

**HOLDEN BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
MEETING MINUTES  
February 6, 2023**

**6:30PM**

**Memorial Hall**

Present: Anthony Renzoni, Stephanie Mulroy, Geri Herlihy, Richard Bates  
(participating remotely), Thomas Curran

Others Present: Peter Lukes, Town Manager  
Steven Madaus, Town Counsel  
Ms. King, Assistant Town Manager  
Liz Fotos, Town Recorder (Participating remotely)

Chairman Renzoni called the Board of Selectmen meeting to order. The Board stood to recite the Pledge of Allegiance. Chairman Renzoni stated that Sel. Bates was participating remotely this evening and all votes would be taken by a roll call vote.

1. Citizens Address

Amy Miller, 95 Mountview Drive, was present. She stated that she was present because she wanted to express her concern about something that happened during the WRSC meeting on January 30<sup>th</sup>.

Chairman Renzoni paused Citizen Address to let the resident know that during Citizen Address they did not call out people by name, but positions were fine. He stated that if there was any problem with an individual they could file a formal complaint, but that Citizens Address was not where they should be named.

Ms. Miller stated that a member of the Board was among the individuals that approached, harassed and attempted to intimidate a parent in attendance. She stated that this Selectboard member tried to use his position to try to intimidate the parent which resulted in the disruption in the school committee meeting. She stated that as a Holden resident and parent she found his actions inappropriate and believes he is not fit for public office. She stated she was asking the Board to disavow this Selectboard member and also ask that he resign from his position as a rep of the town of Holden.

Aiden Kearney was present at the meeting. He stated that he was recording this right now as it was his first Amendment Right to do so. He stated last Tuesday he attended a school committee meeting at WRHS, both as a concerned parent as well as an award winning journalist. He stated that he was there to cover a matter of public concern about an aspect of the curriculum which was intending to get rid of AP courses and merit basis achievements. He stated that he sat towards the front and was minding his own business when all of a sudden 4 individuals, including a member of the Board of Selectmen came up to him in a bullying manner, accosted him, made him feel unwelcome and told him he could not record, which violates his first amendment right. He stated that he recorded as a parent and as a journalist and for his protection from things like this. He stated he was



told to go back where he came from, that he does not live in this town. Mr. Kearney stated that he lived at 111 Mason Road. He stated he felt so unwelcomed. He stated he came from Worcester. He stated that all of a sudden public meetings are top secret and that his video has now gone viral and the town is the laughing stock. He stated it is embarrassing, humiliating, and degrading and he is offended. Mr. Kearney requested an apology and requested the individual in question to resign from his position on the Board.

Chairman Renzoni gaveled for time. He stated that for the benefit of those that attended the meeting tonight the Board does not typically address the citizens address follow up right away; they conduct business first and will come back to it later in the meeting.

## 2. Appointments, Licenses, Permits

Sabrina Heiniluoma was present for Wachu Makin' requesting a one day beer and wine permit for February 13, 2023.

Motion by Sel. Mulroy, seconded by Sel. Herlihy, it was **UNANIMOUSLY VOTED BY A ROLL CALL VOTE TO APPROVE A ONE DAY BEER AND WINE PERMIT FOR WACHUMAKIN ON FEBRUARY 13, 2023.** (Bates: yes; Herlihy: yes; Curran: yes; Mulroy: yes; Renzoni: yes).

## 3. Behind the Meter Battery Energy Storage System

Barry Tupper, HMLD, was present at the meeting. He stated that at 1:00 am crews responded to trees down and power outage and they called for mutual aid. He stated various other departments came and helped and got the power back on. Mr. Tupper stated that on Friday there was a wind storm that destroyed power lines; National Grid responded immediately and he thanked those that helped and the communities that allowed them to come help.

Mr. Tupper stated that the Chapin substation was also complete.

Mr. Tupper stated that the BESS project they were proposing was a low risk high reward project that would give price stability as well as help reduce the need for on peak energy. He stated that there was a packet in front of the Board and that they were looking for the Board to take two votes.

- 1- To authorize participation in MMWEC's Behind the Meter program BESS and all for finalization of all the contracts.
- 2- To take care of a housekeeping issue that had Jane Parenteau as the designee for voting. This vote would allow himself to be the designee and allow them to change the alternate to Chris Monsini.

Sel. Mulroy stated that her concern was that this looked like a great program; she asked what would happen in the future and how costs would change over time. She also asked about the degrading of the battery and how it would be disposed of.



Mr. Tupper replied that there was about a 20 year lifespan of the batteries and that it was the best performing system they have come in contact with. He stated that it was vetted by MMWEC and HMLD. He stated one of the reasons they were getting such a good deal was because they had the extra space and connections ready to go and were essentially turnkey because of this.

Sel. Mulroy asked who policed this developer.

Mr. Tupper replied that MMWEC did.

Chairman Renzoni asked about the 20 year lifespan and if they would put any of the savings into a depreciation fund to use in the future.

Mr. Tupper replied that they had not yet determined that but it would be something to look at.

