

## ***Town of Adams Massachusetts 01220-2087***

### **BOARD OF SELECTMEN**

TOWN HALL BUILDING  
8 PARK STREET ADAMS MASS.

CLERK

**Wednesday, July 15, 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. The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Board of Selectmen Chairman Hoyt. Present were Members Blanchard, Duval and Nowak. Present in the room were Town Administrator Green, and Code Enforcement Officer Blaisdell, Library Director Jayko, Council on Aging Director Girgenti, DPW Director Tober, Interim Police Chief Bacon, and Water District Superintendent Barrett. Attending remotely were *Board of Selectmen Vice Chairman Bush, Town Counsel St. John III, Board of Health Chairman Rhoads, Community Development Program Manager Ferguson, Justin Ohme and Richard Jackson* from TRC representing National Grid.

**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 recording of the meeting is available to anyone who wishes. Governor expanded number of people but rule of 10 in this room due to square footage. Tune into 1303 NBCTC or by number posted on town website or on this agenda. Recording of meeting posted on NBCTC website nbctc.org.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** The meeting minutes for *June 12, 2020* were submitted for approval. *Motion made by Member Blanchard to waive reading and approve the June 12, 2020 minutes as submitted, second by Member Duval. Roll Call Vote: Chairman Hoyt, Vice Chairman Bush, Members Nowak, Blanchard and Duval. Motion passed.*

**PUBLIC HEARING: National Grid Petition for Pole Relocation:** *National Grid & Verizon, 37-39 Commercial Street, Adams, 7:10 p.m. Motion made by Member Blanchard to put the Public Hearing back on the agenda, second by Vice Chairman Bush. Roll Call Vote: Chairman Hoyt, Vice Chairman Bush, Members Blanchard, Duval and Nowak. Motion passed.*

*Motion made by Member Blanchard to enter in to the Public Hearing for National Grid and Verizon Petition for Pole Relocation at 37-39 Commercial Street, Adams, second by Member Duval. Roll Call Vote: Chairman Hoyt, Vice Chairman Bush, Members Blanchard, Duval and Nowak. Motion passed.*

Community Development Program Manager Ferguson gave a brief background on the project and explained that two poles are planned to be relocated as part of the larger project. *Richard Jackson and Justin Ohme* of TRC on behalf of National Grid advised the poles are being relocated just east of Leonard Street on Route 8. Pole #37 and Pole #39 are being moved a few feet north and east of their current locations due to the widening of the road during the project to gain access for the road and sidewalks. The public was invited to give comments or questions and none were received.

***Motion made by Member Blanchard to exit the Public Hearing, second by Vice Chairman Bush. Roll Call Vote: Chairman Hoyt, Vice Chairman Bush, Members Duval, Blanchard and Nowak. Motion passed.***

It was noted that the pole locations will be onto homeowner land, and all abutters were notified in advance of the public hearing of the request. No mail or feedback was received regarding this prior to the meeting.

***Motion made by Member Blanchard to approve the request to relocate National Grid & Verizon poles 37-39 on Commercial Street as submitted, second by Member Duval. Roll Call Vote: Chairman Hoyt, Vice Chairman Bush, Members Nowak, Blanchard and Duval. Motion passed.***

