

## BOARD OF SELECTMEN'S MEETING

March 14, 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, Athanas, Cannon and Collins. Also Present: Adam D. Gaudette, Town Manager. Selectman Melia was absent and it is duly noted.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by those present.

***Presentation of Retirement Plaque to Captain David Holmes, Northbridge Fire Dept.*** Selectman Ampagoomian read aloud the plaque and thanked him for his service with the Town of Northbridge. Chief White stated that Captain Holmes started shortly after he did and they had a lot of good years together. He further stated that Capt. Holmes is a good firefighter and he has always been good to the Department, so he will be greatly missed. Captain Holmes added that he is excited about the direction the Fire Department is taking, that it's been a great place to work, and he is looking forward to retirement.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES/None**

**PUBLIC HEARING/None**

**APPOINTMENTS: By the Board of Selectmen (Vote to approve). Jamie Luchini, Interim DPW Director: 1) Safety Committee (change of status from Alternate Member to Regular Member), 2) Earth Removal Board and 3) Green Energy Committee.** A motion/Mr. Athanas, seconded/Ms. Cannon to appoint Jamie Luchini to the Safety Committee (change status from Alternate Member to Regular Member), Earth Removal Board, and Green Energy Committee. Vote yes/Ampagoomian, Athanas, Cannon, and Collins.

**1) Maurice Guilbault, Animal Inspector and 2) Danielle Edmands, Alternate Animal Inspector.** A motion/Mr. Collins seconded/Ms. Cannon to nominate Mr. Maurice Guilbault as the Animal Inspector and Danielle Edmands as the Alternate Animal Inspector. Vote yes/Ampagoomian, Athanas, Cannon, and Collins.

**CITIZENS' COMMENTS/INPUT/None**

**Warrant posting locations/Vote to revise posting locations per the listing in the Selectmen's agenda packet.** Town Manager Gaudette explained that with the change in precinct designations we are proposing different posting locations, which are shown in the packet. Selectman Collins asked about the Precinct 2 posting location, which is the Cable Studio, and how often they are open to the public. Town Manager Gaudette explained that like the Veteran's Hall it is the only public building in that precinct so we will post it to the outside of the door. A motion/Mr. Collins, seconded/Mr. Athanas to revise the posting locations per the listing in the Selectmen's agenda packet. Vote yes/Ampagoomian, Athanas, Cannon, and Collins.

**TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT: 1) Key Meetings Attended:** Monday, February 28, 2022 – Weekly Fire Station Conference Call with Design Team. Monday, February 28, 2022 – Attended the Board of Selectmen Business Meeting. Tuesday, March 1, 2022 – Read to a 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade Class at NES for Community Reading Day. Wednesday, March 2, 2022 – Attended the Finance Committee to discuss the FY2023 Budget. Thursday March 3, 2022 – Visited the Fire Department for Lt David Holmes last shift day. Thursday March 3, 2022 – Participated in the Library's Strategic Plan Meeting. Friday, March 4, 2022 – Held a Department Managers Meeting. Monday, March 7, 2022 – Weekly Fire Station Conference Call

with Design Team. Tuesday, March 8, 2022 – State Civil Service Hearing for Police Lieutenant promotion. Wednesday, March 9, 2022 – Attended the Finance Committee to discuss the FY2023 Budget. Wednesday March 9, 2022 – Attended the BPCC Meeting for the Fire Station and NES Projects. Wednesday, March 9, 2022 – Met with Heather Elster from Whitin Community Centre to discuss ARPA 2021 Projects. Thursday, March 10, 2022 – Met with Steve Tyler from HSH and Jamie Luchini to discuss Northbridge infrastructure projects. **2) Fire Station Project**: The BPCC met this past week on March 9<sup>th</sup> and voted to award the early site package to the low bidder which was JAM Landscaping and Construction out of West Boylston at a price of \$82,190, approximately \$20,000 under budget. The Construction documents are at 100% and will be finalized for advertising next week. The subcontractor bids will be due April 14<sup>th</sup> and the general contractor bids will be due April 28<sup>th</sup> so that final numbers are available for Town Meeting. **3) Northbridge Elementary School Reuse Study**: The BPCC voted this past week on March 9<sup>th</sup> to select Abacus Architects to perform the study. The next step is to enter into an agreement and issue a Notice to Proceed. **4) Fire Department Radio Communications Study**: The firm CTA has been selected to perform the study and a Notice to Proceed was issued this past week. Chief White and Chief Labrie will next be participating in the project kick-off meeting. **5) 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 issued the Notice to Proceed. The Project is expected to be completed in the next 90 days. **6) 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. IAC has made the final recommendation to award Mass Strategic Health Group (MSHG) as the new provider starting July 1<sup>st</sup>. **7) 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 provided the recommended Funding Project Plan to the Finance Committee, the Board of Selectmen and has been posted on the Town's website. A public meeting will be held with the Finance Committee on March 16<sup>th</sup> in conjunction with the meeting for the FY2023 Budget and SATM Draft Warrant. **8) FY2023 Budget and SATM Warrant**: The SATM Warrant has been closed. The Finance Committee will hold their public meeting next week on March 16<sup>th</sup>. On March 28<sup>th</sup>, the Board of Selectmen will vote to sign the Warrant and vote on any Ballot Questions for the Town Election in May.

