

**HOLDEN BOARD OF SELECTMEN
MEETING MINUTES
March 18, 2019**

6:33PM

Memorial Hall

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

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 BONNIE PRESCOTT FOR THE BOARD OF REGISTRARS OF VOTERS, SET TO EXPIRE 3/31/22 AS PRESENTED.**

Amy Parker, The Farm at Summit Wynds was present at the meeting. Chairman Herlihy invited her up to speak about the event.

Ms. Parker stated that this would be similar to the event that was held last year. She stated that they would do the lavender a little different because they got picked out of lavender early.

Chairman Herlihy asked what the turnout was last year.

Ms. Parker replied about 1000 over 4 days.

Chairman Herlihy asked when the lavender season was.

Ms. Parker stated that it peaks mid June to mid July.

Sel. Renzoni asked about the beer and wine portion of the event.

Ms. Parker stated that they have Wormtown Brewery coming and they hired a bartender. She stated that they also wanted to keep it local so Seven Saws was going to be providing beer as well and

Tom Anderson, Seven Saws was present at the meeting.

Mr. Anderson stated that they would be doing lavender beer for the event and that they were starting to test it out. He stated that there would be a local winery on board and that staffing wise everyone was tips certified.

Ms. Parker stated that Flip Flops would be doing the food this year and they will use pork from the farm.

Sel. Kurtz asked if they were able to make any adjustments with the noise levels and the proximity of the neighbors.

Ms. Parker replied that it would be an acoustic guitar playing and that the music was very quiet. She stated that they have not yet started to look for musicians but last year it was kept to one local person and no DJ. She stated that the event also only goes to 9PM and that they followed a similar pattern last year and it seemed to work.

Ms. Parker stated that the public entertainment license was for different dates then the beer and wine and that they were having a private event fundraiser on Thursday.

Motion by Sel. Renzoni, seconded by Sel. Kurtz, it was **UNANIMOUSLY VOTED TO APPROVE THE PUBLIC ENTERTAINMENT LICENSE FOR THE FARM AT SUMMIT WYNDS, INC LAVENDER FARM FEST PENDING INSURANCE CERTIFICATION IS PROVIDED AS PRESENTED.**

Motion by Sel. Renzoni, seconded by Sel. Kurtz, it was **UNANIMOUSLY VOTED TO APPROVE THE BEER AND WINE LICENSE FOR THE FARMS AT SUMMIT WYNDS, LAVENDER FARM FEST AS PRESENTED.**

2. FY20 Budget Discussion

Sel. Renzoni stated that he asked for this to be on the agenda. He stated that he knew a big item on the budget was the 2 police officers to replace existing officers and that was a big jump in the budget.

Mr. Lukes stated that the Chief had requested it stating that there is difficulty with people leaving temporarily, medically, or retiring, and while they try to plan around these things, they are not always sure of timing. He stated that the Chief is trying to get ahead of the curve because we need to find officers, hire them and put them through the academy, and train them and it is more than a year to do this. He stated that they were trying to put these in the budget prior to the town losing more officers. He stated the other new position was a part time person in the library.

Sel. Lavigne stated that this was consistent with the goals for the Town Manager. He stated that this was something that the Board has spoken about for 3-4 years and that the Department was drastically understaffed for the size and location of it. He stated that the Chief was working on a staffing analysis but it doesn't take a lot to see that we are understaffed and it is needed now so we don't go from a lot of experience to none.

Sel. Renzoni stated that it was new officers but they will be replacing some retirees in the future. He stated that it does nothing to increase staffing it just allows the Department to train officers before retirements.

Sel. Renzoni stated that DPW was done last week and they wanted to hold a Public Hearing for the Water/Sewer rate increase. He stated that was another budget that had a lot of moving parts. Sel. Renzoni stated that Fin Com scrutinizes everything especially with capital.

Sel. Renzoni stated that the budget is about a 9 month process and is on Mr. Lukes desk in the fall. He stated that in the future he things that there should be a meeting to speak with Fin Com to reword some of the bylaw to allow for a more realistic timeline. He stated the Fin Com is supposed to have the budget review by March 16 so it can be considered by the Manager. He stated the timeline seems outdated and doesn't take into consideration technology.

Sel. Renzoni stated the next step is the Board of Selectmen sets the Warrant Articles and the Town Manager and Town Counsel draft motions. Then Fin Com considers the Articles and makes recommendations and the Annual Town Meeting.

Sel. Renzoni suggested that some of this could be changed along with the Board of Selectmen Handbook. He stated there are things that are not relevant and some things that need to be updated.

