



# MANCHESTER-BY-THE-SEA

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

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April 21, 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, BOH Member, Dr. Bradley

**PRESS:**

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Mr. Boling called the BOS meeting to order at 6:31 p.m.

Mr. Boling welcomed participants to the virtual meeting. He requested participants online to ask questions and make comments through the chat window and participants on the phone to state their name if you wish to speak and speak when recognized. If for some reason you are not called to speak please remind the Chairman, you wish to speak.

Mr. Boling added the Board will take public input and comment at the end of the meeting.

Mr. Boling requested a moment to recognize Teddy Graham a well-known member of the community who died on April 13, 2020. Mr. Graham served on the Planning Board. Mr. Boling acknowledged Mr. Graham for the quality of his character and participation in the community.

### 1. Covid-19 Updates

Mr. Boling stated the Governor has closed schools through the end of the year. He also mentioned the number of Covid-19 cases was on the rise in Essex, however Manchester had not experienced a rise and as difficult as the situation is the residents of Manchester are following social distancing with good results.

Mr. Federspiel summarized events related to Covid-19 over that past two weeks:

- Schools are closed through the end of the year.
- There are a couple of new cases in Town relative to exposure in the Boston area.
- One fire fighter tested positive for Covid-19 and two fire fighters tested negative.

- DPW and Police Department continue to work with two shifts one week on and one week off.
- Town Hall remains closed to the public with employees working from home and some workers working in Town Hall. All services continue to be provided to residents.
- Mr. Federspiel stated he has heard on conference calls with other stated leaders the easing of restrictions will be gradual.
- Chief Fitzgerald stated the call volume is lower when compared to previous years.
- Chief Fitzgerald also stated a police presence was required at Singing Beach to keep traffic moving around the circle.

Ms. Jaques commented on reopening beaches and parks. She understands some residents would like for beaches and parks to open to residents, however she does not believe that is possible given the number of parking spaces throughout Town and the train. She concluded opening the beaches and parks at this time is likely not possible.

Ms. Driscoll asked if it is was congestion downtown with people walking toward the beach that caused a problem. Chief Fitzgerald stated it was more people congregating and parking at the circle that caused the challenge on Sunday. Officers on duty were able to easily handle the congestion and keep traffic moving.

Mr. Steinert asked about recommendation regarding criteria to lifting restriction so resident know when it is time to go back to beaches and parks. Mr. Federspiel replied the Governor will decide when to lift the order closing non-essential businesses and the stay at home advisory Currently restrictions are in place to May 4, 2020. When lifted this would gives us confidence in easing our local restrictions.

Mr. Federspiel will be meeting this week with Chief Fitzgerald, Harbormaster Pike and Parks and Recreation Director, Ms. Marshall to develop a plan for reopening parks and beaches. How we open up and ease restrictions according to Mr. Federspiel will depend on infection rates in Essex County and the North Shore, along with recommendations from the Governor.

Mr. Bodmer-Turner asked about scheduled construction on Ocean Street and how long before that work is completed. Mr. Federspiel stated the work will likely be completed within two weeks. When Ocean Street work is completed the construction will move to Raymond Street. Town Hall Common construction is scheduled to be completed by the end of May. The Veterans Honor Roll has run into challenges with the acquisition of granite for the memorial due to the COVID 19 virus.

Mr. Kehoe asked Dr. Bradley if the Board of Health had considered requiring face coverings in Cosby's. Dr. Bradley stated the Governor made an advisory not an order regarding covering of faces. Dr. Bradley stated the issue will be discussed at the BOH meeting later this week.

## **2. FY21 Budget Discussion**

Mr. Federspiel reported the BOS and Finance Committee are continuing to review the FY21 budget and the economic impact the Town will experience related to Covid-19.

The goal was to provide Town residents with a 0% increase in taxes in FY21. In order to achieve that objective \$660K would need to be cut from the proposed FY21 budget. Additionally, it is estimated that local receipts including excise tax and construction permitting will see reductions going forward estimated at 5% for a total of \$780K necessary in reductions.

Mr. Federspiel provided Board members with a spread sheet outlining proposed and recommended cuts to the FY21 budget. There are three primary areas of reduction operating, capital and school district.

Town Operating budget will be reduced by \$152K. The three most significant areas of reductions include:

- 1) Eliminating a part time position in the Town Administrator's office,
- 2) a savings in health insurance budgeted for FY21 of \$50K (the Town will have a 0% increase in health insurance this year)
- 3) eliminating a new laborer position in DPW \$55K.

