

**SELECTBOARD MEETING  
THURSDAY, MAY 19, 2020  
MEETING MINUTES  
VIRTUAL MEETING – 6:00 P. M**

*Present were Chair Jeff Cyr, Vice Chair Sarah Etelman, member Bruce Forcier, member Christopher Geraghty, member Andrea Miles, and Town Administrator Michael J. Sullivan*

**CALL TO ORDER**

Cyr called the meeting to order at 6:02 PM.

**UPDATE COVID-19**

Sullivan reviewed the number of confirmed cases of Covid-19 in Town and indicated that the number of cases were growing. The State's reopening plan was slated to roll out in early June and Town officials were working on developing protocols to help facilitate services throughout the re-open.

**SENIOR CENTER PROJECT (OPM PHIL PALUMBO)**

Phil Palumbo, the Owner's Project Manager (OPM) of the new senior center construction, was present at the virtual meeting. He explained that during excavation an asbestos pipe was uncovered and its removal would delay the project's completion date. He explained that all protocols due to the COVID-19 State-of-Emergency were being followed on site. All subcontractors were required to self-certify and logs were maintained by the general contractor. At this time, there was no request for financial assistance from the general contractor for the cost of implementation of additional protocols.

Sullivan noted that the Senior Center Building Committee had come to an agreement to replace the play apparatus that was removed per recommendation of the Town's insurance company. Construction of the new playscape would be financed through the contingency budget.

**REPUBLIC CONTRACT**

Sullivan explained that Town Counsel was reviewing the drafted contract with Republic Services. There were items that she was recommending to be added to protect the Town's interests. The recommended items had yet to be added to the contract. Therefore, he recommended that the Board consider the contract at a future meeting.

**SOLID WASTE ANNUAL FEE**

Sullivan explained that calculations for the FY2021 solid waste fee showed increases in rates. The increase was a result of multiple factors which included increases in tipping fees and the loss of revenue from recycling to offset collection costs. However, the rate would remain within the industry standard. The Board could consider a vote on the matter at a future meeting. Members recommended developing a matrix to show the costs difference between remaining with the current provider versus the cost of a private hauler.

## **TOWN MEETING FORMAT DISCUSSION**

John Hine, Town Meeting Moderator, was present at the meeting.

Sullivan explained that the legislature had not yet voted to allow virtual Town Meetings and had not yet voted to allow reduction of quorum to ten percent. There were previous considerations to hold an in-person Town Meeting at the Mount Holyoke College field house. Sullivan explained that representatives of the College were reconsidering their offer to host citing health and safety concerns. As options for hosting Town Meeting were dwindling, the Board could consider a 1/12 budget but it was not recommended. None of the options before the Board were ideal.

Hine described how other towns were hosting their Town Meetings. Some communities were pushing ahead with a virtual platform and were well equipped to do so. South Hadley did not have the level of integrated technology that these other communities had. Most communities were planning to host in-person and varying levels of creativity. One community hosted their Town Meeting in a 'drive-in theatre' style where attendees all stayed on their cars. Board members expressed interest in hosting Town Meeting as a 'drive-in'.

Sullivan recommended that the Board vote to endorse the allowance to reduce Town Meeting quorum to ten percent. This action would signal the Selectboard's support of the action to the legislature.

**Motion:** Etelman moved to endorse the concept of reduction of Town Meeting quorum to ten percent. Geraghty seconded. All in favor.

Sullivan recommended that a committee be formed to investigate the potential for hosting future Special Town Meetings on a virtual form. He would compile a statement for the board to consider at a future meeting.

## **DOR SOUTH HADLEY FINANCIAL POLICIES**

Sullivan explained that the Town's financial procedures were reviewed. Within the review, it was acknowledged that the Town staff was performing well and was satisfying best practices. However, as the policy had not been updated since 1998, there were some items that needed to be updated to reflect DOR's most up-to-date standards. The policy would be reviewed by the Appropriations Committee prior to acceptance.

## **ADJOURN**

Miles moved to adjourn the meeting. Etelman seconded. All in favor. The meeting adjourned at 7:18 PM.

**RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,  
Colleen Canning, Senior Clerk Planning and Conservation**