

## **BOARD OF SELECTMEN'S MEETING**

**January 24, 2022**

A virtual meeting of the Board of Selectmen was called to order by Chairman Ampagoomian at 7:00 PM, using Zoom Video Communication (Video Conferencing App). Board Members Present: Ampagoomian, Athanas, Cannon, Collins and Melia. Also Present: Adam D. Gaudette, Town Manager.

Chairman Ampagoomian asked all attendees to mute their microphones unless they are speaking or wish to speak. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by those present.

**Chairman Ampagoomian read the following:** 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.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES/None**

**PUBLIC HEARING/None**

**APPOINTMENTS/By the Board of Selectmen: Open Space and Recreation Plan Update Committee:**

**1) Christine Johnson, Member at Large.** Ms. Johnson acknowledged that she was pleased to be considered for membership on the Open Space and Recreation Plan Update Committee. She is currently on the Historical Commission and the Cultural Council and looks forward to continuing to give back to the town through volunteering. **2) Christopher Allen, Selectmen's Rep.** Mr. Allen thanked the Board for having him. Selectman Melia asked both candidates what interested them in coming forward to serve on this committee and what they expect to accomplish. Ms. Johnson replied that she grew up in the Blackstone Valley and it is very near and dear to her and continuing to provide for the future generations, things that she enjoyed as a youngster means a lot. Mr. Allen mentioned that he has lived here for 20 years and enjoys the Open Space and the ruralness and would like to help to preserve that. A motion/Mr. Melia, seconded/Ms. Cannon to appoint Christine Johnson (Member at Large) and Christopher Allen (Selectmen's Rep.). Vote yes/Unanimous.

**CITIZENS' COMMENTS/INPUT/None**

**Blackstone Valley Chamber of Commerce/Request for a one-day Weekday Entertainment License for the 2022 Home and Community Expo to be held Saturday, March 12, 2022, 10AM – 2PM at the NHS Field House. Present: Liz O'Neil, Director of Programs, Events and Memberships & Jeannie Hebert, President and CEO.** Ms. Hebert explained that after canceling the Expo event two years in a row, they are now moving forward with the Home and Community Expo. She said they usually have entertainment, which is community based. A motion/Mr. Athanas, seconded/Mr. Melia to approve the BVCC's request for a one-day Weekday Entertainment License for the 2022 Home and Community Expo to be held Saturday, March 12, 2022, 10AM – 2PM at the NHS Field House. Vote yes/Unanimous.

**Rockdale Rod and Gun Club. 1) Vote to accept a monetary donation to the Police Department in the amount of \$2,500.00, and 2) Vote to accept a monetary donation to the Fire Department in the amount of \$2,500.00. Present: Police Chief Labrie and Fire Chief White.** Shane Fung-A-Fat, President of the Rockdale Rod and Gun Club, was present to explain that the Club wanted to make donations to the Police

and Fire Departments. Chairman Ampagoomian commented that it was sad to see them forced to dissolve the club as a result of the property owner and inquired if there were any other locations they could obtain. Mr. Fung-A-Fat answered that there is but funding the purchase of land would be a large monetary amount, so they opted to dissolve the club. He added that some memberships have been absorbed by other clubs. Lt. Ouillette stated that the Police Department greatly appreciates the donation and they plan to purchase additional patrol rifles for the cruisers. Chief White graciously appreciates the donation as well and noted that they plan to purchase first aid kits for all apparatus. A motion/Mr. Collins, seconded/Ms. Cannon to accept the monetary donations from the Rockdale Rod and Gun Club as follows: \$2,500 for the Police Department and \$2,500 for the Fire Department. Vote yes/Unanimous.

**Pine Grove Cemetery Deed/Peter Bedrosian [Lot #36, Two Graves, Walnut Ave (North)].** A motion/Mr. Athanas, seconded/Mr. Melia to approve the sale of Lot #36, Walnut Ave (North), 2 graves] to Peter Bedrosian. Vote yes/Unanimous.