**FY2023 Budget Update.** The Board will be voting in the upcoming weeks to close the warrant and sign the warrant pending Town Counsel review. The Board will also need to notify the Board of any ballot questions thirty-five days prior. Currently there are three questions for the ballot, Charter changes, withdrawing from civil service, and additional funds for the fire station. The Finance Committee will be meeting on Wednesday, March 16, 2022 to discuss the budget, warrant and ARPA.

**SATM Draft Warrant.** There have been no changes to the warrant. Some capital items are being tweaked along the way. The Board has already voted to put their articles on the warrant and that is the same for the other committees that have articles.

Town Manager Gaudette provided an update on the tax rate impact of the Fire Station. Currently, the tax rate is \$13.77 with the ongoing projects. He explained that the first Fire Station borrowing will likely happen as follows: half in 2023 and the remaining half in 2024. The third borrowing will also happen in FY23. There is currently one more year for the Turf Field and two more years for the Blackstone Valley Tech expansion. The increase to the tax rate if the additional funding is approved would be approximately .15¢ in the beginning and will go down from there.

**ARPA21 Update.** Town Manager Gaudette reiterated the ARPA funding program details, explaining that the Federal Government has been providing recovery funding to the States for costs related to the pandemic. First, we received the Cares Act which helped to cover PPE and overtime costs for emergency response departments and to assist the Schools with purchasing Chromebooks for students. The next set of funds coming is called American Rescue Plan Act. Northbridge will be receiving \$4.9 million. Departments and

public businesses were asked to gather their needs, so the town can go through the processes to prioritize those needs. The funding is restricted in terms of what it can be used for as it is designed to address economic and health recovery. Some of the economic recovery projects we would be looking to do would aid tourism/hospitality, job training assistance and more. We had about eight million dollars in requests and through the application process and ranking system, it narrowed down the more important projects. Some of the infrastructure that was brought forward has other sources of funding that the town can work towards obtaining. Town Manager Gaudette noted that there will be a full presentation at the Finance Committee Meeting on Wednesday, March 16, 2022 at 6:30 PM, at which all requestors will be present to discuss their requests.

Town Manager Gaudette announced a public forum has been tentatively scheduled for Wednesday, April 27<sup>th</sup>, for the Building Planning and Construction Committee to discuss the Fire Station.

**SELECTMEN'S CONCERNS:** **Selectman Cannon** announced that the 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Committee has been meeting and planning the celebration of the Town's 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary. She said the parade is scheduled for Saturday, July 16, 2022 at 10 AM and fireworks will be later that day. There is a subcommittee that is confirming parade participants. Anyone interested please reach out the [northbridge250@gmail.com](mailto:northbridge250@gmail.com).

**ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDA/None**

**CORRESPONDENCE/None**

**EXECUTIVE SESSION/None**

**A motion/Ms. Cannon, seconded/Mr. Collins to adjourn the public meeting. Vote yes/Board members: Ampagoomian, Athanas, Cannon, and Collins.**

**Meeting Adjourned: 7:21 PM**

**Respectfully submitted,**

**Russell D. Collins, Clerk**

**/mjc**

**LIST OF DOCUMENTATION**

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

**March 14, 2022**

*Presentation of Retirement Plaque to Captain David Holmes, Northbridge Fire Dept.*

- I. APPROVAL OF MINUTES/None**
- II. PUBLIC HEARING/None**
- II. APPOINTMENTS/By the Board of Selectmen (Vote to approve):**
  - A. Jamie Luchini, Interim DPW Director: 1) Safety Committee (change status from Alternate Member to Regular Member), 2) Earth Removal Board, and 3) Green Energy Committee/No documentation**
  - B. 1) Maurice Guilbault, Animal Inspector 2) Danielle Edmands, Alternate Animal Inspector**
    - Copy of letter from the Department of Agricultural Resources
    - Copy of nomination of Inspector of Animals for Maurice Guilbault
    - Copy of Nomination of Inspector of Animals for Alternate Danielle Edmands
- IV. CITIZENS' COMMENTS/INPUT**
- V. DECISIONS:**
  - C. Warrant posting locations/Vote to revise posting locations per the listing in the Selectmen's agenda packet.**
    - Copy of current posting locations listing and revised posting locations listing
- VI. DISCUSSIONS/None**
- VII. TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT**
  - D. FY2023 Budget Update**
    - Copy of Spring Annual Town Meeting Budget calendar
    - Copy of FY 23 budget outlook
  - E. SATM Draft Warrant**
    - Copy of SATM draft warrant
    - Copy of Fire Station Project flyer
    - Copy of Tax Rate Impacts
    - Copy of FY 23 Capital Program
  - F. ARPA21 Update**
    - Copy of ARPA funding plan
- VIII. SELECTMEN'S CONCERNS/No documentation**
- IX. ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDA/None**
- X. CORRESPONDENCE/None**
- XI. EXECUTIVE SESSION/None**