

State of Rhode Island

County of Washington

In Hopkinton on the twenty first day of December 2020 A.D. the said meeting was called to order by Town Council President Stephen Moffitt, Jr. at 5:30 P.M. in the Town Hall Meeting Room, 1 Town House Road, Hopkinton, RI 02833.

PRESENT: Stephen Moffitt, Jr., Scott Bill Hirst and Michael Geary were present in the Meeting Room; Sharon Davis, Robert Marvel; Solicitor Kevin McAllister; Acting Town Manager Brian Rosso and Town Clerk Elizabeth Cook-Martin participated remotely.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCILOR HIRST AND SECONDED BY COUNCILOR GEARY TO CONVENE OPEN SESSION AND RECESS TO EXECUTIVE SESSION UNDER: RIGL SEC. 42-46-5(A)(1) CONDUCT AND DISCUSS REMOTE INTERVIEWS WITH APPLICANTS FOR THE POSITIONS OF TOWN SOLICITOR/ZONING SOLICITOR AND PLANNING SOLICITOR.

POLL VOTE:

IN FAVOR: Moffitt, Davis, Hirst, Geary, Marvel

OPPOSED: None

SO VOTED

Each such person being interviewed and discussed has been notified in advance and in writing of his or her interview and discussion and each was advised that he or she has the right to require that the discussion be held at an open meeting.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCILOR HIRST AND SECONDED BY COUNCILOR MARVEL TO RECONVENE IN OPEN SESSION.

IN FAVOR: Moffitt, Davis, Hirst, Geary, Marvel

OPPOSED: None

SO VOTED

At 7:30 PM, the Town Council convened the open session with a moment of

silent meditation and a salute to the Flag. Instructions for participating in the remote meeting were included on the agenda.

Council President Moffitt reported that no votes were taken in Executive Session.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCILOR HIRST AND SECONDED BY COUNCILOR DAVIS TO SEAL THE MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE SESSION.

IN FAVOR: Moffitt, Davis, Hirst, Geary, Marvel

OPPOSED: None

SO VOTED

CONSENT AGENDA

The December 7, 2020 Council Minutes were removed from the Consent Agenda.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCILOR HIRST AND SECONDED BY COUNCILOR DAVIS TO APPROVE THE CONSENT AGENDA AS

FOLLOWS: Accept the following monthly financial/activity report: Town Clerk; Approve abatements due to 2020 tax roll adjustment submitted by the Tax Assessor; Approve refund due to an approved assessor rebate and an overpayment by an escrow company on 2020 real property tax submitted by the Tax Collector.

IN FAVOR: Moffitt, Davis, Hirst, Geary, Marvel

OPPOSED: None

SO VOTED

Councilor Hirst noted an adjustment was necessary on page 13 of the minutes to delete the “i” in Gardiner so it reads Gardner Palmer.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCILOR HIRST AND SECONDED BY COUNCILOR GEARY TO APPROVE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES OF DECEMBER 7, 2020 WITH THE CORRECTION.

IN FAVOR: Moffitt, Davis, Hirst, Geary, Marvel

OPPOSED: None

SO VOTED

COUNCIL PRESIDENT REPORT

Council President Moffitt reported on Town Council Meeting conduct and guidelines and read the following: As we continue using remote conferencing technology to conduct meetings, we need to keep in mind that the audio portion of the technology can be quite sensitive and will pick up all manner of background noises, side discussions and comments, etc. which are highly disruptive to the main meeting discussion. We would like to remind all participants to keep that in mind whenever you are not muted on the call, and to ensure that disruptive noise is kept to a minimum. Also, as a general rule, please make sure your audio remains muted until you are ready to speak, and to mute your audio promptly when finished. As a final but very important note, please keep in mind that this is a recorded municipal meeting that is retained as a permanent public record and available for anyone to review. Occasionally there are negative or disparaging comments heard on the calls that may or may not be intended for public consumption but they are heard and recorded and are part of the permanent record. I would like to remind everyone that the proper decorum and respect is expected of every participant on these meeting calls. We cannot and will not tolerate cursing, name-calling, bullying, or any other disrespectful behavior. He also congratulated Patrolwoman Brittany Carpenter on her new role as police officer.

