

**HOLDEN BOARD OF SELECTMEN
MEETING MINUTES
September 28, 2020**

6:30PM

Senior Center

Present: Robert Lavigne, Anthony Renzoni (participating remotely), Tyler Gibbs, Geri Herlihy, Chiara Barnes

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

Chairman Lavigne called the meeting to order at 6:30PM. The Board stood to recite the Pledge of Allegiance. He stated that Sel. Renzoni was participating remotely and confirmed that Sel. Renzoni was able to hear him.

1. Appointments, License, and Permits

Motion by Sel. Gibbs, seconded by Sel. Barnes, it was **UNANIMOUSLY VOTED BY A ROLL CALL VOTE TO APPROVE THE ELECTION WORKERS, FROM 9/28/2-8/31/21 AS PRESENTED.** (Gibbs: yes; Barnes: yes; Herlihy: yes; Lavigne: yes, Renzoni: yes)

Motion by Sel. Gibbs, seconded by Sel. Barnes, it was **UNANIMOUSLY VOTED BY A ROLL CALL VOTE TO APPROVE HEATHER PARRY TO THE CONSERVATION COMMISSION TO FILL A VACANCY EXPIRING 12/31/2021 AS PRESENTED.** (Gibbs: yes; Barnes: yes; Herlihy: yes; Lavigne: yes; Renzoni: yes).

Motion by Sel. Gibbs, seconded by Sel. Barnes, it was **UNANIMOUSLY VOTED BY A ROLL CALL VOTE TO APPROVE NANCY ROCHELEAU TO THE AG COM TO FILL A VACACNY EXPIRING 11/2/2022 AS PRESENTED.** (Gibbs: yes; Barnes: yes; Herlihy: yes; Lavigne: yes; Renzoni: yes).

2. Citizen Address

Brendan O'Malley, 19 South View Road, was present at the meeting. He stated that he was there to speak about the Social Justice Alliance. He stated that while he appreciated that the BOS had reached out he believes that the idea of real dialogue was being dismissed. Mr. O'Malley stated that he felt that institutional racism was everywhere and many people experienced its effects first hand. He stated that when he moved to Holden he witnessed an African American of about 12/13 years old being detained by police. He stated that he could not hear what was being said but that the officers stood over him in an intimidating and humiliating manner. He stated that he would like to see a real

dialogue with the police as to how to make everyone feel safe. He stated that he wanted the Board of Selectmen to take this serious and that they could perhaps have a subcommittee to look into it.

Joe Sabato, Boulder Hill Road, was present at the meeting. He stated that he was present to speak about traffic safety issues. He stated that just today, a truck and a car were driving too fast and without speed limits posted, it is very dangerous. He stated he was on the road and he almost had to dive into the brush. He stated that this is a daily occurrence on this road. He stated that he also wanted to bring up Safe Communities and joining it could be an opportunity for Mr. O'Malley. He stated that the purpose is to develop dialogue and have police, citizens, fire, ems, schools, all working together and communicating.

Brendan Plan, 197 Mason Road, was present at the meeting. He stated that he experiences the traffic first hand as he walks his dog. He stated that due to the speed of cars he has to move out of the way often. He stated a speed limit sign would help that.

Jim Ramsey, Boulder Hill Road, was present at the meeting. He stated that he also walks his dog on these roads and they are very hazardous. He stated that he often has to step into a ditch to remain safe. He stated that people need to slow down to keep others safe while walking.

Soudie Tahmassebipour, Executive Director of the Wachusett Area Social Justice Alliance, was present at the meeting. She stated that she wanted to speak at the meeting because the Selectboard is the Town's leaders. She stated that as a community we need to come together to unify over the issues that face our country. She stated that we are all part of the problem and we are all part of the solution. She thanked the Board for being a part of the leadership in Town and stated that she knows the Board is not compensated but that they can not keep doing the same thing over and over the same way. She stated that it is unfair that as adults we are passing these issues on to our youth. She stated in 50 years our youth will have the same issues because we did not fix it. She stated that the Wachusett Area Social Justice came together to critique things that we can do better. She stated that initially they did not get much support and what moved them forward was when a youth spoke at the School Committee Meeting. She stated it was heartbreaking listening to as a woman of color with children. She stated that she wants the kids of color to succeed because they grew up in Holden, not despite it. She stated that they started to educate themselves and reached out to develop a youth board with their own SOP's and bylaws, and vision to help this group be a part of the solution. She stated that she was a public defender for 20 years and that when they speak about police reform it is not to insult the police, its to give them training and make them the most valued members not just for the people that looked like them but for the whole community. She stated that if a certain group in the community does not feel safe then none of the community is safe.

