



Office of  
SELECTMEN  
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**BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
MEETING MONDAY, AUGUST 10, 2020  
MEETING MINUTES  
GLADYS L. HURRELL REHOBOTH SENIOR CENTER**

**Present:** Selectman Frederick "Skip" Vadnais; Selectman James Muri, Selectman Gerry Schwall, Selectman Michael Costello, and Deborah Arruda, Interim Town Administrator.

**Absent:** Selectman Dave Perry

At **6:05 PM** it was voted to enter into Executive Session pursuant to **MGL CHAPTER 30A, Section 21(a) 2.** *To conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with nonunion personnel or to conduct collective bargaining sessions or contract negotiations with nonunion personnel; 4. To discuss the deployment of security personnel or devices, or strategies with respect thereto.*

**Roll Call Vote:** Vadnais, aye; Muri, aye; Schwall, aye; Costello, aye. Vote 3-0  
Selectman Schwall was not present at Executive Session, he joined during Regular Session.

**Call to Order at 7:00 p.m.:** The Board and the public participated in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

**1.0) Consent Agenda**

**Warrants for August 10th, 2020:** J. Muri read the weekly Warrants; 21-06B Payroll, \$116,453.20; 21-05A Withholdings, \$32,338.31; 21-06 Warrant, \$275,936.67. J. Muri motioned to approve the weekly Warrants as read. Second by M. Costello. Vote 3-0.

**Warrants for August 3rd, 2020:** J. Muri read the weekly Warrants; 21-05B Payroll, \$109,953.49; 21-04A Withholdings, \$35,479.01; 21-05 Warrant, \$75,108.26. J. Muri motioned to ratify the weekly Warrants as read. Second by M. Costello. Vote 3-0.

**Minutes:** Regular Minutes: 6/1/2020, 6/8/2020, 6/15/2020, 6/22/2020, 6/29/2020, & 7/6/2020  
Executive Session Minutes: 11/16/19, 10/21/19, 11/4/19 & 6/29/20

J. Muri motion to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes for June 1, 2020. Second by M. Costello. Vote 3-0.

J. Muri motion to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes for June 8, 2020. Second by M. Costello. Vote 3-0.

J. Muri motion to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes for June 15, 2020. Second by M. Costello, with discussion (minor correction on page 7). Vote 4-0.

J. Muri motion to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes for June 22, 2020 with minor corrections. Second by M. Costello. Vote 4-0.

J. Muri motion to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes for June 29, 2020. Second by M. Costello. Vote 4-0.

J. Muri motion to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes for July 6, 2020. Second by M. Costello. Vote 4-0.

### **NEW BUSINESS:**

#### **Action Item #1: Vote to Approve New Polling Location and Signing of the Warrant**

Town Clerk Laura Schwall was present to discuss the need to change the polling location. Due to the current situation with COVID-19 Pandemic, State of Emergency and Social Distancing Protocols, the Town Clerk is asking for the Board's vote to reduce the polling locations and to designate the Palmer River Elementary School Gymnasium as a polling location. The COA will not have the space needed for these two elections.

G. Schwall motion to designate Palmer River Elementary School - Gymnasium, 326 Winthrop Street (Route 44) in Rehoboth, MA as the polling place for the Tuesday, September 1, 2020 - State Primary Election and Tuesday, November 3, 2020 - Presidential / State Election, and to set 7:00 AM - 8:00 PM as the hours the polling place shall remain open for in-person voting; and to take any other action as may be required to comply with guidance provided by Town Counsel and the Massachusetts Elections Division. Said motion is made in recognition of the extraordinary challenges of conducting an Election during a public health emergency. Second by J. Muri. Vote 4-0.

#### **Discussion:**

G. Schwall commented that the Town is still in need of Election Workers. Please consider helping out.

#### **Action Item #2: Vote to Approve Chief Barresi Signatory Authority for REMA**

At the July 27th meeting the Board appointed Chief Barresi as "Interim Director to REMA. The Accounting office is asking for the Board's approval allowing the Chief to sign/approve any invoices, bills and payroll vouchers for REMA.

M. Costello motion to approve Chief Frank Barresi, Interim Director for the Rehoboth Emergency Management Agency (REMA) to have the authority to approve invoices and payroll vouchers pertaining to REMA. Second by J. Muri. Vote 4-0.

