

BOARD OF SELECTMEN'S MEETING
February 10, 2020

A meeting of the Board of Selectmen was called to order by Vice Chairman Alicia Cannon at 7:00 PM, Northbridge Town Hall, 7 Main Street, Whitinsville, MA. Board Members Present: Ampagoomian, Cannon, Melia and Nolan. Also Present: Adam D. Gaudette, Town Manager.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by those present.

Present: Representative Muradian/Update. Mr. Muradian was present to give an update on the Governor's budget that has come out and mentioned Chapter 70 numbers have been provided to the Town Manager. Using the governor's budget as a template, the House will begin their budget review process that will begin with many Ways and Means hearings. This will require Mr. Muradian to travel the state to get input from cities/towns. From there they take all the input received and put the House draft budget together, which he said should be ready the Wednesday before April vacation. The House will then look at filing amendments and will debate the budget during the last week of April. Similarly, the Senate follows the same process, but will start their budget review process in May giving them the added benefit of having an extra month of updated information (tax returns, benchmarks, etc.). Rep. Muradian advised he will reach out to the Town Manager very soon to get a list of needs. Lastly, he wanted to give a shout out to Unibank who helped with a situation he found out about through Facebook concerning a constituent that was having a difficult time financially and wasn't going to be able to provide gifts to their children at Christmas. On their behalf, Mr. Muradian reached out to Unibank who immediately took care of the situation. Representative Muradian thanked UNIBANK publicly and proclaimed his appreciation to all involved. Selectman Melia asked the Representative to respond to some recent newspaper articles concerning: 1) the Governor's refusal and opposition to give illegals/undocumented immigrants driver's licenses and having the Commonwealth become a sanctuary state. Mr. Muradian responded by saying he is also against both of those issues and pointed out that the State's public safety committee is also against it. He added that at least in the House, there isn't a big push for either of those right now. Rep. Muradian told the story of a woman, who came to the U.S. legally, and testified that it would be a slap in her face if the State circumvented the process. Mr. Muradian remarked that the Governor indicated he would veto any legislation about this if it makes it through the legislature. 2) the Rep.'s visit to Souza-Baranowski Prison in response to the incident that took place recently. Mr. Muradian stated that Corrections Officers came under attack recently and he along with several others went to the prison unannounced and met with officers, the officers' union (MCOFU), the prison Superintendent and inmates and indicated it was an eye-opening experience. Mr. Muradian advised he has great respect for Corrections Officers, who have very difficult jobs. In light of what happened, he wanted them to know that they have supporters on Beacon Hill. He also mentioned they are trying to get funding together for another class/training for additional Corrections Officers. In closing, the Representative said if the Town intends to apply for any Community Development Block Grants (CDBG grant), to please let him know right away. Selectman Melia expressed his thanks to Rep. Muradian and stated he was pleased to see that he was leading the charge on this. Selectman Ampagoomian also thanked Mr. Muradian for coming and voiced his support of Mr. Muradian's position in not supporting the granting of driver's licenses to illegals/undocumented immigrants as well as his being against having the Commonwealth become a sanctuary state. Next, he asked about the \$2 million that was supposed to be earmarked for a new fire station and where it stands right now. Mr. Muradian stated there are a couple of possibilities: one is a bond bill coming forward and if it can be bonded, it may be able to be incorporated. The other is the budget side for funding, but for a number that big it probably wouldn't make it into the budget, however, he added that things are looking pretty good (returns are above benchmark) so he is hopeful that additional monies may be able to come back to cities and towns maybe in the form of additional Chapter 70 and/or Chapter 90 funds. Selectman Nolan asked about potential legislation concerning host agreements that are negotiated with retail marijuana establishments and the 3% cap adding he is aware there has been some talk about towns that may have exceeded the cap. Rep. Muradian responded

a bill was passed by the House (that he voted against) that would take local control for Community Host Agreements away and put it into the Cannabis Control Commission's (CCC) hands, which will allow them to circumvent local authority. He said he is a firm believer that a town knows what is best for a town and not a bureaucratic agency. It is a potential game changer in how things move forward and how things will be looked at as far as what communities have agreed to and how many host agreements are given out so it will be interesting to see what the CCC does. They will wait to see what the Senate does too. With a 5-year agreement in place, which says you may be able to do this in perpetuity, but it also could open a Pandora's box. Vice Chairman Cannon thanked Rep. Muradian for coming in.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES/None

PUBLIC HEARING: MSM Management, Inc. dba Sparetime Recreation, 117 Church Street, Whitinsville, MA 01588/Application for a new Wines and Malts Liquor License (Mark Moon, Manager) [Present: Mark Moon and Michael McCarthy]. A motion/Mr. Ampagoomian, seconded/Mr. Nolan to open the public hearing. Vote yes/Melia, Ampagoomian, Cannon and Nolan. Ms. Cannon read the public hearing notice aloud. The gentlemen introduced themselves and Mr. McCarthy began and reiterated their plans to add a liquor license to their establishment that already offers bowling, pool tables, and coin operated games. He also noted that the servers are already TIPS certified. Selectman Nolan asked about the hours they would like to serve alcohol. Mr. McCarthy responded they would like to serve alcohol from Noon to closing [the hours they are open]. Selectman Melia suggested they meet with the Police Lieutenant to review the liquor license rules, regulations and hours of the establishment. There being no one present with comments, a motion/Mr. Melia, seconded/Mr. Ampagoomian to close the public hearing. Vote yes/Melia, Ampagoomian, Cannon and Nolan. A motion/Mr. Melia, seconded/Mr. Nolan to approve MSM Management's application for an annual Wines and Malts Liquor License as noted above. Vote yes/Melia, Ampagoomian, Cannon, and Nolan.

Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) FY2020 Community Development Fund Grant Application Hearing/Present: Wayne Darragh, Community Opportunities Group (COG). A motion/Mr. Ampagoomian, seconded/Mr. Nolan to open the public hearing. Ms. Cannon read the public hearing notice aloud. Mr. Darragh advised everyone present to sign the sign-in sheet. He began by saying the public hearing is required in order to get input for proposed activities for inclusion in the grant application. The funding for the CDBG Program originates at the Federal level with the Office of Housing and Urban Development [HUD]. Funds are then distributed to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and then they decide how the funds will be distributed to local governments. There are different categories: **1) Entitlement communities** (larger metropolitan areas like Boston, Springfield, Worcester) get their funding directly from HUD. **2) Communities below 50,000 people** - compete in the Small Cities Program and have to compete for funds. Mr. Darragh mentioned there is approximately \$15.3 million in funding available, which is the same amount as last year. He noted 28 communities received funding and guessed it would probably be the same for this year. He also indicated that the most money a community can apply for is \$800K and suspects Northbridge will apply for the full amount. Continuing, Mr. Darragh referred to past programs where part of the scoring process for an application was based on a Community Wide Needs Score where the State would rank all the communities on a scale of 25 points in certain statistical categories. He said they did away with that and simply go by the percentage of the town's population that is low to moderate income and base it on a 10-point scale. Based on our low to moderate income population, Northbridge scored 7 out of 10 points on that scale and Mr., Darragh feels it's good enough to be competitive and added that these 10 points go towards the 65 points for the entire application packet. Another thing that people like about the CDBG program is that it is very flexible with the types of activities that are allowed: brick/mortar projects, infrastructure, housing rehabilitation projects, public facilities, planning, and Social Services, which is limited to 20% of the total grant. Mr. Darragh also pointed out that in addition to

flexibility there are other requirements that must be met for each activity/project. Each activity/project must meet a National Objective and there are three of them: 1) Assistance to low and moderate income individuals, 2) Prevention and Elimination of slums and blight, and 3) Critical or Urgent Need (which is a condition that has arisen in the last 18 months that you don't have the means to address). Mr. Darragh said they typically don't see much of that and they tend to concentrate on the first two objectives. The last CDBG grant in Northbridge was in 2013 as part of the Disaster Recovery Program and used to relocate and renovate new space for the Whittin Community Center's outreach program. Mr. Darragh then mentioned that Town Manager Gaudette and he have been discussing potential projects to submit for this application and are considering: 1) a housing rehabilitation program and 2) conducting a slum and blight survey. The Housing Rehabilitation program provides 0% interest deferred payment loans to low and moderate income individuals so they can make repairs to their property to bring it up to code such as de-leading and/or removing asbestos or other hazardous materials, making the property energy efficient, making the property handicapped accessible. Under the Housing and Rehabilitation Program, the way the program is structured is the town issues a loan to the homeowner and the homeowner hires a contractor, but technical assistance will be provided to them. Under COG's management, they have a Housing Rehab Specialist who goes out to meet with the homeowner and prepares the work specifications for the project. COG also has a list of contractors that have been pre-approved to participate in the program and COG will put the projects out to bid on behalf of the homeowner. During construction, the Rehab Specialist continues to be involved and visits the site on a regular basis to check progress and make sure the work is being done properly. The contractor doesn't receive any payment until the work has been inspected and approved. In addition, 10% is held back until the end of the job to make sure any punch list items are completed and done correctly, and that proper paperwork has been filed by the contractor. Mr. Darragh said the homeowners have someone working with them until the end of the project and it works out really well. As far as the slum and blight inventory goes, the Town can pick out a target area and if the town can demonstrate that 25% of the structures in the target area rates as fair or poor and 25% of the infrastructure in the target area rates as fair or poor, then that area can qualify for future CDBG funding to fix those issues. For example, if 50% of the sidewalks in the target area are rated as fair or poor condition the Town can apply for a future CDBG grant to fix those sidewalks. Mr. Darragh advised that in addition to the above requirements, the Commonwealth of MA has added their own regulations, which has to do with the Massachusetts Sustainable Development Principles, which is basically that they want you to rehab and reuse existing structures rather than clearing a site and building a new structure. They prefer you concentrate development where there is existing infrastructure, etc. He also noted that the Housing Rehabilitation Program meets the sustainable development principles because existing buildings are being rehabbed. He added that the Housing Rehabilitation Program cannot be used to build new homes. Selectman Nolan asked about the 0% interest loans. Mr. Darragh explained that it's really a deferred payment loan, so the property owner doesn't make any payments against it as long as they continue to live on the property for 15 years after the work is done, the loan converts to a grant and is forgiven. He then stated if within 15 years the property is sold, all or a portion of the funds are paid back and can then be made available for another housing rehab eligible project. Selectman Ampagoomian inquired if the contractors that will be doing the housing rehab jobs, if they fall under the prevailing wage law. Mr. Darragh responded no because the contract is between the homeowner and the contractor; not the Town and the contractor. There being no further comments, a motion/Mr. Ampagoomian, seconded/Mr. Melia to close the public hearing. Vote yes/ Melia, Ampagoomian, Cannon and Nolan. The Board was then advised by Town Manager Gaudette that two motions are needed. First, a motion/Mr. Ampagoomian, seconded/Mr. Melia to appoint R. Gary Bechtholdt, II, as the certified Environmental Officer for the purpose of the environmental review record. Vote yes/Ampagoomian, Melia, Cannon and Nolan. Second, a motion/Mr. Ampagoomian, seconded/Mr. Melia to authorize the submission of the FY 2020 CDBG grant application for up to \$800,000 to fund a Housing Rehabilitation program and

