

Truro Select Board Minutes
Thursday, March 19, 2020 at 2:30 pm
Truro Town Hall

Members Present: Chair-Jan Worthington

Others Present: Town Manager-Rae Ann Palmer

Attendance Via Conference Call: COA Director-Mary Elizabeth Briscoe, Health and Conservation Agent-Emily Beebe, Fire Chief-Tim Collins, Select Board Member- Bob Weinstein, Select Board Member-Kristen Reed, Select Board Member-Susan Areson, Select Board Member-Stephanie Rein, Assistant Town Manager-Kelly Clark

Discussion of Emergency Measures related to Coronavirus
Vote on Declaration of State of Emergency

Chair Worthington called the meeting to order at 2:30 pm. She asked Town Manager Palmer to give an update and stated people could ask questions after.

Town Manager Palmer asked COA Director Briscoe to give everyone an update on what is considered our most vulnerable population. COA Director Briscoe stated that for now, all employees at the COA are acting as outreach people, as well as food pantry volunteers. Employees are calling seniors of special concern (and that list has been widened to encompass more people), and folks who participate in any of the activities or exercise classes on the days those are normally held. She just came back from the kitchen where she put together a couple of bags of food for people who are in need of food immediately. They have suspended their transportation. No trips were scheduled for next week, and any trips for this week were cancelled because both of their drivers are in their 60s and 70s. Town Manager Palmer asked COA Director Briscoe to talk a little about the food pantry, the Lower Cape Outreach Council, and what's being done to keep that moving. COA Director Briscoe stated that the Lower Cape Outreach Council, the group which runs the food pantry out of the kitchen at the Community Center, has closed. They are trying to meet the needs of people the best that they can. They will receive a delivery of food on Monday, like they would normally do, and the COA Staff (with the help of DPW staff) will unload and put the food away. Staff is planning on putting together approximately 50 bags for a drive-up/pickup in the parking lot on March 27th, between 10:00am and 12:00pm. People can come and pick up one or two bags depending on how many people there are. Town Manager Palmer would like to evaluate what the pantry has after Monday, and again after bags are filled. Perhaps a call can be put out to the community to drop off food if the pantry is going to run out. Chair Worthington stated that she received a call from a citizen who is afraid to go to the post office. She'd like to know if staff could do a run to the post office to pick up mail. COA Director Briscoe would like to be in touch with someone at the post office because there is an issue of getting mailbox keys from everyone. She is hoping that the post office will suspend the need for the keys and let the COA employees collect the mail. Chair Worthington asked if she had enough employees to do the errands, or did she need volunteers. COA Director Briscoe stated that a lot of people are calling and offering their help. She's suggesting these people check on their neighbors and do what they can. In terms of volunteering, she does not know what the answer is. She said people are trying to band together to form a Truro Community Responders group. Those people would go grocery shopping and pick up prescriptions. The COA employees cannot pick up prescriptions, they are not allowed to do that. Town Manager Palmer needed to state that in doing this, the Town's employees get exposed when they

are running errands over and over. Secondly, if they take on volunteers then the Town will take on a liability which insurance will not cover. If the volunteer group could take on a life of its own it would be safer. The Town could help make connections. If staff starts to become uncomfortable with their exposure, then that needs to be respected. COA Director Briscoe has spoken to many people interested in volunteering and is trying to get everyone in touch with one another. She also reached out to all of the instructors and some are sending videos and uplifting messages to their class participants.

Health and Conservation Agent Beebe stated that they are all set with communicating with the restaurants on the transition from sit-down to take-out service. She is working on keeping track of the quarantine procedures for the staff members who've been travelling. She is keeping track of the testing dates. She's been working on the website messaging to try to make it easier for folks trying to work with Town Hall since we're closed. Electronic payment methods and filing methods have been explained on the web and to town staff. She has met with Mike Gradone and his key staff at the school. They discussed how they are continuing their operations while they are closed. Staff, building cleaning, and how they are feeding the children were all discussed. She has been on a lot of conference calls, between DPH (Department of Public Health), MEMA (Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency), Health and Human Services, CDC, and the Health Agent Coalition, there is at least one meeting per day. On the Health and Human Services call today it was stated that they feel we are on this track of acceleration of the disease for the next 7-10 days. They completed their continuity of operations plan, which is quite sobering. The Board of Health met earlier in the week on a conference call in which she gave the Board her update, along with Meredith Goff (from Outer Cape Health). Ms. Goff explained to the Board how Outer Cape Health has structured their response. Chair Worthington asked for an explanation on the continuity of operations plan. Health and Conservation agent Beebe explained that the plan lays out how things would be rolled out in the case of a pandemic. It is a document which was developed from DPH right after 9/11. It's an explanation of when there is a large event, how that's going to be operated. It also outlines, if Health and Conservation Agent Beebe "goes down" who is next in succession. It's a document which has to be alive, so they updated that.

