

TOWN OF HOLLISTON

SELECT BOARD

September 27, 2022
7:00PM

Town Hall
703 Washington Street

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

Also Present: Travis Ahern, Town Administrator; Michael Cassidy, Fire Chief.

At 7:00pm B. Sparrell called the meeting to order.

BOARD BUSINESS: 6b. (Agenda)

T. Hein made a motion to appoint Sara Zarrelli to the Historical Commission with a term to end June of 2025. B. Sparrell second. Vote 2-0. J. Cronin absent.

PREPARATION FOR OCT. 17, 2022 FALL TOWN MEETING:

T. Ahern noted that the start time will be at 7:00pm in the High School Auditorium. Holliston Community Action Fund will facilitate child care on site, which is greatly appreciated. B. Sparrell asked that temporary additional Handicap parking be made available in front of the High School.

There will be a “pre Town Meeting Forum” in Upper Town Hall on October 3, 2022 at 7:30pm. The Town Moderator and Town Counsel will be in attendance.

T. Ahern proceeded to go through the October 2022 Town Meeting draft Warrant. There will be several Board and Committee meetings on Thursday September 29, 2022 which may slightly alter several articles prior to finalizing the Warrant on Friday September 30, 2022. T. Ahern briefly made some comments regarding Article 7, FY Supplemental Budget Appropriation which pertains to the proposed changes for Fire and Emergency Medical Services, which are a direct result of the MRI Study and beta testing currently being done by the Fire Department.

Discussion will continue as item #4 on the Select Boards Meeting agenda.

The DPW Director Sean Reese met with the Capital Subcommittee last week to discuss several proposed articles. One of which, Article 13, proposes to replace the water meters Town wide which may also include the purchase of new software. Article 14, Water System Improvements (Supplemental Appropriation) is in response to the increase in costs. Another article, Article 18, pertains to the DPW Facility Design and Engineering. Article 20 will address the sidewalk and ramp repairs and reconstruction.

The Director of the Library and the Library Trustees Chair provided language, now incorporated into the comments of Article 21, noting that a new study along with previous study results will further prepare the Library when applying for future grants.

The Envisioning Future Holliston Committee will present a report and then dissolve, as they

have met their charge. After researching other Towns T. Ahern arrived at an amount of \$80,000 for a consultant to assist with formulating a strategic plan based on the results of the 2 surveys. There are 2 Citizens Petitions, Article 28, Zoning and Article 29, Board of Health.

B. Sparrell asked that Article 7 be reworded to add the word “adjustments”, FY23 Budget Adjustments.

T. Hein asked that backup information be added as explanation for Article 14, Water System Improvements, as the increase in the cost presented is substantial.

PUBLIC COMMENT: NONE

WARRANTS:

T. Hein made a motion to approve the Weekly Warrant in the amount of \$1,937,970.65. B. Sparrell second. Vote 2-0. J. Cronin absent.

INTERIM UPDATE ON MRI REPORT FOR FIRE/EMS:

Chief Cassidy presented slides to help guide the latest update as a result of the recommendations from the MRI Study. The 4 themes are Advanced Life Support / Assistant Chief Position / Facilities (storage & future needs) / Dispatch. After nearly 2 months of Staffing Beta Testing the results are as follows: 89% reduction in the need for external resource for a primary ambulance response, 13% reduction in mobilization time (unit notified to en route), 10% reduction in response time (unit notified to on scene). In regards to the Facility the area which previously used as a Covid warehouse is now being used as a dormitory and training area. On September 26, 2022 the Fire Station hosted an in person training session, the first since the pandemic began. Once the DPW no longer needs the back lot for their purposes storage containers will be placed on the property and the Chief will engage staff in moving items out of the Fire Station and into the storage containers.

Chief Cassidy stated for the record “I am in favor of delivery of Advanced Life Support to the patients in our community. This was a goal of mine early on in my career, look at my goals which were presented to the prior Boards and part of my evaluations in the early 2000’s, the movement and achievement of Advanced Support Licensure for the department was achieved in 2007. For 10 years we had an intermediate license until such time that the Department of Public Health phased out the intermediate license level at which time the license reverted to the Basic Life Support, but as a prehospital provider for over 30 years I am well aware and support the benefit of Advanced Life Support for the patients we serve, that we treat and transport and deliver to the hospitals. I have trained with paramedics and I have seen many of my colleges who were basics go on to become intermediate or advanced ALS paramedics. I just want to dispel any suggestion that I do not support ALS pre hospital care. When looking at ALS licensure there are multiple components to achieve that conversion. One challenge is personnel, one cannot recruit until ready to move down that path.”

