

BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING MINUTES– Final
Public Health Emergency Response Update Virtual Meeting Pursuant
to Governor Baker's March 12, 2020 Order Suspending Certain Provisions of
Open Meeting Law.
Zoom Meeting ID# 238444354
Monday March 30, 2020
6:30 P.M.

PARTICIPANTS: Jennifer Glass, Selectmen Chair
(Virtually) James Craig, Selectman
Jonathan Dwyer, Selectman
Tim Higgins – Town Administrator
Trish McGean – Public Health Nurse
Valerie Fox – Town Clerk
Peggy Elder – Administrative Assistant

WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS:

- Ms. Glass opened the meeting, noting that this meeting is being held remotely in a way that is consistent with Governor Baker’s Executive Order of March 12, 2020 in order to mitigate the transmission of COVID-19 virus. The order suspends the requirement to hold meetings in a publically accessible physical location and it allows bodies to meet entirely remotely so long as there is reasonable public access. Ms. Glass noted that this evening a public comment portion has been built into the meeting that will take place after they have gone through the discussion items on the agenda. She respectfully asked that the public participants keep their video and microphones off until that time. Ms. Glass reported that in addition to Zoom, this meeting is being broadcast on Comcast channel 8, Verizon channel 33, and is available through the Town website at www.lincolntown.org. She noted that this meeting is being recorded and that attendees are participating via video conference.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- Mr. Dwyer announced that the Lincoln-Sudbury boy’s hockey team is the State’s Division 2 co-champion as they were unable to play in the finals due to the COVID-19 virus. He noted that they had more than 20 wins and the team they were to play was Canton. Earlier in the season, LS had beaten Canton, their only loss of the season. He extended congratulations to the entire team.
- Ms. Glass expressed her gratitude for the Town Office staff and all of the departments for all that they are doing. In addition she thanked all of the residents who are taking actions to keep our spirits up, create things, or provide educational content. In so many ways, there are many people pitching in and it is really appreciated.

DISCUSSION:

- Public Health Emergency Response Update

1. Public Health & Safety: Mr. Higgins reported that the Public Health Emergency Team met this morning. The team is made up of Acting Deputy Fire Chief Brian Young, Council on Aging Director Carolyn Bottum, Police Chief Kevin Kennedy, Public Health Nurse Trish McGean, Board of Health member Trish Miller, School Superintendent Becky McFall, and himself. Trish McGean provided an update to the group.

Ms. McGean reported that as of 5:45 PM today, there are 5 confirmed cases of COVID-19 virus in Lincoln. She noted that of those five, one is still hospitalized and one has been discharged from self isolation as they met all of the criteria. That leaves three people that she following in addition to all of their close contacts. Ms. McGean reported that each of the towns that she follows has seen an uptick in cases in the last few days which is not a surprise with the availability of testing. She added that they expect to see more cases, but she has great backup and help at the office at Emerson Home Care. She thanked Mr. Higgins and the group that met this morning, noting their support. People are reaching out and questions are being answered and at this point she feels they are doing well.

Mr. Higgins noted that as things evolve he has asked Ms. McGean to keep us apprised about capacity issues. He added that it might be important to the Board and to the Town to know what is involved when there is a confirmed case. Ms. McGean reported that when there is a confirmed case, she gets a notice from the Department of Public Health (DPH). She then reaches out to that person and interviews them. She noted that the most difficult part of case management is following the close contacts. Once the date of onset of symptoms is known, those that the person had close contact with at that time are called and she follows up with them for fourteen days, which is the incubation period of the virus, to see if they become symptomatic. Ms. McGean reported that she has help from the Lincoln School nurse in addition to the Maynard, Carlisle, and Concord School nurses. They are helping with the daily contact tracing phone calls. So far they have been managing, but she feels in the next week or so she will be asking for more help. She noted that there are medical milestones that have to be met before someone can be released from isolation. Once they meet those milestones, she contacts the State and if they agree, the person is released. When that happens she is still following their close contacts for another week or two. Ms. McGean noted that currently with the Town's 5 cases capacity is fine, but if things change and the numbers go up greatly, that will change capacity. Currently the majority of her time is spent on the follow up emails and phone calls and she has roughly fourteen people in the other towns she works with that are trained and ready to jump in and help when needed. Ms. Glass asked if there is a tipping point and Ms. McGean responded that she doesn't know what it is yet, but when she reaches it she will definitely let the Board know.