Fire Chief Collins stated that it's day to day operations at the Fire Department. They are working closely with Federal, State, and County agencies. Their biggest issue right now has been the ability to get supplies for First Responders. The State just got the first release from the Federal Emergency Supplies cache. The Fire Department has submitted a request for supplies from that cache. It is frustrating because everything has been placed on an allocation basis, so gloves, gowns, masks and eye shields are very scarce to get. The Department has been rather resourceful in looking to alternative sources to get some of these items. He was able to go to Home Depot for surgical and Tyvex gowns. He is hoping that as companies gear-up they'll be able to get more supplies. A priority has to be to protect the first responders. Like the Health and Conservation agent, he's been on several conference calls per day. Barnstable County Chiefs and Mass Fire Chiefs have set up a new conference. Chair Worthington asked if the Department had received more calls from people who are concerned about symptoms? Are they calling the Department, or do they have to go on calls like that? Chief Collins stated that they've worked with Cape Cod Hospital, Cape and Islands EMS, and the Police Chief on an established protocol which will ask if the caller is displaying any flu-like symptoms and have they travelled recently, which will prepare a better response from the responders going on these calls. Right now, they do a door response with Lower Cape Ambulance. The protocol is if they have a suspected case, what's been recommended is that they send in one individual (in full PPE-Personal Protective Equipment) to assess the patient. Lower Cape Ambulance will send in that one individual as they would be the ones transporting the person to the hospital. The additional staff will remain outside. If additional staff is

requested in the house, they will don the PPE and minimal staff will go in to assist. Chief Collins stated that they have not been receiving a lot of panic calls.

Town Manager Palmer did the report for the Police. It's status-quo. They have asked people to delay coming into the lobby unless it's an emergency. So, anything that can be done over the phone, mail or email is how they're operating.

Board of Health Chair Rose wished to state that we have such an exemplary team and we're all working together at the highest level. She thinks it's amazing and hopes that everyone's hard work will help flatten the curve and take care of our citizens. She thanked everyone.

Select Board member Areson asked Health and Conservation Agent Beebe what Outer Cape Health was doing in terms of patients coming in. Health and Conservation Agent Beebe said that the Provincetown location will be the "well" site where non-suspected flu cases are going to go. The Wellfleet and Harwich locations are going to do a split program where part of the day will be for "well patients" and the other part of the day will be suspect Covid-19 folks. There will be two separate entrances for each group and the day will be divided. For example; the morning could be "well" people and the afternoon could be Covid related. They will have a deep clean in the middle, between those two shifts. They will have two dedicated entrances to the building and two dedicated areas within the building for those two types of activity. If someone is coming in and has symptoms and wants to get a test, and is authorized to get a test, they will be met in the parking lot by someone who has their PPE. One person per day would be dedicated for that. They would swab that person while in their car and then send the test to a private lab. Town Manager Palmer added that they will screen people over the phone. A nurse will call someone back if they call looking for an "I don't feel well" visit. Fire Chief Collins stated that he and Health and Conservation Agent Beebe were on a phone call the other day and he wished to let everyone know that DPH has taken a very aggressive stance with this. They are looking to increase testing, even non-symptomatic individuals, as more tests become available. They have doubled their capacity to test from 200 per day to 400 per day. Health and Conservation Agent Beebe added that another item mentioned on the call worth noting was that we need to be prepared for a longer period of social distancing. Select Board Member Reed asked her to go more into that. She has heard upwards of 18 months. Health and Conservation Agent Beebe has heard that as well but does not have any other sources going that deep. Select Board Member Weinstein asked if there had been any discussion locally about severely restricting travel? He's seen that Nantucket, most recently, is trying to restrict the Steamship Authority's access to both Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket. There has been talk on the State level about restricting travel, meaning travel only for food and getting prescriptions, etc. Has there been any more conversation on that either through DPH or the Governor's Office? Health and Conservation Agent Beebe has not heard anything on that through DPH, but there is quite a lot of discussion locally. Town Manager Palmer has some concerns that people are requesting to open up seasonal cottage colonies and condos earlier than their license allows. There's the whole issue of the licensing and whether these locations are capable of being open if there is a freeze. She believes there is the underlying concern of do we have the capacity from a medical perspective to support a full-on seasonal population. She thinks that's being discussed at the Governor's level, but she has not heard anything definitively. Chair Worthington thinks that's something the Board should think about and see how they feel about it. Select Board Member Weinstein stated it's not only threatening the medical capacity, it's also threatening the ability to feed the population. He would like to suggest that several communities have put up electronic messaging boards on the highway with an announcement stating; "For further Covid-19 information, be in touch with your local town's website". Is that an advisable step to take and is there something that could be considered information central vis-à-vis, the Town's

website? Town Manager Palmer stated that Assistant Town Manager Clark finished doing a Covid-19 page with information that she'll be updating regularly. It is on the website, and DPW is programming our message board to get that out today.

