



**TOWN OF HOLLISTON
SELECT BOARD**

**703 Washington Street
Holliston, MA 01746**

508-429-0608

**SELECT BOARD
MEETING MINUTES
HOLLISTON TOWN HALL
MARCH 2, 2020**

Present: Mark Ahronian, Chairman; John Cronin, Vice Chairman; Tina Hein, Clerk

Also Present: Jeff Ritter, Town Administrator

At 6:00p.m. M. Ahronian called the meeting to order.

1.) John Petrin, Paradigm Associates: Regarding the search process for a new Town Administrator, J. Petrin reviewed the history of the firm. They completed twenty (20) search last year. He is involved with the Suffolk University Masters in Public Administration program.

During the hiring process candidate need to understand the issues, the budget, the findings of the annual audit, goals and expectations. The ability to work with Department Heads and citizens.

M. Ahronian said he liked the aspect of working well with citizens and the community. He noted that Paradigm comes highly recommended by Special Labor Counsel.

J. Petrin said they would be open to having a community conversation.

M. Ahronian asked about the market conditions. J. Petrin said about twenty (20) percent of the managers retired in the last three (3) years so there has been a significant turnover and new managers are coming forward.

M. Ahronian asked about the search committee and how that would be made up and how much it would cost Holliston to engage Paradigm.

J. Petrin said the process would be for the Select Board to appoint a search committee, perhaps five (5) to seven (7) members, advertise the position, narrow the field of candidates in Executive

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Session and for the search committee to recommend a field of candidates to be interviewed in open session. The alternative would be for Paradigm to screen the candidate pool. The cost would be \$9,800.

Every candidate has a story to tell. It is common to have a full day interview once the field is narrowed. There are not many searches going on right now. A search on Cape Cod can be very different than the MetroWest Boston area a lot depends on geography.

T. Hein asked about public experience vs. private sector experience.

J. Petrin said there is a gap period of learning for the position of Town Administrators it is very important to make sure there is a good fit between the individual and the community. Also, what is the community looking for rapid change or change more slowly.

T. Hein asked how long the process would take. J. Petrin said round fifteen (15) to sixteen (16) weeks. This is a reasonable timeline. It would be helpful to get a goals and objectives document.

J. Cronin said the previous Town Administrator was with Holliston for thirty two (32) years. Why do we need to pay Paradigm \$10,000 to post the position. J. Petrin said the position needs to get posted to the ICMA and MMA web sites but they also have a strong network of candidates they could bring to the table.

J. Cronin asked if they could make a recommendation regarding salary and compensation. J. Petrin said yes but it is market driven they would also complete background checks there are always back stories. However, they already know most of the potential candidates.

J. Cronin asked if they would complete CORI checks and for example if they were current with their taxes. J. Petrin said yes they would take care all of that research.

J. Cronin asked if they would visit previous employers. J. Petrin said typically that is not done.

J. Cronin asked how many resumes would we receive. J. Petrin said around thirty (30).

J. Cronin asked about the use of an assessment center. J. Petrin said they normally work with the screening committee.

M. Ahronian reviewed the timeline. J. Petrin said they would work with the Select Board to develop a profile another important step in the process is for the finalists to interact with the Department Heads at some point in the screen process.

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Mary Greendale ask if the public would have the opportunity to provide input. J. Petrin said all input is valued. M. Greendale asked about the Special Act vs. our local By-Law. J. Petrin said every community is a little different we gather all the documents and available information.

T. Hein asked about input from town employees. J. Petrin said yes, that would be done as part of the development of the profile.

T. Hein asked what would happen if the screening committee only forwarded two (2) candidates. J. Petrin said they would revisit that and forward a third to the Select Board.

2.) Warrants: T. Hein made a motion to approve and sign the weekly expense and vendor Warrant (20-36) in the amount of \$1,100,620.48. Second, J. Cronin. Voted 3-0

3.) Public Comment: T. Hein noted the recent crosswalk accident and the motorists need to stop within the crosswalks and follow the Traffic Rules and Regulations. This is critically import.

J. Cronin thanked the Police Department and thanked a recent firefighter for his recent graduation.

4.) Report of the Town Administrator: J. Ritter said the property at 310 Woodland Street and structures have recent DEP approval for removal we are now securing price proposals for the actual removal.