Mr. Higgins reported that they also spoke about communications with Hanscom Air Force Base. About a week or so ago, the first case was confirmed at the Base and the Town received communication from the Base Commander regarding the steps that the Base had taken in response. Mr. Higgins noted that in this morning's meeting they discussed the variety of responses that could be expected from the Town of Lincoln in support of the Base. The Board knows that the Base is pretty self sufficient when it comes to municipal

type services, but on occasion the Town Police Department responds and provides support, our EMS are called in on mutual aid, and our school employees are very involved providing services on a daily basis and are currently providing volunteer services on the Base. He added that it is very important that the Town is notified in real time when there are cases confirmed on the Base so that our people can take appropriate actions to protect themselves. He added that he has the action item to contact the Colonel and then follow up with Lincoln Public Safety and the Public Health Nurse. Ms. McGean reported that she reached out to the Public Health Nurse in Bedford and noted that the Base has its own Public Health System and they are ready to take care of any cases that are reported on the Base. She asked to be kept informed especially as it pertains to children, families and schools. She expects they will be sharing any new information with her going forward.

Mr. Dwyer asked if the name and address of those with a confirmed case is shared with Town Departments that might come in contact with the person. Ms. McGean responded that when she is notified of a new case she does contact Kevin Kennedy and Brian Young and provide the address. They are not given a name. Ms. McGean noted that just Police and Fire are given the address. Lincoln Commons let everyone know that the first case was there, but that will not be happening going forward as that is a violation of HIPPA.

Mr. Craig asked about the status of the Public Safety Officers who are self quarantining. Ms. McGean responded that they are doing well and she is in touch with them and will be following them through the end of their 14 days. He also asked if the Town should start preparing for larger numbers that require more follow up and whether we should be recruiting workers. Ms. McGean responded that she has plenty of qualified people who are ready when the need arises.

Mr. Higgins reported that they have been keeping the website www.lincolnpublichealthnews.com up to date and welcome any feedback on content.

2. **Operational Status:** Mr. Higgins reported that one thing on which they focused a lot of time at last week's meeting was the operation status of each Town department.

All essential departments are fully staffed and fully functional. In some cases they may be working staggered shifts in order to minimize contact. There are also work-from-home arrangements where practical.

All non-essential employees and offices remain closed to the public, but are accessible to the public via email or telephone. People are periodically coming by the office to check on the mail, etc. Mr. Higgins is confident that the public will be able to reach us if they need to do so.

The "back room" offices such as Finance Department and the other essential business departments are continuing to function. Payroll, accounts payable, and collections work is continuing to go forward with staff coming in sporadically as need be.

Mr. Higgins reported that in regard to the Boards that oversee non-essential functions, Jen Burney and the Land Use Team are going to get a summary out this week of what's happening. They are trying to get a sense of what the priorities are for the next few weeks and months. He added that they are looking forward to when the emergency passes and normal operations are restored and are beginning to think ahead to that time.

Mr. Higgins reported that the DPW is now on staggered shifts. The Transfer Station is now open on Mondays to make it three days a week to minimize crowding as well as keeping the staff safe and operational.

Mr. Higgins reported that one of the things that residents have started to give feedback on is the trails. He noted that the parks and playgrounds have been closed, but the trails are open. Some of the private land conservation groups across the State have made the decision to close their trails, and some in our immediate area have done that, so the Conservation Commission and the staff is keeping an eye on the usage of the Lincoln trails. Last Saturday there was heavier than normal useage. As a result, the Conservation Commission has actively posted recommendations about social distancing and best practices including asking people to keep their dogs on leash when they are on the trails. For now the Conservation Commission and Lincoln Land Foundation are keeping the trails open with the request to users to keep safe distances. Mr. Dwyer wanted to acknowledge Conservation Department staff Tom Gumbart, Stacey Carter and Emma Coates. They have done a phenomonal job of keeping the trails clear. He added that just a few weeks ago there were trees down, but going through now it is all clear and you can see the fresh cuts on the side of the trail.

