

**HOLDEN BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
MEETING MINUTES  
April 22, 2019**

**6:33PM**

**Memorial Hall**

Present: Chairman Geri Herlihy, Tyler Gibbs, Anthony Renzoni, Robert Lavigne

Not Present: Jeremy Kurtz

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

Chairman Herlihy called the meeting to order at 6:33. The Board stood to recite the Pledge of Allegiance.

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

Motion by Sel. Renzoni, seconded by Sel. Lavigne, it was **UNANIMOUSLY VOTED TO APPROVE THE PARADE PERMIT FOR MAYO ELEMENTARY PTA 5K ROAD RACE AND 1 K FUN RUN AS PRESENTED.**

Ross Baker and Heather Baker were present at the meeting. Mr. Baker stated that they own GH2 Fitness and Training, Inc and they were looking to use a portion of the property to sell smoothies and shakes. He stated that they were working with a nationally recognized company and it was all shelf stable items.

Motion by Sel. Renzoni, seconded by Sel. Lavigne, it was **UNANIMOUSLY VOTED TO APPROVE GH2 FITNESS AND TRAINING, INC FOR A COMMON VICTUALER LICENSE FOR THE FOOD SALES OF SHAKES AND SMOOTHIES AS PRESENTED.**

**2. Report of the Finance Committee**

Dave White, Chairman of the Finance Committee, was present at the meeting, along with Paul Challenger.

Mr. White stated that the budget review had been conducted and he waned to compliment the Town Manager and Assistant Town Manager. He stated that they had good budget hearings and came to a consensus on them. He stated that one of the biggest highlights of the hearings was the additional two police officers. He stated that the reason they had done this was based off the time that was needed to train officers. He stated that there is potential for turnover and for the Town to be prepared when that happens, it seemed like the right time to do this.

Mr. White stated other than that, the changes between what the Town Manager requested and what Fin Com approved was minimal. He stated that any changes that were made were made collaboratively. Mr. White stated that the message is that right now financially the Town is healthy and able to maintain. He stated that they were able to fund OPEB and able to continue to put modest amounts in the stabilization fund in order to reach the 15% in reserves. He stated that number was decided on about 5 years ago and currently we are in the range of 12%.

Chairman Herlihy asked what the goal for OPEB was.

Mr. White replied that they were doing a study this year. He stated that the Town has been good with discipline and they are working to get to 100% funded.

Mr. Challenger stated that overall the tax rate is 1.8% more or less or \$17.76/ thousand. He stated that the average house tax bill will be up about \$220. He stated that house values have also risen. Mr. Challenger stated that we are not taxed at the max allowed under Prop 2.5, and not even close to it. He stated that we are about \$1.2 million in excess levy capacity. He stated that the good news was that 5 years ago we had \$2.2 million so we have eaten into that number over the years. He stated that if this trend continues, we may not like the outcome. He stated that it is important to have levy capacity and money saved as we need good credit to retain a good bond rating. He stated that if our credit ratings slips we will pay more overtime in interest.

Mr. Challenger stated that in FY20 we are raising \$1.7 million and overall education is increasing \$1.8 million, it is going up more than the revenue we are getting. He stated that he is speaking about Wachusett and Mountachusett Regional Vocational Technical School but Wachusett is the driver.

Mr. Challenger stated that over 5 years we have spent 78% and this year is even worse; he stated that education is about 61% of the budget and 5 years ago it was 57%. He stated that the Municipal Budget is basically stagnant and the Educational Budget is growing rapidly. He stated that it is not the districts fault. He stated he does not think that they are wasting money and they have lots of state mandates that they are required to adhere to. He stated that we also keep adding students. He stated that we are currently 46% of the district population, so the Town's increases are larger. He stated our assessment is 6.2%. He said the Town asked the District to keep it to 3.5% and it ended up at 3.85% which is reasonable but then it is 6.2% to the Town. He stated the District isn't doing anything bad it just hits us harder.

