the recent paving of the roadway, the Board granted the request.

MOTION: Mr. Boshart moved to grant the street opening request at 14 Pollywog Lane subject to conditions as determined by the Public Works Director. 2nd by Ms. Bent. **Approved unanimously**

Item 6 – Review Draft of the Annual Town Meeting Warrant

Lauren Goldberg, Town Counsel

The Board reviewed the order of the articles as they should appear in the warrant and which items could be bundled into the consent agenda due to the routine nature of or the past non-opposition to the articles. They also discussed the Proposition 2-1/2 question as it should appear on the ballot and if items should be separated out, per the request of the resident who wished to put forth a Citizens' Petition on this matter. Mr. Gaumond indicated opportunities to use free cash for the information systems improvements, as well as moving the southside drainage project into capital improvements like paving operation; these moves would then not require these items to be included in the debt exclusion question. Additional discussion continued but no decision was made.

The Select Board discussed the Citizens' Petition regarding the Safe Community Act/Welcoming Weston and its impact to the Police Department. Ms. Goldberg said if this were to pass by Town Meeting, it would be as advisory only since the Select Board and Police Chief set the policing policies for the town. Mr. Gaumond added that Chief Goulding has reviewed it and agreed that the language is not applicable to this municipality.

Lastly, Mr. Houston asked the Board if it should add an article to the warrant seeking a reduction to the quorum count for Town Meeting. Mr. Boshart asked for time to think on that and Ms. Bent agreed noting the growing concern of the novel coronavirus may highlight the need to reduce that number.

Consent Agenda

MOTION: Mr. Boshart moved to approve the consent agenda as follows:

Approve minutes from the following Select Board meetings: September 24, 2019, regular session; February 11, 2020, regular session; February 25, 2020, regular session; and February 27, 2020, regular session.

Approve Select Board 2019 Annual Report.

Approve a request from the Conservation Department to accept a donation of \$100 from Anna Melone Pollack, to be applied to the Miscellaneous Gift Account.

Approve a request from the Council on Aging to accept a gift of \$100 from Michael Dowd, to be applied to the Miscellaneous Gift Account.

Approve a request from the Weston Public Library to accept a donation of \$150 from Joel and Karen Sirkin, to be applied to the Library General Purposes Fund.

Approve request for permit from The National Brain Tumor Society for the 26th Annual Boston Brain Tumor Ride through Weston on Sunday, May 17, 2020 between the hours of 7:45 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. Approximately 500 riders are expected to participate in this event. Request for permit has been approved by Police and Fire departments and Public Works, subject to conditions. The Police Department will work with the organizer.

Approve a request from the Weston High School Student Council for a permit to occupy Town House Road during Spring Fling being held on the Town Green on Saturday, May 16, 2020, with a rain date of Sunday, May 17, 2020 between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m.

Accept the resignation of Laura Perry from the Tree Advisory Group.

2nd by Ms. Bent. **Approved unanimously**

Item 7 - Town Manager Review

This item was passed over.

Meeting adjourned at 9:20 p.m.

Laurie A. Bent
Clerk

Note: A copy of all documents, explanatory material, and exhibits presented to and used by the Select Board as part of this meeting are attached to the approved minutes.