

TOWN OF HOLLISTON

SELECT BOARD

October 4, 2021
7:02PM

Town Hall
703 Washington Street

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

Also Present: Travis Ahern, Town Administrator; Michael Cassidy, Fire Chief; Dr. Ken Szajda, Finance Committee Chair, Daniel Alfred, Vincent Murphy, Finance Committee members; Chris Meo, IT Director; Deborah Moore, and Adam Taylor, Town residents.

At 7:02pm T. Hein called the meeting to order.

TOWN FINANCIAL POLICIES DISCUSSION:

The Select Board and several members of the Finance Committee, Dr. K. Szajda, D. Alfred and V. Murphy had a lengthy discussion regarding the current version of the Financial Policies. Most of the discussion revolved around the two different recommendations for OPEB funding. The Select Board along with the Town Administrator believe that \$1.25 million per year will meet the expected liability in 2037. The Finance Committee is of the opinion that \$1.5 million per year is a better amount. Their recommendation is to use \$250,000 of Free Cash for the next several years to get to that amount. All three members of the Select Board were in agreement around the importance of maintaining as well as improving the Town's rating. J. Cronin voiced his concern over the use of Free Cash in this instance. This opened a discussion around the best use of Free Cash. B. Sparrell suggested the Select Board along with the Finance Committee look at the current policy and potentially create revisions.

T. Hein thanked the Finance Committee members for their input and noted that although there is common ground more dialogue is necessary. The Select Board asked T. Ahern to relay the comments/suggestions from this discussion to the Town's Financial Advisers in an effort to redraft the policies.

DISCUSSION OF OWNERSHIP OPTIONS FOR STREET LIGHTS:

T. Ahern along with IT Director C. Meo explained that the Town does not own the fixtures for all the street lights throughout the Town. Eversource will be increasing the billing rate effective January 2022. This will increase the current annual cost of \$44,000 to approximately \$120,000. The recommended option is to purchase the fixtures (not the poles) and use LED lights, which will be more cost effective going forward. The Town will also need to secure a maintenance agreement with an outside company. C. Meo noted that if the conversion is done by January 2022 the Town can apply for a Green Community Grant in April 2022 towards the cost.

J. Cronin made a motion to authorize Town Counsel to draft a Purchase and Sale for the 950 light fixtures effective January 2022. B. Sparrell second. Vote 3-0.

GREEN COMMUNITY REPORT:

C. Meo presented the 5th Annual Green Community Report. Several areas where the Town has seen an increase in savings and a decrease in energy use has been the Public Library and the Elementary School, due to changing some thermostats and light switch sensors. However due to the pandemic more people are spending more time at home and numbers at the Water Treatment site have increased. For that same reason heating costs went up in many municipal buildings due to the fact that windows were often opened during office hours to improve air circulation.

J. Cronin made a motion to accept the Green Community Report as presented and submit it to Department of Energy Resources Green Division by November 1, 2021. B. Sparrell second. Vote 3-0.

CARES ACT / ARPA PROGRAMMATIC UPDATE /COVID-19 UPDATE:

Chief Cassidy joined the meeting to present three CARES Act funding requests. The IT Director is requesting \$170 for computer equipment. Council on Aging is requesting \$3,100 for touchless fixtures at the Senior Center. The Facilities Department is requesting \$5,000 for a touchless water bottle filling station at 1750 Washington Street.

J. Cronin asked for clarification from the Chief regarding the deadline to spending the CARES Act Funds. Chief Cassidy stated that October 29, 2021 was the “hard deadline” for spending the funds.

J. Cronin made a motion to approve the three CARES Act Funding requests as presented totaling \$8,270. B. Sparrell second. Vote 3-0.

Chief Cassidy noted that the next ARPA Steering Group meeting will be held on Wednesday October 20, 2021.

In conclusion the Chief stated that the Covid-19 numbers are trending in the right direction. There are currently 13 active cases throughout Town.

WARRANTS:

J. Cronin made a motion to approve the Weekly Warrant in the amount of \$1,356,831.64. B. Sparrell second. Vote 3-0.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

T. Hein thanked Walter McGrath who had presented to the Town a flag and the framed certificate on behalf of the American Legion Post #47.

J. Cronin apologized for not being able to fulfil his commitment to HCAT and participate in the Trivia Game held last week.

J. Cronin read a statement from the DPW Director S. Reese regarding the completion of the Winter Street Water Main Replacement Project. The road will be paved in the spring of 2022. J. Cronin asked that T. Ahern obtain an update regarding the Marshall Street solar project to be presented at a future Select Board Meeting.

B. Sparrell thanked Dylan McDonald, who filled in for J. Cronin at last weeks Trivia and stated that they had a great time.

