

Town of Adams Massachusetts 01220-2087

BOARD OF SELECTMEN

TOWN HALL BUILDING
8 PARK STREET

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Wednesday, August 19, 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 Duval, Blanchard and Nowak. Present in the room were Town Administrator Green, Chief Bacon, Water Superintendent Barrett and Town Clerk Meczywor and Jeff Snoonian of iBerkshires. On the call were: Town Counsel St. John III and Vice Chairman Bush and Lawrence Parnass of Berkshire Eagle.

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 recording of this meeting is available for anyone who wishes. Rule of 10 in place according to Code Enforcement for the size of the room in accordance with the Governor's order and NBCTC will post a link soon after the meeting. A review was made of who was in the room and who was on the call.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: The minutes for the July 22, 2020 meeting were presented for approval. *Motion made by Member Blanchard to waive reading and approve the minutes as presented, second by Member Duval. Roll Call Vote: Chairman Hoyt, Vice Chairman Bush, Members Duval, Blanchard and Nowak. Motion passed.*

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Join Zoom Meeting: <https://zoom.us/j/95498886786?pwd=ZnQxY25VQ2JGcDZBRWV0SE1uM0dvQT09>
Meeting ID: 954 9888 6786; **Passcode:** BOS0819

Dial In: 1 (929) 436-2866; **Meeting ID:** 954 9888 6786; **Passcode:** 7933526

No public comment was made.

NEW BUSINESS

Water District Update: *Water District Superintendent John Barrett* advised conditions he monitors in Adams are tracking closer to possibly having to implement Stage III Drought restrictions. He explained that if the water level drops below seven feet it will be at Drought Stage IV. He reported that if Drought Stage III is implemented restrictions will limit citizens to one hour of watering allowed per week, and if Drought Stage IV comes in there is no local option. He noted that the water level measured at 9.6 cubic feet per second this morning. Conditions in aquifer were reviewed from last meeting. He explained that he has never seen any wells drop when one well is running and now he is seeing water being sucked out of the adjacent well. The

Biggest well is Well #4 which supplies 900 gallons per minute to the town, for a consumption of 600 gallons per minute. He pointed out that it is about 5 feet from critical shutdown, and if need be the supply can be accessed from a deeper well which pumps less water or lower capacity but it would lower the water amount that can be utilized should there be a fire. He explained that the Fire District usually utilizes tanker trucks and as there is no water to take out of the streams right now they would rely more on this water source. He noted that the drought is at a record-breaking situation in town right now and he is seeing a lot of new things at the wells that have never been seen before so he is preparing for the worst. He noted that unless there is a rainfall that turns things around, the well is not under the direct influence of surface water and may take a longer time for levels to come back up. He stressed the message to the citizens to try to conserve water. He noted that he spoke with engineers and Well III is experiencing issues, causing it to be 6 feet from sucking air. He advised that he is going day by day and monitoring it. Clarification was made about the 24% loss of water and it was noted that unaccounted water loss is not necessarily leaked. He reviewed the leak detection program that runs twice a year and explained that during water breaks data accountability is done for every gallon that comes out and pipe footage with number of piping joints are considered. He explained that after the data is calculated there is about 13% of water unaccounted. He explained that some factors are that fire protection systems cannot be metered because they are not UL Rated and fire suppression systems don't have monitoring on them. He explained that this year the Fire District began their own flow tests on fire suppression systems that is addressing unaccounted water. He pointed out that when a hydrant is turned off it could be leaking. An inquiry was made about tanks overheating and needing to be flushed and it was explained that there was a problem with a tank overheating on East Orchard but it has been re-engineered because the tank was too large for the consumption from it. He noted that data informed the need to loop the system in off of Leonard Street to put 28 more houses on the system and to put in a couple weepers to get rid of some of the water. He advised that the result was that this year there has been no problem and he has maintained chlorine levels without having to do anything. He reported that he is working on getting another well up and rehabilitating Well #3, as he wants to run a water main and connect East Street, Meadow Street and East Road. He expressed the desire to upgrade the Glen Street service area for fire protection. The communication of water use restrictions was briefly reviewed and it was explained that some people don't get the paper or have internet so there is no easy way to inform all citizens. Currently information is put on Facebook, the Town of Adams and Fire District webpages and by word of mouth. He noted that the Berkshire Eagle and iBerkshires should be able to get the word out.

