

Thursday, March 26, 2020 – 6:0 PM
Meeting Minutes
Remote Access Virtual/Electronic Meeting
Due to Current State of Emergency

Participants and the public were able to join this meeting using the following credentials.

By computer, tablet or smartphone:

<https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/971384645>

By phone:

United States (Toll Free): 1 877 309 2073

United States: +1 (312) 757-3129

Access Code: 971-384-645

In Attendance: PC Chair Bruce Perron, PC Clerk Kevin Taugher, PC member John Wojciechowski, Interim Clerk/Treasurer Ira Brezinsky, Assistant Treasurer Kari Scytowski, Water Superintendent & BPAAC Chair Jeff Cyr

CALL TO ORDER

Perron called the meeting to order at 6:01 PM

REORGANIZATION

The first order of business was for the PC to reorganize following the Annual District Election.

- Wojciechowski nominated Taugher to be Chair, seconded by Taugher. Nominations were then closed. Taugher was elected Chair 2-1 (Wojciechowski, Taugher – aye, Perron – nay).
- Perron nominated Wojciechowski to be Clerk. Wojciechowski declined the nomination.
- Taugher then nominated Perron to be Clerk. Perron stated that he would be willing to be Clerk provided the District Clerk/Treasurer takes the minutes. Taugher stated the PC would have make sure this is part of the C/T responsibilities and that the C/T is compensated. Nominations were then closed. Perron was elected Clerk 3-0.

Wojciechowski asked that communication during meetings continue in the manner as has been the case since his appointment to the PC on June 20, 2019. He would like to see a continuation of open communication with all views being voiced before decisions are made.

Cyr commented that, by State law, the C/T is not responsible for taking minutes for individual committees. Taugher agreed, but responded that if the C/T chooses not to take minutes for the PC, the C/T salary could be adjusted commensurately. This would be a decision for the Annual District Meeting. Cyr continued that the PC Clerk is currently paid an additional amount in exchange for the responsibility for taking minutes. He asked if the PC Clerk would continue to receive this additional compensation if the PC Clerk was no longer responsible for taking minutes. Taugher responded that he didn't feel this was a big issue, but that decision could also be made at the Annual District Meeting.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion: Perron moved and Wojciechowski seconded to approve the minutes of December 12, 2019. Motion carried 2-0-0 (Taugher abstained).

Motion: Perron moved and Wojciechowski seconded to approve the minutes of February 26, 2020. Motion carried 3-0.

INTERIM CLERK/TREASURER REPORT (complete report attached)

The Annual District Election of March 3 saw a total of 1226 ballots cast. This is a historical high, at least in modern times, and was the result of several factors, including coordination with the Town election and presidential primary. In addition, Interim C/T Brezinsky mailed more than 225 absentee ballot packets to individuals who had already voted by absentee ballot in the Town election. A total of 155 absentee ballots were cast by the deadline of March 3 at 8PM. Five additional ballots were received, but after the close of the election.

Brezinsky stated that he had briefly discussed with Town Clerk Carlene Hamlin and Town Administrator Mike Sullivan the topic of the Town of South Hadley taking responsibility for administering the District Election. Both were willing and interested to have a further discussion with the District. The potential benefits of turning this responsibility over to the Town would be to 1) further improve voter participation by making the process for early/absentee District voting easier for voters; 2) better coordinate publicity leading up to election day; 3) provide a more consistent voter experience on election day; and 4) possibly save money for both the Town and the District. Taugher commented that he agreed that this is something that should be discussed with the incoming elected District Clerk/Treasurer, Terie Fleury, and perhaps moved forward to further discussion with the Town, subject to approval by the new C/T.

The new C/T will be sworn in on Monday March 30 and begin work that day. The plan is for training and transition planning to begin next Monday with Brezinsky and Fleury working in the office to start. A second PC has been set up in the office and both will be wearing masks and keeping as much distance as possible. Going forward, and while distancing guidance is in place, the two will work remotely as much as possible.

Brezinsky spoke recently with the District's investment advisor, Brian Jamros from Bartholomew, regarding the District's OPEB and Stabilization accounts. While OPEB funds have declined significantly, based on the District's moderately aggressive investment strategy for these funds. The expectation is that OPEB funds will bounce back as financial markets improve. The OPEB investment strategy is very long-term with funds not expected to be used for 20-30 years or more. Stabilization funds have not been impacted in this way. The reason for this is that Stabilization funds are invested 90% in fixed income and 10% in the highest quality blue chip stocks (known in the State as the Legal List). Jamros will be happy to meet with the PC to provide further guidance.

Taugher asked for an update on District ethics/conflict of interest training. Most employees have completed the training. Brezinsky will follow up on any remaining employees and report back.

POTENTIAL DELAY OF DISTRICT MEETING

The State has closed all schools until at least May 4. The Town is also considering delaying Town Meeting. Perron suggested delaying the District Meeting for 2 weeks to May 11. Brezinsky suggested voting to delay to the Meeting to a future date to be determined. Taugher suggested delaying to May 11, but with the caveat clearly stated that further delay would be possible. Cyr asked what the law

states regarding change of Meeting date. Following brief discussion, Brezinsky stated he would confirm his understanding of the emergency legislation as it relates to delay of the District Meeting.

Taughner asked that an article be added to the warrant approving health/dental/life insurance benefits with specific breakdown by department, including elected officials.

Motion: Perron moved and Wojciechowski seconded to delay the Annual District Meeting until at least May 11 with approval from Counsel. Motion carried 3-0.

DRAFT ANNUAL DISTRICT MEETING WARRANT

Cyr suggested that the order of articles 38-40 be reversed with the current articles 39 and 40 moving to 38 and 39 and the current article 38 moving to article 40.

The draft provided to the PC in the C/T's report is not the final draft, but was included for information only. The expectation

NEW BUSINESS

The PC received a written update from the Chief regarding the Covid-19 pandemic. The report is included with these minutes. Taughner suggested that the Chief provide a weekly update and the PC agreed. Perron had a further update as communicated to him from the Chief. Holyoke Medical Center approached the District to ask if the District had any ventilators to loan to them. The District has 4 ventilators that were acquired through a grant several years ago. The ventilators are currently on loan to HMC. There are currently 2 confirmed cases in Town, one in each District.

NEXT MEETING

The next online virtual meeting is planned for April 9 at 6:30 PM.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion: Perron moved and Wojciechowski seconded to adjourn at 6:42 PM. Motion carried 3-0.

Respectfully submitted,

A true copy, attest:

Ira Brezinsky
District #1, Interim Clerk Treasurer

Bruce Perron, Prudential Committee Clerk