

## TOWN OF HOLLISTON

### SELECT BOARD

January 11, 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; Paul Coffey, EMT; Dr. Susan Kustka, Superintendent of Schools; Robert Weidknecht, Chair of Trails Committee; Rich Rosenberry and Joan Levinsohn, Town residents.

#### **COVID 19 UPDATE:**

Chief Cassidy along with Paul Coffey, Assistant Emergency Director (via Zoom) were in attendance to update the Board on the current status of the pandemic. There are 477 cases, 345 recovered, 7 fatalities, 125 active cases throughout 83 address. The positivity rate is currently 6.2%, which is still below the States average. The Chief stated that the Governor announced that the most recent restrictions put in place will be extended through January 24, 2021 at noon.

The Chief presented slides outlining the 3 phases in which the vaccine is to be distributed. First responders are now eligible. He also presented a map showing the vaccine centers which will be available for Holliston First Responders.

J. Cronin expressed the need to let citizens know that every decision we make has consequences and there is so much at stake. Difficult choices made now can help keep people safe. The Chief stated that the message has remained consistent since March 2020. Wear a mask, wash your hands, maintain a safe distance and stay home if you are not feeling well.

#### **CARES ACT PROGRAMMATIC UPDATE:**

The Chief presented 3 requests for the Board to approve.

The schools voted at the last School Committee meeting to approve funds for the purchase of PCR testing equipment and supplies. They would like the funds set aside to be able to order these items when needed in the near future. Dr. Kustka joined the meeting to voice her support for the request. The original amount of the request is \$4,500, however after some discussion based on the cost of the testing kits it was decided that \$15,000 would be a more appropriate amount.

T. Hein made a motion to approve up to \$15,000 for Covid testing and supplies, pending the Schools Committee approval (original amount approved was \$4,500) to be funded by the CARES Act. Second by B. Sparrell. Vote 3-0.

The Board of Health voted at their meeting on Tuesday January 5, 2021 to approve \$18,000 for contact tracing for the month of November and December 2020, and \$2,000 for additional

clerical hours for the Board of Health staff through the CARES Act.

B. Sparrell made a motion to approve \$18,000 for Contact Tracing for the months of November and December 2020 and for \$2,000 to be approved for additional clerical staff to be funded by the CARES Act. T. Hein second. Vote 3-0.

Council on Aging requested 2 separate items to be funded by the CARES Act. The first one in the amount of \$3,500 for additional supplies for the meals program for such items as containers and utensils through June 30, 2021. The second request for \$5,141.74 for delivery costs.

B. Sparrell made a motion to approve \$3,500 for additional meal program supplies and \$5,141.74 for delivery services as provided by Senior Center. T. Hein second. Vote 3-0.

The Chief concluded his update by stating that the new deadline for CARES Act reporting is now March 5, 2021.

#### **WARRANTS:**

B. Sparrell made a motion to approve the Weekly Warrant in the amount of \$1,136,362.40. T. Hein second. Vote 3-0.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT:**

T. Hein will be attending a webinar along with the Finance Committee on municipal finance, specifically concentrating on budget priorities.

J. Cronin stated that nomination forms will be available at the Town Clerks office on February 1, 2021 for the upcoming Town Elections on May 25, 2021. He encouraged those residents that may be interested to consider running.

#### **COMMENTS FROM THE TOWN ADMINISTRATOR:**

T. Ahern stated that RFQ for the Traffic Study is currently on the website and is due on Thursday January 21, 2021 at 4:00pm. J. Keast, Facilities Manager is in the process of looking to send out to bid several other maintenance projects within several Town buildings, such as the Town Hall, Library and Senior Center.

T. Ahern sent out a survey on behalf of the Stipend Committee to 14 community's. He noted that the new deadline for the report from the Stipend Committee is now January 31, 2021. He is also expecting an update from the Governance Committee within the same time frame. The Economic Development Fund has been approved by the House and the Senate and is awaiting the Governors signature.

Holliston's application for the Local Rapid Response Program (LRRP), although it has not been officially approved, T. Ahern thinks it will be useful to various committees and groups within the Town (ie. Economic Development Committee, Holliston Together, HCAT).

T. Ahern presented a Q2 report on the Towns' financial status. He met with the Town Accountant and Treasurer/Collector and put together a presentation with slides.