**Spring Annual Town Meeting [May 3, 2022] / 1) Vote to close the warrant on Friday, March 4, 2022 at 12:00 Noon and 2) Vote to give notice to the Town Clerk to place vacancies from elected boards on the Town Election Warrant.** A motion/Mr. Melia, seconded/Ms. Cannon to close the warrant for the Spring Annual Town Meeting on Friday, March 4, 2022 at 12:00 Noon and to give notice to the Town Clerk to place vacancies from elected boards on the Town Election Warrant. Vote yes/Unanimous.

**TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT: 1) Key Meetings Attended:** Monday, January 10, 2022 – Weekly Conference Call for the Fire Station Project. Tuesday, January 11, 2022 – Met virtually with UniBank President, Michael Welch. Wednesday, January 12, 2022 – Conducted a walk-through of NES with J. Luchini for folks looking to rent space. Wednesday, January 12, 2022 – Attended a virtual BPCC meeting for the Fire Station Project. Friday, January 14, 2022 – Had a virtual meeting with the Fire Station Architect, Yar Laakso from TGAS, to discuss the Planning Wing layout. Monday, January 17, 2022 – Holiday – MLK Day. Wednesday, January 19, 2022 – Met with Chief T. Labrie to discuss Budget and Personnel. Wednesday, January 19, 2022 – Met with Selectman Melia to provide updates. Thursday, January 20, 2022 – Held a virtual Department Head Meeting. Thursday, January 20, 2022 – Met virtually with Town Counsel, Chief Labrie and the Police Union to discuss Civil Service Revocation. Friday, January 22, 2022 – Attended the virtual MMA Conference. **2) Fire Station Project:** The BPCC will hold its next meeting on February 1<sup>st</sup>. The architect continues to work on the design which now again includes the Planning Wing. The Design Team is preparing to advertise the early site package. Pre-qualifications for Subs and GC's have been submitted and the group will be providing rankings to the BPCC. **3) Fire Department Strategic Plan:** The Town Manager and Fire Chief selected the consultant CPSM for this project. The services agreement has been finalized and the Town Manager has issued the Notice to Proceed. The Project is expected to be completed in the next 150-180 days. **4) American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA):** The Town will be receiving \$4.9M which can be used for projects/programs in response to the recovery effort brought on by the pandemic. The Town Manager issued Project Request application Documents to staff and area non-profit organizations for the purposes of accessing Federal Relief Funds issued to the Town through the American Rescue Plan Act. The Town Manager will provide a Funding Project Plan as part of the FY2023 Budget and Capital Planning Process. **5) Northbridge Elementary School Reuse Study:** The RFP Proposals were due on December 17<sup>th</sup>. The BPCC will be holding interviews at their next meeting on February 1<sup>st</sup> to select a qualified firm to perform the study over the winter/spring of 2022. **6) Fire Department Radio Communications Study:** The RFP for this project, which is being funded by a State Capital Earmark, was advertised on January 12<sup>th</sup> and responses are due January 28<sup>th</sup>. **7) Fallon Health Insurance Replacement:** The Town Manager has been working with the Finance Team and NFP to solicit pricing for health insurance plans as Fallon is getting out of the municipal market. The RFP was advertised, and the Town received several responses. NFP and staff team had the providers proposing plans present to the IAC on Wednesday, January 5<sup>th</sup>. The IAC will be meeting on January 26<sup>th</sup> to select the new provider. Selectmen Athanas asked what the cost would come in at compared to what is in place now. Town Manager Gaudette replied that we

have two providers in the range of 4-5%, which isn't bad for active employees. Right now the Insurance Advisory Committee are pondering the two different proposals. **8) FY2023 Budget and Capital Plan Development:** The Town Manager has initiated the process for staff and committees for the upcoming FY2023 Budget and Capital Plan Development. Draft budgets and capital plans will be prepared for February 1<sup>st</sup>.

