

TOWN OF HOLLISTON
SELECT BOARD

February 28, 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; Lieutenant George Leurini, Lieutenant Chad Thompson, Holliston Police Department; and Chris Pierce, Holliston resident.

At 7:01pm T. Hein called the meeting to order after adjourning from Executive Session (reason #2: strategy with respect to non-union personnel).

RATIFICATION OF COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AGREEMENT (CBA) W/ HOLLISTON POLICE ASSOCIATION (HPA) FOR FY22-24:

T. Ahern stated that last year during the pandemic the Holliston Police department entered into a 1 year contract that expired June of 2021. Negotiations since then have arrived at a 3 year contract with many thanks to J. Cronin, Chief Stone and the officers on the Holliston Police Association. Both T. Hein and B. Sparrell also expressed appreciation for the hard work and conversation leading to the agreement.

J. Cronin made a motion to ratify and counter sign the Memorandum of Agreement between the Town of Holliston and the Holliston Police Association for a successor Collective Bargaining Agreement to be in effect through June 30, 2024 as presented this evening and signed by the Holliston Police Association. B. Sparrell second. Vote 3-0.

FY23 BUDGET REVIEWS:

Police Budget: Chief Stone presented the proposed FY23 Police Budget. The proposed budget includes the hiring of a 26th police officer. The Chief stated the last year the department handled 17,865 calls, which has increased from the previous years and as a result of this the need for an additional officer has become more apparent. He pointed out that the needs of the community have changed and are now beyond the traditional needs of the past. Chief Stone continued to state the members of the Police Department continued to provide an exceptional level of service during the pandemic. Each Select Board member took the opportunity to ask the Chief a question regarding his presentation and also thanked him and his department for all that they do within the community. T. Hein stated her support for the addition of a 26th officer.

The proposed FY23 Police Budget is \$3,482,733.

Auxiliary Police Budget: Lieutenant Leurini presented the proposed FY23 Auxiliary Police

Budget. Lieutenant Leurini stated that the increase in the proposed budget is based on the increase in cost of equipment used as part of the required training the auxiliary officers need to attend. The training at the Bridge Academy is free, however the cost of ammunition is not. Lieutenant Leurini noted that as requirements around training increase the number of auxiliary offices may decrease which will then require full time officers to fill the gap, which speaks to the justification of adding a 26th officer to the Police Department. The proposed FY23 Auxiliary Police Budget is \$16,002.

Animal Control Officer Budget: T. Ahern presented the proposed FY23 Animal Control Officer Budget. The Animal Control Officer splits her time between Holliston and Ashland. The agreement was signed in 2009. T. Ahern noted that there may be an opportunity to review and revise the agreement in the near future. The proposed FY23 Animal Control Officer Budget is \$38,000.

Fire Budget: Chief Cassidy presented the proposed FY23 Fire Budget. This is a level service budget. The department filled a part-time clerical staff member as well as a part-time inspector during the current fiscal year. The proposed FY23 Fire Budget is \$956,436.

Ambulance Budget: Chief Cassidy presented the proposed FY23 Ambulance Budget. This past year, 2021, a shift deferential was offered to ambulance crew members as an incentive to stay at the Fire Station during a 12 hour shift. The Chief explained that it has become difficult to recruit staff on a national level due to the fact that private ambulance companies can offer incentives such as sign on bonuses. Chief Cassidy continues to work on succession planning as one of his goals. The proposed FY23 Ambulance Budget is \$607,731.

Emergency Management Budget: Chief Cassidy stated that most of the Emergency Management budget is used for the community notification system and is a level service budget.

The proposed FY23 Emergency Management Budget is \$17,161.

The Chief concluded his presentations by stating that Holliston is one of 31 communities within Massachusetts that has received a grant from FEMA to update the Towns Hazard Mitigation Plan.

Each Board member thanked Chief Cassidy for all the guidance and never ending leadership throughout the pandemic. Chief Cassidy intern gave credit to his staff who made it possible for him to attend to all matters as they presented during that time.

WARRANTS:

J. Cronin made a motion to approve the Weekly Warrant in the amount of \$1,507,008.73. B. Sparrell second. Vote 3-0.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

None of the Select Board members had any public comment.

Chris Pierce, 117 Shaw Farm Road joined the meeting to echo what Chief Cassidy noted regarding issues with staffing nationally. He was also pleased that an additional inspector has been added to the Fire Department and voiced his support of a proposed addition of a 26th Police Officer.

Andres Vargas, 12 Curve Street joined the meeting to voice his ongoing concerns over the of snow removal on Curve Street and also the surrounding area. A. Vargas expressed his frustration at the work, or lack of follow through with the attention given to clearing the sidewalks. His point was that the individuals clearing the sidewalks are not achieving that goal.

He also stated that the issue with the private plows plowing snow onto Town property continues to make visibility and safety a concern. A. Vargas has film of those plows in action. T. Ahern stated that the last time A. Vargas brought this issue to the Select Boards attention the DPW Director was present, he too noted his frustration with the private contractors. T. Ahern will follow up with Town Council to determine if there are any legal ramifications and also asked that A. Vargas forward the film he spoke of. A. Vargas noted that he would and thanked the Select Board for their time.

