

Approved 6/17/20
TOWN OF WEST TISBURY
SELECTMEN'S MEETING
May 27, 2020 4:40 pm
Virtual meeting

Present: Selectmen Skipper Manter, Cindy Mitchell, Kent Healy, Jen Rand

Also Present: Bruce Stone, Kathy Logue, Dan Waters, Mike Bellissimo, Susanna Sturgis, Russ Hartenstein, Laura Silber, Tara Whiting-Wells, Doug Ruskin, Rich Saltzberg, Matt Gebo, Laurie Peters

Cindy called the meeting to order at 4:41 pm

Skipper motioned to approve the Minutes of May 13, 2020 Kent Healy second. Roll call vote was unanimous.

New Business:

Covid-19 Update:

- **Vote to approve CARES Act funding request:**

Cindy asked Bruce to explain. He referred to a letter (attached to agenda) from Federal Government to the State that lays out how the State will distribute to Towns and Cities. Towns must apply for the money and West Tisbury has been earmarked for money related to Covid-19. They have advised us to apply for expenses incurred up until June 30th the end of the fiscal year, and a second withdrawal can be made for the second half of the year. As of now, we have incurred about \$76,000 of Covid related expenses, most of it for payroll for BOH and Emergency Management. Also, extra legal, extra cleaning, ppe, zoom subscription and additional equipment for homework. He anticipates about \$30,000 more for the fiscal year, mostly for BOH and extra Police coverage on Lambert's Cove Rd. Also, improvements on Town Hall space for employee workspaces. He is thinking we may have expenses up to about \$140,000 for this fiscal year. He mentioned some of the anticipated expenses for next fiscal year. He said the application must be submitted by next Friday, June 5th, and hoped that the Selectmen would sign an acknowledgement letter and vote to approve. The Board thanked him for the understandable explanation.

Skipper motioned to authorize the Chair to sign the certification letter to accompany the Towns request for CARES Act funding. Kent Healy second. Roll call vote was unanimous.

Governors bill regarding Reduced Quorum: Jen said they have been waiting for the bill to go thru the Senate and House and be signed by the Governor which impacts Town

meeting. It has now passed in the Senate and has passed in the House with some amendments, now needs to go back to Senate to be ratified and then signed. So not yet complete, but it looks likely to be signed so they need to plan ahead. To reduce quorum, the BOS shall publish a notice of its intention to consider an adjustment of TM quorum requirements not less than 7 days before the vote of the Selectmen. It must be done with deliberation with the Moderator and cannot be less than 10% of what our actual quorum would be required. The good news is that there's no timing of quorum reduction related to the posting of the warrant. So we could theoretically, post a meeting 7 days before the 22 of June, have a meeting and take that vote. The minute it gets signed she will post a notice that it will be taken up by the BOS. It may need to be a special meeting. No action needs to be taken today, but she wanted them to know that she is on it. Skipper asked if they should consider starting the process of having Ron Rappaport appeal to Superior Court to attempt to get quorum reduced as another place has done? He is concerned about the closeness of deadlines to get things done. Jen will ask him if he thinks they should, but she thinks it will get signed.

- **Annual Town Meeting update:** Jen has met with Oak Bluffs folks and the Director of Tabernacle and says everything is a go, although there are still details to be worked out. They will be doing a walk thru to start getting it pulled together. She has requested of the MV Commission a map be created to show parking, entrances and general rules of engagement to be sent to the newspapers, put on the website and shared in advance of the meeting so everyone can prepare in advance what they are doing. Everyone is happy with the plan so far and as Oak Bluffs will be having their meeting before us, we will learn from their problems.
- **Vote to approve amended Warrant:** Jen said they had been sent the amended warrant showing the articles removed and articles that were modified. It is ready to go and be printed and signed if they have no other questions. She would like to get it printed and out to the newspapers tomorrow if possible. Skipper asked why the entire classification was included and Jen explained that they always do it that way so that people can see where certain positions fall relative to others. He would also like to see the Superintendent of Streets position held till the fall because it will generate discussion. The others agreed that it was ok.
Skipper motioned to approve the amended Warrant with the one change just suggested. Kent Healy second. Roll call vote was unanimous.
- **Phase 1 Return to Work Plan for Staff:**
Jen explained she has had a small working group trying to figure out how they come back into TH and in what fashion. She has sent out a draft of phase 1 & 2 and they have touched on phase 3, 4 & 5 but are not doing much with them now as so much depends on

