

HOLDEN BOARD OF SELECTMEN
MEETING MINUTES
April 11, 2022

6:30PM

Memorial Hall

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

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

Chairman Barnes called the meeting to order. The Board stood to recite the Pledge of Allegiance. Chairman Barnes announced that Sel. Bates was participating remotely and all votes would be taken by a roll call vote. Sel. Bates replied that he was present.

1. Citizen Address

None

Ms. King left the meeting at 6:35PM.

2. Appointments, Licenses, and Permits

Motion by Sel. Renzoni, seconded by Sel. Lavigne, it was **VOTED TO APPROVE THE COMMON VICTUALER LICENSE FOR SALIU VALINTINA, THE BAGEL INN BY A UNANIMOUS ROLL CALL VOTE.** (Renzoni: yes; Lavigne: yes; Bates: yes; Herlihy: yes; Barnes: yes).

Ms. King returned to the meeting at 6:42PM.

3. Solid Waste Rates

Pam Harding, Director of Planning and Development, was present at the meeting. She presented *Renewal of Solid Waste and Recycling Contract*. (See attached).

Ms. Harding laid out three options to the Board.

Option #1: Maintain FY 23 and evaluate FY 24-25. In this option they would utilize free cash for FY 23 and monitor inflation, recycling trends, and fuel costs, adjust budget accordingly to adjust rate increase for FY24.

Option #2: Smaller increase over a three year term. In this option there would be a smaller rate increase for the three year contract and subsidized by free cash.

Option #3: Increase over a 3 year term, maintain free cash.

Sel. Renzoni suggested tabling this conversation until December. He stated that he thinks with the amount in the reserve fund and the changing environment they can revisit the conversation in December and take action. He stated the Board is in the process of looking at other rate changes as well.

The Board agreed and thanked Ms. Harding for her information.

4. Public Hearing- Water/Sewer Rates and Fees

Motion by Sel. Renzoni, seconded by Sel. Herlihy, it was **VOTED TO OPEN THE PUBLIC HEARING FOR WATER/SEWER RATES BY A UNANIMOUS ROLL CALL VOTE.** (Renzoni: yes; Lavigne: yes; Bates: yes; Herlihy: yes; Barnes: yes).

Mr. Woodsmall, Director of DPW, and Isabel McCauley, Water/Sewer Superintendent, were present at the meeting in addition to a number of members from the Water/Sewer Advisory Board; Paul Hogan, Joseph Kenney, Joseph Buckley.

Mr. Woodsmall reviewed the Memo dated April 5, 2022, Subject: Water & Sewer Rate Recommendation - FY2023. He provided the Board with Exhibit A-G for review and discussion.

Mr. Woodsmall stated that in Exhibit A there were a few changes but the major ones being health insurance and retirement. He stated that they could be moving to a different phase for legal as well. Mr. Woodsmall stated that one of the biggest increases is for DCR disposal. He stated that this was tied to the suit but with the inflow and infiltration they were able to find that the meters were not reading properly and the end result was that flow was being measured incorrectly and our portion of that has gone up. He stated that they were assuming a 10% increase in flow on top of the rate increase of 5-7% so the budget item is \$2.5 million assuming the average and that there is not an extremely wet year.

Mr. Woodsmall stated that there is also some increase in Worcester water purchase. He stated that was a combination of using more water and also the rates were held because of COVID and they expect those to increase as well. He stated with regards to the discolored water they have turned down the operation at Spring Street so they were purchasing more water from Worcester as an experiment.

Mr. Woodsmall stated the cost of chemicals rose as well. He stated that there were also a few line items related to capital and debt line items because the town carried a short term ban for a long term project that turned into long term borrowing for the end of last fiscal year. He stated that the small borrowing cost transferred into long term borrowing so debt has gone up to \$400,000. He stated that based off the debt schedule there is \$200-300K of existing debt falling off; he stated that it won't go back to 1 but it will drop by about \$2 million.

Mr. Woodsmall stated that there is also reduction in revenues with the loss from cellular antennas from Steel Street when T-Mobile bought out Sprint. He stated there was also a decrease in water connection because a large subdivision had not yet started.

Mr. Woodsmall stated that Exhibit B speaks to how free cash is used.

