



**TOWN OF HOLLISTON
BOARD OF SELECTMEN**

703 Washington Street
Holliston, MA 01746

508-429-0608

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN
MEETING MINUTES
HOLLISTON TOWN HALL
MARCH 5, 2018**

Present: Kevin Conley, Chairman; Jay Marsden, Vice Chairman; Mark Ahronian, Clerk

Also present: Jeff Ritter, Town Administrator

K. Conley called the meeting to order at 7:00p.m.

- 1.) **Warrants**: M. Ahronian read the Warrants and made a motion to approve the weekly vendor (expense) and payroll warrants in the amount of \$1,320,249.68. Second, J. Marsden. Voted 3-0
- 2.) **Public Comment**: M. Ahronian said the Board held a special meeting this afternoon at the Senior Center. He thought the meeting was very informative and enlightening. I provided the opportunity for senior citizens to hear about what is going on in Town. Many seniors are unable to attend Selectmen's meetings so this meeting provided the senior community an opportunity to voice questions and or concerns. Among other topics the Board heard the need for affordable housing. Residents need to hear reasonable rents are high and taxes are high as well. There are over 100 citizen volunteers at the Senior Center. There are many residents in the 90's. There are a lot of positive things happening in Town and seniors like to be connected to the community.

J. Marsden said he was approached by students who suggested the creation of a "Citizen's Volunteer Bank" be established. K. Conley said this is something perhaps the Town Clerk could take on.

J. Ritter thanked all the public safety personnel for their quick and efficient response to the recent storm last Friday.

- 4.) **School Committee – Statement of Interest:** Brad Jackson, Superintendent of Schools and Stacey Raffi, Vice Chairman of the School Committee and other members of the School Committee were present for the purposes of discussing with the Selectmen the possibility of getting an approved Statement of Interest to be sent to the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA); from the Board regarding the condition of the existing High School.

B. Jackson reviewed the MSBA process from starting the conversation, the process of generating a feasibility study, the need to have all Town boards involved in the analysis of the existing High School.

There are three (3) “exit ramps” where the Town if it were to decide to put a stop to the project at no cost to the community. First, submission of a Statement of Interest (SoI) would have to be voted on by both the Board of Selectmen and the School Committee which we are asking the Board of Selectmen to approve of this evening. Second, there is about a then (10) month review process by the MSBA after which time the MSBA may or may not invite Holliston to participate in the program. Third, the Town would have 270 days to fund the feasibility study at Town Meeting which may include a debt exclusion question.

There would have to be the appointment of a School Building Committee. Typically, the establishment of a School Building Authority is outlined in a town’s charter or bylaws. Once the feasibility study is funded and a solution identified the MSBA would work with the Building Committee to define which options fit the.

Upon the completion of the schematic design the entire project would have to be funded at Town Meeting along with a ballot question. This would be the final opportunity to stop the project.

Once funded the design development phase of the project can be completed including the preparation of bid documents. To get to this point it will most likely take about three (3) years.

So we are requesting approval of the Selectmen to submit the SoI by the April deadline. The State would pick up somewhere around 31% and 40% of the project.

M. Ahronian asked about the schematic design and if this would be collaborative process between the MSBA and the Building Committee and what would happen if the project was held off for a year.

B. Jackson said people who are normally appointed to the School Building Committee have experience in construction. If the project were delayed a year the building would a little older. It is a question for the community as to how much residents want to invest in

Page Three

Board of Selectmen, Meeting Minutes 3-5-18

the current building. For example, last Friday we had water damage due to the storm and there was damage to the auditorium wall. Does it make sense to keep on reinvesting money, if so how much?

Martha Devoe, a member of the School Committee stated it is likely that Holliston would have to go through this process several times before being asked or invited by the MSBA to participate. There are many towns seeking project funding.

B. Jackson added the SoI process will allow Holliston to receive feedback on the current condition of the High School.

M. Ahronian asked about the septic system and the possibility of connecting to the existing treatment plant on Linden Street. Has there been any analysis done about making the connection vs. constructing a new septic field onsite.

B. Jackson noted that data is very important if we to decide to take on the project in phases. But we still need a SoI so that we can reserve a spot on the MSBA list. Of projects. The feasibility study would address those specific questions and provide information and data in support of their conclusions.

M. Ahronian said the Town is facing water quality issues and an eight (8) million dollar treatment plant is needed. We need to retain our ability to borrow to address this issue and many other issues in town.

B. Jackson said he understand there are other needs in town but his job is to advocate for the school system. To identify needs and propose solutions. This is an opportunity to gather data.

S. Raffi said this is not necessarily about building a new High School there are options to be explored.

J. Marsden asked about the accelerated repair program.

B. Jackson stated he thought that program was limited to roofs and was not sure about septic systems. In general this is a community discussion if the educational services we are trying to provide today fits a 1950's building. The building was not designed for the 21st century learning environment.

J. Marsden said he understands that there might be a need to upgrade the science lab

B. Jackson no upgrades would be needed for the athletic facilities.

J. Marsden said he agrees with M. Ahronian that there are other pressing community needs which have to be addressed like the water quality and the need for a treatment plant. He is sensitive to the "exit ramp" issues and the farther we go down the road the

Page Four

Board of Selectmen, Meeting Minutes 3-5-18

difficult it will be to stop the project. He thinks it is a bit premature especially since the Town has not completely paid off the last renovations and we might want to consider the accelerated repair program as an option.

