



**Board of Selectmen
Ware Town Hall, Meeting Room, 126 Main Street
Regular Meeting Minutes – Tuesday, May 19, 2020 at 7:00 p.m.**

Instructions for call in option: at or before 7:00 p.m., call the phone number below and when prompted enter the Meeting ID number. The platform is Zoom Meetings.

Join online: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/7846041861> (the online option will require a download).

Meeting ID: 784 604 1861

Phone: 929-205-6099

Present at Town Hall: Selectman Alan G. Whitney, Selectman John E. Carroll, Selectman Keith J. Kruckas, Selectman Nancy J. Talbot, Town Manager Stuart Beckley

Remote Participation VIA Zoom: Selectman Tracy R. Opalinski, Director Health Department Judy Metcalf, Superintendent of Schools Dr. Marlene DiLeo, School Business Manager Andrew Paquette, Director Planning & Community Development Rebekah DeCoursey

Meeting Opened by Chairman Whitney

Opening Remarks, Announcements, and Agenda review by Chair

Selectman Carroll announced that the Ware Lions Club Fireworks have been postponed. Selectman Opalinski thanked Mr. Sorel for the Barnes Street Water Treatment Plant update. Mr. Beckley noted there will be a chart of timelines and next steps at the next meeting.

Consent Agenda

- **Approval of April 21, 2020 Meeting Minutes**

Selectman Kruckas noted that the minutes were incorrect for his motion regarding Curaleaf, as his motion did not include the donation amount; Selectman Opalinski noted her corrections were submitted to include \$20,000 for donation. Mr. Beckley noted language would be noted in the revised HCA. The minutes were not approved and will be corrected after the Clerk again watches the video of the meeting.

Scheduled Appearances

- **Judy Metcalf, Health Department Director**

Judy Metcalf joined the meeting via Zoom. Ms. Metcalf noted that the Board wanted an update regarding the Governor's plan. She stated that as of last Friday there were 23 cases of COVID-19 in Ware, with 2 added through tonight. In March, the numbers were travelers, then hospital workers with no PPE, then nursing home patients. In the last few weeks, the numbers have been of essential workers. There have been 32 contact cases in Ware to date. There have been no cases in group homes. The educational campaign began this week, and Ms. Metcalf thanked John Piechota for placing signs in the parks and cemeteries; the signs indicate respect, keeping social distance, wear a face covering. Selectman Opalinski asked if face masks are necessary if walking in the park; Ms. Metcalf stated all citizens should have a face mask to put on if within six feet of others. "Your mask protects me, my mask protects you." This is the way to not go backwards as we re-open. Selectman Kruckas noted no one should be harassed for not wearing a mask; Ms. Metcalf noted health privacy, but businesses need to make customers feel safe and workers must feel safe. Some have health conditions. Chairman Whitney asked if a business can refuse service if a resident is not wearing a mask; Ms. Metcalf noted

the business can offer alternatives such as curbside service or other reasonable accommodation. Selectman Opalinski asked if there was a control plan for businesses; Ms. Metcalf noted the Governor's plan and the staff would be more knowledgeable of specifics, possibly have a separate website page with resources and links. She noted that IT Director David Grace, Mr. Beckley and Ms. Midura could do that. Chairman Whitney noted that we should not interpret the State; Ms. Metcalf noted that information could be made clear to specific businesses or the WCBA could do so. Selectman Opalinski questioned the ABCC consideration of outdoor seating for restaurants; Ms. Metcalf stated that phase 2 of the Governor's plan may address that. Mr. Beckley noted that Ms. Midura was ahead and in touch with the ABCC seeking direction for a modification of a license for outdoor seating or addressing spacing of diners.

Selectman Kruckas questioned why Aspen Street Rod & Gun Club was not allowed to do their fish dinners as take-out only; Ms. Metcalf noted they are a non-profit closed by the State since March 23. The designation was appealed but the State has not yet responded. Selectman Kruckas quoted from Mass.gov regarding sales to public; Ms. Metcalf noted that non-profit organizations were classified similar to church functions for spaghetti dinners, and there may be a way to get an exemption.

Selectman Carroll asked of the deaths in Ware due to COVID-19; Ms. Metcalf noted three deaths (Mrs. Talbot confirmed this is public information) of which one was a resident of a nursing home in another town, one was at home in age 60s, and one was over 70, all with pre-existing conditions making them susceptible. Selectman Talbot noted that Ware was doing better; Ms. Metcalf noted that Pelham had 2 cases, and Belchertown had a high number of cases.

Selectman Kruckas noted that the Health Department's communication to the Town was not good, as he got most information from the Fire Chief, and he would expect more consistent updates. Ms. Metcalf stated she has called the Town Manager or emailed, and she has worked 32 years and this should not be reflective on her. The Board asked that Ms. Metcalf attend every other meeting with an update. Ms. Metcalf stated she has always attended when requested.

