

TOWN OF HOLLISTON

SELECT BOARD

March 7, 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; Sean Reese, DPW Director; Mark Frank, Park & Recreation Director; Shaw Lively, Park Commission member; and Matt Zettek, Sustainability Coordinator.

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

COVID-19 UPDATE / ARPA:

Chief Cassidy joined the meeting with a Covid-19 update. Chief Cassidy stated that for the first time in a very long time the number of active cases is down to a single digit. There are currently 6 active cases. Today March 7, 2022 also marks the first day the Schools have instituted a “mask option” for staff and students. Vaccines are still available and recommended. Chief Cassidy noted for all questions regarding protocol individuals should consult their primary care providers.

ARPA PROGRAMMATIC UPDATE:

Chief Cassidy reported that the ARPA Steering Group voted to recommend 2 requests at the February 28, 2022 meeting. The first to approve funding in the amount of \$34,000 for a part-time position at Youth & Family Services to help meet mental health and behavioral challenges. J. Cronin made a motion to approve ARPA funding in the amount of \$34,000, \$10,440 within FY22, the remaining amount to be used within FY23 for a part-time position at Youth & Family Services on a contractual basis falling under the category of “promoting healthy childhood environments.” B. Sparrell second. Vote 3-0.

The second request is of a procedural matter. The Chief explained that if the Town elects a standard allowance category, such as “Revenue Loss” for all ARPA funding requests it will allow the Town greater flexibility with the use of funds.

J. Cronin made a motion to opt into the standard allowance for “Revenue Loss” on behalf of the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) for the Town of Holliston. B. Sparrell second. Vote 3-0.

WARRANTS:

J. Cronin made a motion to approve the Weekly Warrant in the amount of \$1,489,611.65. B. Sparrell second. Vote 3-0.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

J. Cronin stated that the Community Farm Advisory Committee will be attending the Select

Board meeting on Monday March 14, 2022 to present an update. J. Cronin asked that they be prepared to discuss a recent correspondence from a Agricultural Commission member regarding concerns that the Community Farm Advisory Committee may be in conflict with its mission.

Matt Zettek, Sustainability Coordinator joined the meeting with an update pertaining to the Department of Energy Resources (DOER) proposed changes to the Stretch Code, which emphasizes energy performance. M. Zettek stated that the deadline for public comment on the proposed changes is March 14, 2022. T. Hein asked T. Ahern to distribute a letter to various Department Heads and report any feedback/input to the Select Board at next weeks meeting. T. Hein attended the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) meeting last week and stated that Holliston's assessed share is \$8,375, which is an increase of 2.5% from last year.

FY2023 BUDGET REVIEWS – OPERATING & CAPITAL:

Sean Reese joined the meeting to present the following proposed FY23 budgets

DPW Highway: S. Reese presented the proposed FY23 Highway Budget line by line. There is an increase in the cost of tree maintenance ie, pruning and tree removal and also an increase in professional development.

The proposed FY23 Highway Department Budgets is \$1,571,470.00.

T. Ahern stated that a working group consisting of members from the Park Commission, Select Board, FinCom, Highway and Schools have put together a proposal for a separate Grounds Division which would be responsible for all of the Town's fields, parks and cemeteries. S. Reese stated that currently Highway staff is often pulled off of other jobs to attend to the fields within Town. Mark Frank, Park & Rec Director expressed his thanks to all those in the group and stated that he feels that a Grounds Division is a much needed asset and is a priority for the Parks Department. Shaw Lively, a member of the Park Commission voiced his support of the creation of a Grounds Division and also appreciated the fact that the findings were data driven.

T. Ahern noted that some of the costs to cover the Grounds Division would be allocated from other departments budgets and revolving account funds. ARPA funding could be used to cover the first year.

All Select Board members took the opportunity to thank everyone involved for their efforts in bringing this proposal forward.