#### **Action Item #3: Vote to Accept Resignations, as submitted**

On July 23<sup>rd</sup> our office received the resignation of Abby Abrahamson as chairman of the Keep Rehoboth Beautiful Committee. Abby will be attending college in the fall. She is grateful for the opportunity the town gave her. She has done tremendous work for the town and has made a difference. Thank you, Abby for all your dedication and hard work.

J. Muri motion to regretfully accept the resignation from Abby Abrahamson as chair of the Keep Rehoboth Beautiful Committee. Second by M. Costello. Vote 4-0.

#### **Discussion:**

The Board thanked Abby and made mention that her successor will be Lorelei Kellum, another promising young resident.

On July 29<sup>th</sup> our office received the resignation of Terri Moitozo from the Board of Health. Thank you for your time and many years of service to the Town in several different capacities.

J. Muri motion to accept the resignation from Terri Moitozo from the Board of Health. Second by G. Schwall. Vote 4-0.

**Action Item #4: Vote to Approve New Hire for Highway & Ratify Forestry Employee Hire**

The Highway Superintendent, Mike Costello has hired a new employee for the vacant position of Truck Driver/Laborer. Four candidates were interviewed and Mike felt that Christopher Clark was most qualified for the position. The candidate has passed the DOT physical and his start date will be August 17<sup>th</sup>. We wish him well in his new position.

J. Muri motion to approve the hiring of Christopher Clark as a Truck Driver/Laborer for the Highway Dept. second by G. Schwall. Vote 3-0. M. Costello abstained.

Back on May 4<sup>th</sup> Christopher Vieira was hired by Rob Johnson as a Full-time Forestry employee. We had 5 candidates apply for the position and Rob felt that Christopher was the best candidate for the position. This approval by the Board was missed

G. Schwall motion to ratify and approve the hiring of Christopher Vieira to the Forestry Department. Second by J. Muri. Vote 4-0.

**Action Item #5: Vote to Approve September Spending Plan**

As the Board approved the August Spending Plan, the Accountant has put together a September Spending Plan. As mentioned in previous meetings, this is a spending plan and not necessarily a 1/12 budget, as the Town has to take into consideration monthly obligations outside of the 1/12<sup>th</sup> budget.

J. Muri motion to approve the September Spending Plan for \$2,661,739.00. Second by G. Schwall. Vote 4-0.

**Discussion:**

J. Muri added that this month's spending plan includes 50% of the Library payment, which is budgeted.

**Action Item #6: Vote to Accept Retirement**

M. Costello motion to table. Second by J. Muri. Vote 4-0.

**Action Item #7: Vote to Ratify Acceptance of \$5,000 Technology Grant from Bristol Elders**

Bradley Marshall and Linda Sherman of the COA applied for this grant in February and were accepted last week. The signed paperwork had to be in hands by Wednesday, August 5<sup>th</sup>. With guidance from Chairman, Selectman Muri and Interim Town Administrator Debbie Arruda approved the grant and asked the Director of COA, Linda Sherman to sign the paperwork.

J. Muri motion to ratify the acceptance of the \$5000 Technology Grant from Bristol Elders for the COA. Second by M. Costello. Vote 4-0.

**Discussion:**

J. Muri informed the Board that the money will be used for iPads for the elders for computer classes when operations return.

**Action Item #8: Vote to Accept PEG Quarterly Payment**

BOS office received the PEG payment for 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter and have forwarded it to the Collector's office.

J. Muri motion to accept the 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter PEG payment of \$55,837.57. Second by G. Schwall. Vote 4-0.

**Discussion:**

J. Muri explained that this money from Comcast is to allow us to continue our Rehoboth TV operations in town, a small amount of which comes out of everyone's Comcast bill.

**Action Item #10: Award Bid for PSB Modular Building Move**

M. Costello explained that we received three bids, two of which were incomplete and therefore had to be rejected per Town Counsel, leaving only Vanguard Modular Building Systems, LLC.

M. Costello motion to Award Bid to Vanguard Modular Building Systems, LLC of Exton, Pennsylvania for the amount of \$240,979.00. For the dismantling, moving, and set-up of 9 Modular Units from So. Dartmouth. Second by J. Muri. Vote 4-0.