a slum and blight survey. Vote yes/Ampagoomian, Melia, Cannon and Nolan. The Board thanked Mr. Darragh.

APPOINTMENTS/RESIGNATIONS/None. Selectman Ampagoomian asked about the resignation of Kenneth Warchol from the Historical Commission and recognizing him for his many years of service. Mr. Gaudette responded that Mr. Warchol is not resigning, but just stepping down from the Chairmanship and that he intends on completing his current term. The Town Manager added that when the time comes, Mr. Warchol will be recognized for his 40 plus years of service to the Town.

CITIZENS' COMMENTS/INPUT/None

Acceptance of Gift [monetary donation]-Leonardo Estates Subdivision/Present: Michael Proto, Chairman, Playground & Recreation. Mr. Proto stated that the developer of the Leonardo Estates Subdivision has proposed a monetary donation in the amount of \$5,000 to the Northbridge Playground & Recreation Commission. Selectman Melia asked what the money will be contributed towards. Mr. Proto stated that they would like to use the proceeds towards improvements to the Linwood Playground basketball courts. He added the Commission is in the process of saving up for those repairs and since it is a large and costly repair the Commission would greatly benefit from this donation. Vice Chairman Cannon added that it is definitely needed. A motion/Mr. Melia, seconded/Mr. Ampagoomian to accept the monetary donation from Leonardo Estates Subdivision in the amount of \$5,000 for the Playground and Recreation Commission to be used towards improvements to the Linwood Playground basketball courts. Vote yes/Ampagoomian, Cannon, Melia and Nolan.

Tri-Valley Front Runners, Inc. [Matthew Kellogg]/Request permission to hold the “Frank Nealon Boston Tune-Up” Road Race on Sunday, April 5, 2020, subject to the safety requirements of the Police Department. A motion/Mr. Melia, seconded/Mr. Ampagoomian to approve Tri-Valley Front Runners, Inc.’s request as shown above and subject to the safety requirements of the Police Department. Vote yes/Melia, Ampagoomian, Cannon and Nolan.

Veterans Hall, 875 Hill Street, Whitinsville/Vote to approve Lease with Blackstone Valley Veterans Association - Present: Ken Trajanowski, Past Commander and Daniel Lessard, Commander. Mr. Lessard began by saying they were present to get a commitment from the Board of Selectmen in the form of a lease allowing the Veterans to continue to use the Veterans Hall long-term before they move forward with renovating it. He indicated that Blackstone Valley Tech will be coming to view the building to see what needs to be done, but before they embark on any type of project and/or fundraising, they want some kind of assurance from the town long-term. The Town Manager advised he has been speaking with Bill Audette about this matter for a couple of months and then provided the Board with some background information noting there was a 5-year lease on the building from 2006-2011. He also said there is an updated lease in the agenda packet, which he sent to Bill Audette and the only thing that changed was the dates. Other than that Mr. Gaudette said he would like to discuss payment of utility bills going forward because the lease states that the tenant is responsible for paying the utilities, however, at some point during the lease or after the lease expired, the Town of Northbridge took over the utility payments. He explained it was probably during the time when the Town housed their Regional Veterans Services Office there. Selectman Melia asked about the name change from Blackstone Valley Vietnam Veterans to Blackstone Valley Veterans. Mr. Trajanowski advised the name was changed some years ago in order to allow Veterans from all eras be represented and further because it has gotten increasingly difficult for all the different veteran groups to recruit members. Mr. Melia followed up with another question and asked the gentlemen if they thought it was possible for the other Blackstone Valley towns to pay a portion of the costs of the annual utilities and Mr. Trajanowski stated he didn’t think so because even though the name implies it’s the Blackstone Valley Veterans, it’s primarily Northbridge veterans and the other towns have their own posts besides. He added that it’s more of a name thing than a reality. In terms of the \$44 plus million town

budget, Mr. Melia mentioned that he didn't think it would be a big deal to continue to spend approximately \$4,300 in utility costs for the Veterans Hall if there isn't any other alternative and voiced his support in doing so. Vice Chairman Cannon also voiced her support. There being no further questions/comments, a motion/Mr. Melia, seconded/Mr. Ampagoomian to direct the Town Manager to sign a 5-year lease with the Blackstone Valley Veterans Association and to continue to pay the utilities. Vote yes/Melia, Ampagoomian, Nolan and Cannon. Mr. Trajanowski thanked the Board for their support and made it clear that this is a do or die situation for the veterans so they may continue to meet.

