

**IPSWICH SELECT BOARD**  
**Meeting of Monday, May 18, 2020**

In accordance with the Governor's March 12 Order suspending provisions of Open Meeting Law and to promote public health and social distancing, a meeting of the Select Board was held on Monday, May 18, 2020 at 7:00 PM via Zoom video conference call.

Board Members present: William Whitmore, Chair; Linda Alexson, Vice Chair; Dr. Tammy Jones; Kerry Mackin; Nishan Mootafian

Also present: Anthony Marino, Town Manager; Eileen Page, Recording Secretary

With a quorum present, Mr. Whitmore called the meeting to order at 7:03 PM.

**Welcome/Announcements**

**COVID-19**

Town Hall will open to the public from 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM Monday through Thursday, and from 8:00 AM to 12:00 PM on Fridays until further notice. Residents are encouraged to do as much business online as possible. Masks are required in Town Hall, as well as within any open essential business.

**WATER RESTRICTIONS**

The Town has implemented a voluntary water restriction. Residents are asked to conserve water whenever possible.

**COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

The Ipswich Community Development Plan is ongoing, and a new survey is being circulated soliciting feedback from residents. To access the survey: [ipswichma.gov](http://ipswichma.gov) → News → Resident Input Requested Ipswich Community Development Plan, Prioritizing Goals. Or, visit <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/IpswichCDPGoals>.

**Citizen Queries**

Ms. Alexson stated that she was asked by a resident to address parking along East Street at the Town Wharf. It was noted that some trucks and trailers have been parking on the street and sidewalk, outside of the parking lot. Police Chief Paul Nikas stated that he would caution against designating this area on East Street as resident-only parking as it would be difficult to enforce. Mr. Marino noted that there have been numerous emails from residents regarding parking in the summertime. The Board resolved to address the issue on an upcoming meeting agenda.

**Crane Beach Update**

Peter Pinciario (Director of Crane Estate for Trustees of Reservation) informed the Board of processes that will be implemented to encourage appropriate social distancing at Crane Beach in the upcoming summer season.

For non-Ipswich residents, entry to the beach will require a ticket purchased in advance through Eventbrite. Ipswich residents are not required to purchase entry ahead of time, and the grace period for 2019 beach stickers has been extended to June 1, 2020. The Trustees parking lot will be limited to 50% capacity at 725 vehicles. One-way boardwalks will be enforced whenever possible.

Operating hours will be 8:00 AM to 6:00 PM. Fishing stickers currently allow parking outside the gates from 6:00 PM to 7:00 AM; it was requested that the Board amend the hours for fishing sticker parking from 8:00 PM to 7:00 AM to decrease interaction of people coming and going on the beach.

Cape Ann Transportation Authority (CATA) will not be running shuttles from the train station to the beach at all.

*Vote: Dr. Jones moved to change the fishing sticker hours from 6:00 PM through 7:00 AM to 8:00 PM through 7:00 AM. Mr. Mootafian seconded. The motion carried unanimously via roll call.*

**Discuss/Vote on Suspension of Shellfish Task Program for 2020**

Chief Nikas reported concerns from the Shellfish Constable and Deputy Constable about the ability to social distance while commercial clammers perform tasks. He recommended suspending the task program for 2020 to avoid penalizing anyone for being unable to attend.

Ms. Alexson reported that the Shellfish Advisory Board unanimously supported suspending the task program for commercial clammers for this year.

*Vote: Ms. Alexson moved to suspend the 2020 Shellfish Task Program under Commercial Shellfish Regulations temporarily, to resume in 2021. Mr. Mootafian seconded. The motion carried unanimously via roll call.*

### **Sunday Opening for Recreational Clam Flats – Summer 2020**

Ms. Alexson reported that recreational harvesting on Sundays at Richard's Ground from May 1 through September 30 is revisited yearly. All other flats are closed on Sundays during this period. The Shellfish Constable reports no enforcement issues. The Shellfish Advisory Board recommended approval.

*Vote: Ms. Alexson moved to support the opening of Richard's Ground clam flats on Sundays from May 1 to September 30, as long as the flats are open barring rainfall closures. Mr. Mootafian seconded. The motion carried unanimously via roll call.*

### **Consent Agenda**

#### **II. Student Commercial Shellfish Permit Application**

##### **a. Jack Macklin**

Ms. Alexson reminded the Board that three student permits were approved on May 4, extending the cap on student shellfish permits from 5 to 6. She reported that the Shellfish Advisory Board discussed the matter, and is sympathetic to difficulties in finding summer employment due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Advisory Board voted to recommend the Select Board extend the student permit cap to 8 for this year, leaving one spot available if Mr. Macklin's request is approved. The student permit season is only through September 30, and an application deadline for the eighth permit would be set at June 1. It was also reported that the Advisory Board would appreciate all requests for permit exceptions go through them before being referred to the Select Board.

