

TOWN OF HOLLISTON

SELECT BOARD

September 29, 2020
7:00 P.M.

Town Hall
703 Washington Street

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

Also Present: T. Ahern, Town Administrator; Senator Karen Spilka; Representative Carolyn Dykema; Michael Cassidy, Fire Chief; Ken Szajda, Fin Com Chair; Dan Alfred Fin Com Vice Chair; Vin Murphy, Mark Whittaker, Michelle Zeamer, Fin Com members; Stacey Raffi, School Committee Chair.

At 7:00pm J. Cronin called a joint meeting with the Finance Committee to order.

STATE BUDGET UPDATE:

The meeting opened with K. Szajda, Fin Com Chair reading the opening statement, after which a roll call was taken by that committee. Both Senator Karen Spilka and Representative Carolyn Dykema were present to update the Board on the status of the state budget. Senator Spilka began by welcoming all and thanking the Fire and Police Chiefs for all their work around Covid. She stated that the States local aid will be the same for FY21 as it is for FY20. She continued by acknowledging the fact that the effect of the virus on the economy in the next several years is still unknown. It is also unclear as to whether more CARES Act funds will become available next year, after December 31, 2020. The State currently has a healthy Rainy Day Fund, however she advocates conserving as FY22 will most likely be a touch year. Representative Dykema also expressed her gratitude to all as we move through this challenging time. She echoed Senator Spilkas sentiment on looking to conserve around the Rainy Day Fund for FY22 as well. T. Hein thanked them both for advocating around Mental Health issues which have certainly been impacted by the pandemic. Senator Spilka stated that a program starting this week called "More to the Story" is aimed at reducing the stigma surrounding mental health and will hopefully help those in need during this difficult time. J. Cronin asked if there was a timeline for the budget currently. Senator Splika responded that hopefully by the National Election there will be more information provided as to what the Federal Government will do. After some discussion with the Fin Com members regarding concerns around the budget uncertainty Senator Spilka stated that there will be a balanced budget, the State Constitution is written to insure it. J. Cronin recognized S. Raffi who joined the meeting to thank the Senator and the Representative for all their support. J. Cronin also thanked the Senator and the Representative for their assistance with the ongoing traffic issues facing Holliston currently.

At 7:54pm the Finance Committee left the meeting to continue their own remotely.

COVID-19 UPDATE:

Chief Cassidy informed the Board that as of last Wednesday, September 23, 2020 Holliston is in the Red category, which is higher risk. This brings the number of cases to 94, 15 of which are active. The cluster cases are within a long term care facility in town and contact tracing reveals there have been no outside cases.

The Chief reported that the school reopening has been going well. Everyone is remaining diligent. S. Raffi commented that the staggered reopening approach appears to have been the best way to bring everyone back into the schools safely. And commended the teachers on doing a wonderful job.

The Chief did not have any reimbursement requests to present through the CARES Act this week. However the first quarterly report to the State was submitted last week on time.

He concluded the report by stating that he is awaiting a response from the Board of Health as to the guidelines for Halloween this year and will update the Board in the next week or so.

TOWN MEETING:

Chief Cassidy reported that he has reached out to various houses of worship in town and none are available to host Special Town Meeting. The best and safest venue is the High School Auditorium. The meeting will have to be held on a day when there would be no school in session the following day. The meeting is currently scheduled for Monday October 26, 2020. After much discussion the Board decided to schedule Special Town Meeting on Saturday December 5, 2020 with an alternative date of Saturday December 12, 2020. The warrant for Town Meeting closes on October 1, 2020. T. Ahern will look into reopening it again.

B. Sparrell made a motion to schedule Special Town Meeting on Saturday December 5, 2020, starting at 1:00pm with an alternative date of Saturday December 12, 2020. T. Hein second. Vote 3-0.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

B. Sparrell toured the MWRTA, Meterowest Regional Transit Authority with T. Ahern, Town Administrator, and Byron Perkins, Senior Center Assistant Director recently and was very impressed by the facility. He also spoke to the vandalizing of political signs within town and encouraged residents to please be respectful and uphold the 1st amendment.

J. Cronin congratulated Fire Captain Timothy Costello who retired from the Holliston Fire Department after 29 years of service. He also extended his condolences to the family of John Greendale on his recent passing. J. Cronin spent several hours with MassDOT driving around town to observe traffic.

