

# DRAFT

## BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MEETING

### MINUTES OF EMERGENCY REMOTE MEETING

March 23, 2020

Buzzards Bay Water District 15 Wallace Ave. Buzzards Bay, MA 02532

#### MINUTES

##### **Remotely Present:**

Wendy Chapman, Chairperson  
Robert Ethier, Vice Chair  
Joe Carrara, Commissioner  
Judith Flynn, Commissioner  
Jennifer Kelson- Treasurer  
Barry Woods, Admin. Support  
Steven Souza – Superintendent  
Wayne Perkins – Crew Chief  
Louise Warren- Billing Clerk

Meeting was held remotely with audio only thru Zoom

#### Minutes

1. **Call Meeting to Order-** Wendy Chapman, Chairperson, called meeting to order at 2:00 pm. Wendy stated that the meeting was being recorded, and we would be following the protocol order of suspending certain provisions of the open meeting law.
2. **Decision to declare a state of emergency-** Wendy asked if anyone had any comments about the decision to declare a state of emergency. Joe stated that it is protocol and we should follow it.  
Wendy asked if anyone had any questions regarding the staffing schedule proposed by Steve. The proposed schedule was: 2 technician on, 2 off, rotating weekly. Wendy asked if the office staff needed to rotate. Bob Ethier answered, “No.” He said “like the governor stated we should operate with minimal staff.” Wendy asked if everyone was in agreement. Judy said that she did not agree. Judy stated the staff should stay as is. She stated that they are essential to what goes on and our customers are the people who live here, who use and sell and buy our water. Joe Carrara responded that the governor has established the protocol, and we should start off with what was suggested. He stated that he was respectful of Judy’s opinion. Judy stated she had not seen the protocol from the Governor. There was a question if the protocol was emailed to the commissioners. Wendy stated the protocol was not emailed bc she was at work at Town Hall. Judy asked if Wendy was still working at Town Hall. Wendy said that they are down to minimal staff, one person per department. She is not aware of the protocols outside of her building. Wendy explained the protocol from the Governor was just announced at 10:0 am this morning. Judy stated, as far as she’s concerned, they all stay working, stay more than 6 feet apart and we are essential. There was back and forth discussion about why and who was essential. Bob explained there will be 2 operators on at all time and one of

them can answer the phone because there will be very few phone calls. Judy expressed that this meeting should have happened Wednesday or Thursday when the office closed to the public. Wendy explained that it has always been past protocol for the office to close when town hall closes; for example, for snow storms, etc. Judy implied that the office was closed and no one was working. Wendy explained that we (BBWD) were open and working all week. Bob and Jenn stated that no one closed this office. Jenn emphasized that she was here in the office all week. Judy stated that no one answered the door when someone knocked. Jenn explained that she was in the restroom in the back and answered the door as soon as she heard the knocking. In addition, Jenn explained that there was a big sign on the door stating the office was closed to the public and to call the phone number (phone number provided on the sign). Louise Warren, billing clerk, described the signs on the door and what the signs said. Jenn explained that when one person is alone in the office, it is impossible to be in two places at once (ie, in the bathroom and answering the door).

Wendy again emphasized that the office (BBWD) closes down when Town hall closes. Judy asked if Wendy knew that the office was closed to the public. She responded that she did not know until Friday when she came into sign the weekly warrant. Wendy said she assumed that everyone would find out that Friday when they came in to sign the warrant. Wendy expressed that she was told when she first started that warrants should be signed on Fridays. Judy said that no one ever told her to come in on Fridays to sign warrants. Joe and Bob agreed to Wendy's statements. Bob stated that we are in a National Emergency. Wendy asked if Bob is working. Wendy answered that he is Board of Health. Bob explained that Wareham Town Hall is closed. Wareham Town Hall is closed with minimal staff only people that need to assist with emergency operations. Town of Plymouth has also been sent home. Wendy stated this is not normal circumstances. Wendy stated that North Sagamore is voting on same protocols on Wednesday and Bourne voted in the protocols last Friday.

