



Town of Swampscott
Select Board and Board of Health Emergency Joint Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, April 29, 2020 – 6:00 PM
Virtual Meeting

SELECT BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

Peter Spellos (Chair), Naomi Dreeben (Vice Chair), Polly Titcomb, Laura Spathanas

BOARD OF HEALTH MEMBERS PRESENT

Marianne Hartmann, (Chair), Emily Cilley, Stephanie Goodman

MEMBERS ABSENT

Don Hause

OTHER TOWN OFFICIALS PRESENT

Sean Fitzgerald, Town Administrator; Allie Fiske, Assistant to the Town Administrator; Jeff Vaughan, Health Director; Neia Illingworth, Public Health Nurse; Marzie Galazka, Director of Community Development; Molly O'Connell, Senior Planner; Graham Archer, Fire Chief; Ron Madigan, Police Chief; Max Kasper, Building Commissioner; Lieutenant Bill Waters, Harbor Master Police Dept.

The meeting was called to order at 6:08pm

COVID-19 UPDATE

Town Administrator Sean Fitzgerald provided an update on Swampscott's response to COVID-19, and provided a recap on the current Town closures and safety protocols. The State and Swampscott Declaration of Emergency currently remain in effect, as does Swampscott's Stay-at-Home Order.

There was a discussion regarding the Swampscott Harbor operations. Mooring Permit Renewal Letters are being sent out but there will be no use of the Swampscott pier or launch. Private prams or kayaks can be utilized to access boats. Lieutenant Bill Water, Swampscott Harbormaster spoke briefly to provide more context. There was also a note made that a decision should be considered regarding pedestrian safety measures on the pier.

Town Administrator Fitzgerald confirmed that all Town-sponsored events are postponed, so summer recreation programs are on hold. He also ran through a review of the face covering requirement and where they should be worn.

Jeff Vaughan, Director of Public Health noted that there been 94 positive cases in Swampscott and 6 deaths. He provided an overview of the new reporting requirements for essential businesses which will provide the Health Dept. with critical information on areas of potential concern including compliance on employee health checks, facemasks, and social distancing. These surveys are completed by restaurants, grocery stores, and assisted living facilities. There are also ongoing physical inspections of each including large residential buildings.

Public Health Nurse Neia Illingworth provided a public health update. She explained the contact tracing process and noted that 1 lab confirmed case typically resulted in 4 close contacts, so with 94 cases this results in a list of 376 close contacts. She stated that the pandemic is a long-term event expected to continue for at least a year to 18 months and we will be working on a phased approach to reopening, which health care experts indicate should not occur until there is at least 14 days of decreasing numbers of cases and deaths, available testing for everyone, hospitals have capacity to treat all patients, and there is extensive contact tracing.

There was a discussion about whether or not a face mask order for all public spaces would be implemented. Marianne Hartmann, Chair of the Board of Health remarked that there did not appear to be a reason for that at this time.

EXTENTION OF COVID-19 EMERGENCY ORDERS:

In line with the Governor's extension of the State of Emergency until May 18, the Select Board discussed and voted on extending each of Swampscott's 3 emergency orders to May 18 as well.

- Emergency Order #1: Extend closure of Swampscott Playgrounds until May 18, 2020 at 11:59pm
- Emergency Order #2: Extend the Stay at Home Order in its entirety to May 18 at 11:59pm
- Emergency Order #3: Extend in its entirety to May 18, 2020 at 11:59pm

On Select Board **MOTION** (Dreeben) and **SECONDED** (Spathanas) it was **VOTED** by roll call to extend each of Swampscott's three emergency orders to May 18 at 11:59pm. Roll call: Spathanas (YES) Titcomb (YES) Dreeben (YES) Spellios (YES)

On Board of Health **MOTION** (Cilley) and **SECONDED** (Goodman) it was **VOTED** by roll call to extend each of Swampscott's three emergency orders to May 18 at 11:59pm. Roll call: Cilley (YES) Goodman (YES) Hartmann (YES)

There was a discussion regarding an amendment to Emergency Order #3 to provide exceptions to the face covering rule. Individuals seeking an exception can contact Jeff Vaughan in the Health Dept. They make up a simple ID that people can show at a business establishment to confirm that the individual is exempt from the order. Businesses will be notified about the new order.

