

**HOLDEN BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
MEETING MINUTES  
November 4, 2019**

**6:30PM**

**Senior Center**

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

Not Present: Robert Lavigne

Others Present: Peter Lukes, Town Manager  
Brian Falk, Town Counsel  
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**

Chairman Renzoni stated that they had received correspondence from a resident at about 4:00PM today. He stated that this was not a public hearing or a matter asking for public comment so his suggestion is that the Board moves forward with appointing Ms. Gustafson as originally intended.

Chairman Renzoni called a short recess at 6:33PM to allow Sel. Barnes to read the correspondence provided.

Chairman Renzoni called the meeting back to order at 6:35PM.

A motion was made by Sel. Herlihy to reappoint Ms. Gustafson, it was seconded by Sel. Gibbs for discussion.

Sel. Herlihy stated that she has had many conversations with the applicant and she believes her to be well versed. She stated she does not think that they should discuss the letter further unless Ms. Gustafson was present in order to defend herself. She said regardless, she does not believe that the accusations in the letter should prevent her from being reappointed.

Sel. Gibbs stated that he appreciated the raising of concerns but he does not have reservations reappointing Ms. Gustafson.

Mr. Lukes stated that he apologized for the late nature of the letter but his office did not receive the letter until 3:58PM.

Chairman Renzoni stated that if there were any accusations that would prevent Ms. Gustafson from being reappointed he would suggest having her present but he does not believe that to be the case. He called for a vote.

Motion by Sel. Herlihy, seconded by Sel. Gibbs, it was, **UNANIMOUSLY VOTED TO APPROVE MALEAH GUSTAFSON FOR A 3 YEAR TERM TO EXPIRE NOVEMBER 2, 2022 TO THE AGRICULTURAL COMMISSION AS PRESENTED.**

## **2. Town Manager Final Review**

Chairman Renzoni stated that he was able to give the Town Manager his Final Review and it is on record if anyone wishes to have a copy of it. He stated that the final portion of the review is the compensation component. Chairman Renzoni stated that Mr. Lukes is limited to 2% increase contractually which is the same as the town employees.

Mr. Lukes stated that 2% was standard for all employees in Town both union and nonunion.

Sel. Herlihy stated that this was what they originally contracted for and that she agrees that Mr. Lukes has over performed his goals. She stated she hopes that the Town keeps him for many more years.

Sel. Gibbs stated that he appreciates the 2% and believes that it shows good will to the town employees.

Chairman Renzoni stated that if anyone missed the review of the last meeting, the Town Manager received a fantastic review and he hit all this agreed upon goals and all the performance categories as well. He stated it was a great year for Holden and that this is a well deserved raise.

Motion by Sel. Herlihy, seconded by Sel. Gibbs, it was **UNANIMOUSLY VOTED TO APPROVE THE 2% SALARY ADJUSTMENT FOR THE TOWN MANAGER RETROACTIVE TO OCTOBER 1, 2019 AS PRESENTED.**

## **3. Tax Classification Public Hearing**

Sel. Barnes read the Public Hearing Notice into record.

Motion by Sel. Gibbs, seconded by Sel. Herlihy, it was **UNANIMOUSLY VOTED TO OPEN THE PUBLIC HEARING FOR THE TAX CLASSIFICATION PUBLIC HEARING.**

Mr. Lukes stated that this was the Annual Tax Classification hearing and that the Town Assessor was present at the meeting to share the news. He stated that the average increase would be about \$200.

Rosemary Scully, Town Assessor, was present at the meeting along with James Dillon, Board of Assessors.

Ms. Scully presented **Holden Tax Classification Hearing Fiscal Year 2020, Monday, November 4, 2019.**

She stated that the Board recommended a residential factor of 1 for a Single Tax Rate and with the levy to be raised at \$17 per thousand depending on the state approval.

Chairman Renzoni thanked Ms. Scully.

Mr. Lukes stated they were very happy with the results and that it was a very reasonable amount.

Chairman Renzoni opened it up to public comment.

