

## **TOWN OF HOLLISTON**

### **SELECT BOARD**

January 24, 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, Holliston Fire Chief; Matthew Stone, Holliston Police Chief; Carolyn Dykema, State Rep; Dennis Giombetti, representing Senator Karen Spilka; Robert Weidknecht, Trails Committee Chair and James Keast, Facilities Manager.

#### **LEGISLATIVE UPDATE:**

State Representative Carolyn Dykema and Dennis Giombetti, a Representative from Senator Karen Spilkas office attended the meeting to give the Select Board a financial update. Rep Dykema stated that is was still early in the budget process however this was a good time to obtain an understanding of what the Boards anticipated needs might be. Some of the highlights included funds that will be earmarked for the Water Structure/Wastewater project, as well as funding for continued PPE in response to the ongoing need for masks and testing materials. Rep Dykema also noted that MassDOT is making headway with Town wide projects. Rep Dykema will be happy to write a letter of support for the Blair Square project in conjunction with any grant opportunities/applications.

As Climate has become a regular occurring topic of conversation within the Massachusetts Governing body the House is expected to pass a Wind Bill in the near future. The House continues debate on Voting Legislation, which pertain to early voting and mail in voting. Dennis Giombetti added to Representative Dykemas comments on behalf of Senator Spilka. The State has approved 4 billion dollars in ARPA funding to cover a wide range of areas within communities. Senator Spilka is a leader in Mental Health Support as well as Voter Registration, and Climate Change. The Senator herself will plan on attending a Select Board meeting once the budget is made available.

J. Cronin asked that the special legislation for remote meetings be made permanent as it makes attending meetings more accessible. The current legislative deadline has been extended to July 2022. He also made an inquiry as to the existence of a MassDOT Plan with respect to future work to be addressed in the Town. Representative Dykema stated that MassDOT does prioritize their work within the districts.

The Board discussed the work needing to be done on parts of Washington Street, Route 16 and also parts of Route 126. T. Ahern noted that there has been a site review and the work in question on route 16 will be done during the Spring. The repaving on Route 126 will be done as part of the water main replacement, repairs in that area at another time.

The Select Board will look for possible State funding towards the Towns 300<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration which will take place in 2024.

T. Hein asked for assistance in advocating for an increase over the 2.7% in local aid this year. In conclusion the Select Board members each thanked both representatives for all their continued support. T. Hein extended gratitude and appreciation to Governor Bakers office and administration on behalf of the Board as well.

Nicole Cordon, 1419 Washington Street joined the meeting via zoom. N. Cordon explained that her residence is located across from the intersection of Summer and Washington Streets and that there have been multiple accidents which have caused property damage to both vehicles and personal property. She asked that the State Representatives along with the Select Board members support putting additional signage, possibly with flashing lights at that location.

#### **TAC UPDATE:**

Police Chief M. Stone joined the meeting with a Traffic Advisory Committee (TAC) Update. TAC was formed in 2019 and consists of a 9 members with the intent of meeting quarterly. In 2021 the Committee held 9 meetings. Currently there are 25 petitions pending.

On December 8, 2021 the Committee voted in favor of installing “No Parking” signs on Indian Ridge South Road to alleviate on street parking on that street. The Committee also would like the Select Boards input on the overall effectiveness of TAC up to this point and the possibility to restructure the Committee by reducing the number of its members. Finally TAC has authorized the deployment of equipment on Franklin Street in an effort to gather information regarding traffic for a petition received.

J. Cronin made a motion to request and install “No Parking” signs on Indian Ridge South Road.

B. Sparrell second with a note that the signs will be funded by a previously voted Town Meeting Warrant. B. Sparrell second. Vote 3-0.

The Select Board asked that the Chief return to an upcoming meeting to discuss further any changes to the Mission Statement as well as the membership structure.

#### **COVID 19 UPDATE:**

Chief Cassidy began the Covid-19 update by stating that the numbers are starting to taper off, they are going in the right direction. The Board of Health will be holding another vaccination clinic on Saturday February 5, 2022 at the Town Hall.

The goal going forward will be to continue to access testing materials and PPE as needed, and always continue to educate the public.

#### **WARRANT:**

J. Cronin made a motion to approve the Weekly Warrant in the amount of \$542,447.79. B. Sparrell second. Vote 3-0.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT: NONE**

## **SELECT BOARD ANNUAL PERFORMANCE EVALUATION OF TOWN ADMINISTRATOR:**

After the Select Board completed their annual performance evaluation with input from the various Boards and Committees it was determined that T. Ahern “is doing an excellent job at meeting their expectations.” “T. Ahern exceeds expectations around budget preparation.” A common thread among Department Heads noted “He is a strong leader and collaborator and people like working with him.”