B. Sparrell stated that the Agricultural Commission voted to discontinue managing the community gardens at Pinecrest.

Deborah Moore, 183 Mill Street joined the meeting to express her interest in assisting with managing the community gardens going forward.

Adam Taylor, 80 Burnap Road joined the meeting to also express his interest in assisting with the community gardens at Pinecrest.

The Select Board will have a more lengthy conversation around the matter after Fall Town Meeting.

T. Hein stated that the Complete Streets tier 3 application was submitted on Friday October 1, 2021.

Chief Cassidy reported that “Highlight on Training” with members from the Holliston Police Department, Fire Department and Schools participated in scenario based training. Its intent is to emphasize collaboration during emergency’s that may occur within the Town.

COMMENTS FROM THE TOWN ADMINISTRATOR:

T. Ahern stated that the Fall Town Meeting Warrant is now on the Town website. He is still awaiting the Finance Committee recommendations to be added.

Nelson Nygaard the consultant for the LRRP, Local Rapid Recovery Plan is wrapping up their report on the Village Commercial District/Downtown and Blair Square is due October 8, 2021. The Town is in the process of receiving the cost analysis for the work needed on the three dams. At this point there is no need for additional funding.

T. Ahern stated that there will be a future conversation with Representative Dykema’s office and the DOT regarding the Transportation Bond Bill and how it will relate to needs of Holliston.

REVIEW OF VACANT SEATS ON COMMITTEES:

T. Ahern shared a graphic with the list of the vacancies on the various committees. He urged those individuals whom may be interested to contact the Select Boards and or the Town Clerks Office. The full list can also be found on the Town’s website.

BOARD BUSINESS:

Chris Westland, 103 Norfolk Street joined the meeting to ask the Board to approve the 4th Annual Community Farms Haunted Walk. The proceeds of which will go to the Friends of the Community Farm.

J. Cronin made a motion to approve the 4th Annual Community Farm Haunted Walk on October 30, 2021 to be held at the Community Farm from 5:00pm-9:00pm, all proceeds going to the Friends of the Community Farm. B. Sparrell second. Vote 3-0.

J. Cronin made a motion to approve the Newcomers & Neighbors Halloween Rail Trail Walk on October 31, 2021 from 10:00am-12:00pm. B. Sparrell second. Vote 3-0.

J. Cronin made a motion to approve the Meeting Minutes of September 13, 2021 as written. B. Sparrell second. Vote 3-0.

J. Cronin made a motion to approve the Executive Session Meeting Minutes of July 12, 2021 and September 27, 2021 as written, but not to be released. B. Sparrell second. Vote 3-0.

J. Cronin made a motion to approve the Executive Session Meeting Minutes of July 19, 2021 as written to be released no sooner than November 1, 2021. B. Sparrell second. Vote 3-0.

T. Ahern presented a list of the new rates for the Snow & Ice Contractors for the 2021-2022 season. These rates have been based on comparison with surrounding towns.

J. Cronin made a motion to approve the rate adjustments for the Snow & Ice Contractors for the 2021-2022 season based on the information presented by T. Ahern. B. Sparrell second. Vote 3-0.

J. Cronin made a motion to authorize the Town Administrator and Town Counsel to finalize the temporary site access for the demolition at 9 Green Street. B. Sparrell second. Vote 3-0.

J. Cronin made a motion to accept a donation from Ann Mahaney in the amount of \$100 for the Taxi Grant for the Senior Center. B. Sparrell second. Vote 3-0.

J. Cronin made a motion to appoint Mary Greendale to the Historical Commission for a 1 year term. B. Sparrell seconded. Vote 3-0.

J. Cronin made a motion to approve a One Day Beer & Wine License for Crafted for a Fall Fest to be held at 45 Chestnut Street on Saturday October 17, 2021 from 11:00am-4:00pm. B. Sparrell. Vote 3-0.

OTHER BUSINESS:

J. Cronin read the memo regarding the Parking Ban on Overnight Street Parking which will begin November 1, 2021.

J. Cronin read the memo regarding Fall Leaf Curbside Pickup which will be the week of November 29, 2021.

J. Cronin asked if there has been any update on increasing staffing at the Marshall Street Recycling Center. T. Ahern stated that at this point in time there are no changes.

T. Hein noted that the LRRP, Local Rapid Recovery Plan final report will be available shortly and the next step will be to have discussion at future meetings. T. Hein would also like to have future discussion regarding the standing by-laws.

T. Hein reminded all that next weeks meeting will be on Tuesday October 12, 2021 due to the holiday.

At 9:16 J. Cronin made a motion to adjourn. B. Sparrell second. Vote 3-0.

Respectfully submitted;

Margaret Driscoll

Approved_10-25-21