

Town of Adams Massachusetts 01220-2087

BOARD OF SELECTMEN

TOWN HALL BUILDING
8 PARK STREET

Wednesday, April 29, 2020, 7:00 p.m.
MEETING MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER: On the above date the Board of Selectmen held a meeting on the first floor of Adams Town Hall. *It was announced that Members Blanchard and Duval were attending the meeting remotely for COVID-19 emergency purposes under 9410 CMR 29.10(5).* The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Chairman Hoyt. Present were Vice Chairman Bush, Member Nowak and Town Administrator Green.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Chairman Hoyt advised that "pursuant to Governor Baker's March 12, 2020 *Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A, §18*, and the Governor's March 15, 2020 Order imposing strict limitations on the number of people that may gather in one place, this meeting of the Town of Adams Board of Selectmen is being conducted via remote participation. No in-person attendance of members of the public will be permitted, but every effort will be made to ensure that the public can adequately access the proceedings as provided for in the Order. A reminder that persons who would like to view this meeting while in progress may do so by tuning into Channel 1303, thank you to Northern Berkshire Community Television OR by calling (888) 788-0099. Despite our best efforts, if we are not able to provide for real-time access, a record of this meeting will be posted on www.nbctc.org as soon as they are able."

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: The minutes for the April 1, 2020 and April 15, 2020 meetings were submitted for approval. *Motion made by Vice Chairman Bush to waive reading the minutes for April 1, 2020 and April 15, 2020 approve them as submitted, second by Member Nowak. Roll Call Vote: Nowak, Bush, Blanchard, Duval and Hoyt. Motion passed.*

PUBLIC COMMENT: Public Comment was taken at 1-(646) 558-8656. *Town Clark, Haley Meczywor* advised the absentee or early voting ballots for town elections are available now and citizens should call 743-8300 x176 to request applications to be sent out. Information is on the Town website.

NEW BUSINESS

COVID-19/ Town Operations Update: *Town Administrator Green* advised that the Town of Adams is weathering COVID-19 in a stable and steady manner. He reviewed some of the Covid-19 positive numbers, and explained that data will determine when the Governor will ease up on restrictions. He noted there were thirty-two Covid-19 positive cases in Adams total, and only seven cases open currently. He reported that there were approximately four hundred forty Covid-19 positive cases in Berkshire County and the death toll is thirty. He explained that Governor Baker extended the non-essential business closure order and gatherings of ten or more people. *Vice Chairman Bush* advised businesses in Adams to please abide by the rules as the Code Enforcement Officer is paying attention. *Member Blanchard* advised that the DPW crew is being separated but for safety of jobs may be in closer contact with masks.

Ratification of Special Police Officer: *Shawn Briggs. Chairman Hoyt* read the letter from Town Administrator Green recommending ratification of Officer Briggs, who retired after thirty-four years on April 18th and this will allow staffing support for the department as determined by the Chief.

Town Administrator Green advised in the event of needs during the pandemic or strained staffing he may fill in as needed as determined by the Chief. **Motion made by Vice Chairman Bush to ratify Shawn Briggs to the position of Special Police Officer, second by Member Blanchard. Roll Call Vote: Chairman Hoyt, Vice Chairman Bush, Members Blanchard, Duval and Nowak. Motion passed.**