Judy stated that communication is not good and needs to improve. Judy suggested that when we do something in the office they (the commissioners) need to know and if there is prior protocol new board needs to be notified. Judy said she looked like a fool when she didn't know that we were closed. Wendy asked Judy to come up with some sort of procedure to review, possibly a chain, and they would review it at the next meeting.

The issue of coverage was revisited. Wendy asked again, what the coverage should be. She emphasized that she would only be in the office at Town Hall one day per week, and Barry (Johnson) would not be in the office at all. Joe answered if the Town can do it and has upwards of 24,000 subscribers and we only have 2,400, we should follow their lead. The protocol has been established. He said maybe we don't all individually agree with it, but the protocol is there to follow.

Judy asked again about office coverage and emphasized that there needs to be people in the office. More discussion followed. Wendy asked Judy if she wants the office staff to rotate. Judy said yes. Bob stated he was not in favor. Wendy said that it is overkill. Jenn stated that Louse and herself are smart enough to know what needs to be done and

when it is necessary to come in. She explained that no one thinks of this as a vacation. We don't want to be in this situation. Feels like fingers are being pointed at us and insinuating that we are looking for a free ride. Jenn explained that there is a lot that can be done from home. She explained that she lives two miles away from the office. She made a point that this is not fun for anyone. She explained how the phone system works. If it rings in the main office, it also rings in the "guy's office." Wendy asked if we can access emails from home. Jenn answered yes. Judy stated that the District is essential. Jenn replied that the operators are essential. The office is prompting people to pay their bills on the website.

Bob said the Governor stated that foreclosures are on hold, mortgages are on hold...Wendy said that she agreed with Bob only because that is what Town hall is doing. Wendy stated technicians are essential. Wendy said she does not believe office work is essential because we do not repair the pipes. Wendy explained that one technician will be here to answer phones at all time, and if by some chance, both technicians need to go on the road, they will call Louise and/or Jenn to come into the office to cover the phone. Joe stated that this is reasonable and the office needs flexibility. Joe suggested we try it this way and see how it works.

Wendy said, the girls will still be doing their work from home, answering emails, covering the bills, and will come in when needed. The technicians will work to answer the phone and if they need to be away, one of the office staff will come in. Wendy asked if this is acceptable. Joe said yes.

Wendy made a MOTION that the 2 technicians will be covering the phones and if they do need to leave the office, personnel (Jenn or Louise) will report in to cover the phones. Jenn and Louise will work from home doing what they need to do to keep the District paperwork up and running and bills paid.

Bob stated that he is in Public health. He explained that people are dying. It's multiplying every day. In Ptown five people died overnight. This is terrible. You need to keep people out of the stream and the public to try to slow this down til April 7<sup>th</sup>. The Town was telling people to go home. I have been working from home, and I'm the Director of Public Health. He continued to explain the status of the community and the disease. Every day it is multiplying. Bob stated that Judy makes great points and would feel the same way if he didn't know what he knows now. He said this is a pretty bad situation. I want to keep our employees safe and keep a skeleton crew. If only one person could run it, I'd feel even better with that. Judy is great in saying what she said about everyone doing their job, but not in this situation. They should be paid to stay home and do their job from home. That's what they are doing with me and a lot of people. You need people who don't get sick to take over if something happens. Wendy said that's what they have done with us, and she is working from home when she can.