COMMENTS FROM TOWN ADMINISTRATOR:

T. Ahern stated that the Senate President Karen Spilka will attend the March 14, 2022 Select Board meeting. Questions for the Senator are welcome and can be asked through the Select Boards Office.

The HCAT program "Ask the TA" aired its first show in which the guests were Staci Raffi and Ben Sparrell discussing the results of the Envisioning Future Holliston survey. Any suggestions or questions for further shows are welcome.

The Assistant Town Administrator has created a quarterly newsletter which highlights all the ongoing projects/events in Town and will be available to anyone who signs up to receive it.

FY23 BUDGET REVIEW / OTHER ITEMS OF INTEREST:

T. Ahern presented the most recently updated Revenue vs. Expenditures Projection. There have been no significant changes since last weeks review. The Town Administrators proposed budget will be completed by the end of the week, March 4, 2022. The Select Board will then begin to review the warrants for the 2022 May Town Meeting. Further discussion regarding the FY23 Capital Improvement Requests and the 5 year Capital Improvement Plan will be ongoing.

BOARD BUSINESS:

T. Ahern explained that due to a recently noted fee error by Eversource the Town is now in the process of purchasing the light fixtures (not the poles) throughout Town. He also noted that

the Town will need to engage in a contract to maintain the lights and fixtures. The plan is to purchase 932 (approximately) light fixtures and then convert to LED as needed which will be a cost savings in the long run to the Town. The cost to purchase the street lights from Eversource is \$46,133.37. The total cost of conversion is estimated at \$350,000. There is potential to receive up to \$200,000 from the Green Communities Grant. T. Ahern stated that the conversion process will not begin until the outcome of the grant is known. Chief Cassidy stated that on Monday February 28, 2022 the ARPA Steering Committee voted 5-0 to fund the \$46,133.37 to purchase the street light fixtures as it falls into the “building strong and healthy communities through investments and neighborhoods” category.

J. Cronin made a motion to approve the purchase of the street lights and fixtures from Eversource in the amount of \$46,133.13 consistent with the Purchase and Sale agreement attached to the vote and further that the Chair has authorized to execute the Purchase and Sale agreement and related closing documents necessary to effectuate this sale. B. Sparrell second with the comment to note that the funding source is ARPA. Vote 3-0.

T. Ahern presented a Public Employee Committee (PEC) Side Letter of Agreement for Medicare buy in program for those employees whom were not eligible at the time of their retirement.

J. Cronin made a motion to approve and countersign the Side Letter of Agreement between the Town of Holliston and the Public Employee Committee know as PEC related to the so called Medicare By in Program for the non-Medicare eligible retirees effective July 1st, 2023 for the open enrollment period to take place in FY22. B. Sparrell second. Vote 3-0.

J. Cronin made a motion to approve a Temporary Inter-municipal Agreement with the Town of Medway for dispatch support services to cover ongoing employee training. B. Sparrell second. Vote 3-0.

Geoffrey Zeamer, 583 Winter Street joined the meeting and expressed his enthusiasm regarding his new seat on the Community Preservation Committee.

J. Cronin made a motion to appoint Geoffrey Zeamer to Community Preservation Committee with a term ending June 30, 2023, and to appoint Paul Saulnier to the Community Preservation Committee with a term ending June 30, 2024. B. Sparrell second. Vote 3-0.

K. Sherman, the Town Planner drafted a letter of concern on behalf of the Town of Holliston with respect to the Department of Housing and Community Development DRAFT Compliance Guidelines for Multi-family Districts under Section 3A of the Zoning Act to the Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development. T. Hein voiced concerns as well and her support of the letter.

J. Cronin made a motion to authorize a letter addressed to Secretary Michael Kennealy, Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development regarding the DHCD’s Draft Compliance Guidelines for the Multi-family Districts under Section 3A of the Zoning act. B. Sparrell second. Vote 3-0. J. Cronin asked that copy of the letter be sent to Senator Spilkas Office.

J. Cronin made a motion to disband the Town Hall Septage Committee and the Stipend

Committee as the work of the committees has been completed. B. Sparrell second with a comment that the Board evaluate the many committees and properly disband those that are no longer needed and also consolidate when appropriate to do so. Vote 3-0.

J. Cronin made a motion to approve the Meeting Minutes of January 31, 2022 as written. B. Sparrell second. Vote 3-0.

OTHER BUSINESS:

T. Ahern asked that the Select Board give him authorization to submit the grant application for Shared Streets and Spaces on behalf of the Town which is due on Tuesday March 1, 2022. The grant proposal is in the amount of \$300,000 and can be used to fund the 9 Green Street project.

J. Cronin made a motion to authorize the Town Administrator to submit the Shared Streets and Spaces grant application for an amount up to \$300,000 for the 9 Green Street Project. B. Sparrell second. Vote 3-0.

At 9:26pm J. Cronin made a motion to adjourn. B. Sparrell second. Vote 3-0.

Respectfully submitted;

Margaret Driscoll

Approved__3-28-22

