

TOWN OF HOLLISTON

SELECT BOARD

January 31, 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; Mary Bousquet, Treasurer Collector; Mallory Franceschi, newly appointed Assistant Treasurer; Sean Reese, DPW Director; Deb Moore, Golf Course Advisory Committee Chair; Adam Taylor, resident; Blake Mensing, resident; Andre Vargas, resident; James Keast Facilities Manager; Matt Zetteck, Sustainability Coordinator, Rich Rosenberry and Joan Levinson, residents.

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

BOARD BUSINESS:

M. Bousquet the Treasurer Collector introduced M. Franceschi whom has been working in the Treasurer Collectors Office since 2019. M. Franceschi is working toward completing the necessary training to become a certified Assistant Treasurer.

T. Hein made a motion to appoint Mallory Franceschi to the position of Assistant Treasurer effective February 7, 2022. B. Sparrell second. Vote 3-0.

HOLLISTON COMMUNITY GARDEN AT PINECREST:

Adam Taylor, 80 Burnap Road and Deb Moore, Chair of the Golf Course Advisory Committee joined the meeting to present a Business Plan for the Community Garden located on a parcel of land behind the overflow parking lot at the Pinecrest Parking lot. Since its conception 16 years ago the community garden has grown from 12 plots to 33 plots. The goal is to expand community involvement and have a maintenance plan to address the next 5-10 years of activity. This would be achieved by creating a 3 member committee to oversee the garden and all that it entails. After some discussion the Select Board suggested that a Subcommittee within the Golf Course Advisory Committee be established so that all things related to Pinecrest itself, (i.e. water which is supplied by the club house) is addressed. D. Moore and/or A. Taylor will return to the Select Board once this has been done.

COVID-19 / ARPA:

Chief Cassidy presented the latest graph showing that the most recent surge is trending downward. The Chief noted that there is a time in the near future that the Corona Virus will be tracked like most other viruses throughout the globe and it will be up to individuals to monitor their own behaviors. Moderna has become the first to obtain full FDA approval for those 18 and

older. The Board of Health will hold another Vaccine Clinic on Saturday February 5, 2022 at Town Hall.

The Chief stated that the next ARPA Steering Group meeting is scheduled for Thursday February 10, 2022.

In conclusion the Select Board agreed that the weekly Covid-19 updates are no longer necessary and thanked Chief Cassidy for all his time and work since the pandemic began.

WATER RATE HEARING FY23:

At 7:30 pm J. Cronin read the Notice of Hearing to set the Water Rate for FY23.

J. Cronin made a motion to open the Water Rate Hearing for FY23. B. Sparrell second. Vote 3-0.

S. Reese, the DPW Director joined the meeting to present the proposed FY23 Water Rate. The suggested increase of 1.25% will still leave a deficit of approximately \$250,000 which can then be funded by the Water Retained Earnings. S. Reese pointed out that there has not been an increase in water rates within the past 5 years and that actually there was a slight decrease last year.

T. Hein opened discussion regarding the tier structure, late fees and the infrastructure fee. It was noted that infrastructure fee continues to help fund the water main replacements which continue throughout town. The cost for 1 mile of replacement is approximately \$1.4 million. If the Town was to eliminate the current infrastructure fee there would need to be alternate funding in place. S. Reese stated that the Town offers financial assistance in the form of exemptions, Elderly and Hardship, which can be applied for through the Assessor's Office and then if approved can reduce a portion of the water bills. The Select Board unanimously agreed that the tier and late fee structures were acceptable however would like to discuss the infrastructure fee again in the future.

Brian Moran, 267 Norfolk Street asked what water mains have already been replaced within the Town. S. Reese stated that the DPW has replaced 1-3 miles of pipe annually over the past 5 years. He then gave a list which included Cedar Street, Winter Street, a portion of Pinecrest Road and parts of the Mudville neighborhood.

J. Cronin made a motion to approve the proposed 1.25% increase in the Water Rate for all tiers for FY23. B. Sparrell second. Vote 3-0.

At 7:54pm J. Cronin made a motion to close the Water Rate Hearing. B. Sparrell second. Vote 3-0.

WARRANT:

J. Cronin made a motion to approve the Weekly Warrant in the amount of \$2,959,660.13. B. Sparrell second. Vote 3-0.

PUBLIC HEARING:

J. Cronin asked residents who live in close proximity to a fire hydrant if they could please take the time to shovel around them for safety reasons.

On Tuesday February 1, 2022 starting at 9:00pm the DPW will be conducting snow removal in the downtown area. No On-Street Parking continues until March 31, 2022.

