



MANCHESTER-BY-THE-SEA

BOARD OF SELECTMEN • TOWN HALL
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MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN

March 30, 2020 6:30p.m. Virtual Meeting
<https://join.startmeeting.com/communication2>
Virtual Meeting 425-535-9843

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mr. Boling, Ms. Driscoll, Mr. Bodmer-Turner and Ms. Jaques, Mr. Steinert

MEMBERS ABSENT:

STAFF PRESENT: Town Administrator, Mr. Federspiel, BOS Clerk, Ms. Hunter, Chief Fitzgerald

GUESTS: Town Moderator, Mr. Wilson and BOH Member, Dr. Bradley

PRESS:

Mr. Boling called the BOS meeting to order at 6:33 p.m.

Mr. Boling stated this was the first regularly scheduled Board meeting online. There had been a couple of other meetings, however he and the Board are still feeling their way through the technology. He would like to have public comment take place in the chat window by typing your question into the window or by voice. Remote meetings are like the meetings that take place in Town Hall where the Board is in conversation.

In ordinary times the Board would be preparing for Annual Town Meeting. During the past two weeks the Board has spent time dealing with emergencies and logistical complications. By state law Annual Town Meetings and Town Elections occur on fixed dates. In Manchester Town Elections normally take place at least 35 days post Town Meeting. This evening the Board will discuss Annual Town Meeting and Town Elections. The financial impact of the escalating crisis will be discussed during the Board's first meeting in April.

Our preliminary goal was to schedule Town Meeting and Town Elections prior to the end of June in order to have the FY21 budget in place for July 1, 2020.

1. Annual Town Meeting – Review of Timing

Mr. Wilson, Town Moderator, discussed his Declaration of Recess and Continuance. Which stated:

Pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 39, section 10A, I declare Manchester-by-the-Sea Annual Town Meeting scheduled for April 6, 2020 recessed and

continued, this 17th day of March 2020. In consultation with the Board of Selectmen and the Board of Health, I have determined that a public safety emergency may prevent voters from attending the meeting on April 6.

The nature of the emergency is the outbreak of the 2019 novel Coronavirus (“COVID-19”). In making this Declaration, I note that on March 10, 2020 Governor Charles D. Baker declared a state of emergency in the Commonwealth and prohibited gatherings of more than 250 people throughout Massachusetts. On March 15, 2020, the Governor reduced the number of constituting a prohibited gathering to more than 25 people. Although the Governor’s orders explicitly exempt legislative bodies (in other words, town meetings), turnout for Manchester-by-the-Sea town meetings regularly exceeds 250 voters. In addition to consulting with the Selectmen and Board of Health, I have reviewed guidance from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Given the rapid spread of the disease, the limited testing and conducted to date, the present lack of containment, and the risk to vulnerable populations inherent in public gatherings, I conclude that delay the Annual Town Meeting is in the best interest of the Town and its citizens.

I intend to declare additional continuances of up to 30 days each as necessary to defer the meeting until it can be held safely. In considering further deferrals, I will continue to consult with the Board of Selectmen and the Board of Health.

Mr. Wilson stated the Date of Declaration of Recess and Continuance is April 13, 2020 but he believes this will be the first step of additional delays. He also clarified that because the Warrant had been posted the BOS could not vote to delay the Annual Town Meeting, rather it is the Moderator’s responsibility.

Mr. Bodmer-Turner stated he supports moving Town Meeting out the maximum distance. Ms. Jaques strongly agrees with Mr. Wilson’s recommendation. Mr. Steinert and Ms. Driscoll also agreed

Mr. Wilson stated he will provide a letter to the Cricket and assure there are postings on the Town website as the Town Meeting date is moved forward. Mr. Boling stated it is the Board’s goal to hold a traditional Town Meeting with everyone present.