Appointment of Fence Viewer: Susan Denault. *Chairman Hoyt* reported that the Board had appointed two Fence Viewers and received this application just before that meeting. She noted that the Board could appoint a third person if desired. She read aloud the letter submitted with the application and resume. ***Motion made by Member Blanchard to approve the appointment of Susan Denault to the position of Fence Viewer, second by Vice Chairman Bush. Roll Call Vote: Chairman Hoyt, Vice Chairman Bush, Members Duval, Blanchard and Nowak. Motion passed.***

Review of Applications and Appointment of Parks Commission Members: Scott Cernik, Paul Nowicki. *Chairman Hoyt* reviewed that a request for applications to the Parks Commission was made and two interested parties wished to fill them until the next Town Election in May. She reviewed the two applications aloud. ***Motion made by Member Nowak to approve the appointment of Scott Cernik to the position of Parks Commission Member until Election in May, 2021, second by Member Blanchard. Roll Call Vote: Chairman Hoyt, Vice Chairman Bush, Members Duval, Blanchard and Nowak. Motion passed. Motion made by Member Blanchard to approve the appointment of Paul Nowicki to the position of Parks Commission Member until Election in May, 2021, second by Member Nowak. Roll Call Vote: Chairman Hoyt, Vice Chairman Bush, Members Duval, Blanchard and Nowak. Motion passed.***

Ratification of Full-Time Police Officers: Samantha Morin, Nicholas Kaiser. *Town Administrator Green* explained that these appointments were a replacement for retirements. He noted that the Police Department lost five staff to retirements over the last few months, and there were three open positions within the department that were anticipated being filled this fall. He reviewed the interviewing team, and recruitment for a third position was taking place as one candidate had been offered and declined the position. *Chairman Hoyt* read the

letter provided by Town Administrator Green recommending ratification of the appointment for Samantha Morin. *Interim Chief Bacon* advised the process started before he arrived, and was very thorough. He noted that he was impressed with all the applicants and it was tough to decide. He expressed confidence that the candidates before the Board will serve Adams vigorously and excited to be here in Adams engaged in the community with community policing. A request was made for the Board to be part of a ceremony for the officers hired, and it was explained that a ceremony will be scheduled in the future with the rest of the officers present when it can be managed with the logistics to do so with Covid-19. ***Motion made by Member Blanchard to ratify the appointment of Samantha Morin to the position of full-time Police Officer at Step 1 rate, second by Member Duval. Roll Call Vote: Chairman Hoyt, Vice Chairman Bush, Members Duval, Blanchard and Nowak. Motion passed.*** Brief discussion took place about challenges faced by police officers in the media in recent times, and it was explained that the Chief reached out to different groups and the NAACP to expand the candidate pool and the outreach was appreciated. ***Motion made by Member Blanchard to ratify the appointment of Nicholas Kaiser to the position of full-time Police Officer at Step 6 rate \$26.14 per hour on or about September 7, 2020, second by Vice Chairman Bush. Roll Call Vote: Chairman Hoyt, Vice Chairman Bush, Members Duval, Blanchard and Nowak. Motion passed.***

Early Voting Information: *Town Clerk Meczywor* advised that September 1st is the State Primary. She reviewed the obligation to have in-person voting on Saturday, August 22, 2020 from 12:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. She cautioned that voters are required to wear a mask and sign in. In-person voting will also take place on Sunday from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. and August 27, 2020 from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. The only activity that will be allowed will be to vote in person, and no other Town Hall business. Citizens were urged to knock on the door and to go to the Town Clerk office, where they will be escorted out the door to maintain social distancing. She noted that there will be regular cleaning of markers after use to keep as safe as possible. Polls will be held on September 1st at the DPW Garage from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. and citizens may also vote by mail. She noted at the Polls social distancing practice will be in place and booths will be cleaned regularly. November 3rd will be election in-person voting and mail-in voting. 2001 ballots were mailed out and 616 ballots were received back by postal mail or placed in the Drop Box at Town Hall. Citizens with questions were urged to call the Town Clerk office with questions at 743-8300 x176. Information is provided on the Town website and on Social Media. She advised that the deadline to register to vote is Saturday August 22nd, which can be accomplished at Town Hall or on the Secretary of the Commonwealth website to register online. Requests for an absentee ballot can be made until Monday, August 31st at 12:00 p.m. Town Clerk Meczywor and her staff member were thanked for going the extra mile in this complicated time.