The remainder of the FY21 revenue appears to be in good standing and on the budget side with tracking several emergency management items the Town overall appears to be in good shape.

#### **RAIL TRAIL – LICENSE & ENCROACHMENT:**

Robert Weidknecht, the Chair of the Holliston Trails Committee joined the meeting via zoom. T. Ahern explained that there are 9-10 businesses that abut the Rail Trail in which the Town is looking to obtain annual licenses for use of some of the space. The licensing fee would be a straight fee based on input from the Assessors Office and the square footage involved.

B. Sparrell made a motion to approve/allow the Town to establish annual licenses for certain businesses that abut the Rail Trail. T. Hein second. Vote 3-0.

R. Weidknecht presented a draft letter to the Board looking for approval to send to residents in an effort to continue communication regarding encroachment. In 2018 a general letter was sent to all abutters to establish what was considered encroachment of the space. Due to the fact that there is still an issue regarding this matter the Trails Committee would like a letter to be sent. It was suggested that a line be added to the letter specifically stating the encroachment to those property owners as needed with an explanation (wording) of a possible fine.

J. Cronin made a motion to approve a letter to be sent to Rails Trail abutters to include language for those in violation of encroachment, Mass Law Chapter 270, sec 16 once approved by Town Council. B. Sparrell second. Vote 3-0.

#### **MASS TRAILS GRANT APPLICATION:**

R. Weidknecht explained that a good deal of the funding for the construction of the Rail Trail came through grants. Continued work needs to be done specific to drainage issues. He is looking to the Select Board for approval to allow the Trails Committee to apply for a Mass Trails Grant.

B. Sparrell made the motion to approve support for the Trails Committee and authorize the Town Administrator to apply for the Mass Trails Grant on their behalf. T. Hein second. Vote 3-0.

#### **UPDATE ON DPW INFRASTRUCTURE STUDIES:**

B. Sparrell met with Stantec and provided an update on the status of the DPW Infrastructure studies. All reports including inventory are in an electronic format. B. Sparrell is hopeful that the sidewalk inventory will be fully updated in time for Town Meeting in May 2021. Water studies will take longer to complete. The goal is to have the studies be in a format that needs little interpretation and easy for all residents to comprehend. B. Sparrell would like to have monthly updates and will continue to report back to the Select Board. He also would like to work with J. Keast the Facilities Manager on a maintenance plan for the DPW facilities.

**POSTPONED - MARSHALL STREET SOLAR PROJECT PUBLIC HEARING HAS BEEN POSTPONED UNTIL THURSDAY JANUARY 21, 2021.**

**METRO-WEST REGIONAL SOLAR & CLEAN HEAT CHALLENGE PROGRAM:**

T. Ahern stated that Holliston is looking into entering a mutual partnership with Framingham, Natick and Ashland around Solar & Clean Heat. This should be a benefit to residents of each of these communities. Matt Zettek, Sustainability Coordinator will be the point person for Holliston. Rich Rosenberry and Joan Levinsohn along with Utah Nickel, all Holliston residents volunteered to assist M. Zettek in this project.

B. Sparrell made a motion to approve joining the Metro-West Regional Solar & Clean Heat Challenge Program. T. Hein second. Vote 3-0.

**BOARD BUSINESS:**

B. Sparrell made a motion to accept a gift of \$500 from Carl Road residents to the Fire Department. T. Hein second. Vote 3-0.

B. Sparrell made a motion to accept a Grant from MEMA (Homeland Security Grant) in the amount of \$2,500 for the Fire Department. T. Hein. Vote 3-0.

**OTHER BUSINESS:**

T. Hein asked if T. Ahern could reach out to the DPW and see if there might be input from them prior to the Shared Streets Grant meeting next week. She also asked if he could obtain an update on the Complete Streets survey as well.

J. Cronin asked the public to please listen to all Covid updates and take all necessary precautions to stay safe.

T. Hein made a motion to approve a letter written by T. Ahern to our Federal Legislators, looking for additional aid in 2021, which may become available due to Covid-19. B. Sparrell second with the note that both the School Committee and Finance Committee sign the letter as well. Vote 3-0.

At 8:35 B. Sparrell made a motion to adjourn. T. Hein second. Vote 3-0.

Respectfully submitted;

Margaret Driscoll

Approved 2/1/21