

Meeting of the Waterbury Select Board
April 6th, 2020
28 North Main Street

Present (either in person or by telephone): C. Viens, M. Frier, M. Bard, K. Martin and N. Fish, Select Board; W. Shepeluk, Municipal Manager; S. Lotspeich, Community Planner; B. Farr, Emergency Management Director and C. Lawrence, Town Clerk.

Public: Grant Eckfeldt and Michael Frank.

The meeting was called to order at 7:00pm.

APPROVE AGENDA

W. Shepeluk stated that the topic under Select Board items should be to consider the appointment of and Acting Zoning Administrator as opposed to interim. M. Frier made a motion to approve the agenda as amended. The motion was seconded by K. Martin and passed unanimously.

CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS

N. Fish made a motion to approve the consent agenda items including the minutes of the March 16th and March 30th meetings, and a liquor license for the Waterbury American Legion. The motion was seconded by K. Martin and passed unanimously.

PUBLIC

G. Eckfeldt asked how many cases of COVID-19 there are in Waterbury. B. Farr responded that there are 15 cases in Washington County. W. Shepeluk said the only information the Town receives is from the State Department of Health. G. Eckfeldt responded that it is concerning that the concentration in Waterbury is not known. B. Farr responded that personal information is not currently disclosed. G. Eckfeldt asked if residential construction is considered essential. C. Viens stated that his understanding is that this function is not considered essential. M. Bard stated that some projects will be considered essential if related to the structure of the residence such as roofing or septic systems.

M. Frank stated that the School Board will be filling the Waterbury vacancy on Wednesday. M. Bard expressed concern about the containment of costs. He asked for M. Frank's opinion on the school tax rate. M. Frank stated he is favor of reducing the tax rate and showing fiscal responsibility while maintaining the level of education. M. Frank stated that James Grace resigned and two applications were submitted to fill the vacancy. The vacancy will be filled by the School Board and the term will run until the next Town Meeting. M. Frank let the Board know how they could join the meeting Wednesday if they so choose. W. Shepeluk asked if the Board had support for any particular candidate. C. Viens stated that individual members of the Board could offer their own opinion as the Board did not have the opportunity to talk with the second candidate.

SELECT BOARD ITEMS

Appointment of an Acting Zoning Administrator

W. Shepeluk previously distributed a policy regarding appointing an Acting Zoning Administrator. The current Zoning Administrator will be laid off at the end of the week. The Acting Zoning Administrator will have full authority. The Planning Commission met by phone earlier today and nominated S. Lotspeich as acting Zoning Administrator who will act in the physical absence of the Zoning Administrator. The appointment will be in effect until rescinded. M. Bard asked S. Lotspeich if he can perform both the Zoning Administrator and Planning duties. S. Lotspeich responded in the affirmative, and stated that zoning issues will take priority in the near term. M. Bard made motion to approve the policy regarding the Acting Zoning Administrator. The motion was seconded by M. Frier and passed unanimously. N. Fish made a motion to appoint S. Lotspeich as the Acting Zoning Administrator. The motion was second by M. Bard and passed unanimously.

Discussion about Local News Outlet

Lisa Loomis of the Valley Reporter joined the meeting. She stated that the Valley Reporter would like to ramp up coverage of Waterbury news. K. Martin had previously expressed concern that the Waterbury Record was going out of business. She started a conversation on Front Porch Forum as to how Waterbury news could be disseminated. K. Martin has been in contact with several people to brainstorm how to get Waterbury news out to the public. M. Bard asked about distribution of the Valley Reporter to Waterbury residents. L. Loomis stated that the paper has newsstand presence and subscriptions. The Reporter is committed to providing coverage, including extensive online coverage. K. Martin stated that Waterbury news will be covered to the extent there is space in the paper. This will depend on the amount of Valley news and advertisements.

MANAGER'S ITEMS

Approve Local Emergency Management Plan

W. Shepeluk stated that the Plan is due for re-approval. B. Farr has updated the Plan and explained that the Plan is required to be adopted each year by May 1st. The Town will maintain eligibility of FEMA funds through the adoption of the Plan. M. Bard made a motion to approve the Local Emergency Management Plan dated April 6, 2020 for the Town of Waterbury for the ensuing year. The motion was seconded K. Martin. M. Bard asked why a member of the Select Board was not included in the stakeholder group. B. Farr reported that this group was based on people that were involved in exercises. B. Farr stated that M. Bard can be included next year.

B. Farr updated the Board on the weekly conference call on the COVID-19 crisis with various interested parties within the community. The calls have expanded to people that are interested and may express specific needs. The delay of the Main Street reconstruction project was discussed and the impact to the downtown businesses. There may be assistance available through organizations like the Small Business Administration.

Lending Concept for Sick Time

W. Shepeluk stated that he wanted to have a conceptual discussion this evening and was not expecting a motion. W. Shepeluk explained that now that some employees have been laid off, it has to be considered how the employee will make up their hours, through either leave time or unemployment compensation. He does not want employees to use up all of their sick time during this crisis, and has thought about creating a sick bank where some employees can give time and some can use the time. W. Shepeluk explained a spreadsheet that was distributed to the Board earlier in the day. The Town carries a very heavy liability in its book related to sick time. The concept would allow those employees that are eligible to give of their sick time and get paid for 20th of it with a cap of \$2,500.

M. Bard stated he was a bit opposed to paying donors that offer sick time to the bank. K. Martin stated she is interested in the discussion. M. Bard stated employees might be more likely to donate time if they could donate to a particular person. M. Frier stated that he is in support of the concept but not if it would provide annual compensation to employees who give up sick time. W. Shepeluk stated that he would like to discuss the concept with the EFUD Commissioners this week. The Select Board can revisit the concept at their next meeting on April 20th.

Discussion Concerning Activities at Recreation Facilities

W. Shepeluk distributed a memo earlier in the day from the Recreation Director with an update on the status of the parks and facilities in light of the COVID-19 crisis. The Director was ordered last week to close all of the facilities and residents were expressing concern about people congregating. It is unfortunate, but given the crisis it is the right thing to do. The State Police have been notified that our facilities have been closed. The dog park will be closed as well. Refunds are being given for some programs that have been cancelled. The Town is actively trying to hire summer staff in the hopes that most programs will run. People will be allowed to sign up for the community gardens. It was been

recommended that the fees be increased from \$15 to \$25 for a single plot and from \$20 to \$35 for a double plot. By consensus, the Board decided to not increase fees this season.

There being no further Select Board business, the meeting adjourned at 8:48pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Carla Lawrence, Town Clerk

Approved on: April 20, 2020