Warrant Committee
September 30, 2020
Zoom Conference Call

(Conducted pursuant to the Executive Order dated March 12, 2020 suspending certain provisions of the Open Meeting Law, Gen. L. c. 30A §20 et seq. and 940 CMR 29.01 et seq.)

Present: George A. Ashur (Chair), Erin G. Bradley (Secretary), Rosemary C. Bouzane, , Kathleen A. Cassis, Brian G. Foster, Christine J. Gimber, Susannah H. Hegarty, Douglas B. Scibeck, , Scott D. Johnson, David Humphries, Emily Cavalier, Ohene Asare, Brigid Gaughan.

Absent: Clinton Graham, John E. Driscoll.

Guests: Michael Dennehy (Town Administrator), Daniel Clark (Vice- Chair of the Fire Station Building Committee).

Meeting called to order at 7:03 p.m.

1.) Chairman remarks: 
7:02 p.m. On a motion from Kathleen A. Cassis, seconded by Douglas B. Scibeck, the minutes from September 21st, 2020 were approved unanimously.

2.) Warrant Discussions: 
   a.) 7:04 p.m. The Warrant Committee discusses, and nominates a Warrant Committee member to join the Capital Committee. On a motion from Christine J. Gimber, seconded by Erin G Bradley, Kathleen A. Cassis is approved to be on the Capital Committee unanimously.

   b.) 7:07 p.m. Mr. Dennehy addressed the Warrant Committee. Mr. Dennehy thanked returning Warrant Committee members and the new members. Mr. Dennehy noted the Warrant Committee plays an important part in making sure the Town stays fiscally responsible.

   Mr. Dennehy gave the Warrant Committee a brief timeline regarding the Town Facilities and Department shut down due to COVID-19 earlier this year. On March 16th, 2020, several Town facilities were shut down, including Town Hall, Library, Council on Aging. All administrative staff were placed on staggered shifts, so that each office only had half of the number of employees it normally has. The days the employees were remote, many were given laptops and were asked to work from home. Additionally, on March 17th, 2020, the Parks and Recreation department decided to close all playgrounds. Mr. Dennehy also commented that Milton Fire, Police and Fallon Ambulance never missed a beat, and continued services as normal. On March 23rd Governor Baker gave his 13th emergency order, since the pandemic started. Mr. Dennehy met with Paige Eppolito
(Assistant Town Administrator/ Human Resources Director), consulted with several people including Caroline Kinsella (Health Director Town of Milton), Milton Select Board, and the Norfolk County Managers. After serious consideration it was decided all operational staffers, (including: Parks Department Workers, DPW workers and Consolidated facilities workers;) were placed on staggered shifts. This was the best way to keep workers socially distanced while trying to ensure the safety of all workers, without interrupting services to the Town. Mr. Dennehy noted that two workers could not be placed in the same truck at the same time and tools could not be shared. Mr. Dennehy noted the alternative would have to lay off staff, who would have filed and received unemployment, (and the Town would be responsible to pay up to 60% of their wages). The consensus was at least the employees would provide some productivity.

In summation, Mr. Dennehy noted this lasted for 10 weeks from March 23rd through the end of May. Mr. Dennehy commented that at the end of May, masks were worn by everyone and as a Town we had learned how to socially distance ourselves. At that time department heads from Cemetery, Parks and DPW felt that workers could go back to work in the new normal environment. On June 1st all departments were back to full staff.

The employees affected were 45 total: 3 from Parks Department, 8 from Consolidated Facilities, 8 Cemetery and 26 from DPW. Mr. Dennehy noted he reviewed and a rough estimate of wages broke down: approximately 7,500 man hours that were staggered for employee safety (social distancing), $200,000.00 of work that needed to be shelved to ensure the virus did not transmit among staff. Mr. Dennehy also noted from speaking with other surrounding area Town Managers, our staffed returned sooner than other communities. Throughout it all, there was not one transmitted case of COVID-19 among employees.

Mr. Dennehy also noted there had been some questions regarding when Town Hall would open. Early voting begins October 17th, 2020 at Town Hall. To ensure employee safety the plan is to open Town Hall after voting when there is less foot traffic at the actual building, (as long as our community continues to remain low on positive COVID-19).

Lastly, Mr. Dennehy noted that DPW gave back $50,000.00 to free cash for last Town fiscal year; (as well as Fire and Police all gave back to free cash as some of their events did not take place due to COVID-19).

7:20 p.m. Rosemary C. Bouzane enters the meeting.

The Warrant Committee thanked the Town employees. The Warrant Committee asked if the Town had a Disaster Recovery Plan prior to COVID-19. Mr. Dennehy noted that Milton Police Lieutenant Chuck Caputo has been in charge of the Town Disaster Recovery Plan for years.

c.) 7:22 p.m. The Warrant Committee discuss the articles for December Special Town Meeting. Mr. Dennehy noted that there is a weekly call with the Lieutenant Governor Polito, Governor Baker, however, the Town has not yet received the fiscal guidance. Mr.
Dennehy is expected to learn more from tomorrow call with the Secretary of Administration and Finance is excepted to have more financial information. The Warrant Committee asked for confirmation if Mr. Dennehy was anticipating the State would be honoring Chapter 70 and local aid, and he confirmed he was expecting this.

d.) 7:27 p.m. Mr. Clark addressed the Warrant Committee. Mr. Clark presented a Power Point Presentation regarding the status and future building projects for all three Milton Fire Stations. Mr. Clark noted that Central Fire and Atherton Station projects are further along than the East Milton, as the physical sight is still to be determined. The Central and Atherton station are at the stage were all the details are being examined and reviewed.

Mr. Clark noted even though Central Station and Atherton Station are further along in design and planning than the East Milton project, the Fire Station Building Committee want to keep all three projects on the same timeline. The reason why the Fire Station Building Committee wants to keep all three buildings as one large project, is due to funding, and not having to go back to the Town in a couple of years to ask for funding again and again. The Fire Station Building Committee is looking to fund the projects with a Special Debt Stabilization Fund, (otherwise known as the Hurley Amendment), which requires a Town referendum vote. The first of the three stations to start construction, (most likely Headquarters first), would be late Fall 2021. Mr. Clark also gave the Warrant Committee greater detail on each station. The total cost of all three projects are estimated at $28,943,055.00, (however this excludes the cost of purchasing or leasing land for the East Milton Fire Station location). Additionally, this is based on today costs, if a Fire Station is built two years from now, costs could inflate.

7: 29 p.m. Scott Johnson enters the meeting.

e.) 8:17 p.m. The next Warrant Committee meeting will be October 14th, 2020 at 7 p.m. and October 19th, 2020 at 7p.m.

f.) 8:19 p.m. No new business.

8:19 p.m. On a motion from Scott D. Johnson, seconded by Kathleen A. Cassis, the meeting is adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lynne Hoye
Warrant Committee Clerk