Sel. Gibbs stated that he had read through it and feels that it is a live document that can change over time. He stated that the budget is a complex process and that it is the Boards job to make it more accessible to the people.

Sel. Lavigne agreed and stated that the process can get confusing. He stated that the Board does not have much say in the finances as that is Fin Com. He stated that it is a long process with lots of red tape and it is good that the Board has a good relationship with Fin Com and has a liaison attending the Fin Com meetings. He stated that he thinks there needs to be a better way to keep the lines of communication open.

Sel. Renzoni stated that the documents should reflect how we are doing business today and they should make recommendations to change it if necessary.

Mr. Lukes stated that he believed any changes needed to go to the Attorney General.

Chairman Herlihy stated that a lot of people ask her why the School District meets with Fin Com after they approve their budget.

Sel. Lavigne stated it was counterintuitive to do that and they should meet with the towns first but that they can't change the schools process.

Sel. Renzoni stated that the towns had tried to fix that a little and meet in order to effect the process before it ramps up. He stated that it sounds like they listened. He said the overall increase was not adhered to (3.5) but what was budgeted for (3.9) was within what Fin Com agreed to. He stated that Fin Com asked how they planned to spend the 3.9 increase. He stated that Holden was baring 50% of the increase for the assessment and as a town he would like to see 50% of the benefits. He stated that we have been critical because it is not always clear the value of the money being spent.

Chairman Herlihy stated that they were given the date but no changes can be made because the budget was already voted on.

Sel. Renzoni stated that other than meeting early which is what was done last summer/early fall and outlining the towns needs and wants they can't consider all the Town Managers, Boards, and Fin Com's, there isn't enough time.

Sel. Lavigne stated that he did not agree. He stated that it handcuffed the Town Government and that if the town wants to do something with police or fire or capital and then the district comes in with a different budget then the Town has to make cuts and is scrambling at the last minute.

Sel. Renzoni agreed and stated that there was not enough time after the budget to go back. He stated that he thinks the time to effect change is early as was done this past budget season. He stated that he will push again for a meeting next year.

Chairman Herlihy stated that the school committee just approved the budget last week so Fin Com could have met with them prior. She stated that they met with the four other towns.

Sel. Lavigne stated it was just information.

Chairman Herlihy replied that it left no room to change anything. She stated that she thought the School Committee would want to meet with all five towns prior to taking a vote.

Sel. Lavigne stated that it was difficult because they are trying to base the towns budget from articles in the Landmark rather than from the District.

Mr. Lukes stated he agreed with what Sel. Lavigne was saying. He stated every year the education line was increased.

Chairman Herlihy stated that they had a prelim budget in February and they could have met with all five towns.

Mr. Lukes replied that he was not sure anything would change because of those meetings.

Chairman Herlihy replied that now we don't have that choice.

Mr. Lukes replied that meeting early was what they could do.

3. Citizens Address

Tom Anderson, 23 Palley Circle, Seven Saws was present at the meeting. He thanked the Board for their tireless work and he stated that he appreciated the hard work that is done. He stated that he did have a question as to why they could not have recycling every week versus every other week.

Ms. Harding stated that the recycling was done every other week to keep the cost level down. She stated that they do accept an unlimited amount of recycling though so it can be in a different container and it will be accepted.

4. Public Hearing- Fees Regarding Waste and Recycling

Motion by Sel. Lavigne, seconded by Sel. Renzoni, it was **UNANIMOUSLY VOTED TO OPEN THE PUBLIC HEARING FOR THE FEES REGARDING WASTE AND RECYCLING.**

Sel. Renzoni read the Public Hearing notice into record.

Pam Harding, Director of Planning was present at the meeting. She stated that as they knew when they renewed the 5 year contract with Casella, it resulted in an increase to the Town and they anticipated 2 phases to make this increase. She stated the increases were from \$18.75/ month to \$19.75/month and from \$13.50/ month to \$14.50/month and an increase from \$7.25 to \$8 for the blue bags. She stated this will cover the cost incurred for the remaining contract, June 30, 2022.

Sel. Lavigne asked when the last increase was.

Mr. Lukes replied 2 years ago.

Ms .Harding stated the last increase was \$1.5 and now it would be \$1.

Chairman Herlihy reminded the Board that they had already spoken about this.

Sel. Renzoni asked if it was for the calendar year or fiscal year.

Ms. Harding replied Fiscal 22.

Sel. Renzoni stated that the change in the overseas process was going to effect us in ways that we don't yet understand.

Ms. Harding replied that they were keeping a close eye on it. She stated that plastic and recycling material had been a recent point of interest.

