Hugh Curley  
Virginia Drew  
Cheryl Gilpatrick

Approved: Cheryl/Hugh  
Vote 3-0 in Favor

Staff Present: Nancy Wheeler, Deborah Sullivan, Dawn Blackwell, Wayne Preve, Scott Elliott, Stewart Yeaton, Richard Bilodeau

Other Attendees: Len Gilman, Meadow Wysocki

Virginia called the meeting to order at 5:30pm and asked Hugh to lead the Pledge of Allegiance.

Virginia reviewed the agenda and changes included addressing closing the town office and COVID-19 Regulations.

**Motion by:** Cheryl to accept the agenda as amended.  **Second by:** Hugh.  **Vote:** 3-0 in favor.

**Finance Reports:** Nancy indicated Deb had merged the approved budgets and copies were issued to all department heads and the selectman. Now that the budget has passed, and raises are determined and approved by the Board, she will update the rate sheet. She did put in one signature item, which was a letter of appointment to be submitted to the State for Laura and Livia to collect boat taxes.

**Motion by:** Cheryl to appoint Laura Scearbo and Livia Acdan as Boat Agents.  **Second by:** Hugh.  **Vote:** 3-0 in favor

Virginia addressed the Board organization. Need to elect a Chair, Vice Chair and go over the assignments for the Board.

**Motion by:** Cheryl nominated Virginia as Chair of the Board.  **Second by:** Hugh.  **Vote:** 3-0 in favor.

**Motion by:** Hugh to nominated Cheryl as Vice Chair of the Board.  **Second by:** Virginia.  **Vote:** 3-0 in favor.

**Liaison Selections:** Virginia felt that the ones that have a voting member, Budget Committee, Planning Board, and BCEP, were working well and asked if each member assigned would like to keep their assignment. Hugh and Cheryl agreed. Virginia also addressed the three main departments, Fire, Highway, and Police. Virginia asked if everyone was comfortable remaining as assigned. Hugh and Cheryl agreed. The remaining departments and boards/committees need to be reviewed.

Cheryl indicated she would like to remain on EDC and Conservation. Hugh would like to discuss Office Staff and Emergency Management liaisons. Cheryl had mentioned Parks and Rec and if the Board felt it appropriate Hugh would change EM for P&R. Virginia expressed that all members of the Board had expressed an interest in the Office Staff liaison but with the changes that are happening right now she is OK with staying with the current assignment as long as...
as they discuss how things are handled and that communication is important. Hugh will continue with the Office Staff assignment and Cheryl will continue to work with Donna on Assessing and Planning Board items.

Cheryl indicated they had talked about moving the Emergency Management over to Virginia with the Police Department. Virginia and Hugh agreed. Hugh asked if they should have a Legal Liaison or should Nancy be the point of contact. Virginia would like to look at this again once the staffing changes have been made. Nancy indicated it is already in the job description for her position. Virginia will list it as Town Office Staff.

Town Clerk/Tax Collector will remain with Hugh as this goes hand in hand with Office Staff assignment.

Virginia indicated she would be happy to stay with the Zoning Board of Adjustment. This would also include Zoning Compliance.

Hugh will remain with Welfare. Virginia will remain with Library. Cheryl will remain with Parks and Recreation.

Preambulation will be covered by the entire Board. When the nicer weather comes Virginia would like additional information on how this was handled in the past.

Virginia will remain with the Cemetery Trustees.

The Epsom Historic Structures Stewardship Committee and the Old Meetinghouse Revitalization Committee are appointed at a different time of year and are already in place. When they are renewed the Board can discuss if either of these should change. Currently Virginia is assigned to both.

Closing the Town Office. Virginia has been keeping up to date with the Governor’s office on recommendations issued pertaining to closures. They have indicated this decision is currently up to the individual towns.

Questions to be addressed would be if the office closes, are they expecting staff to use their sick time or would they be continued to be paid as normal.

The official letter from Homeland Security and Emergency Management has not been issued but reports are indicating that gatherings will be limited to no more than 10.

Hugh asked what office functions are required to be provided and what are the other means of providing these functions should the offices close.