The first draft of the Annual Town Meeting Warrant is on the Agenda this evening.

We held an important meeting of the Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) grant last Wednesday. As part of your Agenda this evening is an RFP which we would like to release tomorrow.

There will be a Tri-Board Meeting Wednesday with the Finance Committee, Select Board and the Finance Committee this Wednesday at 7:00p.m.

7.) Colonial Power Aggregation: Denise Allard and Mark Cappadona were present and said the natural gas markets are at a six (6) year low and asking for J. Ritter be granted authority to sign an agreement this coming Thursday to lock in the rates for the Town at the new pricing.

T. Hein asked why Natick and Ashland appeared to be a bit lower and can Holliston be 100% green.

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M. Cappadona said Holliston will be at twenty (20%) percent renewable which is required. Competitive suppliers have to be careful there needs to be a public process and the price needs to be known for thirty-six (36) months.

T. Hein asked about the energy manager or Sustainability Coordinator position and how that might be funded.

D. Allard said a small surcharge can be added to the monthly electric bill and that would equal about \$43,000 per year.

J. Cronin asked about the impact on the community. M. Cappadona said about ten (10) percent.

J. Cronin asked about market trends. M. Cappadona said by going into the market now we should be able to secure better pricing for Holliston.

J. Cronin made a motion to authorize the Town Administrator to sign the new pricing agreement on behalf of the Town this Thursday including adding the energy manager option. Second, T. Hein. Voted 3-0

5.) Annual Audit: Terenzio Volpicelli with Roselli, Clark & Associates was present and reviewed the annual audit with the Select Board.

T. Hein said that we need to focus on the seven (7) credit factors. T. Volpicelli said there are two (2) rating agencies Stand and Poor's and Moody's and they generally have a ranking from 1-5.

J. Cronin asked about the road map going forward and what are the areas that need to be focused on to get a AAA bond rating instead of a AA+.

T. Volpicelli said he spoke with the bond advisors and confirmed we are moving in the right direction and they should provide a written recommendation.

M. Ahronian asked about the community preservation allocation and how that compares with other towns.

T. Volpicelli said he did not have that information but he could find it and share it with the Select Board.

T. Hein asked about the quality of education that is provided in Holliston and if that fits into the bond rating.

T. Volpicelli said yes Standard and Poor's takes this into consideration.

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J. Cronin asked if the conference call met his expectations. T. Volpicelli said yes and that Holliston is ahead of most towns. J. Cronin agreed and reviewed a series of questions including if Holliston should have an audit committee.

T. Volpicelli said yes that is considered a best practice.

6.) Treasurer/Collector FY21 Employee Benefits and Debt Budgets: M. Bousquet reviewed both budgets.

T. Hein asked about payments to the Middlesex County Retirement System. M. Bousquet said they have two (2) options make one annual payment or make two (2) payments per year. Holliston currently budgets for two (2) payments but we make one (1) annually.

T. Hein asked about the Health Savings Account and the contribution for non-union employees. M. Bousquet said unions can't participate in the current program because they decided not to.

J. Cronin noted employee benefits budget allows to move money around as needed by way of line item transfers but this is a large increase.

M. Bousquet said they are looking at a 5.2% increase in health insurance this is driven by West Suburban.

M. Ahronian asked about the \$10,000 increase due to an IRS audit. J. Cronin made a motion to approve and refer to the Finance Committee the employee benefits budget. Second, T. Hein. Voted 3-0.

M. Bousquet presented the FY21 debt budget. J. Cronin made a motion to approve and refer to the Finance Committee the FY21 Debt Budget in the amount of \$3,010,540. Second, T. Hein. Voted 3-0.

8.) Community Farm Update: Kristen Westland was present to provide an update regarding the Community Farm project. She reviewed a status report and handout provided to the Select Board. A new water well is a priority as well as improvements to the house.

M. Ahronian said a master plan is needed for the house. The cost for renovations and how the reuse would work. He noted many in-kind donations have been received and other fundraising efforts.

K. Westland said a revolving fund would be very helpful and should be included in the Annual Town Meeting Warrant.

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9.) Police Department FY21 Budget: Chief Stone and Lieutenant Thompson were present and reviewed the budget in detail. Overall there is a 2.89% increase.

