

HOLLISTON SELECT BOARD

November 25, 2019
7:00 p.m.

Holliston Town Hall
Meeting Room – 105

Present: Mark Ahronian, Chairman; John Cronin, Vice Chairman; Tina Hein, Clerk and Andrea Minihan, Administrative Assistant. Jeff Ritter Town Administrator was absent.

MS. HEIN MOVED TO APPROVE THE FOLLOWING WARRANT

20-22	GENERAL WARRANT	\$1,065,053.06
	DEBT SERVICE TOWN (001)	\$2,519,175.00
	PAY.COM (APPLICATION FRO MEDICARE-HEALTH)	\$ 677.80
	DEBIT CARD	\$ 2,338.42
	COMMUNITY PRESERVATION (265)	\$ 67.32
	PERFORMANCE DEPOSITS (801)	\$ 5,382.41
	AGENCY (890) VETERANS DISTRICT	\$ 275.00
	AGENCY (890) VETERANS DISTRICT PAYROLL	\$ 2,223.84
	TOWN PAYROLL	\$ 63,604.20
	TOTAL PAID WARRANT	\$ 3,656,573.21

ACCOUNTANT’S NOTE:

ACCRUED DEDUCTION LIABILITIES NOT PAID	\$ 34,147.28
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TREASURER’S NOTE:

WIRE TO HEALTH INSURANCE TRUST	\$ 20,775.96
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THE MOTION WAS SECONDED BY MR. CRONIN. ALL IN FAVOR.

COMMENTS FROM THE BOARD

Ms. Hein wanted to express the sympathy of the Board in the passing of Jarred Adams. Ms. Hein said that Mr. Adams was a Navy Veteran, and he served for a term on the Board of Selectmen. She said that Mr. Adams served the community of Holliston in many ways, he was also on the Board of Water Commissioners.

Ms. Hein also congratulated the Girls High School Soccer Team with a great win over Winchester in the State finals.

Mr. Cronin said that Representative Dykema’s office called with the news that the liquor bill for Crafted has passed at the State House last Friday November 22, 2019. He said that now it goes to the Senate for consideration for legislative action before it goes on the Governor’s desk to be signed.

Mr. Ahronian said that it was a wonderful win for the girls Soccer team. He said that the Fire Department and the Police gave the team bus an escort back into town.

Mr. Ahronian thanked Ms. Minihan for helping with tonight’s meeting.

GREEN COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT

Chris Meo, Technology Director, was present to give the report. Mr. Meo said that in 2015 the Town of Holliston was designated a Green Community. He said that with that a yearly report needs to be sent to the Department of Environmental Resources. Mr. Meo said that in the report we have decreased our energy by 3.25%. He said that this was because of the new electric vehicles, there was a huge decrease

in gasoline. He said that the new boilers have decreased the natural gas by 36% in Town Hall. Mr. Meo said that there was a very large gap in the ceiling at the Library and we lost a lot of energy. He said that now that it has been repaired he expects to see a decrease in the utilities at the Library. Mr. Meo said that in May and June of 2019 we had to run the heat longer because it was so cold in the buildings. Mr. Meo said that another increase is the new downtown traffic lights has increased the cost of the lighting by 40%. Mr. Meo said that the Town applied for a new round of grants and were awarded but the State underfunded each and every one of them by 18%. He said that we have worked with Riser the Energy provider and Eversource, they will make up the difference on all the electrical projects. There are four weatherization gas projects that they are not going to fund. He said that they are working with the provider to help make up the \$4,800 that we are short. Mr. Meo said that one of the projects is to put LED lighting at 1750 Washington Street, and putting exterior at all three schools. He said continuing weatherization at Town Hall including filling in some gaps that were discovered because of the broken pipe last year. He said the kitchen hoods will be replaced at the Middle and Elementary schools.

Mr. Ahronian asked if they did something at the Senior Center?

Mr. Meo said that last year they did an energy management system and light retrofit. He said that they did lights at the Library about 2 ½ years ago.

Mr. Meo said that about 2 years ago the Town purchased 2 electric cars thru the Green Community, they replaced a 2007 Ford. He said that the cars have driven over thirteen thousand miles, and we have saved over seven hundred and sixty nine gallons of gas, which would have cost two thousand two hundred and fourteen dollars in gas. He said that the cost to charge the cars over the past couple of years is about eight hundred dollars.

Ms. Hein asked if the eight projects that Mr. Meo was taking about, are they already in the works?

Mr. Meo said yes and we have signed contracts for most of them. He said that the work at 1750 Washington Street will be starting in about 2 weeks and hopefully finished sometime in January.

Ms. Hein asked if the projects that are starting will they be able to help save the \$4,800? Mr. Meo said that we have to pay upfront. He said that we would see the savings the following year.

