

BOARD OF SELECTMEN'S MEETING

February 12, 2024

A meeting of the Board of Selectmen was called to order by Chairman Collins at 6:30 PM, Northbridge Town Hall, 7 Main Street, Whitinsville, MA. Board Members Present: Ampagoomian, Collins, Melia and Paulhus. Selectman Begin is absent and it is duly noted. **Also Present:** Town Manager Adam D. Gaudette.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by those present.

Chairman Collins announced that the Board would be going into Executive Session and declared that having an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the litigating position of the body.

Executive Session: A motion/Mr. Melia, seconded/Mr. Ampagoomian to go into Executive Session under MGL Chapter 30A, section 21(a)(3) for the following purpose: To discuss strategy with respect to litigation for the Whitinsville Water Company rate increase petition to the Department of Public Utilities, DPU no. 23-64; and to reconvene in open session. Roll Call Vote: Mr. Melia/Yes, Mr. Paulhus/Yes; Mr. Ampagoomian/Yes; and Mr. Collins/Yes.

Open Session Adjourned: 6:31 PM

Executive Session Convened: 6:32 PM

Executive Session Adjourned: 6:48 PM

Open Session Reconvened: 7:00 PM

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

APPROVAL OF MINUTES/None

PUBLIC HEARING/None

APPOINTMENTS: By the Board of Selectmen/(Vote to Appoint) – a) Jamie Pohlman, Playground & Recreation Commission / Present: Karen Rogers, Play & Rec. Member. Ms. Rogers explained that they have been looking for a candidate to fill the vacancy on the Playground and Recreation Commission and feel that Ms. Pohlman would be a great addition. A motion/Mr. Melia, seconded/Mr. Ampagoomian to appoint Ms. Pohlman to the Playground and Recreation Commission. Vote yes/Ampagoomian, Collins, Melia and Paulhus.

2) By the Board of Selectmen (Vote to Reappoint) – b) Sharon Susienka, Retirement Board (Selectmen's Appointee). A motion/Mr. Ampagoomian, seconded/Mr. Melia to reappoint Sharon Susienka to the Retirement Board as the Selectmen's Appointee. Vote yes/Ampagoomian, Collins, Melia and Paulhus.

CITIZENS' COMMENTS/INPUT

Announcement – Water Rate Hearing Status – Possible vote to support DPU's recommended settlement provisions / Present: David Doneski, Town Counsel (KP Law). Chairman Collins read aloud the DPU rate change letter. Attorney Doneski noted that any request or proposal for an increase in fees or rates the Town and the Attorney General's office is tasked with minimizing the increase and to consider

the impact over time of the increase. The goal is to see if the increase is spread out over a time period. The next step, provided something is submitted to the Department of Public Utilities, there will be several weeks of review to determine approval by the Department, if so, a formal order will be issued and if it is not approved it will proceed to a formal hearing process.

Presidential Primary [Tuesday, March 5, 2024] / Vote to sign the warrant. A motion/Mr. Ampagoomian, seconded/Mr. Melia to sign the Presidential Primary warrant for Tuesday, March 5, 2024. Vote yes/Ampagoomian, Collins, Melia and Paulhus.

Blackstone Valley Chamber of Commerce/2024 Sidewalk Sale: 1) Request permission to hold the annual Sidewalk Sale along Church Street on Saturday, June 15, 2024 from 10 AM to 2 PM; 2) Request permission to close Church Street from Park Street to the intersection of Cross Street during the hours of 9 AM to 3 PM; 3) Request a one-day weekday entertainment license from 10 AM to 2 PM for a DJ; and 4) Request permission to hang a banner across Church Street from June 3, 2024 to June 17, 2024 to advertise the Sidewalk Sale Event. A motion/Mr. Melia, seconded/Mr. Ampagoomian to grant permission to the BVCO to hold the annual Sidewalk Sale along Church Street on Saturday, June 15, 2024 from 10 AM to 2 PM; to close off Church Street from Park Street to the intersection of Cross Street during the hours of 9 AM to 3 PM; to issue a one-day weekday entertainment license from 10 AM to 2 PM for a DJ; and to hang a banner across Church Street from June 3, 2024 to June 17, 2024 to advertise the Sidewalk Sale Event. Vote yes/Ampagoomian, Collins, Melia and Paulhus.

T.J.J. Development Corporation / Vote to approve and sign Easement Modification Agreement-Present: Thomas Berkowitz, Pres. Mr. Berkowitz explained that the parcel that was purchased next to their facility on Douglas Road has a drainage easement and in order to get the approval to construct three commercial buildings they are required to change the easement. A motion/Mr. Melia, seconded/Mr. Ampagoomian to approve and sign the Easement Modification Agreement for T.J.J. Development Corporation. Vote yes/Ampagoomian, Collins, Melia and Paulhus.

Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Program Project [Main Street and Carpenter Road Causeways] /Present: Bill Guenther from Fuss & O'Neill, Lead Project Manager and Jamie Luchini, DPW Director. Mr. Guenther provided an update on the project. He explained that they previously were looking at flooding and climate resilience for two of the main reservoirs in town, Carpenter Reservoir and Whitins Pond along with water quality issues at both locations. Locations were identified across the watersheds for those ponds to design and install green infrastructure, which is essentially a way to filter stormwater to protect the water quality of these reservoirs. They are also looking into alternatives for the Carpenter Road causeway for removal, repair or replacement. They came up with an alternative replacement that was vetted through public meetings and a couple of public workshops. Input was provided from residents and they chose a total replacement of the causeway with a bridge alternative. He explained that by removing what is there now and installing the bridge structure it will be safer and allow water to pass more freely, which will reduce flood impacts. The second part of the project is to design green infrastructure along the Main Street Causeway. The project will include the addition of a sidewalk, curb bump outs where stormwater can be filtered before entering the pond. Mr. Guenther noted that there will be a public workshop held on Wednesday, February 28, 2024 from 6:30 PM – 7:30 PM at the Northbridge Elementary School. Selectman Ampagoomian asked if there would be water or sewer line upgrades. DPW Director Jamie Luchini replied not at this time, as this was a green infrastructure project focusing on stormwater. Selectman Ampagoomian asked if there would be parking allowed. Mr. Guenther stated that the intent is to identify what people are using it for now, so whether or not it is designated, that still remains to be determined. Selectman Melia asked if there is an anticipated start date. Mr. Guenther replied that the design of the bridge for the Carpenter Road Causeway is at the 25% design phase, which is where the determination for the size of the hydraulic opening for bridge and foundation types and the next stage would be the 75% design, which is the permitting level, which can take up to a year to a year and a half depending

on the complexity of design and then construction. In total, it would be about two to three years. Selectman Melia asked about funding. Mr. Guenther stated that the idea is to get as many state dollars as possible, which is how this project has been operating from the beginning. At some point there will be conversations on how far they will take their funding. Selectman Paulhus asked if the MVP grants continue all the way through to the construction. Mr. Guenther replied that once they identify a project that is selected for funding they try and take those projects to finished construction, but they do have certain core principles that need to be applied for in order to get points awarded for the grant application. He noted that they also have caps depending on their available funding. Mr. Luchini added that they did hit a benchmark this year, where they awarded Northbridge with a grant to get into the design phase, which shows they are supportive of this project.

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT: Town Manager's draft goals for 2024. The Board was in agreement on the goals that were discussed. Town Manger Gaudette added that he would add it to the next agenda for a formal vote.

SELECTMEN'S CONCERNS/None

ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDA/None

CORRESPONDENCE/None

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

Meeting Adjourned: 7:26 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Russell Collins, Acting Clerk

/mjc

LIST OF DOCUMENTATION

BOARD OF SELECTMEN'S MEETING - OPEN SESSION

February 12, 2024

EXECUTIVE SESSION - 6:30 PM

- I. APPROVAL OF MINUTES/None**
- II. PUBLIC HEARING/None**
- III. APPOINTMENTS: A. 1) By the Board of Selectmen (Vote to Appoint) – a) Jamie Pohlman, Playground & Recreation Commission / Present: Karen Rogers, Play & Rec. Member**
-Copy of letter recommending Ms. Pohlman to be appointed to the Playground and Recreation Commission
-Copy of talent bank application
- 2) By the Board of Selectmen (Vote to Reappoint) – b) Sharon Susienka, Retirement Board (Selectmen's Appointee)**
-Copy of letter to reappoint
- IV. CITIZENS' COMMENTS/INPUT**
- V. DECISIONS: B. Announcement – Water Rate Hearing Status – Possible vote to support DPU's recommended settlement provisions / Present: David Doneski (KP Law), Town Counsel/No documentation**
- C. Presidential Primary [Tuesday, March 5, 2024] / Vote to sign the warrant**
-Copy of warrant for the March 5, 2024 Presidential Primary
- D. Blackstone Valley Chamber of Commerce/2024 Sidewalk Sale: 1) Request permission to hold the annual Sidewalk Sale along Church Street on Saturday, June 15, 2024 from 10 AM to 2 PM; 2) Request permission to close Church Street from Park Street to the intersection of Cross Street during the hours of 9 AM to 3 PM; 3) Request a one-day weekday entertainment license from 10 AM to 2 PM for a DJ; and 4) Request permission to hang a banner across Church Street from June 3, 2024 to June 17, 2024 to advertise the Sidewalk Sale Event.**
-Copy of letter request
-Copy of one-day entertainment application
-Copy of Hold Harmless
-Copy of Certificate of Liability
- E. T.J.J. Development Corporation / Vote to approve and sign Easement Modification Agreement- Present: Thomas Berkowitz, Pres.**
-Copy of Easement Modification Agreement
- VI. DISCUSSIONS: F. Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Program Project [Main Street and Carpenter Road Causeways] Present: Bill Guenther from Fuss & O'Neill, Lead Project Manager and Jamie Luchini, DPW Director**
-Copy of Flyer

- VII. TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT: G. Town Manager's draft goals for 2024
-Copy of draft goals for Town Manager**
- VIII. SELECTMEN'S CONCERNS/None**
- IX. ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDA/None**
- X. CORRESPONDENCE/None**
- XI. EXECUTIVE SESSION: 6:30 PM / H. Under MGL Chapter 30A, section 21(a)(3) for the following purpose: To discuss strategy with respect to litigation, Whitinsville Water Company rate increase petition to the Department of Public Utilities, DPU no. 23-64.**