

**HOLDEN BOARD OF SELECTMEN
MEETING MINUTES
December 16, 2019**

6:32PM

Memorial Hall

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

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

Chairman Renzoni called the meeting to order and the Board stood for the Pledge of Allegiance

1. Appointments, Licenses, and Permits

Motion by Sel. Lavigne, seconded by Sel. Gibbs, it was **UNANIMOUSLY VOTED TO APPROVE HOLDEN DISCOUNT LIQUORS, INC. FOR A CHANGE OF MANAGER (Robinson) AS PRESENTED.**

Motion by Sel. Lavigne, seconded by Sel. Gibbs, it was **UNANIMOUSLY VOTED TO APPROVE THE COMMON VICTUALER/ CHANGE OF OWNERSHIP FOR PARROT PIZZA AS PRESENTED.**

Motion by Sel. Lavigne, seconded by Sel. Gibbs, it was **UNANIMOUSLY VOTED TO REAPPOINT LANCE LAZAR, SUSAN KOWALZCY, AND KAREN CLICKNER TO THE HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION FOR A TERM TO EXPIRE 12/31/2022 AS PRESENTED.**

2. Jane Parenteau HMLD Calendar Year 2020 Operating and Capital Budgets

Jane Parenteau, HMLD Director was present at the meeting and presented:

Holden Municipal Light Department CY2020 Operating and Capital Budgets// HMLD Board of Commissioners dated December 16, 2019. (Attached)

Chairman Renzoni interrupted Ms. Parenteau and opened up Citizen Address

3. Citizen Address

Dave White, 84 Wachusett Street was present at the meeting. He stated that he was present today to address the Board because he received a Certified Letter from the Holden DPW claiming that he pushed snow into the road and the right of way. He stated

the letter put him on notice and stated that if it occurred again he would be subject to fines. He stated that he has been doing snow removal for 25 years and never once had anyone complain. He stated that it was interesting to him that the property they were discussing was his personal home and that in the past year he had issues with Holden DPW. He stated that he was the person that brought it to the Town Manager's attention that the Mountview athletic fields were not acceptable and other issues that he has raised regarding DPW. He stated that from his road he plows a culvert that belongs to Shields Pond and he has never received a thank you. He stated that the Town Manager had indicated that his (White's) name was on the list and that it was indicated that the letter should go out like the others but that he (Lukes) did not believe it.

Mr. White stated that he wanted the dates and pictures and proof. He stated that he is suggesting that this is retribution. He said he is the first to admit that he puts himself out there and is not afraid to state his opinion but he thinks after 20 years of service in Town Government and being apart of every new building project done in town in the last 20 years this is a cheap shot.

Chairman Renzoni thanked Mr. White for his comments.

Dan Marinone, 37 Village Way, Jefferson was present at the meeting. He stated that the Eagle Lake Committee was interested in presenting a cost conscious Town Meeting Warrant Article that will address concerns. He asked the Town Manager and the liaison to the ELC for help completing this in a timely manner.

Jane Parenteau HMLD Calendar Year 2020 Operating and Capital Budget Cont.

Sel. Lavigne asked Ms. Parenteau about the plan for staffing during the Light Up Navajo time.

Ms. Parenteau replied that they anticipated 4 employees would go from May-June which was not a high vacation time for HMLD. She stated the OT backup would be minimal. She stated that if there were a storm they would have to take that into consideration but it would be like existing vacation time for the department.

Sel. Lavigne asked if it personnel or equipment.

Ms. Parenteau confirmed it was just personnel.

Chairman Renzoni asked the total cost.

Ms. Parenteau replied that they anticipated the total cost to be \$2,000-\$5,000.

Ms. Parenteau stated that the Municipal Electric Power Advisory Board met on December 4, 2019 and voted 6-0-1 in support of it.

Motion by Sel. Lavigne, seconded by Sel. Gibbs it was **UNANIMOUSLY VOTED TO MOVE THAT THE HMLD BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS APPROVE THE PARTICIPATION OF HMLD IN 2020 LIGHT UP NAVAJO II.**

BUDGET

Sel. Herlihy thanked Ms. Parenteau for her presentation; she asked if the 3% increase that was forecasted was typical.

Ms. Parenteau replied that she was only there for a month and did not have time to dive into it so this year one of her goals was to look at every position to ensure that they were using tech and employees correctly and that the right people were in the right places. She stated they were hoping to stay in budget.

Sel. Herlihy asked how the pilot was calculated previously.

Ms. Parenteau replied it was her understanding with the Town Accountant that it was assumed a 2.5% increase annually. She stated that she thinks they are in good position but that it should be fine tuned and have benchmarks set.