Sel. Renzoni stated that the Board sets the rates and he did not want to get to FY22 and have a big surprise. He stated that if that was anticipated they should start to put into that earlier.

Sel. Lavigne asked when they start that conversation. He asked when the last time they went to bid on this.

Mr. Lukes replied it was before he was in Town.

Sel. Lavigne asked if they should go and see what is available.

Mr. Lukes stated they could do the normal bid process and see what is available.

Chairman Herlihy replied that there was not a lot of competition.

Ms. Harding stated that there were more options but cautioned that there was also a cost associate with infrastructure changes.

Sel. Renzoni stated he did not want to be blindsided. He stated that they needed to look at trends and if need be they could raise rates a little at a time.

Ms. Harding replied that they were keeping an eye on the situation and were communicating with other towns as well. She stated this was not unique to Holden and that everyone was looking at recycling.

Sel. Renzoni stated that he knew that Ms. Harding was doing the work he just wanted to make sure the Board was talking about it.

Ms. Harding replied that she was happy to talk about it and update the Board as well. She stated that the Wheelabrator was also expiring.

Mr. Lukes stated that this was a changing industry and that 5 years from now it will look very different. He stated that they will stay on top of the changes.

Chairman Herlihy opened it up for public comment; no members of the public wished to speak.

Motion by Sel. Lavigne, seconded by Sel. Renzoni, it was **UNANIMOUSLY VOTED TO CLOSE THE PUBLIC HEARING FOR FEES REGARDING WASTER AND RECYCLING.**

Motion by Sel. Lavigne, seconded by Sel. Renzoni, it was **UNANIMOSULY VOTED TO ACCEPT THE AMENDED CHANGES TO THE SOLID WASTE AND RECYCLING FEES (19.75/14.50) AS PRESENTED.**

5. Citizen Warrant Article Petition Information

Mr. Lukes stated that he asked Ms. Harding to come and give some information about the Citizen Petition that had been around for some time. He stated that this was a ZBA matter and there were also some legalities involved.

Ms. Harding stated that there was a Citizen Petition from Fred Lonardo regarding lots that were held in common ownership for zone in 2000 that doubled. She stated there were about 6 cases left and because they were in common ownership they lost the build ability. She stated they have gone to ZBA for a variance. She stated its legally hard to prove the hardship and he wants it changed to a special permit process that would allow for more leniency. She stated the Board has to refer it to the Planning Board for a Public Hearing that will be scheduled for April 9, 2019.

Sel. Renzoni stated that the Board had referred it last week and it was their understanding that they were given a grace period.

Ms. Harding stated that legally there was a 5 year grace period and that many lot owners did not realize the change or were unaware of it.

Sel. Renzoni stated that the Board could wait for the recommendation from the Planning Board and that it would be placed as a Warrant Article.

Ms. Harding stated that it was also referred to Town Counsel for opinion.

Chairman Herlihy asked if it was six total cases or just six that came forward now.

Ms. Harding replied that they had gone through zoning maps and that was where the six came from.

6. Town Manager Update

E-Permitting: The Town continues to move forward with offering 24 hour online services. The last piece of online permitting is currently being programmed and we hope to have Board of Health permits online by summer. This latest step will complete all feasible online permitting to our website. The online permitting provides a great convenience to our residents and businesses, speeds up the process and streamlines our recordkeeping.

Housing Choice Initiative Grant Applications: The Town intends to apply for a Housing Choice Initiative grant in the coming month in order to fund a study of student population predictions. The subject matter would be within the topic areas for the Housing Choice Initiative grant program. The Board of Selectmen voted approximately two years ago to support our membership in the Housing Choice Initiative, with grant opportunities such as this being one of the driving factors for our participation. Many

thanks to Planning and Development Director Pam Harding for her work towards this grant application.

Applications for Historic District Commission: Enclosed in your packets are applications from a number of residents seeking open positions on the Historic District Commissions. We can schedule interviews as per your direction in the coming weeks either before or during a Board of Selectmen meeting.

Safest Cities and Towns in Massachusetts: Holden was recently ranked seventeenth in the Safewise 2019 ranking of the safest municipalities in Massachusetts. This ranking is similar to our past positions in other comparisons made by other online listing in recent years. Further details on the study can be found at this web address:

www.safewise.com/blog/safest-cities-massachusetts/

Annual Senior Citizen Dinner Dance: On Thursday, April 25th from 5:00-8:00 there will be a free dinner dance held at Wachusett Regional High School for all the senior citizens of the Wachusett area. The dance is sponsored by the Wachusett Mountaineer Volunteer students and the Holden Council on Aging. Those wishing to attend can sign up at the Holden Senior Center by April 19 or call to register at (508) 210-5570. This year's dance is themed "Safari"

Community Garden Applications: The 2019 Community Garden Applications are now available. You can download your application from the Community Garden web page. At www.holdenma.gov/community-garden-committee Applications will also be available in the Starbuck Building. There will be 11 plots- first come, first serve. The plots are 10x18 and the rules and regulations can be found on the applications.

