

TOWN OF HOLLISTON

SELECT BOARD

March 20, 2023
7:00PM

Town Hall
703 Washington Street

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

Also Present: Travis Ahern, Town Administrator; Senate President Karen Spilka; Representative James Arena-DeRosa; Barry Sims, Cable Advisory Committee; Attorney William August, consultant and Michael Cassidy, Fire Chief.

At 7:01pm B. Sparrell called the meeting to order.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE:

Senate President Karen Spilka expressed her sympathies to the community for recent passing of Holliston resident Joshua Taylor and his friend. After which she began the Legislative Update. Senate President K. Spilka stated that the Governors Recommended FY24 Budget has been published and this is the first step in a long process which will be finalized by July 1, 2023. The expectation is that there will be a slowdown from last year's budget. Senator Spilka went over in detail various programs funded in the current FY23 Budget, and those that will continue into FY24. Governor Healeys recommended FY24 Budget particular to Holliston includes funding for Chapter 70 and Chapter 90. Senator Spilka is aware of the Woodland Street bridge closing and will make an effort to assist in expediting solutions if possible. She continued to outline various programing available and the need to continue in investing in local Public Health with an emphasis on Mental Health. Also pointing out the various Infrasture Grants including water and sewer improvements under the Economic Development bill. There are also grants available pertaining to Clean Energy and Affordable Housing.

Senator Spilka cautioned that there will not be another large scale bill supporting additional ARPA funding in the future. She also noted that ARPA monies that have already been appropriated cannot be reallocated. Senator Spilka thanked the Select Board members and Town Administrator for the support given to her over the years.

Representative James Arena-DeRosa began by thanking Senate President Spilka for her ongoing commitment to Holliston. J. Arena-DeRosa noted that during Governor Bakers administration there was a mandate that resulted in a 14% increase in out of district Special Education Funding. Both he and Senator Spilka will continue to discuss and address the issue during the ongoing budget process. J. Arena-DeRosa stated that he is available to all residents and appreciates any questions and input.

T. Hein took the opportunity to thank Senator Spilka for her support of the "Safe Routes to Schools" initiative.

J. Cronin noted his respect for Senator Spilkas commitment in prioritizing the Mental Health issues within our communities. He also added that Holliston has several “shovel ready” projects B. Sparrell noted the importance of Remote Meetings being allowed to continue going forward as they are benefit to all that are unable to attend meetings in person.

Dr. Kenneth Szajda, Finance Committee Chair added is support of continuing remote participation in meetings. Dr. Szajda also questioned the necessity of written meeting minutes if all meetings are recorded as a form of record keeping.

Dr. Catherine Savard, School Committee Chair also added her support to continuing remote participation as a way to keep residents involved.

Cynthia Listewnik, School Committee member expressed gratitude for the commitment to making school lunches available to all, and for addressing the issue pertaining to the earlier referenced Special Education funding.

Dr. Susan Kustka, Superintendent of Schools expressed appreciation for the collaboration between the Town and Senate President Karen Spilkas Office.

8:05 PM PUBLIC HEARING – CABLE RENEWAL LICENSE/COMCAST COMMUNICATIONS MANAGEMENT:

At 8:05pm T. Hein made a motion to open the Public Hearing under Mass General Law 166A, Section 1 as duly posted and advertised. J. Cronin second. Vote 3-0.

Barry Sims, representing the Cable Advisory Committee gave a brief summary of the Comcast Renewal License, with a maximum term of 10 years. On February 23, 2023 the Cable Advisory Committee recommended the proposed renewal license and also that the Town Administrator have authorization to sign a letter authorizing the 5%, \$296,000 in fees be paid directly to Holliston Cable Access. Attorney William August endorsed the license as strong and similar to what is held in other towns.

At 8:23pm T. Hein made a motion to close the Public Hearing under Mass General Law 166A, Section 1 after which the Select Board will take a vote. J. Cronin Second. Vote 3-0.

T. Hein made a motion to approve the Cable Franchise renewal proposal of Comcast Cable Communication Management LLC Comcast, finding that it reasonably meets the Franchise and Cable related renewal needs and interest of the Public in the Town of Holliston, also finding that Comcast financial and technical qualifications and local programing channels facilities and services are reasonable and meet the Cable Franchise needs and with the recommendation of the Town of Holliston Cable Advisory Committee in favor of the Select Board as the statutory cable licensing issuing authority for Town vote to accept and approve the renewal license agreement with Comcast effective November 1, 2023. J. Cronin second. Vote 3-0.