2. Annual Elections – Review of Timing

Mr. Boling stated annual elections will be pushed from May into June. Mr. Wilson stated legislation has been passed allowing Towns to move elections. Mr. Boling proposed scheduling municipal elections on the last Tuesday in June within range of fiscal year end. Mr. Wilson stated it is the Board’s call to push out elections to the last Tuesday in June. He believes it makes sense to amend the election date and allow for extended early and absentee voting.

Mr. Federspiel stated the Town could set the date now and provide 20-day notice of election and extend absentee and early voting or wait to see how things evolve.

Ms. Driscoll stated it would be great to have Annual Town Meeting on May 4, 2020 but understands it is important to push out the date further. Regarding elections she believes June 23, 2020 is the last day of school and she would prefer to see the election date set

for June 30, 2020. Mr. Steinert would like to see the Town retain maximum flexibility in scheduling dates. Ms. Jaques agrees with Mr. Steinert.

Mr. Bodmer-Turner stated it is important to highlight the Town's reliance on absentee and early voting. He understands residents need access to Town Hall to pick up and return their ballots and does not understand how that will be possible with the rigors of social distancing. Voting through the mail is possible. Town Clerk, Ms. St. Pierre will confirm the standards and work to provide the maximum opportunity for voters.

Mr. Bodmer-Turner believes the earlier the date is set the better, however stated it is important to maintain flexibility as the COVID-19 crisis is very fluid.

Mr. Boling stated pushing elections to June 23rd provides the flexibility the Town needs and does not anticipate a problem unless there is a change in how things are trending. Hopefully Annual Town Meeting will take place in advance. Mr. Wilson supports Mr. Boling's recommendation.

Mr. Federspiel believes June 30th would be an easier date. Essex has scheduled elections for June 22nd with their Annual Town Meeting scheduled on June 15th. Ms. Driscoll stated there is concern over space availability at Memorial School. Mr. Boling stated it is possible to change polling location and he will confirm with the District.

Dr. Bradley stated there is a possibility self-isolation will continue to June 1, 2020. Mr. Meahl stated confirming building availability makes sense and agrees with the June 30, 2020 date for elections. Ms. Sandra Bodmer-Turner stated the date needed to be scheduled subject to availability and she agreed with Mr. Wilson.

Mr. Boling summarized by stating availability of the building was a good question and final recommendation will be made at the next meeting on April 6, 2020.

3. Covid-19 Update –

Mr. Boling reported during the past week beaches and parks were closed due to the spread of the virus to assure the community was not compromised. The decision was made in response to residents and non-residents not practicing social distancing which is not compatible with the new standards and ineffective. This behavior will result in exponential growth. Days matter and proper social distancing is critical to slowing the spread of the virus. Following the Town's closure of beaches and parks Essex, and Trustees also closed their parks and beaches. The Board will review the decision and lift restrictions when state statistics on virus infection rate shift, and with input from the Board of Health and Public Safety Departments.

Mr. Federspiel and Chief Fitzgerald stated MBTS had taken many important steps in response to the virus and, at least for now, the situation was manageable:

- Town Hall is closed to the public with many staff working remotely.
- Public lobby for the Police Department is open.
- The first check for emergency funding is expected this week.
- BOH, Town Nurse is tracking Covid-19 cases.

- Police and DPW Department staff are working one week on and one week off to assure healthy staff available to cover the Town.
- Police are providing pick up and delivery service for seniors along with the COA.
- Go bags are in all cruisers.
- Town vehicles have been disinfected as are offices and other facilities

Additionally, the Town continues to work with the State, FEMA and MEMA to stay abreast of developments and follow up on preparedness.

Mr. Wilson thanked Mr. Federspiel and Chief Fitzgerald for their thoughtful planning. Ms. Driscoll, Mr. Steinert and Ms. Jaques also expressed their thanks to Mr. Federspiel and Chief Fitzgerald.

Mr. Bodmer-Turner stated the District had planned and implemented for the continuation of students' education.

