



**BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
REMOTE MEETING MINUTES  
MONDAY, JANUARY 3, 2022**

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**

Ms. Shufelt, Mr. Valcourt and Mr. Ouellette recognized Mr. Damase "Jiggs" Giguere, former Selectman, and prominent Westport Businessman, owned and operated New England Sanitation, he was a gentleman farmer, owning a farm that was picturesque in many ways, hosted many Weddings and/or Wedding pictures on the beautifully maintained property. Jiggs owned a well-known race car team that raced at Seekonk Speedway and other speedways throughout New England. Sincere condolences for out to his family.

**2. Covid Update**

Ms. Ryden summarized the Covid update, there were 595 cases in December and 12 new cases as of this morning (1/2/22) the positivity rate is 11.82%, which shows Westport is really feeling the effects, and the goal is to be under 5%. There is a Covid Vaccination Clinic on January 7, 2022, at the old high school from 3:00 – 6:20 pm. Ms. Shufelt and Mr. Hartnett both stated they received their vaccines at the local clinic and both praised their experience.

**3. Public Hearings**

N/A

**4. Licenses/Permits**

N/A

## 5. Discussion

### a. Chief Keith Pelletier, Police Department yearly update

Chief Pelletier was not in attendance, Ms. Shufelt summarized his report, stating 30% of the officers and civilian employees have been out with Covid, they have since returned to work with about 10% of the employees currently out. As of December 30, 2021 the department has answered close to 25,000 calls; with Crime and Arrest Data seeming consistent with previous years, assaults and motor vehicle accidents are up. On a positive note, the department safely participated in many Community Events this past year in conjunction with Recreation, School Departments and other local civic groups.

### b. Chief Brian Legendre, Fire Department yearly update

Chief Legendre stated it has been a record year for calls up 349 from 2020, included in the count 2139 EMS Calls, 517 Fire Calls 202 Motor Vehicle Accidents, which most of the time an engine is dispatched. 128 Calls to provide mutual aid to neighboring towns, and called in mutual aid 104 times, the department has been very busy and short staffed, 7 out with Covid, 1 out because of injury and 1 out on maternity leave. The department is averaging 11 calls per day, each call averages 1.5-2 hours. Ms. Shufelt brought up an anonymous letter that she wasn't going to read stating there are less fires now, yet the department is still fully staffed. Deputy Baldwin stated that structure fires are down nationwide and that is a good thing, noting that there is a lot more to the department than fighting fires as you can see by the EMS calls, there are water rescues, hazmat calls, all the firefighters have dual roles as they are all paramedics. Just because a fire (say an electrical fire) wasn't noteworthy enough to make the paper, doesn't mean that we haven't responded to the call. Ms. Shufelt commended the department, they are doing a great job! Mr. Valcourt noted there are lots of reasons why there aren't as many losses from fires, the training the firefighter/paramedics receive, building codes, etc. As far as the EMS calls we need to keep in mind that the average age in town is 55+. Mr. Ouellette stated that Westport has unique situations, a number of highways and water rescues, he commended the department for their exceptional services, and emphasized the fact that the department gave back \$800,000.00 in surplus funds back to the town. Ms. Ryden from the Board of Health praised the department for their collaboration efforts with the in-home vaccination program.

### c. Fiscal Year 23 Budget update

Mr. Hartnett stated the 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. He continued to say that budget cuts will impact town services all around effecting core departments over the next couple of years, forcing the departments to be more reactive than proactive. There is a Department Head meeting on Wednesday. Ms. Shufelt stated it is the Boards responsibility to present a balanced budget to the Finance Committee, making cuts is going to be painful, she questioned Mr. Hartnett as to when free cash amounts will be available, he answered hopefully by the next meeting, it may not be certified but we should have the amount, however he remains cautious about the use of free cash.

Mr. Brewer inquired about the increase in School Choice and Charter School expenditures, he finds this frustrating and something we have no control over.

Mr. Valcourt answered it's a known fact children are fleeing the district, hopefully the new school will change that, however the new school is only 16 students shy of capacity. The SPED program needs to be looked at and kept in the system, however staffing the SPED Program remains an issue.



Ms. Shufelt stated that departments are short staffed already, can't imagine what effect cutting one body or technology would have on any one department.

