

Notes from tonight's Select Board meeting. Town Manager Adam Chapedelaine references an upcoming **Virtual Town Hall for parents with Superintendent Bodie.**

Virtual Town Hall mtg tomorrow for local businesses and non-profits. Town Manager talks about potentially widening sidewalks.

(Please notes I did my best but these notes are not a full transcription)

Doug: Maria Krepka is not with us tonight, so I can serve in that role until the organizational piece of the mtg is over.

Board can either elect a new chair now and potentially revote later after the election

Or they can vote to keep it the same until after the election

Either choice will be a departure from what we normally do

Voted unanimously to let him fill in for Krepka

Agenda Item #1: Executive Order on Remote Participation

Mahon: Reviewed the rules

Agenda Item #2 - Organizational Meeting for the Purpose of Electing a Chair and Vice Chair
Diane M. Mahon, Chair

Decourcy: One year requirement on one hand and the annual town election on the other. I would be in favor of maintaining the current chair and waiting till after the election occurs.

The new board should vote on who should be the officers for the coming year.

Hurd: I agree wouldn't be a good time to change over leadership of the board at this time

Curro: Everything is in a state of suspended animation right now. Only makes sense to maintain this in a state of suspended animation as well. Should we vote to suspend that portion of our policy for that purpose? To delay until the first meeting after the election.

Dunn: I'm happy to do as the rest of the board wishes, no opinion

Mahon: Second the motion to suspend. I only wanted to do this because... thinking about everything we need some clarity on it. Technically didn't have to have this agenda item but didn't want to have the ambiguity. We should amend the handbook should a situation happen again like this in the future.

Voted unanimously to let Mahon stay as Chair until after the election.

Agenda Item 3: Consent agenda

Approved the minutes unanimously

Citizens Open Forum

Sean Harrington: Referred to the Election Modernization mtg and asked to offer as many polling stations as possible in order to maintain safety.

Lynette Martyn: Referred to the Election Modernization mtg. At the Election Modernization Meeting there was great concern and anxiety about how elections were going to be held, evident that there is a lot to figure out in a short amount of time and there are a lot of creative ideas to be explored. Who will be in charge of this process? Will we have poll workers and how will they be protected? Consolidated polling locations and hours - may cause crowding and not allow for safe distancing, Extended hours/days - allow for safe distancing but hard to staff.

How will revised poll locations and hours be communicated and comply with the need to publicize them 20 days before election? Can we work with the Housing Corporation of Arlington to get flyers under the doors of our low income housing residents?

Also how is Arlington planning to protect low wage workers employed at "essential" businesses here in town? Is the town making any effort to sanitize the benches at bus stops, as it impacts both low wage workers in our food services, as well as our elderly?

Elizabeth Dray: I would like to share a concern that I have regarding the upcoming election. We have under 8 weeks to develop a new way for Arlington to vote, while shuttered in our houses due to a viral pandemic. Huge challenge. We need to marshal all our resources, employees whose job descriptions have been made temporarily irrelevant, build the network to reach out to voters beyond the traditional way, develop a creative and perhaps expensive way to insure a smooth, well run, inclusive election. We need to focus equally on 3 parts. Education, access to absentee ballot, safe way to return ballot or vote at polls. Without compromising safety, accessibility, poll tax and disenfranchisement of voters. Perhaps there is state money available or money the town saves due to reducing the number of poll workers, or money the town is saving elsewhere that can cover the cost. I urge you to look at the League of Women Voters recommendations to the Election Modernization Committee for a multi-platform outreach campaign to inform the voters of the election changes and new safety procedures and develop a working group of officials and volunteers to develop a new election procedure and to administer this election. Also, good, creative outreach suggestions by Town clerk candidate Patty Brennan Sawtelle at the Election

Modernization Committee. With a presidential election coming in November, it makes sense to do the work now.