Mr. Higgins gave the Board an update on resources and budget. He noted that the COVID-19 related expenses are being tracked. Finance Director Colleen Wilkins has set up a new set of accounts exclusively for COVID-19 expenses which will make the process much smoother when applying for grants. Mr. Higgins noted that there are a number of grants that have been identified and the Town is pursuing both public and private funds. The Town applied for and received a grant of \$2700 from the Mass Department of Public Health to help augment the hours that Trish McGean is putting in. The number of hours she gives us per week has been quadrupled through the Minuteman Health Contract. We anticipate that the demand on the budget will increase. Mr. Higgins has been in contact with the Finance Committee chair to discuss how to make funds readily available as these things come up. They discussed whether the reserve fund would be the right way to make funds available for FY20 year-end expenses, and they started thinking about FY21. There are other budget measures that they are also considering. It is important that the departments have the funds available when necessary and that they do not have to wait for the Finance Committee to satisfy the requirements of the Open Meeting Law. Making sure the funds flow to where they need to be is essential. He added that they have made inquiries to the Codman Trust and a number of other private organizations, so they are hopeful that there may be some partnerships that result from those overtures. If they are successful in getting any of these grants, they would be tied right back to the COVID-19 expenses.

3. Communications: Mr. Higgins reported that this is the single biggest challenge of his office. Managing communications between the essential departments, with the key boards, as well as letting the non-essential departments and boards know what is happening. In addition there is the Communication outside of Lincoln and communication with the public. Managing those communication loops has been a real challenge. Over the past week or so, Mr. Higgins reported that he is feeling more confidant now that those communication loops have been established. In addition, he has invited feedback on the level of communication that is being disseminated. Ms. Glass reiterated that if people have basic questions, they should send an email to selectmen@lincolntown.org.

4. Town Meeting/Special Town Meeting/Town Election – Ms. Glass reported that the schools will not be re-opening until May 4th, which impacts our earlier decision to push Town Meeting and the election out 30 days to April 25th and April 27th, respectively. Currently state law only allows Town Meeting to be moved by 30 days, and wondered if the state might change that requirement. Mr. Higgins stated that as far as the evolving law, the Governor has signed a bill Chapter 45 of the Acts of 2020 within the past couple of days and the focus on that legislation is on creating more flexibility on the scheduling of elections during the crisis. It did not address Town Meeting, but it did give the Board of Selectmen the authority to postpone the election to an undetermined date, but no later than June 30th. He added that it also extended the registration deadline from 20 days before an election to 10 days prior. The state is also allowing the re-use of previously-printed ballots, and allows early voting by mail. Ms. Glass confirmed that as it stands the Town would still need to pick a date certain for Town Meeting that is no further out than thirty days from April 25th. Mr. Higgins confirmed that this is correct and that it would be the Town Moderator who would make that decision. Mr. Higgins reported that there was a question that had come up regarding Town Meeting. The question was if the Town Meeting is pushed out to just after the crisis has subsided, but there is still a level of anxiety on the resident's part is there the ability to lower the quorum? This has not yet been addressed in any of the legislation that has been released thus far, but he added that the MMA is lobbying hard for this capability. Ms. Glass asked if, in spite of the Warrant already being posted, it would be possible to combine the Annual Town Meeting and the Special Town Meeting into one single meeting. Mr. Higgins reported that according to Town Counsel we could collapse the two meetings into one warrant and there have been informal discussions with some members of the Finance Committee regarding how to facilitate a very efficient and quick Town Meeting. They may organize the warrant and the consent calendar differently. The thinking was that depending how the crisis evolves, if we are planning to hold a Town meeting in May or June, we may defer all non financial articles until the Fall. He added that they would have the School Building Project vote, the Town Budget, the Capital Plan, the Community Preservation slate of articles, and the other financial articles. One idea is to include all of these articles on the Consent Calendar, with the exception of the School Building Project vote. Mr. Higgins noted that any voter is free to ask that a particular matter be withdrawn from the Consent Calendar and discussed individually. Ms. Glass asked if it made sense to have Town Moderator Sarah Cannon-Holden join the Board of Selectmen's meeting next Monday. Mr. Higgins agreed that it did, and noted that they discussed Town Meeting and the election at the Public Health Response Team meeting. He noted that some of Lincoln's peer towns have gone ahead and held their elections, whereas Lincoln made the decision not to do that. The Board of Health made it clear that they were very much against holding an election during this time. Ms. McGean stated that there is no reason to gather a large group of people when it can be put off. Mr. Craig asked whether pushing off the Town Meeting would be detrimental to the School Building Project and the deadlines that they need to meet. Ms. Glass reported that as far as the School Building Project goes, Chris Fasciano (School Building Committee Chair) has reached out to the Owner's Project Manager and to Consigli to start that conversation about what happens if we can't have a Town Meeting before June 1st. She added that a number of items that are on that list have deadlines that are after June 1st, but unfortunately the ones that are most integral to the project have the June 1st deadline. That conversation is in process, but she has nothing definitive at this point. Mr. Craig wondered whether having the Moderator join their meeting

