

BOARD OF SELECTMEN'S MEETING
October 19, 2020

A virtual meeting of the Board of Selectmen was called to order by Chairman Alicia Cannon at 6:30 PM, using Zoom Meeting Software. Board Members Present: Ampagoomian, Athanas, Cannon, Collins, and Melia. **Also Present:** Adam D. Gaudette, Town Manager.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by those present.

Chairman Cannon read aloud the following statement: Pursuant to Governor Baker's March 12, 2020 Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A, §18, and the Governor's March 15, 2020 Order concerning imposition on strict limitations on the number of people that may gather in one place, meetings of the Northbridge Board of Selectmen will be conducted via remote participation to the greatest extent possible. No in-person attendance of members of the public will be permitted, but every effort will be made to ensure that the public can adequately access the proceedings as provided for in the Order.

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

Open Session Adjourned: 6:31 PM

Executive Session Convened: 6:32 PM

Executive Session Adjourned: 7:04 PM

Open Session Reconvened: 7:05 PM

Representative Muradian / Update. Representative Muradian stated the Governor released his original budget in January and then in April, when the House typically reviews and approves the budget, everything was shut down due to COVID regulations. He explained that they are gearing up to start the process again with a big meeting occurring on Wednesday, where they will hear from the stakeholders. Representative Muradian stated he does not anticipate any earmarks in this year's budget and stressed that even next year's budget could be impacted. He also stated that overall the budget is higher than the budget released in January due to reimbursements for Medicaid and Stabilization Funds. Once the House reviews the budget, it will then go to the Senate and from there the Conference Committee will come out. Selectman Athanas mentioned the requirement of food for Purgatory Beer Company in order for them to remain open and with everyone now looking to get food trucks they are limited. Mr. Athanas asked if there was anything that could be done to assist them. Representative Muradian stated that the owners Kevin Mulvehill and Brian DiStefano have been working closely with Jeannie Hebert on that and Mr. Muradian has pushed for prepackaged food to be an option, which would still be a cost to them, but the conversations continue to be had to make it easier for small businesses.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: July 20, 2020. A motion/ Mr. Athanas, seconded/Mr. Melia to approve the July 20, 2020 meeting minutes as presented with the readings omitted. Vote yes/Unanimous.

PUBLIC HEARINGS/None.

APPOINTMENTS/By the Board of Selectmen: 1) Christine Johnson, Cultural Council/Present: Yurima Guilarte-Walker, Chairman. Ms. Guilarte-Walker stated that Ms. Johnson has an extensive background in business administration and management, is knowledgeable about grant writing and the

Cultural Council would be delighted to have her as a member. Ms. Johnson stated she was the former principal of Northbridge High School and retired in 2019 and moved into the community 2 years ago. She stated it is wonderful to be back and wanted to give back to the community that gave to her throughout the years. A motion/Mr. Melia, seconded/Mr. Athanas to appoint Ms. Christine Johnson to the Cultural Council. Vote yes/Unanimous.

2) Douglas Curving, Zoning Board of Appeals [applicant is currently an Associate member]. Mr. Curving stated he has been on the ZBA for 4 years as an Associate member and is looking forward to continuing to serve as a regular member. A motion/Mr. Athanas, seconded/Mr. Melia to appoint Mr. Douglas Curving to the Zoning Board of Appeals as a regular member. Vote yes/Unanimous.

Resignations: 1) Thomas Hansson, Zoning Board of Appeals. A motion/Mr. Ampagoomian, seconded/Mr. Collins to accept the resignation of Mr. Hansson. Vote yes/Unanimous. **2) William Corkum, Zoning Board of Appeals.** A motion/Mr. Ampagoomian, seconded/Mr. Collins to accept the resignation of Mr. Corkum. Vote yes/Unanimous.

