

TOWN OF EGREMONT, MASSACHUSETTS
MEETING OF THE SELECT BOARD
MINUTES

Date: March 17, 2020
Time: 6:00pm
Place: Town Hall
Egremont

Present at the table were Chairman George McGurn, Vice-Chair Lucinda Fenn-Vermeulen, Board member Mary Brazie.

Others in attendance: Evan Triantafylidis(Berkshire Record), Chuck Ogden, Alison Dixon.

It was announced that the meeting is video and audio recorded.

MINUTES:

Action on minutes was postponed to a future meeting.

SCHEDULED ISSUES:

Alison Dixon of the Housatonic Valley Association presented the Board with a project fact sheet (attached) re: the road-stream crossing management plan that HVA is drafting. They have assessed all road/bridge/culvert crossings that are not state jurisdiction, approximately 33. The Town will get an inventory of the crossings fully funded by HVA, with recommendations for repairs. Once the plan is drafted HVA will request a meeting with the Board, Road Superintendent and Conservation Commission to discuss the plan.

NEW BUSINESS:

COVID-19:

Town Hall is closed to the public but remain fully staffed. A new drop box will be placed outside the handicapped entrance. Town Officials are asked to limit their access to after hours (this was later changed to closed to only essential town officials). Police Officers will be reminded of social distancing. Highway will be limited to one person in a vehicle at a time, reminded of social distancing and asked not to interact with the public. UV wands are an effective means of killing the virus. A phone call will be sent to residents with town, state and federal information and a mailing will be drafted to send out with the tax bills. All meetings, with the exception of the Selectboard and Board of Health, are suspended unless vital to town operations. The Library is closed and the director has put in for vacation time. This can be adjusted later.

The Planning Board will be asked to postpone the hearing on the ADU bylaw. A special town meeting will be held to act on this. The proponents of the petitioned ADU bylaw will be asked to agree to postpone action on their petition until later and again this will be moved to a special town meeting.

Meetings will be set up as real time zoom meetings and free conference call can be used. The Town will pay for extra time on zoom.

Wi-Fi is currently available to residents at the Town Hall and the Library. FiberConnect generously installed a new, higher speed, Wi-Fi at Town Hall free of charge.

The Board will discuss the MIIA Health Insurance premiums and the Longevity Pay policy at its next budget meeting.

The Board voted unanimously to authorize legal counsel to sign host community agreement certificates for the Town.

The Board voted unanimously to re-appoint Carla Turner as the Inspector of Animals.

The Board accepted with regrets the resignation of William Minnaci as Part-time Police Officer. The Chief will be asked to conduct the exit interview.

OLD BUSINESS:

Emerald River LLC is still seeking a location for its recreational marijuana retail facility so no negotiations have begun on the host community agreement.

The Town birthday celebration will take place on August 16, 2020 at French Park.

The septic system for the Affordable Housing Project is being installed. Though there is still hope on the houses from Great Barrington being moved here, Construct is now looking for other means to build housing on the site.

In response to a complaint from a tax payer who lives out of the country, it was noted that abutter notifications have to go via mail to the address on file with the Assessors office. For these people notices will also be sent via email if possible.

FOLLOW UPS/UPDATES:

The Route 23/41 hearing has been postponed indefinitely due to the Covid-19 situation. Mark Moore has reported that lighting can be a part of the infrastructure and there are possibly federal funds available to pay for the fixtures.

At 7pm, the meeting recessed to March 18, 2020 at 10am.

Meeting resumed at 10am on March 18, 2020.

Present were Chuck Ogden, Sue Funk, Juliette Haas, Mary McGurn.

The Board voted to declare a state of emergency in light of the Covid-19 situation.

Employees will be given contact information if they feel they need emotional support.

The Berkshire Health Alliance has applied for funds for the Town's through the Department of Public Health.

At 10:40am the meeting recessed to March 18, 2020 at 1pm.

Meeting reconvened at 1:05pm. Jason LaForest was present.

The Board approved the message below being sent to residents and town officials. George and Mary will do the phone broadcast.

“Directives on Egremont Town Operations and COVID-19

To protect Town residents and employees during the coronavirus pandemic, the Egremont Selectboard has declared a state of emergency and implemented the following:

As of 3/18/2020 Town Hall is closed to the public until further notice. Staff will continue to work normal hours and are still available to assist you by phone, internet or by individually arranged appointment.

There are boxes outside all Town Hall doors to leave payments or paperwork.

All Town Hall offices can be reached at 413-528-0182. An updated message will prompt you to dial the appropriate extension. Free Wi-Fi Hotspot is available in the Egremont Town Hall parking lot. Email addresses for all Town Offices are on the Town’s webpage: www.egremont-ma.gov. If you are unable to find a particular email use tegrement@egremont-ma.gov and it will be forwarded to the appropriate person.

The Transfer Station will remain open as usual however the attendant will not assist you with your trash. The Swap Shop is closed effective immediately. The TS will suspend accepting Construction and Demolition waste, TVs, Electronics and fluorescent light bulbs. Please plan accordingly.

The Police and Fire Departments are available as always and will be working closely with Southern Berkshire Ambulance Squad on medical calls. Continue to call 911 if you are in need of emergency personnel.

All non-essential meetings of Town Boards, Commissions are postponed until further notice with the exception of the Board of Selectmen and the Board of Health.

The Library is currently closed. The Library Director Lesliann monitors phone messages and can be reached via email at egrlibrary@egremont-ma.gov. E-books continue to be available.

During these turbulent times your cooperation, understanding and patience is deeply appreciated. The Selectboard will continue to keep you updated with any changes, additions or suspension of any the directives as described above as it continues to monitor federal, state and local developments.

Be safe. Be well. And please support your neighbors.”

Sue Turner, who is returning shortly from traveling, will be asked to self-quarantine for 14 days. The Assessors office is closed until further notice.

At 1:27pm the meeting recessed to March 19, 2020 at 10am.

The meeting reconvened at 10am on March 19, 2020.

The meeting on Tuesday, March 24 will be done remotely.

The Board approved House To House Hauling’s request to dump at the Transfer Station after hours on Tuesday only until further notice.

The directives have gone out.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:14am.

Mary Brazie,
Office Administrator

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The recording of the minutes is on record at the Town Hall for 90 days. Anyone who wishes to may obtain a copy or listen to the recording at Town Hall. Attachments are on file at Town Hall.