

TOWN OF STERLING
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
April 15, 2020

MEETING:	Chairman Kilcoyne called the Select Board meeting to order at 6:36pm. 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	Selectwoman Sonnenberg moved to approve the minutes of April 1, 2020. Selectman Cranson 2 nd . Selectman Cranson – Aye. Selectwoman Sonnenberg – Aye. Chairman Kilcoyne – Aye. Motion Carried.
Appoint Town Clerk	After discussion, Selectman Cranson moved to appoint Kathy Farrell to the position of Town Clerk. Selectwoman Sonnenberg 2 nd . Selectman Cranson – Aye. Selectwoman Sonnenberg – Aye. Chairman Kilcoyne – Aye. Motion Carried. Kathy has served as the Assistant Town Clerk since October 2017. The Board welcomed her to her new position.
Approve Driveway - Justice Hill	The Board considered the requested approval of a curb cut for private driveway access to the proposed building on 160 Justice Hill Road. No trees or stone walls will be removed. The application was approved by the DPW, Fire Department and Building Commissioner. After discussion, Selectman Cranson moved to approve the Entrance To Public Ways permit request for 160 Justice Hill Road. Selectwoman Sonnenberg 2 nd . Chairman Kilcoyne – Aye. Selectman Cranson – Aye. Selectwoman Sonnenberg – Aye. Motion Carried.
Appoint to Affordable Housing Committee	After discussion, Selectman Cranson moved to appoint Weymouth Whitney and Angela Grattaroti to the Affordable Housing Committee. Selectwoman Sonnenberg 2 nd . Selectman Cranson – Aye. Selectwoman Sonnenberg – Aye. Chairman Kilcoyne – Aye. Motion Carried.
Name change for Affordable housing Committee	Town Planner, Domenica Tatasciore requested that the Board consider changing the name of the Affordable Housing Committee, to a more neutral name, such as the Housing Initiatives Committee. She explained that the reason for this request is because many residents have complained that the current name implies fostership of more 40B and Section 8 housing. However, the purpose of the committee is to also promote affordable housing opportunities for seniors who wish to down-size and remain in Town, as well as younger residents who may be just starting out in the community. After discussion, Selectman Cranson moved to change the name of the Affordable Housing Committee to the Housing Initiatives Committee. Selectwoman Sonnenberg 2 nd . Selectman Cranson – Aye. Selectwoman Sonnenberg – Aye. Chairman Kilcoyne – Aye. Motion Carried.
One time Personnel policy change	The Town Administrator, Ross Perry requested that the Board consider making a one-time Personnel Policy change. He explained that due to the coronavirus pandemic, travel restrictions and the resulting cancellation of vacation plans for many town employees, they are left with vacation time that they won't be able to use this fiscal year. Therefore, he proposed a, onetime FY20 waiver, of the personnel policy, which would allow employees (Union and non-union alike) to carry over 120 hours of unused vacation time to the next fiscal year. (Currently, the limit is 80 hours). After discussion Selectman Cranson moved that, on a one time FY20 basis, (due to the coronavirus pandemic), employees be allowed to carry over 120 hours to Fy21. However, any additional unused time will be forfeited by the employee at the end of the FY20. Selectwoman Sonnenberg 2 nd . Selectman Cranson – Aye. Selectwoman Sonnenberg – Aye. Chairman Kilcoyne – Aye. Motion Carried.

April 15, 2020

Consider sale of
partial lot on
Sunset

The Town has received a request to sell a portion of the Town owned property at 7 Sunset Drive. Town Council drafted the following ATM article for the Board's consideration;

ARTICLE __. Transfer Portion of 7 Sunset Drive for Purposes of Conveyance

To see if the Town will vote to transfer the care, custody and control of a portion of that property located at 7 Sunset Drive, being Assessor's Parcel 157-51, described in a deed recorded with the Worcester South District Registry of Deeds in Book 13525, Page 306, as shown on the sketch plan filed with the Town Clerk, from the Select Board for drainage purposes, and authorize the Select Board to convey said property on such terms and conditions and for such consideration as the Select Board deems appropriate, including reserving such easements as the Town may require, and to execute such documents as may be necessary to carry out the purpose of this article, or take any action in relation thereto.

Recommendation: subject to agreement with abutting property owner relative to preparation of engineering and survey work, to Town's satisfaction, at sole cost and expense, and payment of Town's attorneys' fees

After discussion Selectman Cranson moved to include the article in the Town Meeting Warrant. Selectwoman Sonnenberg 2nd. Selectman Cranson – Aye. Selectwoman Sonnenberg – Aye. Chairman Kilcoyne – Aye. Motion Carried.