Town Capital budget will be decreased by \$478K:

- 1) \$85K savings for new DPW truck achieved by using funds in FY20 vehicle line not fully used and a favorable trade in.
- 2) Sidewalk/Drainage reduced by \$120K – defer Beach St. sidewalk and move funds to drainage work needed on Tappan St.
- 3) Defer construction of pole barn at DPW facility for a savings of \$75K
- 4) Reduce the Fire Engine fund by \$140K
- 5) Police Cruiser more favorable rate and defer Lock Box savings of \$8K
- 6) Decrease turn out gear budget by \$15K

There was on addition to the Capital budget of \$40K with the addition of relining pipes on Boardman Avenue. Mr. Dam made this recommendation due to the high cost of mobilizing equipment and added Beach to the relining project on Boardman .

School District reduction of \$150K.

The total reduced spending in Plan B of the FY21 Town budget is \$780K.

Ms. Driscoll had four questions. She asked about the impact of not adding the part time position to the Town Administrator's office. Mr. Federspiel stated the Town Administrators office was a remarkably busy office with a significant number of phone calls, emails and walk in traffic. The new part time position was in the budget to take some of that work off the Administrative Assistant to allow that person to support the work of the Town Administrator more directly. At this time, the Town Administrator's office will remain busy, but this is not the time to add a new position.

Ms. Driscoll stated she understood the DPW position was added to get projects completed internally and move away from contract services and asked how projects will be managed without the position being filled. Mr. Federspiel stated the Town always has work that needs to be completed which is challenging. In the coming year, the Town may be slower in getting some work completed and will likely need to spend more with contractors.

Ms. Driscoll asked about turn out gear replacement. Mr. Federspiel stated the plan had been to start replacing turn out gear on an annual rotation with a third of the gear being replaced annually. The \$15K is approximately five sets of turn out gear. Ms. Driscoll stated it seems we often cut turn out gear. Mr. Federspiel agreed.

Ms. Driscoll asked what the timeline was for the District deciding their budget. Mr. Federspiel anticipates hearing from the District at the beginning of May in time for the BOS to finalize their recommendations by May 18, 2020.

Mr. Bodmer-Turner stated Ms. Driscoll's questions parallel his and complimented Town employees for the hard work that went into making the budget adjustments. He confirmed taxpayers would have a 0% increase on their property taxes for FY21.

Mr. Steinert asked about further contingencies and areas not included on the spreadsheet. Mr. Federspiel noted there were an additional \$40K in cuts to the operating budget not recommended because those cuts would likely impact services to residents. Mr. Steinert is asking the Town to look at additional levers available to cut the budget if the financial impact of Covid-19 hits revenues. Mr. Steinert would like the Town to continue to plan on budget reductions in the event the value of real estate goes down.

Ms. Jaques asked if the Finance Committee had approved the proposed reductions to the F21 budget. Mr. Federspiel confirmed the Finance Committee had approved the reductions. Ms. Jaques asked what is a Knox Box? A Knox Box is a Lock Box which allows the Fire Department to carry only one key when responding to calls. Ms. Jaques indicated her other questions had been asked and answered.

Mr. Boling stated he was okay with the general direction of the budget cuts and expressed concern about what a \$235K reduction in the District budget would mean. The School Committee had worked hard on the District budget and the final budget included the use of reserve funds. He would like to hear from the School Committee on what the \$235K cuts means for the District.

Sheila Hill – Ms. Hill asked if the spreadsheet could be made available. Mr. Federspiel stated he would place the spreadsheet on the Budget Page of the Town website. Ms. Hill asked about the reduction to the District and how the \$235K figure was reached. Mr. Federspiel stated there was no magic involved he was attempting to make the numbers work for the Town and made the \$235K request to provide the Town with a \$150K reduction. Ms. Hill wanted to be assured the District budget did not include any new hires.

Mr. Boling stated the BOS does not make recommendations to the School Committee. The School Committee is a separately elected and sovereign group. The Town states high level financial goals and how the School Committee reaches those goals is up to them. Mr. Bodmer-Turner pointed out the \$235K is proportional over two Towns. Ms. Erdmann, Chairperson of the School Committee stated there were no new hires in the District budget.

Ms. Thorne stated the Town has worked hard to cut the Town budget and the District budget is 47% of the Town's budget. She believes \$235K is not significant and could be more.

Ms. Furlong stated she was happy to hear the Town did not plan to reduce staff and asked what else was possible to generate savings. Ms. Furlong suggested Town Employees not receive a 2.5% pay increase in FY21. Mr. Federspiel stated he was in talks with the Town employee unions regarding that issue. Town employees are represented by four unions, Fire, Police, DPW and Clerical. Ms. Furlong indicated she was aware that teachers received a salary raise of 4.6%.

Chris Abbott asked for clarification of other capital projects that could be delayed. Mr. Federspiel indicated the Sweeney Park project could be delayed, however that is a project that may be eligible for Federal stimulus dollars if they become available.

Mr. Abbott also asked about the CPC funding for the Congregation Church. Mr. Federspiel stated no projects approved for CPC funding were cut because CPC funds are a separate area of spending which the Community Preservation Committee advances.

