

**Town of Pownal**  
**Select Board Minutes**  
**Monday, January 10, 2022**

**6:30 Public Hearing w/Regular meeting immediately following**

I. **Public Hearing – Special Town Meeting** called to order at 6:32 pm by Chair Morris  
Chair Morris introduced the Public Hearing stating it was to receive input on the Special Town Meeting warrant articles. He read Article 1 and asked if a moderator had been scheduled. The Town Administrator stated yes.

Chair Morris read Article 2. The Town Administrator stated she had just learned that we were not filing the Comprehensive Plan with the state so conditions 1-3 did not need to be included. Selectperson Curry confirmed this, so conditions 1-3 will be removed from the Warrant. Marcia Bowen asked for clarification that we were just striking conditions 1-3 from the Warrant and not the article. It was confirmed yes.

Chair Morris read Article 3. Selectperson O'Brien noted the changes are to section 14, 15 and 16. Selectperson Curry stated we are changing the word mammal to animal. Marcia Bowen noted only mammals can get rabies. Dick Hogue stated the definition of animal includes mammals. The Town Administrator was advised by MMA that animal is an acceptable definition that includes mammals. Marcia Bowen noted the spelling on #11 was incorrect. That will be edited for the next public hearing.

Chair Morris read Article 4. He stated this is an effort by the Select Board to apply more flexibility with the HR department. Marie Wendt asked if this is because it's an ordinance it requires Town Meeting to change but if it's a policy the Select Board can change? She was answered with yes. Selectperson O'Brien stated with the rapidly changing employment environment we need to stay competitive. Chair Morris stated any money expended goes before the town at Town Meeting. This change would allow the Select Board to address salaries, vacations etc. in a more modern way. The current ordinance is cumbersome.

Chair Morris read Article 5. Selectperson O'Brien stated the purpose was to make the drawings match the text in this ordinance.

The second public hearing date was set for January 19<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 pm.

II. **Call to Order-In Person Meeting** by Chair Morris at 6:45 pm  
Select Board Members: Jon Morris, Andy O'Brien, Heidi Cushman Curry

Town Administrator: Becky Taylor-Chase

Road Commissioner: Dick Clarke

III. **Pledge of Allegiance**

IV. **Accounts Payable & Payroll Warrant**

**AP Warrant #44 in the amount of \$245,708.89**

Selectperson O'Brien motioned to approve AP Warrant #44 in the amount of \$245,708.89.

Selectperson Curry seconded.

Discussion: None

**Vote: Yes 3; No 0**

**Payroll Warrant #43 in the amount of \$6783.28**

Selectperson O'Brien motioned to approve Payroll Warrant #43 in the amount of \$6783.28.

Selectperson Curry seconded.

Discussion: None

**Vote: Yes 3; No 0**

### **III. Minutes of Previous Meetings**

- **Minutes of Regular Meeting December 27, 2021**

Selectperson Curry motions to approve the minutes for the December 27, 2021 meeting with the following edits: Pg 3 under Draft Warrant for Special Town Meeting name should be John Bowdren and next sentence the word "is" should be changed to "if". Selectperson O'Brien seconds the motion with the edits.

Discussion: None

**Vote: Yes 3; No 0**

#### **V. Public Comment – Non Agenda Items**

None

#### **V. Department Head Reports – Submitted Electronically**

(Department head reports can be viewed on their respective website page(s))

- **Select Board**

Selectperson O'Brien noted doing normal check at the pump house.

Selectperson Curry had nothing new to report

Chair Morris noted the road crew did a great job last week. It was another challenging week and they worked hard to keep the roads clear. He also noted Ms. Chase did a good job managing the office alone last week. He also thanked Dick Hogue for stepping in and helping with the storm on Friday.

#### **VI. New Business**

- **Citizens Petition**

The Town Administrator stated she had not received the circulator oaths for the remaining petitions and could not certify those signatures. At this point there were 85 signatures certified and 102 signatures were needed to move forward. The deadline was December 16<sup>th</sup> for everything to be submitted so at this point we cannot move forward with them. Chair Morris noted that the petitions were property of the circulators and should be returned. They should use caution as the signatures are confidential unless the signee stated otherwise.

- **Info to the Assessor from Planning Board**

The Town Administrator summarized that we just wanted to clarify how information funnels to the Assessor, Donna Hays. Chair Morris stated that Alan Hill will copy anything he has and give to Donna. They will be using a mailbox. The information flow will go North Star to Planning Board to Code Enforcement Officer to Town Administrator to Assessor to Select Board. Chair Morris had a conversation with Donna Hays regarding extending her to a second day. Selectperson O'Brien agrees this is necessary. Mr. Hill has also expressed an interest in having a table in his office where he can spread out maps and plans. Chair Morris stated this was possible if we moved the large filing cabinets used by Dick Clarke. As the CEO office gets busier this may be necessary. The town carpenter could move the filing cabinets to the Select Board's office and build a table that folds up against that wall. Selectperson Curry asked if there are any privacy issues. The CEO is probably seeing more people in the office and does that office need to be relocated. Chair Morris stated he closes the doors but this is something to consider before the next Town Meeting. Selectperson Curry thinks there are bigger conversations

needed. The table is a great idea but what are the long-term needs. Chair Morris summarized for the public the current situation and set up in the office. Selectperson Curry commented that at one point the Public Works office was possibly moving but does not look like that will happen. Selectperson O'Brien said we were supposed to get a building from Yarmouth but they are still using it. Chair Morris said it speaks to a larger issue.