J. Cronin concluded by thanking the DPW for their response to the recent Nor'easter.

B. Sparrell and T. Hein echoed J. Cronin's appreciation to the DPW for the efficient snow removal.

Blake Mensing, 1865 Washington Street, joined the meeting to request that Cannabis Delivery be allowed within the Town of Holliston and asked that it be considered for a Warrant Article at Town Meeting. B. Mensing went on to state that based on the information received via a Public Records Request a client he represented, Zen LLC has been the only cannabis cultivator denied a HCA by the Select Board. B. Mensing also stated that he has been informed that correspondence is being forwarded to Town Counsel that should not be. He also stated that the Town Administrator made erroneous comments in an email regarding his (B. Mensings) comments made at the October 18, 2021 Town Meeting.

Andre Vargas, 12 Curve Street, joined the meeting to express his concerns over the condition of Curve Street and the sidewalks there after the storm on Saturday January 29, 2022. A. Vargas stated that the owners of the commercial properties on Curve Street use private plow services which ultimately move the snow from the parking lots and deposit it onto the sidewalks and also create large snow mounds that impair vision. His main concern is for the safety of the residents, especially school age children. The Select Board has addressed this issue in the past with the landlords via a letter last winter (2021). S. Reese the DPW Director expressed his frustration over the issue as well and advised A. Vargas that the earliest the DPW could address Curve Street would be on Thursday February 3, 2022.

T. Ahern will take up the matter with Town Counsel and see if any legal action can be taken in to penalize the owners of the commercial properties involved.

COMMENTS FROM THE TOWN ADMINISTRATOR:

T. Ahern will be hosting a segment on HCAT titled "Ask the TA". Residents are welcome to email their questions and T. Ahern will answer them in a segment which will be broadcast to the public.

The 6 minute corporate profile of Holliston created by Viewpointe is complete and T. Ahern shared a 30 second promo. The funding was provided through ARPA.

T. Hein singled out Mary Greendale and Robert Wiedknecht as 2 Holliston residents' and thanked them for their contributions during the filming by Viewpointe.

FY23 BUDGET REVIEWS:

Sustainability: Matt Zettek the Sustainability Coordinator presented a highlight of the various

programs available to the Town. The FY23 goals include making Clean Energy available, continue waste reduction programs, expand carbon reduction and promote financial and environmental benefits derived from sustainability initiatives.

Joan Levinsohn and Rich Rosenberry, 66 Jarr Brook Circle both expressed their appreciation for all the work and the value of the programs brought to the Town by the Sustainability Coordinator. They encourage the Town be more aggressive and do more with the approach to climate issues.

The proposed Sustainability Budget remains the same as last year at \$50,000.

Facilities Maintenance: James Keast is requesting an increase in the grounds and maintenance line of \$16,000. T. Ahern noted that because this is a relatively new position and budget it is a “work in progress”. J. Keast added that he may be able to trim down the budget going forward due to overlapping that may occur within departments. The proposed budget is \$297,749.

Wastewater Treatment: J. Keast continued with the proposed Wastewater Treatment budget stating there is no change from last fiscal year. A recent DEP analysis resulted in the decreased use of air circulators at the treatment plant with a \$6,000 savings. This savings can be incorporated into maintenance and supplies. The proposed Wastewater treatment budget is \$97,700.

Liability Insurance: T. Ahern stated that there is a proposed 5% increase in the Liability Insurance Budget based on limited information currently. This is in response to several large claims paid out in FY21-22. The proposed Liability Insurance Budget is \$336,306.

BOARD BUSINESS:

J. Cronin made a motion to approve the Meeting Minutes of January 3, 2022 as written. B. Sparrell second. Vote 3-0.

J. Cronin made a motion to accept a donation in the amount of \$1,000 from the Wolf Charitable Foundation to Youth & Family Services for Mental Health Awareness assistance. B. Sparrell. Vote 3-0.

J. Cronin made a motion to approve the annual, calendar 2022, Rail Trail License Agreements for several businesses that use a portion of the Rail Trail. B. Sparrell second. Vote 3-0.

OTHER BUSINESS:

J. Cronin congratulated and thanked Representative Carolyn Dykema who has announced she will be leaving her current position. The Board asked T. Ahern to draft a letter of thanks on behalf of the Town of Holliston for all her assistance over the years. The Board also asked T. Ahern to contact Dennis Mariano in Senator Splikas Office to consider holding a special election to fill Representative Dykemas’ seat if possible.

At 9:04 pm J. Cronin made a motion to adjourn. B. Sparrell second. Vote 3-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Margaret Driscoll

Approved _02-28-22