the Governor's plans. Hoping to get some level of staff back into the building. The first floor is the most complicated and she has looked for input from staff. She wants the BOS to approve what she has so far before it is officially released. Kent would like to see a 1 page notice describing the method of transmission and contagion for both employees and public to read before coming in. Jen said they will come up with something. She does not need a vote, just needs to know they are comfortable with what they have come up with. They all agreed they were good with it. Laura Silber mentioned the poster that Oak Bluffs has put out to be printed and distributed. They will look for it. Susanna said she had seen a sign in Aquinnah or Chilmark and wondered if West Tisbury was considering anything along those lines. Jen asked if the board would like her to look into getting the signs for posting at the town lines. They said yes, let's look into it.

- **Emergency Manager Position – Discussion of Extension:**

Russ was transitioned into a full-time job rather than a stipend position when this all began. It was originally for 3 months and that is coming to an end soon. She believes it should be extended for another 3 months as the work is not done, summer will bring new challenges. Russ has done an amazing job with communication and connecting resources and she doesn't want to lose him before summer begins. Cindy asked about funding and Jen said it would be applied for thru the CARES Act mentioned earlier. Skipper had some concerns about the fact that a lot of Russ's work is applied island wide, not just for WT and although he doesn't mind sharing, he wonders if the other towns should contribute towards the monetary effort? Jen said they have talked about it, and Russ is aware that he is responsible to WT first, but his work is applicable to the whole island. While an island wide Emergency Manager would be great, it can't happen quickly and the group of Emergency Managers have discussed it, but in the meantime they still need Russ on board in West Tisbury. There's also other emergency planning that he can do when things with the crisis slow down. Skipper asked Russ about his hours and Russ said he averaged about 90 hours every 2 weeks. Skipper asked how much was devoted to just WT. Russ said about 85%. There will be some FEMA money and the CARES Act for reimbursement.

Skipper made a motion to extend the position by 3 months. Kent Healy second. Roll call vote was unanimous

Cindy said Russell has been doing a great job and was thanked.

- **Absentee Voting:**

Tara said not much to report. So far 51 Absentee received and there are still ballots out there. It has been mentioned in the papers and the Police web site.

Old Business: there was none.

Topics the Chair did not anticipate:

Doug asked about the revised budget and will it go before the Finance Committee? Jen said they planned to get it to the Selectmen next week first. He asked if they should schedule a meeting for after their meeting and Jen said yes. He will get one scheduled for next week. He also reported FYI that the schools seem to be reluctant to make any significant changes and he is disappointed. Skipper disagreed with Doug. Bruce has department amended budget documents that he will get out by end of the week. Jen said Martina at County says they plan to make amendments on the floor because of timing.

Correspondence:

- Letter from Prudy Burt with an update of the Mill Brook Watershed Committee to remind who they are and their goals for the next phase of work.
- Resignation letter from M. Bradshaw.
- *Kent made the motion to accept the letter of resignation. Cindy second. Roll Call: 2 in favor. Skipper abstained.*

Public Comment:

Rich Saltzberg apologized if he missed the info earlier but asked about the plan for transportation to get people to the Tabernacle. Jen explained about plan with VTA. He also asked about legality of voting on Town business in another town and Jen said the MGL allows Town Meeting in another town in an emergency situation. Jen also mentioned that she doesn't have the resources to have childcare for TM this year.

There were no other comments or questions.

Skipper made the motion to adjourn. Kent second. Roll Call: all in favor.

Adjourned 5:28 pm

Respectfully Submitted by Janice Haynes, Administrative Assistant