

**HOLDEN BOARD OF SELECTMEN
MEETING MINUTES
March 8, 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. Lavigne called the meeting to order at 6:31PM. The Board stood to recite the Pledge of Allegiance.

Sel. Lavigne stated that they had invited Troop 180 in to the meeting to talk about the Citizen in the Community Badge they were working towards earning; they invited Brandon Kin, the Senior Patrol Leader to the podium.

Brandon King thanked the Board for having them and stated that they were working towards the Citizen in the Community Badge.

1. Citizen Address

Peg Daley, 78 Tea Party Circle was present at the meeting. She stated that she was there about the meter policy and that she was in favor of this because besides saving money it can also help the environment and the town. She stated that she was passionate about this and I hoped the Board supported it.

1. Appointments, Licenses, and Permits

Motion by Sel. Renzoni, seconded by Sel. Gibbs, it was **UNANIMOUSLY VOTED TO APPROVE THE LIQUOR LICENSE CHANGE OF MANGER, NEW ENGLAND AUTHENTIC EATS LLC, PAPA GINO'S AS PRESENTED.**

2. Meter Policy

Chairman Lavigne stated that they have been debating the use of smart meters to measure how much electric you use. It will send data to the town and analyze the information. He stated that the question outstanding was with regards to the privacy issues.

Chairman Renzoni stated that he thinks that they should put a moratorium on the purchase and installation of the smart meters. He stated that he looked over both departments policies and he suggests having a town wide policy instead of a policy for both departments. He stated that he was looking for an opt in or opt out clause for customers to choose from. He stated that one thing he would insist on was that all the data that would be readily available to government officials was also available to the

customer. He stated that the word “primarily” was used often in the policy and he wants that stricken and have “only be used for”. He stated that if they could clean that up he could support it.

Chairman Lavigne asked what else this data could be used for.

Ryan Mouradian, Water Sewer Superintendent was present at the meeting. He stated that at this point they would use monthly data to look for UAW. He stated that they could do this in a small section of Town and get gallons use and find out where loses were. He stated this was a tool that could be used not only for billing but as a tool in other ways. He stated that they could clean up the language but that they needed to analyze the data as well.

Sel. Renzoni stated he did not like squishy language in government documents. He stated that they should list what they needed the information for.

Mr. Woodsmall stated that he was concerned that this could be too restrictive and the intent was to collect data in order to monitor the system for a variety of things. He stated that we are just getting into this and with evolving technology trying to enumerate every issue it will set them up for failure or have them make an inadvertent mistake. He stated that he feels as though they need some wiggle room. He stated that he understands privacy concerns but operational data does not have an impact on that.

Sel. Renzoni stated that he understands that this is constantly evolving but that it would be a disservice to the rate payer to not know what was happening with the data that is collected. He stated that the Board meets every two weeks and that they could come in and make the case about what additional access they needed when applicable. He stated that where it stands now he is not comfortable with signing off on this and that they need to protect the people.

Sel. Herlihy stated that this is private information and this getting out could be used in so many ways.

Sel. Renzoni stated that it would allow government to know peoples living patterns. He stated he was also interested in knowing what they weren’t going to be doing with the data.

Ms. Parenteau, HMLD Director was present at the meeting. She stated that she understands the concern but that they are going to be using the data internally for the running of the business. She stated that they could analyze data through reads and they can understand what would save a rate payer money. She stated that both her and the Water/Sewer division are agreeing not to share data with third party vendors unless they are working with the town. She stated that the Boards point was well taken and she thinks that they have addressed the concerns.

Sel. Renzoni stated that he wants to make sure that the people that did not want to be contacted would not be and that there was a provision in place for them as well.

Ms. Parenteau stated that they would explain what was available but would not be analyzing bills for people without them requesting it. She stated she believes it is a win/win for the community and HMLD.

Chairman Lavigne stated that regarding the data sharing he would rather it say “we are not going to sell/share...”

Ms. Parenteau stated she was happy to make that change.

Ms. Barnes suggested the verbiage “use for operating business include and not limited to.”

