

TOWN OF HOLLISTON

SELECT BOARD

January 18, 2022
7:00PM

Town Hall
703 Washington Street

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

Also Present: Travis Ahern, Town Administrator; Michael Cassidy, Fire Chief; Kathleen Buckley, Assistant Town Administrator/HR Director; James Keast, Facilities Director and Kevin Conley, Blair Square Committee Chair.

At 7:00pm T. Hein called the meeting to order:

PUBLIC FORUM – FEASIBILITY OF DOWNTOWN SEWERAGE CONNECTION:

T. Hein began the meeting by going through instructions for those interested in participating in the Public Forum to discuss the feasibility of a possible connection of the downtown area to the Linden Street Wastewater Treatment Plant. T. Hein stated that the information provided is not technical, however the Select Board is seeking feedback from the community.

T. Ahern explained that in connection with the Local Rapid Response Plan the State assigned a consultant, Nelson Nygaard (with no cost to the Town) to review and evaluate the Village/Commercial area in regards to possible recommendations and expansion. One of the recommendations being the connection of the area to the Wastewater Treatment plant on Linden Street in an effort to attract more businesses to downtown. T. Ahern provided slides along with ball park cost figures outlining what would be included in a Feasibility Study.

J. Cronin noted that this was not a re visitation of the sewer project the Town voted down over 20 years ago, but a small scale project.

Cynthia Listenwnick, School Committee Chair, 72 Anne Marie Drive, stated that although the School Committee had not taken a vote on the matter she would like to see if connectivity of the High School could be included in the study.

Matt Coletti, Economic Development Committee Chair, 31 Summitpointe Drive stated that the downtown area currently struggles to attract businesses and feels that the connection would be a step towards improving that.

C. Listenwnick asked the Town Administrator to speak to a timeline on such a Request for Proposal. T. Ahern stated that the information can be brought to the Steering Group relatively quickly, however the procurement process takes more than a month. J. Cronin noted it may be possible to have results for the May 2022 Town Meeting.

T. Hein stated she had received an email from a member of the Finance Committee in favor of moving forward with the Feasibility Study.

Matt Putvinski, 95 Overlook Drive, expressed his support of the proposed study. He also made

an inquiry regarding the condition of the water mains in the downtown area and would they need to be replaced. T. Hein stated that the recent Water Replacement Study conducted by Stantec addressed that area and will be cross referenced.

T. Ahern received an email from a resident who is concerned that there is not enough parking in the downtown area to support the expected expansion that the sewerage connection will bring. T. Ahern pointed out that the 9 Green Street Project includes parking space for that area. David Bastille, 136 Rockland Street, asked if the Study will be addressing any changes in the traffic especially truck traffic as a direct impact of the anticipated business expansion. He feels the road structure of the downtown area will not withstand the additional truck activity. J. Cronin thought that by bringing the Planning Board into the discussions it will help to address that issue. D. Thorn, Vice Chair of the Planning Board agreed to bring the concern to the Board. T. Hein stated that the Feasibility of Downtown Sewerage Connection Study assesses the 4 following areas:

1. Define the service area and the types of allowable structures.
2. Confirm capacity at the existing facility on Linden Street.
3. Determine the best route to the existing facility.
4. To develop a cost effective design.

T. Hein concluded the Public Forum by thanking all who participated in the discussion and noted that this will not be the last time it will be addressed in an Open Forum.

BLAIR SQUARE COMMITTEE – PROGRESS UPDATE:

Kevin Conley the Chair of the Blair Square Committee joined the meeting to present an update of the Blair Square Project. The design prepared by Beals & Thomas is now complete. K. Conley shared a sketch. One of the proposed changes includes the redesign of the Rail Trail to bend around the new Veterans Memorial which will add to the available Green Space. The estimated cost of proposed design is \$585,000. The Blair Square Committee has submitted a request to the CPC for funding. The Blair Square Committee will seek out various grants with the intention of using any awarded funding to offset/reimburse the CPC.

The Select Board members thanked K. Conley and the Committee for their continued work.

WARRANTS:

J. Cronin made a motion to approve the Weekly Warrant in the amount of \$1,736,519.23. B. Sparrell second. Vote 3-0.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

C. Listenwnick shared that after reading the presentation (Evaluating the Financial Condition) drafted by T. Ahern which he will present on Thursday January 20, 2022, she suggests one have a glossary of financial terms handy to follow along as it is very thorough and technical. She also took the opportunity to thank the Board of Health for the Covid-19 clinic held this past

weekend January 15, 2022.

