

TOWN OF HOLLISTON

SELECT BOARD

October 25, 2021
7:02 PM

Town Hall
703 Washington Street

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

Also Present: Travis Ahern, Town Administrator; Robert Walker, finalist candidate for interim Highway Superintendent; Sean Reese, DPW Director; Ryan Clapp, Conservation Agent; Elizabeth Greendale, Town Clerk; and Daniel Alfred, Town resident.

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

INTRODUCTION & APPOINTMENT OF HIGHWAY SUPERINTENDENT (INTERIM) ROBERT WALKER

S. Reese the DPW Director introduced Robert Walker as the finalist candidate for the position of the interim Highway Superintendent and gave a brief background of his experience. S. Reese stated that R. Walker shares his vision and he is excited to work with him.

R. Walker stated that he has over thirty years of experience, the last fifteen here in Holliston. His experience includes work within the Highway, Water, Parks and Recycling departments in the Town of Wellesley.

The Select Board members each had the opportunity to ask R. Walker several questions. Some of which included his vision for the Highway Department going forward. R. Walker noted that several of his goals will be to organize the Highway Department and concentrate on the sidewalks throughout Town. He also would like to look at the possibility of implementing a Grounds Department within the Highway Department.

J. Cronin made a motion to appoint Robert Walker as the Highway Superintendent, Deputy DPW Director position for a six month interim basis from November 1, 2021 till May 2, 2022. B. Sparrell second. Vote 3-0.

DISCUSSION WITH EDC CHAIR: "RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVING PROPERTY BLIGHT & DILAPIDATION IN HOLLISTON FOR THE BENEFIT OF HOLLISTON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & PUBLIC WELFARE"

The Select Board opened discussion regarding a letter which was composed by the EDC Chair Matthew Coletti and also was signed by Glen Brown a committee member of Envisioning Future Holliston. M. Coletti however was unable to attend the meeting. The letter highlighted three points. One was a request to review Holliston's General Zoning By-laws. Local regulations, department policy specific to blight and dilapidation, including increase in fines. Second to consider an article at a future Town Meeting to acquire a property in the downtown area by eminent domain. Thirdly request that the Building Department and the Board of Health review

Commercial properties within Town for violations.

The Select Board agreed with the first and third point of the letter, however all three felt that the Town would not have any reason or jurisdiction to obtain the property referenced by eminent domain as the owner has always been a responsible tax payer. J. Cronin suggested the EDC reach out to the owner of the property and encourage a dialogue. D. Alfred, 315 High Street called into the meeting to voice his support of the Select Board and their response to all three points.

In conclusion the Board asked T. Ahern to present the feedback to M. Coletti and also ask for a vote from the EDC regarding the recommendations. T. Ahern noted that there may be State funding available in the future for certain property improvements throughout Town.

CARES ACT / ARPA PROGRAMMATIC UPDATE:

T. Ahern stated that the CARES Act spending deadline is October 31, 2021, with a reporting deadline of December 3, 2021. There will be no balance of CARES Act Funding that will be returned to the State.

J. Cronin made a motion to direct the Town Administrator, to reduce the arrangement made with Nat & Kay from twice a day to once a day High Touch Cleaning of municipal buildings effective January 1, 2022 per the recommendation of the Emergency Management Director. B. Sparrell second. Vote 3-0.

J. Cronin made a motion to authorize the Town Administrator, Town Accountant and the Emergency Manager to close out the remainder of the CARES Act Grant by posting approved expenses and line item transfers and journal entries for CARES Act eligible expenses incurred by Town Departments during the period of performance. B. Sparrell second. Vote 3-0.

American Rescue Plan Act / ARPA

T. Ahern presented an update of the ARPA spending along with graphs outlining requests and total projected revenue. The Steering Committee met on October 20, 2021. The Steering Committee asked the Trails Committee and Historical Commission to take their requests to the CPC first. T. Ahern noted that 40% of the ARPA funding has the potential to be set aside for “shovel ready” projects, of which there is a focus on water infrastructure. J. Cronin stated that a project involving wastewater infrastructure (sewers) in the downtown area would be beneficial to the Town, however it would need to be a project that the community would have input in and embrace. T. Hein suggested a Feasibility Study that could address and include the type of economic growth this project can bring would be extremely helpful. T. Ahern noted that the next step would be to draw up an RFP for the next Steering Group meeting.

T. Ahern presented two recommendations for ARPA funding as a result of the Steering Group meeting on October 20, 2021.

J. Cronin made a motion to approve a request from Youth & Family Services in the amount of \$2,600 to continue funding for the temporary position for the remainder of FY22 to be funded by ARPA. B. Sparrell second. Vote 3-0.

J. Cronin made a motion to authorize up to \$75,000 requested by the Emergency Management Director within FY22 to meet the Town's needs for cleaning and sanitizing (once a day) up to \$55,000 and contact tracing services overseen by the Board of Health up to \$20,000 to be funded by ARPA. B. Sparrell second. Vote 3-0.

WARRANT:

J. Cronin made a motion to approve the Weekly Warrant in the amount of \$2,946,522.28. B. Sparrell second. Vote 3-0.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

J. Cronin asked T. Ahern to work with Town Counsel and fact check the information presented by several residents regarding the October Town Meeting Articles relating to cannabis, (which have been indefinitely postponed) and revisit these articles at the 2022 May Town Meeting.

J. Cronin read the memo regarding Fall Leaf Pickup scheduled for the week of November 29, 2021, As well as the "no on street parking" from November 1, 2021 – March 31, 2022.

