

TOWN OF STERLING
 BOARD OF SELECTMEN
 April 1, 2020

MEETING:

Chairman Kilcoyne called the Select Board meeting to order at 6:30pm. Roll Call: Selectman Cranson – Present. Selectwoman Sonnenberg – Participated remotely. Chairman Kilcoyne – Present. Also present were Town Administrator, Ross Perry and Executive Assistant, Kama Jayne.

Minutes

Selectman Cranson moved to approve the minutes of March 18, 2020. Selectwoman Sonnenberg 2nd. Selectman Cranson – Aye. Selectwoman Sonnenberg – Aye. Chairman Kilcoyne – Aye. Motion Carried.

ATM and Elections date change

The consensus of the Board was that, due to concerns for the corona virus and the subsequent requirement for social distancing, the ATM and Elections must be changed, After discussion, Selectman Cranson moved that the Annual Town Meeting be changed from May 4 to June 22, 2020 and the Annual Town Elections be moved from May 11 to June 29, 2020. Selectwoman Sonnenberg 2nd. Selectman Cranson – Aye. Selectwoman Sonnenberg – Aye. Chairman Kilcoyne – Aye. Motion Carried. The warrant will be posted in early June.

Amend Building Dept. permit fees

Building Commissioner, Sarah Culgin, has requested the following fee changes. These changes will bring Sterling building fees into line with other towns.

RESIDENTIAL BUILDING PERMIT FEES (red indicates changes to version that was voted on October 2019)	
Minimum Residential Permit Fee	\$60
New 1 & 2 Family Dwelling	\$60 plus \$10 per \$1,000 or fraction thereof of total project cost*
All other residential permits (accessory structures, additions, renovations, doors, windows, roofs, siding, chimney, solid fuel stoves, pools, solar, sheet metal, mechanical)	\$10 plus \$10 per \$1,000 or fraction thereof of total project cost, \$60 minimum fee*
Temporary Structures, Party Tents, Amusement, Carnival	\$60
Demolition	\$85
COMMERCIAL BUILDING PERMIT FEES	
Minimum Commercial Permit Fee	\$110
New Commercial Building	\$110 plus \$10 per \$1,000 or fraction thereof of total project cost*
All other commercial permits (accessory structures, additions, renovations, doors, windows, roofs, siding, chimney, solar, sheet metal, mechanical, signs)	\$10 plus \$10 per \$1,000 or fraction thereof of total project cost, \$110 minimum fee*
REINSPECTIONS	\$60
CERTIFICATES OF INSPECTION	\$60; Multifamily \$50+\$5/apartment

WIRING PERMIT FEES	\$60 per inspection plus \$60 per new or temp service; New house \$300**
RESIDENTIAL PLUMBING PERMIT FEES	\$60 plus \$10/fixture or appliance
COMMERCIAL PLUMBING PERMIT FEES	\$80 \$100 plus \$10/fixture or appliance
RESIDENTIAL GAS PERMIT FEES	\$60 plus \$10/fixture or appliance
COMMERCIAL GAS PERMIT FEES	\$80 \$100 plus \$10/fixture or appliance

After discussion, Selectman Cranson moved to amend the Building Department premit fees, per the request of the Building Commssioner. Selectwoman Sonnenberg 2nd. Selectman Cranson – Aye. Selectwoman Sonnenberg – Aye. Chairman Kilcoyne – Aye. Motion Carried.

Staffing plans due to Coronavirus

The Town buildings are closed to the public, due to the coronavirus pandemic. However, services are still being provided and residents who wish to communicate with the staff or make payments may use the phone, email, post office or drop box.

Support of warrant articles

Discussion Tabled.

Discuss FY 20 Budget adjustments

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Board is very concerned for the continued financial health of the Town. After discussion, it was the consensus of the Board that serious adjustments should be preemptively made to the proposed budget. The Board agreed that they wish to grant the 2% Cola raises to employees. However, they do want to hold off on any expense that may be shelved until a later date.

Therefore, the departmental budgets will be returned to department heads with the directive to withdraw from current funding requests - anything but bare bones essentials. It was suggested that, should the economy turn around, funding for some expenses may be addressed later, at a STM. Otherwise, requests for funding may need to be considered next year. The Select Board and Finance committee will begin the process of trimming the proposed budget as soon as possible. After discussion, Selectman Cranson moved that for the remainder of Fiscal Year 2020 all Departments must get approval by the Town Administrator for all but ordinary expenses and that the Town Administrator has the authority to deny requests for expenditures, if he deems them unnecessary at this time. Selectwoman Sonnenberg 2nd. Selectman Cranson – Aye. Selectwoman Sonnenberg – Aye. Chairman Kilcoyne – Aye. Motion Carried.