My concern, my biggest worry, is that Arlington will fall back on their traditional channels of communication - traditional media, town notices and emails, the Arlington list. Whether it be for lack of planning or lack of prioritizing, the result will be disenfranchisement of Arlington voters

I see this in the instructions about how to get an absentee ballot. "This can be done by sending a request for an absentee ballot to the Clerk's office with the voter's full name, birthdate, legal residence, email address, and signature. The voter takes a photo of the completed form and sends that as an attachment by email to the Town Clerk's office." My parents would not be able to figure out how to do that and therefore potentially not vote.

There are times that towns need to decide who they are, what they stand for. This is one of them. If we are really the welcoming, inclusive town that many people think we are, then we need to show it. This is the opportunity.

James O'Connor: Election Modernization chair, offered to send the notes from that meeting to the SB members. 27 people attended and it was productive. Janice Weber was very attentive and responsive trying to meet the needs of the resident concerns that were mentioned. People asked if we have substantive authority and I said no that was not the charge but we would open the forum to discuss the matter. I appreciate any outreach to the committee for recommendation nor support

Beth Melofchik: Thank you for the opportunity to speak. I very much appreciate the citizen open forum. I'd like to give a shout out to O'Connor who ran such a great meeting last week. The public was very appreciative of the opportunity to speak. I like to emphasize what the speakers have said that it is a mtg well worth watching for the SB and citizens of the town. Patti Muldoon's comments were very valuable and her ideas were well thought out.

Agenda Item: Covid19 Response Update

Mahon: In light of the remarks in the Citizen forum, the same concerns were raised. This is an unusual election and there are going to have to be some unusual things done. At the end I'm going to ask the Select Board to empower the Town Manager to be the conduit to bring the various groups together for the additional outreach we need to do. We have to look for creative ways for getting the election info out and how we are doing the election. I think Envision Arlington would be a good group to help. It's unusual to bring the Town Manager in on this capacity. The Select Board does have a role in terms of number of polling places, securing

polling workers, making sure it is done safely but I agree there is a lot more discussion needed with citizens and outreach that we have to do.

Town Manager: I leave it to the Board to let me know how they would like me to proceed in terms of supporting the town clerk etc. I know the citizens raise concerns in terms of our preparation .What I'll say is we have been managing this from a public health point of view. We have representation from (listed lots of people and depts) The suggestions in terms of sanitisation of certain places of town I can bring that up tomorrow to see what they think.

Our staff continues to work 7 days a week, nearly 12 hours a day. Our case count is now up to 87 positive cases. We are now contact tracing people who may have been in contact with those positive cases. It is very important to try to trace contacars in order to prevent the spread. That is what we are going to try to do.

Our team meets virtually at 12 everyday to determine what to message out to the community

We announced today that grocery workers need to wear masks. We are also asking residents of senior housing when they come to congregated spaces to wear masks. We are also strongly encouraging residents to do so too.

We continue to monitor the use of the bike path and other recreational paths. So far we have kept it open. We are considering requests to widening sidewalks. Not pouring concrete or anything but looking into eliminating some parking spaces to accommodate people walking while keeping safe distance. We will see where and how they might be possible .So people can walk and get exercise safely

Trying to find ways to meet resident needs.

Tomorrow first Virtual Town Hall at 2PM. Webinaire style event just like this. It will be the first of what we hope to be a series on ACMI. We start tomorrow with one for small businesses and nonprofits in town. We hope to follow up with another one for residents in general and ****we are working with APS to schedule one for parents and the superintendent.***

Note from Lynette: tomorrow's referenced Zoom meeting

Local Businesses and Nonprofits

Virtual Town Forum for Arlington Businesses and Nonprofits

Tuesday, April 14th from 2:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Join this virtual meeting focused on Arlington's small business community hosted by the Town of Arlington on Tuesday, April 14, 2020 2:00-3:00 p.m. The public may access this meeting via Zoom remote videoconferencing.

To join the meeting, go to <https://zoom.us/j/943134968> or iPhone one-tap:

+13126266799,,943134968# or +16468769923,,943134968#, Enter Webinar ID: 943 134 968.