- **Dr. DiLeo, Superintendent of Schools**

Dr. DiLeo joined the meeting via Zoom. She spoke of the uncertainties of conducting school for the staff and students. She stated that 60 chromebooks were given out to families, and hoped for more direction from the Governor. Graduation is scheduled for July 11, 2020 at 10:00 a.m. and the Junior/Senior Prom has been moved again to August 17, 2020. Dr. DiLeo has communicated weekly with Ms. Metcalf. Chairman Whitney questioned the chromebooks; Dr. DiLeo noted the school already owns these and obtained chargers and had parents sign contracts, as approximately 52 families had no devices. Chairman Whitney noted that tax revenues will be down and the school budget must be affected. Dr. DiLeo noted a 30% decrease in learning with loss of 1/3 of the school year plus the social/emotional aspects for students and families. The school website will offer phone numbers for contacting school counselors from Monday through Friday, 9 am – 3pm. This is an unprecedented time with uncharted waters and it is not known how the school year will start: will the school classrooms need plexiglass or other dividers, how many allowed in classrooms, the human resource of this for teachers and staff and students. Dr. DiLeo continues to work with Ms. Metcalf.

Selectman Opalinski questioned access to internet; Dr. Dileo stated that not all students or faculty have internet access. She noted Commissioner Jeff Riley has conducted a survey to ask schools about connectivity, and it is hoped that the State or DESE will help with this issue.

Mr. Beckley noted transportation has 58% remaining with services. School Business Manager Andrew Paquette joined the meeting via Zoom. He noted that transportation is a regional item and 42% of the costs have been paid with 58% for labor, furloughed drivers, and non-labor costs. To Chairman Whitney's questions of no need for maintenance or fuel, Mr. Paquette noted that busses must be maintained, insurance must be kept in force, and special education busses are delivering meals to students. It is better to pay 42% than 75%. Dr. DiLeo noted conference calls with the Commissioner of Education in which the Commissioner asked that we continue to pay all vendors, as all are in hardship. Dr. DiLeo noted uncertainty about the Fall, do we need to change routes, add a tier, other extraordinary measures. This affects the current year. Mr. Paquette noted that the transportation is done by bid, and contracts note negotiation if there are closures by government. Selectman Kruckas noted that transportation comes from the Town budget and the Board should be part of the discussion. Chairman Whitney noted a selectman should be at the negotiation table for transportation.

Dr. DiLeo noted she does a video to staff and students weekly. Chairman Whitney noted the Board would request Dr. Dileo also update the Board every other week from when Ms. Metcalf will update the Board.

Old Business

- **Complete Streets Prioritization Plan**

Rebekah DeCoursey, Director of Planning and Community Development, joined the meeting via Zoom. Chairman Whitney stated he did not like the order of priorities and would like the Board to prioritize. Ms. DeCoursey noted the priorities' list and renderings of maps are in order for projects to apply for funding, as consulted with DPW. The Board will consider the list of priorities at the June 2, 2020 meeting. Selectman Opalinski asked about consideration of a cantilever bridge; Ms. DeCoursey noted this.

- **Consideration of Town Meeting Quorum**

Chairman Whitney noted that the State may allow towns to lower the quorum for a State of Emergency period. Selectman Talbot noted it is in the best interest of the Town to have town meeting. Town Meeting is set for June 22, 2020 at 6:30 pm in the Great Hall of Town Hall. The Town election is set for June 29, 2020 from 7am – 8pm, with notices being sent to residents to encourage early voting.

Selectman Kruckas made the motion to set the quorum of town meeting to 25, for the State of Emergency pending legislative approval. Selectman Carroll seconded the motion. The motion passed on a vote of 4 Yes, 0 No.

Selectman Kruckas noted that an article for \$25,000 for painting the great hall is not appropriate at this time; Selectman Talbot noted this can be dismissed at the town meeting. Mr. Beckley noted that the DPW cleaned the gutter and a small hole can be repaired.

New Business

- **Appointments for FY2021 – Special Police, Honorary Police, Matrons, and Constables**

Selectman Kruckas made the motion to approve appointments as presented. Selectman Carroll seconded the motion. The motion passed on a vote of 4 Yes, 0 No, 1 Abstention (Selectman Talbot).

- **Reappointment: Kathleen Galford, Historical Commission, Term to Expire June 30, 2023**

Selectman Talbot made the motion to reappoint Kathleen Galford to the Historical Commission. Selectman Kruckas seconded the motion. The motion passed on a vote of 5 Yes, 0 No.

- **Request to Abate Water & Sewer Bill, 59 Park Avenue**

Selectman Talbot made the motion to approve abatement of \$252.43 in water charges and \$230.49 in sewer charges, for a total of \$482.92 against Account #14-1270, Scott Lusignang, for property located at 59 Park Avenue. Selectman Carroll seconded the motion. The motion passed on a vote of 5 Yes, 0 No.

