



**BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
REMOTE MEETING MINUTES  
WESTPORT TOWN HALL  
816 MAIN ROAD, WESTPORT, MA  
MONDAY, DECEMBER 20, 2021**

Members Present: Shana M. Shufelt, Chair  
Steven J. Ouellette, Vice Chair  
Richard W. Brewer, Clerk  
Ann E. Boxler  
Brian Valcourt

Also Present: James Hartnett, Town Administrator

Select Board Chair Shana Shufelt, called the remote meeting to order at 6:00PM.

**6:00 p.m. Call To order & Pledge of Allegiance**

**Chair's Announcement** – Under MGL Chapter 30A, section 20(f) – Meeting being recorded. Pursuant to Governor Baker's March 12, 2020 Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A, §18, and the Governor's March 15, 2020 Order imposing strict limitations on the number of people that may gather in one place, this meeting of the **Westport Board of Selectmen** is being conducted via remote participation. No in-person attendance of members of the public will be permitted, but every effort will be made to ensure that the public can adequately access the proceedings as provided for in the Order. A reminder that persons who would like to listen to or view this meeting while in progress may do so by following the remote links listed on the posting on line. An audio recording of this meeting will be posted on the town's website as soon as we are able.

**1. Acknowledgments & Recognitions**

Thelma Sullivan; highly praised for her involvement in the Community, she served as a poll worker, also part of several campaigns in town, she worked at Westport Federal Credit Union for many years, she was a member of Westport Business to Business, she served as an official greeter for many town/community based events.

**2. Covid Update**

Ms. Ryden provided the update, there are 322 Cases, 2 hospitalizations and one death so far in December. There is a Covid Vaccination Clinic on January 7, 2022, at the old high school. 73% of Westport Residents are vaccinated. With family gatherings for the holidays, it is strongly recommended to get a booster, wear a mask in public indoor spaces, purchase rapid at-home antigen tests that you can use before traveling or visiting, and to keep gathering spaces well ventilated – use an air filter or open windows.

**3. Public Hearings** N/A

**4. Licenses/Permits**

- a. Request to confirm hours of operation for Village Pizza, 760 Main Road.

**MOTION** by Mr. Valcourt to confirm the hours of operation for Village Pizza as Monday through Thursday 11am – 9pm, Friday & Saturday 11am – 9:30pm, Sunday 12pm – 9pm.

The Board voted 5-0 in favor by roll call vote, Brewer aye, Ouellette aye, Valcourt aye, Boxler aye and Shufelt aye.

- b. Request to approve the change of corporate officers for the VFW, 843 State Road. Paperwork Issue – remove from Agenda
- c. Approve and sign the ABCC Annual Liquor License Report and Seasonal Population Form. **MOTION** by Mr. Ouellette to approve and sign the ABCC Annual Liquor License Report and Seasonal Population Form, seconded by Mr. Brewer. The Board voted 4-0 in favor by roll call vote, Brewer aye, Ouellette aye, Valcourt aye, and Shufelt aye. Ms. Boxler removed herself from the meeting.

## 5. **Discussion**

- a. Open Meeting Law Complaint 12-6-21 Patrick Higgins  
Mr. Hartnett will address the complaint with the Complainant and the Attorney General's Office, there was no violation. Mr. Brewer noted that the minutes were previously approved in accordance with the open meeting law.
- b. FY 2023 Budget Discussion  
Mr. Hartnett presented the FY23 Initial Budget Presentation, the Town has limited revenue sources, mainly taxes state aid and local receipts and these are not enough to support the budget for the Town. New growth will be down in FY23, it was higher due to a change by the assessors that allowed for 18 months of new growth instead of 12. Local receipts will also be down due to changes in the way Solar PILOTS are shown and reduced excise taxes due to limited supply of vehicles for sale. These two items decrease the revenue by \$650,000. New revenue minus deductions is estimated at \$548,137, the school budget would increase by 54% of net revenue or approximately \$300,000. Because the school budget for FY22 was supplement with \$444,000 from free cash, even with the new revenue, the current budget for FY23 would be less than FY22.

