

TOWN OF CONCORD
SELECT BOARD
MINUTES
APRIL 9, 2020

Pursuant to notice duly filed with the Town Clerk, the Concord Select Board convened in a video conference call on April 9, 2020 at 4:00pm.

Present were Michael Lawson, Chair; Linda Escobedo, Clerk; Terri Ackerman, Jane Hotchkiss, and Susan Bates. Also present was Stephen Crane, Town Manager.

Call to Order

Select Board Chair Michael Lawson called the meeting to order at 4:00pm.

Town Manager Update

Town Manager Stephen Crane stated that the Town has been communicating daily with Emerson Hospital. They have seen an uptick in cases, but the situation is still manageable. They are discussing options if additional capacity is necessary, and discussing how the Town can help.

There is now a drive through COVID-19 testing site in Lowell.

Residents can sign up for alerts from the Town on the home page of the website by clicking on the News and Notices link.

The compost site is open at this time. Mr. Crane noted that if people are not maintaining proper social distancing, the site will need to close, but it continues to be open at this time.

Businesses that are deemed non-essential should not be operating at this time, per the Governor's order. If there is a question about what businesses are essential or not, residents can consult the Town website.

Mr. Crane noted that the Town's one goal is to stop the spread of COVID-19, and that is behind the decision to close certain recreational areas in Town, and cautioned residents to be patient in continuing to practice social distancing measures to stop the spread of the virus.

Property Tax Relief

The Governor recently signed The Acts of 2020, Chapter 53, which enabled the Select Board the authority to do the following: The committee or commissioners of a district may waive the payment of interest and other penalties in the event of late payment of

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any excise tax, veteran assessment, or apportionment. Further on, they can postpone the payment due date for taxes that were due after March 10, or assessed after March 10, at a date any time before June 30th.

The Select Board has the option to either move the property tax due date to June 1st, or to remove late fees associated with payment after the original May 1 due date. Based on a recommendation from Finance Director Kerry Lafleur, the Select Board determined that removing the late fees for delayed payments would provide more flexibility for the Town and its residents. Mr. Crane noted that if this approach does not meet individual residents needs during this crisis, please reach out to the Finance Department to discuss your individual situation.

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, it was UNANIMOUSLY

VOTED: Move that in accordance with Chapter 53, Section 11 of the Acts of 2020 signed by the Governor on April 3, 2020, the Select Board hereby waives the payment of interest and other penalty in the event of a late payment of any excise, tax, betterment assessment or apportionment thereof. The action will be in effect until it is revoked by the Select Board.

On-Premise Liquor Licenses Sale for Off-Premise Consumption

As part of a bill that the Governor signed, on-premise liquor licenses (bars, restaurants, hotels, taverns, clubs, war veterans clubs, and continuing care retirement communities) can sell up to 192 ounces of malt beverages, or 1.5 liters of wine to be consumed off the licensed premises, only as part of a transaction that includes food, until the end of the state of emergency is over.

Amend the Charge of the Economic Vitality Committee

The Town has been communicating with the business community on how to best bounce back. Amending the Economic Vitality Charge will allow the Town to work in a more organized way to figure out how the Town and business community can work together moving forward.

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, it was UNANIMOUSLY

VOTED: Move to amend the charge of the Economic Vitality Committee by adding to the Duties Section, “Explore and recommend methods the Town and Community can take to support local businesses during the COVID-19 emergency and recovery.”

Relaxing the Monthly and Annually Contributions from the Hugh Cargill Trust

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The Hugh Cargill Trust is a town-managed charitable fund that helps residents with emergency financial needs. Amending the monthly financial assistance caps allowed in the charge for this committee will allow greater flexibility in assisting residents during this time. It was also noted that the fund accepts donations that directly benefit Concord residents in need.

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, it was UNANIMOUSLY

VOTED: Move to authorize the Hugh Cargill Trust Committee to increase the monthly and annual caps for financial assistance given to individual families.

Amend APP #10 to allow all appointed committee members to remain in office until the close of Town Meeting if the Moderator reschedules Town Meeting after May 31st

Most committee members whose term expires in 2020 are set to expire on May 31, after Town Meeting. Given that Town Meeting will likely be delayed beyond May 31, it is necessary to amend the expiration of committee appointments in order to allow continues to carry out their business at full capacity through Town Meeting.

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, it was UNANIMOUSLY

VOTED: Move to add to APP 10, Section VII – Appointment Policies and Procedures, (b) Term of Office, that in the event of a declared emergency and if the Moderator reschedules Town Meeting after May 31, all appointed members of committee whose terms would otherwise expire, shall remain in office until the close of the rescheduled Town Meeting.

Public Comments

Select Board, I am concerned for our small businesses throughout the town. Most of these businesses do not own their space and are dealing with net leases where they pay taxes, utilities etc in addition to base rent. How many will survive under this financial burden is a real question. What will the center, depot and West Concord look like in 3, 6 or 12 months? My question is what resources does the town have to assist these businesses recognizing that Landlords may help along with SBA loans? Thank you, Rick Loughlin. 83 Chestnut St.

Adjourn

Motion made and seconded, with a unanimous vote to **adjourn**.

Meeting Documents: <https://concordma.gov/DocumentCenter/View/24507/April-9-2020-Packet>

Minuteman Media Network Coverage:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SpKlu7ZQo_M

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