Carol Khouri a resident of Bullard Street called in to inquire if there has been an update on Lowland Street traffic issue.

WARRANT:

B. Sparrell made a motion to approve the weekly warrant in the amount of \$3,334,356.92. T. Hein second. Vote 3-0.

COMMENTS FROM THE TOWN ADMINISTRATOR:

T. Ahern stated that he will have a completed memo regarding the Lowland Street Traffic Forum for next weeks meeting.

The Board of Health will be discussing Halloween at their meeting this evening.

In response to a question presented by a town resident regarding privately owned wells T. Ahern stated that the BOH has jurisdiction over them.

The Town website now has a page designated to the Shared Streets and Spaces Pilot. Front Street will now be one-way. There is a link so residents can offer their feedback. The Pilot will be in effect until April 1, 2021.

The Upper Charles Trail project behind Casey's is progressing. The detour should be moved soon.

Due to an accident, involving no bodily harm the steps at the rear of the Town Hall are being fixed this week.

There has been an uptick in fraudulent unemployment claims within the Town. T. Ahern stressed that this is not the result of any breach in data.

T. Ahern will be meeting with the Governance Committee this Thursday October 1, 2020 to start the conversation around the Town's budget process.

The Stipend Committee elected Joan Shaughnessy as Chair at their last meeting.

SPECIAL TOWN MEETING WARRANT UPDATE:

T. Ahern presented the draft of the Warrant for Special Town which is now scheduled for December. He went through each article looking for input from the Board. Article 10, Water Main Replacement. Both T. Hein and J. Cronin stated that they would like to see sidewalks be included in various DPW projects. Article 13, Green Street. Now that the Green Street Committee has disband the Board made the recommendation to form a new Committee to oversee the next phase of the project. Article 15, Traffic Engineering Study. J. Cronin would like to see this study be as broad as possible and be completed within the next 6-12 months. B. Sparrell would like the study to address the traffic that travels through the Town to get to destinations elsewhere. T. Hein suggested that several studies be conducted. Dori Kilduff a resident of Medway and Scott Milligan a resident who resides on South Street in Holliston voiced concerns over the traffic around the Hopping Brook Industrial Park, especially with the project at 555 Hopping Brook now coming to the forefront. J. Cronin stated that K. Sherman, Town Planner has issued a Cease and Desist order to the developer of that project. He also added the project has not yet been brought before the Select Board, however the Board is fully aware of ongoing concerns.

The Warrant is due to close Thursday October 1st, 2020 at 4:00pm. Now that the Special Town Meeting is scheduled for December it is likely that the Warrant will reopen in the near future.

HOLLISTON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FUND CREATION:

T. Ahern read the revised language which now meets the State criteria to create an Economic Development Fund. This is designed to be funded by private gifts and was approved at a previous Town Meeting.

B. Sparrell made a motion to approve the Holliston Economic Development Fund as read by T. Ahern. T. Hein second. Vote 3-0.

BOARD BUSINESS:

B. Sparrell made a motion to approve Meeting Minutes of August 24, 2020 as written. T. Hein second. Vote 3-0.

The Traffic Advisory Committee took action on the following: Morgans Way, "Do Not Enter" sign. B. Sparrell made a motion to approve the use of a "Do Not Enter" on both ends of Morgans Way. T. Hein second. Vote 3-0.

Signage to be placed at Mellon and Winter Streets including a yellow diamond. B. Sparrell made a motion to approve additional signage to be placed at Mellon and Winter Streets. T. Hein second. Vote 3-0.

Proposed adoption of C90. S.17C (speed limit signs) to reduce speed from 30mph to 25mph on a Town wide basis. T. Hein made a motion to approve the adoption of C.90 S.17C for signage to be implemented Town wide on January 1st, 2021. B. Sparrell second. Vote 3-0.

OTHER BUSINESS:

B. Sparrell is working on a quarterly report of the Select Boards activities. He intends to present a draft to his colleagues later in the week.

J. Cronin stated that the HPD has found no evidence that the Balancing Rock fell other than as a natural occurrence.

At 9:42pm B. Sparrell made a motion to adjourn and move into Executive Session. T. Hein second. Vote 3-0.

Respectfully submitted;

Margaret Driscoll

Approved _____