Mr. Valcourt stated there is no way to maintain level services, we need to address the elephant in the room, being an override.

Ms. Shufelt noted that the Finance Committee is working on presenting an override.

Ms. Raus; Chair of the Finance Committee stated that Mr. Valcourt is correct, it is time to address an override, it's important to let the residence know how much it will cost them up front ie: \$25.00 per \$100,000 for a \$1,000,000 override, a \$400,000 house would cost the owner \$100.00 a year.

Mr. Bull; Landing Commission stated the public needs to be informed as to how much it will cost not to have the override.

## **6. Appointments and Resignations**

- a. Request to fill the vacant position on the Board of Registrars; Democratic Town Committee: Isabel Kochman, Republican Town Committee: Robert Alves, Josephine Coleman & Dennis Moniz.

**MOTION** by Mr. Valcourt to appoint Isabel Kochman to the Board of Registrars as the Democratic Member, seconded by Mr. Ouellette. The Board voted 5-0 in favor by roll call vote, Boxler aye, Brewer aye, Ouellette aye, Valcourt aye, and Shufelt aye.

- b. Request from George Ripley, Westport Library to accept the resignation of Library Aide Ethel Rodrigues.

Mr. Ripley noted Ms. Rodrigues 26 years of service, heartfelt thanks goes out to her.

**MOTION** by Mr. Valcourt to accept the resignation of Library Aide Ethel Rodrigues, sending a letter of appreciation, seconded by Mr. Ouellette. The Board voted 5-0 in favor by roll call vote, Boxler aye, Brewer aye, Ouellette aye, Valcourt aye, and Shufelt aye.

- c. Request from George Ripley, Westport Library to appoint Daniel P. Sheahan and Nancy A. Mullen as part time Library Aides.

Mr. Ripley noted they were conducting interviews for the previously approved Library Aide position, when Ms. Rodrigues gave her notice. Mr. Sheahan has 28 years of exemplary service with the Fall River Public Library, and Ms. Mullen has been volunteering for the children's activities here at the library. He also noted, the Library has been very busy, they are updating the interior, the Adult section is done, and the Children's section is next. They have recently installed mobile hot spots.

**MOTION** by Mr. Valcourt to appoint Daniel P. Sheahan and Nancy A. Mullen as part time Library Aides, seconded by Mr. Ouellette. The Board voted 5-0 in favor by roll call vote, Boxler aye, Brewer aye, Ouellette aye, Valcourt aye, and Shufelt aye.

- d. Request from the Agricultural Council to appoint Raymond Raposa to the Climate Resiliency Committee.

**MOTION** by Mr. Valcourt to appoint Raymond Raposa to the Climate Resiliency Committee, seconded by Mr. Brewer. The Board voted 5-0 in favor by roll call vote, Boxler aye, Brewer aye, Ouellette aye, Valcourt aye, and Shufelt aye.

- e. Request from the Finance Committee to post the Recording Clerk position.

**MOTION** by Mr. Valcourt to post the Finance Committee Recording Clerk position, seconded by Mr. Brewer. The Board voted 5-0 in favor by roll call vote, Boxler aye, Brewer aye, Ouellette aye, Valcourt aye, and Shufelt aye.

## 7. Action Items

- a. Diman – Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) Funding Appropriation  
No action taken at this time. Mr. Hartnett stated that the town received a letter from the Diman School Committee and the town has 60 days to respond. Mr. Hartnett will get additional information and present at a future meeting.
- b. Request from Susan Brayton; Treasurer/Collector to approve the borrowing for The Campground and Santos Farm approve the borrowing for The Campground and Santos Farm.  
Ms. Brayton stated this is additional borrowing, looking for signatures by the end of the week.  
**MOTION** by Mr. Valcourt to approve the borrowing for The Campground and Santos Farm, seconded by Mr. Brewer. The Board voted 5-0 in favor by roll call vote, Boxler aye, Brewer aye, Ouellette aye, Valcourt aye, and Shufelt aye.
- c. Request from Susan Brayton; Treasurer/Collector to approve the borrowing for The Community Septic Loan Program.  
Mr. Valcourt noted these a revenue neutral, low interest loans, they get paid back to the town, and these loans don't effect the budget at all.  
Ms. Brayton gave a department update she stated they were very busy today with the tax bills going out last week, the new hire started today.  
**MOTION** by Mr. Brewer to approve the borrowing for The Community Septic Loan Program according to the terms as read, seconded by Mr. Valcourt. The Board voted 5-0 in favor by roll call vote, Boxler aye, Brewer aye, Ouellette aye, Valcourt aye, and Shufelt aye.

