

**TOWN OF CONCORD
SELECT BOARD
MINUTES
May 7, 2020**

Pursuant to notice duly filed with the Town Clerk, the Concord Select Board convened in a conference call on May 7, 2020.

Present were Michael Lawson, Chair; Linda Escobedo, Clerk; Terri Ackerman, Jane Hotchkiss, and Susan Bates. Also present were Stephen Crane, Town Manager; Carmin Reiss, Town Moderator; and Finance Director, Kerry Lafleur.

Call to Order

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

Town Manager Update

Town Manager Stephen Crane noted the [Governor's Order](#) on facemasks went into place on May 6th. If you are in public in an area such as a pharmacy or grocery store where the best practices of social distancing are not possible, you must wear a facial covering. If you are using a ridesharing service or public transportation, you must wear a mask.

Mr. Crane stated he will authorize the Police Department to enforce the Governor's Order, although the goal of this isn't to collect money from citations; the goal is to ensure that people are following the state's public health guidelines to reduce the spread of COVID-19. Residents with a disability or health issue that prevents them from wearing a mask are exempt. The Concord Board of Health may issue an additional order on masks in the coming days. Mr. Crane noted the amount of complaints about people not wearing masks has gone down.

The Governor has issued an order allowing golf courses in the state to open. There are a number of restrictions and it is not a full opening. Residents should check in with individual establishments if they have any questions.

A group of business people in Concord calling themselves Concord Together developed a community business survey that they presented to the Concord Business Partnership. The PowerPoint summarizing the results of this survey are on the Town's COVID business page. Mr. Crane noted that he is encouraged by the engagement and commitment of the business community during this time.

The new tourism website visitconcord.org is up and running. This includes a wealth of information regarding the status of business and tourism in the community.

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The Town Manager sent out new meeting guidelines for boards and committees. Zoom has improved features that have mitigated some of the security concerns that were raised early on in this process. All boards and committees will be able to meet via Zoom effective on May 18th, and can arrange a meeting through the Town Manager's Office. Boards and committees should still only be focusing on essential work. The Town will put together an internal task force in order to review the effectiveness of our remote processes moving forward.

The Town is continuing to review the data breach from October 2019, and there is another round of hard drive backups that are being submitted for scanning, and the Town is almost ready to send out the initial notifications to employees or former employees who have been impacted.

Letter in Opposition to Fish and Wildlife Hunt Plan

Mr. Lawson stated that this is in regards to a new Executive Order that would expand hunting in National Fish and Wildlife Preserves to include coyotes, fox, bear, and waterfowl. The Town's Natural Resources Department asked the Select Board to weigh in on this item, but the Select Board is still waiting on a letter of opposition to review and consider. Ms. Hotchkiss noted that this topic was discussed extensively at a recent Natural Resources Commission meeting.

Update on FY20 Budget, Revenue & Expenses

Town Manager Stephen Crane pointed out that due to the economic impacts of the COVID-19 Pandemic, there is uncertainty about the Town's future budget and expenditures. Finance Director Kerry Lafleur attended to provide an update on the current state of the Town's finances.

There is little change in real estate tax collections at this time, despite the pandemic. The Town is still processing on-time payments, but there has been a delay because the mail has slowed down. There is a 0.004% decrease in the collection rate at this time, representing approximately \$411,000 of revenue. Ms. Lafleur believes once all the payments are processed, the Town will have a similar collection rate as the previous year. Personal property tax collections are now higher than they were at this time last year, despite the pandemic.

The Town is estimating that through the end of the fiscal year, there will be a decrease of about 0.7% revenue, equating to a projected \$820,475 decrease. Ms. Lafleur notes that \$472,280 of this estimated drop comes from a loss of property tax revenue. \$519,293 of this estimated loss comes from local receipts, which are from excise taxes and permits.