Mr. Woodsmall stated that Exhibit C talks about the reserve calculation.

Mr. Woodsmall stated that Exhibit D talks about the Water & Sewer Expense Breakdown.

Ms. McCauley shared another document that showed the expenditures. She stated that the existing average bill is about \$106.66/ household and the proposed average bill is \$119.66/ household.

Ms. McCauley stated that they also included the new recommended rates that reflect each category; Water fixed/ water used and sewer fixed / sewer used.

Chairman Bates asked if any members of the public wished to step forward; no members wished to speak.

Sel. Renzoni asked the status of the smart meters.

Mr. Woodsmall replied that they were still negotiating the final contracts with the supply company. He stated that the town provided the company with contracts and they came back with a long list of edits so it has been a lengthy process.

Sel. Renzoni stated that it would improve efficiency and reading within the town which could generate more revenue. He asked if it was a factor in the budget.

Mr. Woodsmall replied there would be a 6-8 month lag and they would all need to be installed so this is a multiyear process.

Sel. Renzoni asked about the rate stabilization account; he stated that the account doesn't actually work like a stabilization account, it was a source of revenue for DPW.

Mr. Woodsmall replied that there was another account with \$200,000 in it.

Sel. Lavigne asked what the purpose of that account was.

Mr. Woodsmall replied that there was no goal; it was an established place to put money the town won in a class action.

Sel. Renzoni asked about the three capital projects for \$45,000.

Mr. Woodsmall replied that they were each 10 years old and should have been replaced last year. He stated that they pushed them off and it now takes between 8-9 months to get a truck. He stated that he spoke with Fin Com on this as well.

Sel. Renzoni asked if there was any summary for maintenance.

Mr. Woodsmall replied that there was not but the best that he could say was that the depreciated value was more to maintain than the trucks were worth on the open market.

Sel. Renzoni asked if any of the trucks could be pushed out.

Mr. Lukes left the meeting at 7:24PM.

Sel. Renzoni stated that they were looking to reduce the budget in any way and that if they split the truck replacement they could decrease the budget percentage.

Mr. Lukes returned to the meeting at 7:25PM.

Mr. Woodsmall stated the other consideration which was hard to predict was the sewer case. He stated that it would go to trial in July and by August they should know more information.

Sel. Lavigne asked what the three trucks were used for.

Mr. Woodsmall replied they were used in everyday operations, responding to emergencies, service calls, etc. He said nothing was sitting on the lot.

Sel. Renzoni asked if any other vehicles could respond if those trucks go down.

Mr. Woodsmall replied not really and not for the long term.

Sel. Renzoni stated that he would like to find some sort of relief to decrease the 11.25% increase. He asked if any of the projects listed could get pushed a year or if they could anticipate a reduction because they were behind schedule.

Mr. Woodsmall replied that they could possibly see a \$50,000 reduction.

Sel. Renzoni asked about the Spring Street/Chapin system.

Mr. Woodsmall replied that was water quality related and was \$250,000 in borrowing.

Sel. Renzoni stated that they needed to look at \$50,000 here or there or push a truck. He stated that he understands that they need a rate increase but they need to reduce the budget. He asked Mr. Woodsmall to work to get it under 10%.

Sel. Herlihy asked about the money from free cash that was mentioned in the last two memos, she asked how it was replenished.

Mr. Woodsmall replied that they have been able to realize lower expenses and greater revenues.

Sel. Herlihy stated that she thinks that they need to speak about forecasting through the year not just at budget time. She stated that there were things that he may know where on the horizon but the Board didn't and she would like to have that conversation throughout the year.

Sel. Renzoni asked if Mr. Woodsmall would be able to work on this and come back to the Board in three meetings.

Mr. Woodsmall replied that if there was an agreement in terms of using stabilization he thinks he can reduce the number some. He stated that he thought he could reevaluate and decrease it by \$100,000.

Sel. Herlihy asked if purchasing the water from Worcester had helped the brown water.

Mr. Woodsmall replied that they had not seen the frequency of complaints but that he knows there is still some brown water out there. He stated they were still working on the matter.