B. Jackson said we can take a look at that program for any roof repairs needed or window replacement.

M. Devoe said by using the accelerated repair program that would essentially eliminate the new build option.

S. Raffi said the Town does not do good planning if you look at the condition of our water system. This is about getting accurate information out there and starting a community conversation and dialog.

M. Ahronian said the Capital Improvement Planning Committee has been established.

B. Jackson said the decision at the time was to keep the High School off that project list.

K. Conley said this will be a \$100 million project. But everyone understands the quality of the schools also drives the real estate market and values. He is of the opinion that it is premature and more needs to be done and we need to pay off the current debt so he thinks the project have to be delayed.

J. Marsden made a motion to decline the offer from the School Committee and the Superintendent of Schools for the Board to approve and sign the SoI. Second, M. Ahronian. Voted 3-0

5.) Board Business:

Minutes from May 17, 2017: J. Marsden made a motion to approve and release the meeting minutes from May 17, 2017. Second, K. Conley. Voted 2-0-1(Ahronian)

Minutes from May 24, 2017: J. Marsden made a motion to approve and release the meeting minutes from May 24, 2017. Second, M. Ahronian. Voted 3-0

Minutes from February 26, 2018: J. Marsden made a motion to approve and release the meeting minutes from February 26, 2018. Second, M. Ahronian. Voted 3-0

Event Permit – Tri-State Trek: J. Marsden made a motion to approve and grant an event permit for the Tri-State Trek bike ride to benefit the 16th Annual ALS Therapy Development Institute (ALS TDI) Tri-State Trek to be held on June 22, 2018. Second, M. Ahronian. Voted 3-0

Close Annual Town Meeting Warrant: M. Ahronian made a motion to close the Warrant for the Annual Town Meeting. Second, J. Marsden. Discussion, K. Conley said

Page Five

Board of Selectmen, Meeting Minutes 3-5-18

it could be re-opened by the Board if necessary. J. Ritter confirm this to be correct.
Voted 3-0

Personnel Board Posting: J. Marsden made a motion to approve and post the Personnel Board "Profile and Charge." Second, M. Ahronian. Discussion, J. Marsden asked J. Ritter to clarify the roles of the Town Administrator and the Personnel Board. J. Ritter said under the Special Act creating the Town Administrator position most of the roles of the Personnel Board were transferred to the Town Administrator. The Personnel Board serves as like an appeals court where an employee can appeal any personnel related decision to the Personnel Board which the Town Administrator has made. Voted 3-0

Resignation – Cultural Council: J. Marsden made a motion to accept the resignation of Heather Kemp from the Cultural Council and for the Board to send a letter of thanks to Ms. Kemp for her service to the Town. Second, M. Ahronian. Voted 3-0

Goals and Objectives: K. Conley reviewed what he prepared for the indexing budget average with information from the recent annual reports. The information presented breaks down by Department a percentage of the annual operating budget. For example, the schools are at 52.0% based on a multi-year average. One of the goals would be to have the Capital Expenditure Fund at 4% of the budget or \$2,480,000 and maintenance for capital at .50% or \$310,000.

Indexing the capital budget would take the emotions out of the decision making process. For example, if departments including the schools understood they will receive a certain percentage of the operating budget and a certain amount of the capital budget that would be a more balanced and reasonable approach.

Departments may decide to hold off from year to year in spending their capital allocation and fund a larger project later.

Another goal would be to freeze taxes for senior citizens. So a lien could be placed on the property and at the time of scale the back taxes would be paid.

Affordable housing for senior citizens is another top goals.

Downtown economic development would be another goal. Connecting cross walks with businesses.

Another would be for the Board to continue community outreach by meeting in other places. Improve the Town Report, lights at Highland and Washington need to be replaced, and benchmarking key performance indicators and establish a strategic planning committee.

M. Ahronian said he would like some time to think about the priority.

Page Six

Board of Selectmen, Meeting Minutes 3-5-18

J. Marsden said his approach is to pick one or two that are achievable, one or two that might be moderately hard to achieve and one or two that are difficult to accomplish.

- 3. Report of the Town Administrator:** J. Ritter reported this would be his final report on the **Andrews School Project**. The property has been transferred to a private developer (Steve O'Leary Builders) and the former Andrews School building is now demolished. The developer will next go to the Planning Board seeking to construct four (4) townhouses that fit the Mudville neighborhood.

Annual Town Meeting Warrant. Work has started in drafting the Warrant and that item will appear on your Agenda as a routine matter until mid-April when the Board is scheduled to sign it.

Library Bid Specifications. Work is continuing on the HVAC and roof repairs bid documents. Russo Barr Associates have secured the known documents and plans from the Town and are getting estimators onsite to complete inspections.

Medical Marijuana Money. To date the Town has received \$194,380 as a result of the Host Community Agreements. Mayflower Medicinal has offer a tour of their facility to the Selectmen. J. Ritter will try to arrange.

Performance Evaluations: There are three more to complete so that should be wrapped up in the next two (2) weeks then the Board can move on to J. Ritter's evaluation.

Pinecrest Deck Bid: J. Ritter briefed the Board. Two (2) bids were received however one of the bidders forgot to include the cost of replacing the frame. So work continues with the other bidder but the Town does not have \$52,000 to fund the project so we might be looking at a strategic repair plan of action.

Police Lieutenant Posting: The position has been posted.

Youth and Family Services Director: That position has been posted.

Adjourn: At 8:24p.m. M. Ahronian made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Second, J. Marsden. Voted 3-0

Respectfully submitted,



J. Jeffrey Ritter

Town Administrator