

**HOLDEN BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
MEETING MINUTES  
March 16, 2020**

**6:30 AM**

**Memorial Hall**

Present: Anthony Renzoni, Tyler Gibbs, Robert Lavigne

Not Present: Geri Herlihy, Chiara Barnes

Others Present: Peter Lukes, Town Manager  
Stephanie King, Assistant Town Manager  
Stephen Madaus, Town Counsel

Chairman Renzoni called the meeting to order and the Board stood for the Pledge of Allegiance

**1. Appointments, Licenses, and Permits**

Motion by Sel. Lavigne, seconded by Sel. Gibbs, it was **UNANIMOUSLY VOTED TO APPROVE ELIZABETH PARENT TO THE CONSERVATION COMMISSION FOR A THREE YEAR TERM TO EXPIRE 12/31/2022 AS PRESENTED.**

Motion by Sel. Lavigne, seconded by Sel. Gibbs, it was **UNANIMOUSLY VOTED TO REAPPOINT JANE ARNTZ TO THE BOARD OF REGISTRARS FOR A THREE YEAR TERM TO EXPIRE 3/31/2023 AS PRESENTED.**

Motion by Sel. Lavigne, seconded by Sel. Gibbs, it was **UNANIMOUSLY VOTED TO APPROVE A PARADE PERMIT/ 5K RUN WALK FOR DAN MARINONE ON BEHALF OF HCA AS PRESENTED.**

Motion by Sel. Lavigne, seconded by Sel. Gibbs, it was **UNANIMOUSLY VOTED TO APPROVE A PARADE PERMIT FOR A 5K AND 1K FUNDRAISER RACE FOR MAYO PTA AS PRESENTED.**

Sel. Lavigne asked if they two parade permits understood that these are pending current situations and Governors order to not gather.

**2. COVID-19 Response**

Chairman Renzoni stated that he asked the manager for an update on this matter

Mr. Lukes stated that they had been worked on this matter continuously over the past week. He stated he was hesitant to make a lot of statements on this initially as information was constantly changing. He stated that last week the Town enforced extra cleaning and disinfecting by DPW and Grounds Department in addition to the normal cleaning service. He stated that once the schools were closed, they knew this would

impact operation further so as of Saturday Mr. Lukes ordered all town buildings be closed to public access as well. He stated this included: Town Hall, Gale Free Library, Senior Center, the Recreation Department, and even Trout Brook. He stated that the Town offers almost everything online; permits, bills, etc and that any necessary interactions can still occur over the phone.

Mr. Lukes stated that certain offices, if hit, only have 3 people in the office so the Town would have serious problems. He stated that they have a rotational schedule with the admins in his office so one is working from home and they don't risk the whole office. He stated that they are taking it seriously in order to maintain the Towns essential functions.

Mr. Lukes stated the obvious is fire and police and they don't want that to go through their ranks so that is a priority. He stated beyond our first responders would be the Water/Sewer Operations. He stated that if we were to lose key personnel it would impact clean water or response time for an emergency water main or other emergency situation. Mr. Lukes stated that DPW was offered a liberal change to policies in shift rotation, working from home and social distancing. He stated that the key was to keep the staff healthy. He stated that if anyone showed any symptoms they were not allowed back to work until they were checked and symptom free. He stated that they were tracking the costs associated with this matter as they believe that the federal government was going to reimburse the local municipalities and they would need proof to show FEMA what was spent.

Mr. Lukes stated that they cancelled any non essential travel, equipped the police with masks, and also incorporated questions for dispatch to ask when contacted about concerning people at a location. He stated that if there were individuals with symptoms the police were ordered to not enter the residence and to wait for the EMT's with the proper PPE in place. He stated that they have made all necessary precautions for all first responders and DPW/ Water/Sewer.

Mr. Lukes stated that as far as the impact to residents, they were worried about the seniors. He stated that Meals on Wheels was a concern that was discussed and something that was maintained by delivery. He stated that they also changed the way that they were doing outreach and it was now conducted over the phone instead of in person.

Mr. Lukes stated that the WRTA vans were still running and that all drivers and employees were asked to not come to work if they had any symptoms. He stated that they were going to try to maintain that service if they were able to.

Mr. Lukes stated that DPW is not doing any inspections on meters and nor making visits except in the cast of emergencies.

