

**HOLDEN BOARD OF SELECTMEN
MEETING MINUTES
January 18, 2022**

6:30PM

Memorial Hall

Present: Anthony Renzoni, Richard Bates (Participating Remotely), Geri Herlihy, Robert Lavigne

Not Present: Chiara Barnes

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

Sel. Renzoni called the meeting to order. The Board stood to recite the Pledge of Allegiance. Sel. Renzoni stated that Sel. Bates was participating remotely. Sel. Bates confirmed that he was able hear the Board.

1. Appointments, Licenses, and Permits

Motion by Sel. Lavigne, seconded by Sel. Herlihy, it was **VOTED TO APPROVE JAMES DEIGNAN TO THE ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS FOR A REAPPOINTMENT FROM 1/22/22 TO 1/22/25 BY A UNANIMOUS ROLL CALL VOTE.** (Lavigne: yes; Herlihy: yes; Renzoni: yes; Bates: yes).

Motion by Sel. Lavigne, seconded by Sel. Herlihy, it was **VOTED TO APPROVE RONALD SPAKAUSKAS TO THE ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS FOR A REAPPOINTMENT FROM 1/22/2022-1/22/2025 BY A UNANIMOUS ROLL CALL VOTE.** (Lavigne: yes; Herlihy: yes; Renzoni: yes; Bates: yes).

Motion by Sel. Lavigne, seconded by Sel. Herlihy, it was **VOTED TO APPROVE IDA NYSTROM FOR A REAPPOINTMENT TO THE HISTORICAL COMMISSION TO EXPIRE 1/22/2025 BY A UNANIMOUS ROLL CALL VOTE.** (Lavigne: yes; Herlihy: yes; Renzoni: yes; Bates: yes).

2. Citizen Address

Richard Caprioli, 37 Country Hill Road, was present at the meeting. See attached document regarding Stone Ridge Condominium Trust.

Richard Wright, 31 Country Hill Road, was present at the meeting. He stated that he agreed with Mr. Caprioli's comment. He stated that he seconds the public request that the neighbors receive clear, concise and complete information about the zoning at 71 Miles Ave so that they can better understand whether or not things happening at the

property meet requirements. He stated that at a previous meeting the Board indicated that they were going to look into this however he does not believe that it should take over 30 days for an answer. He stated that they are very frustrated with the Town not following up and they want to know if what is happening on the property is legal and appropriate.

Citizen's address was closed.

3. Acceptance of Donation for Improvements at Dawson Rec

Mr. Lukes stated that Scott Sundin wished to donate \$25,000 to the Town for the purpose of modernizing Dawson basketball courts. Mr. Lukes stated that the town has the check in the Treasurer's possession but the Board needed to accept the donation in order to move forward. He stated that the Town was also going to contribute funds in order to resurface the courts from funds budgeted last year. He stated that everything was delayed at this point due to supply issues but the goal was to have it up and running by the summer. Mr. Lukes thanked Mr. Sundin for his generous donation.

Motion by Sel. Lavigne, seconded by Sel. Herlihy, it was **VOTED TO ACCEPT THE GIFT OF \$25,000 FOR THE SPECIFIC PURPOSE OF BASKETBALL COURTS AT DAWSON REC AREA AS PRESENTED BY A UNANIMOUS ROLL CALL VOTE.** (Lavigne: yes; Herlihy: yes; Renzoni: yes; Bates).

Sel. Lavigne thanked Mr. Sundin for his continued generosity to the Town.

4. Recreation Fees FY 2023

Mr. Lukes stated that the fee schedule along with the programming schedule was changing. He suggested taking a preliminary statement from the Recreation Director and tabling the vote until the Board had a better understanding of where the town was and how they were doing it from a revenue/ cost perspective.

Nichole Hallett, Recreation Director, was present at the meeting. She stated that she has gone through the budget and was interested in understanding the revenue and expenses. She stated that it appeared that the Town was behind on fees, not just at the pool but for camps as well. She stated that she also discovered that they were not paying their employees minimum wage which while it was normal 5-10 years ago it no longer was. She stated that after looking at the various parts of the Recreation Department she came up with a financial proposal which she had for the Board to review. She stated that she additionally had a lot of goals for the Before and After School Program but that it needed its own hierarchy based on the size and regulations that needed to be followed.

Sel. Lavigne stated that the Board wanted to listen to all of Ms. Hallett's suggestions and that they have long wanted to re-imagine this Department.