Gordon McFee, 428 Salisbury Street was present at the meeting. He stated that he recommends 1 tax rate for all properties.

Motion by Sel. Gibbs, seconded by Sel. Herlihy, it was **UNANIMOUSLY VOTED TO CLOSE THE PUBLIC HEARING FOR TAX CLASSIFICATION PUBLIC HEARING.**

Chairman Renzoni stated that the Manager said that it was an approximate \$200 increase to the average tax bill. He stated that the value increase has the Town in good position.

Motion by Sel. Herlihy, seconded by Sel. Gibbs, it was **UNANIMOUSLY VOTED FOR THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN TO ADOPT A RESIDENTIAL FACTOR OF '1' FOR FY 2020.**

Sel. Herlihy stated that this was important to do and looking at Worcester with their commercial factors it is important to do this.

Chairman Renzoni thanked the Board. He stated that this is great news.

#### **4. Town Manager Update**

**MMA Annual Meeting:** The Mass Municipal Association will be holding its annual meeting and trade show once again at the Hynes Convention Center January 24 and 25, 2020. We have received confirmation from all of the Select Board members, with some able to attend and some unable to attend. If any of you have a change in scheduling, please let us know and my office can register you upon request.

**18 Industrial Drive Update:** Bids for the purchase of materials and installation of the water service cut at 18 Industrial Drive have been received and a low bidder has been

chosen. We are in the process of notifying the bidders now. Work should start in mid November and completed within a couple of weeks.

Cost estimates for projects have been completed by Weston & Sampson and our independent cost estimator. The DPW Facility Committee is meeting shortly to go over the cost estimates and our Owners Project Manager will be formulating the specs for General Contractor bids over the next couple of months in conjunction with Weston & Sampson, our DPW staff and the committee members.

**Committee Appointments:** I have recently appointed Katie Brier to the Holden Garden Committee and Nancy Melton to the Council on Aging, both for three year terms.

**YTD Revenue and Expenditure Reports:** Included in your packets are the year-to-date revenue and expenditure reports for the month of September, 2019 prepared by Lori Rose, Town Accountant.

**Mountview Final Audit:** At the MSBA's Executive Board meeting on October 31<sup>st</sup>, the final audit for Mountview was formally approved. The Town should receive a final grant payment of approximately, \$856,373 and the project will be officially closed.

Chairman Renzoni stated that he was still concerned about the HVAC system and asked if they could reach out to the school and see how we were going to resolve it.

Sel. Herlihy asked how it was closed out with this issue pending.

Chairman Renzoni replied that they had accepted it with this issue. He stated that they built a new building and that this is not acceptable.

**Halloween in Holden:** The first Halloween in Holden trick or treating event was held up and down Main Street on Saturday, October 26. The event was organized by the EDC, with over thirty businesses participating and hundreds of children and adults enjoying the beautiful day. Congratulations to everyone for a very successful event.

Holden Fire Department also hosted a "trunk or treat" event on Monday night, October, 28 which was extremely well attended as well. Many thanks to the Holden Fire Dept for hosting this event at the Public Safety Building.

**Partnership with North Pole:** Last week, my office confirmed with Santa's Workshop that Santa will be visiting town prior to Christmas in order to speak directly with Holden's children. Santa's arrival and tree lighting ceremony is scheduled for Saturday, December 7, at 5:00pm at Town Hall. The program will be similar to prior years, and the Girl Scouts will be singing holiday songs starting at 4:30pm, while residents gather and wait for Santa. Children have the opportunity to sit on Santa's lap and will receive a goodie bag. Hot chocolate and popcorn will be available in the First Congregational Church following Santa's visit.

Many thanks to Denise Morano and the Recreation Department, along with the Holden Fire and Police Departments who will be escorting Santa and his staff across town.

Chairman Renzoni asked if there was any update on decorations.

Mr. Lukes stated that they did have a few thoughts but they are a little tight for this year as it was not budgeted for. He stated that he met with the DPW Director and Light Department Director and they were reaching out to other towns to see what they did to make the center of town feel more festive.

