

**Minutes of Emergency Meeting  
Select Board  
Tuesday, March 17, 2020  
Remote Online Meeting (Zoom ID 745-644-2881)  
Called to Order at 6:00 p.m.**

Remotely participating 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.

Mr. Houston called the remote meeting to order and read the following:

*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 concerning imposition on strict limitations on the number of people that may gather in one place, meetings in the Town of Weston will be conducted via remote participation to the greatest extent possible. We will strive to provide access to such meetings via a link to call in, or other similar option. In the event we are unable to accommodate the same, despite best efforts, we will post recorded sessions of the meeting as soon as possible following the same. 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.*

**Item 1 – Consider Declaring a State of Emergency for Weston**

Mr. Gaumond explained to the Board that many municipalities are beginning to declare a local state of emergency following the Governor's declaration in the wake of the novel coronavirus outbreak in Massachusetts. He explained the declaration will give the town some flexibility and place it in a favorable position with any type of assistance or emergency funding from the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency and/or the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the action can be removed once the public health emergency resolves. The Select Board discussed the benefits of the declaration along with any potential negative consequences of taking such an action.

**MOTION:** Mr. Houston moved that in light of the rapidly evolving instances of COVID-19 in the Commonwealth and the burdens it will place on local government, that the Select Board vote to adopt the following declaration of emergency:

Declaration of Emergency – COVID-19

WHEREAS, the 2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) is a highly contagious and potentially fatal respiratory disease, the prevalence of which is increasing rapidly throughout the world, inclusive of the United States and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts; and

WHEREAS, on March 11, 2020 the World Health Organization designated the COVID-19 outbreak a Pandemic Health Emergency; and

WHEREAS, on March 10, 2020, the Governor of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts issued a Declaration of a State of Emergency to Respond to COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, on March 13, 2020, the President of the United States announced a national declaration of emergency; and

WHEREAS, on March 15, 2020, Governor Baker announced emergency actions to respond to the evolving COVID-19 public health emergency impacting the Commonwealth, including prohibitions on public gatherings of twenty-five or more people and prohibiting on-premises consumption of food or drink at bars and restaurants from March 17, 2020 until April 6, 2020, as well as suspension of elementary and secondary school educational operations from March 17, 2020 until April 6, 2020; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Selectmen and the Board of Health, following consultation with the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, has determined that COVID-19 presents a major disaster which poses an immediate threat to public health, safety, and general welfare of people residing both within and outside of the Town of Weston; and

WHEREAS, the Weston Select Board and its Board of Health have determined that immediate public action is needed in order to prevent or minimize the spread of COVID-19 by and among the people of Weston; and

WHEREAS, it is critical to take additional steps to prepare for, respond to, and mitigate the spread of COVID-19 to protect the health and welfare of the people of Weston; and

WHEREAS, declaring a state of emergency will facilitate and expedite the use of resources to protect persons from the impacts of COVID-19, including but not limited to emergency expenditures pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 44, Section 31 and limitations on operating hours and access to public buildings; and

WHEREAS, the Select Board and Board of Health recommended that a state of emergency be declared in the town of Weston.

NOW THEREFORE, we, the Select Board and the Board of Health of the Town of Weston, Massachusetts, hereby declare that as of today, March 18, 2020, a state of emergency exists in the Town of Weston. This declaration of emergency shall remain in effect until further notice is given, pursuant to our judgment that the conditions leading to this declaration no longer exist.

2<sup>nd</sup> by Ms. Bent.

**Roll call vote:** Mr. Boshart, Ms. Bent and Mr. Houston voted in the affirmative. **Approved unanimously**

## **Item 2 – Discussion of Upcoming Town Meetings**

Mr. Houston said it was clear the April 6<sup>th</sup> Special Town Meeting will not be occurring and asked if the vote could be rescinded. Mr. Gaumont said yes since the Warrant has not yet been posted and the item could be added to the Annual Town Meeting, if that were to occur in May.

The Board turned its discussion to the Governor's allowance to hold government meetings online noting that this is typically a busy time for several boards and committees as the Town prepares for Annual Town Meeting. The Board discussed if public bodies should continue business as usual or if there should be a recess in activity and reassess in a few weeks when there may be more clarity on the status of the public health emergency. The Board ultimately decided that it should be left to the comfort level of the individual committees for the time being.

**MOTION:** Mr. Houston moved to rescind the vote from February 27, 2020 to call a Special Town Meeting for April 6, 2020. 2<sup>nd</sup> by Mr. Boshart

**Roll call vote:** Ms. Bent, Mr. Boshart and Mr. Houston voted in the affirmative. **Approved unanimously**

**MOTION:** Mr. Houston moved to adjourn the meeting. 2<sup>nd</sup> by Ms. Bent.

**Roll call vote:** Mr. Boshart, Ms. Bent and Mr. Houston voted in the affirmative

**Meeting adjourned at 6:56 p.m.**

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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.*