

TOWN OF HOLLISTON

SELECT BOARD

January 19, 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 via zoom; Kevin Connelly, Chair Blair Square Committee via zoom.

COVID-19 UPDATE:

Chief Cassidy joined the meeting via zoom with the weekly Covid-19 update. There are currently 47 new cases, bringing the total to 527. There are 172 active cases spread throughout 110 addresses. The positivity rate is 6.39%, which is still below the state average. Holliston remains RED for the fourth straight week. Going forward Chief Cassidy will note the number of tests recorded on the graphics. Messaging continues to be at the forefront. One new message revolves around carpooling. The Chief presented a slide outlining phase 1 of the vaccine rollout.

CARES ACT PROGRAMMATIC UPDATE:

The Chief noted that there are no new requests to present to the Board. Chief Cassidy presented a slide regarding Phase 4.0 Legislation dated December 27, 2020. This phase does not include additional assistance through the CARES Act, however it extends the covered period through December 31, 2021. The Chief pointed out that other funding is available.

WARRANT:

B. Sparrell made a motion to approve the weekly warrant in the amount of \$2,444,882.64. T. Hein second. Vote 3-0.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

B. Sparrell stated that there will be a public forum on February 3, 2021 for the Blair Square renovation project. There will be a portal on the Town website to allow for residents input. After which the Board will look to present a plan and costs associated with it from the Blair Square Committee to have a warrant for May Town Meeting.

Kevin Connelly, Chair of the Blair Square Committee joined that meeting via zoom and stated that the Committee will forward a report to the Select Board prior to the February 3, 2021 open forum.

J. Cronin took the opportunity to address the fire on Winter Street which occurred on January 18, 2021. The fire resulted in tragic loss of life, both human and canine. He thanked the First

Responders and sent condolences to the family.

7:00 PUBLIC FORUM FRONT STREET PILOT:

T. Ahern gave a brief background on the Front Street One-Way Pilot which expires on April 1, 2021. This was obtained through the Shared Streets & Spaces Program Grant. Right now any changes made are temporary. There were 29 comments submitted by residents on the portal on the Towns website. Some of the suggestions were as follows; limit the yellow/orange markers in the area. Add parking. Add a stop sign on Vine Street. Move walkway to the side of road that has parking and not residents (Winthrop Street). It appears that most of the comments were positive regarding the adoption of Front Street being one-way. Another suggestion was to extend the one way beyond Vine Street to Exchange Street this would only impact 3 homes.

Chris and Kathy Byrne who reside on Winthrop Street stated that the crosswalk as it stands now is not being used. They suggest it be moved from its current location. C. Byrne also felt that there is a safety issue around the parking in that area.

As the conversation continued it was thought that any changes made should be made with the consideration of how they will affect the Rail Trail and Blair Square. T. Hein felt that at this point there are several decisions that should be made.

1. Make the one-way on Front Street permanent (look into the possibility of extending to Exchange Street)
2. Add more parking (look at various possibilities)
3. Beautification of Green Space (work with Blair Square Committee)

Going forward T. Ahern will get input from the DPW regarding the parking, green space and clean up. The conversation will continue over the next several weeks.

COMMENTS FROM THE TOWN ADMINISTRATOR: MID-YEAR UPDATE

T. Ahern presented a very detailed update of the past six months of improvements and ongoing work, as well as looking forward. Revenue is trending positively. Motor Vehicle excise will be added to the revenue in March. There may be some impact as a result of Covid-19, however T. Ahern stated that the Town continues to trend positively. Full report can be found on the Towns website.

T. Ahern is looking to initiate 3 year contracts for personnel in FY22. The goal is to have them renew at the same time.

The conversation around the Lowland Industrial Park continues with input from MassDOT. The RFQ sent for the Traffic Study, Article 15 passed at December 2021 Town Meeting is due on Thursday January 21, 2021.

T. Ahern has been in contact with Verizon regarding an incident on Regal Street involving a commercial vehicle and utility wires. He will continue to work towards a solution.

The Facilities Manager is moving forward with several projects.

Various DPW projects are on track as well. Sidewalks and drainage issues throughout Town are being addressed and discussion will continue.