**PUBLIC COMMENT:** *Board of Health Chairman Rhoads* advised of the capping of the number of tobacco permits in Adams, and advised that nine is the municipal aim. He reviewed the distance limitations on issued permits from schools, sports or athletic facilities and playgrounds. He noted the prohibition of flavors for regular vendors and it is available only in adult only stores. He briefly reviewed the structure of fines with graduated infraction amounts of \$1000, \$2000 and \$5000 as required by the state. He advised that there will be a public meeting on August 5<sup>th</sup> at 4:00 p.m. and he will publish the notice in the Berkshire Eagle and give information to the Town Clerk. *John Moyer* of the Banners for Fallen Heroes project advised that the banners will be put up on Park Street on Monday in response to the permission given by email from Town Administrator Green. The media will be notified. He noted the intent was to decide on the light poles they will be affixed to before Monday. It will be coordinated between the DPW, Community Development and the Banner team to determine which light poles they will be put on. *John Bordeaux* of the American Legion was given credit for his extensive work on the project. *Interim Police Chief Bacon* introduced himself to the public and thanked Chief Tarsa for his service, showing him around and helping in getting him indoctrinated into the position. He noted that he is looking forward to working with the officers and all others, and can be reached by email or telephone. *Member Nowak* inquired about the authorization by the Town Administrator of the banner installation without approval of the Board of Selectmen, as well as the location. He advised that all of the other banners had been approved for placement location through the Board of Selectmen. *Chairman Hoyt* advised this process was similar to the banners being put up for Susan B. Anthony, Thunderfest and Ramblefest and is coordinated by Community Development. *Town Administrator Green* advised he was approached by Vice Chair Bush and George Haddad regarding the project and wasn't aware of any special approval needed. It was pointed out that Vice Chairman Bush gave a number of updates on the project and concerns were addressed from Community Development regarding competition with Ramblefest and Thunderfest events. It was understood that the Board was aware of the project. A request was made for better communication between the Board and the Town Administrator. It was noted that Vice Chairman Bush and the Banners for Fallen Heroes team had done hard work on the project and the fallen heroes deserve acknowledgement. It was noted that in the past work was done with former Town Administrator Butler to put up Agricultural banners. A suggestion was made to research the past banner approvals to see how they were approved, and the location. It was noted that other communities have approved them on highly traveled secondary streets rather than main streets. *Vice Chairman Bush* advised that he reported on the Banners for Fallen Heroes project to the Board and that Park Street had been considered for the banners to be put up on every other pole so it would not to interfere with other banners. It was noted that it was reported in June that the banners were hoped to be installed before July 4<sup>th</sup> but there was a printing delay. Originally the location considered was Memorial Park but the poles were too short for the height requirement for banners and the location did not meet criteria so the only other location viable was Park Street. A suggestion was made to delay it while further information was gathered, and consensus was reached by Board Members to go forward with it as scheduled.

**Join Zoom Meeting:** <https://zoom.us/j/92178435508?pwd=ek9TWUMvcnFEcm9RZ2xlK2ZURlVBUT09>

**Meeting ID:** 921 7843 5508; **Password:** BOS0715

**Dial In:** (929) 436-2866; **Meeting ID:** 921 7843 5508; **Password:** 4213314

## **NEW BUSINESS**

**Update from the Adams Water District.** *Superintendent John Barrett* explained how the Water District arrived at the current water restrictions. He noted that Adams has a ground water supply and has a permit with regulations that must be met and encompass how and when to put in water restrictions. He outlined that from the annual report at the end of year they identify number of residents, how much water is pumped and if residents are using over 65 gallons per resident per day which indicates they must institute water restrictions. He pointed out that the Drought Management Task Force oversees reports and if they make a recommendation to enact water restrictions it supersedes what the Water District Superintendent does. He explained that the District monitors the USGS station in Adams and if that station reads under 14 cubic feet per second for 14 days the District will have to institute water restrictions. He detailed several things that contribute to drought conditions. He noted that there could be further restrictions if the USGS monitor station gets too low. He stated the District is not currently in violation but is under state mandate to institute restrictions as outlined under the Massachusetts Drought Plan that was put in place last year. He explained that when water is low wells will pull water from areas that the water doesn't normally come from and it could be contaminated. He noted that MassDEP sent out the letter requiring restrictions and gave 14 days to implement them. He noted that there was no indication of more than a small increase of water use due to Covid-19, and stated that most of the citizens are elderly and already at home. He outlined the Water District's Internal Leak Protection Program which finds leaks, and they perform ongoing fixes. The water use by Hoosac Valley High School was noted as not being significant. Specialty Minerals was pointed out as being a large water consumer but owns their own pump and has their own permits. He stated he didn't see restrictions changing soon and it is the Fairwater Conservation Plan that has changed. He reminded citizens that there are no lawn sprinklers or watering plants except only on Mondays before 9:00 a.m. and after 5:00 p.m. Enforcement was briefly discussed and he encouraged having a water caching system like rain gutters flowing into a barrel. He explained that the permit is up in 2028. He noted that groundwater is more regulated and if residents do not abide by the restrictions they will end up paying the price. Water District Superintendent Barrett was thanked for his report.

**Information about the Reopening of Schools:** *Chairman Hoyt* advised that reopening of schools has not been finalized and Superintendents Dean and Brosnan were asked to communicate information to the Board. She noted that they are working on three scenarios; full in person classes, a hybrid model of remote and in-class learning, or fully remote learning. She explained that the data has to be submitted by July 31<sup>st</sup> and they asked to wait until August. They will update the Board with changes along the way and were asked not to speak of their plans until possibly the second week of August.