The remote meeting will provide updates to Arlington's small business and nonprofit community on the Town's response to COVID-19, answer questions, and hear from businesses about the challenges that they are currently facing.

2:00 p.m. Opening remarks and Town operations update on COVID-19 response (Adam Chapdelaine, Town Manager)

2:10 p.m. Update on important information and resources available for small businesses and nonprofit organizations (Jennifer Raitt, Director of Planning and Community Development)

2:25 p.m. - Q&A with and comments from the small business community

2:55 p.m. Closing remarks and future virtual meetings

3:00 p.m. Meeting conclusion. This meeting will be cablecast live on ACMi Public Channel : RCN 629, Verizon 31, and Comcast 8, replay schedule & OnDemand at ACMi.TV

Dunn: I had several good conversations about the election today, Kicked off with a very useful call with Elizabeth Dray which she mentioned. I think of the election as having two tracks. One is the regular track people show up at the polling locations and they vote. Can't be exactly like the way we've been doing it. For example it doesn't make sense to have people show up at Chestnut Manor. Looks like we are going to be able to get enough poll workers presuming we have the election on June 6th.

The second track, which is new to us, is the absentee ballot or mail in version. This is going to be the 1st election in MA where anyone can do it. If there is a way where we can beef up the alternative way to vote. I think the Town Manager's office is uniquely suited to help with that. I think it's appropriate to ask the Town Manager, in particular to help with the 2nd lane of voting - the absentee lane. He can work with Joan Roman, Attorney Heim and IT department among others.

Curro: My sentiments are close to Mr Dunn's. There are a couple of issues at play here. The 1st issue that has been raised is about getting out the word about the election. This is a public /private partnership, Getting the word out btwn the town where we set the election date and using the traditional communication to get out the word, the MEDIA, ACMI, The Advocate, The LWV. Also the campaigns and candidates. This is where I think we are going to be operating at an advantage. This is the first time that I can remember that there are contested races for almost every office and every precinct. Which means those candidates and those campaigns are important partners as well. It can't all fall on the town. We have to be working together on this. The second is the administration of the election itself, traditionally a partnership with the Town Clerk. The Select Board plays an important role in selecting staffing and running polling stations and thirdly, the Town Manager's staff plays a role in a lot of the logistics of the elections as far as facts and details are concerned to make sure we have a smooth running election. So asking the Town Manager to serve as point person to coordinate between those three parts of town government as well as volunteer advocates like the election modernization committee and come back to use with any votes we need to take action on.

I think the whole mail in mechanism and option is something very different. Where most people are used to voting in person and now they need to take two steps. They have to send in an application, receive it and send it back. Public education is going to be important. I'm going to be looking for some recommendations as to how we can creatively and efficiently and most effectively make sure that the process is as smooth as possible.

I make a motion to put the TM in charge of determining how we remove barriers to participation in light of early voting. Come back to the board with any actions that we need to take.

I agree with the point Mr Harrington has made > It seems to me that you can even have more locations or longer hours. Having more locations will reduce the contact between folks

Hurd: If we can get more poll workers to staff all our traditional locations I think that is a much safer option because there is a lot less contact. As many locations as we are able to staff with poll workers. As far as absentee ballots are concerned it is so important that ballots are accessible ,this should be part of the charge that we give the TM right now. If some citizens can't get ballots that needs to be addressed right way

Decourcy: Agree w my colleagues with the remote voting this is going to be new it is no excuse absentee voting. We need to work with IT to get links on the clerk's website right now. Chapter 45 that allowed us to move the elections allows for any form of communications expressing that people want to vote. Providing notice to the public, we have already done that but here is more to be done. There were a number of suggestions in chtp 45 that we can follow and consider and go beyond

Hurd: Question for attorney Heim. Under the law can we make it so people can just email a request into the Clerk's office for an absentee ballot

Heim: This has been frustrating in terms of the disconnect between the special legislation and the law generally. Folks can email but there is supposed to be a signature affixed to it. Under the law they are requiring some form of a signature attached to that email.