T. Hein made a motion to authorize the Town Administrator to direct that the Capital fund and 5% payments be made directly to Holliston Access Cable. J. Cronin second. Vote 3-0.

MAY 2023 ANNUAL TOWN MEETING:

T. Ahern stated that the Warrant for the May 2023 closed at 4:00pm today March 20, 2023.

There are 32 Articles on the Warrant with no Citizens Petitions. T. Ahern presented the graphic of the 32 Articles.

T. Hein made a motion to close the Town Meeting Warrant as of 4:00pm on Monday March 20, 2023 as presented and to be revisited prior to the printing of the document in mid to late April 2023. J. Cronin second. Vote 3-0.

J. Cronin presented the Working Groups updated Capital Memo funding model for the upcoming Capital Projects. The Finance Committee has suggested moving the infrastructure projects funding from 10 years to 15 years to lower the tax implication annually. The discussion included projected funding, borrowing and debt. There was also discussion regarding the financial benefit to addressing the three sidewalk projects, (Norfolk, Central, Goulding Streets) separately as opposed to how they are currently bundled as one project. The Select Boards concusses is to keep the sidewalk project as one.

FY24 BUDGET DELIBERATIONS:

T. Ahern presented the recommended changes in the FY24 Budget. Some of the changes include adjustments made in the DPW Budget in the amount of \$30,000 and \$120,000 above the obligation to Middlesex Retirement to increase the CapEx Budget from 2.2 million to 2.35 million.

T. Hein suggested adding \$1,000 stipend to the Facilities Manager Budget to cover the cost of obtaining the MCPPO Mass Certification of Public Purchasing. The discussion will be addressed in upcoming meetings. J. Cronin will abstain from any discussion on the matter.

T. Ahern also explained several adjustments pertaining to the Water Division Budget, Extended Day Program at the Schools and Metrowest Veterans. The recent decline in motor vehicle fuel costs will reduce the Motor Fuels Budget to \$176,500 from \$185,000.

T. Ahern noted that he, K. Buckley and Chief Cassidy along with feedback from MRI Consulting created a document outlying the timeline including responsibilities and goals over a 3 year period. The salary will be split between the Fire and EMS budgets.

J. Cronin made a motion to approve the proposed changes as made by the Town Administrator in the FY24 Budget Presentation this evening with further amendment provided by T. Ahern relative to the vehicle fuels as stated. T. Hein second. Vote 3-0.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

B. Sparrell expressed his deepest condolences to all effected by the tragic accident this past weekend.

T. Hein read a prepared statement of condolences and informed the community that there will be counseling available.

J. Cronin also expressed his condolences to the families and friends of the deceased.

J. Cronin had a conversation with Yvette Cain and Lisa Borchetta from the Senior Center and they are currently looking at ways to rebrand the Senior Center in an effort to make it more inclusive, as a result of the recent survey. Also there is additional funding through the Habitat for Humanity Small Home Repairs Program. Those who may be eligible should contact the

Senior Center.

J. Cronin stated that there are Climate Action State Grants available through the DEP and suggested the Town start the conversation regarding the possibility of obtaining such grants.

J. Cronin, along with EDC Chair John Drohan met with two local business owners in continuing their efforts to reach out to business within Town.

WARRANT:

T. Hein made a motion to approve the Weekly Warrant in the amount of \$925,017.21. J. Cronin second. Vote 3-0.

COMMENTS FROM THE TOWN ADMINISTRATOR:

T. Ahern will have another update from Pare Corp this week regarding the Woodland Street Bridge. He expressed his gratitude to Senate President Spilkas office for their wiliness to assist in moving the project forward.

T. Ahern noted the Agricultural Commission will met on Monday March 27, 2023.

T. Ahern will not be present at the April 3, 2023 Select Board meeting. The Assistant Town Administrator/HR Director will be in attendance. The Treasurer/Collector C. Heymanns will attend the April 4, 2023 Finance Committee meeting on his behalf.

BOARD BUSINESS: NONE

OTHER BUSINESS: NONE

At 9:46pm J. Cronin made a motion to adjourn. T. Hein second. Vote 3-0.

Respectfully submitted;

Margaret Driscoll

Approved__05-08-23