On **MOTION** by Select Board (Dreeben) **SECONDED** (Spathanas) it was **VOTED** by roll call to amend Emergency Order No. 3 of the Swampscott Select Board and the Swampscott Board of Health by adding a new Section 9 as follows:

9. This Order shall not apply to persons for whom a face covering would cause impairment to an existing health condition, or persons requiring a reasonable accommodation/modification as a result of a qualifying disability as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act and/or applicable laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Roll Call: Spathanas (YES) Titcomb (YES) Dreeben (YES) Spellios (YES)

On **MOTION** by Board of Health (Cilley) **SECONDED** (Goodman) it was **VOTED** by roll call to amend Emergency Order No. 3 of the Swampscott Select Board and the Swampscott Board of Health. Roll Call: Cilley (YES) Goodman (YES) Hartmann (YES)

CHAPTER 53 OF THE ACTS OF 2020

The board reviewed the following:

- Option to Delay Property Tax Due Date to June 1: Allows the Select Board to delay the due date for municipal property tax bills from May 1 to June 1, 2020
- Option to Extend Due Date to file for tax exemptions: under sections 57, 57c, and 59 of G.L. Chapter 59 for tax exemptions from the usual due date of April 1 to June 1, 2020
- Option to Waive Interest and Penalties for Late Payments due after March 10 and paid before June 30 for any excise, tax, betterment assessment, water, or sewer bill, or other charge added to a tax. Deferral must be related to circumstances caused by COVID-19.

There was a question about who makes determinations on whether or not circumstances for deferral are valid. Assistant Town Administrator of Administration and Finance Ron Mendes stated that they will put a waiver of interest on all residential properties assuming that any payment at this point has some tangential relationship to COVID-19. The Town does not have the ability to waive interest and fees beyond what the state has ordered.

Select Board Vice Chair Naomi Dreeben asked how people apply for exemptions altogether. Mr. Mendes stated there are some exemptions (elderly and Veterans, for instance) that would go through the Board of Assessors but that generally there is no exemption that would broadly apply to the entire community.

On **MOTION** (Spathanas) and **SECONDED** (Titcomb) it was **VOTED** by roll call that the Select Board exercise the option provided under Section 10 (a)(ii) of Chapter 43 of the Acts of 2020 to extend the due date provided under Section 57C of G.L. Chapter 59 from the usual due date of May 1, 2020 to June 1, 2020

AND that the Select Board exercise the option provided under Section 10(b) of Chapter 53 of the Acts of 2020 to extend the due dates provided under sections 57, 57C, and 59 of G.L. Chapter 59 for tax exemptions from the usual due date of April 1, 2020 to June 1, 2020.

AND that the Select Board exercise the option provided under Section 11 of Chapter 53 of the Acts of 2020 to waive the payment of interest and other penalty in the event of late payment of any excise, tax, betterment assessment or apportionment thereof, water rate or annual sewer use or other charge added to a tax for any payments with a due date on or after March 10, 2020 and

made after its respective due date but before June 30, 2020 that results from a demonstrated inability to pay due to circumstances related to the outbreak of COVID-19 or the governor's March 10, 2020 declaration of a state of emergency; provided that the inability to pay shall include a demonstrated financial hardship of a resident, which may include, but not be limited to, loss of employment, serious illness of someone within the home or death of someone within the home.

Roll call: Dreeben (YES) Spathanas (YES) Titcomb (YES) Spellios (YES)

OTHER UPDATES

Select Board Vice Chair Naomi Dreeben provided an update on the Food Availability Program and Senior Outreach initiatives.

Board of Health Member Emily Cilley stated that there will be a blood drive on May 29 at Swampscott High School.

Board of Health Director Marianne Hartmann highlighted two high school students in Swampscott who are sewing masks and donating proceeds to My brother's Table.