Sel. Herlihy asked about the Bullard Street substation.

Ms. Parenteau stated it was her understanding that the transformers were designed to put in and because of a hurricane the decision was made to change them out to regular transformers so the design was modified and because of the modifications they ran into other issues.

Sel. Lavigne stated that the Capital Budget was pretty aggressive last year he asked for the outlook of the next 2-4 years.

Ms. Parenteau stated that they need to present long term capital plans. She stated that she could not do that without an engineering study to determine how to prioritize things. She stated she will get that this month and they have a preliminary draft about looking at the different substations. She stated Chaffins will need a redo so she has that worked into the capital budget and looking at the funding for that. She stated they could look at bonding through Town or MMWEC. She stated they were also long at a meter change program that they did not have the money for this year so they were looking to work it into the 2020 budget.

Sel. Lavigne asked if this was going to be the normal level of spending for the next 5 years.

Ms. Parenteau replied that she thinks it will be significant because not a lot has been done. She stated that Bullard Street is critical and they need to be able to carry the load on both substations.

Sel. Lavigne asked about the software upgrade.

Ms. Parenteau stated that it was a hyper convergence and that it was her understanding that it will merge the server with the Towns.

Sel. Lavigne asked if all the Town departments were on this.

Ms. King stated that they were continuing to merge everyone over and that it was saving the town a lot on maintenance to have everyone working on the same software.

Sel. Lavigne asked about back up.

Ms. Parenteau replied that they worked as each others back up.

Sel. Lavigne stated that he would be worried about something happening regionally; he asked if there was a server back up if there was a cyber issue.

Ms. King stated that they were planning to work on that in the future.

Sel. Lavigne asked if there was back up offsite.

Mr. Lukes replied there was at two different locations.

Sel. Herlihy asked if the Bullard Street plan would help push off what needed to be done at Chaffins.

Ms. Parenteau replied that it would help but that it inevitability needed to be done.

Chairman Renzoni stated that the OPEB was impressive; he stated that next year they hoped to be over 100% with a number assigned to new hires.

The Municipal Electric Power Advisory Board met on December 4, 2019 and unanimously recommended the three actions.

Motion by Sel. Lavigne, seconded by Sel. Gibbs, it was **UNANIMOSULY VOTED TO MOVE THAT THE HMLD BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS APPROVE THE CALENDAR YEAR 2020 OPERATING BUDGET AS PRESENTED ON DECEMBER 16, 2019.**

Motion by Sel. Lavigne, seconded by Sel. Gibbs, it was, **UNANIMOUSLY VOTED TO MOVE THAT THE HMLD BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS APPROPRIATE THE SUM OF \$107, 687 OF LIGHT DEPARTMENT FUNDS TO THE TOWN OF HOLDEN OPEB TRUST FUND IN 2020 ON A DATE TO BE DETERMINED BY THE TOWN MANAGER ON THE RECOMMENDATION OF THE GENERAL MANAGER.**

Motion by Sel. Lavigne, seconded by Sel. Gibbs, it was, **UNANIMOUSLY VOTED TO MOVE THAT THE HMLD BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS APPROVE THE CALENDAR YEAR 2020 CAPITAL BUDGET IN THE AMOUNT OF \$2,029,100 AS PRESENTED ON DECEMBER 16, 2019.**

4. Response to Citizen Address

Chairman Renzoni asked for an update on Eagle Lake.

Sel. Lavigne stated that they had been trying to find some time to meet and discuss the matter. He stated that they had all seen the report and were disappointed by it. He stated that this was the first he had heard of the ELC plan to go to Town Meeting. He stated that there was some confusion between the Friends of Eagle Lake and the Eagle Lake Committee but he would look to meet with them.

Chairman Renzoni asked about the letters that went out.

Mr. Lukes stated that he was not sure. He stated that when the last storm ended the Director of DPW stated that there were letters to send out from snow in the street. He stated that he did not want to treat anyone special and that they followed the same process for all citizens. He stated that it could have been a mistake or other extenuating circumstance although he doubts that Mr. White would improperly snow plow.

Mr. Lukes stated that as far as this being a cheap shot he does not believe that to be the case, he stated that the town frequently sends out letters and it is in no way retaliation. He stated that he has always appreciated what has been submitted and that it was not a retaliation from him, nor would he tolerate it from the Town of Holden. He stated that if he felt it was happening, it would stop immediately. He stated that the letter was not a threat and was not a fine, it was a general reminder or warning to people that they should not plow into the right of way. He stated that he was sorry that Mr. White felt this way.