FY23 BUDGET DISCUSSION:

T. Ahern presented the Select Board FY23 Budget, noting that the changes referenced are due to the creation of the Assistant Town Administrator/HR Director in FY22. He explained that in FY21-22 the Benefits Clerk position which fell under the Treasurer Collector Department was repurposed into the HR Benefits Specialist and now reports to the Assistant Town Administrator/HR Director and the two positions now make up the Human Resources Department.

Kathleen Buckley, the Assistant Town Administrator/HR Director presented the HR budget along with various slides. K. Buckley read the HR Mission Statement and took the time to outline the Departments goals, some of which include compensation and benefits management, compliance reporting and risk management and policy development and implementation. K. Buckley stated that “communication is key” when working with both employees and in interaction with the public. K. Buckley will also participate in HR nonspecific responsibilities. Some of which include grant writing, the development of a Grounds Division, a quarterly news letter and participation in various community projects.

B. Sparrell asked the Assistant Town Administrator for her input on how to encourage more participation from the community when it comes to Town Meeting.

T. Hein agreed that working on a strategy to achieve more participation would be appreciated. T. Hein also noted that K. Buckley has been an asset in collaborating with the Schools regarding non-discrimination issues.

After a brief discussion the Select Board agreed that the ATA/HR Director position will be a 50/50 split between the Select Board and the Human Resource Budgets.

COMMENTS FROM THE TOWN ADMINISTRATOR:

T. Ahern stated that he will be giving a presentation, Evaluating Financial Condition, designed to be presented to the Finance Committee, Select Board and the Schools on Thursday January 20, 2022. The public is also welcome.

Monday January 24, 2022 representatives from the State House will be on the Select Board Agenda.

Monday January 31, 2022 there will be a Water Rate Hearing during the Select Board meeting.

T. Ahern explained that the May Town Meeting Warrant had been opened in a previous meeting however the specific time of expiration was not voted.

J. Cronin made a motion to close the May 2022 Town Meeting Warrant on March 21, 2022 at 4:00pm. B. Sparrell second. Vote 3-0.

COVID 19 UPDATE:

Chief Cassidy began his Covid 19 updated with some good news. The sixth surge is showing

signs of decline. The emphasis will be moving to a model of “personal responsibility”, transition to Global individual responses. A new term has been introduced “Staying up to date with Your Vaccines”. The Chief introduced a slide with the website along with an explanation of how individuals can upload to their mobile device. He also noted new guidelines for “at home testing”. The Federal Government has issued free “at home testing kits” to all households across the country. The Chief displayed the link for residents. The Chief also presented a slide with the new guidance from the States Department of Early and Secondary Education. The School Committee will discuss at their next meeting.

The Board of Health held a successful Covid-19 clinic on January 15, 2022 in which 141 vaccines/boosters were given. The next Clinic is scheduled for February 5, 2022.

BOARD BUSINESS:

J. Cronin made a motion to accept a donation to the Library from Sheila Adams in the amount of \$500 to purchase books in her husband’s name. B. Sparrell second. Vote 3-0.

J. Cronin made a motion to accept a donation to the Holliston Fire Department in the amount of \$500 in appreciation from a Sherborn resident. B. Sparrell second. Vote 3-0.

J. Cronin made a motion to accept a donation in the amount of \$1,000 to the Blair Square Gift Account for the purchase of metal benches from the Publisher The Holliston Reporter. B. Sparrell second. Vote 3-0.

J. Cronin made a motion to approve the 2022 ABCC (Alcohol Beverage Control Commission) Renewal Certification Form. B. Sparrell second. Vote 3-0.

OTHER BUSINESS:

J. Cronin suggested that the Select Board consider having a liaison to the Celebrate Holliston Committee for the planning of the Town’s 300th Celebration in 2024. T. Hein noted that Staci Raffi, a member of Celebrate Holliston will be the liaison to the Select Board. J. Cronin will contact S. Raffi to discuss further.

J. Cronin read a letter of appreciation from the Historical Society to the ARAP Steering Committee and the Select Board for approving the funding for the improvements to the Asa Whiting House at the Historical Society.

At 9:12pm J. Cronin made a motion to adjourn. B. Sparrell second. Vote 3-0.

Respectfully submitted;

Margaret Driscoll

Approved 2-14-22

