

TOWN OF HOLLISTON

SELECT BOARD

January 4, 2021
6:30PM

Town Hall
703 Washington Street

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

Also Present: Travis Ahern, Town Administrator; Michael Cassidy, Fire Chief, Bob Blair, Holliston resident (Farmers Market) and James Keast, Facilities Manager.

At 6:30PM J. Cronin called the meeting to order.

COVID 19 UPDATE:

Chief Cassidy presented slides as part of his update. Total number of Covid cases is now 430, 78 active cases throughout 55 addresses, 345 recovered with 7 fatalities. The largest increase is within the 30-39 age group at 29%. The positivity rate is still below the state average, however it continues to increase and the Town remains RED. In looking at the analysis he found no correlation between December 5, 2020 Town Meeting and any of the positive cases. The Chief stated that continued focus is on messaging emphasizing travel and travel guidelines. He urged residents to sign up for the Blackboard locally as well as the States automated messaging site to obtain updates. Chief Cassidy presented a slide showing the 3 phases in which the vaccine is to be rolled out. He noted that the 75+ age group will now be on a higher step within phase 2. He continued to state that the hope is that Holliston first responders will be eligible for vaccines the week of January 18, 2021.

The Chief presented the stats regarding incidents/calls for the Fire Department during this past year, 2020. Out of 1,588 calls 553 were fire related, 1035 medical. The department continues to have ongoing training.

After discussion regarding messaging and communication it was decided that the Chief be authorized to rent several electronic message boards to be placed throughout Town. T. Hein suggested targeting neighborhoods as it appears the spread of the virus is related to social gatherings. J. Cronin recognized that although message fatigue may be a concern he feels that the urgency of the message outweighs the concern.

CARES ACT PROGRAMMATIC UPDATE:

Chief Cassidy stated that the next reporting period is at the end of January 2021. At this time he is waiting to find out how much additional funding may be available as a result of the legislation which was signed on December 27, 2020. He will report back to the Board once he has more clarity.

WARRANTS:

B. Sparrell made a motion to approve the Weekly Warrant in the amount of \$1,385,648.91. T. Hein second. Vote 3-0.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

B. Sparrell wanted to remind residents that the new 25mph speed limit is in effect on any street in Town which does not already have a posted sign.

T. Hein noted that the first month or two will be about educating the public so they can become aware of the new town wide speed limit. Signs have been ordered and will be installed on various streets in the near future. This is a major step taken to improve the walkability (safety) within the Town.

J. Cronin stated that the FY22 budget process is beginning with the opening of the Town Warrant later in the meeting. He continued to note that the Boards agenda for the current month is full of challenges and opportunities.

COMMENTS FROM THE TOWN ADMINISTRATOR:

T. Ahern began his update by stating that there are a number of postings for job positions within the Town, Senior Center Director, Police Officer, Park & Rec Assistant Director, Human Resource/Benefits, DPW, as well as several part-time positions. These jobs are posted on the MMA website as well.

T. Ahern along with the Town Planner, DPW Director, Highway Supervisor, Sustainability Coordinator and Health Director did a site visit of the Solar Project on Marshall Street. The Public Hearing which was originally scheduled for January 11, 2021 will now take place on Thursday January 21, 2021 at 6:30pm.

T. Ahern and the DPW Director will meet with StanTec regarding the sidewalk and water modernization studies which was approved at Special Town Meeting in December 2020 and report back to the Board.

T. Ahern has contacted the business connected to a truck which pulled lose some cable wires on Regal Street in an attempt to get to Lowland Street. He is also looking to Verizon and MassDOT for assistance in a solution.

RFQ's Requests for Quotes for a Heavy Vehicle Exclusion Study, which was passed at Special Town Meeting December 2020 have been posted on the Towns website.

B. Sparrell made a motion to open the May 2021 Town Meeting Warrant on January 4, 2021 to close on March 29, 2021. T. Hein second. Vote 3-0. The forms necessary for submitting an article can be located on the Town's website. The press release will go out tomorrow January 5, 2021.

FARMERS MARKET DISCUSSION AT BLAIR SQUARE:

Bob Blair joined the meeting to look for the Boards input on the concept of a Farmers Market at

Blair Square. The market would run from mid-June through mid-October on Sundays from 9:00am-1:00pm. B. Blair has received input from many sources. He has also met with the Town Planner, Friends of the Trail, the Agricultural Commission, Economic Development Committee. After much discussion it was noted that the concept has the support of the Select Board, however there are many logistics that need to be considered. Some of them being trash, foot traffic, parking, collection of vendor fees including the management of those fees as well as a business plan. Matt Coletti, a member of the Economic Development Committee phoned into the meeting to offer the committees assistance.

B. Blair will work on an outline of all that was discussed and will return to the Board in the near future for an update.

BOARD BUSINESS:

James Keast, Facilities Manager collected data in the marketplace looking for competitive rates for Natural Gas Suppliers for the Town's municipal building. He presented a spreadsheet and made his recommendation to the Board. Over an 18 month period of time the Town can obtain a savings of approximately \$10,674 through UGI Energy.

B. Sparrell made a motion to authorized J. Keast, Facilities Manager to enter into an 18 month contract with UGI Energy as the natural gas supplier for municipal buildings with a projected savings of \$10,674. T. Hein second. Vote 3-0.

B. Sparrell made a motion to approve the Meeting Minutes of December 14, 2020 as written. T. Hein second. Vote 3-0.

J. Cronin stated that the Town Administrators evaluation process will begin with each Board member meeting with T. Ahern to be completed by the end of this month January 2021.

B. Sparrell made a motion to accept a gift in the amount of \$100 from a resident whom resides at Fieldstone Drive to the Fire Department. T. Hein second. Vote 3-0.

B. Sparrell made a motion to accept a gift in the amount of \$100 from Diane Keeley to the Senior Center. T. Hein second. Vote 3-0.

OTHER BUSINESS:

B. Sparrell is currently working on the Q2 report and will present it to the Board once completed.

T. Hein stated with the institution of the 25mph speed limits it would be helpful to have an individual get the information to the various travel apps. Might there be an intern (ie. High School student) that would be interested in volunteering their services.

Chief Cassidy returned to the meeting with information on sign board rentals which the Board had discussed earlier in the meeting. After some discussion it was agreed that the Board would authorize the Chief to rent 4 sign boards for 3 months costing approximately \$14,400.

T. Hein made a motion to authorize Chief Cassidy to rent 4 sign boards for a 3 month period up to \$14,400 to be funded by the CARES Act, to be placed in various locations throughout Town. B. Sparrell second. Vote 3-0.

At 8:26PM T. Hein made a motion to adjourn and enter into Executive Session for nonunion negotiation not to return to Open Session. B. Sparrell second. Roll Call: T. Hein AYE, B. Sparrell AYE, J. Cronin AYE.

Respectfully submitted,

Margaret Driscoll

Approved_____