

TOWN OF HOLLISTON

SELECT BOARD

December 12, 2022
7:00PM

Town Hall
703 Washington Street

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

Also Present: Travis Ahern, Town Administrator; Chris Heymanns, incoming Finance Director; Matthew Stone, Holliston Police Chief; Michael Cassidy, Holliston Fire Chief; Stephen Hooke, Holbrook Regional Emergency Communication Center Director; Lauren Mielke, Holbrook Regional Emergency Communication Center Deputy Director; and Chris Peirce, Holliston resident.

At 6:30pm B. Sparrell called the meeting to order.

INTRODUCTION OF THE FINANCE DIRECTOR-TREASURER/COLLECTOR:

T. Ahern stated that the succession plan for the Treasurer/Collector has been in place for several months with the upcoming retirement of the current Treasurer/Collector. T. Ahern also noted that there will be a change in the job description to now include that of Finance Director. He then introduced Chris Heymanns, who is currently the Treasurer/Collector in the Town of Hopkinton. C. Heymanns gave a brief background of his professional experience and then took questions from the Select Board members, including his accomplishments, challenges and what has drawn him to the Town of Holliston. C. Heymanns stated that one of the things that attracted him to Holliston is the strong financial position the Town currently holds.

T. Ahern presented an Organizational Chart of the Town Financial Departments, which indicated the newly titled role of the Treasurer/Collector to include the title of Financial Director. T. Ahern also stated that with the current strong financial team in place it will be complete with C. Heymanns.

T. Hein made a motion to appoint Chris Heymanns as custodian of the Tax Title for the Town of Holliston effective January 1, 2023. J. Cronin second. Vote 3-0.

WARRANTS:

T. Hein made a motion to approve the Weekly Warrant in the amount of \$1,844,102.53. J. Cronin second. Vote 3-0.

COMMENTS FROM THE TOWN ADMINISTRATOR:

T. Ahern stated that a street view rendering of the proposed Town Solar project on Marshall Street has been added to the Towns website, and that all information relating to that project can now be found under the link Town Project Updates.

The Town will also request that the contractor of the Private Solar Project on Marshall Street replace landscaping where it has appeared to have died out.

T. Ahern will send a letter to all the farming businesses within Town in an effort to solicit interest in the Agricultural Commission. The Farm Day Event will now be coordinated by Town Staff.

T. Ahern stated that the Town Planner is drafting a tree by-law as part of the Tree City USA application, with the intent of action taken at the May Town Meeting.

PUBLIC SAFETY DISPATCH DISCUSSION:

T. Ahern began the discussion by presenting a slide indicating the General Overview of the current Dispatch Function of the Fire/EMS and Police. Early in 2022 Holliston participated in a Feasibility Study for a Central Regional Dispatch. As a result of the Municipal Resources Inc. (MRI) Study Holliston has 3 options to consider. 1. Status Quo. 2. Consolidation. 3. Regional Dispatch Option.

Stephen Hooke and Lauren Mielke representing Holbrook Regional Communication Center joined the meeting with a presentation of the call center, starting with their Mission Statement followed by numerous graphics. Graphics included topology, services offered, accomplishments and call statics for 2021. S. Hooke stated that there is a heavy emphasis on training in customer service. S. Hooke pointed out that Communication Center handles all grant applications and facilitates all the onboarding, which includes purchase of equipment, installation of equipment and will personally oversee all contact with vendors.

T. Ahern as well as Chief Cassidy and Chief Stone toured the Holbrook facility. T. Ahern found it an impressive facility and noted the fact the Center would be prepared to take non-emergency calls as well as emergency calls. Chief Stone stated that current dispatchers at the Holliston Police Department are incredible, however retention is an issue that cannot be ignored. Chief Cassidy also noted that a benefit to the Holbrook Call Center is that there is more than one person per each call, one to answer call, and one to radio for the appropriate response to the emergency. S. Hooke stated that the preliminary annual estimate for the Town of Holliston is approximately \$300,000.

Each of the Select Board took the opportunity to ask questions. S. Hooke stated that there would be no procedural changes made specific to Holliston if and when they chose to join the Center. J. Cronin encouraged dispatchers currently employed by the Town of Holliston to apply for employment at the HRECC if and when a change is made and asked that the Center be sensitive to such change. B. Sparrell asked a question relative to the current capacity at the Call Center. S. Hooke stated that at this time there is available space to accommodate Holliston's needs.

