

BOARD OF SELECTMEN'S MEETING

December 19, 2022

A meeting of the Board of Selectmen was called to order by Chairman Collins at 7:00 PM, Northbridge Town Hall, 7 Main Street, Whitinsville, MA. Board Members Present: Ampagoomian, Begin, Collins and Melia. Also present: Town Manager Gaudette. Selectman Paulhus was absent and it is duly noted.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by those present.

PRESENTATIONS: *1) Plaque presented to Senator Michael O. Moore who, due to re-districting, will no longer be representing the Town of Northbridge as State Senator in the Second Worcester District.* Chairman Collins read aloud the plaque and presented it to Senator Michael Moore. Senator Moore stated that it has been great working with everybody and they have accomplished a lot and he will miss everything that they accomplished together. Town Manager Gaudette stated that there has been a lot of progress under his leadership and the Town appreciates everything he has done for us.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES/None

The Board moved ahead to the Appointments portion of the agenda as it was not yet time for the public hearings.

APPOINTMENTS: By the Board of Selectmen/Vote to Appoint: Central Mass. Regional Planning Commission: 1) Delegate and 2) Alternate. A motion/Mr. Ampagoomian, seconded/Mr. Melia to appoint Selectman Begin as the Selectmen's Delegate to the Central Mass. Regional Planning Commission. Vote yes/Ampagoomian, Begin, Collins and Melia. A motion/Mr. Ampagoomian, seconded/Mr. Begin to appoint Selectman Melia as the Alternate member to the Central Mass. Regional Planning Commission. Vote yes/Ampagoomian, Begin, Collins and Melia.

Chairman Collins announced that it was now 7:05 PM and read aloud the public hearing notice.

PUBLIC HEARING: 7:05 PM – FY'20 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG): Grant Progress & Proposed Re-Allocation of Funds. Present: R. Gary Bechtholdt II, Town Planner & Wayne Darragh, Community Opportunities Group. A motion/Mr. Melia, seconded/Mr. Ampagoomian to open the public hearing. Vote yes/Ampagoomian, Begin, Collins and Melia. Mr. Bechtholdt noted that the Board has copies of the general overview of the CDBG program as well as photos and descriptions of the current status of Church Ave. Mr. Darragh explained that there are funds left over from the Town's FY2020 grant to complete the Slum and Blight Inventories in two sections of town. Instead of sending the money back they would like to see if it can be used for something else. One of the main reasons for the inventories was to complete an analysis, which would allow the town to seek future CDBG funds to address some of the issues that are identified in the analysis. Under the regulations, anytime you are spending more than \$175,000 on a public facility project, they expect you to have bid ready plans and specifications. Mr. Darragh stated that they are hoping to get permission from CDBG to reprogram the remaining funds to develop those plans and specs so that in the next grant round we can submit for CDBG funding for the construction. If the Board approves this tonight they will prepare a new application packet to submit to DHCD. The only other option would be to reprogram it for additional Housing Rehab funds but right now they have not been able to spend the housing rehab funds in a timely manner. Selectman Ampagoomian asked about the timing once the application is submitted. Mr. Darragh replied that once DHCD reviews the amendment and pending the approval the hope is to go out to bid for design services and have plans and bid documents completed by the end of calendar year 2023, then submitting an application in March of 2024. Mr. Darragh then proceeded to review the current status of the 2020 grant. The Housing Rehab funds

posed a real challenge as they had a waiting list of 12 applicants and none of them qualified or followed through with the program. They are trying to market the program to increase interest, which lead to a mass mailing, and the interest has been much better. They now have a waiting list of 25 applicants. To date they have completed 2 projects and a number of other projects that are going through the income qualification process, 12 units are in the pipeline with the vast majority of these properties being multi-family homes. The Slum and Blight Inventories were completed by Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, which was brought in under budget. We are still waiting to hear from DHCD on approval of the inventories, and it does take a year or two to get the approval. Once approved, it is good for 10 years. A motion/Mr. Melia, seconded/Mr. Ampagoomian to close the public hearing. Vote yes/Ampagoomian, Begin, Collins and Melia. A motion/Mr. Ampagoomian, seconded/Mr. Begin to resubmit the application to the CDBG for the remaining 2020 grant funds to be reprogrammed for the use of developing bid plans and specifications for the Church Ave. project. Vote yes/Ampagoomian, Begin, Collins and Melia.