Keri Macrae (21 Heartbreak Road) asked about the requirements for a student shellfish permit. Chief Nikas reported that students aged 14-19 are eligible, provided that they are enrolled in the public schools and obtain a letter of good standing from Dr. Brian Blake (Superintendent).

*Vote: Ms. Alexson moved to temporarily extend the student commercial cap to 8 for the 2020 season only, with an application deadline of June 1, with the understanding that no further student permits will be approved after the cap of 8 is met. Mr. Mootafian seconded. The motion carried unanimously via roll call.*

*Vote: Ms. Alexson moved to approve the application of Jack Macklin provided that he furnishes the Town Clerk with all documentation and fees by the close of business on June 1. Mr. Mootafian seconded. The motion carried unanimously via roll call.*

### **Discussion of FY21 Budget Cuts**

Mr. Marino and Sarah Johnson (Finance Director) presented the Board with cuts made to the FY21 budget. Local Receipts have been reduced by \$400,000, encompassing a loss of motor vehicle excise tax, meals tax, and Trustees Pilot Program revenue. State Aid has been reduced by \$600,000, which is reportedly similar to the 2008 recession. Total Revenue has been reduced by \$1,000,000, cutting the Schools by \$627,553 and the Town by \$372,447. These numbers reflect a 5% budget cut by department heads across the board.

Mr. Marino and Ms. Johnson presented a case for the utilization of a 1/12 budget, which would carry the Town on a monthly interim budget subject to approval of the Department of Revenue (DOR) until a Town Meeting could be held. The implementation of a 1/12 budget would provide no increase in capital or salaries, allocating increases instead to retirement, health insurance and debt. Benefits of a 1/12 budget include delaying Town Meeting until residents feel conditions are safer, and allow the Town and Schools to continue to operate, albeit on limited funds.

Disadvantages of a 1/12 budget include 0% salary increases for all union and non-union employees, and a state-controlled budget.

Dr. Jones asked if applying a 1/12 budget and freezing salaries would require applying raises retroactively once a budget was approved. Ms. Johnson responded that they would, and retroactive payments would have to be calculated and issued to every employee. Dr. Jones acknowledged the work that would be required, but expressed a desire for the Town to maintain control of the budget.

Ms. Mackin stated that residents have expressed concern about risking infection if a Town Meeting is held in June, and have told her that they will not attend. She stated that she sees the implementation of a 1/12 budget as a solution.

Ms. Alexson noted that at prior meetings, Ms. Johnson had stated that the Town received discounts for paying for certain expenses upfront for an entire fiscal year. She asked if those discounts would still be available with a 1/12 budget. Ms. Johnson responded that the largest expense eligible for a discount is the Town's contribution to the Essex Regional Retirement Board (ERRB.) She stated that while the Board has not yet voted on the issue, the concerns are shared among several communities that sit on the Board. Ms. Alexson stated that she is not in favor of holding a Town Meeting in June, citing too many unknown variables.

Barry Hopping (School Committee, Chair) stated that the School Committee would prefer to hold a Town Meeting, versus following a 1/12 budget for an undetermined amount of time. He noted that teachers have taken on an enormous burden over the last few months, and the School Committee wants to honor their salary increases.

Dr. Blake agreed with Mr. Hopping, stating that he would like to utilize Stabilization Funding and make reductions elsewhere to keep the budget process moving forward.

Janice Clements-Skelton (Finance Committee, Chair) expressed concern over scheduling a June Town Meeting when the Governor has yet to lift any restrictions on public gatherings, especially considering the average age of Ipswich residents attending Town Meetings. George Hall (Town Counsel) stated that legally, the Governor's order prohibiting gatherings of 10 or more does not apply to Town Meetings.

Michael Dougherty (Finance Committee, Vice Chair) expressed doubt that the Town could move forward on a budget without knowing what kind of revenue would be available. He stated that the Town should implement a 1-2 year hiring freeze, as he predicts financial impacts across multiple fiscal years. He further recommended that the Select Board wait to make decisions until pending legislation is further reviewed that would provide municipalities with the tools to make the best decisions for their communities.

Keri Macrae (31 Heartbreak Road) stated that the Town should not ask senior citizens to choose between their safety and their right to Town Meeting. She stated that she does not agree with lowering the quorum of Town Meeting, and that a 1/12 budget should be implemented in an effort to react to the information that is currently available.