CITIZENS' COMMENTS/INPUT/None

Northbridge Beautification/Request to have lights professionally installed on the Town Common/Present: Cheryl Tivnan. Chairman Cannon added that the Trustees of Soldiers and Memorials have no issue with this request. Ms. Tivnan explained that they coordinate the flower buckets in the downtown area and purchase the wreaths that go up along Church Street. She mentioned with the feedback from Facebook about how the downtown area was looking, they decided to move forward with this project to put lights up professionally around the Common. The company would put the lights up before the Holiday season, remove them in the spring and store them until they are used again. The company is fully insured and has done work for Worcester, Shrewsbury, Gardner, and Leominster. Ms. Tivnan stated that if the Board approves this request, they will go ahead and get a quote for the cost to present it to the company who is confidential at this point, to see how much they are willing to contribute. Mr. Athanas asked when the anticipated date to put the lights up would be. Ms. Tivnan stated she hoped it would be before Thanksgiving. Selectman Athanas asked if there would be any fundraising. Ms. Tivnan replied that they are going to start with the donation and go from there. Mr. Ampagoomian expressed concern for the lift making marks in the grass and asked that they put plywood down to avoid that. Ms. Tivnan stated that she has been working closely with the Highway Department on that, and also noted that there is a lot of paved walkway that could be used as well. Mr. Collins asked if the lights are rented or owned. Ms. Tivnan replied that you own them, and the company stores them. A motion/Mr. Melia seconded/Mr. Athanas to approve the request to have lights professionally installed on the Town Common. Vote yes/Unanimous.

Fall Annual Town Meeting/Vote Positions on Warrant Articles. Town Manager Gaudette announced that the Fall Annual Town Meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, October 27, 2020 at 7 PM in the Northbridge Middle School Auditorium. He reviewed the articles as follows: **Article 1** is for budget adjustments to the Omnibus Budget approved at the Spring Town Meeting. **Article 2** is another housekeeping article to pay prior year bills due to the fact that sometimes invoices are received after the deadline for expenses that were expended in the prior fiscal year and this article allows us to pay those invoices. **Article 3** is to accept Hannah Drive as a public way. Mr. Gaudette explained that the Selectmen first voted their intent to lay out the road as a public way, then voted to lay out Hannah Drive as a public way and the last step is to accept it. **Article 4** is to discontinue a small portion of the public way, which only exists as a paper street, non-constructed and adjacent to Hope Street. The small grass strip is proposed to be discontinued and if it is, there is another process that the town would have to take to auction off that piece of property, but the abutter is looking to obtain that strip of land for a housing project. **Article 5** is the petition for a solar PILOT Tax Agreement that required a variance from the Zoning Board of Appeals, which was denied, and the article was passed over at a previous town meeting. Town Manager Gaudette explained that property owner

appealed the denial of the variance to land court and they sent it back to the Zoning Board of Appeals for a second attempt for a hearing, which the Zoning Board denied a second time. Town Manager Gaudette stated that this article will be passed over a second time. The Finance Committee supports passing all articles. Selectman Athanas asked if Town Manager Gaudette knew what the reasoning was for the variance not being approved. The Town Manager responded that shape soil and topography all play into it in this case the only frontage this property has is a 40' strip, but the zoning required more than that. A motion/Mr. Athanas, seconded/Mr. Collins to support passage of Articles 1 2, 3, and 4 and to pass over Article 5. Vote yes/Unanimous.