**FY 21 WRSD Round Table Meeting:** The annual round table discussion between WRSD Administration and member town Select Boards, Finance and Administrators will be again hosted in Holden at our Senior Center, 1130 Main Street, this Thursday, November 7, at 6:30PM. The event will be televised and is open to the public but there is no opportunity for public comment. We look forward to offering the town's positions as to our continued and strong support for our schools while also addressing our financial concerns. Many thanks to Superintendent McCall and his administrative staff for their desire to hear from all the member towns at this annual event.

#### **5. Selectmen Subcommittee**

None

#### **6. Selectmen Minutes**

None

#### **7. Citizen Address**

None

#### **8. Regional Round Table Discussion**

Chairman Renzoni stated that in the previous year Holden had hosted and there was a consensus with three towns with regards to goal setting. He stated that they argued that someone had to set the goal first instead of accepting the Districts assessment as the goal. He stated that was when they decided that they wanted to have the discussion prior to the budget meetings. Chairman Renzoni stated that Fin Com took position on the matter three weeks ago and that they suggested that the Town could absorb no greater than a 3% increase. He stated that last year they supported at 3.5% increase and then it came in a little higher because of the one time expense of close to \$1 million for full day kindergarten. He stated based on this Fin Com felt that they could support 3%. He stated that he is looking for guidance from the Board prior to the meeting so that they have a good stance going into the meeting.

Sel. Herlihy stated that she is happy to have the discussion about the budget. She stated that last year they were most concerned with the transparency and obtaining the line by line budget. She stated in terms of the 3%, she can go along with that as a starting point but that she does think there are some issues in Holden that she wants addressed; at Mountview in particular.

Sel. Herlihy stated that they spoke about the Master Plan and that they have lost kids in elementary school but are gaining at Mountview and the Mountview teachers are teaching more class periods in order to keep class size down. She stated that she has been asking for caseload numbers for a while and had not received them. She asked how many math students Mountview sees versus the other middle school teachers in the district.

Sel. Herlihy stated that she knows that people are saying there is a need for a new school but Mountview needs help now. She said looking at the raw numbers Holden students are losing about 15 hours/ year per subject. She stated that she wants to hear more information about it now as they were making budgeting decisions because they have come out with a staffing plan and they are not planning on adding teachers until FY22. She stated that they always talk about what is fair and it always seems like Holden is giving things up.

Chairman Renzoni stated that the inequity has been bought up and it is about 140 students at Mountview verses about 90/100 students in the sister communities. He stated that it is about 15 hours less in math and puts our students at a disadvantage. He stated that the history behind this was that two administrations ago there was a problem with staffing and it was easiest to take from Holden being the biggest. He stated they took our teachers and increased the number of classes per day so that Mountview may teach 7 classes as opposed to 6 at other schools. He stated it was never fixed. He stated that he was happy to bring that forward with consensus of the Board.

Chairman Renzoni stated that the Board is looking to support the 3% increase but wants to speak about caseload so far. He interrupted this conversation to call for the Public Hearing scheduled at 7:05PM

**Public Hearing-On-Premises All Alcoholic Beverages License Lilac Hedge Farm, LLC, 106 Bond Road**

Motion by Sel. Herlihy, seconded by Sel. Gibbs, it was **UNANIMOUSLY VOTED TO OPEN THE PUBLIC HEARING FOR ON PREMISIS ALL ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES LICENSE LILAC HEDGE FARM LLC, 106 BOND ROAD.**

Sel. Gibbs read the Public Hearing Notice into record.

Chairman Renzoni invited the owner, Ryan MacKay, up to the podium.

Mr. MacKay handed out a packet; he stated that this packet was a broad overview of what they want to do. He stated that he understands that it is a shock to be requesting a liquor license on a farm. He stated that as some people know they have done events in the past but that they predominantly raise meat.

Sel. Herlihy left the meeting at 7:08PM.

Mr. MacKay stated that over the past year they had opened a test pilot ice cream stand in Northborough with the idea that they wanted to do more at home on the farm. He stated that they also attended an event at Dawson Elementary for Abby Collins where they had a baby pig present and there were a large amount of people that asked where the farm was located.