Dog Licenses: Friday, March 29th is the last day to license dogs at the discount fee of \$10 for neutered/ spayed dogs and \$11 for intact dogs. Licenses may be obtained at the Town Clerk's Office or by mail. If licensing by mail, include 1) check payable to Holden Town Clerk, 2) Proof of current rabies vaccination, 3) proof of neutered/ spayed certificate and 4) self-addressed stamped envelope. Mail the request to assure delivery by March 29th. On Monday, April 1st the fee goes up to \$20 per neutered/ spayed and \$21 for an intact license. For more information call the Town Clerk's office at 508-210-5530.

Holden DPW Snow/Ice: Including the last snow event along with road salt purchases that are encumbered from the FY 19 budget, we appear to be safe to remain under our budgeted snow and ice removal amount of \$500,000 for FY19. At this point, the Town has about a \$60,000 cushion in the remaining line item if there are any further winter weather conditions that require road treatment.

Recreation Department Summer Brochure: Residents can find the summer catalog for Holden's Recreation programs online on the Town of Holden website www.holden.gov/recreation or through a link on the facebook page.

Finance Committee: Finance Committee hearings continue every Wednesday at 7:00PM in the Community room of the Holden Municipal Light Department. All major municipal departments have now had a hearing. This Wednesday we will discuss the capital budget along with any remaining funds that have not already been discussed. Education will be the topic for the agenda on March 27. Superintendent McCall and his administrative leaders will present the Wachusett Regional School District Budget, which accounts for the vast majority of increased spending in FY 20. Accordingly, Education also accounts for the vast majority of the increase that residents will see on their residential tax bill for FY 20. We are trying to get a representative from Montachusett Technical School to attend that night as well or in the alternative we have requested some form of written information as to their budget request for FY 20,

FY Budget Discussion Cont.

Sel. Renzoni stated that this was just an FYI. He stated that he does think that they should set an agenda item on this and he can speak with Fin Com to come up with a process. He stated the way that the process is currently done does work but is also outside the Towns Bylaws.

7. Selectmen Minutes

None

8. Selectmen Miscellaneous

Sel. Lavigne gave a huge congratulations to the State Hockey Champion Team. He stated the coaches and the kids did a great job! He stated that they had lots of fans at the Garden and lots of support.

Sel. Lavigne stated that Seven Saws held a fundraiser for a girl from Dawson and they did a great job with that. He stated that they were hoping to raise \$3,000 and they raised \$6,000.

Sel. Renzoni asked about getting a sign up for the hockey team. He stated that the Monti-Tech girls also had a state championship and he would need to look into that as well.

Sel. Renzoni stated that he would like a future discussion on the Brave Act that was passed by Legislation two years ago. He stated it allowed the town to compensate military employees while they were deployed and they had spoken about the impact which would be small. He stated that the Board should take it up and bring it forward to the Town.

Mr. Lukes stated that it could go on the next agenda and that he spoke with Town Counsel at length and they could prepare for discussion.

Sel. Gibbs: none

Chairman Herlihy congratulated the Hockey Team for a great year.

Sel. Kurtz stated that the winter had been rough on the roadways. He stated that he knew that the DPW was out filling roads but if you see a pot hole you could contact DPW.

Mr. Lukes stated that there were also a lot of state roads in town that DOT took care of but that they had been responsive as well.

9. Selectmen Subcommittee

Sel. Lavigne suggested inviting those people in that had filled out the Do Something Questionnaire before the next meeting.

Sel. Gibbs: none

Chairman Herlihy stated that DPW was working on the plans and also doing some site visits. She stated they would be meeting April 8.

Mr. Lukes stated that he met with Weston and Sampson, Administration, DPW and the Project Manager this morning and they have addressed all concerns. He stated that he thought it was a productive meeting and that he thinks it will be a fine structure when it is done.

Sel. Kurtz: none.

Motion by Sel. Gibbs, seconded by Sel. Lavigne, it was **UNANIMOUSLY VOTED TO ADJOURN THE MARCH 18, 2019 BOARD OF SELECTMENT MEETING AT 7:37PM.**

APPROVED: ____5/6/19____