Pine Grove Cemetery Deed/Vote to approve the sale of lots No. 258 & 259, [2 full graves - Forest Ave. South] [Sandra Beccia]. A motion/Mr. Nolan, seconded/Mr. Ampagoomian to approve the sale of lots 258 and 259 to Sandra Beccia. Vote yes/Nolan, Ampagoomian, Melia and Cannon.

Annual Town Election [May 19, 2020] / Vote to give notice to the Town Clerk to place vacancies from elected boards on the Town Election Warrant. A motion/Mr. Ampagoomian, seconded/Mr. Melia to notify the Town Clerk to place vacancies from elected boards on the Town Election Warrant. Vote yes/Nolan, Ampagoomian, Melia and Cannon.

Town Manager's Employment Agreement/Vote to provide notice to Town Manager of intent to renew. A motion/Mr. Ampagoomian, seconded/Mr. Nolan to give notice to the Town Manager of their intent to renew his employment agreement. Vote yes/Ampagoomian, Nolan, Melia, and Cannon. Selectman Melia clarified that the Town Manager's contract requires the Board to give him 6 months' notice of whether they intend to renew his contract.

Presidential Primary [March 3, 2020]/Vote to sign the warrant. A motion/Mr. Ampagoomian, seconded/Mr. Melia to sign the Presidential Primary Election warrant. Vote yes/Ampagoomian, Melia, Nolan, and Cannon.

Fire Station Project Update/Present: Adam Gaudette, Town Manager and David White, Fire Chief. Mr. Gaudette gave a brief overview of what he was going to discuss this evening and said he would provide information on the history of the project from its inception through the November 2019 Forum including the History of the Department, Conditions of the Station, and the Feasibility Study Process. Next, he mentioned he would provide an update on what has been done since the Forum including some background on Goulet Field (preferred site); Floor Plan; Site Layout; Façade Renderings; Questions Received to Date; Cost Estimates; and Taxpayer Impacts. Lastly, he will review the next steps leading up to the May town meeting and May town election. Before starting the presentation, the Town Manager introduced himself, Fire Chief David White; and Steven Nye, Building, Planning & Construction Committee member. Next he re-introduced the Design Team. Brent Arthaud, Cardinal Construction, and Michael McKeown and Rene Croteau, Kaestle Boos Architects. To begin, Mr. Gaudette talked about the current operations: 1 FT Chief/1 PT Adm. Asst./17 FT Firefighters/17 Call Firefighters. The Department provides Fire and Emergency services (24/7- Advanced Life Support) for 16,544 people in 19 square miles. In 2019, the Fire Department answered 3,370 calls. Next, the Town Manager reviewed the current list of vehicles: 3 engine companies, 1 aerial ladder, 1 heavy rescue, 3 forestry trucks, 2 ambulances, 3 utility vehicles, and 4 trailers. He also mentioned there are 2 Fire Stations: Fire Headquarters (193 Main Street), which was built in 1923 and donated to the town by the owners of The Shop. The second, much smaller substation, is the unmanned Rockdale Station (2305 Providence Road, Northbridge) and is primarily used for storage. It too was built by the mill owners in the 1950's and later donated to the town by the mill owners. Both buildings have code, ADA and life safety issues. The next topic focused on the existing conditions at 193 Main Street (Fire Headquarters). The Town Manager noted that the building was completed in 1923 and is in rough shape. He also indicated there are well documented deficiencies with the exterior of the building: concrete foundation, brick façade, windows, doors/door frames/ leaking roof and roof drainage. In addition, the interior of the building also has deficiencies: extensive water and/or moisture infiltration on surfaces,

