

TOWN OF HOLLISTON

SELECT BOARD

November 15, 2021
7:00PM

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; Staci Raffi, Chair Envisioning Future Holliston; Frank Gervasio, Melinda Ordway, representatives from Division of Local Services; Sam Tyler, Chair Governance Committee; Vin Murphy, Holliston resident and FinCom member; and James Keast, Facilities Manager.

At 7:01pm T. Hein called the meeting to order.

UPDATE FROM ENVISIONING FUTURE HOLLISTON:

Staci Raffi the Chair of Envisioning Future Holliston joined the meeting with an update. The committee has met multiple times and created a survey which will be available until January 7, 2022. The committee is now comprised of several subcommittees consisting of outreach, branding, survey and data collection. The committee hopes to have a report ready for the 2022 May Town Meeting.

DIVISION OF LOCAL SERVICES – PRESENTATION OF FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT REVIEW:

Frank Gervasio and Melinda Ordway, representatives from DLS presented a report of Holliston's financial management policies. The review process consisted of interviewing various staff members from both the Town Hall and Schools as well as certain Committee and Board Chairs. It also looked at a wide range of municipal documents including town bylaws, relevant state statutes, budgets, job descriptions, financial data from annual submissions to the Division as part of the tax rate setting, and free cash certification. F. Gervasio stated that upon review there are 14 recommendations being made to the Town, including the adoption of a Town Charter, review of the Towns By-laws to ensure they are up to date and to hold quarterly meetings which include the Select Board, Finance Committee and School Committee. Slides outlining the scope, overview and recommendations were shown as part of the presentation and the entire report can be accessed via the Towns' website. Other reports pertaining to other communities within Massachusetts can be accessed through the DLS website. The Select Board took the opportunity to ask F. Gervasio and M. Ordway several questions. It was noted that if the Town was to adopt a Charter the process would take several years and require legislation approval.

Sam Tyler, Chair of the Governance Committee stated that the Committee was disappointed in the report and where expecting more advice and guidance. F. Gervasio and M. Ordway

agreed to attend a future Governance Committee meeting to go over additional questions and details. T. Ahern will arrange the meeting.

Vin Murphy, 432 Norfolk Street made an inquiry as to what specific recommendations might be made regarding the auditing process. M. Ordway noted that although an Audit Committee may be helpful it is not necessary and stated if the same Auditing firm is used consistently by the Town a rotation of the individual auditors within the firm would be suggested. Another option would be to put together an RFP (Request for Proposal) to research other firms.

F. Gervasio and M. Ordway thanked all who contributed for their time and input which was very helpful in generating the report.

The Select Board members in turn thanked F. Gervasio and M. Ordway for their detailed presentation.

COVID-19 COMMUNITY UPDATE / ARPA PROGRAMMATIC UPDATE:

Chief Cassidy presented an overview of the eligibility for the booster with the use of slides. There are currently 34 active Covid cases. The Town stands at 999 Covid cases since tracking began back in March 2020.

When asked a question regarding the FEMA reimbursement process the Chief explained that he will coordinate with the Schools as only 1 application can be submitted which will include both the municipality and schools. The aggregate amount is \$325,000, 10% (\$30,000) of which is being held in contingency for ARPA Funding.

The Chief stated that the next scheduled ARPA Steering Group meeting will be held on Wednesday December 1, 2021 at noon. Several Committees/Boards will be bringing requests to the Group including the Council on Aging, Historical Society and Economic Development.

WARRANTS:

J. Cronin made a motion to approve the Weekly Warrant in the amount of \$831,640.85. B. Sparrell second. Vote 3-0.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

J. Cronin stated that the Veterans lunch which was held at the Senior Center on November 11, 2021 was great event. He expressed his gratitude to all the Veterans.

The DPW is advertising for snowplow drivers.

There will be a Covid-19 Booster Clinic at the Senior Center on Wednesday December 8, 2021 from 1:00pm-2:00pm.

Anyone who may qualify for fuel assistance this year should contact the Senior Center.

B. Sparrell also expressed his thanks for those involved in the Veterans luncheon as well.

He continued to also thank Josh Mann for organizing the "No Place for Hate" rally which was also held on Thursday November 11, 2021.

T. Hein stated that the flashing sign at the Woodland Street Crosswalk at Holliston Oil (Rail Trail) will be installed next week.

The Highway Department has begun short term improvements to the intersections of Hollis and Highland and Prentice and Highland to improve on traffic flow there.

The October 2021 Town Meeting approved 3 additional crosswalks on Washington Street, which should be installed in the spring of 2022.

UPDATE ON 260 WOODLAND STREET PROPERTY/PLANS:

The Select Board opened up discussion on the current status of the future of the property at 260 Woodland Street. J. Cronin stated that at a recent Park & Recreation meeting the idea of a pump track within the Town still held a good deal of interest. Land behind Pinecrest Golf Course was mentioned as another area that could be considered as a site. Josh Solberg who has been the advocate for the pump track will be moving from the Town and therefore the Town will need another person to take on the project. The other two options which also have been discussed in the past for the site have been a dog park or a rest area. As T. Hein pointed out these would also need a person or a group to spearhead a potential project. T. Ahern noted that any project would most likely need some capital investment or a grant to fund. The Board agreed that this will be an ongoing agenda item and anyone interested should contact the Select Boards office.