TOWN MANAGER REPORT

There was no Town Manager report.

NEW BUSINESS

APPOINTMENT OF PLANNING SOLICITOR

Interviews had been conducted by the Town Council for the position of Planning Solicitor.

Councilor Geary felt that they should take their time and give this more consideration before appointing a new solicitor and he wished to continue this matter until after the holidays.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCILOR HIRST AND SECONDED BY COUNCILOR GEARY TO TABLE THE APPOINTMENT OF THE PLANNING BOARD SOLICITOR UNTIL A LATER DATE.

IN FAVOR: Hirst, Geary

OPPOSED: Moffitt, Davis, Marvel

MOTION FAILED

Councilor Marvel felt the longer they delayed picking solicitors, the more the Town Council and Planning Board would be in limbo and there were important items of discussion coming up and this should be resolved as soon as possible.

He felt they had done their due diligence and were ready to make a decision.

Councilor Hirst felt that there was a current solicitor in place and nobody was in limbo. Councilor Davis felt that they should take a vote and make a decision.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCILOR DAVIS AND SECONDED BY COUNCILOR MARVEL TO HIRE MARGARET HOGAN AS THE PLANNING BOARD SOLICITOR.

IN FAVOR: Moffitt, Davis, Marvel

OPPOSED: Hirst, Geary

MOTION CARRIED

APPOINTMENT OF TOWN SOLICITOR/ZONING SOLICITOR

Interviews had been conducted by the Town Council for the position of Town Solicitor and Zoning Solicitor.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCILOR HIRST TO APPOINT KEVIN MCALLISTER AS TOWN SOLICITOR AND ZONING SOLICITOR. There being no second, motion failed.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCILOR MARVEL AND SECONDED BY COUNCILOR DAVIS TO APPOINT JAMES MARUSAK AS TOWN SOLICITOR AND ZONING SOLICITOR. Discussion followed:

Councilor Hirst believed that from all indications, Attorney Marusak would serve the town well; however, for continuity, many years of assisting the Town of Hopkinton and his many years of legal experience, he wished to see Attorney McAllister continue as the solicitor. Councilor Geary indicated that he was a little concerned that Attorney Marusak would not actually be attending the Town Council meetings but having an associate attend. Discussion ended and vote taken:

IN FAVOR: Moffitt, Davis, Geary, Marvel

OPPOSED: Hirst

MOTION CARRIED

DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WELFARE REPORT

Director of Public Welfare Joseph Moreau indicated that they were in the process of having his contact information posted to the town's website. He advised that he had been contacted by a representative of Tri-County Community Action who was seeking assistance for three Hopkinton families in need and also from another town resident who needed assistance. He wished people to know that their calls would be kept confidential. He also thanked the Town Clerk, Councilor Davis, Chief Palmer and Detective Forbes for providing him with information where he could find assistance for these people.

RE-ADOPT TAX RESOLUTION FOR FY BEGINNING JULY 1, 2020

A vote to re-adopt the Tax Resolution for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2020 was unnecessary. Acting Town Manager and Finance Director Brian Rosso reported that back in July there was a vote by the prior Town Council to deviate from our normal billing schedule because they were waiting for the State to make a decision on the motor vehicle tax exemption and the Governor was proposing a different tax exemption amount from what the State legislation had in it. A lot of the cities and towns in Rhode Island have not billed for the motor vehicles for the current fiscal year. Recently it was decided that the state is not going to change it, they are going to leave it at what the current legislation is, so Hopkinton is going to be sending out the first and second quarter motor vehicle tax bills next week which will be due on March 8, 2021 and the third and fourth quarters will be due on June 8, 2021.

PUBLIC FORUM

No one spoke during public forum.

ADJOURNMENT

Councilor Geary thanked Ron Sposato and crew of the Ashaway Volunteer Fire Association for the parade with Santa Claus held on Sunday afternoon. Council President Moffitt noted his children loved it.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCILOR HIRST AND SECONDED BY COUNCILOR MARVEL TO ADJOURN IN MEMORY OF SUSAN JOHANSON QUINN.

SO VOTED

Elizabeth J. Cook-Martin

Town Clerk

Marita D. Murray

Deputy Town Clerk