



Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Selectmen

Date: March 26, 2020 – Special Meeting
Time: 6:00 p.m.
Place: Audioconference Broadcasted Live from McCourt Social Hall
Memorial Town Hall, Spencer, MA
Present: U & F Superintendent Bill Krukowski and Town Clerk Laura Torti
Dialing in: Chairman Pepe, Vice Chair Monette, Clerk Berthiaume, Members Hicks and Woodbury, Administrator Gregory, Town Clerk Laura Torti, Health Agent Lisa Daoust, and Chief Darrin

Vice Chair Monette called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and indicated that Chairman Pepe would be dialing in late.

Review and Act on Postponement of Annual Town Election (ATE)

Town Clerk Laura Torti reported that the ATE is scheduled for May 12th, per the Town Bylaws and noted that new legislation allows towns to make changes to their election dates and recommends postponing the ATE until June 23rd. Polling hours can be determined at a later date when there is a better understanding of where we stand with the COVID-19 pandemic. April 7th is the last day to file a notice of written ballot question.

Dr. Hicks suggested placing plastic shields between poll workers and voters for safety. Ms. Torti will check into and Health Agent Lisa Daoust will help purchase the shields with funds from the State.

A motion to postpone the Annual Town Election until June 23, 2020 (Hicks/Woodbury) passed with a roll call vote: Woodbury-yes, Berthiaume-yes, Hicks-yes, Pepe-yes, Monette-yes

Review and Act on Coronavirus / COVID-19 Response

Mr. Gregory reported that there are two confirmed cases in Spencer and said he has concerns over utilizing a reverse 911 call to inform the public of COVID-19 cases.

Ms. Daoust spoke with the public health nurse and was informed both cases are in quarantine and there are no other cases at this time. She said there are no other towns with positive cases utilizing a reverse 911 call and she's concerned that would cause fear and hysteria. She worked with the Fire Chief and Police Chief to post a press release for the Town and will continue to do so.

Dr. Hicks said he believes the reverse 911 call should have been made to alert residents as they are still out and about. Mr. Woodbury agreed and said hearing the Health Agent is more calming than reading about it on Facebook. Mr. Monette said people shouldn't have to hear about it on Facebook.

Ms. Torti pointed out if a reverse 911 is done now, it sets a precedent and would lead to making a call for every confirmed case, which would be out of control. Ms. Berthiaume agreed and noted that a reverse 911 call may cause people to panic and said it's not the way to get the information out. Chief Darrin also advised against it, noting that people are being asked to take universal precautions. If additional cases are reported, they will be handled. He receives weekly updates on the number of Massachusetts cases and will add the number of Spencer cases to a weekly press release. Mr. Woodbury said he prefers a weekly reverse 911 call.

A motion to make a weekly reverse 911 call to Spencer residents listing the number of cases Statewide, and in Spencer diagnosed with COVID-19 (Hicks/Woodbury) passed 5/0 with a roll call vote: Woodbury-yes, Berthiaume-yes, Hicks-yes, Pepe-yes, Monette-yes

Dr. Hicks said if a Town employee falls sick with COVID-19 that facility should be shut down and a cleaning crew sent in to sanitize prior to reopening.

Mr. Gregory reported that a number of Towns are operating on a rotating schedule and he is proposing to begin in Spencer by providing Department Heads with the discretion to pare down on a rotating schedule to allow employees to work from home without remote access to the Town's financial software and network, however they will have the ability to retrieve email, download files on a USB drive, and sort files while one employee will be in the department to access the network and financial software. He will provide a staffing pattern for each department at a minimum level at the next meeting. Mr. Pepe said he would like to scale back and minimize the risk to employees.

Ms. Daoust reminded everyone to follow the recommendations of the CDC regarding social distancing and washing hands to help combat the spread of the virus.

A motion to adjourn at 6:43 pm (Woodbury/Hicks) passed 5/0 with a roll call vote: Woodbury-yes, Berthiaume-yes, Hicks-yes, Pepe-yes, Monette-yes

The meeting was adjourned at 6:43 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Brenda Savoie
Executive Assistant