

BOARD OF SELECTMEN'S MEETING

June 7, 2021

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

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by those present.

REORGANIZATION OF THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN: 1) Town Manager asks for Nominations for Chairman. Town Manager Gaudette asked for nominations for Chairman of the Board of Selectmen. A motion/Mr. Melia, seconded/Mrs. Canon to nominate Selectman Ampagoomian as Chairman. Vote yes/ Ampagoomian, Cannon, Collins and Melia. **2) Chairman asks for Nominations for Vice-Chairman.** A motion/Ms. Cannon, seconded/Mr. Collins to nominate Selectman Melia as Vice Chairman. Vote yes/ Ampagoomian, Cannon, Collins and Melia. **3) Chairman asks for Nominations for Clerk.** A motion/Mr. Melia, seconded/Mr. Ampagoomian to nominate Selectman Collins for Clerk of the Board. Vote yes/ Ampagoomian, Cannon, Collins and Melia. Town Manager Gaudette thanked Selectman Cannon for her hard work as Chairman over the last year. Chairman Ampagoomian also thanked Selectman Cannon. Chairman Ampagoomian then turned the meeting over to Vice Chairman Melia who asked for a moment of silence for fallen Worcester Police Officer Enmanuel “Manny” Familia who died in the line of duty on Friday. Mr. Melia also requested a moment to recognize all Police Officers who put their lives on the line each and every day.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES/None

PUBLIC HEARING/None

APPOINTMENTS/None

CITIZENS' COMMENTS/INPUT/None

Bond Anticipation Notes. 1) Department of Public Works Facility in the amount of \$1,750,000, and 2) Lasell Field Turf Project in the amount of \$1,775,000/Vote to sign. Present: Neil Vaidya, Town Accountant and Julie Harris, Treasurer/Collector. Mr. Vaidya explained that this is year number five for the DPW facility, which has a 10-year note and the year number two for Lasell Field. Ms. Harris stated that they went out to bid on June 1, 2021, and received five bids and the winner was Oppenheimer and Company at a rate of .3056%. Selectman Melia asked about the paperwork before them, which stated that the rate is 1%. Ms. Harris explained that the rate starts at 1% but we have a premium that makes it .3056%. Selectman Melia followed up asking if it is a good rate and are we saving money compared to what was anticipated. Ms. Harris explained that the first year we borrowed the rate was 2%; the following year the rate was 1.9%, last year the rate was .88% and this year the rate is .3056%, which is a great rate. Mr. Vaidya added that going into the borrowing they anticipated 3.5%, which is still good, but considering that it is under that's even better. There being no further discussion, a motion/Ms. Cannon, seconded/Mr. Melia to award the sale of \$3,525,000 Bond Anticipation Notes dated June 25, 2021, and payable June 24, 2022 to Oppenheimer & Co. at a rate of 1.00%. Vote yes/Ampagoomian, Cannon, Collins and Melia.

Whitin Community Center/Request to hang a banner across Church Street from August 8, 2021 to August 22, 2021 to advertise their Cars in the Park event to be held on Saturday, August 21, 2021. A motion/Mr. Collins seconded/Ms. Cannon to approve the above request to hang a banner across Church Street from August 8, 2021 to August 22, 2021 to advertise their Cars in the Park event to be held on Saturday, August 21, 2021. Vote yes/Ampagoomian, Cannon, Collins and Melia.

Blackstone Valley Regional Recycling Center/Vote to renew the Intermunicipal Agreement for Recycling Services and the License Agreement between the Town of Northbridge and the Blackstone Valley Regional Recycling Center for the period of July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022. Town Manager Gaudette explained that this is annual agreement for the regional recycling center that is operated by the Town of Blackstone and Northbridge pays an annual fee of \$7,500. A motion/Mr. Collins, seconded/Mr. Melia to renew the Intermunicipal Agreement for Recycling Services and the License Agreement between the Town of Northbridge and the Blackstone Valley Regional Recycling Center for the period of July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022. Vote yes/Ampagoomian, Cannon, Collins and Melia.

