

TOWN OF EGREMONT, MASSACHUSETTS  
MEETING OF THE SELECT BOARD  
MINUTES

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Date: April 21, 2020  
Time: 10:00am  
Place: Town Hall  
Egremont

Present via zoom meeting were Chairman George McGurn, Vice-Chair Lucinda Fenn-Vermeulen, Board member Mary Brazie. Others in participating: Mary McGurn, Evan Triantafilidis(Berkshire Record), Laura Allne, Bruce Bernstein, Juliette Haas, Steve Cohen, Jeff Lazarus, Rolfe Tessem, Steve Goodman, Chuck Ogden.

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

FY 21 BUDGET/TOWN MEETING:

Town Clerk Juliette Haas submitted a Contingency Pan for Town Election as requested and proposed a date of Friday, June 26, 2020. The Board approved the mail in option and the plan and voted to set the Election date for June 26, at Town Hall from 12noon to 5pm.

Guidelines for holding Town Meetings are still not firm. A Town meeting date of Friday, June 19 was proposed but a majority felt that a Friday night or day time meeting would not encourage attendance or be inappropriate. A tentative date of Tuesday, June 23 was proposed. An outdoor meeting was also proposed. Clarification will be sought on the Governor's directive for no gatherings of more than 10 people. Town Clerk Juliette Haas and Moderator Steve Cohen were asked to draft a contingency plan for Town Meeting for the Board to consider at its April 28, 2020 meeting. Town Clerk Juliette Haas asked that no borrowing votes be scheduled for the Annual Town Meeting. Chairman McGurn expressed support of this view and requested it be part of the contingency plans.

The Compensation Committee presented their proposed wage increases for FY 21. Exempt employees will get from 3% to 9.9% increases, non-exempt from 2.5% to 7.6%, and most elected officials will get 0% with the exception of the Town Clerk and Tree Warden who will both get 2.5% increases. The Board, with Selectman Brazie recused, voted to approve the proposed wage increases.

The Board had expected to hear from the Town of Mount Washington with thoughts on the proposed Fire Services Fee. Mary Brazie will follow up with Brian Tobin.

The engineers for the Mount Washington Road project submitted a conceptual estimate which the Board had not had a chance to review. No further discussion took place.

The Board approved the following budget requests:

Town Telephone	\$9,600
High Speed Internet	\$4,251
Berkshire Community Action	\$1,000

The Board discussed two issues that had cropped up regarding Egremont's Broadband build out.

FiberConnect is now asking for to limit the number of households that would get a 50% subsidy on the installation and monthly charges to 15. No standards of eligibility have been established though Adam Chait has talked with TRI (The Resources, Inc.) about the possibility that they might

administer the subsidy program. The number of eligible residents is not clear, though Berkshire Community Action reported giving 33 Egremont residents fuel assistance. It was noted that Spectrum Cable used the school system - those that qualify for free lunch in the school can get a discounted rate if they show proof of their eligibility for school lunch.

The second broadband issue is that FiberConnect has continued to build out areas on Egremont with private funds so that there are no longer 135 unserved homes, but actually 88. FiberConnect is seeking the full MBI allotment no matter how many unserved homes there. The concern is that as the number of unserved houses goes down, MBI is less likely to award the entire \$1,070,000 to FiberConnect and FiberConnect will not agree to a lesser amount. A majority of the Board expressed support for FC's position that it's engineering costs and acceptance of risk should be inclusive and not just unserved households. Also of concern is that with the state decrease in economic performance there is a fear that the MBI funds may disappear. The board agreed to pressure the Governor's office. The Board has also begun to think about forming a Municipal Light Plant to own and operate the balance of the build out as a town network. All of the required votes are in line in order to do this. Jeff Lazarus will check in with MBI's Michael Baldino. The letters recently sent out via mail regarding Egremont's lack of broadband to some areas of town will be sent via email.

#### OTHER BUSINESS:

Bruce Bernstein and Chairman McGurn have drafted a job description for a Mobility Manager for the board to consider. The funds put aside for Southern Berkshire Elderly Transport may be able to be used for this position. Grants to pay for this may also be available. Stephen Goodman has expressed an interest in volunteering for this position. The Board will discuss further at its April 28 meeting. Jeremia Pollard has been asked to explore future steps.

The Board has received from MassDOT a draft Emergency Action Plan for the dam at the Mill Pond (Smiley's Pond). An update of contact information will be sent with a request to make Office Administrator Brazie a point of contact as this plan came to the Board via Ed McCormick.

The next meeting of the Board will be April 28 at 10am.

Meeting adjourned at 11:55am.

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.*