



WAKEFIELD TOWN COUNCIL

Monday, April 27, 2020
7:00 P.M. (Via Zoom virtual meeting)

**COUNCIL
MEMBERS
PRESENT:**

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

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 Dombroski called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.
Pledge of Allegiance	Councilor Dombroski introduced a compilation video that consisted of a number of Wakefield children, to lead the Pledge of Allegiance, with much thanks to WCAT for putting the video together.
Attendance	All seven (7) Councilors were present and participating via Zoom.
Approval of Minutes	Councilor DiNocco motioned to approve the April 13, 2020 regular Town Council Meeting Minutes. Councilor May seconded. Motion passed 7-0-0 by a roll call vote.
Public Engagement	Madam Clerk Dalton stated there was no public engagement.
Public Hearing	<p>At 7:05 p.m. Councilor Santos motioned to open the Public Hearing for Bhavya Two LLC for a License and/or a modification of an existing License to store flammables at 950 Main Street. Councilor DiNocco seconded. Motion passed 7-0-0 by a roll call vote. Councilor Chines motioned to continue the Public Hearing until the completion the State Delegation agenda item. Councilor May seconded motion passed 7-0-0 by a roll call vote.</p> <p>At 8:00 p.m. Councilor May motioned to re-open the Pubic Hearing. Councilor Santos seconded. Motion passed 7-0-0 by a roll call vote. Attorney Brian McGrail on behalf of Bhavya Two LLC presented their application to amend an existing flammable license pursuant to MGL C.148 § 13. This location has had a flammables license since 1971. It is currently licensed for 18,000 gallons of gasoline storage and they are requesting an increase to 24,000 gallons of gasoline</p>

storage. Bhavya Two LLC is currently in the process of renovating the property with significant upgrades that will include new pavement; new signage; and gasoline storage tank capacity upgrade. Granite curbing will be installed throughout the property and the owners have made a commitment to significant enhancements to the landscaping. The landscaping will include the installation of approximately 200 plants on the site. As part of the renovations project, Bhavya was required to appear before the ZBA in which two partitions were approved by them to move forward with the renovations. Attorney McGrail worked closely with Fire Chief Sullivan, as required under MGL C. 148 § 13, prior to appearing before the Town Council. The Fire Chief is required to sign-off on the application and either recommend approval or denial. Fire Chief Sullivan submitted a letter of support for the applicant's request. There were no public questions or comments. At 8:08 p.m. Councilor May motioned to close the Public Hearing. Councilor Santos seconded. Motion passed 7-0-0 by a roll call vote. Councilor Santos motioned to approve the modification of an existing license to store flammables at 950 Main Street. Councilor DiNocco seconded. Motion passed 7-0-0 by a roll call vote.

State Delegation

Members of Wakefield's State Delegation participated in the Town Council meeting, including: Senator Lewis, Representatives Wong and Lipper-Garabedian. Senator Lewis extended his gratitude to Wakefield's first responders, local public health staff, and all the professional medical staff at Melrose/Wakefield Hospital. The State has been pursuing a two-pronged strategy to respond to the COVID-19 crisis. The first part is containing the spread of the virus by minimizing the number of people by physical distancing. The second part is mitigating devastating economic impacts on the residents, businesses, non-profits, municipalities, and other folks in communities. Unemployment benefits have been significantly strengthened and expanded which includes extending benefits to individuals not traditionally covered by these benefits. Support for small businesses and non-profits largely through the Federal CARES Act, Paycheck Protection Program (PPP), and small business loans. Emergency funding has been passed at the State and Federal levels for public health and hospitals. Legislation has also been passed to help municipalities with budgeting flexibility; relief from deadlines with permitting, town meeting, and elections. Tax filing deadlines have been extended and a moratorium has been placed on any evictions or foreclosures. Action has also been taken to cancel student standardized testing for the remainder of the school year. Electronic notarization has been passed for real estate and business transactions. Additional steps are being taken to support nursing homes with the elderly population. Legislation is being worked on to strengthen the safety net for low income families; vote by mail and early voting options for the Fall elections. Emergency paid sick time legislation has been filed which fills in gaps to make sure all workers have access to paid sick time so they do not have to go to work, potentially putting themselves and others at risk. The State Education Committee is planning an oversight hearing next week to learn more about how distance learning is going in the schools. The State budget outlook is hopeful in that there will not be any 9C cuts

in the current Fiscal Year. The outlook for Fiscal Year 2021 is grim. The normal budget process that would have been well underway has been delayed by at least a couple of months. The Senator reported forecasts indicating state government can expect anywhere from a \$4 billion to \$6 billion reduction in revenue, which is significantly more than the last recession in 2009. Expectation of the unemployment rate could reach as high as 20%. There is a "rainy day fund" that the State will tap into and the big unknown is how much aid for states will be included in the next Federal stimulus bill. There was some money in the CARES Act but they are really hoping and counting on significant aid for states and hopefully for municipalities. They are hoping to provide guidance to Wakefield regarding Chapter 70 and unrestricted local aid but he does not know when that guidance will be provided. The partnership between local government and state government is more important than ever and the two must continue to work closely together.

