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TOWN OF CHARLTON
Minutes of Special Selectmen's Meeting
Tuesday, April 7, 2020, 6:30pm

Due to COVID19 – meeting held by ZOOM app, video participation: <https://zoom.us/j/331426003>

Present remotely: Chairman – David M. Singer, Vice-Chairman – Karen A. Spiewak, Clerk – William Borowski, Members – Deborah B. Noble and John P. McGrath, Town Administrator – Andrew Golas and Student Selectperson – Anya Grondalski.

Employees and residents were in attendance via ZOOM as well.

I. Call to Order:

Chairman Singer called the meeting to order at 6:30pm. He explained that due to COVID19, the board is meeting remotely via ZOOM. All votes will be by roll call vote.

II. Scheduled Appointments:

1. Appointment – Full Time Dispatchers. Chief Maxfield is requesting the appointment of temporary full-time Dispatcher Shawna Tankersley to be promoted to full-time Dispatcher effective 04/12/2020. He is also requesting part-time dispatcher Jacob Keyes be promoted to full-time Dispatcher also effective 04/12/2020 due to two Dispatchers leaving. That will put his department at 4 full-time dispatchers. They will have to advertise the open 5th full-time dispatcher position as currently, they do not have any part-time people to move up. **Motion by Mr. Borowski to make the appointments as requested, seconded by Mr. McGrath. Roll call vote taken: Mr. Borowski - aye, Ms. Spiewak – aye, Mr. McGrath – aye, Ms. Noble – aye and Chairman Singer – aye.**

III. New Business:

1. Municipal Building Closure
2. Emergency Policies
3. Furlough of Municipal Employees
4. Departmental Oversight

Chairman Singer stated that the Board unanimously decided a few weeks ago to close the town hall to allow employees to work remotely from home because the board wanted to protect our employees. Department Heads were asked to account for hourly work by their employees. The reason for this is because it is illegal for us to pay someone for work not being done. The reports received wouldn't hold if we were questioned about paying employees with no accountability for all time worked. He said without this reporting, we are one public records away of being in trouble. We should be prepared, if we have the reports we need from the Department Heads and employees next week, it's a non-issue. If the Board can't validate this information by next week, decisions will need to be made.

Mr. McGrath asked where is this stated in the law that we have to have exact data. He works for a big state department and this is not taking place. Department Heads are tasked with their department and making sure the public is getting the services they need.

Chairman Singer said he was asked and we have already had this come up before when we were paying a town employee to work and they weren't. We have already had a problem with this in the past. He said all we are asking for each week is that Department Heads give their employees daily or weekly tasks and submit them.

Mr. McGrath said we have changed the operation of the town due to a National Emergency.

Chairman Singer said according to the state and the laws, the COVID, what it allows us to do is to give one extra benefits if they are dealing with a COVID reason to not be able to do the work from home. It also allows us to reassign people out of their categories to do work not in their job description to protect their employment.

Mr. McGrath said if we think the reporting is not being done correctly, we tell the Department Heads who we have already charged with taking care of this, to take care of it. Threatening to furlough the employees is way beyond the realm.

Chairman Singer said no one is threatening to furlough the employees. The first people we would go to are the Department Heads. We would have a conversation with them. He said we are asking for the minimum of providing a summary from employees to the department heads, they can send it to Andrew to keep it on file. He said that's not asking a lot.

Mr. McGrath said that's not asking a lot and the things he's seen have been justified. Chairman Singer said it's not so much the reports we've seen, it's the reports we haven't seen. Andrew should have received reports from Department Heads regarding every employee and that hasn't happened. The report we did receive were for one week. The town hall has been closed for more than one week.

Ms. Noble said what she thinks would help everyone involved, is a chain of command and accountability. She doesn't like holding the threat of furlough over someone's head. She doesn't think it's unreasonable to ask people at the end of the day to send an email to your department head or supervisor letting them know what they did for the day. Once a week the Department Head summarizes that and sends it to Andrew and he disseminates it to this board. Mr. McGrath agrees. The citizens will let us know if they are not happy with the service they are getting. Chairman Singer said we are still responsible to the taxpayers and we are responsible for the services. Ms. Noble said she thinks we can do all these things without micro-managing the day to day operations of the town hall by leaving that responsibility to the Department Heads. She said that maybe it's not getting filtered to them that way.

Ms. Spiewak would like to give Andrew an opportunity to talk about what was put in place and when and his recommendation moving forward. She agrees that we shouldn't be micro-managing.

Mr. Golas said they are trying to do everything they can to keep the wheels moving. The first two weeks have been spent trying to figure out how to keep it going. They are working together to track the hours to show the work being done. He said the fact that the reports haven't been done until now, falls on him. He is using the best practice shared by the MMA. He forwarded a policy to the board that outlines this procedure. Chairman Singer asked Mr. Golas if this information was shared with the department heads of what the board had decided about the reporting requirements? Mr. Golas said the conversation was to make sure the Departments were still operating. He didn't have a framework in place until this week.

Mr. Borowski said being proactive, if a taxpayer asked if Town Buildings are closed and the employees are getting paid, what are the employees doing. That's all he's looking for. Just a justification of what

they are doing. Mr. Golas said he did provide the board with a plan with what everyone would be doing. He provided reports yesterday that showed a better oversight of what was going on. Mr. McGrath said he thinks that Andrew has started at the best place to use the MMA best practices. Mr. Borowski recommended Andrew to continue working with Department Heads. Mr. Golas asked if the complaint was that a service wasn't provided or that the lights were off at the town hall. Chairman Singer said he was just asked if the employees are being paid to stay home.

Nichole Neill – Assistant Treasurer said she is concerned of the complaints stated by Chairman Singer. She said that we are providing the same services at home that we provide in the office. We are answering phone calls, emails, questions. She would like to know who the townspeople are who are questioning and what it is that we could do to accommodate them. Chairman Singer said this meeting was called for one reason only and that is to ensure that we can protect the employees. He said all they are asking the Department Heads and employees is help us help you.

Ms. Spiewak would recommend the Town Administrator provide feedback to the Department Heads if he feels the reports should have more.

Ms. Noble said if a town hall employee feels that they don't have the tools to do their job, she would like them to be comfortable with coming to the department head or one of us and let us know.

IV. Other Business:


V. Next Meeting Announcement:

- BOS Regular Meeting – April 14, 2020 – 6:30pm

VI. Adjourn: Motion by Mr. Borowski to adjourn at 7:17pm, seconded by Mr. McGrath. Roll call vote taken: Ms. Spiewak – aye, Mr. Borowski – aye, Ms. Noble – aye, Mr. McGrath – aye and Chairman Singer – aye.

Submitted by:
Mary C. Devlin
Administrative Assistant

Accepted by:




David M. Singer, Chairman




William Borowski, Clerk



Karen A. Spiewak, Vice-Chairperson



Deborah B. Noble, Member



John P. McGrath, Member