



WAKEFIELD TOWN COUNCIL

Monday, May 28, 2020
6:00 P.M. (Via Zoom virtual meeting)

**COUNCIL
MEMBERS
PRESENT:**

Councilor Ann McGonigle Santos, Chair
Councilor Julie Smith-Galvin, Vice-Chair
Councilor Mehreen N. Butt
Councilor Jonathan P. Chines
Councilor Paul R. DiNocco
Councilor Edward F. Dombroski, Jr.
Councilor Peter J. May

ADMINISTRATION PRESENT:

Town Council Clerk Sherri A. Dalton
Town Administrator Stephen P. Maio
Town Counsel Thomas A. Mullen

----- TOPICS OF DISCUSSION -----

Call to Order	Councilor Santos called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.
Pledge of Allegiance	Councilor Santos led the body in the reciting of the Pledge of Allegiance.
Attendance	All seven (7) Councilors were present and participating via Zoom. Councilor Santos mentioned that she and the Town Administrator are wearing Stoneham gear due to the few percentage points win that Stoneham had over Wakefield in seeing which community could fulfill the census most robustly.
Public Engagement	Eric Bertrand of 41 Crescent Street, who is also the owner of Wakefield Computer Hospital on Albion Street addressed the Council with his concern regarding the small businesses and restaurants in town and asked the Council to think about closing Main Street on the weekends as an opportunity for the business to set-up outside. Councilor Santos thanked Mr. Bertrand for his thoughtful comments and stated that the Town has already started to think about how to uniquely support the small businesses.
Approval of Minutes	Councilor Chines motioned to approve the May 11, 2020 regular Town Council Meeting Minutes. Councilor May seconded. Motion passed 7-0-0 by a roll call vote.
COVID-19 Updates	Emergency Management Director Walsh stated the policies and procedures that have been implemented have been successful so far as no Town employees have contracted the virus and over 65,000 masks were distributed to the citizens. Phase 1 of the re-entry plan is to bring some employees back into the buildings with safety measures with the exception of the Library, Senior Center and Civic Center which will remain closed. Phase 2 of the re-entry plan will start on June 15,

2020 where Town Hall will be open to the public for limited hours from 8:30 a.m. until 12:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. A greeter will be stationed at the front door asking a series of questions and keeping a log for contract tracing. The second floor and basement of Town Hall will be kept closed until June 30, 2020 with the exception of the Board of Health. Phase 3 will be a wait and see for guidance from the State and also how Phase 1 and Phase 2 has gone. Employees will still be encouraged to work remotely from home.

Health Director Clay emphasized that most of the decisions are not local. The Governor's office has orders and guidelines and the Health Departments are the enforcement of those guidelines. Hair and Nail salons are open under the Governor's Orders and our inspectors have been at those businesses that are open giving them a packet of information and posters that they are required to display. The Board of Health repealed at their meeting last night the face coverings order as well as the personal services order so that we are in sync with the Governor's Orders of wearing face coverings. The Board also approved the School Committee's plan of small groups up to 18 families at a time for graduation over a two-day period. That plan, she believes is changing but anything other than what the Board of Health approved would need to be approved by the Board again. They also approved lowering their permit fees for restaurants and retail food by 25% for the period of July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021. Councilor Chines asked for a rough idea from a spending standpoint since the onset of COVID-19 of how much might be reimbursable. Mr. Maio answered that we are approaching between three and four hundred thousand dollars and we will be looking for reimbursement through FEMA and the Cares Act, so it is very likely that a hundred percent of that could be reimbursed between both of those. Councilor Chines also asked Director Clay if there are any lessons learned from the contact tracing work that the department has been doing. Director Clay answered that when this is over they will be looking back at lessons learned and that the numbers are a compilation of households; long-term care facilities and the rest are community based. Councilor Chines inquired about the summer programs that the recreation department runs. Mr. Maio said that there has been a lot of thought with no guidance to go by and they are waiting for that guidance but most of the summer programs will be contracted programs. Councilor Chines recognized the time and commitment from both Director's Clay and Walsh. Councilor Smith-Galvin asked Director Walsh about the progress with getting the red alert app. He was not sure as Jenn handles communications. She also asked where we are with parks as she received reports that a lot of kids have been seen at parks. Director Clay stated that there is guidance from the State and people can passively recreate in parks but there cannot be organized games or activities that use equipment but made it aware that people are encouraged to be outside to get fresh air and exercise as long as they are 6-feet away from other people and if not, they need to have a face covering. Mr. Maio stated that playground apparatus will still be closed. In regards to the Dog Park, Mr. Maio thought that the re-opening would be in Phase 2 and Councilor Santos agreed. Councilor May questioned the guidelines for re-opening of restaurant. Director Clay said that the State has not come out with the