Representative Wong stated one of the main concerns with this virus was masks for first responders and stated that Taiwan donated 100,000 masks to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and the Governor matched the donation. He also said that House Bill 4475, the bill to help seniors with tax relief, is in its third reading. Representative Lipper-Garabedian addressed the limited liability for healthcare workers to ensure that they are mindful of the type of environment in which they are operating, which was recently signed by the Governor. A bill was also sent to the Governor related to the Board of Health standards creating a state action plan for local Boards of Health. Chairman Dombroski thanked the Delegation for offering a very thorough overview. He raised one of the more pressing issues for the Wakefield community relates to re-imbursements for having to expend as a town to mitigate this pandemic. Senator Lewis stated that it is very important to track any of the spending that the town is doing related to this State of Emergency. It is their expectation since the Governor declared a State of Emergency and the President declared a National State of Emergency, which activates FEMA at the Federal level and MEMA at the State level, and that should lead to those expenses being reimbursed. Councilor Chines thanked the Delegation for their great leadership. He asked if there was a sense of where projects would go that are in the pipeline with the MSBA over the next couple of years. Senator Lewis answered that the short answer is they do not know yet what impact the pandemic will have directly on the MSBA and their funding capacity. What they do know is the MSBA relies, in part, upon their funding stream of a penny from the sales tax. When sales tax revenues fall, as they are right now, that does impact the revenue stream that the MSBA receives. Councilor Chines also questioned transportation and what are the short term and longer terms paths going forward to make sure that enhanced access is there for transportation. Representative Lipper-Garabedian answered that it remains to be seen what kind of revenue will be available to make some of the policy changes that were going to be made prior to COVID-19. Chairman Dombroski questioned that if we find ourselves in a situation come this Fall needing to social distance or class sizes need to be smaller, where do we stand in terms of the State's recognition that those sorts of measures for a municipality would be incredibly challenging to be able to

do and costly. Senator Lewis stated those discussions are underway now and this is why we need to get additional help from the Federal government. His advice was to continue to speak with Congressman Moulton's office or directly to the Congressman and also Senators Markey and Warren as they want to do everything they can but it is good to hear from residents directly. Councilor Butt asked to keep the transportation issue in mind. She mentioned that the House passed a Bill last week regarding collection of COVID data and asked that the state legislature pass that Bill also as it is really important especially for minority populations. The House did not look at collecting LBGTO data in their version of the Bill and she asked Senator Lewis if it could be included in the Senate version. She also commented about the vulnerable population and wants to make sure that they are being looked out for as they come up with statewide legislation. Councilor DiNocco questioned the CARES Act and noted that several local businesses are still struggling with the process of completing their applications as they missed the first round. Now with more money available, who can these businesses contact to make sure the applications are being processed properly. Representative Lipper-Garabedian commented that her office has put together resources describing the programs available and that people can reach out to her office as well as the Wakefield-Lynnfield Chamber of Commerce as they are another resource for people to contact. Senator Lewis stated people can reach out to all three of their offices. Councilor Santos thanked the Delegation for all the work they are doing. Chairman Dombroski raised the question regarding Chapter 70 funding as Wakefield is not getting its fair share, if you simply look at state aid per student. Senator Lewis stated that his office organized a forum to go over Chapter 70 in depth which had to be cancelled due to the pandemic, but they did release a presentation which should answer how Chapter 70 works. He would be happy to go through the presentation virtually with everyone. Chairman Dombroski said that while he understands the numbers for FY 2021 are in flux and that no one would pin down numbers at this point, his broader concern is talking about the Chapter 70 funding formula. Chairman Dombroski said that while the input number is uncertain and a concern, it is more the output amount per student and how it is being distributed. Senator Lewis said that he is happy to walk everyone through the presentation as it does explain the formula. The Delegation will continue to work with members of the School Committee and the Town Council going forward on school funding. Chairman Dombroski thanked the Delegation for taking the time tonight to answer questions.