Motion by Sel. Renzoni, seconded by Sel. Lavigne, it was **VOTED TO CLOSE THE PUBLIC HEARING WATER/ SEWER RATE AND FEES BY A UNANIMOUS ROLL CALL VOTE.** (Renzoni: yes; Lavigne: yes; Bates: yes; Herlihy: yes; Barnes: yes).

5. Town Manager Update

See attached

6. Vote Intention to layout ways as public ways and for the Town Manager to send notice to the owners of the ways of the date of the hearing at which the Board of Selectmen will vote to layout the ways.

Pass over

7. FY 2023 Budget Discussion

Pass over

8. Response to Citizen's Address

None

9. Selectmen Minutes

Motion by Sel. Renzoni, seconded by Sel. Lavigne, it was **VOTED TO APPROVE THE SEPTEMBER 7, 2021 BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING MINUTES AS PRESENTED BY A ROLL CALL VOTE OF 4-0-1.** (Renzoni: yes; Lavigne: yes; Bates: yes; Barnes: yes; Herlihy: abstain).

Motion by Sel. Renzoni, seconded by Sel. Herlihy, it was **VOTED TO APPROVE THE SEPTEMBER 20, 2021 BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING MINUTES AS AMENDED BY A UNANIMOUS ROLL CALL VOTE.** (Renzoni: yes; Lavigne: yes; Bates: yes; Herlihy: yes; Barnes: yes).

Motion by Sel. Renzoni, seconded by Sel. Lavigne, it was **VOTED TO APPROVE THE OCTOBER 18, 2021 BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING MINUTES AS PRESENTED BY A ROLL CALL VOTE OF 4-0-1.** (Renzoni: yes; Lavigne: yes; Bates: yes; Barnes: yes; Herlihy: abstain).

Motion by Sel. Renzoni, seconded by Sel. Herlihy, it was **VOTED TO APPROVE THE NOVEMBER 1, 2021 BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING MINUTES AS PRESENTED BY A UNANIMOUS ROLL CALL VOTE.** (Renzoni: yes; Lavigne: yes; Bates: yes; Herlihy: yes; Barnes: yes).

Motion by Sel. Renzoni, seconded by Sel. Lavigne, it was **VOTED TO APPROVE THE DECEMBER 6, 2021 BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING MINUTES AS PRESENTED BY A UNANIMOUS ROLL CALL VOTE.** (Renzoni: yes; Lavigne: yes; Bates: yes; Herlihy: yes; Barnes: yes).

Motion by Sel. Renzoni, seconded by Sel. Lavigne, it was **VOTED TO APPROVE THE NOVEMBER 15, 2021 BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING MINUTES AS PRESENTED BY A UNANIMOUS ROLL CALL VOTE.** (Renzoni: yes; Lavigne: yes; Bates: yes; Herlihy: yes; Barnes: yes).

Motion by Sel. Renzoni, seconded by Sel. Herlihy, it was **VOTED TO APPROVE THE DECEMBER 20, 2021 BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING MINUTES AS PRESENTED BY A UNANIMOUS ROLL CALL VOTE.** (Renzoni: yes; Lavigne: yes; Bates: yes; Herlihy: yes; Barnes: yes).

Motion by Sel. Renzoni, seconded by Sel. Lavigne, it was **VOTED TO APPROVE THE JANUARY 18, 2022 BOARD OF SELECTMEN AS AMMENDED BY A ROLL CALL VOTE OF 4-0-1.** (Renzoni: yes; Lavigne: yes; Bates: yes; Herlihy: yes; Barnes: abstain).

10. Selectmen Miscellaneous

Sel. Renzoni stated that the Manager had provided the Board with a handout for the Warrant Articles for place holders.

Sel. Lavigne asked for more information on Article 24.

Mr. Lukes stated that this article was about the Shrewsbury Street Reconstruction. He stated that the Town needs to do easements for the property that abuts the road.

Sel. Lavigne asked if there was a plan.

Mr. Lukes replied that it was part of the process. He stated that they need permission to move forward on the project.

Sel. Renzoni stated this permission would occur at the May election and Town Meeting.

Sel. Lavigne asked about the naming of the Senior Center. He stated that he opposed putting this on the warrant until the policy on naming buildings is finalized and then sending this through the process. He stated that he did not want to set a precedent where they are now renaming buildings without a proper procedure.