The Town is awaiting the arrival of TAC equipment.

The proposal for a Farmers Market at Blair Square is being worked on and the Board will have an update within the next several months.

The Governance and Stipend Committee will be returning to the Board with updates in the near future.

Both the Facilities Manager and the Sustainability Coordinator continue to look into cost saving incentives for the Town.

There will be a public forum on Thursday January 21, 2021 for the Solar Project at Marshall Street. Looking to Fall of 2021 for the completion of the project. Revenue will begin when the lease is signed.

The Town continues to apply for and reap benefits from various grants such as Green Communities, Shared Streets & Spaces. A consultant should be assigned by the LRRP (Local Rapid Recovery Program) which will benefit local businesses.

Looking ahead T. Ahern will have a clearer picture once there is additional State Aid in place, however it appears an increase in revenue may be 1.5%, he will continue to review as the numbers change.

FY22 BUDGET & REVENUE PREPARATION AND REVIEW:

Peter Barbieri presented a budget update for the Economic Development Committee. The Committee is working toward creating a job description for a part time position to assist the Economic Development Committee with clerical items and various other tasks. The Committee proposes the funding at \$14,067.

T. Hein made a motion to approve \$14,067. for the Economic Development Committees FY22 budget for a part-time position. B. Sparrell second. Vote 3-0.

Robert Weidknecht and Ken Henderson presented a budget update for the Trails Committee. The Committee is looking for \$1,000 for maintenance of Trail.

B. Sparrell made a motion to approve \$1,000 for the FY22 budget for the Trails Committee for maintenance. T. Hein second. Vote 3-0.

Matt Zettek the Sustainability Coordinator is entering his second year with the Town. This is a contracted position and the funding remains at \$50,000 for FY22.

B. Sparrell made a motion to approve \$50,000 for FY22 budget for the Sustainability Coordinator. T. Hein second. Vote 3-0.

After some discussion regarding street lights T. Ahern will pursue researching what options may be available through Eversource for more efficient light fixtures and such.

FY22 BUDGET CONT'ED:

The Town is entering into its third year of a five year contract with Harvey for solid waste. Many residents are currently working from their homes as a result of the pandemic and this has in turn created more solid waste being disposed. The Town will look to improve the operations at the recycling center and the Sustainability Coordinator will continue to pursue grants regarding solid waste.

B. Sparrell made a motion to approve the FY22 Solid Waste budget in the amount of \$1,318,183. T. Hein second. Vote 3-0.

The Celebration budget is used for the Memorial Day Parade. It is currently \$2,000.

B. Sparrell made a motion to approve the FY22 Celebration budget in the amount of \$2,000. T. Hein second. Vote 3-0.

The Sealer of Weights & Measures has a zero dollar budget. The revenue obtained through services rendered supports the budget. This may change in the future due to the fact that new equipment may need to be purchased for the cannabis industry now located in Town.

T. Ahern presented the Liability Insurance budget which is provided by MIIA in the amount of \$289,798. MIIA provides training in the way of on-line seminars and also offer grants which have proved helpful.

B. Sparrell made a motion to approve the FY22 Liability Insurance budget in the amount of \$289,798. T. Hein second. Vote 3-0.

BOARD BUSINESS:

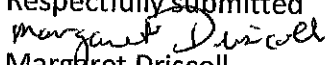
B. Sparrell made a motion to approve the Meeting Minutes of December 21, 2020, December 28, 2020 and January 4, 2021 as written. T. Hein second. Vote 3-0.

The Board signed Bid Documents for Well #5.

OTHER BUSINESS:

T. Hein stated that since meeting with the Safe Routes to School Task Force she has been asked to make a request for a pedestrian signal at the Woodland Street crosswalk located at Holliston Oil Company on their behalf. T. Hein also looked to T. Ahern to identify what workshops may be available to Town employees via Town Council. T. Ahern will look into which topics generate the most interest.

At 9:09pm B. Sparrell made a motion to adjourn. T. Hein second. Vote 3-0.

Respectfully submitted

Margaret Driscoll

Approved 2/1/21