



**TOWN OF HOLLISTON
BOARD OF SELECTMEN**

**703 Washington Street
Holliston, MA 01746**

508-429-0608

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN
MEETING MINUTES
HOLLISTON TOWN HALL
NOVEMBER 26, 2018**

Present: Jay Marsden, Chairman; Mark Ahronian, Vice Chairman; John Cronin, Clerk

Also present: Jeff Ritter, Town Administrator

1.) Warrant: J. Cronin read the Warrant and made a motion to approve the weekly vendor (expense) and payroll Warrant (19-22) in the amount of \$444,673.74. Second, M. Ahronian. Voted 3-0

2.) Public Comment: J. Cronin thanked the Holliston Business Association for sponsoring the recent Holiday Stroll last Saturday. The event was very well attended and it was great family event.

M. Ahronian thanked John Paltrineri and the Holiday Lighting Committee, Griffin Electric, Chipman Electric, Michael Tyman and the Lions Club for making the Holiday Stroll and outstanding success and community event last Saturday.

J. Marsden said he spent three (3) hours on a trolley during the Holiday Stroll and had a wonderful time. The event was great for the business community.

4.) Report of the Town Administrator: J. Ritter reminded the Board and others that the Fiscal Year 2018 Annual Town Reports are due to the Selectmen's Office on January 31st. The sooner it is received the easier it is to prepare the Annual Report.

Last week the Board approved the 2018 Green Communities Annual Report was approved by the Board. The Annual Report was submitted to the State this morning.

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As a reminder, the Annual Police Association Luncheon for seniors will be held on Monday, December 3rd starting at 12noon. The Board is invited to attend. J. Marsden and M. Ahronian said they plan to attend.

As a reminder, there will be a regional meeting of Selectmen to be held at the Thayer House in Medway next Thursday, December 6th starting at 7p.m. J. Marsden and J. Cronin said they plan to attend. J. Ritter will post the Board for that time and location.

J. Cronin asked J. Ritter about the status of the Library ceiling. J. Ritter responded that the shoring was now in place and repairs were underway.

8. Board Business

Meeting Schedule: M. Ahronian made a motion to approve the weekly meeting schedule for the next several months. Second, J. Cronin. Voted 3-0

M. Ahronian made a motion to authorize the Clerk to sign the meeting scheduled for posting. Second, J. Cronin. Voted 3-0

4. Public Hearing – Bar Athena Liquor License Transfer: At 7:15p.m. M. Ahronian made a motion to open the Public Hearing. Second, J. Cronin. Voted 3-0

J. Cronin read the Legal Notice to consider the application for a transfer of an All Alcoholic Beverage Restaurant license from Jasper Hill, LLC d/b/a Jasper Hill Café and Bristo to Black Mountain Foods, Inc. d/b/a Bar Athena for the premises at 770 Washington Street.

Lisa Mendoza-Wood, Manager and Gordon Wood were present both individuals reside at 2 Dennis Street, Hopedale, MA

L. Mendoza-Wood said they are planning to open a new restaurant that will feature tradition European food with a five (5) seat bar.

J. Cronin asked about their previous experience opening a restaurant. L. Mendoza-Wood said she is a trained chef with a lot of experience. G. Wood said he was from New York City with a strong background in finance but this would be a new venture.

J. Cronin asked about hiring and how many employees they anticipated. G. Wood said approximately five (5) to six (6) plus himself and L. Mendoza-Wood. There would be about two (2) bartenders and two (2) to three (3) waiters and waitresses.

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J. Cronin asked about hours of operation. L. Mendoza –Wood said these are all subject to change but for now they are planning to be closed Mondays but normally they would open between 10:30a.m. and 11:00a.m. and close at nine (9). Fridays and Saturdays they might stay open later or closing around 10p.m.

J. Cronin asked about seating and when they planned to open. G. Gordon said there would not be any changes. However, they were planning to do some interior painting and opening around February 1st.

M. Ahronian asked if they were considering providing Middle Eastern food. L. Mendoza-Wood said that was primarily a summer menu item but they would consider it.

J. Marsden said the number one question around town was when that new restaurant was going to opening. He was very happy to see the space utilized it is a prime location and wished them all the best going forward.