**2020 Census Update:** *Council on Aging Director Girgenti* explained that prior to Covid-19 there was a solid plan for providing responses to the Federal Census. She noted that she is working with the Town Clerk and the Library Director and provided an informational map for the Board Members with flyers, information and handouts for distribution property owners. She reported that there has been a 66% response, which is behind where Adams was in 2010. She commended Dalton for having the highest response. She pointed out that the center of town showed the lowest response rate, and the town was broken into three areas which she outlined. She emphasized the importance of looking to see if the lack of response is due to rental areas with unrented units. She explained that it is vital for landlords to get information to get an increase in response. She asked to share the information on the social media page and advised that on August 11<sup>th</sup> door knockers will be out. She reported that another round of outreach is being done and will include the census information. She is looking into ways to safely allow internet access.

It was pointed out that back in 2010 when the federal census came in the numbers were a lot lower and did not represent local census counts. It was explained that the houses that have not responded will be targeted. It was pointed out that the local census shows higher numbers because people don't understand the difference between the local and the Federal Census, which helps with funding. It was cautioned that if people don't respond there is chance this area may be reduced by state representatives and lose its voice at the State House. It was explained that many federal grants come from the government due to the census. The final percentage of response from Adams 10 years ago was noted as being over 70%. It was emphasized that is very important to get most accurate report possible as this area already lost a representative seat in 2010 occupied by John Olver. It was also pointed out that second home owners and snowbirds are not appropriately filling out where they spend the majority of their time.

**Discussion about the Reopening of Town Facilities:** *Town Counsel St. John III* advised that there is a statute that provides that the Board of Selectmen has control over town property unless provided otherwise, and in the Town of Adams a provision was made to give the Town Administrator authority over town facilities. He noted that he is confident that the Town Administrator will work with the Board of Selectmen and keep them informed with respect to town property. *Town Administrator Green* advised that it is important that Board Members are aware that he does his best to communicate with the board, he takes feedback and works in a collaborative fashion. He noted that Covid-19 has stressed him and the staff, and there is no playbook for it so he is doing his best to comply with state and local guidelines and needs. He noted that he has been cautious, and the overarching context is to consider public health and safety.

**Library:** *Library Director Jayko* introduced the new Adult Services Librarian, Eleanor Goerlach to the Board and outlined her background. It was noted that her appointment was made in March, is responsible for library outreach service and she has been an exceptional addition to team. Library Director Jayko advised that the Library began takeout service June 24<sup>th</sup> and reviewed how many items had been checked out. She noted that precautions are being taken to get vital services going, and she is working on Step II for public computer access by appointment with Code Enforcement Officer Blaisdell and Building Commissioner Garner. Library hours were briefly discussed and it was noted that work is being done to add hours with the limited staff. Ms. Goerlach was welcomed as part of the Library staff.

**Council on Aging:** *Council on Aging Director Girgenti* advised that normal office hours began at the Council on Aging on June 29<sup>th</sup>, Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. She reported that there is a new operating walk in with magnet locks and appointments are made and there is a doorbell for appointments or delivery service. She clarified that restrooms and Visitors Center materials are closed to the public. She explained that there is nobody allowed into the building unsupervised or without an employee in the building. She pointed out that a cleaner has been hired to do surface cleaning daily and deep Covid-19 cleaning once a week. She reported that Berkshire Tents provided a tent for July and August outside as there is no plan to have programming in the building. She noted this is being done with cooperation and guidance by the Board of Health and groups of ten people or less, socially distanced. She listed upcoming presentations and explained the Council on Aging will provide lunches for people to come pick them up. She advised that picnic tables outside the building are available to community members by appointment and the staff can provide a table and chairs for them if they are sanitized appropriately. She welcomed back the SHINE health insurance counselor. She advised that staff is continuing to do outreach phone calls as normal business but there is a change in how services are delivered. She explained that the transportation program is continuing but numbers are deflated so there is only one van operating on partial hours, Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays. She detailed that the transportation vehicle is sanitized after each ride and all riders are using the wheelchair lift to allow the driver to stand a distance away with one person in the van at a time unless they are from the same household. She advised that Berkshire Regional Transit Authority provided grant funding for partition walls as splash screens that are removable.



**Town Hall:** *DPW Director Tober* advised that people are allowed into Town Hall by appointment with similar precautions as the Visitors Center. There is a sign-in sheet, a handwashing station and documentation provided by the state. A cleaning service has been hired to help with the process and supplement the custodian in meeting additional requirements. He noted that ventilation cleaning has also been taken on at Town Hall, the Police Station and the Visitors Center. He noted that it only takes one person with Covid-19 to change the system. Clarification was given about who is required to sign-in at the buildings. Code Enforcement Officer Blaisdell added that some spaces already have barriers in place, including furniture or distance between the employee and the member of the public. He noted that there would need to be barriers put up to direct the public to areas where people can visit, and appointments will need to be made ahead of time. The budgetary impact of adding barriers, plexiglass and other necessary measures was briefly touched on. *Town Administrator Green* reported that he held a department head meeting to review what online services are offered and it would be helpful for the Board of Selectmen to understand what is handled. He noted that departments will come in to report on this at a televised meeting.