Mr. Challenger stated that Municipal offices have responded by freezing new employees. He stated the public safety has added, the 6 fire fighters was funded by a grant and now the 2 officers. He stated that all other Town departments have not added staff in 6 years and that can not continue. He stated that there are more roads and buildings and people need to be added to service them. He stated one way they have dealt with this is to spend less on capital but that can only last so long. He stated that it is okay for this year but the district is going to take more over time. He stated that the Town needs to keep our eye on

this and we may need to think of an override to fund the government. He stated that as a Town we have been very frugal and not done it but at some point we will hit the wall and that he (Challenger) is afraid it will be in the next five years.

Mr. White stated that they did have a few meetings in the fall with the Towns. He stated that he thinks the District tried to achieve what was asked. He stated that he thought it was a good thing to do and that everyone may not have agreed but they sent the message.

Mr. White stated the last thing he wanted to suggest is that it would be a great goal to have the Town Administration do a 5/10 year staffing plan. He stated we know about developments and lots and we should have a longer range staffing plan. He stated that as a Town we need to plan better. He stated that we added 6 fire fighters and that is great for the 3 year grant but after that we own them. He stated that Fin Com supports public safety but the two new officers were not planned for this year and a staffing plan could help to know what was coming.

Sel. Lavigne stated that he thought that was a good idea. He asked about the District, not too long ago they said they felt a new school was needed.

Mr. White said he did not know but if the process starts it is 8-9 years before anything can be built with MSBA Assistance. He stated that maybe in the fall they should talk about it and he was happy to send a letter to the Superintendent for his thoughts.

Chairman Herlihy stated that she was hoping the Population Study would have that information in it.

Mr. Lukes stated the Master Plan should as well.

Chairman Herlihy thanked Mr. White and Fin Com for all their hard work.

### **3. DPU Report (HMLD Director)**

Jane Pareteau, General Manager was present at the meeting. She presented the Board with hard copies of a slide show dated April 22, 2019. (Attached)

Sel. Lavigne thanked Ms. Parenteau for the work she did. He asked about the 19% growth.

Ms. Parenteau replied that she would have to look into it as the program delineates it. She stated that she would get back to the Board with that information.

Chairman Herlihy asked about the LED Lights. She asked if we were saving as much as was originally projected.

Ms. Parenteau replied that there was a 40% reduction with the first payment in December and the second in June.

Sel. Renzoni asked what the life expectancy is for the LED lights.

Ms. Parenteau replied that they were much more efficient and lasted 20-25 years. She stated that they still had to change over the decorative lighting but they were looking at samples and coloring and would then move forward with converting those as well.

Sel. Renzoni asked if there was cost savings.

Ms. Parenteau replied they used less energy.

The Board thanked Ms. Parenteau for her report and coming in.

#### **4. Citizens Address**

Chris, Bailey Road, was present at the meeting. He stated that he was there to appeal the personal property tax on farm animals and farm equipment. He stated that he runs a computer consulting firm in Town and he also runs a retirement home for discarded farm animals and the cost of keeping them is 5 figures and 5-8 hours of caring for them daily. He stated that he does it willingly but discovered that Holden assesses him an excise tax for it. He stated that Rutland had repealed the tax for non-incorporated entities and found that it was not fairly assessed. He stated that he went in front of the Agricultural Commission for support and they decided not to. He stated that Sterling, Princeton, Hubbardston and Rutland all don't collect this tax and Holden would be following other towns. He stated that a lot of people have horses or hens and he does not think they deserve to be taxed.

Chairman Herlihy reminded the public that they don't go back and forth during Citizens Address.

Karen Bullis, 336 Shrewsbury Street, was present. She stated that she was present for a different matter but that listening to the Fin Com report, they should look into Animal Control Bylaws. She stated that funds could be paid to the Town instead of the State for citations. She stated that was just her suggestion, she can think of about \$10,000 that goes to the state and she hopes that they can look into it and address it before the Annual Town Meeting next year and make any necessary changes to the bylaws.

#### **5. Animal Control Officer Designation**

Mr. Lukes stated that this is not something that was done in the past officially but that he thinks it should be done now. He stated that they wished to designate Karen Bullis as the Animal Control Officer.

Motion by Sel. Lavigne, seconded by Sel. Renzoni, it was **UNANIMOUSLY VOTED TO DESIGNATE KAREN BULLIS AS THE ANIMAL CONTROL OFFICER AS PRESENTED.**

## 6. Town Manager Report

**HMLD Monthly Report:** Enclosed is the monthly activity reports for January and February of 2019, prepared by Jane Parenteau, General Manager.