Ms. Tahmassebipour stated that she feels like the community needs to do better by the police, the teachers, and more and that they need to allow all voices to be heard and matter. She stated that she wants to be better for our future.

Don Ferdend Jr., 10 Autumn Circle, was present at the meeting. He stated that he was 19 years old but feels older. He stated he was born and the first Thursday of his life was 9-11 which changed the country forever. He stated that there have since been several global catastrophes and we are living through one currently. He stated that he moved to Holden when he was 8 and felt like an outsider then and he does now. He stated he did not have the tools to understand that because of the way the community is. He stated he graduated in 2019 and now attends Howard University and is studying Political Science. He stated that in his time away he gained a better understanding of situations involving race and he is now here as part of the Wachusett Area Social Justice Alliance however his views are his own.

Mr. Ferdenand stated that he was not in favor of policing as it stands. He stated that he is someone who looks away from police for public safety. He stated more so in larger cities then here, but that police take a lot of resources and they are not adequate in responding to mental health calls. He stated that he saw a situation with Mr. Goodhile who tragically lost his life with a police altercation. He stated that he stands here today to say that it is hard to be a person of color in Holden. He stated that he has felt this first hand in the schools and community and he is here to ask that the Board be receptive to ideas and reconsider their own bias and explore it on their own time. He stated he was asking for change for the Board and Town to all come together.

3. Response to Citizens Address

Chairman Lavigne stated that Citizens Address was not a dialogue, but rather a place for the Board to hear citizens concerns. He stated that he knows that they have met with a majority of the Board separately but they need to abide by the laws for the Board as well. He stated that he spoke with Mr. Lukes and Chief Sherbloom and they will meet with Ms. Tahmassebipour next week. He stated that they are being heard and that this is a conversation with ongoing dialogues not one conversation.

Sel. Gibbs stated that this is something that should be on the agenda in addition to the road issues. He stated that he apologized to Mr. Ferdenand for feeling as though he was an outsider, he stated that it should not be like that. He stated that he felt as though they could make some appropriate changes.

Sel. Herlihy thanked everyone for coming out. She stated that she wanted to echo Sel. Gibbs and stated that they were all in this position because they want the Town to be the best it can be for everyone. She stated that she wants these conversations to be public ones and she wants to hear from everyone to see what they are experiencing in the community. She stated that if they can help and change she wants to be there for that.

Chairman Lavigne asked about the streets as well.

Mr. Lukes stated that as far as the roads were concerned he spoke to Chief Sherbloom and that traffic enforcement with an officer and sign will help slow it down. He stated

that they could not change the road itself. He stated that there were grants for electric signs which may also help.

Chairman Lavigne stated that the only other thing he wanted to bring up was that Superintendent McCall stated that people can use the property for walking but not during school hours or events. He stated the biggest issue was people bringing dogs on the property as they were not allowed.

4. Town Manager Update

See Attached

5. Town manager update

See attached

6. Selectmen Minutes

None

7. Selectmen Miscellaneous

Sel. Gibbs asked when goal setting would be done for the Town Manager.

Chairman Lavigne stated that they would probably be done in November but they could discuss it at the next meeting.

Sel. Barnes: none

Sel. Herlihy stated she was contacted by a number of people who no longer have charter and asked if there was other ways to view the meeting. She stated that the School Committee was using YouTube.

Mr. Lukes stated that he knew that the meetings were streaming live over the internet.

Sel. Herlihy asked if people were uncomfortable if they could email the Selectboard and have it read into record.

Sel. Lavigne stated they could send it; and that the Board wanted everyone's voices heard.

