

BOARD OF SELECTMEN
Steven P. Rose, Chairman
Eric S. Beckerman, Clerk
Jason L. Suzor, Associate

Gregory S. Enos
TOWN ADMINISTRATOR

Town of Avon Massachusetts



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TOWN OF AVON
2020 SEP -8 A 10:09
TOWN CLERK

BOARD OF SELECTMEN WORKSHOP MEETING AUGUST 12, 2020 at 12:00 p.m.

Members present: Steven P. Rose, Chairman
Eric S. Beckerman, Clerk
Jason L. Suzor, Associate

Others present: Gregory S. Enos, Town Administrator
Shanna M. Faro, Executive Assistant
Patricia Bessette, Town Clerk
Kathleen Waldron, Health Agent
Fire Chief Robert Spurr
Debra Morin, Treasurer/Collector
Ann Fogg, Library Director
Christine Godino, School Superintendent
Erin Barry, Town Accountant

Chairman Rose announced that pursuant to Governor Baker's March 12, 2020 Order suspending certain provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A, §18, and the Governor's March 15, 2020 Order imposing strict limitations on the number of people that may gather in one place, this meeting of the Board of Selectmen is being conducted via remote participation. No in-person attendance of members of the public was permitted, but every effort was made to ensure that the public can adequately access the proceedings as provided for in the Order. Chairman Rose reminded the viewing audience that persons who would like to view this meeting while in progress may do so by joining the Zoom link for the videoconference in session.

Chairman Rose called the meeting to order at 12:00 p.m. with all members present. Each Board member acknowledged their presence at the meeting by responding in the affirmative during the roll call. In addition, all anticipated speakers acknowledge their presence by responding in the affirmative when Chairman Rose called their names.

Reevaluation of Opening Town Buildings to the Public

Chairman Rose stated that today's meeting is a follow-up meeting to the July 28, 2020 Workshop Session meeting in which the Board voted to for town offices to remain closed to the public and open by appointment only during the coronavirus pandemic. Chairman Rose stated that the purpose of today's meeting is to reevaluate and consider opening town buildings to the public.

Avon Public Schools

School Superintendent Christine Godino informed the Board that the School Committee voted on August 11, 2020 for the schools to reopen using a hybrid module. The hybrid module is a combination of students to attend classes in person two days a week and work remotely three days a week. Ms. Godino stated that parents will have the option to choose between a hybrid module or fully remote during the 2020-2021 school year. Ms. Godino stated that school is scheduled to start on September 16, 2020. Finally, Ms. Godino advised the Board that the proposed school year plan is subject to change at any time during the COVID-19 pandemic. Ms. Godino stated that should the schools need to shut down for any reason, she will contact the Health Agent. Ms. Godino did inform the Board that the Avon Public Schools does intend to fully use all CARES Act funding allocated to them.

Avon Public Library

Library Director Ann Fogg informed the Board that the Avon Public Library is currently open for curbside pickup only. Ms. Fogg stated that she receives many calls from patrons upset that the library is still closed. Ms. Fogg requested permission from the Board to allow the library to open to the public by appointment only, allowing ten people in the library for thirty-minute intervals at a time for five hours per day. Ms. Fogg stated that she and her staff could be ready to open the doors to the public on August 17, 2020. Ms. Fogg stated that in preparation for opening to the public, all tables and chairs have been removed from the common areas. Ms. Fogg stated that all toys and puzzles have been removed from the children's area as well. Ms. Fogg informed the Board that even if the library is granted permission to open by appointment only, she still intends to offer curbside pickup for patrons who are uncomfortable entering the building due to the pandemic. Mr. Enos informed the Board that the library is still undergoing construction that should be finalized shortly. Mr. Enos stated that the library still needs some safety measures in place prior to opening to the public such as plexiglass for the counter desk and to separate patrons at the computer and the photocopier. Chairman Rose recommended no more than five people enter the library for thirty-minute intervals by appointment only for five hours per day. Chairman Rose informed Ms. Fogg that all safety protocols must be in place prior to the library opening to the public. Chairman Rose requested that Ms. Fogg keep track of the amount of people entering the building and report that calculation back to the Town Administrator for reevaluation at a later date on increasing the number of people allowed in the building at one time. The Board agreed unanimously with Chairman Rose's recommendation for reopening the Avon Public Library. The library may reopen by appointment only for five people for thirty-minute intervals for five hours per day once all safety protocols are in place.