Sel. Renzoni thanked Ms. Hallett and suggested reviewing this at the next Board meeting. He stated that fees should be set ASAP. He stated that the Board has long wanted to

make Recreation bigger however it having been a tough year they need to ensure that programs are still affordable. He stated that they should plan to get to where they need to be but not in one shot.

The Board thanked Ms. Hallett for the information and time.

5. Selectmen Miscellaneous

Sel. Lavigne stated that he has been speaking about the ice rink in town and that many parties including the Rec. Department, DPW, various students and more had reached out in order to get this back up and running. He stated that it's these little things that make the Town better and he appreciated everyone jumping in to make this happen.

Sel. Herlihy stated that she participated in the municipal leader call for the search for the Superintendent with Paul Challenger and the NESDEC. She stated that it is no surprise that people are looking for transparency, accountability, and taking into consideration the Towns budget. He stated that they are hopeful to have four people to bring to the Committee by March.

6. Town Manager Update

See attached

Sel. Lavigne stated that on the topic of the override, it had been three years overdue and that the Board has been continuously speaking about this matter. He stated that this was not posturing, this was very real and there was going to be a 2.5 override on the ballot unless the schools change their numbers dramatically. He stated they needed to be able to lay out what will happen to town services and be very transparent about what will happen in this year's budget so citizens can see the impact.

Sel. Herlihy agreed and stated that while it does depend on the other 5 towns they need some sort of plan in the event everything passes and the override does not.

Sel. Renzoni stated that when discussing the override it is important that people understand that the override was permanent and that to the average home the increase would be about \$600. He stated that the Town has a lean budget and great services but that if the school budget continues in this manner things will start to deteriorate. He stated that things such as plowing, reaction time for water main breaks, reduction in staff, library programs, and more are all things that have potential to be reduced or cut.

Sel. Renzoni stated that the Town needs to build a budget off of what we know and that these are real conversations that need to happen. He stated that the Board has been saying for years that this was coming and it is here.

Sel. Lavigne stated that one thing that the Town has learned in the past is that outsourcing has been a colossal failure and he does not think this is the way to proceed.

Sel. Renzoni stated that they need to have these conversations so that people know what is at stake when they vote and so that they know what is best for Holden.

Mr. Lukes stated that from preliminary calculations the Town Administration sent a letter and asked for a budget from the schools for 2.5% increase because that is what they thought the Town could handle. He stated that if the town taxes to the maximum about the increase will be about \$600 on average not including the proposition override. He stated that this does not need to be a school versus town conversation but it needs to be a discussion.

Sel. Herlihy stated that the Board was going to need to be creative with how they got this information to the people. She stated that the Town historically struggles with quorum at Town Meeting so that means a small population will be deciding this matter.

Mr. Lukes stated that people should come to Town Meeting to make your voice heard.

Sel. Renzoni stated that this should be a real debate on how to move forward. He stated that tax bills would be getting bigger and bigger each year and people need to understand and get involved.

7. Follow Up to Citizens Address

Sel. Lavigne asked if the Board could have a summary email pertaining to the zoning question brought up in Citizens Address.

Mr. Lukes stated that this was a matter for the Planning Board and that it was not previously on his radar but that it was now and he would look into it.

Sel. Renzoni stated that this is an issue with communication and that being in a small town an email or phone call could have gone a long way. He stated that there has been some Covid outbreaks within Town departments but that he is looking forward to the update.

8. Selectmen Subcommittee

Sel. Lavigne stated that the EDC met last Monday and that it sounds that Winter Festival would be able to return. He stated that they were looking to make it bigger and to include businesses as well.

Sel. Renzoni congratulated the Town Manager and EDC. He stated that there was nothing this EDC would not do and they were looking to get involved in the Winter Festival as well to help make it bigger and draw people into town for the businesses.

Sel. Herlihy stated that at the last DPW Building Committee they indicated that they were on track and that they were hoping to get the Board in at some point to see the progress.

Sel. Bates: none

Motion by Sel. Lavigne, seconded by Sel. Herlihy, it was **VOTED TO ADJOURN THE JANUARY 18, 2022 BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING AT 7:26PM BY A UNANIMOUS ROLL CALL VOTE.** (Lavigne: yes; Herlihy: yes; Bates: yes; Renzoni: yes).

APPROVED: 4/11/22 AS CORRECTED