Mr. Meahl asked how many cases there were to date in MBTS. Chief Fitzgerald replied one case. Mr. Boling stated one reported positive case and indicated testing is not easy to get. There are a lot of potential cases out there and only one case opens us to risk. Chief Fitzgerald stated there are 653 positive cases in Essex County.

Dr. Bradley stated on March 22, 2020 the day the beach closed there were 60 cases in Essex County. She reiterated the need for social distancing.

Mr. Coyne stated there were some 600 cases hospitalized state-wide.

4. 4th Quarter Property Tax Bills – Review of Timing

Mr. Federspiel reported the 4th Quarter Tax Bills are mailed on April 1, 2020 and due on May 1, 2020. There is proposed legislation to extend the payment due date to June 1, 2020. The legislation is expected to pass this week. Ms. Driscoll stated the Board extended payment to May 15, 2020 but at this time it is advisable to see if the legislation passes and postpone further discussion to next Monday's meeting.

Discussion postponed to next meeting.

5. Consent Agenda

- BOS Minutes – March 16, 2020

Ms. Jaques moved to approve the Consent Agenda, Mr. Bodmer-Turner seconded the motion. The motion passed with Mr. Steinert abstaining.

6. Correspondence

- Letter from National Grid re: Covid-19 Precautionary Actions
- Letter from Joseph Domelowicz, Hamilton Town Manager, re: Veterans Service Officer's Function
- Letter from Xfinity re: Postponement of Cartoon Network Move
- Letter from John Jay re: Annual Town Meeting and Spending

National Gird has asked people to inform them if anyone in the home is sick if there is a need for National Gird to come to their home. Additionally, there will be no disconnection of service for lack of payment. This provision is in place until the end of April.

Letter from resident financial impact will be discussed next week.

7. Town Administrator's Report

- ✓ Town Common work is underway. The Veteran's Honor Roll is getting ready for construction. The Honor Roll Committee received a State grant to help reach their fundraising goal.
- ✓ Drainage work at Central/School Streets will be starting ahead of the Complete Street intersection and cross walk work.
- ✓ Ocean Street water pipe work is nearly completed with construction moving onto Raymond Street. If there are any concerns residents should call DPW. If residents do not want to provide access to their home's construction crews will work around their requests.
- ✓ DPW work is continuing; all contractors have a scheduled stand down day for COVID-19 avoidance training
- ✓ Fire Chief search is continuing. There are several excellent candidates.
- ✓ Budgets will be reviewed for savings with the understanding the Town may take a hard-economic hit.

8. Other Matters, as May Have Not Been Reasonably Anticipated by the Chairman – Discussion Only. There were no additional matters discussed this evening.

Ms. Jaques thanked the residents who participated in this evenings meeting.

Mr. Meahl asked why the Board did not discuss the letter from Mr. Jay. Mr. Boling stated it was mentioned with correspondence and will be fully discussed during next week's meeting with the Finance Committee.

Mr. Meahl stated his objection to the widening of the Beach Street sidewalk at the cost of \$223K when there were other priorities for the Town to address. He added grant projects always cost the Town additional money. He suggested the Town hire a cost control consultant to help with costs and the Town should start with fewer employees. He also hopes for more transparency.

Ms. Furlong is interested in hearing financial conditions and acknowledged the postponement of tax payments. Ms. Furlong would like to know how to eliminate unnecessary expenses at Town Meeting and was the Town willing to change the Warrant.

Mr. Boling stated changes and recommendations to the Town budget could be made from Town Meeting Floor. Mr. Federspiel stated the expanded Warrant includes department expenses that document is currently at the printer. Mr. Boling stated it was

good to have so many residents participate in the meeting, but he missed seeing people face to face.

Ms. Jaques moved to adjourn the meeting, Ms. Driscoll seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Meeting Documents:

- Consent Agenda as listed
- Correspondence as listed
- Town Administrator's Report

Upcoming BOS Meetings

- Monday, April 6, 2020
- Tuesday, April 21, 2020
- Monday, May 4, 2020
- Monday, May 18, 2020