Sel. Renzoni stated that they also want to say what they are not doing with the information.

Mr. Woodsmall stated that he thinks they all know what they don’t want to do with it.

Chairman Lavigne stated that to that point, everyone that was currently in the room knew what they didn’t want to do with the information what they want the policy that can allow people 10 years in the future to know. He stated by nailing down a policy it can reflect the spirit of what they were looking to accomplish.

Sel. Herlihy asked what a customer would be able to opt in and out of.

Mr. Mouradian stated that a customer could opt in or out of notifications but things such as if your meter was reading would not be a choice.

Sel. Barnes suggested saying that they could state that there would be no transfer of citizen data.

Sel. Renzoni stated that this was new technology for the ages and they need to have the ability to not allow some things. He asked the life expectancy on these meters.

Mr. Tupper replied 15-20 years.

Sel. Renzoni replied that overtime these devices would evolve and the policy should be in place.

Chairman Lavigne stated that he thought they were close and with a few small language changes along with stating that data will not be sold or shared, adding in an opt out policy, and having data available to the customers in a town wide policy they would be there.

Sel. Renzoni stated that something like this would be useful for law enforcement to get timeline and patterns of usage. He stated that he wants them to put all this information into the policy and talk about what they will and won't do with it.

Mr. Woodsmall stated that the police would need a warrant for that.

Sel. Renzoni replied that he did not disagree but that he wanted the policy in place. He stated that he was not worried about it but that some people did not want government having this data.

Chairman Lavigne asked if there was a dashboard.

Mr. Woodsmall replied that there was an add on to the subscription service but it would add about \$30,000 / year and it appeared that over long term, a small percentage of people ended up using it. He stated that they would need to flush out the cost/benefit of this.

Chairman Lavigne stated that they need to have forethought because 20 years from now things will look so different.

Mr. Woodsmall asked the Board to lift the moratorium so that they could move forward. He stated it seemed as though everyone was comfortable with the procurement and it would be helpful to have some certainty so they can start to move forward. He stated that they were months away from installing but was hoping to lift this so they can start to move forward.

Sel. Renzoni stated that there was not a moratorium on purchasing the systems only on the data. He stated that the Board's next meeting was on 3.22.21 so they would have time to move forward before April 1.

Mr. Lukes stated he was not sure what was needed for the RFP.

Mr. Woodsmall replied that the RFP was April 1 and was currently undergoing legal review. He stated that they have been talking about this for a year and if they were not going to move forward he needed to know.

Sel. Renzoni stated that if they can satisfy what the Board was asking then in two weeks they could lift the moratorium and have a policy in place and move forward. He stated he was not comfortable lifting the moratorium prior to these concerns being lifted.

Chairman Lavigne stated that once they get these updates to the Board he would be comfortable calling for a meeting and 48 hours later being able to lift the moratorium.

Chairman Lavigne called a one minute recess at 7:07PM.

Meeting called back to order at 7:09PM.

3. WRSD Regional Agreement

Chairman Lavigne stated that he had a conversation about this and that there had been a change in leadership. He stated that Ken Mills would be the liaison and that they were going to start this process. He stated that he would keep the Board up to date and although the review would be late it would occur. He stated that he offered to host Holden's public hearing for them as well.

4. WRSD Budget

Chairman Lavigne stated that the budget came in way over what the Board had hoped and more than the Town could pay for. He stated that he worked with management and came up with some real cuts if this passed. He stated that cuts would be substantial to Public Safety and Public Works, including removal of snow from sidewalks, cutting back on snow removal in general, reorganizing the police and possibly shutting down the pool. He stated that he thinks the school committee got the message loud and clear and that they went from about 42% of the budget ten years ago to more than 70% now. He stated that his analogy was that it should be three circles; public works, public safety, and education.

Mr. Lukes stated that there was not much more to elaborate on. He stated that the public needed to know that if the school districts budget was passed in draft form that there would be cuts as Chairman Lavigne indicated above in addition to closing the Chaffin Substation, limiting traffic enforcement, not maintaining playing fields, and more. He stated that even with these cuts there would need to be override so the average tax bill would go up over \$400 and there would be a loss of services.