ceilings flaking and chalking (contaminating equipment), basement storage areas experience continual standing water, inability for water to drain through apparatus bay floor drains, steel doors & frames, apparatus bay doors require replacement, roof leaking, standing water, and bubbling roof drainage system backflows through building floor drains. **FEASIBILITY STUDY HISTORY:** In 2001, a feasibility study was done by the Building, Planning and Construction Committee (BPCC) and due to the condition of the 2 buildings, the result was that action needed to be taken. In 2006, some funds were set aside to do some testing and an analysis, which has been put towards what is being done now for the current feasibility study. Mr. Gaudette felt that this project was probably put on hold due to several things: in the early 2000's, a new High School was built; then the recession hit around 2008-2010; in 2013-2014, the Balmer School project took over and was eventually approved for construction; and in 2017, Town Manager Gaudette and Fire Chief White set a goal to explore the need and building of a new Fire Station facility. In 2017, the BPCC hired Cardinal Construction to oversee the project and assist the Town as the Owner's Project Manager (OPM). In 2018, the BPCC set up a working group to do some preliminary site research and the RFQ development. In 2019, Kaestle-Boos Architects was hired to do certain parts of the study that will be discussed tonight (Fire Station programming, site selection, response time analysis (probably the most important part of the project). In November 2019, the BPCC announced their preferred site location. **PROGRESS #1 (Fall 2019): Programming:** Mr. Gaudette explained that the programming effort is to figure out the space needs and other aspects of the Fire Department today and moving forward; Staff interviews were done; Space needs were explored; planning diagrams and development of a floor plan (bays, office space, meeting rooms) was done that includes an outbuilding for the storage of trailers and a building wing that will be used for planning. **Site selection:** Included in the site selection were about 100 town-owned properties, private properties with large acreage, as well as commercial properties that were/were going to be for sale. After an evaluation of all sites, the BPCC narrowed the list of possible sites to 21. Many were excluded due to size and/or development restrictions like wetlands. The 21 sites were then reduced to 11 possible sites. After further evaluation of those 11 sites by consultants and the BPCC, the number of sites was reduced to 6 possible sites. Five of the 11 sites were eliminated; some due to size (the footprint and/or program did not fit) and one site that was privately owned was then sold; and one was not only too small, but the historical restrictions were too limiting to be considered in the final 6 sites. **Response time study:** Mr. Gaudette said the response time analysis was completed in the fall. The data (from 3 years of calls) shows the calls are pretty spread out around town with the largest number of calls coming from Beaumont Nursing Home. Next, they mapped out the calls to determine what the coverage is from the existing fire station. To measure this, they used the NFPA's [National Fire Protection Association] standard, which means for a community like Northbridge, 80% of the community should be responded to in 10 minutes or less. The BPCC, Town Manager, Fire Chief, and Consultants felt it was important to do what was best for the town in terms of location and decided to use a standard of 8 minutes. Using the 8-minute standard, they found they could cover 78% of the town from the existing station. Mr. Gaudette added that 4 of the final 6 sites actually had an 8-minute or less response time compared to the existing station. As for the preferred site (1681 Providence Road/Goulet Field) it had the best response time as compared to the existing station. Next, the 6 final sites were evaluated based on certain criteria: recommended floor plan, fire department needs, response time and site development. The following town-owned sites were ranked lower due to size restrictions, response time, site development restrictions and/or severe topography issues: Church Ave., Northbridge Elementary School, 180 Main Street parking lot, 644 Providence Road [WWTP] and the Linwood Field. Lastly, the preferred site [1681 Providence Road/Goulet Field]. The pros for this site: **Response Time** – almost 100% of the town can be covered in 8 minutes or less. **Size** – The parcel is 23 acres, which allows for multiple buildings, provides circulation for vehicles, and parking. It essentially meets the entire program and needs. **Site Development Cost** – advantageous because being a town-owned site there is no acquisition cost and no demolition of facilities is needed. Some potential cons: **Visibility from the road** and possible **Regulatory Restrictions** if we have to approach the wetlands. **PROGRESS #2 (Since November 2019):** Town Manager Gaudette shared some additional information about the Goulet Field Site. In 1966, the Town authorized the purchase of the 23-acre property for \$12,000. The property was purchased in 1967 to be used for a new second elementary school but then

St. Patrick's Parochial School on Cross Street became available and the Town purchased that building rather than building a brand-new school on the Goulet site. In 1976, on the Goulet Field site, a right-of-way was authorized for the Meadowood Project [Suzanne Drive] to give the development access to the field and playground. In 1997, the School Building Committee looked at the Goulet Field site for a new High School, but it was deemed too small to fit the school, parking and fields. Eventually, a new high school was built on Linwood Avenue. Mr. Gaudette advised that the Soil Information from the 1997 study was reviewed by the consultants and they saw no fatal flaws. He noted there was some ledge on the site, but it is located mostly in the back. The new fire station would be built on slab, so the ledge isn't much of a concern. Again in 2017, as part of the new Balmer School feasibility study, the Goulet Field property ranked 4th out of 7, due to size (it couldn't fit the whole program) and it lacked 2-way access. Continuing, the Town Manager said as part of the current feasibility study, they took another look at the floor plan. **FLOOR PLAN:** They shifted things around and looked at areas where space could be reduced and/or made more efficient. As part of the floor plan review, they looked at a 2-story option and noted that the second floor would only house bunk rooms and living area for the firefighters. The reason being, if you allow public access to the second floor, it would require an elevator and due to maintenance and construction costs, they felt they should avoid the 2-story option. He stated it costs more to build a 2-story building just from a structural standpoint alone and added that it's also less efficient for the staff in getting around because it's easier and quicker to navigate hallways versus stairs. **SITE LAYOUT:** Looked at the building area, access to the site, circulation of the site, parking, buffer zones, and the potential for future expansion. Mr. Gaudette commented that at this point, the team feels they have a very efficient use of the property. The site is relatively flat. The building would be situated at the front of the site in order to avoid slopes, wetlands and ledge. No demolition will be needed, which is an advantage for this site. The site also has excellent front and rear circulation for vehicles including the department's 49' ladder truck, ambulances, and staff vehicles coming in and out. There is sufficient parking for staff and visitors and an overflow parking area is available during on-site trainings. The site also provides for future expansion, should the need arise. The plan also shows there are buffer zones to the residential abutters. There is 134' of frontage, which will be a good balance to allow for buffers and proper site distance for pulling in and out of the site. Signage and lighting will be at the entrance with the potential for a good viewscape to the entrance of the property. **FAÇADE RENDERINGS:** Also discussed with the Committee was building materials, styles and architecture. Discussed having architectural balance (multiple roof lines, efficient light, façade) and regional character (brick, pitched roof) while be cognizant of costs (use of different materials: metal panels, concrete block and cast stone base). The Town Manager then reviewed questions that have come up during the feasibility study process. **1)** Why isn't the Town including a Police Station in the project? Mr. Gaudette advised that the current police station is suitable and in very good condition. He noted that due to cost factors, it wasn't in the best interest to taxpayers to include a Police Station in this project, but reminded everyone that should the need arise, there is plenty of space for future expansion. **2)** Why is space for town offices included? The current offices are located in a building (former school) that was built in 1925. There are 5 full-time employees and 1 part-time employee in a 3-story building that houses offices on 1st floor, storage on 2nd floor, and an empty 3rd floor. This equates to about 3,000 sq. ft. per staff member. Utility costs are approximately \$11,500 per year. The proposed office space (as part of the Fire Station project) will be a one-story, brand new building with about 340 sq. ft. per person and expected utility costs around \$4,200 per year. Questions that continue to come up at this time: **1)** Isn't NES the best solution as it will be empty in the fall of 2021? Mr. Gaudette indicated that the NES (44 Cross Street) site is not centrally located so the response time would not be ideal; being a 2-story building isn't as efficient as a 1-story building; and it does not fit the program as far as parking, training, and vehicle circulation goes. In addition, he added that there would be no room for future expansion. **2)** Why was Uxbridge's new station built for only \$10 million and Northbridge's will be significantly more? The Town Manager pointed out some of the differences were as follows:

UXBRIDGE	NORTHBRIDGE
Replaced headquarters only; 3-man crews (12FT staff)	Replacing headquarters, substation, and Annex; 4-man crews (17FT staff) 33% more calls than Uxbridge
Replaced 6,600 sq.ft. station with a 14,365 sq.ft. station (118% larger)	Replacing 33,556 HQ, a 3,520 sq.ft. substation and a 21,262 sq.ft. Annex for a total of 58,338 sq.st. with a 29,047sq.ft. new building
Original program was for a 19,000 sq.ft. building and it was reduced to fit the downtown site.	New building 29,047 sq.ft. (50% smaller)
Storage is off-site	New building includes out building, storage, and office wing
No room for on-site training; insufficient parking; poor circulation access; no room for expansion	Has room for on-site training, sufficient parking, better access/circulation and room for expansion
Total Project Cost: \$679 sq.ft.	Total Project Cost: \$653 sq.ft.

Continuing, the Town Manager reviewed the cost estimate, which totals \$18,968,000 and includes: Direct Cost (\$12,429,000); Gen. Contractor Mark-ups + Escalation (\$2,566,000); Equipment Costs (\$679,000); Indirect Costs / Design / Other (\$2,318,000); and Owner Contingencies (\$976,000). Mr. Gaudette explained that the contingency amounts are very high because we aren't at the design phase yet, however, the further we get into the project, it's possible the contingencies could be less than what is shown. He then showed a chart showing comparative construction data. In terms of the 2020 cost per square foot, the chart indicated that Northbridge had a very favorable cost per square foot. Next, Mr. Gaudette showed the cost of building our program at the Goulet site (\$18,968,000) versus a 1-story building at the NES site (\$22,249,000). The increased cost is due to demolition of the building, asbestos removal, etc. Also looked at was the tax impact to taxpayers. In comparison with 10 other surrounding towns, Northbridge's tax rate remained the lowest at \$13.84 per thousand including the first \$30 million that was borrowed for the Balmer School project. The highest tax rate belonged to Blackstone at \$18.86 per thousand. In terms of borrowing for the fire station project, the Town Manager looked at 3 scenarios of the annual tax impact for an average single-family home valued at \$329,000: **Interest Rate of 4.5%:** 1) borrowing \$19M for 20 years at 4.5%, taxes would increase \$258.67 per year; 2) borrowing \$19M for 25 years at 4.5%, taxes would increase \$222.75 per year; and 3) borrowing \$19M for 30 years at 4.5%, taxes would increase \$198.80 per year. For comparison purposes, he also looked at 3 scenarios of the annual tax impact for an average single-family home valued at \$329,000: **Interest Rate of 3.0%:** 1) borrowing \$19M for 20 years at 3.0%, taxes would increase \$231.01 per year; 2) borrowing \$19M for 25 years at 3.0%, taxes would increase \$195.34 per year; and 3) borrowing \$19M for 30 years at 3.0%, taxes would increase \$171.57 per year. Next steps: the Town Manager reviewed some meeting dates (Finance Committee, BPCC, and Public Forums) through April 2020. He also advised the authorization to borrow for the Fire Station project will be placed on the Spring Annual Town Meeting Warrant [May 5, 2020] and the authorization to exclude the debt (ballot question) will be placed on the Town Election Warrant [May 19, 2020]. Mr. Gaudette then opened the floor to questions for the design team. In regard to the new building bring one-story, Selectman Nolan asked if a drying tower [a tall structure] for fire hoses is still required. Chief White replied that the drying tower is included in the proposed project plans and will serve a dual purpose and be used for training. Selectman Ampagoomian asked: **1)** Will the new station be built on slab or is there a basement for storage. Chief White answered it will be slab. **2)** If the new station is built on the Goulet site, will the Town have to get a permit from the state to install lights on Rte. 122 at the proposed entrance. The Town Manager responded yes. **3)** Inquired about whether there were any flat roofs on the new building. Chief White responded yes, the only part that doesn't have flat roofs is over the apparatus bays and this is a cost benefit. Mr. Ampagoomian said he isn't fond of flat roofs, but the designer interjected and clarified that the flat roofs weren't really flat that the steel was somewhat pitched for drainage. **4)** Asked what the plans were for the existing buildings that will no longer be used (HQ, Rockdale Station, and Annex). The Town Manager responded it is typical for towns to do an adaptive re-use study, which would be done through the Building, Planning & Construction Committee. He said the town has some monies on hand. An adaptive re-use study