guidelines as of yet. He suggested extending outdoor dining as a way to help the restaurants. Director Clay said that we cannot override the Governor's rules that he sets but that doesn't mean we cannot be creative with the space. Councilor Dombroski noted he has had many conversations with Mr. Maio and that Mr. Maio has spent a lot of time on trying to be creative in terms of finding spaces that may be available and suggested to the Town Council that they give Mr. Maio and his team the authority when there is guidance from the State to come up with solutions within the parameters of the guidance to either block off streets or the closing of them. Councilor Santos agrees with the suggestion and also stated that she does not have a problem with calling a special meeting addressing the issue. Mr. Maio stated that if the Council were to give that authority to him and his team to allow a restaurant or retail business to come out to the sidewalk and/or street to do something creative, they will certainly do something with the traffic as he cannot shut down the streets every day. On one issue that is restaurant specific is the serving of alcohol in these outdoor spaces which will expand their footprint. The Chamber has put out a survey asking people a series of questions i.e. would they go to restaurants; what nights they would go to restaurants. A re-opening guide for businesses with links to the Massachusetts standards has been put together but not yet released. Councilor DiNocco commented that we all need to be proactive in supporting the businesses that open in each phase and if the Council just lets Mr. Maio allow a business to come out to the street without the Town Council being aware of it, then the Town Council cannot be proactive. He would support having a meeting to discuss the plan. Councilor Santos remarked that she cannot image the Town Administrator making the decision without the Town Council knowing about it nor would the Town Council not know what the businesses can do. She is confident that if Steve and his team were to make these decisions, the Town Council would know within moments of the decision. Councilor Butt recognized all the work Director's Ruth and Walsh have been doing and she supports having a meeting to discuss and vote any plans recommended by Steve and asked that Jenn push all the information out so that it can be shared. She was also excited to hear that there will be a greeter at the entrance of Town Hall as this is something that has been talked about for years. Councilor Chines also supports having an emergency meeting to vote on any recommendations from the Town Administrator.

Councilor Santos welcomed School Committee Chair Tom Markham to speak regarding graduation. He stated the Board of Health was very clear in opposing all the students on the field for graduation. The School Committee appreciates the approval of the small group option but they were seeking some direction over what they could do with regard to a larger group socially and asked Director Clay to clarify the vote of the Board of Health. She stated the consensus of the Board was that there wasn't any way they could say that two hundred and sixty students plus their families which could ultimately be a thousand people on the field was a small group. The plan that was presented to the Board of Health was a well-thought-out plan and that is the plan they approved.

Annual Town Meeting

Town Moderator William Carroll, along with consultation from Town Counsel Mullen and Director Clay, stated that the Annual Town Meeting will be moved from June 8, 2020 to Saturday, June 20, 2020 at the Wakefield Memorial High School Field House beginning at 9:00 a.m. and continuing until the completion of business. He will be sending a letter to the Attorney General's office advising them of the change. One action Town Counsel Mullen requested the Town Council to act on tonight is that a report has to be submitted to the Attorney General shortly after the Town Moderator issues his declaration continuing Town Meeting. That report must come from the public health official designated by the Board of Selectmen as stated in Chapter 53. The Town Council would need to designate Health Director Clay as the appropriate person to transmit that report. Councilor Chines wants to make sure that every voting resident will be able to vote if they have to use an overflow space. Moderator Carroll stated that if the overflow space is utilized, he will have an Assistant Moderator in that space. Councilor Chines also asked if there was a way to accommodate the voting population that cannot physically attend Town Meeting. Mr. Carroll answered that there is no way of really telling if the person cannot attend but he will look into it. Councilor Smith-Galvin brought up the point that Wi-Fi/cell coverage is non-existent at the High School. Councilor DiNocco motioned to designate Health Director Clay to submit to the Attorney General a letter declaring the continuing of Town Meeting from June 8, 2020 to June 20, 2020. Councilor Smith-Galvin seconded. Motion passed 7-0-0 by a roll call vote.