Ms. Hein asked if we will see an energy savings at the Library because the roof project is completed.

Mr. Meo said that there will be a big decrease in gas usage because the heating system is working the way it should be.

Mr. Cronin said that this is FY19 information, and it has to be in by December 4, 2019. Mr. Meo said yes.

Mr. Cronin asked how many years have we received this grant?

Mr. Meo said that this is our third round.

Mr. Cronin said that we have two Nissan Leaf cars. Mr. Meo said yes. He said that one is assigned to the Building Inspector and the other used by the Assessors.

Mr. Cronin asked how many miles have the cars driven?

Mr. Meo said about thirteen thousand.

Mr. Cronin said each?

Mr. Meo said no total of both.

Mr. Cronin asked if we had a budget to maintain the vehicles?

Mr. Meo said that they are still under warranty. And there is very little maintenance on them. He said that the only real maintenance is to rotate the tires, and that has been handled by the Highway Department.

Mr. Ahronian asked when you apply for the next grant are you going to explain the loss of heat for the Library.

Mr. Meo said that yes he will explain. Mr. Meo said that when you explain what happened you always look better.

MR. CRONIN MOVED TO ENDORSE THE GREEN COMMITTEE GRANT APPLICATION. THE MOTION WAS SECONDED BY MS. HEIN. ALL IN FAVOR.

SQUARE CREDIT CARD TRANSACTION POLICY

Mary Bousquet, Treasurer/Collector was present. Ms. Bousquet said that this was a pilot project for the park Department to accept credit cards at the concession stand at the lake. She said that it worked out well. She said that now the school Department would like to be able to use the square. She said that if several different departments want to use the square, they need to set up a policy for its use.

Ms. Bousquet said that the square can only be used by Town employees only. No Boards or Committees may use the square. Ms. Bousquet said that they want to know where the tablet is at all times. They do not want it taken home or used for personnel use. Ms. Bousquet said that she and Chris Meo, Technology Director worked on the policy together. She said that the square can only be used on the tablet not an iPhone.

Ms. Hein asked who monitors the square transactions?

Ms. Bousquet said that she can log into the square account and she would be able to see all the transactions.

Ms. Hein asked if there was any risk of fraud or a hacker that could get access to the square account?

Ms. Bousquet said she keeps a close eye on it.

Ms. Hein said that she thinks it is a good police and that it covers all the bases.

Ms. Hein asked how will the schools use the square?

Ms. Bousquet said they wanted to use it for the silent auction. She said that they waited for the last minute to ask for it, and we did not have a policy in place.

Ms. Bousquet said that they could use it for ticket sales.

Mr. Cronin asked how many credit squares do we have?

Ms. Bousquet said that we only have one.

Mr. Cronin asked if they were thinking of purchasing any more?

Ms. Bousquet said yes a couple of more.

Mr. Cronin said the square is only use to accept payment.

Ms. Bousquet said yes.

Mr. Cronin asked if there was a cost per transaction to the Town.

Ms. Bousquet said that yes there is a fee that the user pays for, not the Town.

Mr. Ahronian asked if there had been any issues since we started using the square?

Ms. Bousquet said everything is running fine.

MR. CRONIN MOVED TO APPROVE AND ACCEPT THE SQUARE CREDIT CARD TRANSACTION POLICY. THE MOTION WAS SECONDED BY MS. HEIN. ALL IN FAVOR.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY GRANT APPLICATION

Chris Meo, Technology Director was present. He spoke about cyber security backing. He said that we received a State grant for training. Mr. Meo said that he attended a meeting just last week about this. He said that there is an aggressive timeline. They are looking for a commitment from the Town by next Monday. He said that there will one hundred and ten user account that we will be sharing with the school and Town employees. He said that he met last week with the schools Technology Director and they are both recommending that all Town Hall staff including Youth and family Services, Park and Recreation, some Library staff, some Fire Department employees, some Police Department employees, all school Central Office staff, the front office staff at all the schools and the Technology staff as users. Mr. Meo said that the grant starts on December 2, 2019 and for the first two months will be an evaluation of our network. And then they will make recommendations. He said that starting February 22, 2020, through December 2020 the one hundred and ten users will need to take a four hour self paced course. Mr. Meo said that he is looking for the Boards approval.

Ms. Hein asked if these accounts become a best practice accounts.

Mr. Meo said that you log into a website and you take a fifteen minute course. At the end there is an assessment tool and if you fail the assessment then you go back in for review or they move onto the next course.

Mr. Meo said that this has nothing to do with email. It is an account that goes right into a State computer.

Mr. Cronin asked if there was any funds coming to the Town for this program?

Mr. Meo said no but if we were to do this on our own each account could cost \$65.00 each.

Mr. Cronin asked if elected or appointed members could take part in this?

