

**HOLDEN BOARD OF SELECTMEN
MEETING MINUTES
October 21, 2019**

6:30PM

Memorial Hall

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

Others Present: Peter Lukes, Town Manager
Liz Fotos, Town Recorder

Chairman Renzoni called the meeting to order at 6:30PM. The Board stood to recite the Pledge of Allegiance.

1. Appointments, Licenses, and Permits

None

2. DPW Facility Committee Chairman Report

Dan Nason, DPW Facility Chairman, Mark Johnson and Gary Kaczmarek, OPM were present at the meeting.

Mr. Nason stated that the design is well underway and they were at about 60% design level. He stated that they have successfully moved the fuel location for a better location and vehicle access and worked to use existing underground utilities and located the sanitary sewer line. He stated that they would be working on the telecommunications and would save the town money by doing it now.

Mr. Nason stated that they anticipated that this would be complete in December of 2019 and then they would review documents in January of 2020. He stated that they would begin bidding in February 2020 and complete it in mid March of 2020. He stated that they anticipated construction to be about 18 months.

Mr. Nason stated that the future tasks would be to prequalify contractors, work on design development and review cost estimates. He stated they would also have a meeting to define the industrial equipment that would be needed. Additionally he said that they would meet with Town Departments, State permitting, and other pertinent parties.

Mr. Nason stated that they will also do construction drawings and then front end and tech specifications.

Sel. Lavigne thanked Mr. Nason for the updates. He asked if there had been any blips in the cost.

Mr. Nason stated that they do have an escalator to look out for inflation but the number is a rough number. He stated that the cost per square foot was higher than they thought but they were trying not to get too worried because they were looking at the numbers through the winter. He stated that they were watching it closely and once they have the estimates in they will have a better feel for cost. He stated that they were also looking to do cost cutting measures in the projects.

Chairman Renzoni stated it looked like the project would be wrapping up in October of 2021. He thanked them for coming out and that they could reach out to the Board and come in to brief them at any time.

3. Town Manager Update

New School Proposal: I met last week with Superintendent McCall and his administrative staff, along with the Chairman of the Board of Selectmen and Chairman of the Finance Committee to discuss population trends and the potential necessity for additional classroom space in the coming decade. Our Master Plan numbers show a limited need for more class space within a ten years time frame, although NESDEC is presenting figures that are indicating a much higher rate of growth of student population in the next ten years. Obviously with such widely different predictive models, no solid determination could be made as to a timeframe for the potential of building another school, an addition onto a current building, or a renovation project. We will meet again with the same parties prior to the FY21 budget roundtable that will take place at the Holden Senior Center on November 7th.

Sel. Lavigne asked if we knew where the NESDEC gets their numbers from.

Mr. Lukes replied that they looked at different things. He stated that they gave a full breakdown annually and year over year and when the Town was analyzing it they were unsure where they got their numbers from.

Chairman Renzoni stated that it was important to note that the Town went prepared and their numbers were higher than the actuals. He stated that he does not think anyone disagrees that we will need a school in the next decade but it was a matter of where to fit it in the capital budget; he stated there were no big ticket items falling off. He stated if this was done today it would be several years of a big impact on the budget.

Chairman Renzoni stated that another Mountview would be another \$30 + million dollars. He stated they would have to consider principals, custodians, teachers, and more. He stated that right now in the 6th grade teachers are teaching 140 as a caseload as opposed to sister towns that are teaching 90-100. He stated that they are already overloaded and it is not fair to the students.

Sel. Lavigne stated that the other side is that if NESDEC is looking at a population that large then eventually Holden would be 51% of the school committee. He stated that if he was a Selectman in another Town he would not want to lose that amount of power. He

stated that he thinks this has to be a larger discussion because if we grown and are 51% then Holden representatives would control it all.

Chairman Renzoni stated that he agreed that there needed to be a follow up. He stated that they were meeting on November 7, 2019 and then they can move forward. He stated his concern was where this would fit in the budget.

Mr. Lukes stated that the Capital Asset Study also called for \$35 million in spending for the buildings that we already have.

Chairman Renzoni stated that they were in an environment where the municipal budget went up by almost nothing. He stated that these are scary numbers and budgets they were looking at. He stated that the tax bills were going up faster and faster. He stated that he is optimistic that they will figure it out but they need to watch how the money is being spent.

Sel. Herlihy stated that she wanted to make sure they discussed the middle school caseload further. She stated before they speak about a new project they could get relief to Mountview teachers by giving them teachers now.

Sel. Gibbs asked if they had classroom space to do that.

Sel. Herlihy replied that they did.

Chairman Renzoni stated that he wanted to know the Boards thoughts on where to go from here for the roundtable.