7:10 PM - Massachusetts Electric Company dba National Grid and Verizon New England, Inc. Present: Michael Parent, National Grid. Petition for Joint Pole Location and Relocation: Providence Lane – National Grid to install 1 jointly owned pole and relocate 1 jointly owned pole on Providence Lane. Relocate Pole #36-2 across the street per request of customer. Install new Pole #36-3 and anchor [Plan No: 30666059, Dated: October 31, 2022]. Chairman Collins read aloud the public hearing notice. A motion/Mr. Melia, seconded/Mr. Ampagoomian to open the public hearing. Vote yes/Ampagoomian, Begin, Collins and Melia. Mr. Parent from National Grid explained the reason for moving the pole is due to how close the pole is to 34 Providence Lane and the wiring to get from the current pole to 53 Providence Lane is a long stretch so moving it will alleviate a lot of issues. Selectman Ampagoomian asked if the poles that were being removed would be done so immediately. Mr. Parent replied that the agreement that was made with Verizon was that National Grid would set the Poles and Verizon is to remove them. When a new pole is put in the National Grid wires are installed first as they are on the top of the pole and the bottom lines are Verizon. When they are removing poles, National Grid will cut down to their wires and the rest is up to Verizon and Charter to remove. Chairman Collins noted that DPW Director Jamie Luchini had no issues with this request. There were no comments from those present. A motion/Mr. Ampagoomian, seconded/Mr. Melia to close the public hearing. Vote yes/Ampagoomian, Begin, Collins and Melia. A motion/Mr. Ampagoomian, seconded/Mr. Melia to approve the petition for a Joint Pole Location and Relocation: Providence Lane – National Grid to install 1 jointly owned pole and relocate 1 jointly owned pole on Providence Lane. Relocate Pole #36-2 across the street per request of customer. Install new Pole #36-3 and anchor [Plan No: 30666059, Dated: October 31, 2022]. Vote yes/Ampagoomian, Begin, Collins and Melia.

APPOINTMENTS: By the Town Manager/Vote to Affirm: Kayleigh Labrecque, Part-time Library Asst. Present: Rebecca Sasseville, Library Director. Ms. Sasseville introduced Ms. Labrecque. A motion/Mr. Ampagoomian, seconded/Mr. Melia to affirm the Town Manager's appointment of Kayleigh Labrecque as a part-time Library Assistant. Vote yes/Ampagoomian, Begin, Collins and Melia.

CITIZENS' COMMENTS/INPUT/None

SD Briere LLC dba Valley Pub / 2023 Indoor and Outdoor Entertainment License Renewal/Present: Stephanie Briere, Mgr. Chairman Collins reminded the Board that there were some noise complaints, so the entertainment licenses were held back in order to hear from Mrs. Briere on the plans for remediation. Mr. Briere explained that they did not receive any emails about noise complaints. Town Manager Gaudette read aloud the email address to which they confirmed was correct. Mrs. Briere stated that they did hire a construction company to come out and build a stage with walls and had it completely sound proofed and facing the hill, which acts as a buffer. On Saturday nights, the music stops at 10 PM, for larger events they sent emails and letters to the neighbors and hired Police details. Chairman Collins asked Lieutenant Ouillette to comment on any instances or reports that they have received this calendar year. Lieutenant