Mr. Meo said no just employees who deal with confidential information and cash. He said the front line staff.

Mr. Cronin said that there is a four hour commitment for training. Did the schools buy into this commitment.

Mr. Meo said that he met with Brad Jackson last week.

Mr. Cronin asked if the four hours was going to be split up?

Mr. Meo said yes it is fifteen minutes intervals.

Mr. Cronin said that this a phenomenal program.

MR. CRONIN MOVED TO APPROVE AND ENDORSE THE PARTICIPATION OF THE TECHNOLOGY GRANT APPLICATION FOR THE 2019 CYBER SECURITY AWARENESS. THE MOTION WAS SECONDED BY MS. HEIN. ALL IN FAVOR.

BOARD BUSINESS

MS. HEIN MOVED TO APPROVE THE MEETING MINUTES FOR NOVEMBER 12, 2019, AS WRITTEN. THE MOTION WAS SECONDED BY MR. CRONIN. ALL IN FAVOR.

MS. HEIN MOVED TO APPROVE THE MEETING MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 18, 2019, AS WRITTEN. THE MOTION WAS SECONDED BY MR. CRONIN. ALL IN FAVOR.

HOLIDAY DISPLAY REQUEST

Ms. Hein said that this request is from the Lions Club.

MS. HEIN MOVED TO APPROVE THE HOLIDAY LIGHT REQUEST FOR THE LION'S CLUB. THE MOTION WAS SECONDED BY MR. CRONIN. TWO IN FAVOR. MR. AHRONIAN ABSTAINED. (Mr. Ahronian is a Lion's Club Member)

APPOINTMENT – ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

MR. CRONIN MOVED TO APPOINT OKSANA LEVCHENKO TO THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE. FOR A TERM TO EXPIRE JUNE 2020. THE MOTION WAS SECONDED BY MS. HEIN. ALL IN FAVOR.

Mr. Cronin said that he would like to see a few items placed on the agenda. He said that the Sustainability Coordinator job description. Also the facility Managers position. He said that he thinks that posting closed last Friday. Mr. Cronin said that there were sixteen applicants for this position. Mr. Cronin would like to have Mr. Ritter form a screening Committee, to make recommendations to the Board. Mr. Cronin suggested that Mr. Ritter, Mr. Reese, Mr. Frank, and a school Department member. He would like them to screen the resumes then make recommendations to the Select Board.

7:33 P.M. TAX CLASSIFICATION HEARING

Ms. Hein read the following Tax Classification Notice.

The Board of Selectmen of the Town of Holliston will hold a public hearing on Monday November 25, 2019, at 7:30 P.M. in the Selectmen's Meeting Room, room 105 at Town Hall 703 Washington Street on the issue of allocating the local property tax levy among the five property classes for the fiscal year ending June 2020. This hearing, commonly known as the Tax Classification Hearing, will be held for the purpose of providing an open forum for the discussion of local property tax policy. The Central issue to be discusses is whether all five classes of property – residential, open space, commercial, industrial, personal – shall be taxed at the same rate or at different rates. The information and data concerning the fiscal effect of the available alternatives is open to public inspection in the office of the Board of Assessors at Town Hall, 703 Washington Street, Holliston, MA between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. Monday, Wednesday and Thursday, 8:30 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday and 8:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. on Friday. Interested taxpayers are urged to review the material and attend the hearing. Written and oral statements from interested taxpayers will be accepted and taken into consideration at the hearing. Written statements will also be accepted prior to the hearing.

Katherine Peirce, Principal Assessor, Mary Greendale, Chairperson, and Leslie Kennally, Board Member were present.

Ms. Greendale said that we currently have a single tax rate. She said that the State will allow is to set it up differently. She said that a lot of communities that have a lot of industry or commercial property do have a split rate. That means that the business share a big brunt of the taxes. Ms. Greendale said that there is only 12% commercial/industrial in the Town of Holliston. Ms. Greendale said that the assessment went up by 5% this year. She said that the spending has gone up by 4%.

Ms. Greendale said that if the assessment of your property goes up the tax rate goes down. But if your tax rate goes up then the assessment goes down. Ms. Greendale said that because we spent more

money this year by 4% we ended up with the tax rate not going down. She said that it has changed by two cents. Ms. Greendale said that we have a levy that we have to pay out of our funds.

Ms. Peirce said that if the values had not changed and only but budget changed our tax rate would have gone up eighty-nine cents. She said that the rate has changed by two cents, it altered the tax rate.

She said that if they had not done any evaluation changes other than added on growth it would have gone up eighty-nine cents. Ms. Peirce said that it still would have been under the levy.

Ms. Peirce said that if they do split the tax rate the commercial/industrial would go up and the residential would go down. She said that it is a disadvantage for the commercial/industrial.

