



Town of Bellingham

BOARD OF SELECTMEN

10 Mechanic Street

Bellingham, Massachusetts 02019

Tel: 508-657-2800 * 508-966-4425

April 27, 2020

The Board of Selectmen meeting was called to order remotely at 7:00 PM by Chairman Daniel Spencer using Zoom Technology. A roll call confirmed all members of the Board were participating. Also actively participating in the meeting was Town Administrator Denis Fraine, Administrative Assistant Hilarie Allie and Chief Financial Officer Mary MacKinnon. The remote meeting was being monitored by Jim Kupfer, Town Planner and Zoning Officer. It was determined by Governor Baker's March 12, 2020 Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, and the Governor's March 15, 2020 Order imposing strict limitations on the number of people that may gather in one place that no in-person attendance of Board members or any member of the public would be permitted at this meeting. This meeting was accessible to the public via the Zoom online option.

Mary MacKinnon, CFO

Mary MacKinnon stated in summary that the Town has \$5,655,000 in Bond Anticipation Notes – short term debt that the Town issued last year and these notes were scheduled to mature June of this year. Given the fact that most municipalities have their debt mature at the end of the fiscal year and given the volatility of the market due to the COVID-19 pandemic it was recommended by our financial advisors that the Town go out to market now. The debt sale took place on April 22nd and there were 2 bidders. The winning bid went to Piper Sandler & Co. with a coupon rate (which is the rate of interest we pay) of 2.0% on \$5,655,000 worth of short term debt with an average net interest cost of 1.2%. On a Martinis/Biagi motion, the Board unanimously voted to:

1. Approve the sale of \$5,655,000 in Bond Anticipation Notes
2. Approve and adopt the Preliminary and Official Statements,
3. Execute a significant events disclosure statement in conjunction with this sale,
and
4. Direct the Treasurer to follow procedures to maintain tax-exempt status of these Notes

And further that the Board of Selectmen, Town Clerk and Town Treasurer are authorized to take any and all such actions to carry out these votes and execute the associated documents.

Town Administrator Report

Mr. Fraine reported things were working out well at the municipal center as are the daily LEPC meetings. He stated the 10AM meetings on ABMI Cable have allowed for all the department heads and residents to stay informed each day. In a recent phone conversation with Senator Fattman and State Rep Soter he was informed that the state will be able to keep the Town whole for the current fiscal year as far as the budget is concerned but next year's fiscal year is still unknown and might not be available until the end of June beginning of July. This could make it difficult as the Town Meeting is scheduled for June 22nd. Mr. Fraine stated that the Inspectional Services department has

been busier than ever issuing permits for new construction and home improvements. Recently two employees of the fire department tested positive for COVID-19 but no other individuals at the department tested positive. Mr. Martinis asked when these individuals would be able to go back to work. Mr. Poirier stated they need to be symptom free without medication for at least 7 days and they will be retested at that point. Mr. Poirier wanted to give a shout out to Bellingham Urgent Care on Wrentham Street. He said they have been great to work with and they have been more than accommodating to the Town.

New Business – Larry Sposato, Town Clerk RE: Update on Elections

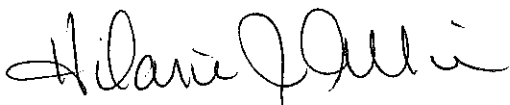
Mr. Sposato stated the Town has three elections remaining this year. They are the Annual Town Election rescheduled for June 9th, the Primary Election in September and the General Election in November. Currently the only firm guidelines that have been set forth are the ones for the Town Election. Registered voters may vote by way of absentee voting by mail, early voting by mail or at a polling place. Chapter 45 of the Acts of 2020 have allowed municipalities to change the date which the Board has already voted on as well as lessen the minimum voting hours at a polling place to 4 hours. But in keeping with the Town Charter that states the polling hours will be open for a minimum of 8 hours, Mr. Sposato would like to have the election take place from 12PM-8PM. This will minimize the number of hours people are together voting and cut back on the number of poll workers needed. He further stated historically voter turnout at Town Elections are low so if these hours work out he would suggest we continue this practice for further Town Elections. Mr. Spencer suggested we split the shifts from 8AM-12PM and then open again from 4PM-8PM. Mr. Sposato stated the wardens had a problem doing this as they would have to reconcile the votes after a shift change to make sure things balanced. Mr. Biagi asked about the police detail requirement. Mr. Sposato stated that this is mandated by the state. Each ballot box is considered a polling station and a police detail is required at each polling station. Even though Bellingham has all their polling station in one place under one roof we still must provide a police detail at each ballot box as it relates to the precinct. Mr. Connor asked why we can't reduce the number of precincts we have at the one location and Mr. Sposato stated it is based on population. Mrs. McNulty expressed her concerns about not opening in the early morning if that is typically the time the polls are the busiest. Mr. Sposato said it is only busy for the first 20 minutes of opening but then it dies right down. He feels if the residents that do vote in the morning are given enough warning they can fill out an absentee ballot or early voting ballot by mail since no reason has to be given now. Further discussion ensued with regards to social distancing and Mr. Sposato said they will make adjustments like wearing masks, putting tape on the floor, spreading out the precincts inside the gym and setting up the booths in a different manner. Although there is no formal vote that needs to be taken by the Board Mr. Spencer asked for a roll call of who was in support of the Town Clerk reducing the voting hours at the polls from 12PM-8PM. All members voted in the affirmative with the exception of Mr. Connor who is not in favor of reducing the voting hours. This election the school committee has proposed a proposition 2 1/2 and Mr. Connors feels if the Town reduces the polling hours that fewer people will have the opportunity to vote. It was also suggested that the Town make a valid effort notify the seniors of this change.

Mr. Biagi asked about the plan to phase in the opening of small businesses and asked if the Town was waiting on the governor's directive or if the Town was going to get creative on its own. Mr. Spencer stated an Economic Development Committee had been formed and included two members of the Board of Selectmen, Cindy McNulty and himself, a Board of Health member Trish Leclair, a Planning Board member Bill O'Connell as well as a Bellingham Business Associate member Sue Ranieri. Also, the committee will welcome input from Denis Fraine, Jim Kupfer and Mark Poirier. This committee will be meeting Tuesdays at 10:30 via Zoom and will look at ways to open up these businesses in the short term, intermediate term and long term. Anyone is welcome to log on and join the meeting.

Mr. Connor asked if the proposition 2 1/2 for the schools was going to be promoted by the individuals personally or as a Board and was looking for opinions. Mr. Spencer stated there are a lot of uncertainties right now and it would be hard to know for sure what is the right thing to do. Mr. Martinis asked for clarification on how much extra money the override would cost residents based on the average home and Mrs. MacKinnon stated the override would cost \$40 extra per quarter. Mr. Spencer reiterated Mr. Connor's concern about voters getting out to vote in the reduced time frame and stated that the advocates must get the information out there so residents are well aware of the new times so they can make a valid effort to vote especially with the override on this year's ballot. Mrs. MacKinnon voiced her concerns about the FY21 budget and a possible reduction in state funding. Mr. Fraine stated they Board of Selectmen will do another budget workshop type meeting before the budget is presented at Town Meeting.

On a Martinis/Connor motion, the Board unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting at 7:53PM.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Hilarie J. Allie".

Hilarie J. Allie
Administrative Assistant