**4<sup>th</sup> Annual Holden DPW Open House:** The Holden Department of Public Works will be holding their third annual open house event at the Adams Road facility on April 27<sup>th</sup> from 9:00AM to 1:00PM.

**Year-to-Date Expense/Revenue Reports:** Attached are the year-to-date revenue and expenses reports for the months of February and March, prepared by Lori Rose, Town Accountant.

**FY 20 Finance Committee Budget Review:** I am happy to announce that the Finance Committee has concluded their review of the FY 20 Municipal Budget. The hearings went well and I would like to thank the committee members for their hard work and collaborative spirit. The Fin Com meets at least once per week starting in January and goes through most of April, holding hearings at which they ask questions and receive presentation from myself and our Department Heads. Chairman Dave White, along with other members of fin com will be at the Board of Selectmen meeting to present the Finance Committee's report later in the agenda.

Mr. Lukes thanked Fin Com, he stated that the process takes several months and everyone did a great job this year, it was a lean and solid budget.

Sel. Renzoni stated that the Town and Fin Com have a great relationship. He stated that in the past, managers did not speak with Fin Com and now this relationship is better than ever. He stated that 5 years ago the school district was 55% of the budget and now it is 60%. He stated if this continues there will be nothing for the municipal side and it is something they need to keep an eye on.

**Registered Voters:** New residents or those who have not registered to vote are asked to do so by tomorrow, April 23rd in order to be eligible to vote in the May 13th town elections and the May 20th Annual Town Meeting. They can register online through the Secretary of States website or at the Town Clerk's Office in Town Hall. The Clerk's Office will be open until 8:00PM tomorrow, April 23rd.

Absentee ballots are available to voters who will be absent from town or confined to home on the day of the Annual Town Election, Monday, May 13<sup>th</sup>. All requests for absentee ballots must be in writing and received in the Towns Clerk's Office no later than 5PM on Friday May 10th. Voters may choose to have the ballot mailed to them or vote at the Town Clerk's Office.

**Health and Wellness Expo:** The Oriol Foundation is sponsoring and organizing our first Health and Wellness Expo at the Senior Center on Thursday, April 25<sup>th</sup> from 9:00am to 1:00PM. Many vendors will be present, there will be numerous free giveaways, blood

pressure screenings, healthcare proxies, lectures, and other information related to health and wellness. They will provide a free continental breakfast and also light lunch for those attending.

**Eagle Lake Boat Races:** Friends of Eagle Lake is again sponsoring their second annual canoe/kayak/SUP boat race on Saturday, May 11, 2019. Registration starts at 9:00AM and races start at 11:00AM.

**Real Estate and Excise Taxes Due:** Real estate and personal property taxes are due May 1<sup>st</sup>. The Tax Collector's Office is located in the Starbard Building, 1204 Main Street. Property owners can also pay their bills online through the town's website [Holdenma.gov](http://Holdenma.gov).

**Letter from Chief Hall to Chief Armstrong Re: Dispatch Response:** Enclosed in your packet is a letter from Holden Fire Chief Hall to Holden Police Chief Armstrong commending the outstanding work of our regional dispatch office during a recent public safety event, in which several area towns and departments needed to be coordinated at one time. Our public safety units continue to maintain excellent communication and collaboration, which has tremendously improved over the last two years.

**Correspondence Re: Monty Tech from City of Gardner:** Enclosed in the packet you will find correspondence from Mayor Hawke of Gardner regarding their recent City Council vote to not support the Montacuset Regional Technical School's FY 20 budget. The reasons for their vote are contained therein. Holden's Finance Committee has already voted to support the FY 20 Monty Tech assessment, but the approval will take place by vote of our residents at our Annual Town Meeting on May 20th.

Sel. Lavigne stated that the letter was not in the packet.

Mr. Lukes stated that Mayor Hawke felt that the annual increases were without proper explanation and they were not getting enough of a detailed budget and that expansion was greater than it should be year over year. He stated that he will forward the Board a copy of the letter.