Sel. Lavigne stated that they always have the roundtable and it is lip service. He stated that the district tells the towns what they need and then the towns say what we can afford and then the district does what they want to do. He asked if we should meet with the Holden Reps. He stated that he is unsure if they realized what the town was facing. He stated that his duty was to the residents of Holden not other towns. He stated that our representatives should hear it from the Board and maybe Fin Com as well and then we can get closer to the same page.

Sel. Lavigne stated that the budget line is growing so much that we won't be able to do anything else. He stated that he thinks that we need to make sure that the school committee members know what the Board thinks.

Chairman Renzoni asked for others thoughts.

Sel. Herlihy stated that in the past they had issues with transparency. She stated that they finally got a line by line budget and she wants to know what the kids in Holden are getting.

Chairman Renzoni replied that he didn't disagree. He stated that he thinks that Holden's delegation could come in to meet with the Board to see where we are financially as a town and understand the constraints the town faces. He stated that he doesn't think they have ever done that and maybe they could reach out via the Town Manager's Office to invite them in.

Halloween in Holden: The Economic Development Committee will be holding their first organized event called Halloween in Holden on Saturday, October 26th from 10:00AM through 4:00PM. There are at least thirty businesses participating in a trick or treating event up and down Main Street. Lists of participating businesses will be available at the Holden Bandstand in front of the Senior Center starting at 11:00AM, along with music at Seven Saws, and the festivities are followed by a family fun event at the Red Barn from 3:00PM to 5:00PM.

EDC Chair Jessica Milliken has done a great job leading the charge on this event and the entire EDC has come together in a short time since their first meeting a couple of months ago to organize our local businesses, along with the Wachusett Area Chamber of Commerce, and to coordinate with the Friends of the Red Barn. This is a truly inclusive event that will be great for children, adults, businesses and residents. Participants who visit enough stops on the trick or treating route can enter a drawing to win gift cards to the Holden businesses of their choice. Details are available on the Town's Facebook page, on the Town's website, and on posters that have been placed in businesses up and down Main Street.

Praise of HMLD: The strong coastal storm that Massachusetts experienced last week overnight from October 16-17 caused power outages across the Commonwealth and within most, if not all, of our neighboring towns. Holden customers of HMLD did not experience any power outages as a result of this storm. This is a testament to the continuous attention from HMLD pays to maintaining our lines and protecting them from potential storm damage, year round. Kudos to HMLD staff and our Director Jane Partenteau for their dedication to keeping our power grid in top shape.

Holden Fire Dept: Holden fire fighters participated in a live burn drill at the training facility on Grove Street in Worcester on the weekend of October 12. Holden Fire also hosted their annual open house and fire safety awareness event on October 19th. Both events went exceptionally well and many thanks to Chief Hall and Deputy Chief Smith for all their work planning these activities.

Budget Season: Although it seems as though we just finished our Annual Town Meeting, we have already kicked off our annual budget season by asking department heads to begin preparing and submitting capital budget for FY 21. Our FY21 budget calendar has been set, and our generally conservative philosophy of budgeting will remain the same as it has been in prior years. This means of budgeting has paid the Town dividends throughout the years in the form of excellent bond rating, healthy cash reserves and the ability to provide the necessities for excellent municipal services for our residents.

Sel. Lavigne asked when the next bond rating was.

Mr. Lukes stated it would be around three months. He stated that the S&P was next week.

Chairman Renzoni called a short recess at 6:54PM.

Chairman Renzoni called the meeting back to order at 7:00PM.

4. Citizen Address

None

Town Manager Update Cont.

18 Industrial Drive: The bids for constructing and laying new water service to the property have been received and are currently being reviewed. We will also be working with HMLD to hopefully bring electric to the site along with extra potential hookups for the back lot if we should need power to the other parts of the property in the future. This final element will have the site prepared in advance for construction and should further save the town time and costs during the construction phase.

Cost estimates for the project itself are currently being calculated by both Weston and Sampson and an independent cost estimator. We have also been going through the long process with bond counsel to issue the initial debt for the project. I expect that we should have access to those funds by the end of November. Pre-qualification will be starting soon as well.

HMLD Community Room: Many of you have probably noticed that the carpeting in the community room at Holden Municipal Light Department has been in need of replacement for some time. After selecting a vendor, work began last week and should be completed within a few days.

5. Town Manager Annual Review

Chairman Renzoni stated that the Board could offer edits or inputs on the document that they had in front of them and once it was reviewed the Board could entertain a motion to accept it as is or amended and then authorize the Chairman and Vice Chairman to present it to the Town Manager.

Chairman Renzoni opened the floor for amendments.