COMMENTS FROM TOWN ADMINISTRATOR:

T. Ahern noted several updates regarding scheduling:

The annual tax rate hearing will be held on Monday November 22, 2021, with an alternative date of Monday November 29, 2021.

The annual Humanitarian Awards will be held on Monday November 29, 2021 at 6:15pm in Upper Town Hall.

Stantec Corp. will attend the December 6, 2021 meeting with updates on the sidewalk and water studies.

T. Ahern sent a letter to Mass DOT to followup on State owned roads throughout Town requesting road and sidewalk repairs, prioritizing 1 mile on route 16 and also the installation of water pipes on a section of route 126.

Pare Corp will kick off the cost benefit analysis for the Dams on Monday November 22, 2021 with a site walk.

The MRI engagement for Emergency Medicine Services evaluation for the Fire Department has begun and should be completed and delivered in March 2022.

T. Hein asked if T. Ahern could invite Senator Spilka and Representative Dykema to a Select Board meeting in December if possible.

James Keast the Facilities Manager joined the meeting with an update of various projects:

The septic system project at Town Hall will start this week, November 15, 2021. It will be completed in 3 phases.

The installation of storm windows at Town Hall are 80% complete.

The new keys, access control, electronic card key reader will be accessible by the end of December 2021. All keys assigned will be documented for security purpose.

The demolition of 9 Green Street is on schedule. J. Keast presented a graph displaying the weekly progression with a completion of the demolition in early December 2021. All abutters have been notified.

The bid opening for the Goodwill Park renovations/restroom will be on Friday December 3, 2021. Work to be done in the spring of 2022.

The front entrance to 1750 Washington Street will be rebuilt. The work will begin this week, November 15, 2021.

The DPW Feasibility Study being done by Weston & Sampson is ongoing. The report should be available in February 2022. T. Hein asked if the study recommends that the current DPW facility no longer be used as such would that site be reused by the Town in some way. J. Keast noted that "how to decommission the site" is included in the study. J. Cronin added that he would like to see the DPW, Water and Highway under one roof.

GENERAL FINANCE DISCUSSIONS:

T. Ahern presented graphics and an update on the Town's Financial Policies after the most recent feedback from the Select Board and the Finance Committee. T. Ahern explained the goal is to increase Capital and set aside monies up to 3%, which would include future laying in of the futures debt service within the levy limit. Also to look at prioritizing keeping reserves in line with targets. T. Ahern also discussed briefly the feedback received regarding the Town's \$1.5 million set aside annually for OPEB liabilities and the projected maturity dates.

J. Cronin made a motion to approve the Annual Town Financial Policies dated November 9, 2021 to be updated in the fall of 2023. B. Sparrell second. Vote 3-0.

T. Ahern reviewed the graphic of the FY23 Budget Schedule. T. Ahern will schedule a meeting with Senator Spilka and Representative Dykema. After which he will develop a budget guideline document. A number of department budgets are due mid-January. There will also be a meeting with the Schools in mid-February 2022. All levels of the budget will be presented at the 2022 May Town Meeting.

T. Ahern continued with a graphic of the historical receipts which are used to project revenue. He noted that during the pandemic the Building Department saw an increase in activity which resulted in an increase in revenue which may not continue over the next several year. Also due to current issues revolving around various shortages the auto industry has seen a decline in sales and this will be reflected in the revenue the Town receives for Motor Vehicle Excise Tax. Currently the Town has not benefited from the Solar Project on Marshall Street, however at some point the Town will be receiving revenue.

The Select Board thanked T. Ahern for his presentation.

BOARD BUSINESS:

J. Cronin made a motion to appoint T. Ahern to the Board of the MetroWest Veterans' District for a term to expire in June 2022. B. Sparrell second. Vote 3-0.

The Select Board members signed a Letter to the MetroWest Veterans Service District. No motion was needed.

J. Cronin made a motion to approve/establish a gift account for the purpose to support the Blair Square Project specific to Article 31 of the 2021 Annual May Meeting which gives the Towns' gift policy as outlined by the Treasurer Collector and expended through the Towns weekly warrant process and received by the Town Accountant. B. Sparrell second. Vote 3-0.

J. Cronin made a motion to approve the installation of the Chabad Center Menorah at the front of the Town Hall from 11-21-21 through 12-12-21. B. Sparrell second. Vote 3-0.

J. Cronin noted the Snowman Scavenger Hunt which is being sponsored by the Cub Scout Pack 2 will be held throughout Town in the near future. More details to follow.

OTHER BUSINESS:

J. Cronin read the Fall Leaf Pickup memo for the week of November 29, 2021 and the memo for the Winter "No On Street Parking which went into effect on November 1, 2021.

J. Cronin reminded the public of the Flu Clinic at the Town Hall on Saturday November 20, 2021.

J. Cronin stated that the Town has received a grant from the Sustainable Materials Recovery Program in the amount of \$6,600. Thanks to Matt Zettek.

T. Hein stated that an update will be forthcoming regarding the Downtown Traffic Flow (McMahon Engineering Traffic Hearing).

At 9:41pm J. Cronin made a motion to adjourn. B. Sparrell second. Vote 3-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Margaret Driscoll

Approved_12-13-21