Consider
extensions on
Taxes and water
bills

Due to the Covid Pandemic and so many being out of work, the Board was asked to consider extensions on Municipal bills. After discussion, Selectman Cranson moved that the Town adopt the local option of the provisions of "An Act to Address Challenges Faced by Municipalities and State Authorities Resulting From COVID-19," Chapter 53 of the Acts of 2020, to extend due dates for real and personal property tax payments and applications for exemptions and a waiver of interest on certain municipal tax and other bills paid by June 29, 2020 as listed below:

1. The due date of real and personal property tax bill has been extended to June 1, 2020. June 1, 2020 is the new due date even if the due date for payment on a previously mailed tax bill is May 1, 2020.
2. The due date for applications for property tax exemptions has also been extended to June 1, 2020. June 1, 2020 is the new due date even if the due date for applications on previously mailed tax bill is April 1, 2020.
3. Waive interest and other penalty for late payment of any excise tax, betterment assessment or apportionment thereof, water bills or Dog License or other charge added to a tax for any payments with a due date on or after March 10, 2020 where payment is made late but on or before June 29, 2020. This applies to late payments of bills that have a due date of March 10, 2020 or after, when such bills are paid late but paid on or before June 29. This waiver of interest does not apply to bills with due dates before March 10, 2020 or if the bill is not paid on or before by June 29.

Selectwoman Sonnenberg 2nd. Selectman Cranson – Aye. Selectwoman Sonnenberg – Aye. Chairman Kilcoyne – Aye. Motion Carried.

Budget and ATM
update

The Town Administrator reviewed the amendments to the proposed FY21 Omnibus budget and the capital budget. The Finance and Capital Budget Committee met on April 13th to work toward level funding the budget and limiting Capital expenses. This was done to help alleviate the anticipated hardship on taxpayers, due to job loss caused by the Pandemic. To that end, the following was proposed;

- FY 21 salaries and wages continue as submitted with COLA and Longevity & Merit increases

- Expenses will be level funded at the same amount as FY 20.
- New positions are limited to the Board of Health part time Administrative Assistant and the Assistant Town Administrator
- Capital requests were prioritized and total requests reduced from \$1,439,501 to \$790,151.

This proposed budget was returned to Department heads for final acceptance. If a department head has a real concern for a budget item that was eliminated from this budget, they may attend the next Finance Committee meeting to plead their case.

Warrant article support

Warrant article support was tabled until April 22nd. It will be discussed at a joint meeting between the Select Board, Finance Committee and Capital Budget Committee

Town Administrator Report

TA Report-

Town Hall Operations

- Continue with a mix of work at home and staggered appearances at Town Hall.

Budgets:

- After the Fin Com meeting Monday, we are revising the FY 21 budget by level funding most expense items from the FY 20 budget.
- Fin Com approved a revised capital budget that reduces the \$1,439,501 initial requests to \$790,151

The Town Administrator and the Accountant/Operations Manager will work with the Finance Committee and Department Heads to resolve any differences that may arise, due to the level funding of the budget.

Water:

- The DCR has granted permission for the water department to have test wells dug. Two test wells will be drilled off Greenland Rd and one off John Dee Rd near the W. Boylston line. Paul Lyons, the DPW Superintendent, has worked hard to reach this milestone.

PSAs

- There is a Sterling Lancaster Cable Television interview with the Town Administrator that the public is encouraged to view. It provides an update regarding the COVID -19 in Town and the procedures that are implemented at the Town Hall.
- Condolences to the family of Sarah LaMountain. Sarah had been a member of the School Committee. She was very dedicated to the best interests of the school system and she will be missed.

Adjourn

- KUDOS to the Board of Health during this turbulent time. They have been proactive and continue to provide guidance for the Townspeople during the pandemic.
- Please note: Information regarding the number of COVID cases in each town comes from the Department of Public Health not the local Board of Health. The "official" count does not usually coincide with the actual number of cases.
- The Board urges residents to be patient during these trying times and if they DO have a complaint, it must be accompanied by a name. Anonymous complaints will not be recognized.

At 7:56 Selectman Cranson moved to adjourn. Selectwoman Sonnenberg – 2nd. Selectman Cranson – Aye. Chairman Kilcoyne – Aye. Selectwoman Sonnenberg – Aye. Motion Carried.

Materials: agenda, minutes, driveway application, volunteer applications, email for AHC name change, Motions for Personnel Policy Waivers, Conveyance article Sunset Drive, motion to move due dates and waive late fees, capital and omnibus budgets, A Report