would include an analysis of the building(s) conditions, compatible uses for the existing space, and a market analysis. The information would then be attached to an RFP because towns are required to advertise through a proposal process for projects over \$25,000. By doing this, the town can choose the proposal that's meets the goal of the town for using the space and it also allows the town to restrict certain uses. 6) Does the town intend to do additional soil testing on Goulet Field. Mr. Gaudette responded if the project is approved, the next steps would include conducting full based soil testing, flagging wetlands, full topography plan, etc. 7) Mentioned ledge and is glad there is transparency about it. The Town Manager reminded him the site is relatively flat and there are going to be shallow foundations noting based on the information they have at this time, it is favorable. Selectman Melia thanked the Town Manager and Fire Chief for all the information that has been made available to the community. He asked about the tax rate and when the highest spike in the tax rate will occur. Mr. Gaudette said Fiscal Year 2023, which will be the first year the fire station is on the tax bills, and which will also be the last year the turf field is on the tax bills. Mr. Melia then voiced his opinion that a Public Safety Complex is not needed at this time based on the great condition of the Police Station building. Vice Chairman Cannon stated she likes being able to direct people with questions to the website. She then asked about the response time study and how it was done; is it statistical based or actual time. The Town Manager said it is based on the time they leave the station to the time they get to the location. Chief White reiterated that the Goulet site is centrally located and provides for a better response time to the entire town. As for next steps, Ms. Cannon suggested advertising the dates for the next public forums in March and April as soon as practical, to keep pushing the most up-to-date information out there and to stay ahead of any possible fake news. The Town Manager said they are looking to schedule a public forum the first week in March; he is just waiting to confirm that the design team is available. Any comments and questions from that forum will be taken up at the April forum and a final presentation will be done at the May town meeting.

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT – For the period of January 27, 2020 – February 7, 2020

1. Key Meetings Attended:

- Monday, January 27, 2020 – BOS Meeting was postponed – all items moved to February 10, 2020.
- Monday, January 27, 2020 – Participated in Fire Station Conference Call with Design Team.
- Tuesday, January 27, 2020 – Conference call with Kopelman & Paige and staff regarding Tax Title/Eviction issue.
- Tuesday, January 27, 2020 – Met with Chairman Athanas.
- Monday, February 3, 2020 – Met with Michael Welch, Chairman of Unibank.
- Monday, February 3, 2020 – Met with Superintendent A. McKinstry and Business Manager M. Walker from NPS to discuss preliminary budgets for FY2021.
- Monday, February 3, 2020 – Participated in Fire Station Conference Call with Design Team.
- Tuesday, February 4, 2020 – Met with staff to discuss capital planning for FY2021.
- Wednesday, February 5, 2020 – Attended the BPCC Meeting (Fire Station and Turf Field).
- Thursday, February 6, 2020 – Met with Selectmen Melia to discuss BOS Agenda.

2. **Balmer School Building Project:** Project construction by Fontaine Brothers continues. Steel erection is underway. Trade bids continue to be finalized and CM amendments have been approved. The MSBA recently visited the project on Wednesday, January 22, 2020 for a regular site visit. The next School Building Committee is scheduled for February 18, 2020.
3. **Fire Station Project (Feasibility Study):** The BPCC met with Kaestle-Boos Architects and the OPM Cardinal Construction this week on February 5, 2020. The design team presented updated cost estimates and discussed presentation preparation for the BoS Meeting scheduled for February 10th and also FinCom on February 19th. The Chief and Town Manager will be presenting again to the Department in the upcoming weeks as well. A draft feasibility study report, incorporating all

information date, was distributed and the BPCC will be developing comments for their next meeting on February 26th. The website is up and running and several comments have been received. Website link is www.northbridgefirestationproject.org.

4. **Lasell Field Turf Project:** The BPCC met with the Land Scape Architect Activitas last on January 22, 2020 to finalize the design concept and fine-tune the budget. The project construction was advertised last week on January 30th. The Committee meets again with Activitas on February 26, 2020 to discuss bids which will be due February 20, 2020. The team is preparing to provide the BoS with an update at their February 24th Meeting.
5. **FY2021 Budget Process/SATM Prep:** Staff have submitted FY2021 Department Budget Requests as well as capital plan requests. The Town Manager has completed the 5-year Capital Plan Update and received BPCC approval on January 22, 2020. State Aid and Chapter 70 allocations for FY21 (House 1) were announced by the Governor and MADESE at the MMA Annual Meeting on January 24th. The Town Manager has met with NPS to discuss the FY2021 Budget Outlook and is preparing for presentations to the Finance Committee on February 19th and the Board of Selectmen on February 24th.

