

TOWN OF HOLLISTON
SELECT BOARD

December 28, 2020

Town Hall

6:30PM

703 Washington Street

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

Also Present: Travis Ahern, Town Administrator; Michael Cassidy, Fire Chief.

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

COVID-19 UPDATE:

Chief Cassidy presented the latest update. There are 384 total covid cases, which is an increase of 41 since last week, 274 recovered, 7 fatalities, 103 active. These cases are spread out throughout 70 address which is a 22% increase from last week. Ages between 40-49 years increased by 19%, 0-9 years increased by 18%, 10-19 years increased by 13% and 70-79 years by 12%. The positivity rate as of last Thursday December 24, 2020 was at 5.08%, which has now put Holliston in the RED. This however was not unanticipated as numbers have been continuing to climb throughout the State. Social media will continue to move forward including messaging encouraging people to get tested. The Chief noted that he had been in contact with the Superintendent of Schools last week and they will be looking to set up a protocol for possible testing in the schools. Also since the Governor's announcement regarding the latest guidelines, which cap office capacity at 25%, the Chief and the T. Ahern have discussed the effect on certain departments within the municipal buildings, such as staggering hours for employees and the possibility of employees working from home when possible.

CARES ACT PROGRAMMATIC UPDATE:

The Chief stated that he had meet with the Town Administrator, Town Account, and the Treasurer Collector in an effort to prepare for 2 possible scenarios. One being allocating all CAREs Funding prior to December 31, 2020, or two have the funding extend to December 31, 2021. The Town has currently allocated/spent \$1,261,000 of the \$1,317,000 CARE's Act funding allotted. The Chief presented 4 requests for the Board to consider. They are as follows: November 2020 unemployment in the amount of \$14,816. Additional Solid Waste cost through November 2020 in the amount of \$7,192.78. Stipends for Covid-19 duties for certain Town employees in the amount of \$14,550. T. Ahern described these as work needed above and outside of ones job description. FMLA and Sick Leave for employees themselves or family members due to Covid in the amount of \$31,267.66.

Going forward this will be coded as such on employee time sheets. T. Ahern also noted that the Town is starting to receive credit for some of the fraudulent unemployment charges it has incurred during this time.

B. Sparrell made a motion to approve the four requests, November 2020 unemployment in the amount of \$14,816, additional solid waste removal through November 2020 in the amount of \$7,192.78, Stipends for Covid related duties in the amount of \$14,550., and FMLA and sick leave for employees due to Covid in the amount of \$31,267.66. T. Hein second. Vote 3-0.

The Chief continued to state that since the announcement on December 27, 2020 of the deadline now being changed to December 31, 2021 to allocate CARE's Act Funding he would recommend the reauthorization of such items as temporary IT staffing, additional telework capacity for Youth & Family Services and additional cleaning of municipal buildings for January 1, 2021 through March 31, 2021. T. Hein noted that the expense of the Crossing Guard on Woodland Street should be included in the reauthorization as well.

B. Sparrell made a motion to approve the reauthorization of temporary IT staffing, telework capacity for Youth & Family Services, additional cleaning of municipal buildings and the Crossing Guard on Woodland Street from January 1, 2021 through March 31, 2021. T. Hein second. Vote 3-0.

WARRANTS:

B. Sparrell made a motion to approve the Weekly Warrant in the amount of \$335,208.40. T. Hein second. Vote 3-0.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

B. Sparrell wished residents a Happy New Year and to stay safe.

T. Hein thanked the Holliston Police Department and the DPW for their efforts in getting the message out for the upcoming Drive 25mph which will take effect on January 1, 2021.

J. Cronin stated that the Town will be looking to obtain quotes for Traffic Studies to be conducted now that the Article was passed at the Special Town Meeting. T. Ahern added that the RFQ's will be going out very shortly and he anticipates a quick turnaround. Once a firm has been selected he will set up a timeline. It was also noted that the noise issues around traffic will have to be conducted in a separate study.

Karen Langton, a resident on Regal Street phoned into the meeting to inform the Board that at 3:20pm today (December 28, 2020) an 18 wheeler took out the cable lines of another resident on that street. Due to the fact that so much work/school activity is now done remotely it is necessary now more than ever to have your cable service. She went on to state that this was the sixth incident involving trucks driving to Lowland Industrial Park since March 24, 2020.

T. Ahern will contact the Police Chief and review the incidents to determine what action may have taken and what possible action could be taken going forward and report back to the Board.

COMMENTS FROM TOWN ADMINISTRATOR:

The Stipend Committee have asked T. Ahern to assist them in distributing a survey to the various Boards and Committees within the Town. He will also send it to several Town Clerks offices in other Towns. Once the information is compiled the committee will report back to the Board. The original date of January 4, 2021 which was written into the Stipend Committee Charge will be extended to sometime within the month of February 2021.

Signs boards are now advertising the "Drive 25mph Streets" effective January 1, 2021. There have also been notices "Drive 25" mailed with the recent tax bills. Posts and signs will be going up soon on the various street. The Police will take into consideration a learning curve for all those accessing the roadways.

T. Ahern reported back to the Board after they received many complaints regarding the DPW's response to the snow storm on December 16-17. T. Ahern stated that the DPW had 4 vacancies on their staff, and that several private contractors who had been called in to aid with the snow removal did not turn up to do so. Two positions have been filled since the storm with drivers that currently have their CDL licenses and they will continue to post the positions still available. B. Sparrell noted that there had been a lot of complaints regarding the lack of snow removal on sidewalks. He suggested this may be a good opportunity to look to determine what areas in Town need attention.

T. Hein suggested that this would be the time to make an assessment of the Procedural Manual used by the DPW.

J. Cronin stated that this is an issue that the Board will continue to monitor over the next several months and the next several storms.

T. Ahern would like to look to develop a system in which the public could notify the Town in real time during a weather event to deal with problems as they come up. The Board agreed that this would a concept worth exploring in the future.

BOARD BUSINESS:

B. Sparrell made a motion to approve Meeting Minutes of December 7, 2020 as written. T. Hein second. Vote 3-0.

B. Sparrell made a motion to approve Meeting Minutes of December 8, 2020 as written. T. Hein second. Vote 3-0.

T. Ahern presented a contract from PARE for the building demo plan and site reuse design for 9 Green Street. J. Cronin requested that a timeline for the project be made available.

B. Sparrell made a motion to approve a contract from PARE for the building demo plan and site reuse design, subject to a timeline to follow. T. Hein second. Vote 3-0.

OTHER BUSINESS:

B. Sparrell made a motion to approve a gift from Century Ty-Wood in the amount of \$250 to the Fire Department. T. Hein second. Vote 3-0.

The Board wished all a Happy New Year, stay safe.

At 8:13PM B. Sparrell made a motion to adjourn. T. Hein second. Vote 3-0.

Respectfully submitted;

Margaret M. Driscoll

Approved_____