**Update on the Reopening of Businesses and Parks/Fields:** *Vice Chairman Bush* asked how an establishment maintains occupancy if it is at maximum capacity when it rains? Code Enforcement Officer Blaisdell advised that the establishment is responsible to monitor it. It was noted that many establishments have notices that outdoor dining is weather permitting. *DPW Director Tober* advised that close work is being done with Code Enforcement Officer Blaisdell regarding practices and games. He noted that the fields are ready for use except for Russell Field, which remains closed for the season during construction. He explained that the adult exercise area and playground will remain closed due to the location of the new grass. He detailed that Valley Street and Reid Fields are ready to use with restrictions, and Renfrew is a game field and not for practices but the playground there is ready to go. *Code Enforcement Officer Blaisdell* outlined the state "play risk categories" and four levels of play. He noted those of interest are the basketball and skate parks, and under the current phase and step they are allowed to open and are restricted to no contact and social distancing. He pointed out the other restrictions of being supervised and if open, rely on the honor system of the users. He explained that if the Board wishes to open them on a conditional basis he will modify the order. Enforcement was noted as being difficult and would be a Board of Health responsibility. It was pointed out that neighboring communities had not put up their basketball hoops. Cleanliness and sanitation of playgrounds was discussed briefly. It was explained that the DPW did an initial equipment cleaning, and Covid-19 lives in the air for a short time but is pretty much dead overnight. It was noted that sanitizing playground equipment had to be prioritized for labor to be pulled to do this from filling potholes, and was the reason for "Use at Own Risk" signs. *Member Duval* requested that the Valley Street field pitcher's mound and baselines be worked on and that the Town provide infield materials as they did not receive any last year. Concern was expressed about encouraging activity on the fields.

**Discussion and Decision about Student Recognition:** *Chairman Hoyt* advised that it had been communicated to the Board that there was a desire to do a recognition but a number of awards were presented at the same event and she asked to postpone this agenda item and converse about it as she didn't want to miss anyone. She noted that the Board would have been missing some students if this item went forward and asked Board Members for their input. *Member Nowak* gave the reasons that he brought this item to the Board. He noted that the award of Athlete of the Year was given to one female and one male for all of Berkshire County, but the other MVP awards were given out in many different sports. He pointed out that MVP awards are laudable, however Athlete of the Year was prestigious. He explained that it was not his intention to make light of the other recognitions, and he felt strongly that something at this level was worthy of being brought forth for citation. He added that those that decide on the award recipients look beyond just the athletics, but also background, grades and civic activities. *Chairman Hoyt* advised she had done research and discovered that other Adams residents were part of the event and grew uncomfortable with not recognizing them. She asked for input from other Board Members. It was pointed out that there were also students of McCann School and other students were given Board recognition for other reasons.

It was acknowledged that this request had been given to the Board in advance, and also expressed that for the board to take on the responsibility of keeping track of every individual with well-deserved accomplishments for athletics or education, or teams that win state level awards and to recognize every one would be a full-time job. Concern was expressed that if anyone was missed there would be disappointment or hurt feelings. It was explained that the Board makes decisions for the community and must be fair. *Member Nowak* respectfully asked to remove the request to give the award to this well-deserving person after this input from the Board Members.

## DEPARTMENT REPORTS

**Town Administrator:** *Town Administrator Green* reported that the Town Common Rehabilitation and the Russell Field Projects are both underway, and the Grant Street Drainage and Crotteau Street projects are beginning. He noted that the Metropolitan Planning Organization had approved the Commercial Street Project to go forward. He detailed that bid awards have been accomplished, the project is moving forward and construction may be able to move forward before the end of the construction year. He reported that there will be a workshop scheduled with Tighe and Bond regarding the preliminary report on the Wastewater Treatment Plant to review the findings and explore how to fund it. He explained the report covers a capital improvement plan, a sewer enterprise fund and the grant application to take the capital improvement plant into an asset management plan. He reported that he spent time with Chief Bacon to integrate him into the community and thanked Chief Tarsa for time he spent with him as well. He advised that the Harpers time and attendance system has been. *Member Duval* noted that the Board will be approving the 1/12 budget for the month of August and inquired about the timing of Town Meeting as Williamstown is moving forward with theirs. It was explained that Williamstown was going forward with their Town Meeting despite not having the state funding. The Town of Adams is keeping in mind items for Town Meeting such as 40R and zoning, and if 40R goes through the state will give the town infrastructure funds. It was noted that the Town is paying for non-funded work for sewer lines on the Commercial Street Project as it does not qualify for a loan program, and it has been programmed into the capital budget. It was noted that other communities are moving ahead because they rely less on state aid than Adams. An inquiry was made about the gazebo status in the Town Common Rehabilitation Project and it was explained that the gazebo was around forty years old and was removed. Tree and landscaping work being done, and a new gazebo sitting areas and walkways are being put in place that meet current standards. The Town anticipates the arrival of the statue in August and is coordinating site work to be done in conjunction with that. It was pointed out that a majority of funds are park grant funds through a Parkland acquisition and the balance was authorized at last year's Town Meeting. The Adams Suffrage Centennial Celebration Committee donated \$20,000 for engineering of the project.