SELECTMEN'S CONCERNS: **Selectman Ampagoomian/1)** Mentioned his concern about the 55+ community being built off Church Street. He believes there may be some clear cutting going on but will send his observations and concerns in writing to the Town Manager for follow-up. **2) Plummer's Corner.** Jamie Luchini, Hwy. Supt., came forward to give an update on a couple of issues noting that the light for the Library walkway has been replaced with a higher wattage bulb and he will check to see how that works. As far as Plummer's Corner goes, he said it came up in a conversation with TIP project consultants who suggested the town do a Route 122 corridor study and then send the tabulations to the state and maybe get them to take another look at the lights. At least by doing the study the town can point out the traffic issues and they will have some data to back it up. **3) Veterans Hall Lease.** Is the building heated by gas? Mr. Luchini said no, it's heated with oil. **4) Grill 122 (formerly Brian's Restaurant).** Reminded everyone to use the crosswalk and button to change the light!! **Selectman Melia/1)** asked Mr. Luchini if the town was going to do another surplus equipment/vehicle auction. Mr. Luchini responded that after the last auction, they trade in vehicle to it makes it easier and more efficient. There are currently no surplus DPW vehicles. **2)** attended the MMA Annual Conference in January and attended classes on new regulations on marijuana and cyber security for municipalities-both excellent classes. He gave the materials to the Town Manager for the IT Director.

ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDA
CORRESPONDENCE
EXECUTIVE SESSION – None

Vice Chairman Cannon announced the next Selectmen's meeting is scheduled for Monday, February 24th. Due to early voting taking place in the Selectmen's meeting room, the location is to be determined.

A motion/Mr. Ampagoomian, seconded/Mrs. Cannon to adjourn the public meeting. Vote yes/Board Members Ampagoomian, Cannon, and Melia.

Meeting Adjourned: 9:12 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Daniel Nolan, Clerk

/mjw

LIST OF DOCUMENTATION

BOARD OF SELECTMEN'S MEETING - OPEN SESSION

February 10, 2020

Representative Muradian – Update / No documentation

I. APPROVAL OF MINUTES/None

II. PUBLIC HEARING: A. MSM Management, Inc. dba Sparetime Recreation, 117 Church Street, Whitinsville, MA 01588/Application for a new Wine and Malt License [Present: Michael McCarthy]

- Copy of Public Hearing Notice [Legal Ad]
- Copy of Liquor License Application (7 pages)
- Copy of Articles of Organization
- Copy of Applicant's Statement
- Copy of Corporate Vote
- Copy of Real Estate Lease
- Copy of establishment plan
- Copy of License Routing Slip

B. Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) FY2020 Community Development Fund Grant Application Hearing/Present: Wayne Darragh, Community Opportunities Group (COG)

- Copy of Public Hearing Notice
- Copy of Public Hearing requirements

III. APPOINTMENTS/RESIGNATIONS/None

IV. CITIZENS' COMMENTS/INPUT/None

V. DECISIONS:

C. Acceptance of Gift [monetary donation] -Leonardo Estates Subdivision/Present: Michael Proto, Chair Playground & Recreation

- Copy of letter dated January 16, 2020 from Gary Bechtholdt, Town Planner to Adam Gaudette, Town Manager

D. Tri-Valley Front Runners, Inc. [Matthew Kellogg]/Request permission to hold the "Frank Nealon Boston Tune-Up" Road Race on Sunday, April 5, 2020, subject to the safety requirements of the Police Department

- Copy of Hold Harmless Agreement
- Copy of race route
- Copy of tax-exempt status / Non-profit organization
- Copy of email dated January 22, 2020 from Police Chief Warchol indicating he has no problem with the race request/route
- Copy of email dated January 22, 2020 from DPW Director Shuris warning there could be repairs done to Moon Hill Road in early April but no other concerns
- Copy of email dated January 22, 2020 from Melissa Wetherbee to Matthew Kellogg informing him the Police Dept. will require a detail at Mendon and Moon Hill Road and the DPW cautioning about possible road repairs in early April.

E. Veterans Hall, 875 Hill Street, Whitinsville/Vote to approve Lease with Blackstone Valley Veterans Association - Present: Bill Audette and Patrick McGowan

- Copy of Lease between the Town of Northbridge and Blackstone Valley Veterans
- Copy of memo dated February 7, 2020 to Town Mgr. Gaudette from Neil Vaidya, Town Acct. outlining the costs associated with the Veterans building at 875 Hill Street

F. Pine Grove Cemetery Deed/Vote to approve the sale of lots No. 258 & 259, [Forest Ave. South] [Sandra Beccia -2 full graves]

- Copy of cemetery deed

G. Annual Town Election [May 19, 2020] / Vote to give notice to the Town Clerk to place vacancies from elected boards on the Town Election Warrant

- Copy of memo dated February 10, 2020 to BOS and Town Mgr. from Sharon Susienka listing the vacancies for Boards and Committees that will appear on the Annual Town Election warrant

H. Town Manager's Employment Agreement/Vote to provide notice to Town Manager of intent to renew

- No Documentation

I. Presidential Primary [March 3, 2020]/Vote to sign the warrant

- Copy of Presidential Primary warrant

VI. DISCUSSIONS:

J. Fire Station Project Update

- PowerPoint presentation can be viewed at:
https://ddf6af6a-7745-45d5-9ba20e578ce1623a.filesusr.com/ugd/71e575_571...

VII. TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

- Copy of report

VIII. SELECTMEN'S CONCERNS/No documentation

IX. ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDA/None

X. CORRESPONDENCE/None

XI. EXECUTIVE SESSION/None