September 1, 2020 Election Warrant: *Town Clerk Meczywor* reviewed the Election Warrant and reported that the election will be held at the DPW Garage, 92 North Summer Street on September 1st from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Specimen ballots are up on the Town website and posted at the polls and at the Secretary of the Commonwealth website for review before that day. ***Motion made by Member Blanchard to approve the September 1, 2020 Election Warrant as provided, second by Vice Chairman Bush. Roll Call Vote: Chairman Hoyt, Vice Chairman Bush, Members Duval, Blanchard and Nowak. Motion passed.***

September 2020 Budget: It was explained that the Town is still in the process of a 1/12 Budget and will move forward with September. Town Administrator Green noted that the budget was more than the past because the Hoosac Valley Regional School District ¼ assessment budget is there as well as McCann Vocational Technical School. He noted this should be the last 1/12 budget before Town Meeting. July expenditures were not near the total budgeted amount so staff was very cautious with spending. ***Motion made by Member Blanchard to approve the 1/12 Budget for September as presented, second by Member Duval. Roll Call Vote: Chairman Hoyt, Vice Chairman Bush, Members Duval, Blanchard and Nowak. Motion passed.***

Set Date for Annual Town Meeting, September 24, 2020 at 6:00 p.m. *Chairman Hoyt* reviewed the process for determining the date for Annual Town Meeting. She explained it would be a Thursday instead of Monday as Labor Day, Yom Kippur and Rosh Hashanah were factors. She noted the time is earlier than normal for because it will be an outdoor Town Meeting and as the sun sets earlier it will need to be concluded in daylight.

She explained that Town Meeting will take place at Bowe Field, and logistical work was done in May and June with a tent company and other organizations to work with sound and lighting. Logistics are still being worked out regarding Covid-19 restrictions and guidelines. She explained that Bowe Field was selected as the location as the event was planned for 175 people, and the pavilion, restrooms, electrical service and lights are there. She noted that some communities are utilizing two entrances and staggering Town Meeting Members and Bowe Field allows this option. A few precincts can use one entrance and others in another so not everyone goes into the same space. It was reported that the cost of tents is covered under COVID costs. Accessibility issues were being addressed. It was explained that the Memorial School gymnasium could not spread people out enough due to restriction requirements. *Vice Chairman Bush* asked for an alternate plan for Bowe Field in case it rains because he noted it becomes muddy. *Berkshires Reporter Snoonian* asked if state is giving reduced quorum options and it was explained that this option is only for Open Town Meeting systems and Adams has a representative system so it does not apply. It was pointed out that other communities have done it, and had a smaller turnout in Open Town Meeting format. It was noted that it is incredibly cumbersome to do a remote model and no other communities have chosen that. ***Motion made by Member Blanchard to set the date for the Annual Town Meeting for Thursday, September 24, 2020 at 6:00 p.m., second by Member Duval. Roll Call Vote: Chairman Hoyt, Vice Chairman Bush, Members Duval, Blanchard and Nowak. Motion passed.***

Open Town Meeting Warrant: August 19, 2020 to August 26, 2020. *Chairman Hoyt* reviewed the process and opening the Town Meeting Warrant for Citizens Petitions. She explained that under Town Counsel and Town Clerk advice the Town Meeting Warrant should be opened one more time. *Town Counsel St. John III* advised there is no reason to change the date as it had already been open and opening it would give additional time to provide articles. He noted that it is not bound by this seven-day period and can be done up to 7 or 10 days before Town Meeting to allow for publication notice. ***Motion made by Member Blanchard to open the Town Meeting Warrant from August 19, 2020 to close on August 26, 2020 at 4:00 p.m., second by Member Duval. Roll Call Vote: Chairman Hoyt, Vice Chairman Bush, Members Duval, Blanchard and Nowak. Motion passed.***

DEPARTMENT REPORTS

Town Administrator: *Town Administrator Green* reported that the Town received the Cherry Sheet numbers from the Commonwealth as Fiscal Year 2020 numbers and there will be a budget meeting next week. He noted that the budget did not have to be cut to the extent originally expected but there were some reductions. He explained he had a discussion with the Assessor and Town Accountant on the tax rate system and may be set for November to have a preliminary tax rate. He advised that staff has been very busy getting warrant articles drafted, working on logistics for the outdoor Town Meeting and doing projects on Valley street and Crotteau Street. He noted the sites are coming along nicely and Community Development is looking into grants. He updated that the Town Common project is still ongoing despite no work being done for the last three mornings. It was explained that the work was waiting on concrete which was hard to schedule due to high demand. An inquiry was made about the census takers going door to door, and it was explained that the census reporting was hovering at 66 percent. It was explained that Adams is tracking consistently with other communities in the Berkshires. Discussion took place about census forms where nobody resides and it was explained that it has to be reported as zero and nobody residing there but there still needs to be a response or the census taker will knock at the door and leave a note on the door. It was explained that the federal census can be filled out online, and if assistance is needed a call to the local office will provide staff to help navigate it. The importance of having an accurate census count was emphasized as it affects grants and congressional districts. A brief review was done of the Grant Street Drainage project and the logistical approach to it. It was noted that the pipes were too small in some areas and there was ledge. The funding for test pits to locate pipes exceeded the amount available before the pipes were found so the DPW did work to eliminate extra costs and were successful in finding them. It was pointed out that the Blueprints were not accurate and the Operations Supervisor located the pipes from another street prior to Memorial School being built in 1956. Work is being done now to continuing on the project and to increase sizing of the pipes in certain locations.