Sel. Herlihy reentered the meeting at 7:09PM.

Mr. MacKay stated that these events showed him that they needed to connect with the community more. He stated that they offer a CSA pick up that you can order meat to be picked up on the farm once a week. He stated that they also have a turkey pick up for Thanksgiving.

Mr. MacKay stated that the demographics on Bond Street make it so that there is not a lot of retail space but that they do have the idea that they need to do more business at home. He stated that he has 25 people on staff but the travel from here to Berlin is difficult. He stated that they have road frontage on Main Street and that they want to build there.

Mr. MacKay stated that they will have a walk in freezer going on Main Street in order to bring packing and distribution back to the farm. He stated that with the packing room they want to do a small retail store in order to sell their meats and also do an ice cream stand at home, and smaller events such as a Thursday night chicken rotisserie, a Friday night burger, Saturday pumpkin painting in season, as a few examples.

Mr. MacKay stated that he has a lot of friends in the industry and that the biggest thing he has learned is that you need to be diverse. He stated that the building was hard to describe but that it would be like at 30FT silo and that they would like to be able to have it open for weekends with beer and wine and selling their own BBQ and rotisserie chickens. He stated that he does not think it would be more than a Thursday-Sunday venture and that it would be closed by 8:00PM/9:00PM. He stated that they would also like to be able to have music come in on afternoons. He stated that they have the staff to do some of these cool activities and to grow and connect with the community. He stated that they own 2% of the land in Holden and that putting in the beer and wine would help pay for them to be able to do these things.

Sel. Herlihy stated that this all sounded great and that she appreciated the open space, agriculture and his vision.

Mr. Lukes stated that he did hear from the Fire Department today and that he had assumed they had reached out to Mr. MacKay indicating that they were not ready to move forward at this point. He stated that the Fire Department had requested more information for the structure and more detailed plans. He stated that in the past he knew that they always proceed with this type of venture with baby steps and that Mr. MacKay has done these over the past few years with thousands of people attending their festival and no issues with noise, alcohol or food service. He stated that at this point they needed to gather more information.

Chairman Renzoni opened up the matter for public comment.

Paul and Cindy Dinoia, 2323 Main Street, Jefferson were present at the meeting. Ms. Dinoia stated that her family owned the farm prior and she had questions as to where they proposed site would be. She stated that the back 40 is her back yard and she is all for promoting agriculture. She stated one weekend a season was fine and they had no problem with it but that she can see this growing into an every weekend thing and it is about 50-60 feet from her home. She stated that she has supported Ryan from the time that he bought the farm, she donated to the fire. She stated that the fire was another concern of hers. She stated that the hydrant is a half mile away and that she saw her parent's barn burn down as they were trying to wheel out the hoses. She stated there was not water in the fields.

Ms. Dinoia stated that she also wanted to know if this was approved by the Commonwealth because under the Agricultural Acts there was wetlands on the property and they had to jump through hoops to build their home. She stated they built 22 years ago with the knowledge that no commercial building can go there both on High Street and Bond Street and that they feel as though this will bring down their property value.

Ms. Dinoia stated that she does not mind the one weekend but she knows that this will grow. She stated the fire issue is there and that they were talking about more events and more food which means dumpsters and rats.

Mr. Dinoia stated that they were also concerned with traffic and quality of life. He said that they love to see the cows and hear the cows. He stated that they were worried about music and full alcohol and the changes that it would cause.

Ms. Dinoia stated that she also has a medical condition that is a central nervous issue and that stress comes into play. She stated there was an issue in the past with a shooting range and they ignored it but it was all day long. She stated that quality of life, safety issues, and property value were her concerns.

Mr. Dinoia asked the Board to think about if this was in their backyard.

Chairman Renzoni stated that the Fire Department was not satisfied with the site plan and fire access from Main Street. He stated that they would need to go through their list which was why they had asked the Board to hold off at this point.



