

BOARD OF SELECTMEN'S MEETING

March 22, 2021

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

Chairman Cannon asked all attendees to mute their microphones unless they are speaking or wish to speak. Inappropriate comments and/or disruptive behavior will result in immediate dismissal.

Chairman Cannon read the following aloud: 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.

PRESENTATION: Certificates of Special Recognition awarded to Joshua H. Pinoos, Daniel A. Maccaline, Kevin P. McGowan and Christopher J. Hollenbeck for attaining the rank of Eagle Scout. Also present: Howard Carlson, Scoutmaster, and Charles Thompson, Committee Chairperson. Mr. Thompson introduced Daniel Maccaline, a student at Lowell Tech, and Kevin McGowan who were present at the meeting. Mr. Thompson announced that Joshua Pinoos and Chris Hollenbeck are both taking college courses and were not able to attend. Mr. Maccaline stated his Eagle Scout Project was building a trail head kiosk for a trail near Presidential Estates on Sutton Street. He said the trail has been there for some time, and has a small parking area, but there were no markings on the trail. Mr. McGowan explained that his Eagle Scout Project was refurbishing the backyard of the Blackstone Valley Veteran's Association. He removed trash, debris, an old fire pit and old horseshoe pit. He then added a new firepit with a wood storage shed, loam and fresh grass seed. Chairman Cannon congratulated all four scouts on their accomplishments. Selectman Melia congratulated them and also noted that nationwide only 4% of scouts obtain the rank of Eagle Scout, which is a great honor. Mr. Collins congratulated the Eagle Scouts and said the town appreciates all the hard work they have done and wished them luck. Selectman Athanas commended them on their achievement and encouraged them to keep up the good work. Mr. Thompson expressed his appreciation for the Selectmen's support.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: January 25, 2021. A motion/Mr. Melia, seconded/Mr. Athanas to approve the January 25, 2021 meeting minutes, as presented, with the readings omitted. Vote yes/Unanimous.

PUBLIC HEARING/None

APPOINTMENTS: By the Board of Selectmen: 1) Mary Contino, Board of Registrars (Appointment – Term Expires 3/31/24). Present: Linda Zywiec, Town Clerk. Ms. Zywiec stated that Ms. Contino has been the chairperson of the Board of Registrars for many years and her assistance is very valuable and helpful. Ms. Contino mentioned that Ms. Zywiec does a great job and she enjoys helping out and working with the other members of the Board. A motion/Mr. Melia, seconded/Mr. Collins to reappoint Mary Contino to the Board of Registrars for a 3-year term. Vote Yes/Unanimous. **2) Christine Johnson, Historical Commission/Present: Lenny Smith, Chairman.** Mr. Smith introduced Christine Johnson and recommended her for appointment to fill one of two vacancies. He stated that Ms. Johnson is a retired educator, was a former principal and superintendent and she has a passion for history. Ms. Johnson grew up in Northbridge and has been supporting them with projects over the last few months. Mr. Smith stated

that Ms. Johnson would be an asset to the Historic Commission with her background, experience, and passion. Ms. Johnson thanked the Board for this opportunity and added that she has a love for the Blackstone Valley having grown up here and looks forward to preserving the history for the future. A motion/Mr. Ampagoomian, seconded/Mr. Melia to appoint Christine Johnson to the Historical Commission. Vote yes/Unanimous.

By the Town Manager: 1) Maurice Guilbault, Animal Inspector. Town Manager Gaudette announced that Mr. Guilbault would be stepping in as Animal Inspector on a full-time basis replacing Rochelle Thomson. Mr. Guilbault stated that he has been working for the Northbridge Board of Health for two years covering for Ms. Thompson and that he also covers Douglas and Uxbridge. A motion/Mr. Athanas, seconded/Mr. Collins to affirm the appointment of Maurice Guilbault as Animal Inspector. Vote yes/Unanimous.

