

**TOWN OF HOLLISTON**  
**SELECT BOARD**

February 26, 2024  
7:00PM

Town Hall  
703 Washington Street

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

**Also Present:** Travis Ahern, Town Administrator; Dr. Susan Kutska, School Superintendent; Keith Buday, Assistant School Superintendent/Financial Manager; Daniel Alfred, School Committee Member.

At 7:00pm J. Cronin called the meeting to order.

**HOLLISTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS – STATEMENT OF INTERESTS:**

Dr. Susan Kutska, School Superintendent stated that this is the 6<sup>th</sup> request for a Submission of Interest for the Holliston High School. This application would address 4 priorities, #1, #4, #5, #7. The Facilities Manager James Keast put together a Facilities Study which was forwarded to the Mass School Building Authority (MSBA) in October 2023 to be added to the previous application. Members of the MSBA performed a walkthrough of the High School in the Fall of 2023 as part of the process, which resulted in some constructive feedback. The application was denied in December 2023, however based on the Facilities Study and feedback from the walkthrough the Superintendent was encouraged to apply for the SOI. The deadline is in April 2024, however she would like to submit an application by March 8, 2024.

T. Hein made an inquiry into what the timeline after a “green light” might be. K. Buday, Assistant School Superintendent noted that a Feasibility Study would be done to determine if there is a need for a new building, a renovation of the current building or a renovation of the current building with an addition. J. Cronin stated that he was the nay vote on the previous approval of the application for the SOI for the High School, however after the results of the Facilities Study he is in support of this application request. D. Alfred, School Committee Chair noted that with inflation creating budget challenges as well as operating cost increases it is important to maintain educational needs and facilities improvements, such as a new building.

B. Sparrell made the following motion: “Having convened in an open meeting on February 26, 2024, prior to the SOI submission closing date, the Select Board of the Town of Holliston, in accordance with its by-laws and ordinances, has voted to authorize the Superintendent to submit to the Massachusetts School Building Authority the Statement of Interest form dated April 2024 for the Holliston High School located at 370 Hollis Street which describes and explains the following deficiencies and priority category for which an application may be submitted to the Massachusetts School Building Authority in the future: Priority area #1: Building jeopardizing student health, poor health and learning environment. Priority #4: Prevention of severe overcrowding as a result of increased enrollment. Priority area #5:

Replacement, renovation and modernization of school facilities such as roofs, window, boiler, heating and ventilation systems, to increase energy conservation and decrease energy related costs in a school facility. Priority area #7: Replacement or addition to obsolete building in order to provide for a full range of programs consistent with State and approved local requirements. And hereby further specifically acknowledges that by submitting this Statement of Interest Form. The Massachusetts School Building Authority in no way guarantees the acceptance or the approval of an application, the awarding of a grant or any other funding commitment from the Massachusetts School Building Authority, or commits the Town of Holliston to filing an application for funding with the Massachusetts School Building Authority.” Tina Hein seconded and amended the motion as follows; to change the date from April 2024 to March 8, 2024 and to allow for non-substantive changes and the inclusion of the MBTA 3A Community Data. Vote 3-0. All in favor.

K. Buday presented a second SOI request for a new roof on the Robert Adams Middle School. This is for accelerated roof repair and in no way impacts the SOI for the High School. The current roof has been patched and repaired, however it is in need of a new roof, which can be installed on top of the one currently there. This is a reimbursement process, therefore the Town would be responsible for the funding. B. Sparrell inquired if there is an opportunity to install solar components to which K. Buday responded that would be discussed at the time of design. K. Buday noted that a placeholder for a request for design may be considered in 2024. Ben Sparrell made the following motion: “Having convened in an open meeting on February 26, 2024, prior to the SOI submission closing date, the Select Board of the Town of Holliston, in accordance with its charter, by-laws, and ordinances, has voted to authorize the Superintendent to submit to the Massachusetts School Building Authority the Statement of Interest form dated February 29, 2024 for the Robert H. Adams Middle School located at 323 Woodland Street which describes and explains the following deficiencies and the priority category for which an application may be submitted to the Massachusetts School Building Authority in the future;Priority area #5: Replacement, renovation or modernization of school facility systems, such as roof, window, boiler, heating and ventilating systems, to increase energy conservation and decrease energy related costs in a school facility, specifically, restoration of the Robert H. Adams Middle School roof; and hereby further specifically acknowledges that by submitting this Statement of Interest Form, the Massachusetts School Building Authority in no way guarantees the acceptance or the approval of an application, the awarding of a grant or any other funding commitment from the Massachusetts School Building Authority, or commits the Town of Holliston to filing an application for funding with the Massachusetts School Building Authority.” Tina Hein seconded the motion. Vote 3-0. All in favor.

**BOARD VOTE TO RATIFY MEMORANUM OF AGREEMENT WITH LABORERS’ UNION:**

J. Cronin stated that he attended the negotiations with the DPW in December 2023. The new contract will be for 3 years with a goal to ensure that the Town of Holliston remain competitive and obtain retention of its employees.

T. Ahern presented the proposed rate structure, including changes to “steps and grades” and

changes to sick and bereavement leave. T. Ahern stated that in this current climate it is incredibly difficult to acquire CDL licensed operators. Due to this fact the Town will cover the cost of the CDL training, with the stipulation that the employee agree to work for the Town for 24 months after the completion of the license or will be required to refund the Town for the cost of the license. Again the goal is aimed at recruitment/retention.