FY21 Budget Update and Proposed Meeting Schedule: It was noted that hard work has been done on the budget and it has gone through several revisions. The budget was described as being level funded in discretionary funding. It was explained that combining the meetings with the Finance Committee and doing so virtually is not ideal, but given the timing to put a budget in place it is the best route. The budget meeting schedule was outlined, and it was noted that the meeting on May 20th will be available to look deeper at anything that needs further discussion with any department heads. It was noted that this meets the social distance requirements due to the public health crisis and keeping with the requirements of the Town Charter and Open Meeting Law. It was explained that the budgeting was done conservatively. State Aid is driven by legislature and what the Governor decides to put forth and it is uncertain currently what the state budget will look like. A provision is in place to cut back as it unfolds. Questions were answered about the timing of putting forth a budget without this information, and it was noted that it is more efficient to take it month by month and track it. The month by month budget strategy was discussed and would be utilized if it is unable to be done at town meeting. Legislation is going forward to address things if people cannot gather by Town Meeting, and communication has taken place with the Town Moderator to discuss this. Discussions are taking place about possibly splitting up Town Meeting into two locations. *Vice Chairman Bush* suggested making people aware of what is possibly going to take place so they can become more informed and prepared. *Member Duval* advised the Town has to have a physical budget by the end of the fiscal year in June and patience will be needed to wait for the Governor's direction.

Set Town Meeting Date for Monday, June 22, 2020: *Chairman Hoyt* advised this will give a little time from Town Election to allow for newly elected Town Meeting Members to get acclimated. **Motion made by Vice Chairman Bush to set the Town Meeting date to Monday, June 22, 2020, second by Member Nowak. Roll Call vote: Chairman Hoyt, Vice Chairman Bush, Members Nowak, Blanchard and Duval. Motion passed.**

Open Town Meeting Warrant: It was explained that this will allow for any citizen petitions to be brought forward for the warrant. **Motion made by Vice Chairman Bush to open the Town Meeting Warrant, second by Member Nowak. Roll Call Vote: Nowak, Bush, Blanchard, Duval and Hoyt. Motion passed.**

Set Closing Date for Town Meeting warrant as May 20, 2020: An explanation was given that this date closes the time for people to submit citizens petition on the town meeting warrant. It was clarified that Citizens Petitions require ten citizen signatures and to be turned into the Selectmen's Office by May 20, 2020. **Motion made by Vice Chairman Bush to set the closing date for the Town Meeting Warrant as Wednesday, May 20, 2020, second by Member Blanchard. Roll Call Vote: Chairman Hoyt, Vice Chairman Bush, Members Nowak, Blanchard and Duval. Motion passed.**

2020 Events Discussion: *Chairman Hoyt* advised that with Covid-19 the Town has seen a number of cancellations and postponements. **Memorial Day:** with the Governor extending the order until May 18th it does not leave much time for planning. It was noted that there is a possibility of the order being extended again. *Commander St. Hilaire* advised he is waiting for direction from the Board of Selectmen whether to go forward, and some neighboring communities have cancelled theirs.

Discussion took place about doing something more as a region that could be televised and brings the region together. *Vice Chairman Bush* suggested having a keynote speaker at Maple Street Cemetery and the Honor Guard make a speech on television with a 21-gun-salute to honor the veterans. Social distancing requirements were briefly discussed in order to make this a possible option. *Member Blanchard* noted that he did not think honorees for Memorial Day would want anyone putting themselves at risk to honor them. *Member Duval* noted that the Governor's Order is for a ten-person maximum and could be raised to twenty-five. A parade would include the high school band, scouts, children on bicycles and veterans with underlying conditions. A ceremony aspect would be supported as long as the American Legion wants to do it. ***Motion made by Member Blanchard to cancel the Memorial Parade and to put on a remote ceremony, second by Vice Chairman Bush. Roll Call Vote: Chairman Hoyt, Vice Chairman Bush, Members Nowak, Blanchard and Duval. Motion passed.*** **ASCCC August Events:**