Departments were asked to submit two budgets, A & B and both were very conservative, Budget A shows deficit of \$690,613 and budget B increases that deficit by an additional \$300,000.

Mr. Ouellette inquired if the Marijuana Revenue had been included in these numbers, Mr. Hartnett answered no. Mr. Valcourt recommended a joint meeting with Finance Committee to discuss an override, and that it is important to let the residents know how much it will actually cost them. Ms. Raus from the Finance Committee stated that they plan on presenting an override budget at Town Meeting. Mr. Hartnett stated for about 3-5 years now the town has been very creative in order to balance the budget but there are no more resources left, unless the Town approves an override cuts will have to be made and this will impact services. He will be meeting with the departments in the next two weeks and reporting back. Ms. Shufelt mentioned to keep in mind this is the first outline of the budget.

## 6. **Appointments and Resignations**

- a. Request from Police Chief Keith Pelletier to appoint Vallery Belliveau as full time EMD Dispatcher.  
**MOTION** by Mr. Ouellette to appoint Vallery Belliveau as full time EMD Dispatcher, seconded by Mr. Valcourt. The Board voted 4-0 in favor by roll call vote, Brewer aye, Ouellette aye, Valcourt aye, and Shufelt aye.
- b. Request to accept the letter from Lt. Thomas Plourde announcing his retirement as of January 1, 2022.



Mr. Hartnett noted he received notification the Lt. Plourde will be retiring at a later date to be determined, no action taken.

- c. Request from Matthew Armendo, Director of the Board of Health to allow the Town Administrator to approve the appointment of a part time nurse.

Ms. Ryden stated that the Board of Selectmen had approved the hiring at a previous meeting, however the candidate suffered an injury and is unable to accept the position, and the Board of Health would prefer not to wait until the next Board of Selectmen Meeting to hire for this position.

**MOTION** by Mr. Ouellette to allow the Town Administrator to approve the appointment of a part time nurse, seconded by Mr. Valcourt. The board voted 4-0 in favor by roll call vote, Brewer aye, Ouellette aye, Valcourt aye, and Shufelt aye. Ms. Boxler removed herself from the meeting. Ms. Ryden stated that the Board of Selectmen had approved the hiring at a previous meeting, however the candidate suffered an injury and is unable to accept the position, the Board of Health would prefer not to wait until the next Board of Selectmen Meeting to hire for this position.

## 7. Action Items

- a. Request to approve parking ticket contract agreement for Passport Contract Labs, Inc.  
Mr. Hartnett noted the fee has increased significantly, however we need the contract in place. Mr. Ouellette asked why the increase? Mr. Hartnett stated the company has been sold, and they are charging more for the services.

**MOTION** by Mr. Valcourt to approve parking ticket contract agreement for Passport Contract Labs, Inc., seconded by Mr. Brewer. The Board voted 4-0 in favor by roll call vote, Brewer aye, Ouellette aye, Valcourt aye, and Shufelt aye.

- b. Request from Carol Freitas; Veteran's Agent to accept the following donations for the Veterans Food Pantry: Paul Schmid \$100, American Legion Post 145 \$50, Pauline & Sean Dooley, \$50, in memory of Charles Rodrigues, Tom Flynn \$20, Anonymous \$45, Westport United Methodist Church \$20 gift card, total of \$265 in monetary donations and \$20 in gift cards, and the following donations for the Veterans Monument: Winifred M. Tripp & Lornalee Frederick, \$100, in memory of Eunice Durfee, Earl W. & Kathy A. Santos Rezendes, \$75, in memory of Robert Morton, and Allen J. Kirby, \$50, in memory of Robert Morton, total of \$225.00.

**MOTION** by Mr. Valcourt to accept the donations listed above, seconded by Mr. Ouellette. The Board voted 4-0 in favor by roll call vote, Brewer aye, Ouellette aye, Valcourt aye, and Shufelt aye.