Shining Rock Development/Jersey Barrier replacement. Present: Ken Marino, resident. Mr. Marino explained that he came before the Board of Selectmen four years ago and requested that the parking lot across from his house be blockaded due to the high number of incidents that were going on, including vandalism. Jersey barriers were then put in place to block the parking lot. Mr. Marino is now looking to have a better structure put in place such as a locked gate or a post with a fence. Selectman Melia asked if he received the letters from the Conservation Commission. Mr. Marino replied that he did and he is happy to discuss their points. Continuing, he mentioned that one of the issues was the number of kids hanging out in the lot, which has since decreased but they have not gone away completely. He feels that removing the barriers would bring the issues right back to square one. Selectman Melia noted that he liked the Conservation Agent's (David Pickart) suggestion the best, which would be installing a gate similar to what is at the West Hill Damn Recreation area, but the issue arises as to who is going to be responsible for locking it. Mr. Marino stated that he would have no issue with locking it at night. Selectman Collins is in agreement with Mr. Pickart as well. Ms. Cannon stated that her only issue with the gate and Mr. Marino locking it at night is what happens if he moves out of the neighborhood. Mr. Shuris added that he likes the idea of some sort of gate there, which would be easy to maintain but agrees with Selectman Cannon about the responsibility of who will open/lock the gate. Mr. Shuris further said that he would choose to open the gates for those looking to utilize the walking trail and mentioned the possibility of coordinating with Berkowitz Trucking to empty a trash barrel. Town Manager Gaudette thought it best to get input from other Departments for a design/discussion and then bring it back to the Board of Selectmen for a vote. The Board agreed and will place this item on a future agenda.

Rockdale TIP Project (Intersection improvements at Route 122 and Sutton Street)/Update. Present: James Shuris, DPW Director and HSH Design Team. Town Manager Gaudette introduced Steven Tyler, Jocelyn Dewire, and Andrew Fabisewski, who are all with Howard Stein Hudson, who was hired to do the design work for the Transportation Improvement Program project. He further explained that the funds come down to the State from the Federal Highway program and then Central Massachusetts Metropolitan Planning Organization (CMMPO), a division of Mass DOT, distributes the money to all the regions in Massachusetts. One of the conditions is that the Town needs to fund the design themselves, which was done with Chapter 90 and free cash. With the design company hired, the goal is to get funded for the construction dollars through CMMPO. Mr. Tyler introduced Project Manager (Jocelyn Dewire), Lead Civil Engineer (Spencer Donnalley) and Lead Traffic Engineer (Andrew Fabisewski). Mr. Tyler noted that this intersection is located in the Rockdale section of Town at the intersection of Sutton Street, School Street, Providence Road and Upton Street. One key element is the accident history of this intersection, which puts it at a high accident rate, which makes it a good candidate for this project. He mentioned that it is a highly traveled area and is a connector route to all major routes. Mr. Tyler further explained that there will be TIP projects coming off the list as they are completed, which will bump this project up into the program as long as the Town keeps moving forward with the construction preparation plan and will likely be available for funding in 2024 or 2025. Ms. Dewire explained that the intersection leaves inadequate sight distance from side streets, sharp turn to and from School Street and no defined paths through the intersection, no pedestrian walkways or sidewalks. Next, Mr. Donnalley explained the proposed design. Traveling on Providence Road towards the intersection, they suggest two 11-foot travel lanes in each direction with full pedestrian and bike-travel lanes along Providence Road with minimal impacts to easements and sidewalk width. He stated that there would be a relocation of a small historic staircase in front of the living center. The historical bell