Chairman Lavigne stated that the Chaffins Substation would be a huge loss.

Mr. Lukes stated that having the station on this side of town cut two minutes of response time to that side of town.

Chairman Lavigne stated that it would also mean cutting back Senior Center Hours, Library Hours, road repair, cemetery upkeep and more.

Sel. Renzoni stated that he hopes the district will take a nice long look at their budget, cuts like this would impact the Town dramatically.

Mr. Lukes stated that he also wanted to let the Board know he completed the Resource Profile and he wanted to make clear that there was a \$600,000 cut in the Town's budget for capital budgets. He stated that he also negotiated with the fire union and non union workers for a 1% raise which is lower than usual. He stated all this was done in anticipation of the past year and having an increase in the next year. He stated that that a big increase shows a lack of empathy and that the town did budget in for an additional \$1 million but it was not nearly enough for the \$2.4 million that the district raised it.

Sel. Herlihy stated that it was a disappointing budget from the district. She stated they should have started where the towns could support. She asked if the Chaffins Substation was cut if they would lose personnel there as well.

Mr. Lukes replied it would be difficult.

Chairman Lavigne stated that he also let the School Committee know that there was a lack of transparency and that the Town still did not know where they spent money. He stated that he asked where the savings went from the amount saved on electricity, water, and sewer from when the schools were closed. He stated that they provided a general number and that the Town knows that they received federal money but they don't know where it was spent.

Sel. Herlihy stated that the budget does not say anything and is not broken down line by line as was asked for. She stated that the explanations do not say anything either and that all budgets should be easy to read and the one from the school district is irresponsible.

Chairman Lavigne stated that once he receives more information he will share it with the Board.

5. Discussion/ Vote on ESSER II Funds: Wachusett Regional School District and Montachusett Regional Vocational High School

Mr. Lukes stated that in order to access these funds the Board needs to make a request. He stated that they should request each of the schools grant funding to minimum location contribution.

Motion by Sel. Renzoni, seconded by Sel. Gibbs, it was **UNANIMOUSLY VOTED TO GRANT THE WRSD TO MINIMUM LOCAL CONTRIBUTION AS PRESENTED.**

Motion by Sel. Renzoni, seconded by Sel. Gibbs, it was **UNANIMOSULY VOTED TO GRANT MONTACHUSETT REGIONAL VOCATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL TO MINIMUM LOCAL CONTRIBUTION AS PRESENTED.**

Mr. Lukes stated that it would be a total of \$250,000 if this survived the budget process.

6. Recreation Passes and Participation

Mr. Lukes stated that they had spoken about opening the pool and that the pool usually funded itself but last year it lost a lot of money. He stated that they wanted to find a better way to build the recreation program while also building the summer programs. He stated that the debate would be if aside from residents and town employees, does the Town allow other people to use the pool.

Denise Morano, Recreation Director was present at the meeting. She stated that she was able to get the Recreation Committee together and Erin Bradbury and Robyn Floyd were present tonight to present their findings.

Ms. Bradbury stated that the Committee met last week and discussed admission fees for the pool and that there was unanimous support for an increase of 20%. She stated that additionally any family over 5 members would have to pay an additional \$15/ member. She stated that they felt as though a 20% increase across the Board was fair.

Chairman Lavigne thanked the Recreation Committee for meeting and coming in.

Sel. Renzoni agreed and thanked the Board. He stated that a rate increase was probably needed regardless. He stated that he would be the liaison to the Committee and that if the Committee had ideas moving forward he would want to hear them. He stated that the Town wanted to invest in recreation and fields so that kids in town stayed in town. He stated that if they had anything in mind for goals going forward they could also reach out to him. Sel. Renzoni asked about summer camps this summer and wanted to know if there were other camp opportunities the town could explore.

Ms. Bradbury stated that it was something to look at and that they would need to meet to discuss it. She stated that there was nothing in the works for additional camps this summer but they were hoping to get information out to the public shortly for the camps they were holding. She stated that she was hoping to get these programs up and running to get revenue coming back into recreation so they could defray some of the other costs.