- **Budget Modifications**

Mr. Beckley noted changes including \$309,000 in cuts. He noted revenues from the State may not be enough and may need another \$250,000 in cuts including one police and one fire position, library and schools. He noted some bills must be paid upfront in August. Selectman Kruckas questioned lock-in of fuel costs; Mr. Beckley noted the State bid and this is looked at daily.

- **Fiscal Year 2020 Departmental Transfers**

Selectman Kruckas questioned the Hardwick Ambulance contract ending in June; Mr. Beckley noted a discussion with the Hardwick Selectmen is needed. Selectman Kruckas stated that with the Slum & Blight designation, the Town needs to focus on our own town. Mr. Beckley noted the ambulance contract raises \$150,000. Selectman Carroll questioned streetlights; Mr. Beckley noted that conversion to LED saves \$4,000 monthly.

Selectman Talbot made the motion to approve the Transfer of Appropriations as presented in the memo of May 8, 2020. Selectman Opalinski seconded the motion. The motion passed on a vote of 3 Yes, 2 No (Selectman Kruckas, Selectman Carroll).

Comments and Concerns of Citizens – none

Town Manager Report

Mr. Beckley noted that yard waste will be collected on Saturday, May 30 and Sunday, June 7 from 9 am- 2 pm at the Robbins Road Collection site.

Main Street: Gibby and I met with MassDOT today. The next three weeks will include continued installation of conduit and other work along the sidewalks including hydrants. The trees have been removed. They will be replaced later in the project. As Main Street businesses begin to re-open, the parking and storage of equipment and materials will be moved away from the Street and Veterans Park. Equipment may be moved to the millyard.

Grants: There are two COVID grants of immediate interest to the Town. The State is offering a CDBG version that will be competitive. Funds may be used for social services such as food assistance or domestic violence, or for assistance to small businesses. The intent is to address those most affected by COVID. The State is recommending regional applications, so the Town and PVPC are looking at surrounding communities to participate. There is up to \$400,000 available to the Town. The Community Development Authority is working on priorities and setting up a public hearing.

The CARES Federal Coronavirus Relief Fund is being released to towns per the attached document. These funds may be used for COVID costs incurred between March 1 and December 30, 2020. There is a list of town uses that can be charged to these funds. The State is working on the federal government to allow the anticipated loss of revenue to be included. By June 5, the Town is to request the anticipated costs for FY2020. I will work with department heads to determine this request for the Board to approve at its June 2 meeting.

114 Main Street is structurally of increasing concern due to the condition of the roof. The Building Inspector with assistance from the Town Attorney has ordered a response from the owner. They have talked directly, but the owner has not responded with a plan. The Town has sought an opinion letter from a structural engineer.

Thank you to the Police Department for its recent investigations and arrests, as well as enforcement responses to COVID concerns. Thank you to the Fire Department for extinguishing the fire on Monson Turnpike during the storm and power outage on Friday night.

Re-opening. The Governor and the Reopening Advisory Board released details yesterday for the phased re-opening of businesses and recreation. There is a base process to be completed by everyone, including the Town as a formerly essential service, as well as specific requirements for business types to open. These are expected to be self-enforced. The Town will complete and implement the required plan. Shields for counters have been ordered. Masks will be worn in common areas and will be required for access to the buildings. Safety and sanitization procedures will be in place for vehicles

The Food Bank will held today at Grenville Park with the assistance of many volunteers as well as the police and Parks departments. Residents remain in their vehicles as food is delivered.

The Amherst Survival Center is providing additional food to residents, particularly seniors through monthly deliveries to three sites. Quaboag Connector and Senior Center drivers are assisting with distribution.

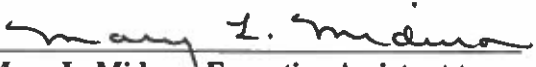
The Quaboag Connector has returned to offering service 5 days per week and will be increasing its hours to assist people getting to work.

Adjournment

Selectman Talbot made the motion at 8:47 p.m. to Adjourn to Executive Session: M.G.L. Chapter 30A, Section 21(a) #2 Union Negotiations – DPW and Administrative, #3 Litigation – Sheehy Road, NOT TO RECONVENE IN OPEN SESSION. Selectman Carroll seconded the motion. The motion passed on a roll call vote of 5 Yes, 0 No.

Selectman Alan G. Whitney	Yes
Selectman John E. Carroll	Yes
Selectman Keith J. Kruckas	Yes
Selectman Tracy R. Opalinski	Yes
Selectman Nancy J. Talbot	Yes

Attest:


Mary L. Midura, Executive Assistant to
Town Manager
Minutes VIA TV15 Video

