

TOWN OF HOLLISTON
SELECT BOARD

November 23, 2020

Town Hall

6:30 P.M.

703 Washington Street

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

Also Present: Travis Ahern, Town Administrator; Michael Cassidy, Fire Chief; Sam Tyler, Governance Committee Chair; Paul LeBeau, Tina Lingham, Scott McKecknie, and Len Engel, Governance Committee members.

At 6:30pm J Cronin called the joint meeting with the Governance Committee to order by reading the notice for the remote open meeting law then proceeded with a roll call.

GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE:

S. Tyler presented a update to the Select Board. The Governance Committee is still working on the draft for the budget development process which they hope to present in May 2021. They plan to have several articles to present for Town Meeting, one of which is to look to change the dates of both the May and October Meetings, as well as amending the language. The Committee plans to establish a bylaw outlining the process around budget development. This would involve the Town Administrator, Finance Committee and Select Board and look to establish a Capital Planning Committee with a five year plan. After some discussion J. Cronin thanked the Committee for all their work and at that point the Governance Committee left to continue their own meeting remotely.

COVID 19 UPDATE:

Chief Cassidy started the update by stating that Holliston has passed over 200 cases, this has doubled since the beginning of October 2020. The total now standing at 209, 34 cases are currently active, however the positivity rate is 2.83%, which is lower than it was the previous week. Holliston still remains in the Yellow. During this week of Thanksgiving there will be a “social media splash” advising people to celebrate responsibly and safely. The Chief reminded the public to look to “Stop the Spread” website to find testing locations. Due to the uptick in testing requested the turnaround time for getting results may well be delayed. J. Cronin asked the Chief to comment on the current status of the schools. Chief Cassidy responded that the schools are continuing to do a great job of balancing in-person and remote learning and that there has been very little transmission reported through the schools.

CARES ACT PROGRAMMATIC UPDATE:

The Chief reported that at this time he did not have any requests for the Boards consideration.

WARRANTS:

B. Sparrell made a motion to approve the weekly warrant in the amount of \$1,797,182.28. T. Hein second. Roll Call: B. Sparrell, AYE; T. Hein, AYE; J. Cronin, AYE.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

B. Sparrell reminded residents that fall leaf curbside pickup starts on Monday November 30th. The details are on the Town website. He asked that residents stay safe over the Thanksgiving break and help keep our schools open.

T. Hein welcomed and introduced Rabbi Micner, who joined Temple Beth Torah this past July. Rabbi Micner thanked the Board for the opportunity to introduce herself and went on to say that she has felt very embraced by the community.

J. Cronin informed the public that the Town Warrant for the December 5, 2020 meeting is currently on the Town website and printed copies are located at various locations around Town.

TOWN MEETING QUORUM:

B. Sparrell stated that he felt comfortable reducing the quorum to 75. T. Hein and J. Cronin felt that a number between 50-75 should be considered. J. Cronin asked Chief Cassidy to weigh in on the conversation. He responded that 50 seemed to be a more realistic number based on the current conditions, and reiterated that the quorum does not limit the attendance which is set at 142 seats.

T. Hein made a motion to reduce the quorum for the Special Town Meeting on December 5, 2020 to 50 voters. B. Sparrell second. Roll Call: T. Hein, AYE, B. Sparrell abstained, J. Cronin, AYE

SPECIAL TOWN MEETING WARRANT:

T. Ahern stated that at the last Finance Committee meeting on Tuesday November 17, 2020 they voted some changes to Article #1 Fiscal Year 2021 Budget Adjustments and #3 Stabilization Fund, with a 0 impact on the bottom line. This opened up discussion among the Board members, Keith Buday, Business Manager for the Schools, Staci Raffi, School Committee Chair, Anne Louise Hanstad, School Committee member, Dan Alfred, FinCom member and Mary Greendale, resident. Due to the fact that it remains unclear as to if there will be additional Federal Aid such as CARES Act and FEMA after December 31, 2020 the Schools along with the Finance Committee are looking to prepare for worst case scenarios. D. Alfred stated that FinCom is looking to do this by putting additional money into the Reserve Fund. This was not a vote to spend the funds. M. Greendale expressed concern that the Finance Committee voted to change the Special Town Meeting Warrant after it had been approved by the Select Board on

Monday November 16, 2020. After some further discussion and several Select Board members expressing frustration J. Cronin asked that T. Ahern contact Town Counsel to get clarification.

COMMENTS FROM TOWN ADMINISTRATOR:

T. Ahern reported that effective November 23, 2020 all offices at Town Hall will be appointment only. The Town Hall will be closing at noon this Wednesday November 25, 2020 and will reopen on Monday November 30, 2020 for the Thanksgiving Holiday.

EDA STATUS APPLICATION:

T. Ahern stated that he is looking to send a letter to review the status of Holliston being considered for an Economically Distressed Area (EDA) funding. Going forward he would like it referred to as Economic Target Area (ETA). This status has benefited many other Towns in the area and can be used to access tax benefits and may allow for economic funding for 9 Green Street and Axton Cross as well as private entities.

T. Hein made a motion to authorize T. Ahern to send a letter to establish if Holliston could qualify for EDA status. B. Sparrell second. Roll Call: T. Hein AYE, B. Sparrell AYE, J. Cronin AYE.

POLICE AWARDS:

B. Sparrell read a memo from Chief Stone awarding Officer Scott Downey with the Meritorious Service Award for his life saving efforts of a suicidal individual on November 2, 2020.

B. Sparrell read a memo from Chief Stone awarding Officer John Scanlon and Officer Downey a Life Saving Award for their life saving efforts of an individual who had gone into cardiac arrest on October 21, 2020.

B. Sparrell read a memo from Chief Stone awarding Officer Ryan Parent a Life Saving Award for his life savings efforts of an individual who was in respiratory arrest on November 8, 2020.

J. Cronin gave his heartfelt thanks to the Officers for their commitment to the community.

BOARD BUSINESS:

B. Sparrell made a motion to accept a donation to the Senior Center in the amount of \$100 from the Prior family in the memory of Jeri Chartrand. T. Hein second. Roll Call T. Hein AYE, B. Sparrell AYE, J. Cronin AYE.

B. Sparrell made a motion to accept a grant from Metrowest Health Foundation in the amount of \$16,650 to the Senior Center to enable seniors to utilize technology including hardware, software and a tech consultant. T. Hein second. Roll Call: T. Hein AYE, B. Sparrell AYE, J. Cronin AYE.

B. Sparrell made a motion to accept a gift in the amount of \$250 from the Holliston Reporter to the Holliston Police Department. T. Hein second. Roll Call: B. Sparrell AYE, T. Hein AYE, J. Cronin AYE.

B. Sparrell made a motion to approve the Meeting Minutes of November 9, 2020 as written. T. Hein second. Roll Call: T. Hein AYE, B. Sparrell AYE, J. Cronin AYE.

B. Sparrell made a motion to appoint Matt Putvinski to Youth & Family Advisory Committee, term will expire in June 2023. T. Hein second. Roll Call: T. Hein AYE, B. Sparrell AYE, J. Cronin AYE.

OTHER BUSINESS:

B. Sparrell wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving.

T. Hein asked that the Board consider the possibility of reducing or waiving annual licensing fees for certain businesses which have been negatively impacted by the pandemic, especially restaurants. It was agreed after some discussion to look into issue and continue the discussion going forward.

J. Cronin also wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving.

At 9:12pm B. Sparrell made a motion to adjourn. T. Hein second. Roll Call: B. Sparrell AYE, T. Hein AYE, J. Cronin AYE.

Respectfully submitted;

Margaret Driscoll

Approved_____