DPW Water: S. Reese noted that the Water Rate Hearing was held in January 2022. He presented the proposed FY23 Water Budget line by line. The increase is driven by the fact that an additional employee, a licensed water operator, a DEP mandated hire, is factored in. T. Ahern added that Water Retained Earnings fund Personnel Services for the department. The proposed FY23 Water Department Budget is \$3,120,029.00.

Snow & Ice: S. Reese stated that the Snow and Ice Budget is currently overspent. This is due mainly to the fact that the Highway Department has changed the manner in which the roads are treated during a weather event. This has resulted in the use of additional materials and labor, however the feedback has been positive.

The proposed FY23 Snow & Ice Budget is \$250,000.00.

T. Ahern presented a draft list of DPW equipment that falls under capital items for consideration for the May 2022 or October 2022 Town Meeting.

Motor Vehicle Fuels: S. Reese presented the proposed FY23 Motor Vehicle Fuels budget. T. Ahern added that due to current conflicts overseas the cost of fuel has been increasing dramatically.

The proposed FY23 Motor Vehicle Fuels Budget is \$110,000.00

Town Administrator Recommended FY23 Budget: T. Ahern stated that the proposed FY23 Omnibus Budget as well as the projected Revenue and Expenditures have been posted on the Town's website. He noted that the request for the 26th Police Officer as well as the proposed Grounds Division within the DPW was not included within the recommended proposed Budget. The School Committee recommended Budget will be complete by March 21, 2022. T. Ahern also noted that it is important look to a 5 year projections as well.

J. Cronin suggested the Town take a more active role in soliciting new businesses to fill the vacancies within the Industrial Parks to add to the Towns revenue.

COMMENTS FROM THE TOWN ADMINISTRATOR:

The Highway Department is actively filling potholes throughout Town. Residents can report potholes in need of repair on line.

The Department of Transportation will be begin significant road work shortly, starting with resurfacing the roadway on Route 16 from Pine Street in Holliston to Beaver Street in Milford. Which will include sidewalk repairs from Pine Street to Oak Street in Holliston. After which work will take place on Route 126.

Senate President Karen Spilka will be in attendance at the Monday March 14, 2022 Select Board Meeting. Any questions for the Senator can be sent to T. Ahern at the Select Boards Office. J. Cronin asked that the individual replacing Representative Carolyn Dykema be invited as well. The Town's quarterly Newsletter is now available. Residents can sign up through the Towns website.

The Warrant for the May 2022 Town Meeting will close on Monday March 21, 2022 at 4:00pm. Eversource is in the process of cleaning up the long list of light repairs in conjunction with the recent sale to the Town.

BOARD BUSINESS:

J. Cronin made a motion to approve the Friends of Trails 5K-10K on Sunday May 15, 2022.

starting Blair Square and ending at Summer Street or Hopping Brook beginning at 8:00am and lasting approximately 2 hours. B. Sparrell second. Vote 3-0.

J. Cronin made a motion to approve the permit request for the Household Hazardous Waste Day on July 9, 2022 at the Robert Adams Middle School from 8:00am to 12:00 noon. B. Sparrell second. Vote 3-0.

J. Cronin made a motion to approve the Meeting Minutes of January 31, 2022 and February 7, 2022 as written. B. Sparrell second. Vote 3-0.

J. Cronin made a motion to accept a donation from multiple donors to the Ambulance Gift Account in the memory of Bobby Bowles in the amount of \$1,250. B. Sparrell second. Vote 3-0.

J. Cronin made a motion to accept a donation from a Washington Street resident to the Fire Department in the amount of \$197.97. B. Sparrell second. Vote 3-0.

OTHER BUSINESS:

T. Hein asked if a discussion regarding the start time for Town Meeting, changing it from 7:30pm to 7:00pm be put on the Select Boards agenda and for a vote to be taken.

At 8:59pm J. Cronin made motion to adjourn. B. Sparrell second. Vote 3-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Margaret Driscoll

Approved_4-19-22