should take place on April 13th or the 20th instead of this coming Monday, as news reports were indicating that the pandemic would peak during the first two weeks of April. Mr. Higgins stated that we could put it off if we had to, however if the consensus is that they are leaning toward putting it off, it might cause the Town Clerk's office less stress if they know there is no April election. Mr. Higgins asked if there was consensus among the Board to postpone the April 25, 2020 meeting. The consensus of the Board was yes, they are going to postpone. Mr. Higgins noted that this means looking into mid- or late May for a meeting. If the crisis has not subsided, the SBC consideration will weigh in. If we are unable to hold a meeting before the end of June, there are work arounds for the budget. One of the relief bills signed by the Governor allows us to proceed with July budgets based on FY20 budgets, so if we go into the Fall he feels the time sensitivity will be on the side of the school building project and not the Town budget. Ms. Glass noted that if June 1 is a hard deadline, the last date that a town meeting prior to that deadline would be May 30th. Mr. Higgins will alert the moderator.

- Liaison Reports

Oriole Landing – Mr. Craig reported on the status of the Oriole Landing project and that there are specific deadlines with the Department of Housing & Community Development (DHCD) concerning the issuance of the Certificate of Occupancy for the project in order for all 60 units to count on our subsidized housing inventory. That deadline is June 30th. Mr. Craig inquired of Mr. Higgins as to the status of the construction schedule with Civico due to the pandemic. Mr. Higgins stated that the Town Building Inspector confirmed that they were continuing to go forward with the work while following proper safety protocols and seem to still be on schedule. Mr. Craig asked that the Town reach out to the our Regional Housing Services Office (RHSO) to see if they knew of any waivers or time extension agreements that could be put in place with DHCD in the event that work is halted and the project is unable to be substantially completed by June 30th.. Mr. Higgins agreed to follow up with RHSO and/or DHCD and will follow up.

Council on Aging – Mr. Craig wanted to acknowledge the work that Carolyn Bottum, Council on Aging Director, has been putting in and he noted the high number of rental applications that have been submitted for the rental assistance program. He added that while the funds are coming from a dedicated CPA fund, the Town should consider thinking about other funding sources, possibly from the private sector, to help with the current situation. Going forward, it might also be something to look at in terms of whether the Town should increase its request for CPA funds for this program. Mr. Higgins commented that once the deadline closed for the program, they realized that the demand was higher than the funds available. He added that Ms. Bottum has done a remarkable job putting this program together and she has been speaking with the Community Preservation Committee about increasing the funds for next year. Ms. Glass noted that even before the COVID-19 crisis, the applications for this program outweighed the funds available.

School Building Committee (SBC) – Ms. Glass reported that they had a meeting last Wednesday for the purpose of confirming the Guaranteed Maximum Price (GMP) which is the point that they have been working toward. Pending a final legal review of the contract, the SBC voted to approve the guaranteed maximum price for a project that remains on budget and on time. She added that the GMP has a number of components, not only the construction price, but also the working conditions, schedule, etc. She clarified that the project is going forward regardless of any votes that might take place at Town Meeting. Those votes would be

on a specific set of items that we, as a Town, might want to add back in to the project. The SBC will meet again on April 15th unless there is a reason that they need to meet sooner.

OPEN FORUM:

- None

ACTION ITEMS:

- None

WARRANTS:

- None

MINUTES:

- March 23, 2020 - Mr. Craig moved to approve the minutes of the March 23, 2020 meeting. Mr. Dwyer seconded the motion. With no further discussion, the motion was approved unanimously with a roll call vote: Dwyer: Aye; Craig: Aye; Glass: Aye.

Mr. Dwyer made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Craig seconded the motion. With no further discussion, the motion was approved unanimously with a roll call vote: Dwyer: Aye; Craig: Aye; Glass: Aye. The meeting adjourned at approximately 7:30 P.M.

Submitted by Peggy Elder

Approved 04/06/20