J. Cronin asked the FY20 saw an increase by the hiring of a traffic enforcement officer how is that working. M. Stone said they have hired two (2) new officers both are currently in training.

J. Cronin asked if there were any capital items. M. Stone said none at this time.

M. Ahronian asked that M. Stone provide a summary of the Department's accomplishments. M. Stone reviewed the accomplishments to date.

J. Cronin made a motion to approve the proposed FY21 budget and refer it to the Finance Committee in the amount of \$3,105,122. Second, T. Hein. Voted 3-0

10.) Board Business

Annual Town Meeting Warrant: J. Ritter reported this item will be on all upcoming meetings of the Select Board until May 4th.

Veterans FY21 Budget: T. Hein made a motion to approve the FY21 budget request in the amount of \$41,239.27 (administrative) and \$52,565 (benefits). Second, J. Cronin. Voted 3-0

Select Board Budget: J. Cronin asked that the Select Board Budget be sent to the Finance Committee.

Resignation of Parks Commissioner: J. Cronin said we have received the resignation from James Keast from the Parks Commission. In order to get this on the ballot the Select Board needs to accept the resignation in order for the Town Clerk to get the opening on the ballot for the next election. J. Keast understands he does not have to resign but is doing so to avoid any appearance of a conflict. M. Ahronian made a motion to accept the resignation. Second, T. Hein. Voted 3-0

Meeting Minutes from December 16, 2019; February 19, 2020; February 10, 2020; February 6, 2020 and September 12, 2019: T. Hein made a motion to approve and release the minutes except to hold and not release the Executive Session meeting minutes from December 16, 2019. Second, J. Cronin. Vote 3-0

Donations – Community Farm and Senior Center: T. Hein made a motion to accept a donation to the Holliston Community Farm Committee from the Downtown Marigold Project in the amount of \$425. Second, J. Cronin. Voted 3-0

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T. Hein made a motion to accept a donation to the Community Farm Committee from the American Legion Post 47 in the amount of \$250.00. Second, J. Cronin. Voted 3-0

T. Hein made a motion to accept a donation to the Holliston Senior Center from the Holliston Superette in the amount of \$400.00. Second, J. Cronin. Voted 3-0

Appointments Fire Fighter, EMT Blair Square Committee: T. Hein made a motion to appoint Arthur Fenno as an on-call Emergency Medical Technician (EMT). Second, J. Cronin. Voted 3-0

T. Hein made a motion to appoint Thomas Washek as an on-call firefighter EMT. Second, J. Cronin. Voted 3-0

T. Hein made a motion to appoint Eric Woodhouse to take Jamie Erickson place on the Blair Square Committee. Second, J. Cronin. Voted 3-0

Chapter 90 Reimbursement Request: T. Hein made a motion to accept the \$277,117.50 Chapter 90 reimbursement for the Westfield Drive culvert reimbursement replacement project. Second, J. Cronin. Voted 3-0

Open Water Rate Hearing: T. Hein made a motion to open the Water Rate Hearing. Second, J. Cronin. Voted 3-0

MVP/RFP: The Select Board reviewed the Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) Request for Proposals (RFP). It was agreed to remove any reference to a dollar amount. T. Hein made a motion to approve and release the RFP. Second, J. Cronin. Voted 3-0

11.) Any Other Business: T. Hein said regarding 799 Washington Street there is a proposed curb cut in the middle of the intersection. The Town Planner has asked the owner and traffic engineer to look into that. There is a Hearing before the Zoning Board of Appeals and asked for an advisory opinion. T. Hein asked that be prepared. Second, J. Cronin. Second, J. Cronin. Voted 3-0

M. Ahronian said there is a need for a Governance Committee to be established. He said State Laws say one thing and local By-Laws say another. T. Hein asked if the scope would be limited. M. Ahronian said we need to look at elected or appointed boards and that State Laws usurp local By-Laws.

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J. Cronin said the By-Laws need to be reconciled to the laws of the Commonwealth and the Town Administrator Act and asked that a Committee profile/charge be created. T. Hein made a motion to approve. J. Cronin second. Voted 3-0.

Adjourn: J. Cronin made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:37p.m. Second, T. Hein. Voted 3-0

Respectfully submitted,



J. Jeffrey Ritter
Town Administrator