COVID-19 Updates

A lot has changed in the last six (6) weeks since the last update from Director Clay and Director Walsh. Director Walsh commented on where we are currently and where we see ourselves headed. He stated that the Town is doing a good job in protecting the residents of Wakefield; getting the PPE out to the public safety first responders; the state has freed up a lot supplies and we have been getting supplies twice a week from the State. There was a mask distribution to residents 60 and over and to people with underlying conditions which went well. FEMA is going to reimburse the Town 75% of what the Town has put out with a start date of January 1, 2020 until we are informed that it is over. An RPA (Request for Public

Assistance) has already been submitted to FEMA and the Wakefield accounts have been set-up. MEMA has one program and the Town is looking at getting reimbursed from them. Director Clay stated that Wakefield is at 209 cases as of today and a great deal of those are unfortunately in the nursing homes. There is a fantastic system in place for case management and contact tracing. The school nurses are helping as well as the members on the Board of Health. Because Wakefield is part of a health district with Melrose, we received \$100,000.00 up front over a month ago. This money is paying part of the rooms at a hotel that is available for someone that needs isolation and quarantine; overtime; funding for the contract tracing and case management and also the masks. Another very large mask distribution is planned, details will be made available soon. Laurel Gourville, Chair of the Board of Health commented that the team has worked very well. The messaging on social distancing specifically with the Order may need to be clarified as she feels that people are not reading the Order and asked the Council if anyone hears anything about clarity in that communication to please let the Board of Health know. Chairman Dombroski did note one point of clarification regarding the Order that was issued through the Board of Health as it does not require face masks it requires a face covering for anyone entering an essential business or working within an essential business. Director Clay confirmed the clarification. It does not relate to things like people walking in the streets. Councilor Chines thanked the Board of Health for everything that is being done and is curious as to what sort of criteria and what kinds of milestones would the Board of Health be looking for to try to drive some of those decisions in an evidence-based way that we continue to keep people safe. Director Clay stated why they are concerned about the peak is so the health care system can manage the number of patients at once. It does not decrease the number of people who will become ill or pass away, it decreases the amount of time so it is not this big peak all at once. The hospitals in Massachusetts are in really good shape as they are not even close to being at full occupancy. Flattening the curve does not decrease the total number of cases as it just spreads the cases out over a longer period of time. She said that they are always looking at the data in the number of cases and where the cases are what type of cases. Councilor Chines asked about the kinds of communication and cooperation that they have between the different departments in town. Town Administrator Maio stated that departments are in constant communication every day as well as Department Manager meetings every week. Director Walsh stated that when we go back to some type of normalcy, we will still be social distancing. He feels that we are still 4-6 weeks out before the Governor does something, but even when he does we are going to be that 6-foot limit on social distancing with people. The restaurants will probably be no more than 50 percent capacity. He feels that we are probably a year away from reality and thinks for the next year we are going to have some normalcy come back but not what we are used to. Councilor Chines asked the Town Administrator to clarify his comment regarding communication as it sounds like it is coming from his office and phasing down to each of the department managers. Town Administrator Maio stated that is correct within a structure, but he does not micromanage every department. Councilor DiNocco questioned the

face coverings and if it is directed at restaurants. Director Clay stated that it is not directed at restaurants, it is directed at all workspaces. He also asked how this information was distributed. She answered that the only distribution list that they have is for the food establishments and they were sent an email. For everyone else it has been through social media. She understands that it will take time for people to know about the Order and obtain face coverings. Chairman Dombroski took a moment to acknowledge the incredible job that Director Walsh has been doing and that Director Clay and the Board of Health have been doing as well as the Town Administrator. Director Clay pointed out that she really does appreciate the kudos but the ones that really deserve to be acknowledged are the public health nurses and school nurses, who are doing a really fantastic job. Councilor Smith-Galvin recommended that the Order state "by order of Wakefield Board of Health". She also commended that Wakefield is not effectively using the Code Red app. Director Walsh said that the app can be utilized if people are more apt to use it and he will look into it. Councilor Butt asked if he knew how many people are signed up for Code Red as she worries about the communication. Director Walsh said he could get that information.

