

Approved 5/1/24
Town of West Tisbury
Select Board Meeting
Wednesday, April 24, 2024 4:30 pm
At the Town Hall and via Zoom

Present: Select Persons, Jessica Miller, Cynthia Mitchell and Town Administrator Jen Rand

Also present or on Zoom for all or part of the meeting: Nicola Blake, Joyce Bowker, Bethany Hammond, Mac Anderson, Larry Shubert, Michael Colaneri, Kim Angell, Doug Ruskin, Bernadette Lyons, Katrina Lui, Thomas Humphrey.

Jessica called the Select Board meeting to order at 4:30 pm.

New Business

Council on Aging (COA) Director Appointment – Bethany Hammond Cindy said that the Council on Aging Board had interviewed Bethany and was thrilled to unanimously recommend her for the position of Director. She said that because the bylaws of that board were not complete and the WT Select Board was the appointing authority they had taken no action on the proposed step; the position is on Grade 8. Jen noted that Kathy and Bruce had looked at the position and due to the timing of Bethany's step increases in her current position starting her at step 1 would create a situation where she would take a pay cut for a period of time, which is not allowed in a promotion. The personnel bylaw states that the person will be placed on the step that is closest but not lower than the current pay rate. She said she had spoken to Maria at the Personnel Board and she had agreed that step 2 was appropriate due to the circumstances.

Cindy moved to appoint Bethany to the position of COA director beginning May 20th at Grade 8 step 2 provided the Personnel Board agrees. Jessica seconded. vote: All in favor.

Minutes: Vote to Approve: April 17, 2024

Cindy moved to approve the minutes of April 17, 2024 as edited. Jessica seconded. vote: All in favor.

At this time it was noticed that the zoom was on mute so Jess recapped the meeting for those on zoom. Bethany thanked the Board for their trust in her.

Joint Meeting with Assessors Re: Residential Exemption for Tax Rate: Mac presented the board with a chart showing the impact of a 5% and a 20% residential exemption. He said the town can go as high as 35%. When asked he said most towns start with a lower exemption and then ease their way up, which he recommended. Michael noted that the roles of the Board of

Assessors is to facilitate the decisions made by the Board of Selectmen. Mac said this is a progressive tax system, and noted that at a certain value (roughly \$4M) even a resident will pay more. Jess confirmed that the exemption rate was set annually, Mac said yes. Larry said that his hope is that if the town moves forward, when the letter goes out to taxpayers it will generate lots of questions from taxpayers, he noted the tax rate hearings don't seem to get anyone's attention. Cindy asked if the Assessors would have public forums about the exemption. Michael said they could but really it is a Select Board decision so they should be joint meetings at least. Jess asked about timing. Mac said they can't move forward on this until they have a third staff member in place, so hopefully the end of May into early June. Prequalification would need to be done in October.

No decisions were made but Jess and Cindy stated they are in favor of the idea.

Doug thanked the Board for considering the exemption.

Old Business:

Response to Questions from Stoney Hill Association re: Land Purchase: Will be discussed next week.

Correspondence

- ❑ **Inspector General re: Free Training** Jen said this was an opportunity for her to re-take the three basic procurement classes for free. She said she hasn't updated her training since before covid. They are now done on line which will save her from having to go to Boston for the training. The Board approved this.
- ❑ **Juleann VanBelle Re: Affordable Housing Committee Meeting & 401 State Rd** The Board acknowledged the two pieces of correspondence.

Executive Session Exemption #6– Re: Affordable Housing Lots Stoney Hill Association: *To consider the purchase, exchange, lease or value of real property if the chair declares that an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the negotiating position of the public body*

Jess declared that open session may have a detrimental effect on the negotiating position of the public body.

With no further business to discuss, Cindy moved to go into executive session and not return to open meeting. Jessica seconded. Roll call vote: All in favor.

Meeting adjourned at 5:05 pm

Respectfully Submitted,

Jennifer Rand, Town Administrator