will be retained and not impacted as well as an historic wall, which will be retained and wetlands which, will not be impacted. The curb to island will be extended on Providence Road and School Street that will allow them to tighten up the intersection. Mr. Donnelley stated that there are some minor conflicts along School Street with the 11-foot travel lane and bike lane, which brings them into the historical park or the residential homes entrances. There is also a steep slope in School Street that will be impacted and are asking that this go to DOT with the 11-foot travel lanes but only providing either the sidewalks or the bike and pedestrian accommodations on one side of the road. This would reduce the impact to the residential homes and the historical ledge. Mr. Donnelly added that restrictions of turning movements will need to take place onto and off of School Street, and there would be loss of five parking spots on Providence Road but there is an opportunity to buy back parking on Sutton Street along the bridge. Mr. Donnelly further explained the alternative to Sutton Street would be to remove 7 parking spots and create a right turn lane southbound. There may be telephone poles that will need to be relocated as well. Mr. Donnelley turned the presentation over to Mr. Fabisewski, who discussed the operations at the intersection. Mr. Fabisewski stated that by adding a signal here it will increase delays for those coming from 122 as they will not have a light but overall would be 60-70 seconds delay, with one lane on Sutton Street and with the second lane on Sutton Street it would be 25-30 second delay. Ms. Dewire mentioned the following items have been completed: survey base plans, field review, design concept alternatives, analysis tech memo. Currently, they are working on a public meeting with the Board of Selectmen and the following steps would be to present the preferred concept to MassDOT for input, which is scheduled for September of 2021. Mr. Tyler stated that they are looking for guidance from the Board on Sutton Street for two lanes and School Street and scaling back on the sidewalks and bike lanes to one side. Mr. Collins stated that he would be open to forfeiting the five spaces for a turn lane on Sutton Street and dropping down to one side for walkways and bike lanes. Ms. Cannon stated that she is not for taking parking spaces away from businesses and we have seen the impact on Church Street and feels that those driving through the intersection can wait the extra 30 seconds to have the parking spaces for businesses. She agrees with one bike lane on School Street. Selectman Melia asked if they could explain where the traffic light would be on School Street. Mr. Fabisewski stated that they do not plan to change the layout of the road but installing a mast arm light which would be visible to those approaching. Selectman Melia asked for Chief Warchol's thoughts. Chief Warchol mentioned that most of the accidents happen with those vehicles traveling on Sutton Street and waiting to take a turn and get hit by those coming off SCHOOL Street to Providence Road. He also mentioned that those 5 parking spaces on Providence Road were promised to Leroy's Auto Shop. Chief Warchol suggested that the up and coming Chief should be a part of the meetings as well for input. Town Manager Gaudette asked if there were any examples of similar 5-way intersections that could be checked out. Mr. Fabisewski replied that there are a lot in Boston and the idea is that it would be a three-phased light meaning those traveling on School Street would be allowed to go and no one else would be allowed to go, then north and south bound on Providence Road would go and then Upton Street and Sutton Street would go. Mr. Collins asked if Upton Street would be on a sensor as it is not a heavily used road. Mr. Fabisewski stated that it could be but in this case the sensor would be driven by Sutton Street. Selectman Melia asked if the Safety Committee has been given this information. Mr. Shuris stated that they will be given this presentation at their next meeting on Wednesday June 9th. Town Manager Gaudette added that being cognizant of businesses in the area and the limited parking, he would like to focus on the loss of the parking spaces on Providence Road across from the garage. Mr. Fabisewski stated that the Sutton Street parking spaces would be moved to the bridge, but the Providence Road spaces would not. Town Manager Gaudette clarified that if we do not take away the 5 spots on Providence Road the Town will not receive the \$3.2 million dollars. He stated his thought is with the timing, if we take away those five spots, we own the Fire Station building lot, which will no longer be used, but would be valuable to the downtown area to create parking. He further explained that since it is public property we will need to look further into the sale of the lot or an RFP, auction, etc. Mr. Tyler stated they haven't asked the question yet, but feels his statement is true. Selectman Melia added that we would need to come up with funding for that project. Town Manager Gaudette added that at some point the building will need to come down, which would likely fall on town to pay for, the station is coming offline in two years, and we will no longer need the building at that point. Town Manager Gaudette added that he doesn't see this site being much use, as it is a small site and the fact of how rare it is to add parking in a

downtown area, which is high commercial use. Selectman Melia stated that this intersection has been a problem for a long time and he would hate to see the town not go for it and another opportunity doesn't present itself until years down the line. He reiterated that he feels it is something they should think about. Mr. Gaudette replied that he feels it needs to be more than thought about and a decision should be made to either have the company continue to work on the tweaks. Selectman Melia agreed but he would like to hear from the Safety Committee. Chairman Ampagoomian asked if a trailer truck could make the turn off Sutton Street onto Providence Road. Mr. Fabisewski replied that the road layouts are existing conditions and it is a tight turn, but a couple options would be to move the telephone poles back, which has been noted and will be investigated further. Chairman Ampagoomian asked if there would be a left turn lane for those vehicles coming North on Providence Road onto Sutton Street. Chairman Ampagoomian stated that he feels that they should move forward. Mr. Tyler went over the discussed plan directed by the Board as follows: Providence Road (Rt 122) and removing the parking spaces but an inquiry will be made, restricted left turns from School Street onto Providence Road, and Sutton Street the parking will remain and it will be a single side bike lane and walkway, School Street impact will be minimized by eliminating the bike path and or sidewalk on one side as well. Chairman Ampagoomian thanked them for the presentation and their time.