CITIZENS' COMMENTS/INPUT

Spring Annual Town Meeting [May 4, 2021] / Vote to sign warrant upon completion and final review by Town Counsel. Town Manager Gaudette stated there were no changes yet. **ARTICLE 1: (Board of Selectmen)** Prior year bills from the previous fiscal year and requires approval from Town Meeting. **ARTICLE 2: (Board of Selectmen)** To amend and balance the current budget and make any necessary adjustments. Town Manager Gaudette stated that the snow and ice budget will need to be adjusted. **ARTICLE 3: (Finance Committee)** Town Manager Gaudette explained this article is for the upcoming fiscal year budget. **ARTICLE 4: (Board of Selectmen)** Sewer Enterprise Operation of the Department of Public Works for FY 2022. **ARTICLE 5: (Board of Selectmen)** Water Enterprise Operation of the Department of Public Works for FY 2022. **ARTICLE 6: (Board of Selectmen)** approval to spend Chapter 90 funds. **ARTICLE 7: (Board of Selectmen)** Authorizes the Treasurer/Collector to enter into a compensating balance agreement or agreements for FY 2022. **ARTICLE 8: (Board of Selectmen)** Housekeeping article to set the spending limits for the Town's revolving funds. **ARTICLE 9: (Board of Selectmen)** Pine Grove Cemetery Trust to fund operations of the Pine Grove Cemetery for FY 2022. **ARTICLE 10: (Community Preservation Committee)** Town Manager Gaudette explained that this article allows the CPC to spend money earned through 1% taxes, which is also matched by the State for community preservation projects in the categories of Historic Resources, Community Housing, Open Space & Recreation, and Budgeted Reserve, and other expenses. **ARTICLE 11: (Community Preservation Committee)** Town Manager Gaudette explained that this article allows the CPC to spend money earned through 1% taxes, which is also matched by the State for the implementation of the Community Preservation Act. **ARTICLE 12: (Board of Health)** Immediate Response Action Plan submitted to the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection for activities at the Quaker Street Landfill, which allows the town to hire a contractor to test and study those wells. **ARTICLE 13: (Board of Selectmen)** Sewer Enterprise Capital Article. **ARTICLE 14: (Board of Selectmen)** Town Manager Gaudette explained that this article allows for funds received from the solar farm pilot agreements to be spent on smaller Town building projects. **ARTICLE 15: (Board of Selectmen)** Receipts Account to be expended under the direction of the Fire Chief. **ARTICLE 16: (Board of Selectmen)** Town Manager Gaudette explained that the funding for this article comes from surplus funds related to Pine Grove Cemetery and will be used for cemetery maintenance projects. **ARTICLE 17: (Board of Selectmen)** Capital plan projects. **ARTICLE 18: (School Committee)** Sums of money to be expended under the direction of the School Committee, which will be voted on by the School Committee. **ARTICLE 19: (Board of Selectmen)** Town Manager Gaudette explained that his is to allow the use electronic voting clickers at Town Meeting. **ARTICLE 20: (School Committee)** Authorization to transfer the custody, care and control of the Northbridge Elementary School building from the Northbridge School Committee to the Board of Selectmen. **ARTICLE 21: (Conservation Commission)** The Conservation Commission is looking to create a fund that would allow them to spend on different projects in Town. **ARTICLE 22: (Finance Committee)** transfer from the

undesignated fund balance to the Stabilization Fund. A motion/Mr. Melia, seconded/Mr. Collins to sign the warrant upon completion and final review of Town Counsel. Vote yes/Unanimous.

Devaney Energy - Reduction in Underground Storage Tank License Fees/Present: John Holmes. - Cancelled due to lack of receipt of information from Mr. Holmes. Tentatively rescheduled for April 12th.

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT: 1) Key Meetings Attended: Monday, March 8, 2021 – Attended the Board of Selectmen Meeting via Zoom. Tuesday, March 9, 2021 – Attended the Lt Governor's Managers Meeting via Zoom. Wednesday, March 10, 2021 – Attended the Finance Committee Meeting via Zoom. Thursday, March 11, 2021 – Held Firefighters Negotiations via Zoom. Monday, March 15, 2021 – Attended the Uxbridge Vaccination Clinic Press Event. Town Manager Gaudette added that the opening of the clinic was a huge win especially for those who are not able to commute to the larger vaccination site. Town Manager Gaudette thanked all of the local Boards of Health who assisted in getting the clinic for their hard work and efforts. Wednesday, March 17, 2021 – Attended the Finance Committee Meeting via Zoom. Thursday, March 18, 2021 – Attended a Managers/Police Chiefs Committee Meeting. Thursday, March 18, 2021 – Attended the RFQ Submittal Opening for the Fire Station Project architect. Friday, March 19, 2021 – Held a Department Managers' Meeting via Zoom. **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 majority of the site work has been completed allowing for work to be conducted in the interior of the building (framing, drywall, painting, finishing, etc.). The OPM requested the Town Manager's assistance in coordinating the substantial completion inspection for the Builders Risk Insurance Coverage. The Town Accountant reached out about beginning the process for the second borrowing for the project (est. \$24M). **3) Lasell Field Turf Project:** The project is essentially complete except for several punch-list items that won't be completed until the spring (loam and seed). The GC Green Acres is also working on providing close-out documents for the Town. **4) Fire Station Project:** The Architect RFQ Submittals were due this week on Thursday, March 18, 2021. The Town received X submittals. The OPM will now assist the BPCC with setting up interviews to select the designer for the project. **5) FY2022 Budget & Town Meeting Warrant:** The Warrant closed on March 5, 2021. There are 22 articles consisting of housekeeping, budget, and capital needs. The Town Manager met this past week with the Finance Committee on Wednesday, March 17, 2021 to hear an FY2022 budget presentation from BVT as well as hold public meeting on the Proposed FY2022 Omnibus budget and provide a warrant update in accordance with our bylaws. The Annual Town Meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, May 4, 2021. The Town Manager will work with staff over the next several months on safety protocols.