B. Sparrell thanked all those whom participated in the October 18, 2021 Fall Town Meeting, including those who attended and all the staff and their hard work.

B. Sparrell noted that the Haunted Walk will be held on October 30, 2021 from 5:00pm-9:00pm at the Community Farm, with proceeds going to the Friends of the Community Farm.

COMMENTS FROM THE TOWN ADMINISTRATOR:

T. Ahern stated the item regarding traffic camera data which was passed as part of Article 4 at the October 18, 2021 Town Meeting will be reviewed by Chief Cassidy and Chief Stone, C. Meo the IT Director and Town Counsel to be presented at the next Select Board Meeting.

The Dam working group, which consists of T. Ahern, R. Clapp, M. Zettek, T. Hein and C. Bajdek have selected a vendor for the cost/benefit study of the Town's dams.

A Beaver Deceiver device has been installed at Lake Winthrop in an effort to solve the problem there.

The DPW, including the new Highway Superintendent R. Walker along with the Park & Rec Department will begin discussion on maintenance of the Town wide grounds, including Blair Square and the Rail Trail.

BOARD BUSINESS:

E. Greendale, the Town Clerk joined the meeting to present the draft copy of the re-precinct map as a result of the 2020 census. There is a slight change in which part of precinct 4 will become part of precinct 3. E. Greendale stated that the current population is approximately 14,996.

J. Cronin made a motion to accept the 2020 re-precinct plan as presented by the Town Clerk. B. Sparrell second. Vote 3-0.

T. Hein explained that the Traffic Advisory Committee voted 6-0, 3 absent, at the hearing regarding the petition submitted by the residents at 811 Highland involving the intersections of Highland and Hollis and Highland and Prentice the following: Direct public safety officials to develop recommendations for roadway markings including speed feedback signs or other traffic calming measures. And/or request an engineering study of the intersections.

The Board will look to the DPW Superintendent for input on the signage.

J. Cronin made a motion to direct the Town Administrator to engage a Traffic Engineering firm to evaluate the existing conditions of 2 intersections, Highland at Hollis Street and Highland Street at Prentice Street as recommended by the Traffic Advisory Committee and funded by the Town as part of Article 15 of the December 2020 Town Meeting. B. Sparrell second. Vote 3-0.

J. Cronin made a motion to approve a gift in the amount of \$250 to the Holliston Fire Department from the daughter of a resident in appreciation. B. Sparrell second. Vote 3-0.

J. Cronin made a motion to accept a donation in the amount of \$10,000 from the Downtown Marigold Project to install a heater and door in the greenhouse at the Community Farm to enable early seeding and annual propagation. B. Sparrell second. Vote 3-0.

J. Cronin made a motion to approve the Lions Holiday Lights Display which this year will include lights in Blair Square, from November 27, 2021 till January 1, 2022. B. Sparrell second. Vote 3-0.

R. Clapp the Conservation Agent joined the meeting to explain that the Holliston Dam's Working Group has been evaluating the state of 3 Dams throughout Town. Lake Winthrop, Factory Pond and Houghton Pond. The goal is repair, rehabilitation or removal. PARE Corp has submitted a proposal costing slightly under \$30,000.

J. Cronin made a motion to authorize the Town Administrator to enter into an agreement with PARE Corp for a Cost Benefit analysis for 3 Dam's in Holliston in an amount not to exceed \$30,000 funded by the October 2019 Town Meeting Warrant Article 18. B. Sparrell second. Vote 3-0.

T. Ahern stated that PARE Corp is also engaged in the 9 Green Street project. May 2021 Town Meeting had previously approved \$118,000 towards the demolition. Costello Dismantling estimate is \$124,390. The Town will look to see if ARPA funding may be eligible to fund the difference.

J. Cronin made a motion to award the contract to the lowest and most responsible bidder for the demolition of 9 Green Street to Costello Dismantling Company for an amount not to exceed \$124,390. Article 32 of the May 2021 Meeting included funding of \$118,000, as the Town Administrator indicated the delta will be covered by some other source, possibly through the federal ARPA grant. B. Sparrell second. Vote 3-0.

J. Cronin made a motion to accept the State Budget FY22 Earmark in the amount of \$100,000 for Goodwill Park. This funding will be used for design/bid/build a replacement structure. B. Sparrell second, with thanks to State Rep. Dykema and T. Ahern. Vote 3-0.

J. Cronin made a motion to accept a \$27,500 grant from the Department of Housing Choice Communities and appoint the Town Administrator as the Chief Procurement Officer.

B. Sparrell second. Vote 3-0.

J. Cronin made a motion to approve the September 27, 2021 and October 4, 2021 Minutes as written. B. Sparrell second. Vote 3-0.

J. Cronin made a motion to approve the following appointments for the Agricultural Commission: Claire Toohey as a full voting member with a term to expire June 2024. Vicky Keller as an Associate member with a term to expire June 2022. Andy Reseska as an Associate member with a term to expire June 2022. B. Sparrell second. Vote 3-0.

OTHER BUSINESS:

J. Cronin stated that there will be a Wreath Ceremony at the Town Hall on Thursday November 11, 2021, Veterans Day, with a luncheon at the Senior Center after. There will not be a parade this year.

At 8:56pm J. Cronin made a motion to adjourn. B. Sparrell second. Vote 3-0.

Respectfully submitted;

Margaret Driscoll

Approved__11-22-21