Budget Update

Both the Town Clerk and the Tax Collector follow the Supervisors Union contract and since that contract was approved, the Town Clerk's salary and Tax Collector's salary needs to be increased. The salary increases will be noted in the recommendation book and they were included in the overall numbers that the Town Administrator previously presented. Councilor DiNocco motioned to approve the Tax Collector and Town Clerk salary increase in their budgets under the same parameters as the Supervisors contract. Councilor May seconded. Motion passed 7-0-0 by a roll call vote.

Annual Town Election Warrant

The Elections Division of the Secretary of State's office has notified all of the towns in the Commonwealth that they can have a four-hour election day and it must begin before noon time. Town Clerk Sheeran is suggesting the hours of 10:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m. at the Galvin Middle School. For 43 days there has been early voting and absentee voting available without having to put a reason and the Town Clerk's office has been receiving them consistently. She mentioned that not everyone is going to be pleased and that somebody will complain but she needs to stay within the guidelines of social distancing and she has pushed out early voting via social media. Councilor Smith-Galvin asked that a red alert be pushed out along with the blinking signage. Councilor DiNocco motioned to approve the election hours from 10:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m. on June 23, 2020. Councilor Butt seconded. Motion passed 6-0-1 by a roll call vote with Councilor Dombroski abstaining. Councilor DiNocco motioned to approve the June 23, 2020 Annual

Town Election Warrant. Councilor Chines seconded. Motion passed 6-0-1 by a roll call vote with Councilor Dombroski abstaining.

**Town
Election/Town
Meeting
Worker
Appointments**

Councilor DiNocco motioned to approve the Town Election/Town Meeting Worker applicants as presented and attached with three-year terms through June 30, 2023. Councilor Chines seconded. Motion passed 7-0-0 by a roll call vote.

**Economic
Development
Council**

At the last Town Council meeting there was an indication from members of the Council looking for an opportunity to further review the proposal and then offer any feedback. Councilor Dombroski reached out to all Councilor and heard from Councilor Chines and no one has indicated that they are not in support of the Economic Development Council but timing of this is the question. Certain members of the Council believe this should wait until after Town Meeting and Councilor Dombroski feels the sooner the Town Council can get something up and running the better off it is going to be for our businesses. This would not be in place of the Economic Development Director, it would be a complement to an Economic Development Director. He asked that the Council move forward with the proposal again as he feels there has been sufficient time for folks to review it and offer comments on it and asked that instead of Town Councilors being on the Economic Development Council perhaps a liaison would make sense. He stated that he has been in touch with Mr. Maio about the oversight initially and Mr. Maio has agreed and is encouraged by the opportunity that this presents. Councilor Chines is not opposed with having an Economic Development Council and if it is structured in the right way there is a lot of benefit to the community. He does have some concerns and feels that waiting to see where we go with the timing and funding of the Economic Development Director position and proposes a motion to table the vote in hopes that we use today and possibly the next meeting to have some further discussion. Councilor Chines withdrew the motion in order for Councilor DiNocco to speak. Councilor DiNocco stated that he has been talking about having an Economic Development Director for years and does not want any vote on forming a Council until after Town Meeting. Councilor Santos suggested that perhaps a smaller group of Councilors could continue the discussion. Councilor Dombroski would like to work with a couple of Councilors and bring it back at the next meeting with the shared understanding that it would be helpful to move this forward. Councilor Dombroski motioned to table the discussion with Madam Chair appointing Councilors to collaborate with the expectation of having a discussion at the next Town Council meeting. Councilor Chines seconded. Motion passed 6-1-0 by a roll call vote with Councilor DiNocco voting against the motion.

**Licenses &
Approvals**

Councilor Smith-Galvin motioned to approve the request of Aaronap Cellars to sell wine at the Farmer's Market. Councilor Butt seconded. Motion passed 7-0-0 by a roll call vote.