Chairman Renzoni stated that it was a good policy to not treat anyone in town differently; and he would expect anyone to receive a letter. He stated in the past there had been a lot of favoritism and that they need to be transparent to all citizens and show all citizens are equal. Chairman Renzoni stated that knowing Mr. White; he is very careful, he does not give his mess to someone else and is very proud and competent. He stated that this is a legitimate concern and that he (Renzoni) would feel insulted as well. He stated that it was great to hear the Manager's policy and that he was sorry it happened to Mr. White as he has done a lot for the community and is very involved and passionate about Holden. He stated that the Town Manager is tracking this and is in charge of it.

Sel. Herlihy asked if the DPW Director saw every house that got a letter.

Mr. Lukes replied that he was sure that the Director did not see any of the homes as it was a report.

5. Snow Plow Discussion

Chairman Renzoni asked if they could be briefed on the last snow storm.

Mr. Lukes stated the storm stalled and then kept coming and to make matters worse, the sidewalk plow broke down. He stated that he did meet with the Superintendent and they were very complimentary of Holden DPW and with the communication from 4AM. He stated that many of the towns have a three to four hour route so that if they start by 11:00AM by 2:00PM it is all back on the roads for school purposes.

Chairman Renzoni stated that he understands that equipment goes down but it needs to be ready for combat for the first storm. He stated that he is sorry they did not get a new sidewalk machine but it is not an excuse. He stated that Davis Hill was sending alerts that kids should not be on RT 31. He stated that he is glad we were communicating with the District but that it was not okay for the kids to be on the roads for those two days.

Chairman Renzoni stated that he also wanted to discuss the street intersection at Shrewsbury and Chapel. He stated it has been a problem for years with the catch basin clogging and puddles and ices. He stated that it is unsafe sidewalk.

Mr. Lukes stated that he spoke with the DPW Director and this is a known issue. He stated that they were going to try to get there tomorrow (Dec 17) to see if they can clear the culverts. He stated that this is a major overhaul that needs to be done and he asked that they find a solution to lessen what is currently going on in the interim.

Chairman Renzoni stated that he received pictures and it was sheer ice from catch basin to catch basin.

Sel. Lavigne stated that he went though and it was water at this point; he thanked Mr. Lukes for taking care of it.

Mr. Lukes replied that it was not taken care of yet but it was being addressed.

6. Selectmen Miscellaneous

Sel. Gibbs: none

Sel. Herlihy stated that she had met with some Jefferson citizens about the brown water situation and heard their issues. She stated that she was hopeful that they could discuss this in another meeting.

Sel. Barnes: none

Sel. Lavigne stated that there was a local charity, Hope Lives Here, which is a non profit for loss and grief that was starting at the library.

Sel. Lavigne stated the tree looked fantastic.

Sel. Lavigne asked for an update on the vandalism at the library.

Sel. Lavigne stated that there had also been an issue with a Department Head that in his opinion was uncooperative and rude to a Citizen Committee. He stated that he saw the frustration in the Committee and they asked why they were wasting their time. He stated that it needs to be perfectly clear that none of the Town Employees speak to any citizen how they did; it was rude and disgusting. He stated that it is his expectation that when a Citizen Committee comes to you with an idea, the Town Employees should be fully cooperative. He stated that he is still waiting for an actual apology and that if he sees it again it will be a bigger issue. He stated that the Town does wonderful things and that this Department Head needs to truly understand that what happened was a very big deal.

Mr. Lukes stated that he knows the complaint that he heard was much more moderate than the way Sel. Lavigne was putting it. He stated that the complaining person could come to him and action will be taken.

Sel. Lavigne replied that they came to him; and he knows that this is not the first time. He stated that they need to make sure the attitude and behavior changes.

Chairman Renzoni stated that in the Town of Holden they value Citizen Committees and look to them for opinions. He stated that in this form of government, we look to citizen boards and committees to make recommendations and the employees should value them.

Sel. Lavigne stated that he does not think that the Department Heads need to listen to every recommendation but that there should be discussions about them.

Chairman Renzoni stated that it devalues the Committee and demoralizes them if they are not valued. He stated that the Town works hard to find the right people to put into these committees and they did great things in six months; he stated that they want to keep them going.

Sel. Renzoni asked if there was a Town Manager Update.

Mr. Lukes replied that he had been meeting with Department Heads for a week and a half and the budget was coming along nicely. He stated that all the departments have sent in budgets at this point.

7. Selectmen Subcommittee

Sel. Herlihy stated she had nothing new from the DPW Building Committee

Motion by Sel. Lavigne, seconded by Sel. Gibbs, it was **UNANIMOUSLY VOTED TO ADJOURN THE DECEMBER 16, 2019 BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING AT 7:51PM.**

APPROVED: APRIL 6, 2020 CORRECTED