Ouillet informed the Board that there were 8 incidences total, some medical, some minor accidents, an argument, a traffic complaint and a couple of patrons that caused issues and the owners called. Mr. and Mrs. Lachapelle came forward to express their concerns. Mrs. Lachapelle expressed her frustration with the emails that were sent, never having received an email or notification that the address was undeliverable. She further indicated that the Chief sent a warning email to the same address, which was also not received. Mrs. Lachapelle argued that the stage faces their backyard and with the stage covered it is now louder. She asked if they had sound engineers or if the bands bring their own. Mrs. Briere replied that the bands bring their own. Mrs. Lachapelle asked if there was a level that they could agree on for the bands to not exceed. Selectman Ampagoomian suggested that once the bands start playing have someone drive down to the neighborhood and listen. Mr. Briere stated that he has done that before and noted that it would be nice to have a decibel level that they cannot exceed. Selectman Collins acknowledged the fact that the calls to the Police Department have decreased and requested that they work on keeping the volume low enough to not disrupt the neighbors. Selectman Begin added that he felt that there can be a happy medium that will not be a burden on the business financially and it is a matter of finding that appropriate level. An audience member who was unidentified stated that Covid-19 made it difficult for operations to continue as they once did, which resulted in using the outdoor space. She continued noting that a decibel level that is high for one person may not be the same for everyone else and felt that it was appropriate to be patient while finding that level where everyone is happy. Chairman Collins proposed that he send an email to the appropriate Valley Pub email address and asked that they reply to it, from there he requested the Lachapelles to send an email as well to the Valley Pub email address to which they are to respond to. If there is no response received, he asked that the Lachapelles call the Valley Pub establishment. Town Manager Gaudette commended Mrs. Briere on the updates and changes that have been made so far, and as Chairman Collins mentioned there were a lot more complaints documented with the Police Department last year, and he feels they are heading in the right direction. He reiterated the importance of controlling the volume level as to not let it get to a point where it is disrupting the neighbors, and potentially in the future coming before the Board for a license suspension or worse revocation. A motion/Mr. Ampagoomian, seconded/Mr. Begin to renew the Valley Pub's 2023 Indoor and Outdoor Entertainment Licenses with the understanding that the volume is to be at a controlled level and both parties are corresponding appropriately when necessary. Vote yes/Ampagoomian, Begin, Collins and Melia.

Pine Grove Cemetery Deeds/ 1) Amy Depasquale [Lot No. 63 A (South), Fir Ave – One burial grave] A motion/Mr. Ampagoomian, seconded/Mr. Begin to approve the sale of Lot No. 63 A (South), Fir Ave – One burial grave] to Amy Depasquale. Vote yes/Ampagoomian, Begin, Collins and Melia. **2) Qiansheng Yu [Lot No. 53 A & B, two graves, Locust Ave (North)].** A motion/Mr. Melia, seconded/Mr. Ampagoomian to approve the sale of Lot No. 53 A & B, two graves, Locust Ave (North) to Qiansheng Yu. Vote yes/Ampagoomian, Begin, Collins and Melia.

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT: 1) Key Meetings Attended: Monday, December 5, 2022 – Participated in the weekly Fire Station Design Team call. Monday, December 5, 2022 – Attended the Board of Selectmen Meeting. Wednesday, December 7, 2022 – Conference Call with the architect for the NES Feasibility Study to discuss planning for a community forum in January. Wednesday, December 7, 2022 – Met with Heather Elster and staff from Mass Development to talk about Whittin Community Center/Town ARPA projects. Thursday, December 8, 2022 – Attended the virtual EACC Meeting to support the TIF application for Eyepoint Pharmaceuticals. Thursday, December 8, 2022 – Attended the weekly Fire Station Construction Site Visit. Monday, December 12, 2022 – Participated in the weekly Fire Station Design Team call. Tuesday, December 13, 2022 – Attended the BPCC Meeting. Thursday, December 15, 2022 – Attended the weekly Fire Station Construction Site Visit. Friday, December 16, 2022 – Held a Department Managers' Monthly Meeting. **2) Fire Station Project:** Weekly design team meetings continue to occur every Monday morning and weekly construction meetings every Thursday afternoon with the project team, the GC M. O'Connor, and the site contractor Leahy. The GC completed paving the binder coat last week. They are preparing to frame (wood) the outbuilding and expect to begin erecting steel on the main building

