

**HOLDEN BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
MEETING MINUTES  
March 21, 2020**

**10:00 AM**

**Memorial Hall**

Present: Anthony Renzoni, Tyler Gibbs, Geri Herlihy, Chiara Barnes

Not Present: Robert Lavigne

Others Present: Peter Lukes, Town Manager

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

**1. Discussion/ Vote to Declare Local State of Emergency**

Chairman Renzoni stated that the Board called a special meeting in order to declare a Local State of Emergency.

Sel. Herlihy read the Proclamation of Local State of Emergency into Record (attached).

A Motion was made by Sel. Herlihy and seconded by Sel. Gibbs. The motion was open for discussion.

Mr. Lukes stated that the Board of Health made a similar motion earlier in the week. A Local State of Emergency is done when there is an ongoing or imminent threat to the community due to any number of factors. Mr. Lukes stated that currently in Holden we do not have an on going emergency; however we are seeing cases regionally and are following both State and Federal Government. Mr. Lukes stated that this emergency declaration would not grant the Board or Town Manager any powers that they don't already have. He stated that it would allow them to move with some degree of speed with regulatory powers, it allowed the Town to do municipal agreements easier and quicker. Mr. Lukes stated that the declaration could also be a requirement to receive resources or funding from state and federal government. He stated that the town now is maintaining a catalog of what we are spending and he thinks it (the Town) will ultimately receive funds from state and federal to cover the spending.

Sel. Herlihy asked if any other towns had enacted this yet.

Mr. Lukes replied that Auburn did it and he thinks that Grafton did as well but was unaware of anyone else in the region.

Mr. Lukes stated that he also attended a teleconference call with Regional Town Managers and Worcester Public Health Alliance. He stated that they came to an agreement that if there was anything mentioned there that the Town would know prior to that meeting. He stated that would allow the Town to have that information about any

positive tests prior to the public call. He stated that he would inform the Board immediately if he found anything out.

Sel. Herlihy asked about the public safety departments.

Mr. Lukes stated that there were significant protocols in place and that he would review them in his update.

Motion by Sel. Herlihy, seconded by Sel. Gibbs, it was **UNANIMOUSLY VOTED TO APPROVE THE DECLARATION OF LOCAL STATE OF EMERGENCY FOR THE TOWN OF HOLDEN AS PRESENTED.**

## **2. Covid-19 Update**

Mr. Lukes stated that there were no known Covid-19 positive cases in Holden at this time. He stated that there were a small number of people quarantined in Holden as a result of having contact with someone that tested positive but as far as he knew there were no symptoms for these individuals.

Mr. Lukes stated that the Town Offices are being manned and that they are trying to keep staff healthy. He stated that they have set up everyone to be able to work from home, they are rotating key staff into and out of spaces and once a staff person leaves it is decontaminated for the next shift.

Mr. Lukes stated that the Town Manager's office will begin a fund for those in need and that all permits and applications for the Town can be done online and over the phone.

Mr. Lukes stated that the essential government services are being continued. He stated that with regards to public safety there have been some changes since the last meeting. He stated that they had been trying to keep the building open to the public but they have closed it to the public at this point short of an emergency. He stated that for non emergency situations, 90% of them can be handled over the phone. He stated that all 911 calls would be responded to as usual.

Mr. Lukes stated that all police officers were notified that public safety was a priority over leave time. He stated that if any officers show the slightest symptoms they were sent home until they were tested and cleared to return to work. Mr. Lukes stated that dispatch was a concern as well because it covered other member towns. He stated that the dispatch office was being cleaned multiple times a day. He stated that if the dispatch center were to become contaminated, they have the means to move the dispatch operation to a back up location which is upstairs in the fire department until they can deep clean the space and make it operational again. He stated that in the worse case scenario, that both spaces were contaminated, he has worked it out with Rutland to transfer services to that location for a brief time.

Mr. Lukes stated that police administration and staff were practicing social distancing and that the civilians in the department were set up on a rotating basis to work from home. He stated there were additional changes but that he did not want to brief the Board on it at this time for public safety purposes.

Mr. Lukes stated that the Fire Department and Chief Hall has strict protocols for incoming and outgoing staff to use different entrances and exits. He stated that the ambulances were decontaminated and common areas were not shared and decontaminated as well. He stated that they were doing a variety of things to keep people separate and that if they did have a positive test it would not wreak havoc on the entire department. He stated that they have put a lot of protocols in place at this point in time.

Mr. Lukes thanked both Chiefs and the departments for all their work. He stated that a lot of work went into this all and they are hopeful to keep everyone healthy and all town functions going.

Chairman Renzoni asked if the Town had reached out to MEMA yet for additional PPE's.

Mr. Lukes replied that they have but they don't anticipate it to be a fast process. He stated that EMS were okay for now and there are protocols in place to limit the PPE's the police officers need.

Chairman Renzoni asked about procedures that police were using for traffic stops.

Mr. Lukes stated that he did not want to get into these procedures publically for the safety of the general public.

Chairman Renzoni asked about permits and licenses.

Mr. Lukes replied that everything could be done online. He stated that there were several things that could not be delayed and there was a system in place so that the pertinent boards and commissions could review plans remotely and with streaming. He stated that this would allow boards such as the Planning Board to review things and stay within the deadlines that were previously set.

Chairman Renzoni asked about pending legislation.

Mr. Lukes stated that there were some matters that were currently pending legislation but that things like elections and acquiring signatures was a very touchy subject that could not be altered without a court order so they were waiting on more information from the state.

Chairman Renzoni asked about how the system was handling the access.

Mr. Lukes replied that the online ability was excellent and working well and that staff was still in place to field phone calls if anyone needed additional assistance.

Chairman Renzoni asked if they could be given a daily update from the Town Manager's office, possibly after the Public Health Briefing. He suggested a Facebook post or some other way to give the public a daily update.

Mr. Lukes replied that they could do that. He stated that as a Town they were also trying to promote local businesses and that they were collecting lists of local businesses that were offering different delivery services to get out to the public.

Chairman Renzoni replied that the local business community had reached out and were thankful.

Chairman Renzoni opened the meeting up for public comment; no members of the public were present or commented.

Motion by Sel. Gibbs, seconded by Sel. Herlihy, it was **UNANIMOUSLY VOTED TO ADJOURN THE MARCH 21, 2020 BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING AT 10:21 AM.**

**APPROVED:** APRIL 6, 2020

\*notes dictated from recording holdentv.com 3.21.20