Sel. Renzoni stated that he had spent a lot of time at Monti-Tech and it is a great education option for anyone. He stated that it is more intimate and there are more options. He stated academically they were very high and that the kids were graduating with a trade and often college credits too. He stated that this is a great option. He stated that they had not had their representative Jim Conoyouer or Sheila Harrity, Superintendent in but they should.

**DPW Composting Schedule:** Holden DPW has released the spring composting and chipping schedules - leaves and grass clippings will be accepted at the composting facility located at the site of the former landfill, 560 River St for HOLDEN RESIDENTS ONLY. Brush and chippings will be done at the ADAMS ROAD GARAGE ONLY due to the Asian Longhorn Beetle regulated area, commercial loads will not be accepted.

Only cars, pickup trucks and small trailers will be allowed. Proof of residency will be required.

Days of Operations, Saturday, April 27, 2019, May 4, 2019, May 11, 2019 and May 18, 2019. Hours of Operations are 8:00AM to 2:30PM.

**7. Liquor License Transfer, Authentic Eats, LLC, d/b/a Papa Gino's**

Motion by Sel. Renzoni, seconded by Sel. Lavigne, it was **UNANIMOUSLY VOTED TO OPEN THE PUBLIC HEARING FOR LIQUOR LICENSE TRANSFER, AUTHENTIC EATS LLC, D/B/A PAPA GINO'S.**

Sel. Lavigne read the Public Hearing Notice into record.

Marie Carpenter was present at the meeting.

Chairman Herlihy asked if everything was in order.

Sel. Lavigne stated that it looked like the corporate parent was changed.

Chairman Herlihy asked if there was any public comment; no members from the public stepped forward.

Motion by Sel. Renzoni, seconded by Sel. Gibbs, it was **UNANIMOUSLY VOTED TO CLOSE THE PUBLIC HEARING FOR LIQUOR LICENSE TRANSFER/ AUTHENTIC EATS LLC, DBA PAPA GINO'S.**

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

Sel. Renzoni thanked Ms. Carpenter and Papa Gino's for being great community members in Town.

**Town Manager Report Cont.**

Sel. Renzoni stated that he wanted to comment on the letter from the Fire Chief to the Police Chief. He stated that the dynamic between the two departments is fantastic and he appreciates the direction it is pulling the public safety in.

Mr. Lukes agreed and stated that both Chiefs do a great job.

**8. Selectmen Miscellaneous**

Sel. Lavigne: none

Sel. Renzoni stated that he has been contacted by a lot of residents for the proposed development by Bailey Road and Salisbury Street. He stated that the Planning Board has a public hearing tomorrow night and that he appreciates the contact but that he thinks they will have more success with the Planning Board as they (Board of Selectmen) do not have a direct role in the process.

Mr. Lukes stated that with a large subdivision there are several Boards and Commissions and each will have their place. He stated Con Com deals with wetlands, Planning Board does the Subdivision Regulations, and so on. He stated that when these plans come forward it does not mean that there will be 100 units built. He stated that Holden does have a phased growth in place. He stated that these particular plans started back in 2009 and that some times when there are changes being made to the subdivision regulations these things get triggered. He stated that residents saying we need to stop growth is not something that can be done. He stated that there are negative effects when someone says you have to stop growth, it is private property and a constitutional right. He stated that they know the impact and they want to curtail large growth but it needs to be done in the confines of the laws that restrict us.

Sel. Renzoni stated that putting a project forward quickly could be a risk if major bylaw changes are made.

Mr. Lukes stated that there is also affordable housing that could come into play.

Sel. Renzoni stated that the town has slowly adjusted the bylaws to present to Town Meeting. He stated that these are meant to better service Holden and it does not mean that a project is going in your backyard. He stated that this particular project is early and the Planning Board will help them to come into compliance with Holden's Rules and Regulations.

Mr. Lukes stated that he encourages anyone to come in and speak at the meetings. He stated it is important to hear from the people.

Sel. Gibbs: none

Chairman Herlihy: none

#### **9. Open, Set, Close Town Meeting Warrant**

Motion by Sel. Renzoni, seconded by Sel. Lavigne, it was **UNANIMOUSLY VOTED TO OPEN THE 2019 ANNUAL TOWN MEETING WARRANT AS PRESENTED.**

Sel. Renzoni asked how much longer the Warrant was open for.