Town Counsel: *Town Counsel St. John III* reported that since August 5, 2020 he reviewed and commented on a public record request, he participated in a meeting in preparation for the dangerous dog hearing, he attended and participated in the dangerous dog hearing, he responded to a request for advice from the Board of Health, responded to a request for advice from the Town Clerk, he provided advice concerning the Town Meeting Warrant, he responded to a request concerning a waiver of the town code requirements concerning installation of garbage disposals, and attended and participated in the Board of Health meeting.

SUBCOMMITTEE AND LIAISON REPORTS: *Vice Chairman Bush* reported that he attended the Board of Health meeting via Zoom. He read aloud a letter he received letter from Donna Hartlage regarding the Banners for Fallen Heroes thanking the team for honoring those who died in combat. *Member Duval* reported that Route 8 is going to be redone by McDonalds to the north side of the Grove Street Bridge. He noted that the Bridge is not part of the project but the railings will be replaced and the contractor will follow safety and environmental codes. He advised that the contractor has a completion date of November 24 2020 but it is being pushed out. The Bridge rail will be received in December, but there will be a contract extension. He reported that the Route 8 project construction is forthcoming. Lead paint concerns have been addressed and details are available on the environmental aspects of the project and shielding for the Ashuwillticook Rail Trail from any toxic material. *Member Nowak* advised that Susan B. Anthony Statue Sculptor Brian Hanlon will be in town to meet with Community Development and the Adams Suffrage Centennial Celebration Committee to go over details and take a look at the Town Common. He reviewed arrangements with Atlantis Crane to put the statue into place. He advised of a Zoom Meeting for the Mohawk Trail Woodlands Partnership tomorrow and work will continue to bring the plan to fruition. *Vice Chairman Bush* reported that Channel 1 did a tribute to Susan B. Anthony and were around town. *Member Nowak* expressed that the Susan B. Anthony Birthplace Museum looks very nice and has a big quote and purple bunting on the window. He noted that it was unfortunate that the Town could not put forth a big celebration and hope to do it next year. *Chairman Hoyt* reported there has been a significant amount of outreach done regarding the events held virtually on Susan B. Anthony.

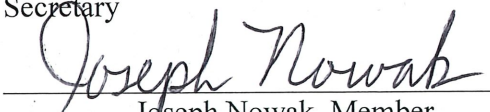
ANNOUNCEMENTS AND GOOD OF THE ORDER: *Member Nowak* noted the passing of Jane Burnett, and Judy Slosek and emphasized that he was sad to hear the news. *Chairman Hoyt* reminded the Board that the next meeting is Tuesday, August 25th at 6:00 p.m. as continuation of the Dangerous Dog Hearing.

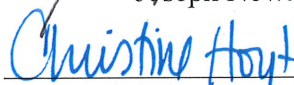
EXECUTIVE SESSION: #3. *To discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining or litigating position of the public body and the chair so declares; Local #204, STATE COUNCIL #93, American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, AFL-CIO (Clerical Unit).* *Town Administrator Green* reported no Executive Session was needed.

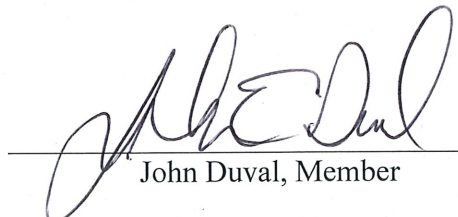
APPROVAL OF CONTRACT: *Local #204, STATE COUNCIL #93, American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, AFL-CIO (Clerical Unit).* *Town Administrator Green* reviewed the positions of the 18 staff enrolled in the union. *Motion made by Member Nowak to approve the Local #204, STATE COUNCIL #93, American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, AFL-CIO (Clerical Unit) as provided, second by Member Blanchard. Roll Call Vote: Chairman Hoyt, Vice Chairman Bush, Members Duval, Blanchard and Nowak. Motion passed.*

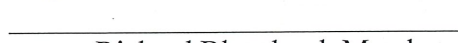
ADJOURNMENT: *Motion made by Member Blanchard to adjourn the meeting, second by Member Duval. Vote: unanimous. Motion passed. Meeting adjourned at 8:40 pm*

Respectfully Submitted by Deborah J. Dunlap,
Recording Secretary


Joseph Nowak, Member


Christine Hoyt, Chairman


John Duval, Member


Richard Blanchard, Member