The ASCCC put together a robust event program for the community and there have been conversations on what to do regarding the events scheduled for August. It was noted that the Town is dealing with a fluid situation and cannot predict what restrictions will be in place for August, or in 2021 and beyond. Public gathering allowances may increase incrementally for gatherings up to ten then 25, then 50 and 100. It was pointed out that the statue should be able to be done but it may be best if all events were rescheduled for 2021. It was acknowledged that the ASCCC has worked very hard and the fundraising thermometer has almost reached its goal. The emphasis is on social gathering, as there are food truck, bands, and other events planned that create social gathering. It was explained that contractual obligations need to be taken into consideration. Pam St. John, Chair of the ASCCC gave a brief overview of the events scheduled and advised that the decision would defer to the Board of Selectmen and Board of Health. *Member Nowak* advised it was heartbreaking for ASCCC members and it was difficult tell the sculptor to keep the statue in his studio for a period of time as it is pretty much finished and the engraving of the quotes should begin next week. Payment of funds are made upon completion of the statue, which was scheduled for August. It was explained that the Town will be ready to accept the statue in August and will coordinate with Community Development Director Cesan to be sure any work that needs to be done prior to that will be completed. Discussion took place about accepting the statue and having it veiled until a later date, such as Columbus Day Weekend, as long as the Police Department doesn't have any protection concerns from vandals. It was suggested that a chain link fence around the statue may help. Logistics and planning for both the coordination or cancellation of the events were weighed. It was pointed out that few of the bands and entertainment for the events returned responses due to the covid-19 pandemic. It was explained that these are Town events and no facility use requests are needed for them. It was noted that the ASCCC needs to get out of the contracts soon and cannot wait until July if events are not going to happen. It was also pointed out that the events were designed to bring people into our community, and if it was just for the Adams community it would be reasonable to honor Susan B. Anthony in year of 2020. Postponement of the contracts was briefly discussed to honor the committee's extensive fundraising efforts to go toward their intended purposes as opposed to cancelling. It was explained that many of the funds were earmarked, but it would be unclear what the schedule would look like next year. It was pointed out that the Committee Members have worked too hard and deserve the opportunity to celebrate Susan B. Anthony, who will always be part of this town. ***Motion made by Vice Chairman Bush to postpone ASCCC events until 2021, second by Member Blanchard. Roll Call Vote: Chairman Hoyt, Vice Chairman Bush, Members Nowak, Blanchard and Duval. Motion passed.***

Other approved events were reviewed, and it was noted that there were others still pending that have been on hold due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Discussion took place regarding putting this in hands of staff to work with organizers of events on the behalf of the Board of Selectmen on postponements, particularly the weddings which have to be planned. They would have to be reviewed on a case by case basis regarding the nature of the facility use. It was pointed out that the Town does not know at this time what the Governor's restrictions will be, and the Board of Selectmen should be providing guidance especially after postponing all ASCCC events. At this time there isn't a clear understanding of how many people can gather during the planned event dates, but it is possible that weddings may not be able to happen until the fall. It was pointed out that the event planners may have already made modifications and would like staff to work with them for anything that would need to come before the full board. It was pointed out that Ramblefest is on hold. ***Motion made by Member Nowak to have the Town Administrator work with event planners to modify, postpone or cancel their events accordingly, second by Vice Chairman Bush. Roll Call Vote: Chairman Hoyt, Vice Chairman Bush, Members Nowak, Blanchard, Duval and Hoyt. Motion passed.***

Revised Community Choice Power Supply Program Aggregation Plan: *Town Administrator Green* gave a brief background on the plan and the amendment made. He clarified that there was a small change in the agreement which allows an additional optional rate selection by citizens. There is a three-week public notice for comment, and the rate, which is less than what is currently being paid, was already agreed upon. He reviewed the opt-in plan to select more green energy. Rates are set in early March, and based on offerings by the broker, this is the process. It was noted that the Board does not have to do anything this evening and recommended Board Members and citizens review the plan as it will be back on an agenda for approval in the future.