Chairman Lavigne asked for an update on the recreation long term plans.

Sel. Renzoni asked if they could speak about Halloween at the next meeting.



TOWN OF HOLDEN
MASSACHUSETTS
OFFICE OF THE TOWN MANAGER

Peter M. Lukes
Town Manager

September 23, 2020

TO: Board of Selectmen

FROM: Peter M. Lukes,
Town Manager

SUBJECT: *Town Manager Update*

1. **Halloween Contest** – The Holden Recreation Department will be running a contest for best decorated homes from now until Halloween. Residents are encouraged to email photos of their exterior Halloween decorations and address to Holdenrec@holdenma.gov by Friday, October 16th. The house with the most "Likes" on the Holden Recreation Facebook page on Friday, October 30th will be declared the winner.

Information ☒ [X]

Vote []

Signature []

2. **Jefferson Tank** – The Jefferson water tank was taken off line to overhaul the valve vault. Extensive flushing of the lines were completed prior to taking the tank offline which will hopefully prevent or at least reduce any discoloration that sometimes occurs in the area when work is being done on the tank. We have not received any complaints of discolored water as of yet.

Information ☒ [X]

Vote []

Signature []

3. **DPW Facility** – The construction contract for the new DPW Facility is complete and we expect to issue a Notice to Proceed some time around November 2. This will give us a fifteen month completion date under the terms of the contract, providing for a tentative April/May 2022 move-in date. We will be scheduling a ceremonial groundbreaking some time in November.

Information ☒ [X]

Vote []

Signature []

4. **Former Landfill** – The River Street Landfill cap issue has been moving forward with fortunate success through the Department of Environmental Protection and we have finally reached a point where we believe that we can proceed with the early plans for a solar farm on the site. This project may or may not become something that works in conjunction with the solar array that we are contemplating for atop the new DPW facility. We are excited, to say

the least, that the former landfill site is passing the point where we can now begin serious talks about reutilizing the land for such positive purposes. DPW Director John Woodsmall, HMLD General Manager Jane Parenteau and myself will be meeting in the coming months to collect our thoughts and assemble a rough draft for a path forward.

Information ☒ [X]

Vote ☐ []

Signature ☐ []

5. **Wetlands Delineation** – Our application with FEMA to determine the wetland boundaries behind 18 Industrial has taken much longer than expected, once again due to COVID impacts on federal employees and their offices. We do expect an answer soon and the town has submitted answers to what we think is a final round of questions from FEMA. Once the wetlands are certain, we are already prepared to move forward immediately with the playing fields study for the area adjacent to Dawson Recreation Area. We still remain optimistic that a plan and cost analysis can be ready for Town Meeting in May.

Information ☒ [X]

Vote ☐ []

Signature ☐ []

6. **Adams Road Re-use** - We are moving forward with contracting a study for the re-use of the Adams Road property (home of the current DPW Facility), planning for when DPW exits for their new location. We have solicited and received RFPs for the project. Relevant staff and I will be reviewing the RFPs and choosing a contractor at the end of this week. This was a BOS goal for 2020.

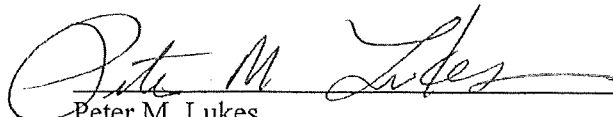
Information ☒ [X]

Vote ☐ []

Signature ☐ []

7. **Senior Center Exercise Classes** – The Senior Center offered outdoor, socially distanced exercise classes last week. This is part of the continuing effort to maintain services to our residents in COVID safe environments. The Senior Center, Library, Recreation and all other departments continue to operate with little if any interruption in services. Our buildings remain closed to general public entry, but all of our staff(s) are available in person by appointment as has been the case since April. We have maintained all functions through email, website, phone and even in person when necessary. We plan to continue working hard to carry on operations within safety parameters for our employees and the general public, and we adapt to every new regulation or guidance that the state imposes, whether more or less strict to our current structure.

Should you have any questions regarding these matters, please feel free to contact my office.


Peter M. Lukes
Town Manager

Cc: Department Heads