

Approved Minutes
Town of Brookline Selectboard Meeting
Wednesday, May 20, 2020, 6:30 PM
(videoconference)

Present

Selectboard:

David Jones (Chair), Gwen Tanza
Shelby Brimmer, Bruce Mello,
Joseph Dutton

Town Officers:

Guy Tanza (Town Clerk, videographer)
Sara Wiswall (Treasurer)

Members of the Public:

Recorder: Peter Barus
Somara Zwick

(Meeting transcribed from video conference)

Call the meeting to order

The meeting was called to order at 6:30PM.

It was noted that FACTV would be broadcasting on FaceBook and YouTube

**Review changes to agenda if any
Scheduled members of the public**

Sara Wiswall, Somara Zwick

Unscheduled members of the public

Approve Minutes

Minutes from May 6, 2020 Regular Meeting

Mr. Jones moved to approve the minutes from May 6, 2020. Second by Ms. Brimmer. **All in Favor.**

Old Business

Financial/Tax Status

Ms Wiswall was asked where the Town stands since the fifteenth of April; and reported outstanding taxes of about \$40,000 with one or two that are as yet unprocessed. Mr. Tanza noted that this is normally about \$26,000 to \$30,000 and that if notices were sent out there should be a good response. Ms. Zwick noted from a historical perspective, that this does not seem alarming, and suggested the Treasurer and Town Clerk decide when to issue the Delinquency Warrant, notifying taxpayers of overdue payments; that Mr. Tanza will know if there are any unusual cases; that there should be a binder in the office to cross-reference if there is a problem.

Mr. Tanza requested a waiver of the tax penalty until June 15, 2020, as a grace period; he will send a notice out to this effect. It was noted that residents have many options for addressing difficulties with tax payments.

Mr. Jones moved that the tax collector be advised to waive penalties for late payment of fourth quarter taxes until June 15, 2020.

The Chair polled the Selectboard and found consensus.

Mr. Tanza noted that the Governor had given Towns authority to provide this waiver, noting that the only compensation for some towns is to collect penalties. Mr. Jones noted that the Motion is essentially an expression of agreement with the Governor's action; and it was noted that this only includes the penalty, not the interest on back taxes.

On the Motion, **All in Favor.**

Mr. Jones noted again that late payments are not much in excess of normal for this time of year; and asked the Treasurer if there are any other issues.

Ms. Wiswall reported a sufficiency to make final School Payment and still have about \$60,000 in the checking account. Mr. Jones suggested that there is no need to take any action regarding the tax situation, and there was consensus. It was suggested that caution would be appropriate.

There was discussion about upcoming operations

The Selectboard expressed appreciation to Ms. Wiswall and Ms. Zwick.

SLP Update

Mr. Mello discussed wood chip delivery by Thomas Bloom as discussed last meeting, not using sand; and gave a budget update, anticipating a balance of \$14,700.00; and noted that no new cases of COVID19 had been reported, two deaths in the last 40 days; and in light of this requested that Norm Holden be directed to start the window upgrade project, noting that it would not interfere with the operations at SLP; that masks should be worn in the building. Mr. Mello discussed working procedures and noted that there should be about \$9,000.00 in the account after paying for the window project.

The Chair polled the members; it was suggested to wait until June 15. There was discussion; that as a financial matter, with the \$40,000.00 in unpaid taxes, funds for the windows project could be needed, and it should be deferred; and that the benefit of spending in the local economy seems an appropriate act of community solidarity; and that spending any nonessential money may be a risk given the uncertainty of the larger situation.

Mr. Mello noted that day care centers are scheduled to be allowed to open on June 1; and discussed building maintenance.

Mr. Mello moved that Mr. Holden be directed to proceed with the window project. Second by Mr. Jones.

There was discussion; it was noted that revenue shortfalls are still possible in the near future. Mr. Tanza was asked to comment and suggested waiting until June 17, as there are tax obligations that would result in a Default if not met, suggesting that the Town err on the side of caution.

It was suggested that many people will be withholding expenditures out of fear, and the Town should take the lead, and the risk, in this case.

Mr. Mello noted that the contract is for \$5,500.00.

On the Motion, by roll call vote, Ms. Tanza, nay; Ms. Brimmer, aye; Mr. Mello, aye; Mr. Dutton, nay; Mr. Jones, aye. **The Motion Passed.**

New Business

School Budget Vote

Mr. Tanza explained that the vote on the school budget will be held June 10, 2020; that infection precautions will be maintained; that early and absentee ballot voting will be facilitated. There was discussion of voting procedures; volunteers were invited, Mr. Jones will help count, Ms. Brimmer will help count, at 7:00PM that Wednesday evening; it was noted that, as Mr. Tanza is responsible as an election official, he would not be counting votes, and five volunteers would be needed. Mr. Mello will help count.

Covid-19 Impact Survey

Ms. Brimmer suggested doing a survey of residents as to what might be needed, how residents are doing. There was discussion of next steps. Ms. Brimmer will draft the survey for next meeting.

Green Up Day May 30

There was discussion, that Green-up Day is a week from the coming Saturday; that the plan is to distribute bags from the parking lot, allowing no entry to the office; that Mr. Bills and Mr. Jones will collect the bags late in the day; that there have been emails about cleaning up Ellen Ware and the Recycle area in years past, and this will not be done in view of the pandemic; that the only activity will be picking up trash on the side of the roads.

Summary / Update / Reports

Guy Tanza - Town Clerk Report

Mr. Tanza reported that the Town office is still following the Governor's directives on masks and permissible numbers of people in the office; that there had not been many property title searches or sales; that many phone calls had been received about taxes; that it's been business as usual, with not as much foot traffic.

Highways & Roads

Mark Bills - Road Supervisor

Communications

Email

- WRC re: new Project Manager on the salt/sand shed, Margot Gia
- Chris Campany (WRC) re: informed that when PM is changed, the new candidate must be vetted through the same process as previous one; and that the Town should confirm acceptance of the new PM.

Mr. Jones noted that the Town chose WRC as PM, not the individual assigned; so the WRC is responsible to assign a suitable PM, not the Town; and Mr. Jones will respond to that effect.

Regular Mail

- Request from Listers (Marcia Omand) that the Vermont Dept of Taxes is allowing municipalities until August 15 to complete Grand List details, but they must have the support of the Selectboard. It was noted that the Listers have requested an extension.

Mr. Jones moved that the Listers' request for an extension to August 15, 2020 be granted. Second by Mr. Dutton. **All in Favor.**

- Cota & Cota offering of a budget payment plan (not historically done). Mr. Jones suggested that this not be taken up.
- Postcard from Southern Vermont Economy Project, a workshop announcement
- VLCT Newsletter

Pay Orders

Payroll

It was noted that this was signed on May 14, 2020.

By roll call, all members had reviewed the Payroll Warrant, and had no questions.

Mr. Jones moved to approve Payroll Warrant #2020-46, dated May 14, 2020, in the amount of \$1,161.73. Second by Mr. Mello. All in Favor.

Accounts Payable

By roll call, all members had reviewed the Accounts Payable Warrant, and had no questions.

Mr. Jones moved to approve Accounts Payable Warrant #2020-47, dated May 19, 2020, in the amount of \$1,389.70. Second by Ms. Tanza. All in Favor.

Set agenda for the next meeting – Wednesday June 3, 2020

- COVID19 Survey
- SLP Update
- Tax Collection
- Green-up Day debrief

Ajourn

Mr. Jones moved to Adjourn. Second by Mr. Mello. All in Favor

The meeting was Adjourned at 7:44 PM.

Respectfully submitted, Peter Barus, Recorder, May 20, 2020