## 8. Town Administrator Report

### Annual Town Election

Mr. Hartnett stated the Town Clerk, Bernadette Oliver issued a press release announcing that Nomination Papers for the April 12, 2022 Annual Town Election will be available on January 3, 2021, for the following offices: for three years: One Selectman, One Moderator, One Assessor, One Board of Health, Two School Committee Members, One Fish Commissioner, Two Trustees of the Free Public Library, One Landing Commissioner, One Commissioner of Trust Funds. For Five Years: One Planning Board, One Housing Authority.

Deadline for obtaining nomination papers is Friday, February 18th by 5:00 p.m. and the deadline for filing nomination papers with the Board of Registrars is Tuesday, February 22nd by 5:00 p.m.

### Filing Deadlines

January 26, 2022 is the deadline for the submission of all articles for the Annual Town Meeting Warrant. Department, Boards and Commissions should file their yearly reports prior to January 28, 2022. (Memo in Packet)

### Cemetery Department

Mr. Hartnett to recognized Chris Gonsalves and his staff at the Highway Department, Bobby Marshall from Town Hall and Steve Souza from the Cemetery Department for pitching in to get through the last two weeks. Former employee Bruce Graves also offered assistance. Without their help additional services would have been delayed until after the first of the year.

## 9. Approve Minutes

- a. December 6, 2021 & December 20, 2021



**MOTION** by Mr. Brewer to approve the December 6, 2021 Minutes, seconded by Mr. Valcourt. The Board voted 4-0 in favor by roll call vote, Brewer aye, Ouellette aye, Valcourt aye, and Shufelt aye, with Ms. Boxler abstaining.

**MOTION** by Mr. Brewer to approve the December 20, 2021 Minutes, seconded by Mr. Valcourt. The Board voted 4-0 in favor by roll call vote, Brewer aye, Ouellette aye, Valcourt aye, and Shufelt aye, with Ms. Boxler abstaining.

**10. Report on Bill Warrant**

Ms. Boxler noted it was in order and it was small.

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

Mr. Valcourt: no meetings, CIPC, Long Term Building and Campground all coming up. He suggested bringing in the Superintendent to discuss the need for administrative space.

Mr. Ouellette: no meetings, would like to keep up with the beach to make sure permits go out on time.

Mr. Brewer: There is a CIPC Hybrid Meeting Wednesday, and on January 16 a meeting regarding ARPA funds.

Ms. Boxler: no meetings

Ms. Shufelt: no committee meetings, met with Mr. Hartnett and Mr. Novo in regards to broadband details.

**12. Comments and Statements**

None

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

Ms. Shufelt mentioned to be sure to inquire about vacancies.

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

Ms. Shufelt suggested keeping the next meeting remote; all were in agreement.

**15. Executive Session** – pursuant to the provisions of MGL c 30A section 21(a), Chair declares an open meeting will have a detrimental effect to:

- a. Discuss strategy with respect to Litigation – East Beach Improvement Association vs Town of Westport et al.
- b. To discuss strategy with respect to Litigation – Diane F. Cramphin vs Town of Westport – Adamsville Landing Case.
- c. Approve Executive Session Minutes of December 6, 2021

**MOTION** by Mr. Ouellette at 7:22 p.m. to enter into Executive Session for the reasons declared by the Chair, seconded by Mr. Brewer. The Board voted 5-0 in favor by roll call vote, Boxler aye, Brewer aye, Ouellette aye, Valcourt aye, and Shufelt aye.

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**Adjournment**

The Board returned to open session and the Chair called for adjournment.

**MOTION** by Mr. Ouellette to adjourn the meeting at 8:49p.m. Seconded by Mr.

Valcourt. Motion passed 5-0 by roll call vote: Brewer, aye; Ouellette, aye; Valcourt, aye; Boxler, aye; Shufelt, aye.

Respectfully submitted,

*Paula Brown*

Paula M. Brown  
Administrative Assistant

APPROVED:

*Richard Brewer*

Richard Brewer, Clerk  
Select Board Member