**Discussion:**

J. Muri questioned if we have the funding to move forward with this? (Yes.)

G. Schwall cautioned that we need to prioritize our needs, necessities versus "wish-lists". He suggested that Interim Town Administrator Arruda needs to sit down with individuals to get a timeline and solicit bids moving forward. We need to be careful on our spending.

S. Vadnais said that once we have identified the components needed, there should be a meeting with M. Costello, the Interim Town Administrator, the Building Inspector, the bidder and any other necessary parties.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

**Action Item #1: Request to Approve Naming of Streets – Veader Property**

Planning Board is requesting approval of street names for Veader Property. Both Fire and Police have approved the names.

J. Muri motion to approve street names for Veader Property, Francelina Way and Veader Farmer Road. Second by M. Costello. Vote 4-0.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**Action Item #9: Request for Discussion: Annual Town Meeting**

The Board was joined by Town Moderator Bill Cute, Town Clerk Laura Schwall, and Finance Committee Chairman Mike Deignan to discuss the logistics of holding Annual Town meeting.

S. Vadnais began by making note of each representative's role. The Board feels the Town Moderator was the person who makes the decision of whether or not a chamber is adequate for not just hearing a meeting, but the safety of the people. It is the Board's responsibility to provide you with a chamber. The Town Clerk's office is responsible for the scheduling of the Town Meeting. The Finance Committee Chairman is here to speak to the financial concerns.

Mr. Cute asked the Board and all present to join him in a moment of silence to honor the passing of Dr. Harrington, former Superintendent of Dighton-Rehoboth Regional High School, and his contributions to the field of education in the Towns of Dighton and Rehoboth.

**Discussion:**

Mr. Cute spoke of his concerns regarding the logistics of holding a compliant socially distanced Town Meeting, citing the expected high voter turn-out and lack of a large enough space as obstacles. He acknowledged that other towns have been able to, but only because they probably had "vanilla" warrants and which garnered low attendance. Ours would be different because we have tough subjects to consider. One of the Articles, de-regionalizing of the schools is a very serious subject, that would bring a lot of people

to the meeting. Mr. Cute also cited the need to allow residents to voice their opinions, which in an outdoor venue, if a large enough one existed, would raise even more obstacles. This topic needs to be discussed; this is just not the right time. It would need to be an outdoor meeting. He proposed the high school's athletic field (which recently held the school's graduation) as a location, and then outlined why that would not be possible with the numbers expected (1000 to 1500 people). He cited more concerns, including providing adequate parking, restrooms, and sound-system. The record heat spell we are having now would not be compatible with having senior citizens out in a sunny ballfield for hours on end, as well as the threat of EEE, weather issues, and daylight timing if we waited till the Fall. He does not feel it can safely be done at this time.

M. Costello agreed that the Article is at the wrong time. He is concerned that a lot of people who want to attend and vote will not because of health concerns. He inquired if the petition to de-regionalize the school could be removed from the warrant only by the people who began the petition. Costello thinks numbers may go down if that Article is removed. Town Clerk confirmed that the party that submitted it would need to be the one who removed it.

J. Muri asked how long can we hold off?

G. Schwall answered we can hold off until 45 days after the State of Emergency, which is not going to be passed anytime soon. The State has extended their budgets until October 2020. He cautioned that the amount of State funding we will receive is unsure and might change, and once we vote on a budget, we can't take it back. He listed several Articles that will call on many voters, as well as the fact the you can't require people to wear masks. Yet another concern is getting a Wi-Fi signal out on the athletic field in order to be able to check in voters, and the need to shuttle senior citizens from parking to and from the field.

Mr. Deignan spoke of Dighton's Town Meeting only having 115 people, so it was doable. He asked the Board, what is the compelling reason for having this meeting? Once the budget is approved for DRRHS we are obligated to pay. Town of Dighton voted a lesser amount than the assessment. He has an issue holding a financial meeting at this time due to our revenue circumstance, uncertain state funding, etc. Mr. Deignan discussed what has been billed and collected for excise tax: January 2020, March 2020, May 2020 (very low). Finance Committee needs to put together a balanced budget – potential FY21 could be almost \$1M reduction.