Motion by Sel. Herlihy, seconded by Sel. Mulroy, it was **VOTED BY A UNANIMOUS ROLL CALL VOTE TO AUTHORIZE PARTICIPATING IN THE MMWEC BEHIND THE METER BESS PROGRAM AND APPROVE THE AGREEMENT THAT ALLOWS PARTICIPATION IN THE BESS AND ALLOWS FOR THE PROGRAM TO FINALIZE ALL CONTRACTS AS PRESENTED AND AS READ INTO RECORD BY SEL. HERLIHY (SEE ATTACHED VERBIAGE).** (Bates: yes; Mulroy: yes; Herlihy: yes; Curran: yes; Renzoni: yes).

Motion by Sel. Mulroy, seconded by Sel. Herlihy, **VOTED BY A UNANIMOUS ROLL CALL VOTE THAT THE TOWN OF HOLDEN PURSUANT TO ARTICLE 3 SECTION 6 OF THE MA MUNICIAPAL WHOLESALE ELECRICAL COMPANY BYLAW AS REVISED AND AMMENDED BY SECION 3B OF CHAPTER 775 THE ACTS OF 1975 HEREBY DESIGNATES BARRY TUPPER AS THE MANAGER OF MUNICIPAL LIGHTING AS ITS VOTING REP TO VOTE AND EXECUTE WRITTEN INSTUMENT ON ITS BEHALF RELATIVE TO ADOPTION, AMMENDMENT, OR REPEAL OF MM WEC BYLAWS, THE ELECTION OF PRESIDENTS AND DIRECTORS OF CORP AND OTHER ACTIONS OF OTHER CITIES AND TOWNS AND CHRISTOPER MONSINI AS AN ALTERNATE TO HAVE ALL POWERS OF VOTING IN THE ABSENSE OF VOTING REPRESENTATIVE AS READ INTO RECORD BY SEL. MULROY (SEE ATTACHED VERBIAGE).** (Bates: yes; Mulroy: yes; Herlihy: yes; Curran: yes; Renzoni: yes).

#### 4. Presentation of Recreation Fees for FY2024

Angela Green acting Recreation Director was present at the meeting. She stated that she was there to discuss proposed rate increases for FY2024. She stated that as the Board knows, the Recreation Department now operates under one revolving fund account which allowed them to dissect profits and loses more efficiently and allowed them to make



adjustments. She stated that adjustments needed to be made in order to bring staff up to current minimum wage rates, these expenses were reflected in FY 24 budget. She stated that after looking at the budget in great detail there would have been deficits if they could not increase fees. Ms. Greene stated that in front of the Board there were handouts that detail items in the Recreation Department. (see attached).

Sel. Herlihy asked about the projected number of passes sold and asked about the rate increases because they seemed high.

Sel. Curran agreed that the rate increase seemed high.

Chairman Renzoni states that these numbers were vetted with management prior to Ms. Greene coming in. He stated that if we are not increasing this steep where these rate increases would be offset. He stated that in the past the Rec. Account was a big account and they pulled from where we had to. He stated that the Board wanted their first step to be to account for expenses. He stated he agreed that it was going up fast. He asked how much was left in the revolving account.

Ms. Greene replied \$320,000.

Chairman Renzoni stated the family passes were the biggest to review.

Mr. Lukes stated that they compared rates with surrounding towns before they made the determination.

Sel. Mulroy stated that you get what you pay for and she liked to see a less crowded pool, lots of lifeguards, and visibility. She stated that as a parent raising a pass that made it safer made it a more valuable place for her family.

Sel. Herlihy stated that she knew when they increased rates, it is upsetting to a lot of people and they hear from the public.

Mr. Lukes stated that salary rates had to go up as well.

Chairman Renzoni stated that at the beginning of Covid, they took non residents passes out and the feedback was that people liked this. He stated that this increase was a culmination of a few smaller ones in the past that got us here. He stated that if this was too far too fast then they needed to offer a solution. He stated that there is currently about half of stabilization left in the account from about a year ago. He stated that they have been eating into this to not have the rates go up so fast. Sel. Renzoni stated that \$40 is significant so he could be in favor of subsidizing but he asked how they offset it. He stated that he was in favor of meeting again even on line if need be so we can get the rates out.

Sel. Mulroy can we do number crunching on family size.



Chairman Renzoni stated that if they were going to ask for lower rates they were forcing her to go into revolving funds to do that or they needed to propose it comes from someplace else.

Mr. Lukes stated they were printing the municipal budget Friday.

The Board agreed to meet this week remotely to finalize this conversation.

#### 5. Town Manager's Update

See Attached

Chairman Renzoni stated that with regards to the budget he was hearing that the School District was looking at significant shortfalls north of \$2 million. He asked what was being put aside for this issue.