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT: Key Meetings Attended: Monday, October 5, 2020 – Participated in the Board of Selectmen Meeting via Zoom. Tuesday, October 6, 2020 – Participated in the Lt Governor's Zoom Meeting for Managers. Monday, October 12, 2020 – Closed for Columbus Day. Wednesday, October 14, 2020 – Conference call with Town Counsel re: draft FATM motions. Wednesday, October 14, 2020 – Participated in a MMMA (Mass Managers) zoom meeting regarding FY2021 Budget Strategies. Thursday, October 15, 2020 – Met on site with Peter Bedigian and Jamie Luchini re: the Armenian Memorial proposal. Thursday, October 15, 2020 – Conference Call with project team for Balmer School project. Thursday, October 15, 2020 – Conference Call with Town Counsel regarding legal proceedings. **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 majority of the site work has been completed allowing for work to begin in the interior of the building (framing, etc.). The Town Manager has been involved with obtaining access agreements from abutters who have received plantings and other work on their property as part of providing screening from the project. Held Conference call this week with Project Team to discuss abutter's insurance claim. **Lasell Field Turf Project:** The project is nearing completion. The GC Green Acres is working through punch list items. Waiting for finishing touches on the bleachers and press box and eventual permit signoffs. Teams have started practicing and gameplay may be possible next week 10/19. The BPCC will be meeting via zoom on 10/21 to approve vendor payments and discuss project close-out. **Fire Station Project:** The RFQ for the OPM was advertised in the Central Register and Milford Daily News this week on October 14th. Proposals will be due on November 12th. The Town Manager will provide an update to the BPCC on 10/21. **FY2021 Budget and Annual Spring and Fall Town Meetings:** The Town Meeting Warrant has been posted. There are two housekeeping articles (prior year bills / revise omnibus budget) and a road acceptance article, as well as two petition articles (road discontinuance and Solar PILOT). The Finance Committee has voted to support all 5 articles and the warrant booklet has been prepared. The Board of Selectmen will vote their positions on Monday, October 19th. Town Counsel is currently reviewing the draft motions. The Town Manager was notified this week that the proponent for the Solar PILOT agreement will be voting to pass over the article as the ZBA denied the project's request for a variance after remand.

SELECTMEN'S CONCERNS: **Selectman Melia/1)** mentioned that a citizen voted by mail and the box was full and asked if there are any talks of getting a bigger box. Mr. Luchini stated that they are working on making more keys for the Town Clerk's Office and the Treasurer's Office as there is currently only one key. **2)** asked how the Middle School traffic route is going. Mr. Luchini stated that right now with students fully remote there has been little traffic. **Selectman Athanas** asked how potholes have been. The Highway Superintendent stated that pothole calls have been low right now but any that they receive they are sending staff out to fill.

ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDA: Community Aggregation Information is scheduled for November 9, 2020, and present at that meeting will be Stefano Loretto, who is the town's representative.

CORRESPONDENCE/None

EXECUTIVE SESSION: 6:30 PM: Under M.G.L. c30A, Sec. 21 #3: To conduct strategy with respect

to collective bargaining or litigation if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining or litigating position of the public body and the chair so declares.

The next meeting is prior to the Fall Town Meeting on October 27, 2020 at 6:30, and after that the next regular meeting is scheduled for November 9, 2020.

A motion/Mr. Melia, seconded/Mr. Athanas to adjourn the public meeting. Vote yes/Unanimous.

Meeting Adjourned: 7:50 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Russell Collins, Clerk

/mjc

LIST OF DOCUMENTATION

BOARD OF SELECTMEN'S MEETING - OPEN SESSION

October 19, 2020

- I. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: A. July 20, 2020**
 - Copy of July 20, 2020 meeting minutes
- II. PUBLIC HEARING**
- III. APPOINTMENTS: B. 1) Christine Johnson, Cultural Council/Present: Yurima Guilarte-Walker**
 - Copy of Talent Bank Application

2) Douglas Curving, Zoning Board of Appeals [applicant is currently Associate member]/No documentation

C. Resignations: 1) Thomas Hansson, Zoning Board of Appeals
 - Copy of letter of resignation

2) William Corkum, Zoning Board of Appeals
 - Copy of letter of resignation
- IV. CITIZENS' COMMENTS/INPUT**
- V. DECISIONS**
 - D. Northbridge Beautification/Request to have lights professionally installed on the Town Common/Present: Cheryl Tivnan**
 - Copy of letter requesting to hire a company to install lights at Memorial Park
 - Copy of email from the Trustees of Soldiers Memorials approving the request to decorate Memorial Park
 - E. Fall Annual Town Meeting/Vote Positions on Warrant Articles**
 - Copy of Fall Annual Town Meeting Warrant
 - Copy of Town Meeting support form
- VI. DISCUSSIONS/None**
- VII. TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT/None**
- VIII. SELECTMEN'S CONCERNS/None**
- IX. ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDA/None**
- X. CORRESPONDENCE/None**
- XI. EXECUTIVE SESSION: 6:30 PM: Under M.G.L. c30A, Sec. 21 #3: To conduct strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining or litigating position of the public body and the chair so declares.**
 - Any documentation for this item is withheld as the executive session minutes have not yet been released to the public.