G. Schwall answered, we have no compelling reason to hold Town Meeting right now.

M. Deignan – We will put the Town in jeopardy if we move forward with Town Meeting.

M. Costello agrees with Mr. Cute and Mr. Deignan, we have no reason to hold Town Meeting right now.

L. Schwall thanked the gentlemen for speaking and added her concern with the health of all the residents.

S. Vadnais – We came together to bring everyone up to date.

J. Muri- It is obvious we cannot hold a Town Meeting right now.

M. Deignan urged Departments to look over their spending and keep them tight, our 1/12<sup>th</sup> budget is on.

**OPEN FORUM-PUBLIC:**

None

**Town Administrator's Report:**

Board of Health Agent is requesting permission to hire a floater-temporary employee. There have been situations when other employees have called in sick and they only have one person working the station.

-J. Muri has spoken to Health Agent, comes from landfill budget. Would be per diem, so cost neutral.

J. Muri motion to approve the hiring of a floater-temporary employee for the Transfer Station. Second by M. Costello. Vote 4-0.

Working on advertising the Assistant Clerical Position for the Assessor's Office in house first, then externally.

-G. Schwall suggested the Board may want to look at other alternatives based on new budget issues.

-S. Vadnais – May schedule a meeting with Assessors, as it requires more discussion.

-J. Muri – agrees with G. Schwall, need to speak to Assessors.

-Board will put a hold on posting position till they can discuss with Assessors.

Auditors not coming into building because their boss was not comfortable with them staying in a hotel. Will do audit remotely.

Regarding scheduling the Veader Property Gravel Committee Meeting, Steve from Conservation Committee will only meet remotely, and Tomas would only be able to attend if after 7:30 PM. The Board proposed meeting in two weeks, with a dial-in option for those who cannot attend in person.

#### **Selectmen's Reports:**

**Vadnais:** no report

**Muri:**

-In light of the recent generator issues at the Public Safety Building, can we give the Fire Department a key to the fuel tank?

-M. Costello – A problem with person checking the fuel. Bill Pray will be checking throughout the week. When a storm happens Highway will take care of fueling generator.

-J. Muri -Can we issue a key for fuel tank to Fire Chief?

-M. Costello- Okay but if we have issues, I don't want to hear about it.

-G. Schwall stressed that this is an important issue because if the Public Safety building loses power and doesn't have generator back-up, they lose access to their 911 database which effects their ability to respond to calls.

-M. Costello outlined the protocol in place: Dispatchers notify Bill, he will time it for 6 hours to coordinate to get generator fueled.

-J. Muri- Will work with Derek to look into getting an Uninterruptible Power Supply (battery back-up) that will buy us time to protect the database in the event the generator fails again.

**Schwall:**

-Conference call with Anthony Azar and Paul Kitchen regarding the Town buying Chrome books and also reimbursing them for PPE purchased in anticipation of school reopening.

-Need to check because Regional districts work differently, we can't reimburse the school.

-School has received about \$900K from State and Federal government, for 2 middle school and high school too.

-Town Funds were used for PPE. It was purchased with encumbered funds from FY20 from both Towns.

-If we can buy it with CARES Act funds that would be the way to do it.

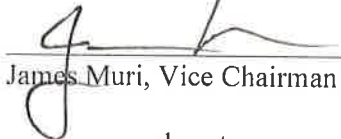
-Does Board desire that I get more information and report? Board agrees.

**Perry:** absent

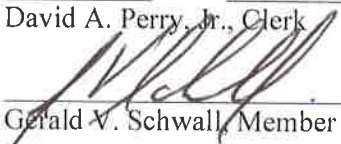
**Costello:** Police Department in Dartmouth is empty.

**ADJOURNMENT:** Selectmen J. Muri made a motion to adjourn the Regular Session Meeting at 8:56 PM., Second by Selectmen G. Schwall. Costello – aye; Muri – aye, and Schwall – aye, Vadnais – aye.

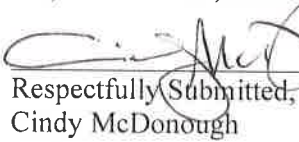
  
Frederick E. Vadnais, Jr., Chairman

  
James Muri, Vice Chairman

absent  
David A. Perry, Jr., Clerk

  
Gerald V. Schwall, Member

  
Michael Costello, Member

  
Respectfully Submitted,  
Cindy McDonough

Assistant to the Town Administrator

**Approved: 9/21/2020**