A goal for the coming year will be to work with the new Assistant Town Administrator/HR Director and develop that role to its fullest.

Each Board member thanked T. Ahern for his hard work and dedication to the Town.

## **FY23 DEPARTMENTAL BUDGET REVIEWS:**

T. Ahern presented 6 Budgets to the Select Board beginning with the Rail Trail.

**Rail Trail:** Robert Wiedknecht, Trails Committee Chair joined the meeting to explain the \$1,000 budget is for maintenance activities on the trail. The reason that budget is minimal is due to the fact that most of the maintenance is done by volunteers. T. Ahern stated that with the development of a Grounds Division as part of the DPW the Town may be in a position to better assist in maintenance of the trail. Also there are currently several businesses that now have license agreements with the Town for use of very small portions of the Trail which will generate a small revenue. The Board thanked R. Wiedknecht for all he has done over the years.

**Economic Development:** The budget remains the same at \$14,000. The intent was to hire part-time clerical staff to support the EDC, however they have yet to fill the position. The Committee is considering seeking a consultant to assist in grant writing, application process. This would fall under Professional Development.

**Sealer of Weights & Measures:** No given budget, this is funded through a revolving fund.

**Street Lighting:** T. Ahern explained that Eversource had erroneously been using a rate to charge the Town with the assumption that the Town owned the light fixtures (not poles). However the Town does not own the fixtures. To insure that the cost to the Town does not go up exorbitantly once this error is corrected the Town will need to purchase new light fixtures (not poles) and the lights. Then procure a maintenance contract. Then by converting to LED lights with funds obtained from a grant the Town should be looking at a manageable budget.

**Solid Waste:** T. Ahern continues to collaborate with M. Zettek the Sustainability Coordinator and R. Walker the DPW Deputy Director in an effort optimize the Recycling Center on Marshall Street. He also recently had a meeting with E.L. Harvey which was acquired by another entity. There will be no changes to the services provided by E.L. Harvey. The overall Solid Waste Budget is \$1,376,118.

**Celebration:** Historically this budget is used for the Memorial Day Celebration. Due to the upcoming 300<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration a line may be added to this budget. The budget is \$2,300.

## **COMMENTS FROM TOWN ADMINISTRATOR:**

The Viewpoint video which was funded by ARPA is nearly complete and ready for release. The video is designed to create a corporate profile of Holliston and highlight the Town's assets. The Water Rate Hearing is scheduled for next Monday January 24, 2022 as part of the Select Board's meeting.

T. Ahern is in the process of putting together a list of all available seats for the various boards and committees.

## **BOARD BUSINESS:**

B. Sparrell made a motion to approve the Meeting Minutes of December 13, 2021 as written. T. Hein second. Vote 2-0. J. Cronin abstained.

J. Cronin made a motion to approve the Meeting Minutes of December 20, 2021 as written. B. Sparrell second. Vote 3-0.

J. Cronin made a motion to authorize the Town Administrator to send a letter of support on behalf of the Trails Committee for the Mass Trails Grant related to the Phipps Tunnel and sign on behalf of the Town as the landowner. B. Sparrell second. Vote 3-0.

T. Ahern explained that the Town reposted a Request for Proposal (RFP) for the Goodwill Park Design project due to the fact that there was only 1 response the first time, Chemini Design Architects. After reposting the Town received 4 proposals, and Chemini Design was selected.

J. Cronin made a motion to approve the contract with Chemini Design Architect, a subsidiary of Rodenhiser for the design engineer services for the project at Goodwill Park, through the State's earmarked funding not to exceed \$85,000. B. Sparrell second. Vote 3-0.

## **OTHER BUSINESS:**

J. Cronin would like to have an update on the Central Street Water Treatment Plant project in an upcoming meeting.

T. Hein stated that she recently had a conversation with an Ashland Select Board member regarding the fact that Ashland is also considering a possible location for a Dog Park. T. Hein suggested using other surrounding towns as references when doing research. She will share any information she obtains with Shaw Lively on the Park Commission.

At 9:07pm J. Cronin made a motion to adjourn. B. Sparrell second. Vote 3-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Margaret Driscoll

Approved\_\_02-22-22

