

## **TOWN OF HOLLISTON**

### **SELECT BOARD**

January 22, 2024  
7:00PM

Town Hall  
703 Washington Street

**Present:** John Cronin, Chair; Tina Hein, Vice Chair; Ben Sparrell, Clerk;

**Also Present:** Travis Ahern, Town Administrator; James Keast, Facilities Manager.

At 7:00pm J. Cronin called the meeting to order.

#### **FLAG POLICY DISCUSSION:**

J. Cronin began the discussion by stating that the several weeks ago Attorney Jay Talerman, a member of Holliston Town Counsel attended a meeting to outline the changes taking place due to the recent Supreme Court Case involving the City of Boston. At the time the Select Board reviewed and discussed the Flag Policies of several other communities, and what constitutes Government Speech. As a result a draft of the Town of Holliston Flag Policy was created. T. Ahern presented the proposed Flag Policy. The Policy listed the Town-owned properties in which a flag may be displayed which has been declared to be government speech, with Blair Square being a potential location where a non-governmental party may petition to raise a particular flag. The Policy would not apply to the Holliston Public Schools.

B. Sparrell supports the proposed Flag Policy and what has been determined to be deemed Government Speech. He also agrees that Blair Square is a valid location for which third party applications can be submitted.

T. Hein also supports the proposed Flag Policy and is in agreement that Blair Square is a valid location for third party applications.

J. Cronin noted that the utility poles throughout Town are owned by the utility companies and therefore the policy does not apply to them.

B. Sparrell made a motion to approve the Town of Holliston Flag Policy as presented. T. Hein second, amending the motion to include associated applications for third party requests. Vote 3-0.

#### **UPDATE ON FY2025 BUDGET SCHEDULE / REVIEW:**

T. Ahern stated the FY25 Budget Schedule is now posted on the Towns website and the appropriation packet for the FY25-FY29 Strategic Plan is available for Boards and Committees to consider. The Schools will present their budget within the next several weeks. T. Ahern will present the Town Administrator recommended Balanced Budget which will be made available by March 4, 2024. The Select Board will hold an all-day Budget Meeting on Saturday February 17, 2024 as well.

The Water Rate Hearing will held in February 2024.

T. Ahern also presented the Quarterly 2 update, FY24 Operating Budget, July 1 2023 –

December 31, 2023. As well as the General Fund Receipts and the FY25 Expenditures/Budget Tracking for the upcoming May 2024 Town Meeting. The process will be to compare the Revenue Model for FY25t with the Departmental Budget Requests received to date. Lower than projected state aid along with changes on the Cherry Sheet have contributed to currently putting the Town in “The Red”, just under \$1.15 million. T. Ahern will work with the Towns Treasurer/Collector and Town Departments to lower that amount prior to the all-day budget meeting on February 17, 2024. The Senate President will be invited to an upcoming Select Board Meeting to discuss local aid.

**WARRANTS:**

B. Sparrell made a motion to approve the Weekly Warrant in the amount of \$501,589.18. T. Hein second. Vote 3-0.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

B. Sparrell read the memo for the Marshall Street Recycling Center which will be open on the remaining Sundays as well as Saturdays from 8:00am-3:00pm during January 2024.

T. Hein welcomed back Town Administrator Travis Ahern from his paternity leave and thanked Kathleen Buckley the Assistant Town Administrator for filling in during his absence.

J. Cronin stated that there has been ongoing discussion regarding the Towns interest in the possible purchase of the vacant Gulf Gas Station located at 799 Washington Street. The next step will be to meet with the Finance Committee and then hold an Executive Session to determine the financial impact on the Town.

**COMMENTS FROM THE TOWN ADMINISTRATOR:**

T. Ahern expressed his appreciation for all who had stepped in while he was out on paternity leave.

T. Ahern stated that Eversource has installed the transformer required for the EV Charging Stations at 9 Green Street. The Stations will be installed as soon as possible. Additional greenery will be planted this Spring, 2024.

T. Ahern noted that J.M. Goldson services have been acquired to produce a Housing Production Plan related to the Strategic Planning Incentive, regarding zoning for the MBTA. T. Hein will be the liaison for the working group.

**BOARD BUSINESS:**

B. Sparrell made a motion to accept a donation to the Senior Center Nutrition Program from the Superette in the amount of \$400. T. Hein second. Vote 3-0.

B. Sparrell made a motion to approve the existing Veterans District Agreement, currently with Ashland, Holliston, Medway and Hopkinton and portioned expenses. T. Hein second. Vote 3-0.

B. Sparrell made a motion to authorize the Town Administrator to sign the Trails Committee Grant Application on behalf of the Select Board. T. Hein second with the comment that this

Application is for the Mass Trials Grant and will be for work to the Phipps Tunnel section of the Rail Trail. Vote 3-0.

**OTHER BUSINESS:**

T. Hein inquired as to the status of the \$30,000 which was appropriated for Celebrate Holliston 300<sup>th</sup> Celebration, as various groups come forward to express interest in event planning. J. Cronin noted that the Celebrate Holliston 300<sup>th</sup> Committee will continue to prioritize requests.

At 7:35pm B. Sparrell made a motion to adjourn. T. Hein second. Vote 3-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Margaret Driscoll

Approved\_\_\_\_3-4-24