B. Sparrell appreciates the efforts made to bring the proposal to the Town.

T. Hein made an inquiry as to the cost of the CDL License, to which T. Ahern stated is currently \$5,000.

B. Sparrell made a motion to approve the Memorandum of Agreement as presented between the Town of Holliston and the Massachusetts Northern New England Laborers District Council, DPW, noting the Town of Holliston has received confirmation this MOA has been ratified by the Union and this MOA will be converted into an updated contract document to be executed when complete. T. Hein second. Vote 3-0.

#### **REVIEW FY2025 BUDGET:**

J. Cronin stated that the all-day budget meeting took place on February 17, 2024 and as predicted the budget requests exceeded the available revenue. Since then and with some feedback provided there were several changes made. T. Ahern presented the summary of all the budgets discussed and provided a list of the changes which include the Pinecrest Revolving Fund, Sustainability Coordinator budget, Solid Waste and Youth and Family Services. T. Ahern will present a level budget on March 4, 2024. He noted that if the Schools budget request exceeds 3.25% increase there will need to be conversation pertaining to an override.

B. Sparrell made a motion to approve the Level 1 Budgets that report to the Select Board, as presented on February 17, 2024 with the following exceptions: Increase the contribution to the General Fund from the Pinecrest Revolving Fund from \$60,000 per year to \$87,000 per year to directly offset increases in the Facilities budget; Reallocate the split costs of electricity for the facilities at Pinecrest from the General Fund (10422-52118) to the Revolving Fund; Approve the Sustainability Coordinator budget as flat from prior year (\$51,000); Approve the Solid Waste budget as 5.1% to account for the agreed contract extension (\$1,549.683); and approve the new request for PT Administrative Salaries in Youth & Family Services (\$29,988) contingent upon offsetting contribution from the Opioid Settlement Stabilization Fund. Further, any additional changes will be recommended by the Select Board after the Town Administrator Recommended Budget (Level 2), which is due to the Select Board on March 4, 2024. T. Hein second. Vote 3-0.

#### **WARRANTS:**

B. Sparrell made a motion to approve the Weekly Warrant in the amount of \$2,010,993.44. T. Hein second. Vote 3-0.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT:**

B. Sparrell will hold his monthly Select Chat at the Senior Center on Friday March 1, 2024 at 9:30am. All are welcome to attend.

J. Cronin stated that Papers are available at the Town Clerks Office for a variety of positions. The Select Board will invite Senator Karen Spilka and State Representative James

Arena-DeRosa to an upcoming meeting. There will be a continuation of the Flag Policy discussion on the March 4, 2024 meeting agenda, a potential Host Agreement transfer and Capital Budget Request Review on the March 11, 2024 meeting agenda.

**COMMENTS FROM THE TOWN ADMINISTRATOR:**

T. Ahern stated that the Town Clerk will hold early voting for the presidential primary during business hours in the Upper Town Hall all this week, February 26 –March 1, 2024. The primary will be held on Tuesday March 5, 2024 at the Holliston High School.

T. Ahern read the list of vacancies for Town Positions and the number of papers which have been pulled currently. Nomination Papers are due back to the Town Clerks Office by April 2, 2024.

There will be a meeting with State Representatives regarding the potential Downtown Sewer District and Woodland Street Projects. Based on the timeline the Town may apply for the Congressionally Directed Spending Grant in March 2024.

T. Ahern will schedule a joint meeting with the Finance Committee and Select Board to discuss and update the Financial Policy. The Finance Committee has updated and drafted a new document. B. Sparrell stated the newer document is easier to navigate, however he is slightly disappointed in some of the items, concerns with the OPEB contributions, specifically funding reserves for future needs. T. Hein agreed with B. Sparrells comments. J. Cronin voiced his disappointment in the current OPEB policy. He stated that no other community contributes \$1.5 million, and that this particular policy is tying up critical Town resources. J. Cronin would like to amend the policy to change the draft to as follows “contribute not more than \$1.25 annually to the aggregate OPEB and Pension Liability”.

T. Ahern stated that the Woodland Street Bridge Project is currently in the permitting stage. This is also tied into the Dam Project. The timeline will be posted on the Towns website. The May 2024 Town Meeting Warrant will close on March 11, 2024.

**BOARD BUSINESS:**

B. Sparrell made a motion to appoint Mackenzie Huff and Kathan Ramnath as EMT’s to the Holliston Fire Department with a start date to be determined by the Fire Chief and HR Director.

T. Hein second. Vote 3-0.

B. Sparrell made a motion to authorize the Town Administrator to approve the amendment to the Pinecrest Restaurant Contract, nonsubstantive schedule of payments, that previously agreed annually upon \$45,000 per year. T. Hein second. Vote 3-0.

B. Sparrell made a motion to approve the Event Permit for the 2024 Panther Prowl 5K Road Race to be held on April 6, 2024 from 9:00am – 12:00noon, starting at the Holliston High School and following the same route as the Turkey Trot, with designated Police Detail. T. Hein second. Vote 3-0.

B. Sparrell made a motion to approve the One Day Wine & Beer License for Crafted, a TIP certified server, for the Holliston Library Adult Book Fair to be held at the 752 Washington

Street from 5:00pm – 10:00pm. on March 2, 2024 with a snow date of March 9, 2024. This was voted and approved by the Library Trustees. T. Hein second. Vote 3-0.

B. Sparrell made a motion to approve a donation to the Senior Center in memory of Merrilyn Ann Potter from the Johnny and Gwen Ulrich Family in the amount of \$100. T. Hein second. Vote 3-0.

**OTHER BUSINESS: NONE**

At 8:30pm B. Sparrell made a motion to adjourn. T. Hein second. Vote 3-0.

Respectfully submitted;

Margaret M. Driscoll

Approved\_\_\_03-25-24