- **Draft Warrant for Special Town Meeting**

Addressed during the public hearing.

- **YTD Expense/Revenue Report**

The Town Administrator stated we are just over the 6-month mark of the fiscal year so ran overall reports for expenses and revenues to give an over view on where we are. The General Government and Fire Department are currently underspent for the overall budget and Public Works is at 55% spent so we are right about or below where we should be. For Revenues she pointed out for vehicle excise and boat excise tax we are ahead on collection. She is seeing MSRPs rising so that figure should increase even as vehicles age. Revenue sharing, we have collected more than budgeted and we also got a homestead refund from the state that was not included in the revenues as we probably did not know we were receiving.

- **FCS – Freeze Out Event**

Sarah Lundin from Freeport Community Services reached out to see if it was possible for volunteers to be at the 4-way stop to collect donations for the event. There is concern about safety. Chair Morris suggested she check with the new owner at Short Stop to see if they would use part of that parking lot. The Town Administrator will follow up with FCS on this.

- **Personnel Policy Updates**

The Town Administrator introduced the COVID policy. Chair Morris asked for Selectperson Curry's input. She stated she was good with saying we are following the CDC guidelines. They are continually changing. Chair Morris stated it's very important to double check the guidelines. Selectperson O'Brien likes the simple policy. The current one he follows is a large binder with amendments being added continually as guidelines change. Selectperson Curry asked what happens if an employee answers yes. Do we ask them to stay home, take a test etc. This wording could be opening up other avenues. Chair Morris stated he felt he understood the direction those statements are going in and is not insinuating that any employee would do this but it does open up the option for someone to take a day off stating they had a symptom when maybe they didn't. Susan Briggs Peters asked if Yarmouth has the tests because they employ more than 100 people. Selectperson O'Brien stated yes. Selectperson Curry supports investing in home tests for employees. She continued to the Pay Compensation section and stated we are out from under the state of emergency so pay should be PTO unless there is some large pool of money left. The Town Administrator stated there isn't. It would be very hard to determine work related versus non-work related as you could contract at the grocery store or restaurant etc. The Town Administrator stated there could be times when it can be determined like if an employee found out that a relative tested positive and they had close contact or the printer rep comes in to service the printer and the next day we get a call that they tested positive. But also agrees there are many cases where it's a very gray area and would be hard to determine. Chair Morris stated we have some reworking to do based on the feedback. He stated it's important to have a policy so employees know what to do, we need to advocate for doing the right thing and support in a reasonable manner. MMA has a portal to order home

testing kits. Selectperson Curry stated it's a no-win situation. Chair Morris stated again it's important to support the employees so they know what to do.

The Town Administrator added Juneteenth to the list of holidays the Town observes to the Personnel Handbook. The Board stated this had already been voted on.

Selectperson Curry asked if we had a policy where an employee could take an unpaid day off and not use PTO even if they have some available. The Town Administrator stated she had not seen that when reviewing the personnel policy. Dick Clarke was asked if this has happened. He stated not to his knowledge. The Town Administrator said the only thing she had seen was one employee had 38.5 hours and did not add in any PTO but did have available. Has not seen it happen more than once or twice.

- **Town Cable Contract**

The Town Administrator had a conversation with a resident regarding getting cable/internet to their house. Currently it ends at their neighbors. They contacted the cable company and were told that all new lines would need to be run to get a strong enough signal and it could cost about \$3000. She was inquiring if this would be covered by the town contract. Chair Morris stated it's a federal contract and does not cover running the lines. The expense would fall to the homeowner. He will be meeting with a group of people to explore an all-inclusive internet.

## **VII. Old Business**

- **Board of Appeals Document**

The Town Administrator has not heard back from MMA. The revised document filed with the Registry of Deeds was accepted. Dick Hogue asked about the other documents. The Town Administrator will follow up with MMA.

- **Remote Access Policy**

The Town Administrator had heard back from a few boards and committees interested in adopting a remote access policy so we should move forward with a public hearing date. She suggested January 24<sup>th</sup> with the regular Select Board meeting to follow. Selectperson Curry asked which boards and committees she had heard from. She stated the CIP committee would like to adopt, the Planning Board is interested and will be discussing at the January 19<sup>th</sup> meeting and John Green with the Budget Committee is interested and will poll the members of that committee. Selectperson Curry asked if she had heard from the Ordinance Review Committee. She stated no.

## **VIII. Correspondence**

Chair Morris received an email from Tom Hall regarding the direction of the Ordinance Review Committee. They have been in limbo. He tasked each Select Board member to write a one paragraph statement regarding the committee. He has received lots of calls about the roads and cars off the road. He gave his 30 second reminder that dirt roads get slippery when wet.

## **IX. Any Other Business**

None

**XI. Adjournment**

Selectperson O'Brien motioned to adjourn the meeting. Selectperson Curry seconded.

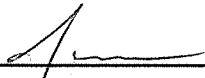
Discussion: None

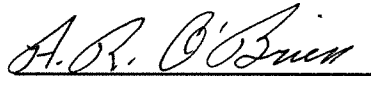
**Vote: Yes 3: No 0**

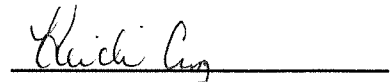
The meeting adjourned at 7:35 pm

Respectfully Submitted,

Becky Taylor-Chase  
Town Administrator

  
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Jon Morris

  
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Andy O'Brien

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Heidi Curry