- c. Approve Town Accountant Employment Agreement for Nicole Pearsall.  
Mr. Hartnett stated that it was a fair contract for the work she's doing, she is doing an outstanding job, with the combined efforts of Ms. Gabriel and Ms. Brayton they were able to get the tax rate certified on time.

**MOTION** by Mr. Brewer to approve the Town Accountant Employment Agreement for Nicole Pearsall, seconded by Mr. Valcourt. The Board voted 4-0 in favor by roll call vote, Brewer aye, Ouellette aye, Valcourt aye, and Shufelt aye.

**8. Town Administrator Report**

**Beach Avenue Accessibility Improvements**

Mr. Hartnett stated the Commission on Disability continues to work on improving handicap accessibility on Beach Avenue. They will be filing with the Conservation Commission and the Natural Heritage for permission to regrade and stabilize a small section of the gravel road at the end of Beach Avenue, approximately 30' x 30'.

**Tax Rate**

The Department of Revenue notified the Town on Tuesday that the Tax Rate has been certified. With limited staff and changes in personnel, credit to Theo Gabriel, Sue Brayton and Nicole Pearsall for getting this information filed and approved. There was a significant amount of time that went into this report including many nights and weekends.

**Letter of Appreciation Roadside Wildlife Inc.**

The Town received a letter of appreciation from Roadside Wildlife Rehab Inc. acknowledging Paul Lourenco and Frank Napert of the Westport Highway Department and the Animal Control Officer, Nick Vidmar for their assistance rescuing a raccoon wedged in a tree, approximately 50' off the ground.

**Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Funding**

Bristol County has just completed work on their portal for communities to access ARPA funds, and is accessible to Westport. All projects will have to be reviewed and approved by the County, and their consultants. The use of these funds will be more restrictive than the funding from the Cares Act.

**Utility Billing**

Mr. Hartnett stated he has been working with Paul Ferland, Deputy Administrator, Fall River Community Utilities on the Town's water and sewer bills. The city has agreed to bill the sewer users directly (mainly one business). There continues to be discrepancies in the water billing dating back a number of years but they are making progress, new water meters will be installed for all users in Westport and the town will be coordinating the flushing program with the City's meter reading schedule.

**9. Approve Minutes**

**a. December 6, 2021**

Mr. Brewer stated the minutes were not part of the packet and recommends approval at the next meeting.

**10. Report on Bill Warrant**

No issues with the warrant.

**11. Selectmen Liaison Committee Reports & Suggestions for Future Agenda Discussion / Action**

Mr. Brewer: CIPC met to prioritize needs of the departments, the next meeting is January 5, 2022.

Mr. Ouellette: SRPEDD still fighting for road money

Mr. Valcourt: Campground Committee met and elected officers, Long Term Building Committee pressing issue to turn Campground Property over to the School Department. All Town buildings need to be addressed within the next 5 years. Relocating School Administration offices needs to be addressed.



Ms. Shufelt: The school contractor continues to work on irrigation and the laying of sod, they are getting the lighting situation under control, the relays need to be changed out.

**12. Comments and Statements**

Mr. Ouellette suggested bringing in Chris Gonsalves to get an update on Snow Removal, and to possible start working on the Trailer Permits to be sure they get out in a timely manner.

**13. Boards/Committees/Commissions Vacancy List**

**14. Topics not reasonably anticipated forty-eight (48) hours in advance of the meeting.**

**Adjournment**

**MOTION:** to adjourn the Remote Regular Meeting at 7:22pm by Mr. Ouellette, seconded by Mr. Valcourt.

The Board voted 4-0 in favor by roll call vote, Brewer aye, Ouellette aye, Valcourt aye, and Shufelt aye.

Respectfully submitted,



Paula M. Brown  
Administrative Assistant

APPROVED: \_\_\_\_\_



Richard Brewer, Clerk  
Select Board Member