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT: **1) Key Meetings Attended:** Monday, May 24, 2021 – Attended the Board of Selectmen's Meeting via Zoom. Tuesday, May 25, 2021 – Attended an MMA Fiscal Policy Committee Meeting. Tuesday, May 25, 2021 – Attended the BPCC Meeting via Zoom. Wednesday, May 26, 2021 – Met with outgoing Police Chief, Walter Warchol. Wednesday, May 26, 2021 – Met with area Town Managers for a monthly meeting via Zoom. Thursday, May 27, 2021 – Zoom call with MIIA regarding General Insurance renewal rates. Monday, May 31, 2021 – Memorial Day – Town Offices Closed. Tuesday, June 1, 2021 – Met with Selectman Melia. Wednesday, June 2, 2021 – Held Police Union Negotiations. Wednesday, June 2, 2021 – Met with George Simmons, new NPS Facilities Director. Wednesday, June 2, 2021 – Met with Chief White. Thursday, June 3, 2021 – Attended the MMA Spring Conference via Zoom. Thursday, June 3, 2021 – Conference Call with retired Burlington Town Manager John Petrin regarding Civil Service revocation. Thursday, June 3, 2021 – Conference call with HSH Design Team and DPW staff to prepare for June 7th BoS Meeting and the Rockdale TIP discussion. Friday, June 4, 2021 – Personal Day. **2) Balmer School Building Project:** Project construction by Fontaine Brothers continues with precautionary measures in place per State construction guidelines for construction projects moving forward during the pandemic. The Town Manager is working with the OPM to secure temporary fence construction access from abutters (5 of the 6 have been obtained). The OPM is working on punch lists as the project will approach substantial completion over the next couple months. The project timeline is on target for opening this Fall. Selectman Collins asked if there was any update on when there would be a tour. Town Manager Gaudette stated that he would reach out to the School to see if they have a date in mind. **3) Lasell Field Turf Project:** The project is essentially complete except for several punch-list items that we are working to get scheduled (loam and seed). **4) Fire Station Project:** The BPCC has selected CHA as the OPM and TGAS as the architect for the project and the Town Manager has issued the Notice to Proceed. The design team has begun meeting with the Town and prepping for the baseline data for the design which includes the field survey and soil testing. The BPCC met with the design team last week on May 25th to pay invoices and hear a project update. The slide presentation was forwarded to the BOS for review. **5) Other:** Ongoing negotiations with Police and Fire Collective Bargaining Units as well as General Insurance premium negotiations for FY2022.

SELECTMEN'S CONCERNS: Selectman Cannon congratulated principal Diorio and his team pulling together the Student Showcase under very restrictive circumstances. **Selectman Melia/1)** wished Mike Lebrasseur who just retired from the School Committee, the best of luck and thanked him for his hard work. **2)** requested a small stretch of Linwood Avenue by the Whitinsville Christian School be paved. Mr. Luchini stated that they can look at it but will need to have a discussion with the Conservation Commission as there is a trail right off that section of the road. Mr. Luchini added that the section of the road is not part of the accepted dimensions of the road and paving it would become a liability. The discussion will be brought to the Safety Committee to discuss as there is concern for accidents in that area. **3)** asked about the parking