Councilor DiNocco motioned to ratify the previous vote taken at the May 11, 2020 Town Council meeting to raise the Pride Flag in front of the Americal Civic Center for the month of June. Councilor May seconded. Motion passed 7-0-0 by a roll call vote.

MSBA High School Building Committee

Councilor DiNocco motioned to appoint the MSBA High School Building Committee applicants as presented and attached with terms for the duration of the committee and to also appoint Councilor Chines as the liaison from the Town Council. Councilor Chines seconded. Motion passed 7-0-0 by a roll call vote.

Youth Council – Middle School Members

Councilor Dombroski motioned to appoint the first three Youth Council Middle School applicants in order as they were received as voting members and the following three as associate members as presented and attached with one-year terms ending June 30, 2021. Councilor DiNocco seconded. Motion passed 7-0-0 by a roll call.

Public Hearing

Councilor Dombroski motioned to set June 22, 2020 at 7:05 p.m. as the Water & Sewer Rates Public Hearing. Councilor Chines seconded. Motion passed 7-0-0 by a roll call vote.

Announcements and Acknowledgements

Councilor Chines congratulated the graduation class of 2020; the incoming High School freshman class of 2024 and the class of 2028 moving on to the Middle School. One event that is happening virtually is the Megan Burnett Memorial Concert which will be tomorrow night on Facebook live from 6:00 p.m. until 7:00 p.m.

Councilor DiNocco questioned if the ban on groups at the Common was still in effect until July 6th. Mr. Maio answered that large groups or any groups are not being approved. Councilor DiNocco announced that the Rotary Club of Wakefield, Wakefield Main Street, Wakefield Independence Day Committee and the Wakefield Community Partnership has raised over \$70,000.00 to support the merchants in this community and thanked each and every donor.

Councilor Smith-Galvin has been hearing about how much people really like the Zoom meetings and recordings and is really hoping for a way to keep it going. The Environmental Sustainability Committee will be having bag recycling set up at Town Hall and then working with a commercial program that can turn them into benches around town. The Youth Council had their first meeting and they have lots of good ideas.

Councilor Butt thanked Jenn McDonald and Steve for the Spring Newsletter. The Human Rights Commission will be celebrating the whole month of June with Pride events. All information will be on the Facebook page of the Human Rights Commission. We did not have our regularly functioned Memorial Day but it was still made memorable. She also noted that we threw committees into having Zoom meetings without having any rules or explaining anything and suggested in

the future that we do some sort of training on how to create an agenda and how to get minutes in.

Councilor Dombroski reminded everyone again that the Wakefield Food Pantry is always looking for donations and cash is actually the best because for every one dollar that you donate they can secure four dollars' worth of food. It was great to see the enthusiasm during the Youth Council meeting as they have great leadership and great talent.

Councilor Santos stated the Memorial Day celebration was very poignant and sweet to be a part of. The West Side Social Club still honored the Veteran's and planted the trees in memory of those we lost and they did it in a responsible socially distance mask-wearing way and apologized for not having a moment of silence for Memorial Day at the beginning of the meeting. Asked Town Counsel Mullen to give a short tutorial if someone on a committee realizes there is a conflict of interest and what are the options. Mr. Mullen stated that anyone can call him to speak confidentially if they suspect a conflict. They can also talk directly to the State Ethics Commission's lawyer-of-the-day who will offer advice. There has been no reluctance on the part of Wakefield officials in doing this as they call him all the time on the merest suspicion that they might have some reason why they should recuse themselves. If a member of a Board thinks they have a financial interest with a particular matter that comes before them, they are supposed to recuse themselves. She recognized and congratulated the graduating class of 2020

**Matters Not
Anticipated for
Agenda**

Councilor DiNocco mentioned that there are three areas of close proximity to his home that need repaired by the DPW and asked for the DPW to be made aware of the issues. Councilor Santos said to reach out to Joe Conway or Steve Maio.

Adjournment

At 8:42 p.m. Councilor Dombroski motioned to adjourn. Councilor DiNocco seconded. Motion passed 7-0-0 by a roll call vote.

**Next Council
Meeting**

The next regular Town Council meeting is June 22, 2020.

Respectfully submitted,



Sherri A. Dalton
Town Council Clerk