On Board of Health **MOTION** (Cilley) and **SECONDED** (Goodman), it was **VOTED** by roll call to adjourn the Board of Health portion of the meeting. meeting. Roll call – Cilley (YES), Goodman (YES), Hartmann (YES)

IMPROVEMENTS TO THE SWAMPSCOTT FISH HOUSE

Director of Community & Economic Development Marzie Galazka provided a history of the Fish House and explained who currently uses the facility (Commercial Fisherman, Swampscott Yacht Club, DPW, Swampscott Recreation Department, Harbormaster, and Swampscott Sailing Team.)

In 2020, over \$90,000 was done in repairs and maintenance but more work is needed. Ms. Galazka provided an overview of short-term, mid-term, and long-term goals. Building Commissioner Max Kasper provided an update on the work that has been completed. To name a few, this includes replacing roof shingles, reinstalling existing side windows, demolishing crumbling railing, replacing fire alarm beacon, cleaned up electrical system, replacing HVAC system, repair frozen pipe in bathroom and install heaters, and conducted ADA assessment.

Mr. Kasper listed some planned projects including completing exterior repainting, installing balustrade and railing, replacing custom exterior doors, conducting structural assessment of roof, design accessible bathrooms, HVAC installation in ground floor bathrooms, and replace pier pilings and floats.

Some long term potential projects could include (not all listed) repairing and rebuilding chimneys, improve all entrances for ADA standards, install new electrical service, design & install elevator or access to upper floor, restore wood floor on second floor, explore feasibility of

designs to accommodate sea level rise, re-envision the parking lot to create multi-use space that can accommodate more activities.

Senior Planner Molly O'Connell provided some information about potential funding resources for these projects. The fact that there is a commercial fishing fleet could be helpful from a funding perspective.

There was a conversation about in what way the Town has supported the cost of the Fish House in the past. Assistant Town Administrator of Operations Gino Cresta gave some history and stated that the Town has always supported it. There is concern about putting financial resources into a facility that largely is not available for public use unless affiliated with a private organization and how this can be remediated through planning and conversation with current tenants. There was acknowledgement of the contributions the current tenants have made to the building.

Chairman Spellios requested that there be a deeper discussion about the Yacht Club lease and understand what revenue is generated from the Fish House and what the Town is financially contributing each year. Spellios requested that the group return in 6 months to get an update.

UPDATE ON LYNN SEWER DISTRICT CONTRACT

Town Administrator Sean Fitzgerald discussed in basic terms about the plan to revisit the Lynn Water & Sewer agreement which expires in September 2020. A team has been compiled to study and analyze the complexity of a multi-year infrastructure agreement.

There are financial concerns in terms of how we analyze costs of such an important long-term agreement. A consultant has been procured to talk about options and alternatives. The Town will be seeking proposals from engineering firms that have specialized expertise in solid waste negotiations with regional districts and will work with Town Staff, Select Board members, and members of the Capital Improvement Team to discuss the topic.

There was a question about timing, considering the agreement expires this fall. Town Administrator Fitzgerald stated that there is some flexibility and a potential for an extension to give time to analyze and have careful conversations.

Another update on this topic will be provided in 6 weeks.

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR REPORT:

Town Administrator Fitzgerald provided a brief update on the following topics: Tax & Water/Sewer Billing and Application Due Dates; Town Meeting/Municipal Elections; Harbor regulations; Wastewater Treatment Options Considerations; Finance Committee Meeting; Meeting with Municipal Managers and Health Experts, and the *Swampscott has Virtual Talent Show* on Friday, May 8th.

CONSENT AGENDA:

- Review of meeting minutes from the following meetings: March 20, 2020 and April 22, 2020

On **MOTION** (Dreeben) and **SECONDED** (Spathanas) it was **VOTED** by roll call to approve the Consent Agenda. Dreeben (YES), Spathanas (YES), Titcomb (YES) Spellios (YES)

SELECT BOARD TIME

The Select Board thanked the individuals involved in the response to COVID-19.

On **MOTION** (Spathanas) and **SECONDED** (Titcomb) it was **VOTED** by roll call to adjourn the meeting. Roll Call: Spathanas (YES) Titcomb (YES) Dreeben (YES) Spellios (YES)

Meeting adjourned at 8:23pm.

True Attest,



Allie Fiske, Assistant to the Town Administrator