Police Chief Skory started off by saying all of the police personnel are currently healthy. They have been provided with all of the PPE equipment that is necessary. Policies have been put into place to help people protect themselves and eliminate any cross-contamination within the department and from the outside. The officers at the beginning of their shifts they clean their cars and their workstations, and they do the same at the end of their shifts as well. Six (6) officers have been tested so far due to contact with positive cases and all six (6) tests have come back negative. In an effort to keep the police personnel healthy, they have gone to electronic roll calls; the officers come in to the station one at a time to do reports; they have cruiser assignments so that they do not have a large number of people sharing the same car; there are no shift swaps; all prisoners are transported by the prisoner van; many reports are being done by phone when possible; they are no longer currently processing licenses to carry firearms. The District Court is shut down so the police department has taken over their administrative work. If somebody needs a restraining order or a protection order, the paperwork is processed and then they call the court. They have tried to create some fun activities for the kids on our community during this time. A coloring contest is currently going on right now with over seventy (70) entries so far. Multiple winners will be picked by age group and they will get a drive-by from a couple of police cars. Some officers are telling bedtime stories on Facebook and they have also done a few parades for kids who had birthdays and could not celebrate with a party. Fire Chief Sullivan acknowledged all the help they have received from the Board of Health and Director Walsh. They continue to work with their EMS partners, Cataldo Ambulance. He is extremely proud to witness the devotion of the Wakefield Police, Firefighters, and EMS providers. Within the last twelve (12) days, the Fire Department has responded to 87 incidents where COVID-19 was either present or suspected. Six (6) employees have been test and all came back negative. Councilor Chines noted he was thrilled to hear that all employees of the

police and fire are healthy and asked what has the trend been in terms of calls over the last six (6) weeks. Chief Sullivan said that the vast majority of calls have been medically related to COVID-19 but there has been fire related calls as well. Chief Skory said that the calls are relatively the same but one thing that they closely monitor is the effect that the stay at home order would have with domestic cases. What they have found is a downward trend in those type of cases. Councilor Butt thanked Chief Skory for partnering with the team from Saugus for the parade to Melrose/Wakefield Hospital last week.

**Ethics
Disclosure**

Councilor Santos motioned to approve the Ethics Disclosure request from Town Counsel Thomas Mullen allowing him to potentially answer questions concerning Articles 24 and 25 of the 2020 Annual Town Meeting, as these are warrant petition articles sponsored by The Savings Bank. Mr. Mullen is a Director of that institution. Article 24 would rezone from General Residence to Business certain properties located on Main, Avon, and Chestnut Street. Article 25 would make textual changes in § 190-31 of the Zoning Bylaws and /or review and comment on motions made thereunder. The Planning Board and/or other Town boards and officials may also seek Town Counsel's advice concerning the meaning and consequence of the proposed zoning changes. Councilor May seconded. Motion passed 7-0-0 by a roll call vote.

**Appointments
– Historical
Commission**

At the last Town Council meeting Chairman Dombroski raised the fact that the Historical Commission oddly does not currently have staggered terms, unlike most other boards/commissions/committees. Following that discussion, Chairman Dombroski reached out to all the applicants and the Chair of the Historical Commission regarding assignment terms and reported back a proposed recommendation for staggered terms. Based on that recommendation, Councilor Santos motioned to appoint Nancy Bertrand, Gene Moulton, and Francene Harrington to the Historical Commission with three-year terms ending April 30, 2023; Daniel Benjamin and Cathlina Driver to the Historical Commission with two-year terms ending April 30, 2022; and Jennifer Osterhout and Therese Frazier to the Historical Commission with one-year terms ending April 30, 2021. Councilor DiNocco seconded. Motion passed 7-0-0 by a roll call vote.

**Constituent
Issues**

There were no constituent issues.

**Chairman's
Comments**

A number of months ago Chairman Dombroski identified to the Town Council a goal of trying to have a collaboration with our neighboring communities to meet and discuss and perhaps implement some ways that we can be most efficient as a region. It was determined that Tuesday, May 5, 2020 via Zoom would be a date that would work for the communities for a "Regional Summit Meeting." COVID-19 would be a heavy focus but also best practices with what we have learned thus far and where we see things going forward. All members of the Council are invited to participate. Each community will have a delegation that will be representing their respective community.