Sel. Renzoni asked if they were waiting to discuss Article 32; dog fees. The Board still had questions on the fees.

Ms. King suggested that the Board suggest the dates for the Town Clerk.

Sel. Renzoni asked if the order of the articles could be moved around after they were set.

Mr. Lukes asked why they would do that.

Sel. Renzoni suggested moving education to the end to ensure that they maintained a quorum after education was discussed.

Motion by Sel. Renzoni, seconded by Sel. Herlihy, it was **VOTED TO OPEN THE 2022 ANNUAL TOWN MEETING WARRANT BY A UNANIMOUS ROLL CALL VOTE.** (Renzoni: yes; Lavigne: yes; Bates: yes; Herlihy: yes; Barnes: yes).

Motion by Sel. Renzoni, seconded by Sel. Lavigne, it was **VOTED TO SET THE 2022 ANNUAL TOWN MEETING WARRANT STRIKING ARTICLE 29 BY A UNANIMOUS ROLL CALL VOTE.** (Renzoni: yes; Lavigne: yes; Bates: yes; Herlihy: yes; Barnes: yes).

Sel. Lavigne asked to add Approval of Selectmen Handbook to the next meeting.

Motion by Sel. Renzoni, seconded by Sel. Herlihy, it was **VOTED TO CLOSE THE 2022 ANNUAL TOWN MEETING WARRANT BY A UNANIMOUS ROLL CALL VOTE.** (Renzoni: yes; Lavigne: yes; Bates: yes; Herlihy: yes; Barnes: yes).

Misc Cont.

Sel. Renzoni stated that he wanted to let the Board know information that Mr. White had as it related to Dawson. He stated that using the existing prints of the bathrooms they applied the formula that is currently used. He stated that for 100 kindergarten children it would be 3 toilets and 3 sinks for each boys and girls. He stated grades 1 through 5 are slightly different at 4/4. He stated staff have 2 toilets each and one in the kitchen. He stated the results were that it appeared the children were being serviced with the exception of kindergarten which may be short one bathroom / gender.

Ms. King left the meeting at 8:16PM.

Sel. Renzoni stated that there is still not a request from the School Committee to do a capital project.

Mr. Lukes replied they had not received anything official.

Sel. Renzoni stated there was no request for a project. He stated that they also learned from the Facilities Subcommittee that they did not vote on this. He stated one toilet / gender would be under \$35,000 which would fall to the district. He stated that he thinks that they need to write a letter to the School Committee and the District so they better understand this matter and their responsibility in it. He stated as this stands right now, the School Committee has said that the Board is holding this up and that is not the case. Sel. Renzoni stated he previously suggested putting a place holder on the Warrant but there is no evidence they need a study. He stated that the architectural firm indicated this was a small problem and he stated that a conversation with the Superintendent's Office would clear this up.

Mr. Lukes stated that they have no real data. He stated there is obviously some issue at Dawson be it procedure, policy, internal something but the formula is the formula.

Sel. Bates asked if there was any follow up with the malfunctioning stalls.

Sel. Renzoni replied that he did not ask that as he was hoping the Facilities Subcommittee would address it. He stated that he thinks that there is a lack of communication between elected officials and the professionals. He stated that it sounded as though the district did not want to move this forward. He stated this was unfairly dropped on the Board.

The Board thanked Mr. White for his work on this matter.

Sel. Lavigne left the meeting at 8:23PM.

Sel. Renzoni asked for an update on the release of the fields.

Mr. Lukes stated that they will be open by this Friday. He stated that they would love to open them as soon as possible but there is frost issues that they need to deal with. He stated that he feels for the kids but that it's easy to overuse the fields and he does not want that to happen because the fields get impacted by early use.

Chairman Barnes stated that the Holden teams are far behind because the fields were not released.

11. Selectmen Subcommittee

Sel. Renzoni stated the All Inclusive Playground was ready to call a meeting.

Motion by Sel. Renzoni, seconded by Sel. Herlihy, it was **VOTED TO ADJOURN THE APRIL 11, 2022 BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING AT 8:33 PM BY A UNANIMOUS ROLL CALL VOTE.** (Renzoni: yes; Lavigne: yes; Bates: yes; Herlihy: yes; Barnes: yes).

APPROVED: 8/29/22