The Chief continued to explain that to get the License from the Department of Public Health the need to have proof a viable plan to staff ambulances with paramedics with various shifts per week. Recruitment and retention has been a challenge and the intent to address this is reflected by the wage changes proposed at the upcoming October 17, 2022 Town Meeting. The Town currently has a 6 month provisional License and the Chief noted that this creates more interaction with the licensing authorities. There will be an evaluation within the next several months and the Chief fully anticipates that the Town will be granted a 1 year license. The Assistant Chief position continues to need additional vetting and will be incorporated into the FY24 budget discussion. The goal of the Assistant Chief will be to prepare and oversee all that is necessary in moving towards the ALS model.

When asked what the timeframe to convert from BLS to an ALS model might be Chief Cassidy responded that 3-5 years was realistic.

T. Hein read 3 emails from resident Elizabeth Theiler, 17 Norland Street, one of which was sent to David Houghton at MRI. Her email noted her concern over the “provisional license” as well as her concern that the Town is waiting till FY24 to hire an Assistant Chief to begin the process of conversion to ALS.

Chris Pierce, 117 Shaw Farm Road, phoned into the meeting to voice his concern regarding the provisional license. He also would like to see pay equity in the hourly rates for the EMTs’ and Fire Fighters.

John Crean, 91 Richard Road, phoned into the meeting and stated that there should be more of a sense of urgency around the “Provisional License” status. He then gave several examples of how paramedics and basics work together while moving towards a ALS model.

T. Ahern noted that the Town is moving forward on rate structure and recruitment efforts.

ARPA may be another funding source which is not tied to the Town Meeting process. The Select Board will be receiving updates from Chief Cassidy in the November/December timeframe.

COMMENTS FROM THE TOWN ADMINISTRATOR:

T. Ahern explained that the Council on Aging in conjunction with UMASS Gerontological Institute grant has sent out surveys to Holliston’s Senior residents in an attempt to determine what future needs might be met within the community. This mailing was sent to all residents 55 and over.

The Massachusetts Competitive Partnership, along with the Holliston Economic Development are hosting a workshop (in-person & hybrid) in the Upper Town Hall on October 12, 2022.

T. Ahern received and posted a broad schedule from the Department of Transportation route 16 and route 126 sidewalk/roadwork project. Tentative start date for paving of roads will begin on October 16, 2022.

The Recycling Center on Marshall Street will increase hours of operation during the months of October, December and January 2023. They will be open on both Saturdays and Sundays. The dates will be listed on the Towns’ website.

T. Ahern asked for the Boards support on 2 letters of request to the Governor's Office. One asking to release the \$1 million bond bill for shovel ready projects and the second for \$10,000 for Holliston's 300th celebration.

BOARD BUSINESS:

The Select Board has a posted meeting on Friday September 30, 2022 at 9:00am via zoom for any additional votes that may be needed prior to posting the October 17, 2022 Town Meeting Warrant.

T. Hein made a motion to approve the Warrant Document for the October 17, 2022 Town Meeting as presented with allowances for requested edits by Boards or Committees with sponsored articles and any non-substantive changes at the discretion of the Town Administrator prior to posting said Warrant on Friday September 30, 2022. B. Sparrell second. Vote 2-0. J. Cronin absent.

T. Ahern presented the DPW Snow & Ice Rates for the 2022-2023 season.

T. Hein made a motion to approve the proposed Snow and Ice Rates as presented for the 2022-2023 season. B. Sparrell second. Vote 2-0. J. Cronin absent.

T. Hein made a motion to award the LED Conversion Contract to the lowest responsible bidder, Pine Ridge Technologies out of North Reading MA, not to exceed the amount of \$277,777. B. Sparrell second. Vote 2-0. J. Cronin absent.

T. Hein made a motion to accept a donation to the Senior Center for their Nutrition Program in the amount of \$400 from the Superette. B. Sparrell second. Vote 2-0. J. Cronin absent.

T. Hein made a motion to approve the Meeting Minutes of August 29, 2022 and September 7, 2022 as written. B. Sparrell second. Vote 2-0. J. Cronin absent.

OTHER BUSINESS: NONE

At 9:40pm T. Hein made a motion to adjourn. B. Sparrell second. Vote 2-0. J. Cronin absent.

Respectfully submitted,

Margaret Driscoll

Approved_10-24-22