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The Town is expecting to close the fiscal year with an expenditure surplus of \$1,332,258. Ms. Lafleur notes that this number is reflective of vacant positions, and the reduced purchasing rate of materials among Town departments. The \$820,475 projected revenue loss, combined with the expenditure surplus of \$1,332,258 equals and estimated surplus of \$511,783 at the end of FY20. This estimate does not include any potential reimbursement from the state or federal government.

The Town's pre-COVID revenue projection for FY21 was \$117,487,391. The current FY21 revenue projection as of May 7, 2020 is \$114,759,926, representing a 2.32% decrease. Ms. Lafleur noted that these projections depend on whether or not Town Meeting will be able to take place in any form before the end of the fiscal year. Mr. Crane stated that he and Ms. Lafleur have been in dialogue with the School Department about what operating under a 1/12 budget starting in July would look like. In the coming weeks, the Moderator and the Town will determine whether or not Town Meeting will need to be postponed beyond the end of the fiscal year, which will impact the budgetary planning process.

Determination of Maximum Useful Life for Purchased Equipment

Ms. Lafleur stated that she appeared before the board in the previous week to discuss the maximum useful life for purchased equipment for FY21, but there was a mix-up and the intention was to take this vote for FY20. Therefore, the board's vote on this item in the April 30 meeting is null and void.

The equipment being purchased is a VOIP telephone system for Concord Public Schools, worth \$200,000 for ten years.

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, it was UNANIMOUSLY

VOTED: to rescind the April 30th Select Board affirmative vote on the certificate of determination for the maximum useful life for equipment provided as listed and provided to the Select Board in the memo originally sent to Stephen Crane from Kerry Lafleur dated April 22nd, 2020.

Roll call vote:

Susan Bates: Aye
Linda Escobedo: Aye
Mike Lawson: Aye
Terri Ackerman: Aye
Jane Hotchkiss: Aye

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, it was UNANIMOUSLY

VOTED: that the maximum useful life of the departmental equipment listed below to be financed with the proceeds of a portion of the \$900,000

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borrowing allocable to equipment authorized by the vote of the Town passed April 10, 2019 (Article 12) to be as follows:

| Item | Purpose | Borrowing Amount | Maximum Useful Life |
|-------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 | VOIP telephone system, district-wide | \$ 200,000 | 10 years |
| | | | |
| | | | |

Roll call vote:

Susan Bates: Aye
Linda Escobedo: Aye
Mike Lawson: Aye
Terri Ackerman: Aye
Jane Hotchkiss: Aye

Extend Deadline for Filing a Property Tax Abatement

Town Assessor Lane Partridge noted that the income and asset requirements were not changed by recent legislation, and therefore the data is still based on 2018 tax returns. A resident who could qualify for an abatement previously, but did not seek one, is now seeking assistance due to greater financial difficulty caused by the COVID-19 Pandemic. By moving the deadline from April 1 to May 1, assistance will be able to be provided.

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, it was UNANIMOUSLY

VOTED: to extend the deadline for filing property tax abatements to May 1, 2020.

Miscellaneous Correspondence

Mr. Lawson stated that the board continues to receive correspondence.

Mr. Lawson stated that an item that was not anticipated needed attention. Massachusetts General Law Chapter 39 Section 10A, which is related to the rescission and continuation of Town Meeting, requires the Select Board to designate someone to notify the Attorney General about the Town's postponement of Town Meeting. Since the postponement is due to a public health matter, the Town

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Manager and Town Counsel determined that Health Director Susan Rask is the most appropriate person to take this action.

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, it was UNANIMOUSLY

VOTED: authorize the Director of Public Health to communicate the Town's decision about the postponement of annual Town Meeting to the Attorney General.

Adjourn

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, it was UNANIMOUSLY

VOTED: to adjourn

Roll call vote:

Susan Bates: Aye

Linda Escobedo: Aye

Mike Lawson: Aye

Terri Ackerman: Aye

Jane Hotchkiss: Aye

Minuteman Media Network Coverage: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UII1ZYdsKng>

Meeting Documents: <https://concordma.gov/DocumentCenter/View/24666/May-7-SB-Packet>