J. Marsden asked for any public comments on the application. None was received.

M. Ahronian made a motion to approve the transfer of license and the Retail Alcoholic Beverages License Application from Jasper Hill, LLC d/b/a Jasper Hill Café and Bristo to Black Mountain Foods, Inc. d/b/a Bar Athena for the premises at 770 Washington Street. Second, J. Cronin. Voted 3-0.

M. Ahronian made a motion to close the Public Hearing. Second, J. Cronin. Voted 3-0

8. Board Business

9 Green Street: Mary Bousquet, Treasurer/Collector was present. There will be a Hearing next Thursday, December 6th regarding this tax title property. She anticipates there will be a final judgement made at that time. She is seeking guidance from the Board if the town should take the property for back taxes due to the Town or ask for another continuance.

M. Ahronian asked for M. Bousquet's recommendation. She stated that the Town should take it and sell it for whatever we can get for it.

M. Ahronian asked about risk. M. Bousquet said it might be low risk.

M. Ahronian asked J. Ritter for his recommendation. J. Ritter said he viewed property as a liability if the Town were to take the property he would like to see it sold as soon as possible.

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J. Cronin asked about a time line to complete this transaction. M. Bousquet said less than one (1) year. It is also possible the owner might redeem the property.

J. Marsden asked about the amount owed on the property. M. Bousquet said about \$122,000

J. Cronin noted the Economic Development Committee is interested in the property

M. Ahronian asked if M. Bousquet had discussed this with the Chairman of the Finance Committee. M. Bousquet said no and she does not normally discuss tax takings with the Finance Committee.

J. Marsden said so the approach would be to take it and sell it.

J. Cronin agreed we need to turn the property into an asset.

M. Ahronian made a motion to take the property for back taxes and then to initiate the sale. Pursuant to the recommendation of the Treasurer/Collector. Second, J. Cronin. Voted 3-0

5. Public Hearing – Bertucci’s Restaurant Liquor License Transfer: At 7:30p.m. M. Ahronian made a motion to open the Public Hearing. Second, J. Cronin. Voted 3-0

J. Cronin read the Legal Notice to consider the application for a transfer of an All Alcoholic Beverage Restaurant license from Bertucci’s Restaurant Corporation to Bertucci’s Restaurant, LLC for the premises at 414 Washington Street.

There was not anyone present from Bertucci’s.

J. Marsden summarized the Chapter 11 statewide.

M. Ahronian made a motion to approve the transfer of license and the Retail Alcoholic Beverages License Application from Bertucci’s Restaurant Corporation to Bertucci’s Restaurant, LLC for the premises at 414 Washington Street. Second, J. Cronin. Voted 3-0.

M. Ahronian made a motion to close both Public Hearings for both license transfers. Second, J. Cronin. Voted 3-0

The Board recessed at approximately 7:37p.m. while they waited for the Golf Course Advisory Committee were able to join the Board. They returned from recess at approximately 7:45p.m.

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7. Golf Course Advisory Committee (GCAC): Deb Moore, Chair, of the Golf Course Advisory Committee was present and review the Request for Proposals (RFP) for both the management of the golf course and the food service.

The GCAC reviewed both proposals and ranked both responses based on a pre-determined criteria which was included in both RFP documents and scored the responses accordingly.

Regarding the food service RFP there was one (1) response. There were a couple of missing documents which will have to be secure before a final determination can be made.

For example, there was no income, financial statement, or insurance certificate included in the response. Those documents will be secured.

J. Cronin if the GCAC were pleased with the service provided to date.

D. Moore said yes, over the last five (5) years of service has continuously improved. The only issue are the operational hours which will have to be addressed.

J. Cronin asked about the review criteria. D. Moore said it was pretty the same criteria used previously and the GCAC reviewed the criteria in advance of issuing the RFP.

J. Cronin asked if the GCAC unanimously supported the submission. D. Moore said yes.

J. Cronin said he would like to hold the decision until all information is provided.

J. Marsden agreed, this is an educated decision and we can wait until these loose ends are tied up.

J. Cronin asked regarding the price proposal did that submission meet the expectations of the GCAC. D. Moore said yes it met the expectations of the GCAC.

J. Cronin asked when the Contract expires. D. Moore said on December 31, 2018. It is important to proceed because there are bookings going into the spring.

Regarding the golf course management RFP. Again, the GCAC reviewed the criteria in advance of issuing the RFP and when the submissions were received there was an operational proposal and a price proposal. Both responders to the RFP were interviewed by the GCAC.

