

**VOLUNTOWN SELECTMANS MEETING**  
**April 14, 2020**

<b>Meeting</b>	The Meeting of the Board of Selectmen was held via Zoom on Tuesday, April 14, 2020 at the Voluntown Town Hall. Ms. Hanson, First Selectman, called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m.
<b>Selectmen Present</b>	Tracey Hanson, Ronald Millovitsch, Mark Oulton
<b>Town Officials</b>	Giselle Neri, Tax Collector
<b>Citizens Present</b>	None
<b>Approval of Minutes</b>	A motion was made by M. Oulton/T. Hanson to approve the minutes of the regular meeting held on March 10, 2020. Motion Approved with one abstention R. Millovitsch.
<b>Citizens Comments</b>	<b>None</b>
<b>Motion</b>	A motion was made by R. Millovitsch/M. Oulton to add Precious Metal Buying Licenses to New Business. Motion approved.
<b>Boards &amp; Committee</b>	
Public Works	The Public Works garage should be completed by the end of this month. The Public Works department are working their regular schedule. They have completed replacing/reinforcing the road bank on Campbell Mill. They started today working on cleaning out the drainage pipes on Wylie School Road. The pipes need to be inspected since they are over 100 years old. The paving bids will not go out until the pipes are inspected and it is determined the costs needed to repair any drainage pipes
<b>Correspondence &amp; Announcements</b>	<b>None</b>
<b>Old Business</b>	<b>None</b>
<b>New Business</b>	
National Day of Prayer	The National Day of Prayer will take place on Thursday, May 7, 2020. It will take place at the Voluntown Baptist Church partly in person and via livestreamed. Gordon Arent asked if the Selectman would like to participate. Ms. Hanson will attend in person to read the Town Proclamation.
Motion	Ms. Hanson read the National Prayer Day proclamation. A motion was made by R. Millovitsch/M. Oulton to accept the proclamation as read. Motion approved.
Tax Status	Governor Lamont passed executive order 7s that requires all CT towns to choose one or both of two tax status choices to help residents pay their taxes if they have been negatively impacted by Covid-19. The Board of Selectmen must report their choice to the Office of Policy Management (OPM) by April 25, 2020 . The options are 1. a tax deferral and 2. a low interest rate on back taxes. For residents to be eligible for these options the budget must be passed by June 30, 2020. Governor Lamont issued executive order 7I discussing how to conduct meetings remotely and how to pass the budget while complying with social distancing regulations. 7I states: “13. Suspension of In-Person Budget Adoption Requirements for Municipalities. Notwithstanding any contrary provision of the Connecticut General Statutes, including Title 7, or any special act, municipal charter or ordinance that conflicts with this order, the legislative body of a municipality or, in a municipality where the legislative body is a

town meeting, the board of selectmen, shall authorize the budget-making authority within said municipality to adopt a budget for the July 1, 2020 - June 30, 2021 fiscal year and to set a mill rate sufficient, in addition to the other estimated yearly income of such town and in addition to such revenue surplus, if any, as may be appropriated, not only to pay the expenses of the municipality for said fiscal year, but also to absorb the revenue deficit of such town, if any, at the beginning of said fiscal year without holding votes required by charter or without complying with any in-person budget adoption requirements, including but not limited to, annual town meetings requiring votes, referendum, and special town meetings. In so acting, the budget-making authority of the municipality shall comply with public meeting requirements consistent with requirements set in Executive Order 7B and shall thereby take all reasonable steps to publicize the draft municipal budget for said fiscal year and to receive public comment thereon, including but not limited to publishing draft budgets on the website and providing an email address or other means for the public to submit timely comments on the proposed budget.”

Ms. Hanson will be consulting with the Town attorney to comply with this order.

#### Tax Collector

Ms. Neri discussed the Tax Status options available to the towns. Most towns are choosing option one without an application. There are no Towns that we know of that are choosing both. Option 1, Tax Deferment, gives residents the ability to pay their taxes without interest until October 1, 2020. Ms. Neri suggested to not have the application and allow whoever needs it to take the option automatically. Most real estate, 75%, is paid by escrow and escrow companies are not given the option to defer payment. It will mostly help those who have mortgages that are paid off or people with taxes on motor vehicles and personal property. The one caveat is that if you pay October 2, 2020 or later then the interest is calculated going back to July 1, 2020.

Option 2, the low interest option, reduces the rate on delinquent taxes to 3%. This option is more complex and doesn't help the residents as much as the tax deferment will. Ms. Hanson suggested a special meeting next Tuesday April 21, 2020 in order to adopt which option is chosen.

#### Budget 20/21

Ms. Hanson discussed the difficulties with the next budget year. The mil increase for FY 20/21 is .30 mils so far. The town is looking at an increase for the total budget by approximately \$213,000 due to a decrease in ECS funding, a \$62,000 increase to the BOE and a \$52,000 increase on the Town side. The increase to the Town side is mainly due to an increase to public works and an increase in insurance. There will be a no cost of living increase to town employees except for those covered under union contracts. The Selectmen are discussing using the unassigned fund to pay the \$213,000 increase so there will be no increase to taxpayers this year. This would affectively defer the increase until fiscal year 21/22. Ms. Hanson has asked if it's possible to delay passing a budget so that taxpayers have the option of a Town meeting and the answer has been "why would you wait". Also, if you do wait until after June then you cannot take advantage of the chosen tax status. Ms. Hanson suggested changing the date of passing the budget to June in hopes that we can have a town meeting but will pass it by June 30, 2020 so that residents can get the benefits of the chosen tax status. We should be ready to have a public hearing by the end of May.

#### FEMA

The State of CT has been approved for FEMA funding. The town has started the process by creating an account with FEMA. We must keep track of all extra COVID 19 expenses that are not part of the normal budget. Some things such as technology might not be covered, however, we have been told to submit everything. There is anticipated to be separate funding for technology for schools. The Town has purchased a couple of laptops for people to work from home and on technology to run virtual meetings. Other expenses include increase staffing for the Fire department, supplies for masks, gloves or anything else needed to keep employees safe.

#### Town Response COVID

The Town closed the library until further notice. The library director is still working but the other part time employees at the library were laid off. All other town hall employees are still working. The Town Hall is closed to the public, and staff is staggering shifts to limit people in town hall at the same time or is working from home. All Town Hall employees still are receiving messages so if residents need to speak to someone they can leave a message, and someone will get back to them. The emergency operations plan was opened in March. Playgrounds are closed until further

notice at the recommendation of UNCAS Health. There is a page on the Town website listing the Town's response and the Governor's executive orders.

Precious Metal Buyer Ms. Hanson was contacted by a resident who wants to be able to buy precious metals. Ms. Hanson has been in communication with the town attorney on how to proceed with this and comply with state statutes. It's a possibility the Town may have to do a Town Ordinance. The resident believes the State Police issue the license. Ms. Hanson will investigate it and discuss at the next meeting.

**Suggestions for Next Meeting –None**

**Adjournment**

**Motion** A motion was made by R. Millovitsch/M. Oulton to adjourn the meeting. The meeting adjourned at 6:53 p.m. Motion Approved.

Respectfully submitted by:

Approved for distribution by:

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Julie L. Zelinsky, Admin. Asst. to the BOS

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Tracey Hanson, First Selectman