

**HOLDEN BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
MEETING MINUTES  
February 22, 2021**

**6:31PM**

**Memorial Hall**

Present: Anthony Renzoni, Tyler Gibbs, Chiara Barnes, Geri Herlihy, Robert Lavigne

Others Present: Peter Lukes, Town Manager  
Stephanie King, Assistant Town Manager  
Liz Fotos, Town Recorder

Sel. Renzoni called the meeting to order at 6:31PM. The Board stood to recite the Pledge of Allegiance.

**1. Appointments, Licenses, and Permits**

Motion by Sel. Renzoni, seconded by Sel. Gibbs, it was, **UNANIMOUSLY VOTED TO APPROVE LENNY SMITH TO THE HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION FOR A THREE YEAR TERM AS PRESENTED.**

Motion by Sel. Renzoni, seconded by Sel. Gibbs, it was, **UNANIMOUSLY VOTED TO APPROVE THE ANNUAL COMMON VICTUALER LICENSE FOR QUING HANG WANG OF CHEOY LEE'S AS PRESENTED.**

**2. Citizen Address**

None

**3. Agricultural Commission 61A Parcel Presentation, Jim Dunn**

Jim Dunn was present at the meeting and presented: Holden Chapter 61 Parcel Prioritization Results (See Attached)

After the presentation Mr. Dunn opened it up for questions.

Mr. Lukes thanked Mr. Dunn for his work along with the Ag Com. He stated that to have this data in place will help if/when a property comes up.

Sel. Renzoni asked if they could look at land value/ real estate value.

Mr. Dunn replied that it was a difficult problem to wrap your arms around. He stated it was important for the Town to continue to fund the Open Space fund at Town Meeting in order to keep working on conservation efforts.

The Board thanked Mr. Dunn and the Ag Com for all of their work.

#### **4. Board of Registrars Vacancy Nominees, Expires March 31, 2021**

The Board invited anyone up to the podium that was present to speak about their nomination to the Board of Registrars.

Margaret Peg Daly was present, she stated that she had moved to Holden after she lost her husband. She stated that she wanted to do something meaningful so she joined the Meals on Wheels and food shelter and then last summer she volunteered with the League of Woman Voters and they worked to register voters. She stated that she felt that this election would be very important and so joined the Democratic Town Committee and worked with the Town Clerk for this election. She stated that it was eye opening to see the amount of work needed. She stated when she heard about this vacancy she thought that it would be a good fit. She asked the Board to consider her for the nomination.

August Mueller was present at the meeting. He stated that he was a six year resident of Holden and had joined the Holden Democratic Town Committee in 2017. He stated that he wanted to become more involved in the voting process and that every citizen should vote and all votes should be counted. He stated he has a background in political committees and has run for the Board of Selectmen in a different town. He stated that now felt like a great opportunity for him to get more involved.

Chairman Lavigne stated that Ms. Johnson was not present and the Town Manager's office was not able to get a hold of her.

Sel. Renzoni thanked both the candidates along with Ms. Johnson for coming out; he stated that he thinks the Board should consider the two candidates in front of them today. He stated that he was going to move one candidate but hoped the other candidate would look at the volunteer list on the town's website as there were 20 vacancies on other Boards and Committees.

Motion by Sel. Renzoni, seconded by Sel. Gibbs, it was **UNANIMOUSLY VOTED TO APPOINT MARGARET PEG DALY AS THE BOARD OF REGISTRARS VAVANCY NOMITTEE TO EXPIRE MARCH 31, 2021.**

#### **5. Town managers Annual Review**

Motion by Sel. Renzoni, seconded by Sel. Gibbs, it was **UNANIMOUSLY VOTED TO AUTHORIZE THE CHAIR TO SIGN THE TOWN MANAGER ANNUAL REVIEW ON BEHALF OF THE BOARD AS PRESENTED.**

The Board thanked the Town Manager for his work in an unprecedented year.

#### **6. Town Manager Update**

See attached

## **7. Covid Vaccine Distribution**

Mr. Lukes stated that the Town ran through practice sessions in anticipation of getting the vaccine and had emergency management staff and health officials run through the emergency plan that the Town has had on file for several years. He stated that the way the state was operating, they were sending vaccines to regional sites, not through the Town and Holden was a member of the Worcester Health Regional Alliance. He stated that they would be running the vaccination distribution and because the Town was attached to them they were unable to set up their own site.