lot behind the school, which was eliminated. He explained that busses are parking there and people pulling in to watch the game and picking up and dropping off people, making it a very congested area. Mr. Gaudette stated that it was a change order; that that section was pulled out of the contract and completed through the Town contracted paver, which does make a difference in price paving the whole thing vs. what was done but was more so to eliminate that parking. Mr. Gaudette will meet with Mr. Simmons the School Facilities Director as well as the Athletic Director, to have a conversation about what changes need to be made there, whether it's no parking signs, curbing, or paving the entire area. Mr. Gaudette added that paving the entire area makes a free-for-all situation of people pulling in turning around, which could be an alternative, but he feels there may be others that he would like to bring to the school to get their thoughts since it is School property. **4)** was approached by an individual interested in purchasing Town property on Providence Road but understands there might be some zoning issues and they would like to develop the area. He told the individual to have the attorney and/or developer put some information together and present it at a meeting. Town Manager Gaudette mentioned that there was a zoning change proposed that was brought forward to the Town, which was drafted by their attorney, and brought to the Planning Board and eventually either withdrawn or passed over at Town Meeting. He has not heard anything since then and in addition if it did go through at Town meeting, we would not be able to just sell town property to anyone as it would require us to go through the RFP process. Selectman Melia stated that we have been talking about this property for years and it has been sitting there. Town Manager Gaudette announced that we are open for business and welcome those individuals to come forward but there is a process that we need to follow. He suggested any individuals looking to develop on that site should take the lead and advance what they brought to us last year. **Selectman Ampagoomian/1)** asked how the stump removals in the Pine Grove Cemetery were coming along. Mr. Luchini replied there is funding that will become available on July 1st so the contractor should be in and done within the first couple of weeks in July. After that they will go in to loam and seed the area. **2)** asked if there was a possibility of roadways being repaired in the Riverdale Cemetery. Mr. Luchini stated that the DPW did some grating work in there, but other than that an article would need to be put together to allocate the funds to overlay it. **3)** mentioned that there are still stones in Bacheller Cemetery that need to be put upright. Mr. Luchini stated he spoke with Whitinsville Monument about it and they will have a tough time getting in there with their lifting equipment and a backhoe would do even more damage, but he will look to see if they can come up with something. **4)** asked how potholes around town have been. Mr. Luchini replied that it is an ongoing battle, but they continue to repair the potholes as they are notified.

ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDA/None**CORRESPONDENCE/None****EXECUTIVE SESSION/None**

Town Manager Gaudette announced that there may be a time change to the June 21, 2021 meeting to accommodate a special event that night.

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

Meeting Adjourned: 8:40 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Russell D. Collins, Clerk

/mjc

**LIST OF DOCUMENTATION
BOARD OF SELECTMEN'S MEETING - OPEN SESSION
June 7, 2021**

REORGANIZATION OF THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN:

1. 1) Town Manager asks for Nominations for Chairman/No documentation
2. 2) Chairman asks for Nominations for Vice-Chairman/No Documentation
3. 3) Chairman asks for Nominations for Clerk/No Documentation

I. APPROVAL OF MINUTES/None

II. PUBLIC HEARING/None

III. APPOINTMENTS/By the Board of Selectmen/None

IV. CITIZENS' COMMENTS/INPUT/none

V. DECISIONS:

**A. Bond Anticipation Notes /1) Department of Public Works Facility in the amount of \$1,750,000 2) Lasell Field Turf Project in the amount of \$1,775,000/Vote to sign/Present: Neil Vaidya, Town Accountant and Julie Harris, Treasurer/Collector
-Copy of motion wording**

**B. Whitin Community Center/Request to hang a banner across Church Street from August 8, 2021 to August 22, 2021 to advertise their Cars in the Park event to be held on Saturday, August 21, 2021
-Copy of letter requesting to hang a banner
-Copy of flyer**

**C. Blackstone Valley Regional Recycling Center/Vote to renew the Intermunicipal Agreement for Recycling Services and the License Agreement between the Town of Northbridge and the Blackstone Valley Regional Recycling Center for the period of July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022
-Copy of agreement for the Recycling Services between Northbridge and Blackston
-Copy of Licensing Agreement**

VI. DISCUSSIONS:

**D. Shining Rock - Jersey Barrier replacement/Present: Ken Marino, Resident
-Copy of email request
-Copy of email discussion from the Conservation Commission
-Copy of email discussion from the Conservation Agent**

**E. Rockdale TIP Project Update/Present: James Shuris, DPW Director and HSH Design Team
-Copy of TIP Project presentation**

VII. TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

-Copy of report from May 24, 2021 – June 4, 2021

VIII. SELECTMEN'S CONCERNS/No documentation

IX. ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDA/No documentation

X. CORRESPONDENCE/No documentation

XI. EXECUTIVE SESSION/None