Relating to the budget, we will be looking at a loss in revenue and with that in mind Mr. Maio has already begun the process of reviewing our budgets and figuring out where we could make some adjustments for Fiscal Year 2021. One adjustment in particular relates to the new proposed Economic Development Director position. This is one position that has not been filled yet and some consideration should be given to possibly table this position temporarily until we have a better sense of where the town will be. Capital projects and capital spending is another area in which items will be looked at. Town Administrator Maio commented that in the middle of April he sent out what was his first pass on thoughts for a balanced budget. He met with the Finance Committee Forecasting Subcommittee and he forwarded three (3) different analyses. At the next Town Council meeting on May 11, 2020 there will be a presentation with some suggested budget adjustments. Come this Fall, positions can be added and his goal is to go forward with the June Town Meeting with a balanced budget or maybe a small surplus with really not knowing where state aid is going to be. There are also three (3) unions that are basically at an agreement that he would like to present at the next meeting as well. That preface brings Councilor Dombroski to highlight the Economic Development Director position and brings forward an opportunity to also work to create an Economic Development Council, especially if the Economic Development Director cannot be filled in the short term. His hope would be to bring together some member of our community in a strategic way, including volunteers with particular expertise who may have never volunteered before. CEOs live in Town and we also have a lot of business executives and business development folks who live in Town who would be good assets to this role. To bring together some of that expertise, first on a short-term basis, to help our local businesses recover and perhaps on a longer term as well. Even when this Economic Development Director position is filled in the future, this just provides a complement to the work that would be done in that role. This is really a unique opportunity to tap into talent and is a real opportunity for a value-add without costing the Town anything. Councilor Butt stated she will continue this conversation at the next meeting but just wants to go on record that she thinks now more than ever it is going to be important to fill that Economic Director position. Councilor Chines wholeheartedly agrees that this is a position that has more value now given the economic climate and stated this is a unique opportunity for us to differentiate our community when it comes bringing businesses into Wakefield. Councilor Smith-Galvin supports what Councilors Butt and Chines said. She thinks it is a predictable thing to cut this position but feels that Wakefield will really be innovative and help the businesses. Councilor Santos agrees with everything that has been said including the suggestion that we tap into our citizens to potentially have a Council, but her concern with the Council coming before the position is that she feels the position is the head and the Council can give suggestions and can work together. She did not realize that the position was at risk for not filling at the present time. She realizes that we are looking at a budget that is really tight but she feels that this position could save

the Town money. Chairman Dombroski clarified that no one is looking to not have this position. The timing of the when to fill the position is the issue at this point.

**Matters Not
Anticipated for
Agenda**

Councilor Chines commented that it wasn't clear to him that a consensus was reached at the last meeting when the discussion of re-organization of the Council was discussed. He asked what the path forward was going to be. Chairman Dombroski's expectation while looking ahead at the calendar with Madam Clerk was that he had anticipated having that on the agenda for voting at the second May meeting. Councilor Chines asked why not May 11th and Chairman Dombroski pointed out that it was a difference of one meeting and there were a number of issues considered. It was also unclear until after the Governor's updated guidance in mid-May whether that meeting would be via Zoom or in person. He stated that no one since the last meeting has raised anything relative to re-organization to him and that he put this as a placeholder as the next meeting. Councilor Chines stated he is struggling to see the rational. Councilor Santos commented that re-organization takes about 45 seconds and the natural progression would have been at the May 11th meeting. She appreciates what Chairman Dombroski has said but thinks reorganization can move forward on May 11th. Councilors DiNocco, Smith-Galvin, May, and Butt stated they thought this should take place at the first May meeting. Chairman Dombroski stated that he appreciates the feedback of the Councilors and thanked them for their input.

**Announcements and
Acknowledgements**

Councilor DiNocco recognized Carol's Café and the T-Stop for going above and beyond for first responders during the pandemic. He also spoke regarding a group of organizations that include Wakefield Rotary, Main Street, Independence Day Committee and the Community Partnership as they have united to launch a major crowdfunding measure to support the businesses in Wakefield. The hope is to raise \$25,000 to give up to \$1,000 in grants to ones that qualify. Applications are on the Town's website as is a way to donation. This is a way to support the merchants.

Councilor Chines reminded the community that the Election is not tomorrow and that it is June 23, 2020. He recognized the Council on Aging with their continued support of the seniors in town by helping with the distribution of masks, rides to medical appointments and connecting people to resources. The level of demand for the Food Pantry has been increasing and he encouraged people who have the ability to do so to consider donating.

Councilor Butt said that the Food Pantry is up 70% for people who are seeking help than they were before this crisis started so please consider donating. Happy Ramadan for people celebrating.

Town Administrator Maio recognized the team as they do a fabulous job and said for the people of Wakefield to stay strong as we will get through this together and we are very grateful for your support.

Chairman Dombroski thanked the T-Stop and 128 Plumbing and Heating with their very generous donation of face shields and face masks to the town as the shields will be used by our first responders and masks made available to residents through the Food Pantry and other potential locations.

Adjournment At 9:35 p.m. Councilor Santos motioned to adjourn. Councilor Smith-Galvin seconded. Motion passed 7-0-0 by a roll call vote.

Next Council Meeting The next regular Town Council meeting is May 11, 2020 at 7:00 p.m. via Zoom virtual meeting.

Respectfully submitted,



Sherri A. Dalton
Town Council Clerk

APPROVED