Gary and Mara Dix, 2381 Main Street, Jefferson, MA were present at the meeting. She stated that they live right next to the entrance that Mr. MacKay wanted to put in. She said that they have an issue with traffic and people drinking alcohol and driving. She feels that it is not a safe place for that and people drive very fast. Additionally she stated that they have a shallow well and that she is concerned with ground water.

Chairman Renzoni asked if they were located north or south of the entrance.

Mr. Dix replied south; he stated that his stone wall abuts their property directly on Main Street. He stated that one reason they bought the property was for a better quality of life and what drew them to this location was that it was next to a forever farm. He stated that he is unsure of how this goes with the Agricultural Preservation Restrictions or how an alcohol license would fall into this category at all.

Ron Howe, Hawe's Country Store, 2443 Main Street, (residential address: 165 Pleasantdale Road, Rutland) was present at the meeting.

Chairman Renzoni told Mr. Howe that unfortunately only Holden residents were able to be recognized in Public Hearings but that he could feel free to reach out to one of the Board members via email or phone.

Kathy Peterson, 2382 North Main Street, Jefferson was present at the meeting. She stated that she had lived at the same home across from the fields for more than 60 years. She stated that this is part of the fabric of the area and she has grown up with it her whole life. She stated that she has known the MacKay family for over 50 years. She stated that she does not support a year round liquor license at this location due to the impact on the residential neighborhood. She stated that most farms with venues like this were located in isolated quiet places not in residential neighborhoods where nights and weekends should be distraction free. She stated that quality of life will be impacted with this type of venue and traffic on 122A is also an issue.

Ms. Peterson stated that there had already been two accidents that occurred recently less than a quarter mile from the entrance. She stated that prior one day events with one day licenses had loud music but everyone knew that it was for a short duration. She stated that one or two days a year was one thing but with an annual on premise all alcohol license and seating for 100 people this will not be one or two times a year this will be all the time. She stated that she hopes this is not approved but if it is, something needs to be placed to have safeguards as well.

Todd Hartley, 2370 Main Street, Jefferson was present at the meeting. He stated that the two accidents that occurred were in his front yard. He stated that having a business that offers alcohol there is scary. He stated that he has three small children playing outside and having people under the influence driving is not okay. He stated that he is okay with events now and again but the constant noise would be an issue. He stated that they moved out there for the quiet life.

Chairman Renzoni closed public comments and invited the owner back up to the podium.

Mr. MacKay stated that the abutters did not have all the details. He stated that one thing that keeps getting brought back up is that the farm was not in production. He stated that it is something that they worked on to get back to production. He stated that people can not expect to have 350 acres and not be able to figure out a source of income. He stated that the cows were not going anywhere. He stated it was going more up the road to try to stay on the road side with a building. He stated the stand is happening as they need to be able to sell and store their products on site. He stated that they can't keep the fields open if they are spending \$400,000 without money coming back. He stated that they want to be able to keep it open. He stated that they had to put in a new well and hydrants in and every field has a spigot. He stated that they want to be out in the nice weather to dusk to let people come and enjoy the property and sell agricultural products. He stated if they can't sell their products they can't keep doing what they're doing.

Mr. Falk, Town Counsel stated that the Board could discuss the matter but suggested leaving the Public Hearing open at this time.

Chairman Renzoni stated that the Fire Department was reluctant to approve this without more detailed information. He suggested that the Board continue the Public Hearing to November 18, 2019. He stated this will give the owners a chance to address some of the concerns and satisfy the Fire Department.

Mr. Lukes stated that all Fire Codes will be met regardless and it will be a safe venue if it were to be in existence.

Chairman Renzoni stated that he had full faith in the Fire Department. He asked if the Board had any further questions or concerns they wished to be addressed.

Sel. Herlihy asked about the location and if it was intending to be opened year round.

Mr. MacKay clarified the location and stated that it was not going to be open year round.

Sel. Herlihy asked if they were going to be done at dusk.

Mr. MacKay confirmed that was the intent.