Mr. Lukes stated that he met with town officials from other towns in the region and they were not sure exactly what to expect but they were expecting at least 4% as an increase. He said after that meeting they all said to the superintendent that the towns could not withstand more than 4% and that went across town lines. He stated that after that meeting he was going to send a communication out to the superintendent. He stated that he thinks that where they got money from in the past was biting them but that they were not telling the District how to spend the money just simply what the towns could afford. He stated that he thinks that this means that every town in the district would be facing an override.

Chairman Renzoni stated that if they meet the current contractual agreements of the town and not increase anything it would be close to 4% and would need an override. The other towns have not done overrides in the past and instead have cut town services. He stated that at some point the Board would need to let the manager know where we stood with regards to that. He stated that he suggests that Holden could not decrease any town services to pay for an increase and that they need to draw that line.

Mr. Lukes stated that in the process of the budget they have cut about \$1 million much of it from capital in order to give them the buffer. He stated that as of now he thinks what is presented on Friday will work but he does not know there is much more room to wiggle. He stated health insurance and retirement are the big increases. He stated that going forward with the school budget, February 23<sup>rd</sup> is the day they anticipate having that budget so they are asking for representative to go to that meeting to speak and represent Holden. He stated that March 2<sup>nd</sup> there was a budget hearing and March 6<sup>th</sup> they anticipate the full school committee budget vote and March 16<sup>th</sup> is the final deadline for the passing of the budget.

Chairman Renzoni stated that looking at that schedule that the meeting they attend in February really has no impact on the budget as there is no time to change anything and is merely a time form the Board to voice concerns going forward. He stated that to no fault



of the current superintendent, as he inherited a mess of a budget, but there will be issues going forward.

#### 6. Town Manager Review Discussion

Chairman Renzoni stated that the Board needed to review the Town Manager and asked for the Board to send him communication directly so that he could write the review and then allow the Board to edit it in an open meeting.

Mr. Lukes stated that he would present a synopsis of the year's accomplishments.

Mr. Madaus stated that the communications from the Board with regards to this matter were required to be public.

Chairman Renzoni suggested that comments be submitted via email so that they could be included.

Mr. Madaus stated that he wanted the new board members to be aware that the comments would be made available as a matter of public record.

#### 7. Follow up to Citizen's Address

Chairman Renzoni stated that he was going to address the demands that were made. He stated the first one was to disavow. He stated that that Board of Selectmen does not disavow incidents that don't occur in convened meeting of the Board of Selectmen. He stated that this means that asking them to disavow something that does not happen in their own meeting is not the business of the BOS.

He stated that demanding a resignation in this form was also brought up and any resignation request is between the elected official and their constituents.

He stated that regarding the open meeting law, the Board all takes training and certify with the Attorney General. He stated that they are all taught as elected officials about open meeting law and they attend open meeting law classes.

Sel. Mulroy stated that she wished to share her personal feelings about this matter. She stated that as a Selectboard member they are non partisan and represent all their constituents regardless of political affiliation. They are held to a higher standard of behavior and that it should not be taken lightly. She stated that no citizen should be intimidated or silenced and she is appalled by the lack of judgment of the Selectboard member of the events exercised at the School Committee Meeting last week. In times of disagreement and division it is their duty as elected officials to be level headed that promotes calm and inclusive discourse.

Chairman Renzoni stated that it is important for him to note that the statement that was read was only the opinion of Selectmen Mulroy and not the view of the Board as a whole.



8. Selectmen Minutes

None

9. Selectmen Miscellaneous

Sel. Herlihy thanked the light department and first responders for their response during the ice storm.

Chairman Renzoni thanked Representative Kim Ferguson for her help with Girl Scout Troop 11634. He stated that they were concerned about legislation about servicing woman relying on shelters and Representative Ferguson is going to meet and help them; so thank you.

10. Selectmen Subcommittees

Sel. Mulroy stated that the Council on Aging wanted an update on the move to Naming Policy.

Chairman Renzoni stated that Sel. Bates was working on that policy and his life was interrupted briefly but anticipated having an update on that as of March.

Mr. Lukes stated that he did not know if they were intending to discuss the battery storage system but if they did not they could skip to number two on executive session.

The Board did not need to discuss the first matter listed so they will omit it in executive session.

Motion by Sel. Mulroy, seconded by Sel. Herlihy, it was **UNANIMOUSLY VOTED BY A ROLL CALL VOTE TO ENTER INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION FOR PURPOSE 2: TO CONDUCT STRATEGY SESSSIONS IN PREPARATION FOR NEGOTIATIONS WITH NONUNION PERSONNEL OR TO CONDUCT COLLECTIVE BARGAINING SESSIONS OR CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS WITH NONUNION PERSONNEL (TOWN MANAGER CONTRACT) AND TO REENTER INTO REGULAR SESSION FOR THE SOLE PURPOSE OF ADJOURNMENT THE CHAIR DO SO DECLARES.** (Bates: yes; Curran: yes; Herlihy: yes; Mulroy: yes; Renzoni: yes).

The Board entered into Executive Session at 7:32pm.

The Board reentered into regular session for the sole purpose of adjournment.

APPROVED: 6/5/23 AS CORRECTED