

BOARD OF SELECTMEN'S MEETING

May 23, 2022

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

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by those present.

Chairman Ampagoomian introduced Brian Paulhus who is the new Board member, winning the open seat as a write-in at the May 17, 2022 Town Election. Mr. Paulhus added that he is honored to be here and thanked the Selectmen for welcoming him. He noted he is looking forward to serving on the Board.

PRESENTATION OF PROCLAMATION TO UNIBANK IN HONOR OF THEIR 150TH ANNIVERSARY. PRESENT: MR. MICHAEL WELCH, CEO. Chairman Ampagoomian read aloud the proclamation and presented it to Unibank President Michael Welch. Mr. Welch thanked the Board members, Town Manager, and members of the community for the recognition. He added that it is an honor to be a part of the community, noting that community assets are very important and local business is critical.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: 1) April 25, 2022. A motion/Mr. Collins, seconded/Mr. Melia to approve the April 25, 2022 meeting minutes as presented with the readings omitted. Vote yes/Ampagoomian, Collins, Melia. Abstain: Selectman Cannon and Selectman Paulhus. **2) May 9, 2022.** A motion/Mr. Collins, seconded/Mrs. Cannon to approve the May 9, 2022 meeting minutes as presented with the readings omitted. Vote yes/Collins, Cannon and Paulhus. Abstain: Selectmen Ampagoomian and Melia.

PUBLIC HEARING/None

APPOINTMENTS/By the Board of Selectmen: Erin Meagher, Board of Health / Present: Lani Criasia, Chair – Board of Health. Ms. Criasia introduced Ms. Meagher and stated that she has attended a meeting and is a great candidate for the Board of Health. She further explained that Ms. Meagher asked questions, has an extensive health background and the Board is looking forward to having her. Ms. Meagher stated that she was born and raised in Whitinsville and has been working at UMass in Worcester for the last 17 years, currently as a Nurse Practitioner. She is looking forward to serving on the Board of Health and giving back to the Town. A motion/Mr. Melia, seconded/Mr. Collins to appoint Ms. Erin Meagher to the Board of Health. Vote yes/Unanimous.

By Joint Appointment with the Northbridge Housing Authority: Nancy Hill - Northbridge Housing Authority / Present: Robert Burrows, Tenant Rep., Christina Simonian, State Appointee, John O'Brien, Chairman and Brett Lambert, Executive Director. A Housing Authority member noted that they were not able to meet last week as planned but hoped to move forward with the appointment tonight. Chairman Ampagoomian asked Ms. Hill to introduce herself. Ms. Hill stated that she has lived in Whitinsville since 2009, and loves the town; she also volunteers at the Senior Center. She mentioned her profession was working at Waters Corporation in Milford, where she was a Financial Analyst in Corporate Finance for 20 years. A motion/Mr. Collins, seconded/Mr. Melia to appoint Ms. Hill to the Housing Authority. Vote yes/Unanimous. A motion/Mr. O'Brien, seconded/Ms. Simonian to appoint Ms. Hill to the Housing Authority until the next annual Town Election. Vote yes/O'Brien, Burrows, and Simonian.