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The operational proposals were equal with one (1) exception which was minor. At that point, Johnson Golf was the front runner. When the price proposals were opened it became clear, financially, that New England Golf was offering a better option for the Town.

J. Cronin noted the same criteria were used to evaluate both responses and Johnson Golf appeared to have a more complete response regarding course maintenance placing them in the excellent category vs. the very good category for New England Golf.

M. Ahronian said New England Golf had managed the golf course for like twenty-five (25) years and were successful and asked when the golf industry appeared to spike.

D. Moore said 1999 was an outstanding year but after 9/11 the industry took a hit but the course was still able to make money even when the market was slow. The industry is very weather dependent.

M. Ahronian asked why the GCAC was seeking approval to enter into a five (5) year contract at Town Meeting. D. Moore said it was an investment by the vendor in the course and the longer the term the better the financial proposal would likely be in terms of cash flow.

M. Ahronian asked how the golf course makes money.

D. Moore said a percentage of the revenue from the food service comes to the Town and for the management a set fee goes into a special account to maintain the course and make other improvements to the course. It was important to relocate the maintenance building from the Club House, improvements were made to the cart paths, development of an irrigation was also important. The borrowing costs are coming to an end so there should be more money to make further improvements.

J. Cronin asked if there is a recommended amount of capital of improvements that should be made annually. D. Moore said around \$75,000 is a pretty good number.

M. Ahronian said this facility should be looked at as a revenue generator not as an expense. D. Moore said the GCAC has always stayed within available funds.

J. Marsden summarized that D. Moore will secure the missing information for the food service and the Board will have time over the next two (2) to review the management submission. We should invite the GCAC back in two (2) weeks.

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6. Tax Classification Hearing: J. Cronin read the legal notice.

Kathy Peirce, Assistant Assessor and the Board of Assessors were present.

K. Peirce reviewed a PowerPoint presentation, in summary as follows:

Single Tax Rate

Open Space Discount, Not Recommended by the Board of Assessors

Shifting the Tax Rate Burden to the Commercial, Industrial, Personal Property Classes,
Not Recommended by the Board of Assessors

Residential Exemption, Not Recommended by the Board of Assessors

Small Commercial Exemption, Not Recommended by the Board of Assessors

K. Peirce noted the Framingham example of splitting the tax rate where the tax burden is greater on the business community and less for the residential community. The single tax rate splits it evenly between the business and residential communities. This is best for Holliston.

M. Ahronian said taxes are hard for the senior citizens to pay there is suffering out there and seniors are looking forward to when the debt will be paid off.

K. Peirce said once the debt is paid off there would be a moderate impact. The Assessors are looking at all the possible exemptions.

M. Ahronian said anything you can do to assist the seniors and young people are finding it hard to locate affordable rentals.

K. Peirce said this is a MetroWest problem.

J. Cronin said it is important to advertise and education the public about the advantages of certain exemptions but there is also a privacy issue that can be a challenge. Affordable housing opportunities are limited that's one reason why it is important to work with the Housing Trust.

Peter Barbieri (Assessor), said the Board did an analysis of the 2017 values and there has not been a significant increase perhaps about \$2,000.

J. Marsden asked about a shift to a split tax rate.

P. Barbieri said that would benefit the residential property owner but not the business community.

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K. Peirce noted the values were not changed this year and the new growth number came in at \$962,000. There would be about a 1% increase to the average tax bill.

J. Marsden summarized the options.

M. Ahronian made a motion not to accept the open space exemption. Second, J. Cronin. Voted 3-0

M. Ahronian made a motion not to adopt a split tax rate. Second, J. Cronin. Voted 3-0

M. Ahronian made a motion not to accept a small commercial exemption. Voted 3-0

M. Ahronian made a motion to close the Public Hearing. Second, J. Cronin. Voted 3-0

9. Other Business: J. Marsden read a letter from Maureen Hagen a 5th grade teacher at the Miller School about the outstanding work Sean Reese the Town's DPW Superintendent did in meeting with her class and educating her students about the Town's water system.

Adjourn: At 8:45p.m. J. Cronin made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Second, M. Ahronian. Voted 3-0

Respectfully submitted,



J. Jeffrey Ritter
Town Administrator