Chairman Renzoni stated that his recommendation was open to the floor but that the Board did have the right to move it pending Fire Department approval but he did not suggest that. He stated that with the all alcohol license the Board has a higher degree of scrutiny. He stated that they are responsible to lean into them to look at the impact of the neighbors and all the residents in that circle. He stated that they want to make sure that they scrutinize it and make sure all resident concerns are addressed.

Mr. Lukes reminded the Board that they have the ability to put restrictions on the license such as days and hours of operation. He stated additionally someone mentioned having events end at one time and then getting pushed later and he wanted to address the fact that changes like that could not be arbitrary; they would have to be approved by the Board.

Chairman Renzoni stated he was curious as to what the Board could legally limit. He asked if they could approve the license on a temporary basis.

Mr. Lukes replied that he is not sure they could do temporary licenses but that they could have a six month review about operations and neighbors and abutters could be present to discuss.

Chairman Renzoni stated that he will sit with the Town Manager to get the information together so that if this does move forward the Board will have all that information in front of them for recommendations and to ensure that there are protections in place.

Motion by Sel. Gibbs, seconded by Sel. Barnes, it was **UNANIMOUSLY VOTED TO CONTINUE THE PUBLIC HEARING FOR ON PREMISES ALL ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES LICENSE LILAC HEDGE FARM, LLC, 106 BOND ROAD TO NOVEMBER 18, 2019 AT 7:05PM.**

Chairman Renzoni thanked the public for coming out to the meeting.

### **Regional Round Table Cont.**

Sel. Herlihy suggested that they limit the increase to no more than 3% and question the Holden caseload.

Sel. Gibbs stated that he also thought that it was a good idea to reiterate the want for the detailed budget report. He stated that they did get it last year but that he wanted to make sure that the District knew they wanted it again. He stated that he is okay with the increase. He stated that he thinks it is difficult to go into meetings with demands but that if they have the numbers for the caseload it will be better. He stated that without that information he is willing to take Fin Com's recommendations.

Chairman Renzoni stated that they were not asking for any operational objectives but that we were saying that as a Town we are comfortable with the 3%. He stated that as a Town it will impact us more than the 3%. Chairman Renzoni stated that he knows Fin Com put a lot of thought into this. He stated that the Town is limited on what they can do on the municipal side and it makes for a lean budget to fit the needs of the community. He stated that it is a tough decision and that they can't keep tipping for the education budget. He stated that last year went 60% education and 40% municipal. He stated that if it goes much further we will cut municipal serves for the schools. He stated in his opinion there is not much more that can be trimmed off the municipal side and that is a concern he has.

Chairman Renzoni stated that without objection he can say that the Board is comfortable with the 3% increase, they want the continued transparency with reporting and that they want information about the caseload. He stated that he also suggested that the Board gives him authority to speak on behalf of it; he stated that he feels that he knows where the Board stands on this matter. He stated everyone is invited to this meeting however he will be the only party able to speak.

No one on the Board objected to this.

#### **9. Response to Citizen Address**

None

#### **10. Selectmen Miscellaneous**

Sel. Herlihy stated that she was approached by a Wounded Warrior who went to pay a bill in Town and was so thrilled and excited to see the parking space; he wanted to thank everyone for it.

Sel. Herlihy stated that she also wanted to say what a great job Halloween in Holden was. She stated that it was so well attended and so much fun.

Sel. Barnes: none

Sel. Gibbs: none

Chairman Renzoni stated that Halloween in Holden was awesome. He stated that he came in late and he couldn't believe the amount of people that were still out in the center of Town. He stated that EDC pulled it together in 5-6 weeks and got a lot of community support. He stated that they would work to grow this next year and thanked the EDC and the Town Manager's office as well.

Mr. Lukes stated that the EDC did a lot and that the Chairman of that Committee, Jess Milliken did a ton of work.

Motion by Sel. Herlihy, seconded by Sel. Gibbs, it was **UNANIMOUSLY VOTED TO ADJOURN THE NOVEMBER 4, 2019 BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING AT 7:52PM.**

**APPROVED:** 12/2/19