Meeting Date: March 16, 2020
Members in Attendance: Chair Michael F. Zullas, Vice Chair Melinda A. Collins, Secretary Anthony J. Farrington, Richard G. Wells, Jr., Kathleen M. Conlon, Town Administrator Michael D. Dennehy, Executive Administrative Assistant Hillary Waite
Meeting Location: Conference Call - remote
Members Absent: none
Time Meeting called to Order: 6:01 pm
Time Meeting Adjourned: 7:16 pm

1. Call to Order
Chair Zullas called the meeting to order at 6:01 pm.

Caroline Kinsella gave an update about coronavirus. Testing in Milton will begin later in the week. Ms. Collins asked whether the Health Department would receive or share information about how many COVID-19 tests are performed in Milton. Ms. Kinsella reported that she may not receive complete information about the number of tests, but would receive information about the number of cases in Milton. Ms. Kinsella also reported that she would be speaking with Police Lieutenant Chuck Caputo, chair of the Local Emergency Planning Committee, in the near future to continue coordinated response.

Town Administrator Michael Dennehy gave an update on Town Hall operations. Department heads met and reviewed logistics for Town government continuity of operations. Town Hall will be closed to the public indefinitely beginning Tuesday, March 17, 2020. Town Hall, the Library and Council on Aging are closed but still providing services to constituents. In-home assessments and inspections are temporarily canceled.

2. Discussion/Approval – waiving COVID-19 Related testing and hospitalization copays
The Board discussed this item in emergency session on March 13, 2020. At that time, the Board voted to waive all Town Employees’ co-payments for the following, until further notice:

- COVID-19 test;
- Doctors office, urgent care and emergency room services for COVID-19 testing; and
- Telemedicine services (all telemedicine, including behavioral health).
This emergency action was necessitated based on the insurance carriers’ requirement that the Town’s intentions be reported to the Massachusetts Division of Insurance by the close of business Friday, March 13.

3. COVID-19 Related Town Policies
Following discussion, Ms. Conlon moved, Mr. Wells seconded, and the Board voted 5-0 to approve the Work From Home Policy.
Collins AYE
Conlon AYE
Farrington AYE
Wells AYE
Zullas AYE

Mr. Wells moved, Ms. Conlon seconded, and the board voted 5-0 to approve the Communicable Disease and Quarantine policy.
Collins AYE
Conlon AYE
Farrington AYE
Wells AYE
Zullas AYE

Following discussion, Mr. Wells moved, Ms. Collins seconded, and the Board voted 5-0 to approve the Staying home or Sending Employees Home policy as amended.
Roll call vote
Collins AYE
Conlon AYE
Farrington AYE
Wells AYE
Zullas AYE

Chair Zullas requested that Ms. Eppolito and Mr. Dennehy draft a policy for how Town staff will carry out payroll functions, including time and attendance tracking and overtime payment, for the Board’s review at their next meeting.

4. Discussion - Public Meetings
The Town’s Technology Department has been working to make public meetings available through remote technology. The application selected for public meetings is WebEx, an online conference calling software. The nature of this software and Town systems may limit meetings to one per evening.

Ms. Collins asked whether other meeting platforms would be acceptable in order to facilitate meeting posting; in particular regarding a meeting of the Housing Committee and Affordable Housing Trust which has already been posted with remote participation information on Zoom, another conferencing platform. The Board agreed that the planned Housing Committee meeting should continue and in the future WebEx should be used whenever possible.
The Board also discussed postponement of the Town Election and Town Meeting. Mr. Dennehy confirmed that the Moderator may postpone Town Meeting with limitations, but that the state legislature is expected to act in the near future to empower towns to further postpone Town Meetings as necessary. The Board agreed to coordinate with Moderator to arrange for change in the date of Town Meeting.

Town Clerk Sue Galvin joined the Board for discussion of postponement of the annual town election. Mr. Wells recused himself from this discussion and left the meeting. Per state law, the election may only be postponed through a court order or an act of the Massachusetts legislature. Clerk Galvin advised the Board to petition the Governor of Massachusetts to file legislation on the Town’s behalf.

Mr. Zullas moved: That, whereas the rapidly-evolving public health issues associated with coronavirus Covid-19, including the swift spread of the disease, present lack of containment, and the risk to the most vulnerable populations inherent in public gatherings; whereas various public and private entities, including professional sports leagues, universities, school districts, cultural institutions and events, and more, have been cancelled, closed, or temporarily suspended; whereas the World Health Organization has identified the current crisis as a pandemic; and whereas the Governor has declared a State of Emergency in the Commonwealth,

the Town is taking action consistent with recommendations from federal and state agencies and officials to limit the spread of this disease amongst the residents and voters of the Town, its officials and employees, and visitors, including, closing or limiting the use of schools and public buildings, suspending in-person meetings and other gatherings in Town office buildings, and encouraging residents to communicate with Town staff by e-mail and telephone to the extent possible.

For all of these reasons, the Board of Selectmen votes to immediately request the Governor to file emergency legislation on behalf of the Town, a so-called “Governor’s bill”, seeking authorization to delay and reschedule the Annual Town Election to a date to be determined by the Selectmen in consultation with the Town Clerk, Board of Health, and other public safety personnel, and authorizing early voting by mail in connection with such postponed election, provided, further, that all nominations, ballot preparation, absentee voting and the like be ratified, validated and confirmed as though it was undertaken consistent with the date of the postponed election; and, further, if such legislation is not passed prior to the date of scheduled Annual Town Election, to ratify, validate and confirm the Board’s vote to postpone the 2020 Annual Town Election; finally, the Board calls upon its legislative delegation to support the filing of this special legislation, and also wishes to provide direction to such delegation that it supports the filing of generally applicable legislation allowing for the postponement of municipal elections this fiscal year.

Ms. Collins seconded and the Board voted 4-0 in favor.
Collins AYE
Conlon AYE
Mr. Wells returned to the meeting.

5. Topics the Chair did not reasonably anticipate would be discussed
Given the rapid pace of changing information and requirements from state and federal government related to COVID-19, the Chair could not reasonably anticipate the following topics for discussion.

The Board agreed to work with Milton Public Access Director Michael Lynch to share public information on a regular basis, potentially through a daily standing update aired on Milton Access.

Ms. Conlon moved, Ms. Collins seconded, and the Board voted to delegate to the Town Administrator responsibility for communicating with residents about information related to COVID-19 until further notice.

At 7:16pm Ms. Collins moved, Ms. Conlon seconded, and the Board voted 5-0 to adjourn.