Dawn was asked if there has been any communication from Motor Vehicles. She indicated they have not discussed this at this point. Richard recommended that he and Dawn would have a conversation with EMS tomorrow to get a better understanding of the direction they should go.
Dawn discussed upcoming training that Laura needs to go to and if they are cancelling training can she do it online or by other means. She cannot do registrations until she attends this training. She is fully trained from Dawn’s perspective and just needs to go through the formality of official training. Dawn will follow up tomorrow on this.

Dawn indicated the fee to process online registrations has been reduced. The problem is that new vehicle registrations cannot be done online. The question remains as to whether this will be handled by the state.

There group discussed if the office should be closed to the public but not closed for staff so they can still manage the workload. Public contact would be via phone, mail and online. Wayne detailed how the PD would be handling access by the public and their response protocol for calls.

There was discussion about the Selectman’s Office side vs the Town Clerk/Tax Collectors office being closed separately. After discussion, it was clear that it should be an all or nothing and that if closure happens at this point it would be for the office being closed to the public. In the future, they may have to close the office in accordance with state mandate but at this point we can decide if we want office staff to continue working and not have the office open to the public.

Should the office close entirely, they will still need to have the ability to have staff process payroll and A/P checks.

Cheryl asked how often someone comes in to clean. Nancy indicated once a week.

Hugh indicated he would be comfortable with reduced hours of operation but this would provide access for staff to check messages and print things as needed. Nancy indicated that you can call in to retrieve messages as needed. Registrations and payment of taxes can be done online. The problem occurs when you have a new vehicle registration but this could be mailed in for processing.

Deb asked about remote connections and how much of what they need to do could be done remotely.

Scott expressed a concern about limiting hours for the office to be open, which would create a rush on the office and not solve the issue of the volume of people coming in. Other staff agreed with this perspective.

Virginia discussed the need to put a message out letting the public know that they can do renewal registrations through E-Reg on the Town’s website and the need to update the reduced fee information.

Richard indicated that all costs associated with the change in normal functions because of the virus need to be kept track of as there will be funds coming back from the Feds. 75% of the costs are reimbursed to the community.
Hugh is concerned that if someone does come down with the virus then certain functions would be more difficult to perform, for instance payroll and printing checks. Nancy felt this could be managed. It might mean a bit more work and few more steps but it could be done.

The Group further discussed closing the office to the public and should the staff also have limited access to the office to cover the essentials.

Wayne asked if any of the first responders have to be quarantined would they get regular pay or workers comp. If staff are being sent home and still receiving regular pay but first responders are expected to receive a partial payment because of workman’s comp that would be an issue.

Hugh is looking into if we ask a staff member to stay home because of exposure do we have to pay full payroll and would this be considered reimbursable by the Feds.

Nancy reiterated that documentation needs to be thorough when it comes to anything related to the quarantine or virus type expenses.

Hugh recommended COVID-19 should be indicated on all this documentation and what specifically it was for.

Hugh asked if the PD had all the equipment they needed. Wayne indicated they did. He also detailed the decontamination protocols put in place for not only the office but also the cruisers. He has also had communication with Chichester and they have agreed to help each other out. He will also be reaching out to Pembroke and Pittsfield to have this discussion.

The Board discussed when the office should be closed to the public and how much advanced notice should be given. Would there be any possibility of having access for items that are urgent how that would work.

The decision was made to close at the end of the business day on Tuesday. Information needs to be disseminated to the public on how to handle things moving forward. Options are: call and leave a message, and online registrations and paying taxes, or by mail. Not many items from the Selectmen’s Office side can be done online but forms can be mailed and returned. The Welfare department would need to be called directly as they normally would.

Nancy asked about how the audit would be handled. She would still be in to take care of this. Not open for the public, but the auditors would be coming in.

The Board asked if workload does not constitute the full time work requirement what hours would they be at work. Virginia noted the Town Clerk sets her own office hours. Dawn indicated that training Laura needs to do would be part of her schedule as well as the calls that would need to be returned and mailed/web items to process.

The Board decided to close the offices to the public until April 3rd.
Virginia expressed concerns about taking the appropriate steps to minimize exposure. She asked Stewart if they had what they needed should they have to deal with exposures. Stewart stated they have been able to come up with suits that will accommodate their needs. They are limiting the number of people that go on a call depending on the severity. They are limiting training and group functions to limit exposure. He has spoken with Chichester and Pittsfield to coordinate. They will be at full staffing for Ambulance 24/7 with part-time and full-time. All inspections have been put off for at least two weeks.