Mr. Lukes stated that the only way to get the vaccinations was through the regional centers. He stated that the Town went through Rutland because we were not getting what we needed through Worcester. He said through Rutland, the town was able to set up residents for vaccination and used the Code Red System to alert residents in addition to working with the Counsel on Aging in order to set up appointments. Mr. Lukes stated that they will continue to work with the Rutland Clinic to address the 75 year and older and will start booking appointments again tomorrow.

Mr. Lukes stated that it seemed as though the state was vamping up and that they anticipated being able to register 65 and older and people with two co-morbidities. He stated that they were working to gain access to the state system that would tell how many residents were vaccinated. He stated that in addition, the state was starting a super site at Worcester State and they were preparing to do 500 doses a day but could do up to 2000/day when it was running at capacity. He stated this would be a state run site and anyone in any part of MA could go there.

Mr. Lukes stated that based on the age of those eligible for vaccination the Town was working on making calls and helping this group schedule their vaccination and would continue to do so.

Sel. Renzoni stated that after Covid, the Town may reconsider their relationship with the Worcester Health Alliance.

Chairman Lavigne stated that if you were 75 and older or 65 and older and wanted to schedule you could call the Holden Senior Center.

Mr. Lukes stated that currently it was 75 and older but that 65 and older would be starting soon.

Chairman Lavigne asked if spouses of 75 and older were eligible.

Mr. Lukes confirmed they were.

The Board reminded the public to sign up for Code Red messages through the town website or by calling the Town Managers office in order to receive important messages.

**Town Manger UPDATE CONT.**

See attached

**8. WRSD Regional Agreement**

Chairman Lavigne stated that every three years the Town reviews the agreement for the five towns. He stated that it was supposed to be reviewed this year but that they received an email from the WRSC Chair asking to postpone this review. He stated that he wanted to open this up for discussion from the Board to see their official opinion on the matter.

Sel. Renzoni stated that he would challenge that the Committee has the time but they are not making the time. He stated that the Committee was obligated to meet and discuss this and he does not think this is good practice for the Board to allow the School Committee to pick and choose which portions of the agreement they were going to abide by. He stated that the Board asked for consideration to better understand the finances and they were not given that consideration. He stated that it is a two way street and the School Committee owes the Town a review. He stated that they were choosing not to honor this.

Chairman Lavigne stated that he was against pushing this. He stated that he knows that it is busy but that the Board wants change and if they had answered some of the Towns concerns back in June it could be a conversation but there is no plan in place and this is a theme coming from them.

Sel. Herlihy asked if this did not get ironed out would the current agreement just roll over three yeas.

Sel. Renzoni asked for the Chair to work with the Town Manager and Town Counsel to see what repercussions there would be if this was not met and if there was any recourse.

Motion by Sel. Renzoni, seconded by Sel. Herlihy, it was **UNANIMOUSLY VOTED TO REJECT THE OFFER TO HOLD THE WRSD REGIONAL AGREEMENT OFF FOR ONE YEAR.**

The Chair stated he would work with the Town Manager to communicate this to the District.

**9. Recreation Passes and Participation**

Denise Moreno, Recreation Director was present at the meeting.

Ms. Moreno stated that she had reviewed different facilities and provided the information to the Board for review (see attached).

She stated that currently, Holden is below what everyone else charges. She stated last year it was great to open and have families be able to enjoy the facility and she is hoping

that guidelines are lifted this year in order to get back to semi normal participation. She stated last year was devastating to the Recreation Revenue Budget without the all day summer programs and before and after school programs.

Chairman Lavigne asked if there was a proposal for what the rate structure would look like.

Ms. Moreno replied that she felt like they were in a catch-22 in Covid times and did not want people to be shut out of the pool due to finances.

Sel. Renzoni thanked Ms. Moreno for coming in. He stated he agreed that any rate increase would not cover the cost and it would need to be subsidized. He stated he felt as though the Town needed to do what was best for the community. He stated last year as far as they know, there were no Covid transmissions because of the pool and it felt clean and safe for the community. He stated that this is a community asset and the decision point that needed to be made was should they restrict the pool to residents only or open it up to non residents. He stated he thinks if this remains resident only than they will need to have a rate increase. He asked if they could call a Recreation Committee meeting and solicit input from the Committee in order to make a decision.