Mr. Abbott asked about the \$3M dollar capital budget. Mr. Federspiel indicated half of the capital budget was water line replacement work for \$1.2M. Other items included \$100K for the Fire Engine Fund, \$230K for sewer plant upgrades, \$160K for HVAC system installation in Town Hall, part of which will be covered by a grant. Mr. Abbott recommended cutting water line work and stated he agreed with Ms. Thorne that the District budget should be cut.

Mr. Kehoe stated it was essential that water line work continue. In the past years, the Town had water line breaks monthly and the proposed repairs provide clean drinking water and wastewater removal for residents.

Lorraine Iovanni – Ms. Iovanni agrees that the Town does not want to fall behind on the water and sewer work. She recommends non-bargaining employee salaries be frozen along with training, unnecessary travel and bonuses. She stated the 4.6% raise in teacher's salaries was over the top. Mr. Boling indicated Mrs. Iovanni will need to speak to the School Committee about things related to the District budget.

Mr. Boling stated the Finance Committee will be meeting and the BOS will meet on May 4, 2020 with a final budget recommendation on May 18, 2020.

Mr. Bodmer-Turner stated deferring construction projects will result in the projects being significantly more expensive in the future. Mr. Boling agreed stating construction project costs increase 7% each year and have for the past several years.

Mr. Kehoe pointed out with schools closed the boy scouts may not be available to deliver Town reports. Mr. Kehoe recommended the Board come up with alternative means of distribution and suggested drive up locations for picking up the Town reports. Mr. Boling thanked Mr. Kehoe, suggested forming a special committee to consider options and with Mr. Kehoe's appointment to the committee as soon as he hung up.

### **3. Consent Agenda**

- BOS Minutes for 3/30/2020 and 4/16/2020
- Longevity Bench at the Norwood Ave. Parking Lot

- Designate Town Website as Official Meeting Posting Location

Mr. Boling clarified Designating Town Website as Official Meeting Posting Location to comply with the Open Meeting Law. Historically the official meeting posting location had been in Town Hall just inside the front doors, however with construction and limited access due to Covid-19 the Board was moving the official posting location to the Town website.

The longevity bench at Norwood Ave. is in memory of Carole Mastendino dedicated to her by her husband Jeff and her children.

Mr. Boling wanted to confirm there was no conflict with the existing bench near the location. Ms. Bonneville of the Longevity Bench project stated the other bench contained no plaque, was located on North St. and was not ADA complaint. Mr. Boling thanked Ms. Bonneville for the clarification and stated Longevity Benches are a welcome addition to the Town.

Ms. Jaques stated she supports the bench in Carole's honor and the designation of the web site for meeting postings. Mr. Steinert agreed as did Ms. Driscoll and Mr. Bodmer-Turner.

*Ms. Driscoll moved to approve the Consent Agenda, Mr. Bodmer-Turner seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.*

#### **4. Correspondence**

- Email from Resident re: CDC Guidance in Parks and Recreation Facilities
- Letter from Xfinity re: Programming Changes

Mr. Boling stated the Town will be reviewing when and how to open up parks and beaches over the next couple of weeks and the Board will come back to the discussion when the recommendations from the Town and Governor are updated.

#### **5. Town Administrator's Report**

- ✓ Construction on Ocean St. will be completed in the next two weeks and Union/Beach Street and School/Central Street will be completed by end mid-May.
- ✓ Fire Chief search has resulted in 24 applicants. Mr. Federspiel will share the list of applicants with the Board. The review committee will reconvene and hopefully the Board will have the final recommendation for a new Fire Chief by mid-June.
- ✓ Ms. Fitzgerald has been hired as the new clerk in DPW. She is the wife of the Police Chief, she is well known in Town and looking forward to providing service to the community on behalf of DPW.
- ✓ The Town is moving forward with shared service Human Resource person with Rockport and Hamilton.

#### **6. Other Matters, as May Have Not Been Reasonably Anticipated by the Chairman – Discussion Only.**

Mike Lahey stated he was impressed with Chief Fitzgerald's closure of the parks and beaches and asked if any consideration had been given to offering hazard pay to Police. He also asked if the police would continue to enforce the closure which he feels may no longer be necessary.

Mr. Boling stated Chief Fitzgerald indicated lifting closure of parks and beaches will not help in controlling access through train and drive ins from out-of-Town. Parks and beaches will open when the Town can assure residents and public safety staff of their safety. The best way to manage is to continue in the direction we are going to provide for the best public health outcome. The Town will carefully measure how we move forward.

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

**Meeting Documents:**

- Budget Reduction Spreadsheet
- Correspondence as listed
- Consent Agenda as listed
- Town Administrator's Report

**Upcoming BOS Meetings**

- Monday, May 4, 2020
- Monday, May 18, 2020