Select Board Member Reed would like to know what can legally be done in regard to the cottage colonies and condominiums request to open early. Town Manager Palmer said that the Health Board licenses cottage colonies and condominiums, and they have dates which they are allowed to open. The concern of staff is that applications are coming in early or trying to come in early and they're looking at the enforcement capability on that. She's reached out to our State Senator about this and whether there is any consideration in terms of potentially delaying licensing. She thinks they have to look to the Health Board, and the Health Board regulations. She would like to get legal opinion on that. She and the Health and Conservation Agent Beebe will discuss further. Select Board Areson has a question regarding the licensing. She asked if the licensing typically went from January 1st to December 31th? Health and Conservation Agent Beebe explained that for condos, because of their zoning, they don't open any earlier than April 1st and close no later than November 30th. Some have differing open dates. She added that at the Health Agent Coalition meeting there was discussion around this issue and a request from a citizen in another town requesting to "shut down the bridge".

Chair Worthington asked if everyone received a copy of the Declaration of Emergency. Everyone had a copy and a motion needed to be made.

Select Board Member Weinstein made a motion -Now Therefore, we, the Select Board of the Town of Truro and the Board of Health of Truro, Massachusetts, hereby declare that as of March 19, 2020 a state of emergency exists in the Town of Truro. This declaration of emergency shall remain in effect until further notice is given, pursuant to our judgment that the conditions leading to this declaration no longer exist.

Select Board Member Reed seconded.

So voted; 5-0-0, motion carries.

Chair Worthington stated that the other two conversation to be had were about their upcoming meeting (what should they have on the agenda), how they will handle that meeting, and the looming Town Meeting questions. Town Manager Palmer started by stating on their next agenda the Board was supposed to interview the remaining Town Manager Screening Committee applicants. She would recommend tabling that. She talked with the search consultant and was informed that there are 29 applicants. He was going to email them to acknowledge that right now there won't be any interviews. He would let the applicants know that because of the Covid-19 issue things were being placed on hold, but we will pick things back up when it is safe to do so. Town Manager Palmer thinks it's safe to at least temporarily suspend the applicants, and she thinks there are some fairly good applicants.

Molly Stevens needs to be appointed as a temporary Assistant Tax Collector. They sent all of their delinquent tax collections out. The attorney that handles tax titles sent letters to everybody (we got \$240,000 in delinquent taxes). Some people have called up and said that they are not going to pay, so there are some next steps we need to take in pursuing that, and they need a Tax Collector in the house to sign that. She recommends that the Board makes that appointment.

They need to vote on the final warrant articles. This is what she knows about Town Meeting;

- The Town's Charter says we have to hold the meeting on the fourth Tuesday of April and that we have to post the warrant two-weeks in advance. There are some issues around pre-town meeting. She's talked to Town Counsel and have come to the conclusion that the best thing to do is what they've been talking about all along; to get the warrant prepared and off to the printer at the end of next week, to post it on the 14th of April the way we should be doing and then from there the Town Moderator has the ability to postpone Town Meeting for thirty days,

which would bring us to May 30th. She thinks they have a couple of weeks to make that decision. The Governor's prohibition on meetings of more than 25 people runs to April 6th or April 8th. She suspects that if we're still in this same kind of period, that will get extended. She thinks the best course of action is to get those final warrant articles voted and then the consent agenda as well.

Select Board Member Rein stated she's been asked about the election papers, because people need to sign them, and they are due on Tuesday and we're trying to minimize contact. She's not sure what to say. Town Manager Palmer stated that all nomination papers are back except for Stephanie's, and Paul Kiernan's. She also stated that there are instructions on the website about contacting Town Hall to meet for things like this. There is now a lock box outside the front door which she can drop off her papers, or she can let Town staff know and they'll let her in.

For a future agenda, Select Board Member Reed would like to discuss the topic of if there is a delay in hiring a Town Manager, would there be a willingness on Rae Ann's part to stay on. Chair Worthington has had a discussion with Town Manager Palmer, and she has graciously offered to help if needed.

Select Board Member Reed noted that while they don't want to have to postpone Town Meeting or Town Election, what is the plan if they can't? Chair Worthington said that they may hear more along those lines from the State as things develop, but they'll keep meeting and tackling things as they go. Select Board Member Reed would like to know how they are conducting next Tuesday's meeting. Town Manager Palmer said that they recently purchased access to go to meeting which is a video conferencing service. There was trouble with phone lines today to use the service, so they will keep working on it. Assistant Town Manager Clark is looking at that and another service called Zoom. The problem is people need to have relatively decent cell phones, cell phone coverage, or internet service in order to get into that. Worst case scenario, they can use their Comcast Business phone, which is being used right now. Regardless, the meeting will be conducted remotely. It was decided that they would hold their next meeting at 3:00 pm

Select Board Member Rein made a motion to adjourn at 3:20 pm.

Select Board Member Reed seconded.

So voted; 5-0-0, motion carries.

**Respectfully Submitted,
Noelle L. Scoullar**



Rae Ann Palmer, Town Manager
Under the Authority of the Select Board