Sel. Herlihy stated that she believes that the Chairman had put in the consensus from the Board.

Sel. Lavigne stated that it has not been business as usual since Mr. Lukes had come on board in a good way. He stated that the Town Manager was looking at revenue generation while still keeping the community feel. He stated that the EDC is great, the police report as a goal for this year was important and he feels that the Board has expressed what they want from that. He stated across the board, he thinks Mr. Lukes is exceeding expectations and he appreciates all the Town Manager's hard work.

Chairman Renzoni stated that once this is approved it will be on record and anyone can request it from the Town Manager's Office as well as having it attached to the meeting minutes. He stated that this annual review was a work up to the annual pay increase. He stated that all the Board members have expressed appreciation for the budget process and how it has evolved under Mr. Lukes. He stated that he (Lukes) has made this is own and Fin Com has gone out of their way to express the value it has in their process. He stated that everyone also acknowledged that communication and correspondence from the Town Manager to the Board was appreciated. Chairman Renzoni stated that the police department reports was made a goal and that it will be addressed through the goal process and that everyone was happy with the seven Town Manager Goals from August. He stated that Mr. Lukes had accomplished all the prior goals and that he was happy to have him (Lukes) on board and looks forward to the future.

Motion by Sel. Lavigne, seconded by Sel. Gibbs, it was **UNANIMOUSLY VOTED TO ACCEPT THE REVIEW OF THE TOWN MANAGER PENDING THE GRAMATICAL UPDATES AND AUTHORIZE THE CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR TO PRESENT IT TO THE TOWN MANAGER.**

Sel. Lavigne stated that this was a good time to bring up the fact that there were a lot of performance measures that were left blank because of how the system was developed. He stated a lot of that information the Board did not have purview of such as personnel files and union proceedings so there are some private things the Board is unable to rate. He stated that they are able to look at this process and see if it should be revamped.

Chairman Renzoni suggested setting this as an agenda item for some time before budget season. He suggested that the evaluation sheet is necessary because they need to have something to hold the Town Manager accountable with in order the write the narrative. He stated the grading could become something different if they wanted.

Sel. Lavigne stated that they need to find a better way so that a correct narrative is formed.

Mr. Lukes stated that he could dig up some templates others use as well.

Sel. Lavigne stated that they had looked into this in the past but that this Board was a different one.

6. Selectmen Subcommittee

None

7. Selectmen Miscellaneous

Sel. Gibbs: none

Sel. Herlihy stated that she went to the Fire Dept open house and it was a great event. She stated there were lots of kids there and it was a fun afternoon.

Sel. Barnes: none.

Sel. Lavigne stated that he wanted to echo what Sel. Herlihy stated. The Fire Dept event looked like a great event. He stated that Holden Halloween was coming up and Boy Scout Troop 180 was doing a hot dog sale for a fundraiser as well.

Chairman Renzoni stated that the State FY 19 Supplemental Budget is out of the house at a 2.6% increase. He stated that the senate weights and measures has it in for a 5.2 increase. He stated that they were not going to vote on this but if you think it is important you should reach out to Senator Chandler. He stated that this will help us out.

Motion by Sel. Lavigne, seconded by Sel. Gibbs, it was **UNANIMOUSLY VOTED BY A ROLL CALL VOTE TO ENTER INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION: PURSUANT TO MGL CHAPTER 30A, SECTION 21 (a), PURPOSE NO. 7; TO COMPLY WITH OR ACT UNDER AUTHORITY OF ANY GENERAL OR SPECIAL LAW OR FEDERAL GRANT-IN-AID REQUIREMENTS-SPECIFICALLY MGL c. 30A, SECTIONS 22 (f), (g).**

PURPOSE NO 2; TO CONDUCT STRATEGY SESSION IN PREPERATION FOR NEGOTIAIONS WITH NONUNION PERSONNEL OR TO CONDUCT COLLECTIVE BARGAINING SESSIONS OR CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS WITH NON UNION PERSONNEL.

AND TO REENTER REGULAR SESSION FOR THE SOLE PURPOSE OF ADJOURNEMNT AS THE CHAIR DO SO DECLARES. (Lavigne: yes; Gibbs: yes; Renzoni: yes; Herlihy: yes; Barnes, yes).

The Board entered into Executive Session by a unanimous roll call vote at 7:14PM.

The Board adjourned Executive Session by a unanimous roll call vote and reentered Regular Session.

Motion by Sel. Lavigne, seconded by Sel. Gibbs, it was **UNANIMOUSLY VOTED TO ADJOURN THE OCTOBER 21, 2019 BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING AT 7:40PM.**

APPROVED: 12/2/19