Congratulatory Signs for Graduating Seniors: *Chairman Hoyt* explained that premade signage has been created to celebrate Seniors, and would be utilizing Town resources of approximately \$10 to \$45 per sign depending on size, for one sign per school to be placed on Town property. ***Motion made by Vice Chairman Bush to approve the purchase of three signs, second by Member Nowak. Roll Call Vote: Chairman Hoyt, Vice Chairman Bush, Members Nowak, Blanchard, Duval and Hoyt. Motion passed.***

DEPARTMENT REPORTS

Town Administrator: *Town Administrator Green* reviewed that the Board decided to waive tax late fees. Treasurer/Collector Rice only received ten inquiries to delay taxes, and everyone else is paying. The bag tag online process is going well and was the most difficult aspect with the building closed. Several weeks ago, the Board approved a \$50,000 contract with Tighe & Bond and with the assistance of Community Development Director Cesan the Town has received a Community Compact grant for \$50,000 to cover it. He reported that after thirty-five years of working for the Town of Adams in the Accounting office, Barbara Lewis is retiring. He thanked Barbara for her long service, noted that she has been a pleasure to work with and one of the most dedicated staff. She was congratulated by the Board Members as well.

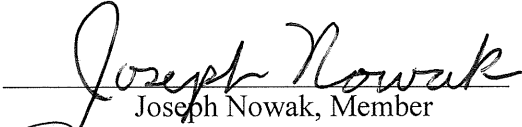
Town Counsel: *Town Counsel St. John III* advised that in the past six days he has been very active reviewing, researching and commenting on changes to the 40R zoning bylaw.

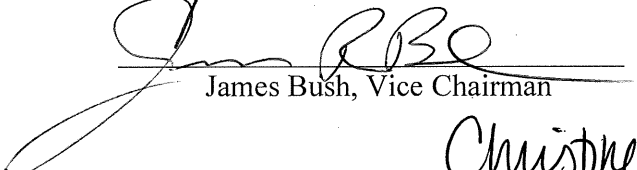
SUBCOMMITTEE AND LIAISON REPORTS: *Vice Chairman Bush* advised that the Banners for Fallen Heroes is moving forward. There will be a zoom meeting within the next couple weeks to finalize things. *Member Duval* advised that there was a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) meeting yesterday regarding the Adams Route 8 Pavement Project. The current cost has been approved and includes systematic bridge maintenance for the Grove Street bridge over the Housatonic River. He noted they are moving forward with all shovel-ready projects. It has passed all clearances needed.


ANNOUNCEMENTS AND GOOD OF THE ORDER: *Member Nowak* advised of dog droppings on sidewalks and asked citizens to clean up after their dogs. He noted that the Tattoo business on Park Street has vacated and is no longer in the Bishop West block. He advised that the Town worked hard to try to keep them here. He explained that he received a call from a gentleman on Summer Street that was concerned about area of the former shoe store, which is town land and littered. He pointed out that the area along Winter Street and the Town's parcel needs to be attended to and cleaned up. He and Vice Chairman Bush wished Town Financial Assistant Barb Lewis a happy retirement, and praised her hard work. A clarification was made about the posts for a sign by the Town Hall driveway to indicate the location of the visitors parking and accessible entrance for Town Hall. *Member Nowak* advised that when the Town takes properties in the future he would like to be informed. It was clarified that this is a function of the Treasurer in the Tax Title process. He advised that the Town needs to work very hard to get stimulus funding, and recommended writing letters to Senator Hinds and Congressman Neal as this area is entitled to it. He inquired about how many people put for the *Care Act* as many people have reported they put in for it but have not heard back. He asked for the Town to fight hard for the community and requested that the Board get a letter out now asking for help.


ADJOURNMENT: *Motion made by Member Nowak to adjourn the meeting, second by Vice Chairman Bush. Roll Call Vote: Chairman Hoyt, Vice Chairman Bush, Members Duval, Nowak and Blanchard. Motion passed. Meeting adjourned at 8:52 pm*

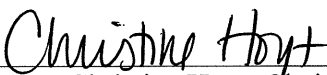
Respectfully Submitted by Deborah J. Dunlap,
Recording Secretary


Joseph Nowak, Member


James Bush, Vice Chairman


John Duval, Member


Richard Blanchard, Member


Christine Hoyt, Chairman