Cheryl recommended they include certain information on the website regarding closing and indicate what other departments are doing such as inspections and burn permits and to contact the departments directly with questions. She requested feedback from the PD and Fire on what they would like to include.

Deb asked if the remote site access should be looked at before they are in a position to have to utilize this feature should a mandated shut down happen in the future. Nancy indicated there is not currently a remote access function established for the office. Virginia indicated that at the state level they have still required H/R personnel to come in for items such as payroll and they are just working in separate sections.

Cheryl explained how certain remote access options work and Nancy indicated they already have it available but it has not been set up yet. This would need to be set up first.

Meadow suggested that if the staff were mandated to be out of the office but payroll and checks still needed to be processed that specific hours were defined and a single person could come into the office. The office would be disinfected before they arrive and after they leave. This would give them access but still protect them. This could be repeated for other staff that need to come in.

Cheryl suggested the need to post a sign on the door tomorrow indicating the offices will be closed as the end of the work day.

**Motion by:** Hugh to close the offices to the public due to COVID-19 effective the end of business on Tuesday 3/17/20 until 4/3/19 and have services provided electronically and remotely as much as possible. **Second by:** Cheryl. **Vote:** 3-0 in favor.

Cheryl requested the Board approve Nancy to give her authorization to be a site administrator so she could add items to the website. Once the new person is hired they will assume this responsibility. Virginia and Hugh agreed and Nancy would take care of it Tuesday.

Virginia indicated with the successful passing of the budget there are raises due which were previously defined in the budget.
Motion by: Hugh to make payroll adjustment to reflect the increase in salaries as per the approved budget to be added to the salary list so they can be approved at the BOS meeting on 3/23/20 with an effective payroll period for the first payroll period of the year.  Second by: Cheryl.  Vote: 3-0 in favor

Deb indicated there will be an adjusted payroll for approval and then the next payroll period would have the retroactive payroll included.

Department Head update:

Stewart indicated one of the full timers gave his notice effective end date of March 30th.

Wayne provided an update on jail protocols. If they answer any of the intake questions as yes, the nurse will check them and if she is unable to clear them they have to go to the hospital first for clearance.  This is the same as if they have any injury.

Wayne received notice today that the drug take back is cancelled.

Stewart’s biggest concerns are is the amount of supplies they are going to be going through and not to burn out the staff.

Stewart would also like to get going on getting the portable radios approved by the warrant article that passed.

Scott asked if there would be a meeting next week.  He would like to have the truck and the bridge added to the agenda.  The answer was yes.

Virginia reviewed the protocol for resume review and getting the rating information to Nancy.  Nancy will pull together the top five and will assign a number to each candidate for the review.

Virginia asked if they should hold off on interviews until after the exposure concerns have passed.  Hugh felt they would be better off if they had someone in place for when they reopen.  It was suggested that maybe they could conduct the initial interviews via telephone.  Virginia indicated that if they do them in person they would need to protect the candidate by seating spacing and disinfecting space.  Nancy suggested they get together again to prioritize who they want to interview and then the candidates can be contacted and see how comfortable they are with coming in.

Virginia feels that if they are going forward with interviews she would prefer they be in person.

Virginia indicated the board will schedule a meeting on March 19th to review the final candidates and schedule interviews.

Nancy wanted clarification on how the office staff will be scheduled after the office is closed to the public.  Dawn will work on the schedule for her staff.  Nancy provided a detail of all the items that need to be addressed.  She would like confirmation from the Board that Deb would be
available for training purposes. Virginia confirmed that she should still be coming in and Hugh indicated that he will communicate this with her. As far as other staff there is plenty of things that need to be done so regular hours should be kept by staff.

Virginia clarified that if Jay is concerned about coming in then he could use sick time to take time off. Inspections are not happening but there are other office items that could be worked on.

Nancy confirmed they have received the notice from M&N that they will not be doing interior inspections and only doing exterior inspection for the re-val. We have not sent out any letters yet.

**Motion by:** Cheryl to adjourn at 7:40pm. **Second by:** Hugh. **Vote:** 3-0 in favor.