Mr. Lukes replied until May 3<sup>rd</sup>.

Sel. Renzoni asked if there were any numbers for the Gold Star.



Mr. Lukes replied he did not have them yet.

Sel. Renzoni stated that if we did not get an exact number, they could do a conservative estimate and that would be helpful.

Motion by Sel. Renzoni, seconded by Sel. Lavigne, it was **UNANIMOUSLY VOTED TO SET THE 2019 ANNUAL TOWN MEETING WARRANT AS PRESENTED.**

Motion by Sel. Renzoni, seconded by Sel. Lavigne, it was **UNANIMOUSLY VOTED TO CLOSE THE 2019 ANNUAL TOWN MEETING WARRANT AS PRESENTED.**

### **10. Speaking Assignments-Town Meeting Articles**

Sel. Lavigne suggested that Sel. Renzoni take Warrant Article #25 and #26.

Sel. Lavigne asked about Street Acceptance.

Mr. Lukes replied to pass over it.

Sel. Renzoni suggested the new Selectman take Warrant Article #21.

Sel. Lavigne: Warrant Article #22

Sel. Renzoni: Warrant Article #23

### **CITIZENS ADDRESS REOPENED**

Motion by Sel. Lavigne, seconded by Sel. Renzoni, it was **UNANIMOUSLY VOTED TO REPOEN THE CITIZENS ADDRESS.**

Bob Pezzini, 18 Forrest Drive, was present at the meeting. He stated that he had been trying to find a way to complain about the RR crossing at Quinapoxet Street. He stated that he did post a complaint with the DPW and he knows that the Worcester Providence is responsible but it is unbelievable. He stated that he was wondering if the Board knew how to get this moving.

Chairman Herlihy reminded the public that they do not typically go back and forth with Citizens Address.

### **11. Follow Up to Citizens Address**

Sel. Lavigne stated that there are two railroad crossings and because we don't own it and it is on federal land the town can't touch it by law. He stated that it has been pushed up to the federal level in order to get resolved and he is hopeful that they will fix it properly

in the summer. He stated that they know it's a big issue and they are trying to get through the red tape to have it fixed.

Sel. Renzoni suggested reaching out to anyone in Congress or the House to place a complaint.

Sel. Lavigne stated that with regards to the Citizen Petition, the Board has some good information. He stated that typically as a Board they do not take positions on a Citizen Petition. He stated that he suggests that interested people come to Town Meeting to state your case on the matter.

Mr. Lukes stated that Warrant Article #27, Excise Tax, the statute requires a 2/3 approval of the Board for it to go.

Sel. Renzoni suggested that the unanimous vote the Board took fulfilled the requirement.

Mr. Lukes agreed.

Chairman Herlihy asked about the Animal Control Bylaw.

Sel. Renzoni asked if this was something that could be tracked and have a recommendation on.

Mr. Lukes replied it could be done in the future.

Mr. Madaus replied he could review it.

## **12. Selectmen Subcommittee**

Sel. Lavigne: none

Sel. Renzoni stated that the VA Advisory Committee was meeting Wednesday in the Starbard Building at 7:00PM to talk about the parade. He thanked the Town Manager's Office for their help. He stated that they would also look for volunteers for flagging and anyone with questions could reach out. He stated that the donation requests went out in the HMLD bills.

Sel. Lavigne asked what the flagging dates were.

Sel. Renzoni replied he was not sure but he would put up an event and he would have the information for the next Board meeting.

Sel. Gibbs: none

Chairman Herlihy stated she did not have an update for the DPW Building Committee but they had been working on planning and design.

Sel. Renzoni stated that he did not have an update on the Master Plan Committee. He asked Ms. Bacon when the report was expected.

Ms. Bacon replied hopefully by June.

Sel. Renzoni stated after that they could stand up an Implementation Committee to do recommendations with possibly a few roll over members and some new members.

Motion by Sel. Lavigne, seconded by Sel. Renzoni, it was **UNANIMOUSLY VOTED TO ADJOURN THE APRIL 22, 2019 BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING AT 7:53 PM.**

**APPROVED: June 3, 2019**