Mr. Mootafian suggested planning to hold Town Meeting on June 30, and changing it if further restrictions are implemented by the Governor. Dr. Jones and Mr. Whitmore agreed.

Ms. Mackin disagreed with a June 30 Town Meeting date, stating that the job of the Select Board is to take care of the town, and they should wait for more information from the state before proceeding.

Jim Engel (362 Linebrook Road) expressed support for a 1/12 budget. He acknowledged that it would be more work, but stated that it is a reasonable solution during such an uncertain time.

Mr. Marino stated that he has looked into renting a tent to hold Town Meeting outside, and suggested setting up an area with an Assistant Moderator to monitor residents who wished to stay in their cars and listen to the meeting over the radio.

*Vote: Dr. Jones moved to hold Annual Town Meeting on June 30, outside. Mr. Mootafian seconded. The motion carried 3-2 via roll call.*

**Discuss/Vote Annual Town Meeting Warrant**

Ms. Clements-Skelton stated that she objects to the approach of having two warrants, and encouraged the Board to hold a Town Meeting with only the necessary financial articles. Ms. Alexson, Dr. Jones, Ms. Mackin, and Mr. Mootafian agreed.

Tom Murphy (Town Moderator) argued that residents would need to adjust, and advocated for an entire warrant.

Ms. Alexson suggested revisiting the date of the meeting, proposing a Saturday morning, to prevent residents from being outside late at night during mosquito season.

Mr. Whitmore confirmed with Mr. Hall that if the meeting were held on a Saturday, Town Elections would have to be held before the following Saturday.

*Vote: Ms. Alexson moved to reconsider the previous motion setting the Annual Town Meeting date as June 30. Mr. Mootafian seconded. The motion carried unanimously via roll call.*

*Vote: Dr. Jones moved to set Annual Town Meeting for Saturday, June 27 at 9:00 AM. Mr. Mootafian seconded. The motion carried 3-2 via roll call.*

*Vote: Mr. Mootafian moved to take the Annual Town Meeting warrant as presented in the meeting packet and add the single Citizen Petition. Dr. Jones seconded. The motion carried unanimously via roll call.*

*Vote: Mr. Mootafian moved to hold Town Elections on June 30 following Town Meeting with reduced polling hours, at a minimum of 4 hours, with encouragement for mail-in and absentee ballot voting. Dr. Jones seconded. The motion carried 4-1 via roll call.*

**Consent Agenda (Continued)**

- I. Over 70 Shellfish Permit Applications
  - a. Jeffrey Berman, 45 Middle Road
  - b. Charlene O'Neil, 4 Ryan Avenue

It was clarified that these permits are recreational, not commercial.

*Vote: Ms. Alexson moved to approve the Consent Agenda, and Dr. Jones seconded. The motion carried unanimously.*

**Approval of Minutes**

- a. May 4, 2020

*Vote: Ms. Alexson moved to approve the May 4, 2020 minutes, and Dr. Jones seconded. The motion carried unanimously.*

**Town Manager Report**

**COVID-19**

To date, there have been 63 reported cases of COVID-19 in Ipswich. Of those, 11 are being actively followed. The rest have finished their quarantine period.

The Governor released a reopening plan. A complete guide to the phases can be found at mass.gov.

**TOWN WHARF**

Construction at Town Wharf is on schedule to be completed the second week of June, however the installation of a new ramp has been delayed. Alternative launch sites in Rowley and Rockport have been identified for resident use.

**CLAM BOX/MILE LANE**

“No Parking” signs have been posted along Mile Lane at the Clam Box. Mr. Marino, Chief Nikas, and Jack Morris (Health Inspector) will be meeting with the owners of the Clam Box on Tuesday, May 19 to inspect the property and remind patrons that their orders must be takeout only, and that tailgating in the parking lot is not permitted at this time.

**New Business**

None.

**Old Business**

**WATER**

Ms. Alexson asked for an update on the status of the Water Department’s Net Zero Plan presentation. Mr. Marino responded that he had planned to put them on the agenda for the June 1 meeting.

**ELECTRONIC VOTING**

Ms. Alexson suggested that the Town utilize electronic voting to ensure the upcoming Town Meeting is accurate and efficient. Mr. Marino responded that he would address it with the Town Moderator.

**Care Fund**

Mr. Marino reported that Ipswich has been allocated \$1.2 million in COVID-19 response funds. The Massachusetts Municipal Association (MMA) is advocating that funds be eligible for covering revenue, state and local aid losses.

*Vote: Ms. Alexson moved to adjourn, and Dr. Jones seconded. The motion carried unanimously via roll call.*

The Select Board adjourned at 9:57 PM.

*Respectfully submitted by Eileen G. Page  
05.19.2020*