TA report

Town Administrator Report 4/1/20

Town Hall Operations

- Town Hall and all other municipal buildings remain closed to the public.
- Town Hall functions continue.
- Staff are working at home, when feasible. About ¾’s are still in the office, observing social distancing and wearing masks when in meetings
- Many board and committee meetings have been canceled. Those that continue are arranging remote participation per the State’s new OML regulations.
- Anyone planning to do business with the town hall should use the drop box in front of the building, or contact us via email or phone. Certain licenses and permits can be obtained via the new online e-permitting application.
- There is an e-Permitting tab on the Town’s home web page.

Vacation accruals:

- Due to the coronavirus travel restrictions and the resulting cancelation of vacation plans for many town employees, they are left with vacation time that they won't be able to use this fiscal year.
- With the Board's OK, I propose a FY 20 onetime waiver of two personnel policies.
 - Remove the requirement of 15 years of seniority with the Town and allow anyone to buy back 1 week of unused vacation, as long as their department has the funds, and they notify their department head by May 15th. (Current policy calls for notification by April 3rd.)
 - The current policy allows employees to carryover up to 80 hours of unused vacation time from one fiscal year to the next. I propose the Town allow up three weeks or 120 hours of unused vacation time to carry over to the next fiscal year
 - These changes would apply to non-union and union employees
 - A Board vote accordingly will be appreciated

(The Board wishes to consider these proposed changes at a future meeting)

Warrant Article:

- Prior to the warrant officially closing on March 16, a resident asked for a warrant article to allow the Town to sell a portion of a wooded lot owned by the Town at 7 Sunset Drive. This lot is part of the drainage system for the surrounding subdivisions with a retention pond. There is also a town water main running through the lot. I suggested that the interested party hire an engineer to draw the new lot lines and to demonstrate that his plan to use a portion of the lot will not interfere with the drainage system or town water line. Understandably, he is reluctant to spend engineering money on the lot until he owes it. I believe the Assessors recommended not selling this lot. The subdivision plan indicates it is NOT a Building Lot. I am waiting for Town Counsel's recommendation regarding the sale of this lot without clearly stated lot lines. Unless you have strong feelings, and now that the ATM has moved to June, I propose holding this warrant article request until the next meeting. Hopefully, Town Counsel will provide input and the potential buyer might be able to talk about his plans. (agreed)

Openings:

- The selection committee has unanimously recommended that Assistant Town Clerk Kathy Farrell be promoted to Town Clerk, effective May 18th. Barbara's last official day is May 15th. Kathy's hard work and accomplishments as ATC will make this transition easier. The Board will be asked to officially appoint Kathy as Town Clerk at their 4/15 meeting
- The selection committee and Planning Board have unanimously agreed to hire Patty Page as the Planning Board and ZBA Administrative Assistant. Patty's experience as a Planning Board member, current ZBA and Building Dept. Admin Assistant, as well as her work ethic, make her a great addition to the Planning Dept.
- Congratulations to Kathy and Patty.
- The job posting for the now vacant position in the Building Dept. was posted today. (Selectman Cranson will speak privately with the TA regarding her thoughts, as to whether this should be a benefitted position or returned to a non-benefitted position.)

Community Preservation Act:

- The CPA presentation planned for this Monday has been rescheduled to June 1st. Thanks to Domenica for making these plans. Details will be sent around when available.

OML complaint from last November:

- The Assistant Attorney General has ruled that the allegations raised in the complaint, if true, would not constitute violations of the Open Meeting Law and thus has declined to review the complaint and considers this matter closed.

Business and Correspondence

After discussion, Selectman Cranson moved that the board send a letter of support to Representatives Ferguson and Naughton and to Senator Tran regarding : House Docket No. 4935, An Act Providing for Moratorium on Evictions and Foreclosures During the COVID- 19 Emergency. Selectwoman Sonnenberg – 2nd. Chairman Kilcoyne – 2nd. Selectman Cranson – Aye. Chairman Kilcoyne – Aye. Motion Carried.

Note: The connection was lost for remote access.

PSAs

The Recreation Committee and the Library have teamed to help in entertaining children during the Covid-19 isolation period. People are encouraged to place bears in their windows for children to find on the Bear Hunt which runs from April 1 – April 30.

Neighbor to Neighbor applications for assistance can be found on the Select Board's Website page. Small Business owners are encouraged to contact their financial institutions to avail themselves to assistance for small businesses, in this time of crisis.

Adjourn

At 8:08 Selectman Cranson moved to adjourn. Chairman Kilcoyne – 2nd. Selelctman Cranson – Aye. Chairman Kilcoyne – Aye. Motion Carried.

Materials: minutes, motion to move ATM and Election, building fee schedule, TA report