Judy read out loud from the document of Essential Services Employees Operational Staff should be there. Digital Staff, workers that maintain infrastructure support, water and wastewater operations are considered essential. Wayne stated that

refers to the technicians. Judy replied that there needs to be a girl in the office. Wendy stated that the essentials are the people repairing and supplying the water. Judy stated that the operational person is Jenn. She is the operational person in the office. Judy said that she would allow Louise and I to split days but the office needs to be covered. Wendy replied that she does not interpret operational in the same manner and asked Joe and Bob for their thoughts. Judy insisted that Jenn is operational. Wendy stated that Jenn doesn't have anything to do with the water. Judy stated that Jenn maintains "the digital." Bob asked Steve if he can do everything in the office, run Scada, phones? Steve said yes. Bob asked if Steve is the operator of the business. Steve said yes. Bob stated that Jenn pays bills. Judy brought up the term "digital" again. Wendy asked what part of paying the bills is essential to maintaining the water lines? Wendy stated I am unfamiliar with that. Judy replied that it is part of the operation of the district. Jenn maintains that with phone calls and consulting. Jenn stated that everywhere is closed.

Barry Woods entered the conversation. He apologized for being late bc he was at the hospital. He said he had been listening and wanted to share. Barry agreed that a lot of what Bob said is 100% true and that he has been on a number of conference calls over the last 3 weeks. He stated that DEP is doing the same thing working from home, that most of the state is. The essential people being operational. He explained how we are unique being a small district. How is the public getting ahold of us? Barry stated that we invested in a system where everyone is notified on the operational side when they are not there in the office. They (the technicians) run the plant 24 hours a day which is run thru computer operation. As for the office, the phones are set up to allow people to forward an emergency onto the technicians to call back. Barry stated that we have followed town hall and that there have been times in the past when in the off hours there was an emergency and one of the office staff was called to come in to man the telephones. It has always worked out well. Half of operators should only be on at one time to ensure continuity and health of the workforce. He stated, it's a small district and everyone works together.

Joe asked Wendy to revisit the voting issue.

Wendy said, to Vote whether to have the 2 technicians on a rotating basis be the one's on staff, one of which in the office to answer phones at all times, and if they are unavailable to cover phones, the office staff will come in to cross cover the phone. Is this a MOTION that this is acceptable?

Joe seconded that MOTION and he said that this is acceptable. Wendy asked, All in favor? Judy stated that she needs to do a roll call.

Wendy asked, "Joe, are you in Favor?"

Joe stated. "Yes. Aye."

Wendy asked, "Bob, are you in favor?"

Bob answered, "Yes. Aye."

Wendy asked, "Judy, are you in favor?"

Judy answered, "I am in favor. Thank you, Barry, for your explanation. Not that I want the office to be unattended. That needs to be attended. Someone needs to be in the office

answering the phone.”

Wendy clarified that someone won't necessarily be in the main office answering phones, because the office phone also rings at the guys building. And, Judy reiterated that someone will call the girls if they need to go out in the field. Wendy answered that that is correct.

Wendy again asked Judy, “Are you in favor?”

Judy responded, “Yes, I am in favor.”

Wendy stated that, “I, Wendy am in favor.” **Motion passed. It is a unanimous vote.**

**Next item: Meeting changes and emergency action plan.**

Wendy explained that at this point they are in trying to allow towns and cities to change their meeting date. St. Peter's isn't accepting anyone to use their hall. Community Building is currently closed. We should contact Bob Troy to see if we comply with delaying the meeting if necessary. We may need a ruling to delay our meeting. Judy said we need to extend the nomination papers. Wendy said that we are not allowed to extend, the same with the town.

Wendy explained that this is all new special legislation. We need to contact Bob Troy. Judy asked about how people can get nomination papers. Judy asked how people are getting papers. Wendy explained the drop off slot on the door. Wendy stated that one of the technicians will be here to hand out papers if necessary. There is a sign on the door.

Wendy asked if the other three are in agreement that we need to work with Bob Troy to change the meeting date if necessary.

Roll Call was made.

Wendy asked, “Are you in favor of contacting Bob Troy to help us get thru all this legalization for this election and our meeting changes.”

Judy, “Yes.”

Joe, “Yes.”

Bob, “Yes.”

Wendy, “Yes.”

It was unanimous to get an opinion from Bob Troy.

Joe made a statement that we have done a good job and this is unchartered water. Joe made a motion to adjourn at 2:41. Bob seconded and all in favor.

