



Town Of Webster
Massachusetts **Est. 1832**

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Randall V. Becker Chairman
Donald D. Bourque, Vice-Chairman
Andrew Jolda, Secretary
Lisa Kontoes
Earl Gabor

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN
REGULAR SESSION MEETING MINUTES**

Monday, April 6, 2020 6:00 P.M.

Selectmen's Meeting Room

Webster Town Hall, 350 Main Street, Webster, MA
via conference call in accordance with Governor Baker's
emergency "Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the
Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A, §20
6:00 p.m.

MEETING OPENING: At 6:02 p.m., Chairman Becker called the meeting to order in the Selectmen's Meeting Room, Webster Town Hall, 350 Main Street, Webster, MA. The following individuals were present: Chairman Becker, Selectman Don Bourque (via conference call), Selectman Andrew Jolda, Selectman Lisa Kontoes (via conference call), Selectman Earl Gabor (via conference call), Town Moderator Ted Avlas (via conference call), Town Administrator Doug Willardson, and Executive Assistant Courtney Friedland, (via conference call). The Board stood and took the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chairman Becker stated on March 12, 2020, Governor Baker issued an Executive Order modifying certain requirements of the Open Meeting Law, to enable public bodies to carry out their responsibilities while adhering to public health recommendations regarding social distancing. The Executive Order relieves public bodies from the requirement in the Open Meeting Law that meetings be conducted in a public place that is open and physically accessible to the public, provided that the public body makes provision to ensure public access to the deliberations of the public body through adequate, alternative means.

WEBSTER TOWN ELECTION POSTPONEMENT: Mr. Willardson stated the State approved the Acts (2020) Chapter 45 granting authority to postpone 2020 municipal elections in the Commonwealth and increase voting options in response to the declaration of emergency to respond to COVID-19. He said this allows the Board of Selectmen to postpone the town election to a later date. He stated he would suggest postponing the election until June 15, 2020.

Motion by Selectman Gabor, seconded by Selectman Jolda, to postpone the Webster Town Election from May 4, 2020 to June 15, 2020.

Call Vote: Selectman Gabor – yes, Selectman Kontoes – yes, Selectman Jolda – yes, Selectman Bourque – yes and Chairman Becker – yes.

SPECIAL AND ANNUAL TOWN MEETING POSTPONEMENT: Mr. Willardson stated he would recommend moving the Special and Annual Town Meeting to June 22, 2020. Mr. Avlas stated a new general law has been passed giving authority to the Board of Selectmen to postpone the Town Meeting. He said the Town Moderator has the authority to postpone that date based on an emergency up to 30 days from the date set by the Board of Selectmen. He said the Board could chose a date sooner so they can give more time if it is deemed necessary. He also suggested that they put the location of Bartlett High School. He said this would allow the town the flexibility to change the location to outdoors as it deems fit. He said other communities have been doing this to accommodate outdoor meetings. Selectman Jolda asked what the Town Moderator’s recommendation was for the date. Mr. Avlas stated he is comfortable with the June 22, 2020 date. Selectman Gabor asked what would happen if there is inclement weather. Mr. Willardson stated they can open the meeting and postpone it for an additional week. Mr. Avlas stated putting the wording as Bartlett High School will give them the flexibility needed to maneuver this situation at this time. Selectman Kontoes asked if the meeting should be held earlier due to the daylight. Mr. Willardson stated they have received several requests not to hold the meeting at 6pm because it was too early for people who work. Chairman Becker stated he also has been contacted about the 6pm meetings being too early for many people to attend. Mr. Willardson stated they can post both meetings at 6:30 pm to accommodate both sides.

Motion by Selectman Gabor, seconded by Selectman Jolda, to postpone the Special and Annual Town Meetings from May 11, 2020 to June 22, 2020 at 6:30 p.m. at Bartlett High School.

Call Vote: Selectman Gabor – yes, Selectman Kontoes – yes, Selectman Jolda – yes, Selectman Bourque – yes and Chairman Becker – yes. Mr. Avlas left the conference call.

COVID-19 UPDATE/TOWN ADMINISTRATOR’S REPORT:

Mr. Willardson stated there are currently 19 positive cases within the Town of Webster. He stated the Public Health Nurse has been overwhelmed with cases so the Board of Health Agent has been helping with tracking the exposures. He stated they are also receiving help from the State with tracking exposures. He stated the Town has partially closed the Town Beach and all of the playgrounds. He stated they are following State regulations and transitory activities are ok. He said the Town will keep an eye on the situation and are having signs placed on the beach. He stated the compost facility will remain closed until the stay at home advisory is lifted. He stated this is a non-essential element. He said when they do open they will be open for the entire week. He stated the Board of Health has reached out to local nursing homes, care facilities to ensure they are informed of best practices. He stated they are being very proactive. He stated the “Acts to Address Challenges Faced by Minimalities and State Authorities Resulting from COVID-19” allows the Selectmen the option to waive interest and penalties for late payments. He stated there are two options for this. He said the Board can formally adopt this which would require a mailing to all tax payers costing at least \$3,000 or the Town Treasurer/Collector could continue to do this according to her discretion. Selectman Gabor asked what her criteria would be. Mr. Willardson stated she would mimic the State and use her discretion. She would not put interest on delinquent bills, not send demand letters and any interest would be overridden when payment is made. Chairman Becker stated the Treasurer/Collector would not apply any late fees or interest. Mr. Willardson stated there is not another large mailing going out so the first options would cost over \$3,000. He said the Acts also allow the town to postpone real estate excise due date from May 1st to June 1st. He said the Board of Selectmen would need to vote this. He said this would also require a mailing to all tax payers. He said it allows for town’s to temporary use free cash for COVID expenses and

amortization of COVID 19 deficits. He said this is not likely necessary. The consensus of the Selectmen was to allow the Treasurer/Collector to continue with the existing process as described above.

Mr. Willardson said restaurants can serve beer/wine in original sealed containers. He said notices have been sent to all restaurants. Selectman Kontoes stated she heard that per Governor Baker's recommendation, towns should not be reporting numbers of COVID-19 positive cases. Mr. Willardson stated he was on a call last week with the Department of Health and they said towns can report numbers but can't release any additional information. Chairman Becker thanked Mr. Willardson for his informational PSA video. He said it was very informative.

He stated he would like the Selectmen to send the Board's Secretary the Town Administrator's Performance Review by Wednesday for her to compile. He said he would like to thank the Webster Police Department, Fire Department, Webster EMS, Town Employees, and Harrington Hospital for all of their hard work and dedication. Mr. Willardson stated although Webster EMS is not part of the town they have done an amazing job working with the town. He stated Chief Hickey was able to secure a shipment of PPE's for the town. Selectman Kontoes stated she would also like to show her appreciation for all of the other entities that are still working making the town function such as trash services and postal workers. She said the School Department is doing a great job with enrichment activities for the children. Chairman Becker stated he would also like to mention the Webster Food Share is still open and giving out food. Mr. Willardson stated they are holding an EDC Meeting on Thursday to develop ideas on what they can do to assist businesses.

Motion by Selectman Jolda, seconded by Selectman Kontoes, to approve the Town Administrator's Report.

Call Vote: Selectman Gabor – yes, Selectman Kontoes – yes, Selectman Jolda – yes, Selectman Bourque – yes and Chairman Becker – yes.

INDIAN RANCH – LICENSE MODIFICATION: Mr. Willardson stated he spoke with the Manager of Indian Ranch and there have been some requests to reschedule some of the concerts to weeknights. He said there is currently a restriction on their license that states they will not have any weeknight concerts. He stated a change to the license would allow them to reschedule concerts from Sunday through Thursday between 10am to 10pm. He stated they will still be restricted to only six-night concerts per their license. Selectman Bourque stated this information needs to be spelled out and communicated to the Webster Lake Association so there are no surprises this summer. He said we did have a big issue with their entertainment license in the past and don't want to open a can of warms for the neighbors. Mr. Willardson understood and stated they want to give Indian Ranch some flexibility to rescheduling is needed. This will only be necessary if the stay at home advisory is extended.

Motion by Selectman Jolda, seconded by Selectman Gabor, to amend Indian Ranch Recreation Inc.'s Entertainment License to allow concerts Sunday-Thursday 10am to 10pm, with keeping the restrictions of no back to back night concerts, only six-night concerts a year, and the speakers must face inwards.

Call Vote: Selectman Gabor – yes, Selectman Kontoes – yes, Selectman Jolda – yes, Selectman Bourque – yes and Chairman Becker – yes.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: At 6:41 p.m.,

Motion by Selectman Gabor, seconded by Selectman Jolda, to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining or litigating position of the public body and the chair so declares.

- Approval of executive Session Minutes
 - December 16, 2019
 - January 13, 2020
 - March 9, 2020
 - March 23, 2020
- Ralph v. Town of Webster, et al

Call Vote: Selectman Gabor – yes, Selectman Kontoes – yes, Selectman Jolda – yes, Selectman Bourque – yes and Chairman Becker – yes.

ADJOURN: At 6:52 p.m.,

Motion by Selectman Jolda, seconded by Selectman Gabor, to adjourn. Call Vote: Selectman Gabor – yes, Selectman Kontoes – yes, Selectman Jolda – yes, Selectman Bourque – yes and Chairman Becker – yes.

Respectfully Submitted,

Courtney M. Friedland, Executive Secretary to the Board of Selectmen