**SELECTMEN'S CONCERNS:** **Selectman Melia/1)** asked if Town Manager Gaudette could explain the Fire Department's Strategic Plan. Town Manager Gaudette briefly described that the Strategic Plan is a process or study where an outside third party assists in evaluating strengths and weaknesses and to set up goals and objectives for a 5-year period. He further explained that a good time to do this is when there is a change in leadership and even though Chief White has been on for four years now, with the new station coming on, it would be a good time to undergo this process as there will be discussions of capital, staffing, and resources. Looking ahead, next year will be the Police Department's turn due to recent changes in upper management. Selectman Melia asked how long it takes. Town Manager Gaudette stated typically 4-6 months. The idea is the goals and objectives will be reviewed every year by a committee to evaluate and reset every 5 years depending on any hurdles or advancements that come within that timeframe. **2)** asked about his prior request for a quote for a digital signboard. Mr. Gaudette reported that Mr. Luchini provided him with a quote and it will be part of the capital review process and will need to be prioritized. **3)** asked if the Bylaw Review Committee should be meeting. Town Manager Gaudette replied that they are slightly behind, however, they recently got a fourth member, so the plan is once the committee is full, they will begin meeting. **4)** asked about the car wash that the Town took over and if the owner has up to a year to pay off the taxes and take the property back. Town Manager Gaudette explained that the property is in tax title, so it does not necessarily belong to the town. The tax title taking process goes to court and eventually the town will exercise its rights to acquire the property and then the owner has a year to pay back their taxes to regain full ownership.

**ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDA/None**

**CORRESPONDENCE/None**

**EXECUTIVE SESSION/None**

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

**Meeting Adjourned: 7:25 PM**

**Respectfully submitted,**

**Russell D. Collins, Clerk**

**/mjc**

**LIST OF DOCUMENTATION**

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN'S MEETING - OPEN SESSION**

**January 24, 2022**

- I. APPROVAL OF MINUTES/None**
- II. PUBLIC HEARING/None**
- III. APPOINTMENTS:**
  - A. Open Space and Recreation Plan Update Committee: 1) Christine Johnson, Member at Large**
    - Copy of Christine Johnson's Talent Bank Form
  - 2) Christopher Allen, Selectmen's Rep.**
    - Copy of Christopher Allen's Talent Bank Form
- IV. CITIZENS' COMMENTS/INPUT/None**
- V. DECISIONS**
  - B. Blackstone Valley Chamber of Commerce/Request for a one-day Weekday Entertainment License for the 2022 Home and Community Expo to be held Saturday, March 12, 2022, 10AM – 2PM at the NHS Field House. Present: Liz O'Neil, Director of Programs, Events and Memberships & Jeannie Hebert, President and CEO**
    - Copy of application for an entertainment license
    - Copy of Revenue Enforcement and Protection attestation
    - Copy of Workers' Compensation Insurance Affidavit
    - Copy of Certificate of Liability Insurance
  - C. Rockdale Gun & Rod Club/1) Vote to accept the monetary donation to the Police Department in the amount of \$2,500.00 2) Vote to accept the monetary donation to the Fire Department in the amount of \$2,500.00 /Present: Police Chief Labrie, Fire Chief White**
    - Copy of letter to the Police Department explained the monetary donation
    - Copy of letter to the Fire Department explaining the monetary donation
  - D. Pine Grove Cemetery Deed/Peter Bedrosian [Lot #36, Two Graves, Walnut Ave (North)]**
    - Copy of Pine Grove Cemetery Deed for Peter Bedrosian
  - E. Spring Annual Town Meeting [May 3, 2022] / 1) Vote to close the warrant on Friday, March 4, 2022 at 12:00 Noon and 2) Vote to give notice to the Town Clerk to place vacancies from elected boards on the Town Election Warrant.**
    - Copy of memo giving notice of vacancies
- VI. DISCUSSIONS/None**
- VII. TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT**
- VIII. SELECTMEN'S CONCERNS/No documentation**
- IX. ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDA/None**
- X. CORRESPONDENCE/None**
- XI. EXECUTIVE SESSION/None**