Sel. Renzoni stated that one of the Manager's goals is to expand recreation opportunities. He stated that he thinks there are opportunities going forward to do this.

Ms. Bradbury stated that working on the Open Space Committee she knew that they were going to meet to talk about skate parks, dog parks, trails and more.

Sel. Herlihy asked about capacity numbers.

Ms. Moreno stated that right now they were not sure about the pool capacity. She stated that she is hopeful that things will loosen up but she will not know that until the Governor updates them. She stated currently all day camp will have a maximum of 25/ group including staff and it will have to be split into groups with no co-mingling.

Sel. Herlihy suggested not raising the prices for the senior passes.

Ms. Moreno replied she could cut that back to \$18.

Sel. Renzoni asked if the pool were to open today if it would have to be in two sessions again.

Ms. Moreno replied that it would be. She stated that she is not sure about capacity so that would have to be determined. She stated last year there were issues with people reserving and not showing up.

Chairman Lavigne replied that it would be a conversation for next year but maybe they could discuss some sort of electronic pass to help make tracking things like that easier.

Sel. Renzoni asked if they increased the fees for programs at all.

Ms. Moreno replied they did not.

Motion by Sel. Renzoni, seconded by Sel. Gibbs, it was **UNANIMOUSLY VOTED TO ADOPT THE PROPOSED POOL FEE AMENDING THE SENIOR PASS TO \$18. (See attached)**

Ms. Moreno asked what the Board wished to do about non-residents.

Sel. Renzoni stated that he did not want to open to non residents at this point. He stated that with capacity issues he does not want to turn down residents.

Chairman Lavigne suggested keeping it open to town employees and town business owners.

Ms. Moreno asked if the Board was still okay with her doubling prices for non resident class participation.

Sel. Renzoni asked if you needed a pass to participate.

Ms. Moreno replied that instead of the pass she would double the price.

Sel. Renzoni asked if there were capacity issues for camps.

Ms. Moreno replied she would have a waiting list.

Sel. Renzoni suggested not opening the camps to non residents.

Chairman Lavigne suggested having Holden residents able to register first and then opening it up to non residents if there were still spots remaining.

Sel. Renzoni stated he wanted to do as much for Holden as possible and if that is not opening to non residents then so be it. He stated that they could revisit it next year pending the drop in Covid.

Sel. Herlihy asked if Ms. Moreno relied on the income from non residents.

Ms. Moreno replied that she always had good participation from non residents that boosted numbers.

Sel. Gibbs suggested launching the website for residents only and pushing non resident applications out a few weeks or months.

Sel. Barnes stated that she worries about exposure as well. She stated that Mr. Lukes shared vaccination rates and that having members come in from other towns could be a concern as well.

Sel. Renzoni stated that these rates were approved and the Board can revisit the non resident participation at the April 5 meeting. He stated this will allow the Recreation Department to go live with resident sales.

Sel. Herlihy asked how much was lost last year.

Ms. Moreno replied \$200,000.

Chairman Lavigne called a recess at 7:53PM; he called the meeting back to order at 7:59PM.

7. Town Manager Update

See Attached

8. Response to Citizen Address

Chairman Lavigne stated that the Board was also in support of this, it was just the data collection aspect they wanted to get in line; he stated that they seemed close on this.

9. Selectmen Minutes

None

10. Selectmen Miscellaneous

None

11. Selectmen Subcommittee

Sel. Renzoni stated that they spoke about the parade last meeting. He stated that he thinks they can do a socially distant parade by skipping the final ceremony. He stated that when things are a little more open they will be able to plan better. He stated that he was planning on a parade but was just not sure what it would look like.

Chairman Lavigne stated that he got an email in order to get the Winter Festival moving and possibly a fall festival as well.

Motion by Sel. Renzoni, seconded by Sel. Gibbs, it was **UNANIMOUSLY VOTED TO ADJOURN THE MARCH 8, 2021 BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING AT 8:15PM.**

APPROVED: 7/12/21