She said that there was a lot of discussion on this. She said that she in on the Assessors Board for the Town of Framingham and in 2015 the average tax bill for residential went up by \$500 because the value dropped. Ms. Peirce said that Holliston struggles to get commercial business and she does not think that it would be fair to charge them more. Ms. Peirce said that the Economic Development Committee is looking for more commercial/industrial growth and that would help with the tax rate.

Mr. Ahronian asked what the total commercial value was in Town.

Ms. Peirce said that it is \$74,926,685. She said that there is additional industrial/personal property \$180,476,800 for industrial and the personal property is \$64,804,500. She said that there is a breakdown in her report.

Ms. Greendale said that this numbers reflect 2018 year. Ms. Greendale said that a single family home increased in value by 5%. She said that condominiums increased by 13%.

Ms. Peirce said that we had growth in condominiums. There is Brooks Mount and Holliston Woods.

Mr. Ahronian asked if this was a 55 and older communities.

Ms. Peirce said that it is an increase in volume.

Ms. Greendale said that the average sale price in 2018 was \$571,000. And the average assessed value for FY20 is \$470,981.

Ms. Peirce said that they had 167 sales.

Ms. Greendale said that the average residential tax bill will go up by 4%.

Ms. Peirce said that we have younger families that are moving into Town and we have a lot of people downsizing.

Ms. Hein said that the best set of decisions to be made for the vision of the future for the Town.

Ms. Peirce said that if the levy has been paid off and the levy is reduced, her concern is that if spending is not checked it will not match and balance.

Ms. Peirce said that the only way to overspend is an override. She said that would be a discussion for the Finance Committee.

Ms. Hein asked if there was a process to keep the work force in Town.

Ms. Peirce said that they do not have any information on income. She said that she was part of a group that did house hold incomes for many years and how many people had to travel back and forth to get to work.

Ms. Peirce said that the younger people and older people are getting forced to leave. She said that they do not want that to happen.

Ms. Greendale said that there are several developers that are purchasing some of the lower level houses and fixing them up.

Ms. Greendale said that the Housing Committee has scooped up a few houses and are fixing them up.

Mr. Cronin said that he knows how much work goes into this decision. Mr. Cronin said that it takes a long time to pull this all together and Ms. Peirce has been working on this since June.

Mr. Cronin asked what did land value do this year?

Ms. Greendale said that it is going up.

Mr. Cronin asked what a one acre buildable lot would go for.

Ms. Greendale said \$230,000 and it is inching up.

Mr. Cronin asked what % did we increase last year?

Ms. Peirce said that the tax rate did not increase.

Mr. Cronin said that we are almost through paying off the elementary school.

Mr. Cronin asked if all this information is on the Town website?

Ms. Peirce said that it will be on tomorrow.

Mr. Ahronian asked what is a healthy percentage of new houses.

Ms. Greendale said that they have no control over that.

Ms. Greendale said that there are only about 20 parcels left.

Mr. Ahronian said that we may have to do some zoning changes to make growth.

Ms. Greendale said not to be afraid of the Assessor when they come to your door. We all want an honest assessment of our homes.

Ms. Hein asked if they inspected homes every 10 years?

Ms. Peirce said that they go door to door every 10 years, but many residents will not let them in.

Ms. Hein asked about empty industrial buildings, and does that have an impact?

Ms. Peirce said that will lower the values. She said that we have a few vacancies and yes there is a concern.

Ms. Hein asked if they were all in the same location?

Ms. Peirce said that there is one on Summer Street, and one that is being foreclosed on Everett Street.

Ms. Greendale said that there are a couple in the Lowland Street Industrial Park. She said that there are a couple that are for sale or lease.

Mr. Cronin asked about the re-cap sheet on local receipts, where did you get the estimated receipts for FY20.

Ms. Peirce said that is a question for the Accountant.

AT 8:16 P.M. MR. CRONIN MOVED TO CLOSE THE TAX CLASSIFICATION HEARING. THE MOTION WAS SECONDED BY MS. HEIN. ALL IN FAVOR.

MR. CRONIN MOVED TO ADOPT A RESIDENTIAL FACTOR OF ONE FOR A UNIFORMED TAX RATE. THE MOTION WAS SECONDED BY MS. HEIN. ALL IN FAVOR.

MR. CRONIN MOVED NOT TO ADOPT THE RESIDENTIAL EXEMPTION, THE SMALL PARCEL EXEMPTION AND THE OPEN SPACE EXEMPTION. THE MOTION WAS SECONDED BY MS. HEIN. ALL IN FAVOR.

AT 8:18 P.M. MR. CRONIN MOVED TO ADJOURN. THE MOTION WAS SECONDED BY MS. HEIN. ALL IN FAVOR.

Select Board

8.

November 25, 2019

Respectfully submitted,


Donna A. Muzzy

approved 12-9-19