Chairman Lavigne asked what the break even point was.

Mr. Lukes stated that the summer programs used the schools as a home base and without them it killed the summer program. He stated they may need to change the structure of the camps if they were not allowing non residents to purchase a pool pass.

Ms. Moreno stated that a non resident could come to a summer program without a pass if they doubled the fee of the class or program.

Ms. Barnes asked if they would be able to have the additional programs.

Ms. Moreno replied that the all day program was unlikely to happen as per license has been suspended at this point. She said she is hopeful but does not think it will happen. She stated that that half day will run with some modifications.

Chairman Lavigne asked about the license.

Ms. Moreno replied that she had submitted all the paperwork but there is a new inspector and the schools are not allowing people in to inspect the camp area.

Mr. Lukes replied that if the state allowed it he thinks that the Town could make it happen. He stated that he is hopeful that restrictions would be lifted come summer. He stated that part of the problem was would the schools give them the space or not.

Sel. Renzoni stated that this is something that should be discussed. He stated that they were discussing schools which are tax payer funded. He stated that they need to plan for

the worse case scenario but that the community needs this. He stated that the schools were not giving the kids what they needed and that this would be good for the community. He stated that the Recreation Revolving Fund is healthy and he suggested a rate hike for residents this year. He asked if the Recreation Committee could come to the Board with recommendations next meeting.

Chairman Lavigne suggested coming up with different scenarios to cover their bases.

Ms. Moreno stated that it was getting close to crunch time and that she would have the full day program added to the online registration but would not open registration for it.

Sel. Barnes stated that this ties into the Regional Agreement they discussed earlier along with the before and after school programs.

Sel. Renzoni suggested drafting a letter stating that they Town expects to use the building as a recreational asset. He stated that they are not using it in the summer and barely using it now. He stated he wants to tell the District they intended to use it; not ask.

Sel. Herlihy asked if the District indicated that it could not be used.

Ms. Moreno stated that she did have a conversation with administration and it was said that it would be highly unlikely that they could use it because it is full of equipment. She stated she has not been allowed to go in and look at it.

Ms. King asked if they could move the equipment.

Sel. Renzoni stated that it was the Town's building. He stated that if they were saying that they were not moving it then they were indicating they were not intending to go back to school full time. He stated that we need to move full speed ahead. He stated that no motion was needed unless there is objection.

Sel. Barnes asked about revenues from parties and if that was possible to explore for this summer.

Mr. Lukes replied that it was the Governors limiting amount of people that was preventing that.

Ms. Moreno replied that it was also because she had to split swim sessions to limit capacity.

The Board stated that they would meet in three weeks to solidify this information; Ms. Moreno replied that she was already behind on getting information out to the public.

Chairman Lavigne suggested shifting the meetings to March 8 and March 22<sup>nd</sup> in order to get the information to Ms. Moreno quicker.

The Board agreed.

**10. Selectmen Miscellaneous**

Sel. Gibbs: none

Sel. Barnes: none

Sel. Herlihy: none

Sel. Renzoni asked about returning books to the library. Mr. Lukes replied that he would look into it.

Sel. Renzoni stated that he had spoken to the Town Manager about the Memorial Day Parade and that they will move forward with planning. He stated that a band and closing ceremony may be difficult to do but that he has a potential tank in process along with something in the cemetery to honor the war dead. He stated that he is very optimistic that this event can occur to kick off the summer.

Chairman Lavigne asked about the snow budget.

Mr. Lukes replied it was up a little to 60%.

Chairman Lavigne stated that there were openings on Boards and Committees and anyone interested should fill out the Do Something Questionnaire.

**11. Selectmen Subcommittee**

Chairman Lavigne stated that the Friends of Eagle Lake was meeting tomorrow.

Motion by Sel. Renzoni, seconded by Sel. Gibbs, it was **UNANIMOUSLY VOTED TO ADJOURN THE FEBRUARY 22, 2021 BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING AT 8:24PM.**

**APPROVED:** July 12, 2021