Avon Town Hall, Council on Aging and Civic Center

Chairman Rose asked Chief Spurr and Health Agent Kathleen Waldron as to the status of positive cases currently in Avon. Ms. Waldron stated that Avon has remain relatively unchanged in the past few weeks. Chief Spurr stated that Avon has been listed in the white/unshaded category according to the state's new mapping system which means that the town has less than five positive cases. Chairman Rose stated that he was still concerned as Avon borders on larger cities and towns such as Randolph and Brockton which fall under the yellow category for higher cases. Chairman Rose requested a recommendation from the Fire Chief and the Health Agent. Ms. Waldron stated that in her opinion, the appointment system was working out well for citizens and staff. Ms. Waldron did suggest increasing the work hours of the employees for more availability. Chief Spurr agreed with Ms. Waldron and suggested keeping the status quo with expanding the hours employees are required to work in town offices each day. Mr. Beckerman asked which employees are back at work and what is the current working hours. Mr. Enos informed the Board that all employees have returned to work with the exception of one employee who is working remotely at the Council on Aging and one employee at Town Hall who is in the office two days a week and working remotely the other three days. Mr. Enos stated that currently Town Hall is open to the

public by appointment only from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Employees are required to work in the office from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Mr. Beckerman suggested that employees return to work for their normal working hours. Mr. Enos stated that employees were working reduced hours in the office for several reasons: (1) to acclimate employees to returning to the office, many of whom were extremely concerned about returning to a public setting during the pandemic; (2) to allot for extra cleaning time of town buildings without employees in the building; and (3) the air quality of the building is not excellent.

Chairman Rose requested input from the Town Clerk on the opening of town offices. Ms. Bessette stated that citizens who do not have appointments are still coming to the door hoping to get into the building. Ms. Bessette stated that those people are generally accommodated without having a scheduled appointment. She stated that she has not received any complaints from residents that Town Hall is still closed to the public and that their business could not be handled by employees through the telephone or computer. Ms. Bessette also stated that she has made herself available to several patrons by scheduling appointments after hours. Ms. Bessette reminded the Board that the State Primary Election is rapidly approaching. She stated that the Mary McDermott room will be open to the public for voting with safety protocols in place.


After listening to all parties regarding the reevaluation of opening town buildings to the public, Chairman Rose recommended keeping Town Hall, the Council on Aging and the Civic Center closed to the general public, and open by appointment only for another 30 days, to be reexamined in mid-September. Mr. Beckerman and Mr. Suzor agreed with Chairman Rose's recommendation. Public meetings are to remain remote via Zoom throughout this time.

Chairman Rose recommended increasing the appointment schedule for town offices from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. to the new hours of 8:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. for more accessibility to the public. Chairman Rose recommended increasing the employees work hours in town offices from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. to the new hours of 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Chairman Rose was undecided as to if town offices should reopen for evening hours on Thursday night. Mr. Enos recommended keeping it closed for at least another week until he could perform a survey with the Department Heads to inquire as to foot traffic on Thursday nights. Mr. Beckerman and Mr. Suzor agreed with Chairman Rose's recommendations as to the increased hours for appointments and employees.

Adjournment

At 1:07 p.m., Mr. Beckerman made a motion to adjourn the Workshop Session. Mr. Suzor seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken. Mr. Suzor voted aye. Mr. Beckerman voted aye. Chairman Rose voted aye. The motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,



Shanna M. Faro

Executive Assistant to the Town Administrator