

Town of Holliston
Finance Committee
Meeting Minutes
December 28, 2021

The meeting was held remotely under the guidelines that were issued because of the emergency caused by COVID-19 virus. All votes taken during this meeting were done as a roll call vote.

Dr. Szajda called the Finance Committee to order at 7:01 p.m. In attendance were Chairperson Ken Szajda, Vice Chair Daniel Alfred, Vincent Murphy, Michelle Zeamer, Mark Whittaker and James Robinson. Iris Sobchak was not in attendance.

Dr. Szajda told the members to please make sure they read and get back to Ms. Rodrigues with all your changes to the minutes she has sent out to all for review.

Mr. Ahern gave updates on various meeting scheduled that needed to be pushed out. January 3rd, annual audit exit meeting with Roselli & Clarke, at which meeting Torenzi will be present to go through it. He was with us on the call that got us upgraded to AAA. So giving him some time to talk about that but also the normal things that we go through in an annual audit and where we are will be a positive thing. January 18 which is a Tuesday after Martin Luther King having a public forum to discuss the potential of scaling up a feasibility study on the Waste Water Treatment Plant on Linden Street to potentially tie in sewer opportunities for the downtown area. He thinks really where that came about through the ARPA Steering Group is, the original request from the Facilities Manager was that we were going to need to do a feasibility on that plant as to its 20 years old and we need to optimize it and use it for the future. So he thinks the purpose of this forum will be to discuss the town's attitude towards doing a feasibility study that has a wider scale and scope that would include the potential to leverage that for downtown sewerage. In a brief discussion, which Mr. Alfred was part of as a member of the public at a Select Board meeting, he got a lot of feed-back on both sides. Some people saying why are you looking at that at all there are other things to focus on and a lot of people saying it's about darn time. Mr. Alfred voiced his opinion on where he thought that they should not bring it down Linden Street but instead bring it down Central Street to Railroad Street before you hook up to Woodland to avoid passing by residences. He thought that this was important and should go to town Meeting for a vote so that we get the Town's notice on backing a plan in addition to everything else that needs to get done talking to businesses and that sort of thing. He is supportive of the plan.

Mr. Ahern wanted to let everyone know about another thing coming up, the water rate hearing on January 31st. Has been a lot of discussion now that we have a lot of things from Stantech. One, the water rate study that they did about 18 months ago and now the most recent water study that will be part of the discussion this year. That will go out with the water bills so that people will be aware of it and when it is coming.

Public Forum February 17th there is a follow up to par if anybody has gone by 9 Green Street. The building is now down and it's being sort of settled in for the winter. Some of the fill from Town Hall is being used for economies and we have taken some of the material over there for

filling in and doing everything we need to do for the DEP in stabilizing that site. So on February 7th will have PAR back in front of the Select Board to talk about our next steps and some of the final decisions. Town Meeting has approved the constructions costs of moving ahead after what we have now completed which is demolition, but there are just some decisions that the Select Board needs to make to make sure people in that area as well as all residents are able to weigh in on things that they would like to see. Also with a \$100K earmark from the state to do a review of the facilities at Goodwill Park across the street will obviously tie the two together to make sure that anything in the future planned at Goodwill Park works cohesively with the 9 Green Street end product.

Dr. Szajda brought up a discussion about the Tesla chargers for the electric cars. He asked does it make sense to have a private partnership and Mr. Ahern said yes that is one of the things we have to look into. Tesla is problematic because if you have a Tesla can plug into any EV but any EV can't plug into Tesla. 9 Green Street set up in the eventuality that EV becomes more wide spread but to Mr. Alfred's point, he doesn't think we are there yet. So it may be approaching within the bid of the contractor is making sure that the conduit is in place but not necessarily starting out with EV if we don't feel like it's a good use of space. But again, he thought on 2/7 a lot of that will also be discussed with Al Hanscom from PAR who is going to be involved in the design and bidding out of this project

Mr. Murphy brought up discussion about the lights on Central and lights @ Green Street. Said people see one green and one red and people blow through the red and almost hit people. Need lights and signs for that area.

Discussion about what we were being charged for the lights, we were being charged at the wrong rate all along. Mr. Ahern reviewed this piece in budget with what the rate increase would do if we left lights in their charge vs. what it would cost if we were to maintain them at a significantly lower cost per year. These were conservative estimates based on information we received from our consultant on what our electric usage would be if we had fully converted to LED street lights that we would be spending about \$24K on. Again it's a conservative amount he quoted more in the \$18K range for electricity for the street lights. Dr. Szajda asked if that's based on the same rate that the \$55 is based on. Yes it is based on the S1 rate with lower usage. Dr. Szajda said that would roughly cut the electricity in half or more than half which is conservative.

Mr. Alfred said the DLS report came out. Governance Committee had a meeting to discuss whether they wanted to send in any questions. They had a whole sort of draft questions circulated. Mr. Ahern said that we could put together a list of questions individual or as an official Finance Committee list. Not sure if any interest can send questions to him and talk about next time we meet. Was not sure when Mr. Ahern was planning on sending in those questions. The Governance Committee has not yet approve a set or list of their own questions yet so he believed we had a week or two to do that. Meet on 11th to have update and could we submit any questions on that date. Look at the material from DLS and if have questions Mr. Alfred will coordinate them. Send to him on the 11th he will review the questions and we can proceed to decide whether we want to make them official Finance Committee questions or whether we just want to let them go thru as questions by individual members.

Dr. Szajda asked Mr. Ahern if he wanted to go into Executive Session and Mr. Ahern said yes.

Dr. Szajda entertained a motion to enter into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing strategy with respect to collective bargaining from which the Committee will not return to open session. So moved by Mr. Alfred and seconded by Mr. Murphy.

Dr. Szajda said Mr. Sparrell was welcome to join them if he felt it was necessary but he thought he was just relaying information that comes from his Board. It was voted 4-0. At this time the Committee will enter into Executive Session and will not be returning to open session.