Curro: It should be noted we do have precedent for sending out postcards with special notifications .When we had to temporarily relocate precinct polling locations, we had to do that. Precedent for this method of notification.

Mahon: We have a printer ready to go pending the results of this vote

Heim: The other legal constraints we are trying to get clarity on is that we sent out some notifications that were candidate statements because they were town mtg members and the same ethics don't apply to as a general rule the town is not allowed to extend town monies. I'm warm to the idea of providing some way of letting people know about the candidates. The dilemma is finding out how much latitude the Campaign finance office will give us. These are

obviously extraordinary circumstances. I'm happy to work with the manager to try and find out how we can best support these things.

Mahon: Having the Town Manager as the leader of a team bc we do need a team. I'd like to suggest we engage Amazing Arlington that Kelly Lynema and Adam K have started along with Envision Arlington. There are a lot of things we need to do in terms of absentee ballots and how we publicize. I'd like to get as much information out there as possible. An FAQ sheet for the computer challenged.

Voted unanimously to appoint our Town Manager as liaison to begin to bring together the aforementioned town offices as well as citizen committees together.

Agenda Item #5 - Discussion & Vote: An Act to Address Challenges Faced by Municipalities and State Authorities Resulting from COVID-19, Chapter 53 of the Acts of 2020

Town Manager: Grants budgetary flexibility. If we can put together a Town meeting by June 30th we might not need to use them but if not we would need to discuss. Recommend relief on certain tax dates. Sandy Poole is making recommendations.

Poole: There is a comprehensive bill that provides relief
Section 10 allows us to change the due date on property tax bills. I recommend that the SB approve that moving it to June 1st. Still in by end of FY2020

Section 11: Posts waiver of payment of interest and penalties on a whole array of payments inc excise tax, water rate charges. We are recommending that the board approve this section as it applies to water and sewer bills so that those would be due June 29th. We are not recommending extending the due dates for the excise bills to a later date bc of cash flow issues t o make sure we get enug rev in by the end of the year and to fairness to the people who have already paid their bills

Changed property tax filing deadline from April 1 to June 1, 2020

Motion to waive late fees for late payments for water and sewer charges due after March 20, 2020. The waiver is only good if payment is made by June 29.

Decourcy: Concerned that people might even have a hard time mtg June 1. Might want to revisit.

Mahon agrees with the possible need to revisit the June 1 date depending on the virus.

Voted unanimously to approve.

Agenda item #6. For Approval: Letter of Support for All-America Road Designation from the Federal Highway Administration's National Scenic Byways Program

Town Manager: A letter of support we are asking the SB to sign. The scenic byway was designated in 2006 and now there is an opportunity for it to be designated an All America Road.

Voted unanimously to approve.

Agenda Item #7: May Board Meetings

Mahon: I'd like to with my colleagues approval do May for right now
Should we do Monday May 4th and May 18th?

Dunn: We still have a handful of town mtg article mtgs to do

Mon: The CDBG mtg we need to have by May 15th. Public mtg and 5 resolutions proposed by Miss Thornton.

Voted unanimously to approve May SB mtg dates for May 4th and May 18th.

New Business:

Heim: Thanks workers compensation staff and first responders

Town Manager: A significant influx of \$600K CDBG money to help us with response to this crisis is coming in.

DeCourcy: Thanks healthcare workers and first responders.

Curro: My brother is a first responder and he tested positive, he is doing well right now but drove home to me the risk that our health responders and grocery workers are taking .Thanks to redinets for following the guidelines to keep every sage

Mahon: If I had my way the bike path would have been closed already. I do not see social distancing happening out there. Please pay attention and follow the advisory if you must use the bike path. If we dont change our behaviour.... Stop throwing masks and gloves in the parking lots.. with the warmer weather we're going to have to work harder..