Chris Pierce, 117 Shaw Farm Road, stated that he supports joining the Holbrook Regional Call Center.

L. Theiler, 17 Norland Street, stated that she as well supports the proposed change.

Brian Grace, 14 Hillside Drive, stated that he was employed as a Fire Fighter in another community during a similar transition with positive results.

Robin Gossels, a current Fire/EMT Dispatcher asked if there will be part time per diem positions available at the Call Center. S. Hooke responded that yes there will be.

T. Hein made a motion to approve the Inter Municipal Agreement (IMA) subject to recommended and agreed upon changes from each Towns legal counsel between the Town of Holliston and the Town of Holbrook in relation to the Holbrook Regional Emergency Communications Center. J. Cronin second. Vote 3-0. B. Sparrell made a request that options for all current dispatchers be explored during the process.

QUARTERLY UPDATE ON MRI RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FIRE & EMS OPERATIONS:

Chief Cassidy reviewed the four domains which fell under the MRI (Municipal Resource Inc.) recommendations. Facilities, Dispatch, Fire Services and EMS Services. Chief Cassidy presented slides and went over each of the four areas in detail. With the assistance of the Facilities Manager many changes have been made to the Central Fire Station, and there are still items to be addressed. Chief Cassidy echoed Chief Stones earlier comments regarding the dispatchers currently in employment and spoke of their outstanding qualities. He did however note that there is an ongoing struggle with staffing, recruitment and retention. Chief Cassidy stated that during the APCO, (Association of Public-Safety Communication's Official) audit the auditor was very impressed with the process. When speaking about the Fire Services the Chief noted that they added a new software app "I am responding" which has been absorbed into the budget. The department is actively looking to use Social Media more often, as was recommended by the MRI Study. The Chief is working with the Assistant Town Administrator/HR Director to seek a way to retain institutional knowledge as more staff are getting ready to retire. There has also been a supply chain issue, (equipment) which is slowing down certain processes. J. Cronin suggested the Chief draft a letter regarding the necessity of such equipment as the Department relies on updated equipment to run safely, and send it to the proper authorities within the State.

Chief Cassidy explained that recently a follow-up inspection was conducted by the Office of Emergency Management Services with three possible outcomes; a 1 year BLS License, a 6 month BLS License (which would be the 2nd and last one allowed) or an Order to Correct. Once there is a determination the Chief will notify the Select Board.

Chief Cassidy took the opportunity to address some recent public statements. There have been several serious accidents recently on Highland Street in which it was publicized that there were fatalities. However this is not correct in all three cases those involved did survive. It is important to note that official word comes from the Public Safety Authorities and not hearsay. Also the Chief went on to explain that with a BLS model "We (EMT's) have a wide scope of what we can do and how we can treat in a pre-hospital setting in accordance with State protocols". The Chief also went on the record to note the he as well as the Department are not resistant to change

and cautioned that the changes (moving towards ALS model) will take time. In conclusion the Chief expressed his thanks to HFD and HPD personnel, other public safety professionals, various department heads and their personnel, elected and appointed officials, Town Meeting and community support.

Each member of the Select Board voiced their support and thanks to the Chief.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

T. Hein read the No On-street Winter Parking Ban in effect until March 31, 2023.

T. Hein read 2 emails relating to Fire/EMS staffing, from Liz Theiler, 17 Norland Street dated Friday December 9, 2022. See attached. T. Ahern will ask the Assistant Town Administrator for clarification.

BOARD BUSINESS:

T. Hein made a motion to appoint, subject to stipulations presented in the Town's Offer Letters, the following individuals: Jaime Eastman as an EMT-Paramedic through June 30, 2023, Mary Katherine Ward, Ryan Jubb and Regan Flynn as EMT's through June 30, 2023. J. Cronin second. Vote 3-0.

OTHER BUSINESS:

T. Hein made a motion to appoint John Cronin as the Select Boards representative to the OPEB (Other Post Employment Benefits) Trust Committee for the calendar years 2023-2024. B. Sparrell second. Vote 2-0.

At 9:19pm J. Cronin made a motion to adjourn. T. Hein second. Vote 3-0.

Respectfully submitted;

Margaret Driscoll

Approved _____