CITIZENS' COMMENTS/INPUT/None

Blackstone River Watershed Needs Assessment Report/Vote to Support Resolution. Present: Stephanie Covino, Blackstone Watershed Collaborative. Mr. Bechtholdt noted that the draft resolution was reviewed by the Conservation Commission and a positive recommendation was provided. Ms. Covino gave an overview of the Blackstone Watershed, noting that we are also on native lands throughout this watershed. She reported that there were rarely any grants distributed on any level for the region. Furthermore, came along the Needs Assessment Report, which compiled 20 different ways to improve climate resilience and water quality within the region. Ms. Covino then recognized the groups and organization that came together in the two years they met to compile the report and information. The needs for our region were capacity and coordination, which explains the lack of grants coming in. Ms. Covino explained that they were able to create the collaborative to work towards bringing projects to the region. Ms. Covino reviewed the action items. They would like to provide equitable access to water ways, removal of water chestnuts, open space conservation, recognize developers that are doing the right thing, and culvert assessments. Ms. Covino explained that the resolution recognizes the history of the watershed, the efforts for the needs assessment report, and that the goals of the assessment report are not only important for the watershed, but also for our community. This resolution is non-binding, so there is one clause that is an intention to incorporate the goals of the watershed needs assessment report into our own planning efforts, such as MVP plans, open space plans, etc. Selectman Melia noted that one area in need of cleanup is right behind Plummer's Landing. Chairman Ampagoomian brought up a presentation on the Mumford River that pertained to water chestnuts and asked if there is funding towards this. Ms. Covino replied that they are talking to the State about funding opportunities for removal of water chestnuts and she is also working on a water Chestnut pull that she could coordinate in town. Ms. Covino also suggested that the Board reach out to the Senator's office to add in earmarks for funding. A motion/Mr. Melia, seconded/Mrs. Cannon to support the Blackstone Watershed Needs Assessment Report and Resolution. Vote yes/Unanimous.

250th Anniversary Committee / Request to hang a banner across Church Street from Sunday, July 3rd to Sunday, July 17th to advertise the Town's 250th anniversary celebration that will take place on Saturday, July 16, 2022, including a parade (10AM) and fireworks display (6PM). A motion/Mrs. Cannon, seconded/Mr. Melia to approve the above request to hang a banner across Church Street from Sunday, July 3rd to Sunday, July 17th to advertise the Town's 250th anniversary celebration that will take place on Saturday, July 16, 2022, including a parade and fireworks display. Vote yes/Unanimous.

Inter-Municipal Agreement - Blackstone Valley Veterans' Services District. Town Manager Gaudette explained that Northbridge engages in an Inter-Municipal agreement with several other towns in the Blackstone Valley for veteran services, which includes administering State plans, funding for veterans in need with the Town of Uxbridge as the host. The change this year is a 3-year agreement and the addition of Millbury, which decreased the rate. A motion/Mr. Collins, seconded/Mrs. Cannon to approve and sign the Inter-Municipal agreement for the Blackstone Valley Veterans' Services District. Vote yes/Unanimous.

Village Congregational Church [Harvest Festival, Saturday, September 24, 2022 from 9 AM to 3 PM. Rain date: Sunday, September 25, 2022/1) Hang a banner across Church Street, from Sunday, September 11, 2022 to Sunday, September 25, 2022; 2) Request to close Church Street from Main Street to Park Street from 8 AM to 4 PM; 3) Request to use Memorial Park; and 4) Request for a one-day Entertainment License. A motion/Mrs. Cannon, seconded/Mr. Melia to approve the Village Congregational Church's requests as noted above. Vote yes/Unanimous.

Unibank, 49 Church Street, Whitinsville /Request for a one-day weekday entertainment license for their 150th +2 anniversary celebration at the Whittin Community Center, 60 Main Street, June 11, 2022 from 5:30 PM to 9:30 PM /Present: Joanne Khoury. A motion/Mr. Melia, seconded/Mrs. Cannon, to approve Unibank's request for a one-day weekday entertainment license for their 150th +2 anniversary celebration at the Whittin Community Center, 60 Main Street, June 11, 2022 from 5:30 PM to 9:30 PM Vote yes/Unanimous.

Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Program (MVP Action Grant) / Carpenter Reservoir - Present: R. Gary Bechtholdt, Town Planner & William Guenther, Fuss & O'Neil, Inc. Mr. Guenther explained that the project has two main parts with a third part that brings them together. The first step is the planning step where the town learns about their vulnerabilities to climate change. Once the town is certified as an MVP community, they can apply for action grant funding to tackle those prioritized projects. Northbridge was specifically looking at the causeway and to protect water quality in terms of drinking water supply in the area of Whittin Pond and Carpenter Reservoir. Mr. Guenther noted that the Action Grants have \$10-\$20 million dollars available annually. The two main pieces are the causeway analysis and green infrastructure analysis. In the causeway analysis, we are looking at alternatives to the causeway using nature-based solutions. Within that there are removal, repair and replacement scenarios. Removal would be the complete removal including the cost to remove it, and relocating utilities. Repair consists of repairing what is there to make it passable for a period of time. The replacement scenario looks at what it would take to make sure the structure is safe to pass cars again and also resilient to future climate change in this area. The second task is the Green Infrastructure to look at protecting the water quality, flood resilience and recharging the town's aquifers. Lastly, it is brought together through public engagement. Mr. Guenther announced that there is a public workshop in which attendees can learn about the options and give feedback on which options they prefer. The workshop will be held at the Elementary School on June 9, 2022 at 5 PM. Selectman Melia asked how the neighbors will be notified of the forum and what will be going on. Mr. Guenther replied that they have posters and flyers that will be going up around the neighborhoods and they are using town social media outlets and his attendance at this meeting to get the word out. Selectman Melia asked if we have applied for a grant yet. Mr. Bechtholdt acknowledged that they received the MVP grant through Planning to get the designation, and this is the first grant received under the action grant component, and they may apply for another grant to complete the work. Selectman Melia asked what the ballpark figure would be. Mr. Guenther stated that for the bridge, which would be a full replacement, would be \$1.5 to \$2 million dollars, but there are additional associated costs to bring it up to code. Town Manager Gaudette noted that they were asked about money in the DPW budget and whether it was being cut or not and last fall a piece of funding was added, which was our match for this project. Mr. Paulhus asked if the town has received a number for the grant. Mr. Bechtholdt responded yes, for the study portion of it.

2020 CDBG Program / Slum & Blight Inventory (Overview & Status) - Present: Tiffany Menard & Ted Harvey, Pioneer Valley Planning Commission. Mr. Bechtholdt explained that they are doing a housing rehab program for eligible property owners of residential properties and also a slum and blight inventory - one for New Village and a second one for a neighborhood in Rockdale. The slum and blight inventory is nearing completion, which will be presented to the Board and the Board will need to approve it, then it will be sent over to DHCD, who will review it and determine if those areas qualify under the slum and blight. Mr. Bechtholdt noted that Tiffany Menard from Pioneer Valley Planning Commission will be at the next meeting for a public hearing to present the reports.

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT: Town Manager Gaudette thanked the voters on behalf of the Building Planning and Construction Committee, the Fire Department and their staff, the design team and all those who have been putting a lot of effort and support into the Fire Station project. At the May 3rd Town Meeting voters approved an additional borrowing of \$3.75 million dollars and on May 17th the voters supported the debt exclusion of those additional funds. The next step will be entering into a contract with the low bid contractor - M. O'Connor Contracting Inc. and we are currently reviewing contract documents and expect to have a shovel in the ground soon.

SELECTMEN'S CONCERNS: Selectman Melia/1) received correspondence from the Town Manager that came down from the State on flag policy and asked if the Town Manager could look into whether or not we have a policy. Town Manager Gaudette is going to look into this. 2) Asked about possible promotions coming in the Fire Department and hopes that we will wait for the strategic plan to be

complete. Town Manager Gaudette stated that he and the Chief have been discussing budget reviews regarding additional staff and adding additional administrative staff and a form of Deputy Chief, which was added to the budget for FY23. There will be a presentation on the strategic plan to the Board of Selectmen once completed. **3)** noted he is still receiving complaints about Charter. Town Manager Gaudette noted that he and Selectman Collins have been sitting in on the cable advisory committee meetings and are preparing for exchanging wants. As far as rates go, they are set by the Department of Telecommunications. **Selectman Ampagoomian/1)** asked when we would hear back from the Attorney General on Civil Service. Town Manager Gaudette stated that we have notified Town Counsel, who is assisting us through the civil service revocation process. A certified vote was provided to Town Counsel and will be provided to the State's Human Resource Division. **2)** informed the Board that he was contacted by a resident on Hill Street who had cable line in her yard, which was cut when the tree pruning was taking place. He contacted Mr. Luchini, who reached out to National Grid to report it. **3)** asked if Jamie could check out Plummer's Corner, there is a light protector that has fallen off and is on the sidewalk.

ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDA/None

CORRESPONDENCE/None

EXECUTIVE SESSION/None

A motion/Mr. Collins, seconded/Mr. Paulhus to adjourn the public meeting. Vote yes/Unanimous.

Meeting Adjourned: 8:13 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Russell D. Collins, Clerk

/mjc

LIST OF DOCUMENTATION

BOARD OF SELECTMEN'S MEETING - OPEN SESSION

May 23, 2022

PRESENTATION OF PROCLAMATION TO UNIBANK IN HONOR OF THEIR 150TH ANNIVERSARY. PRESENT: MR. MICHAEL WELCH, CEO

- I. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES: A. 1) April 25, 2022**
 - Copy of April 25, 2022 meeting minutes
 - 2) May 9, 2022
 - Copy of May 9, 2022 meeting minutes
- II. **PUBLIC HEARING**
- II. **APPOINTMENTS: B. By the Board of Selectmen: Erin Meagher - Board of Health / Present: Lani Criasia, Chair – Board of Health**
 - Copy of Talent Bank Form for Erin Meagher
 - C. By Joint Appointment with the Northbridge Housing Authority: Nancy Hill - Northbridge Housing Authority / Present: Robert Burrows, Tenant member, Christina Simonian, State Appointee, John O'Brien, Member and Brett Lambert, Executive Director**
 - Copy of Talent Bank Form for Nancy Hill
- IV. **CITIZENS' COMMENTS/INPUT**
- V. **DECISIONS:**
 - D. Blackstone River Watershed Needs Assessment Report/Vote to Support Resolution - Present: Stephanie Covino, Blackstone Watershed Collaborative**
 - Copy of presentation
 - Copy of Resolution
 - E. 250th Anniversary Committee / Request to hang a banner across Church Street from Sunday, July 3rd to Sunday, July 17th to advertise the Town's 250th anniversary celebration that will take place on Saturday, July 16, 2022, including a parade (10AM) and fireworks display (6PM)**
 - Copy of email request to hang a banner
 - F. Inter-Municipal Agreement - Blackstone Valley Veterans' Services District**
 - Copy of intermunicipal Agreement with the Blackstone Valley Veterans' District
 - G. Village Congregational Church [Harvest Festival, Saturday, September 24, 2022 from 9 AM to 3 PM/Rain date: Sunday, September 25, 2022]/1) Hang a banner across Church Street, from Sunday, September 11, 2022 to Sunday September 25, 2022, 2) Request to close Church Street from Main Street to Park Street from 8 AM to 4 PM; 2) Request to use Memorial Park; and 3) Request for a one-day Entertainment License**
 - Copy of email request to hang a banner and to close Church Street
 - Copy of Memorial Park Request Form
 - Copy of Hold Harmless Agreement

- Copy of one-day weekday entertainment license
- Copy of approval from the DPW and Police Department
- Copy of License Routing Slip

H. Unibank, 49 Church Street, Whitinsville /Request for a one-day weekday entertainment license for their 150th +2 anniversary celebration at the Whitin Community Center, 60 Main Street, June 11, 2022 from 5:30 PM to 9:30 PM /Present: Joanne Khoury

- Copy of one-day weekday entertainment license
- Copy of certificate of liability

VI. DISCUSSIONS:

I. Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Program (MVP Action Grant) / Carpenter Reservoir -Present: R. Gary Bechtholdt, Town Planner & William Guenther, Fuss & O'Neil, Inc.

- Copy of presentation

J. 2020 CDBG Program / Slum & Blight Inventory (Overview & Status) - Present: Tiffany Menard & Ted Harvey, Pioneer Valley Planning Commission

- Copy of Memo regarding the Slum and Blight
- Copy of Understanding a Slum and Blight Designation

VII. TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

- Copy of May 9 – May 19, 2022 report

VIII. SELECTMEN'S CONCERNS/No documentation

IX. ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDA/None

X. CORRESPONDENCE/None

XI. EXECUTIVE SESSION/None