at the end of the month. The Design Team continues to work through bidding questions/change order clarifications. The BPCC met this past week on 12/13/2022. **3) Northbridge Elementary School Reuse Study**: The architect team from Abacus is currently developing a public meeting presentation for January. The surveyor has completed the fieldwork and we are awaiting the existing conditions plan. The DEP Phase I study has been completed by the consultant Langan Environmental who attended the BPCC Meeting this past week on 12/13/2022 meeting to discuss the need for a Phase II. **4) Linwood Basketball Courts Project**: The field survey has been completed by Activitas, the site engineer. The Town Manager, the DPW Director and Activitas have met with the Parks and Recreation to discuss design programming. The DPW will be assisting with suitable soil testing for the light bases under the direction of Activitas. Activitas is also working on bid documents in anticipation of bidding the project in early 2023. **5) FY2024 Budget and Capital Development**: Planning for next year's budget is underway. The Town Manager is working on preliminary revenues and available capital funds in preparation for Budget Development during the upcoming winter. Staff assignments have been distributed with budget/capital submissions and are due Friday, January 13, 2023. **6) Cable Advisory Committee**: The Town Manager has been working with the Committee to develop needs for the next Franchise Agreement with Charter Communications. The Town Manager is also working with Attorney Bill Hewig from KP Law to plan for a public hearing to be held in January 2023.

SELECTMEN'S CONCERNS: Selectman Melia provided an update for the Upton Street residents that he received some inquiries from. The information in question will be released shortly and the purpose for the activity there has a positive outcome for safety objectives.

ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDA/None

CORRESPONDENCE/None

EXECUTIVE SESSION/None

A motion/Mr. Begin seconded/Mr. Melia to adjourn the public meeting. Vote yes/Ampagoomian, Begin, Collins and Melia.

Meeting Adjourned: 7:50 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Brian Paulhus, Clerk

/mjc

LIST OF DOCUMENTATION

BOARD OF SELECTMEN'S MEETING - OPEN SESSION

December 19, 2022

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

PRESENTATIONS: 1) Plaque presented to Senator Michael O. Moore who, due to re-districting, will no longer be representing the Town of Northbridge as State Senator in the Second Worcester District.

I. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

II. PUBLIC HEARING: A. 7:05 PM – FY'20 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG): Grant Progress & Proposed Re-Allocation of Funds/Present: R. Gary Bechtholdt II, Town Planner & Wayne Darragh, Community Opportunities Group

- Copy of notice of public hearing
- Copy of memo regarding the Community Development Block Grant
- Copy of map of target area
- Copy of Rockdale Infrastructure Rating Map

B. 7:10 PM - Massachusetts Electric Company dba National Grid and Verizon New England, Inc. Present: Michael Parent, National Grid/[Petition for Joint Pole Location and Relocation: Providence Lane – National Grid to install 1 jointly owned pole and relocate 1 jointly owned pole on Providence Lane. Relocate Pole #36-2 across the street per request of customer. Install new Pole #36-3 and anchor [Plan No: 30666059, Dated: October 31, 2022]

- Copy of public hearing notice
- Copy of abutters notice
- Copy of abutters listing
- Copy National Grid request for petition for joint or identical pole locations
- Copy National Grid Order for Joint Pole Locations
- Copy of map
- Copy of email from DPW Director indicating there are no issues

III. APPOINTMENTS: C. By the Town Manager/Vote to Affirm: Kayleigh Labrecque, Part-time Library Asst. Present: Rebecca Sasseville, Library Director

- Copy of offer letter
- Copy of cover letter
- Copy of resume

D. By the Board of Selectmen/Vote to Appoint: Central Mass. Regional Planning Commission: 1) Delegate and 2) Alternate
-Copy of letter requesting Delegate and Alternate

IV. CITIZENS' COMMENTS/INPUT

V. DECISIONS:

E. SD Briere LLC dba Valley Pub / 2023 Indoor and Outdoor Entertainment License Renewal/Present: Stephanie Briere, Mgr./No documentation

F. Pine Grove Cemetery Deeds/ 1) Amy Depasquale [Lot No. 63 A (South), Fir Ave – One burial grave] 2) Qiansheng Yu [Lot No. 53 A & B, two graves, Locust Ave (North)]
-Copy of deed for Lot No. 63 A (South), Fir Ave – One burial grave
-Copy of deed for Lot No. 53 A & B, two graves, Locust Ave (North)

VI. DISCUSSIONS/None

VII. TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT:
-Copy of Town Manager's Report from 12/5/22 – 12/16/22

VIII. SELECTMEN'S CONCERNS/No documentation

IX. ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDA/None

X. CORRESPONDENCE/None

XI. EXECUTIVE SESSION/None