**Town Counsel:** *Town Counsel St. John III* advised that since his last report he responded to a request from Selectman Duval concerning the authority of the Town Administrator and Selectmen over town buildings, he reviewed and signed town contracts, he assisted the Town Clerk in responding to a request for public records and spoke with an attorney from the Secretary of State's office to assure the Town's compliance with the Public Records Act.


**SUBCOMMITTEE AND LIAISON REPORTS:** *Member Duval* reported that tomorrow evening there will be a Berkshire Regional Planning Commission (BRPC) Executive Committee meeting and also a full BRPC meeting. *Member Nowak* advised that tomorrow there will be a meeting via telephone for Mohawk Trail Woodlands Partnership to go over future plans for the organization. He inquired about the funding for traffic control by the bridge at Grove Street and it was explained that it is believed that the project will cover traffic control unless it goes over the contracted amount. *Vice Chairman Bush* reported that he was unable to participate in the Food Bank yesterday but they served 311 families yesterday and he praised the volunteers that worked. He thanked everyone for the work and the approval to go forward for the Banners for Fallen Heroes. He also thanked Chief Tarsa for his many years of service and welcomed Chief Bacon.

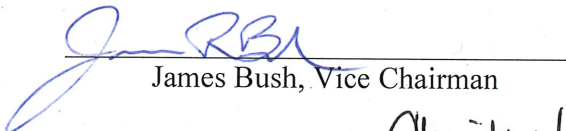
**ANNOUNCEMENTS AND GOOD OF THE ORDER:** *Member Duval* reported that the ceremony for incoming Interim Chief Bacon was well done. *Member Nowak* thanked Animal-Parking Control Officer Witek for the report she provided. He reminded the Chair that he is interested in having the Town Auditors com into give a report to the Board and to perform the evaluation of the Town Administrator. He also wished a happy and healthy retirement to outgoing Chief Tarsa and welcomed in Interim Chief Bacon. *Chairman Hoyt* advised she has been putting together the evaluation, has requested some information from other communities and will have that soon. She reported that the Police Department is having a number of retirements over the last couple months which amounted to 161 years of service to the community. She noted this is definitely something to recognize and honor and she is looking at ways to do that under current restrictions. She reviewed potential agenda items for the next three meetings. She explained that Town Auditor Dave Irwin will give a presentation to the Board next Wednesday and the Treasurer/Tax Collector will be scheduled to present an update as requested. She reported that there will be appointments for Zoning Board of Appeals, the Parks Commission, Fence Viewer and Special Police Officers upcoming as well. She asked Board Members to provide agenda suggestions by the close of business hours tomorrow and reiterated there will be a workshop on July 29<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 p.m. with Tighe & Bond on the Wastewater Treatment Plant. She noted that online services will be on the August 5<sup>th</sup> televised meeting at 7:00 p.m.

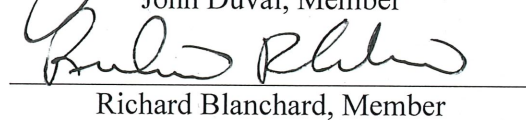
**ADJOURNMENT:** *Motion made by Member Nowak to adjourn the meeting, second by Member Blanchard. Roll Call Vote: Chairman Hoyt, Vice Chairman Bush, Members Duval, Blanchard and Nowak. Motion passed. Meeting adjourned at 9:28 pm*

Respectfully Submitted by Deborah J. Dunlap,  
Recording Secretary

  
Joseph Nowak, Member

  
John Duval, Member

  
James Bush, Vice Chairman

  
Richard Blanchard, Member

  
Christine Hoyt, Chairman