Mr. Lukes stated that in the short term, they have been trying to promote small businesses by working with EDC to catalog lists of businesses that were doing delivery and other services and they were hopeful to have that list compiled shortly.

Mr. Lukes stated that they were also maintaining the early discount on the bills that they were able to. He stated that they were asking people to not return library books or media and that the late fees would be waived. He stated that they were looking at other options to see what they could and could not do legally.

Mr. Lukes stated that Emergency Management's best guess is that a vaccination trial will go forward starting mid summer which would be a fast schedule. He stated that they spoke about drive thru testing and that St. Vincent's in Worcester was implementing it with a referral from a physician. He stated this is a big step forward and a huge weapon against spreading this infection.

Mr. Lukes stated that FEMA stockpiles were distributing supplies to states of things such as hand sanitizers and masks and that they should be made available to municipalities in the near future based on need. He stated that the overall message was for people to act with personal responsibility and follow the basic CDC guidelines of washing hands, not going to large functions, practicing social distancing, etc. He stated that these are the best actions you can take individually and collectively.

Sel. Lavigne asked if there was any consideration to move back to an on call Fire Department to prevent the spread.

Mr. Lukes stated that at this time there was not and that there was a good shift rotation in place.

Sel. Lavigne asked about the waiving of fees and the tax bill.

Mr. Lukes replied that trash was slightly different because it was in contract with Casella but everything else they were looking at. He stated that taxes are statutory however the fourth quarter was not due until May 1 and the Town was going to delay fees for the excise tax. Mr. Lukes encouraged everyone to pay online and if that wasn't possible to send a cashiers check in as they did not want cash floating in the building at this time.

Sel. Lavigne asked how the prompt pay discount would be accounted for.

Mr. Lukes replied that it would not be added to the bill.

Sel. Gibbs thanked the Manager for his quick response.

Chairman Renzoni suggested a daily update from the Town Manager's office to be posted on the Town Website and social media pages. He applauded the superintendent for closing the schools down quickly as well.

Chairman Renzoni stated that families need to isolate and do what they can as a community. He stated that good hygiene and cleaning anything that came in from the outside was good practices as well. Chairman Renzoni suggested purchasing gift cards or take out from local businesses to support them and keep them operational.

Sel. Lavigne agreed and suggested purchasing gift cards to use in the future if it was feasible.

Chairman Renzoni suggested doing this for any Holden business; not just food businesses.

Sel. Lavigne asked if there had been signs posted at the playgrounds showing they were closed.

Mr. Lukes replied there were not but they had lights off. He stated that they were going to put the tennis nets up as that was something the public could do while also practicing social distancing.

Chairman Renzoni stated that he met with the Town Manager and Emergency Management and that there is a great plan in place and the Town is reacting and analyzing things as they come in. He stated the plan is an evolving one.

Chairman Renzoni asked if there was any benefit to declare a Public Health Emergency at this time.

Mr. Lukes replied not at this time. He reiterated that there was a plan in place it was just an evolving plan.

Chairman Renzoni stated that the Town has a great emergency management team in place.

Mr. Lukes stated that a lot of people don't realize but that Town does this all the time for a variety of things. He stated that they have planned out, table talked, and done several different scenarios and many aspects will apply to anything. He stated the point of that was so the Town can have continuity of the operations plan that will work no matter what.

Sel. Lavigne stated that he read what was sent out from Mirick O'Connell regarding Town Meetings and Elections. He stated that they would have to see how that impacted Holden as well.

Mr. Lukes replied that many public meetings were being postponed or cancelled. He stated that they would try to complete the Fin Com meetings as they were so close to wrapping up the budget but that it was a fluid situation at this point.

Sel. Lavigne stated he was hopeful that everyone understood that this was a situation with a lot of moving parts and that the Town was trying not to overreact. He stated that a decision made today could potentially change tomorrow depending on new information.

Mr. Madaus stated that there would potentially be a legislative package that would have statutory instructions addressing extensions and other information coming out at some point.

Sel. Lavigne asked if there would be any sort of webinar offered by his firm to hear the high level points of that legislation.

Mr. Madaus replied that they could certainly work to do that.

Motion by Sel. Gibbs, seconded by Sel. Lavigne, it was **UNANIMOUSLY VOTED TO ADJOURN THE MARCH 16, 2020 BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING AT 7:12PM.**

**APPROVED:** APRIL 6, 2020

\*notes dictated from live feed channel 191 Holden Cable TV, March 16, 2020