SELECTMEN'S CONCERNS: Selectmen Ampagoomian/1) asked if there was an update on the Superintendent of Schools attending an upcoming meeting. Town Manager Gaudette stated that he doesn't have a date yet but will reach out again to let them know we would like to have them for April 12 meeting. **2)** asked about the snow that was plowed off the Lasell field and if the rubber pellets in the snow will be recycled back into the field and if there was any way it could be completed sooner as it is an eye sore. Town Manager Gaudette replied that they do plan to re-use the pellets. He added that as the snow melts, they will be spreading the rubber back on but will reach out to see if they have any equipment to melt the snow faster. **Selectman Collins** stated that he has been receiving inquiries about a schedule as to when the Town Hall will be open to the public completely. Mr. Gaudette advised that this matter was discussed at a Department Head meeting as well as with colleagues and he was shooting for April 1st as an opening date, however with the slow roll out of the vaccines, we are planning to delay a full opening for now. The Town Manager pointed out there are talks of another spike due to spring break and April vacation. Based on all that he will look to open after the May town meeting. **Selectman Athanas/1)** asked when the street sweeper would be going out. Mr. Luchini, Highway Superintendent, stated that the sweeper started going out last week and will continue to do so. **2)** asked if Mr. Luchini has gotten asphalt prices. Mr. Luchini stated that he has not

yet but can only assume that the price will go up over last years' cost, but it is still too early to get bids. **Selectman Melia/1)** added to Selectman Ampagoomian's comment on the field that there is still a lot of snow in the endzone and stated that it does look lousy. **2)** attended the opening of the Vaccine Clinic at the McCloskey School in Uxbridge and added that it was nice to see many local and state officials and the surrounding towns were well represented. He thanked Town Manager Gaudette and the Fire Department for assisting. **Selectman Cannon** followed up on the hours of the Lasell Field track. Town Manager Gaudette replied that he sent an email to the Facilities Director but has not received anything back and will let her know. Selectman Melia stated that he saw a sign on the fence that stated it was open until dusk and was told that when they close the gate on the Pleasant Street side, it has a turnstile so individuals can still get out.

ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDA/None

CORRESPONDENCE/None

EXECUTIVE SESSION/None

Chairman Cannon announced that the next meeting is scheduled for April 12, 2021.

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

Meeting Adjourned: 7:38 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Russell D. Collins, Clerk

/mjc

LIST OF DOCUMENTATION

BOARD OF SELECTMEN'S MEETING - OPEN SESSION

March 22, 2021

- I. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: A. January 25, 2021**
-Copy of January 25, 2021 meeting minutes
- II. PUBLIC HEARING/None**
- III. APPOINTMENTS:**
By the Board of Selectmen: B. 1) Mary Contino, Board of Registrars (Appointment – Term Expires 3/31/24)/No documentation.

2) Christine Johnson, Historical Commission/Present: Lenny Smith, Chairman
-Copy of Talent Bank Application for Christine Johnson

By the Town Manager: C. 1) Maurice Guilbault, Animal Inspector
-Copy of letter from the Department of Agricultural Resources regarding the nomination of Inspector of Animals
-Copy of nomination papers
- IV. CITIZENS' COMMENTS/INPUT/None**
- V. DECISIONS:**
D. Spring Annual Town Meeting [May 4, 2021] / Vote to sign warrant upon completion and final review by Town Counsel
-Copy of draft warrant
- VI. DISCUSSIONS:**
E. Devaney Energy - Reduction in Underground Storage Tank License Fees/Present: John Holmes
-Cancelled due to lack of receipt of information from Mr. Holmes. Tentatively rescheduled for April 12th.
- VII. TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT/No documentation**
- VIII. SELECTMEN'S CONCERNS/No documentation**
- IX. ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDA/None**
- X. CORRESPONDENCE/None**
- XI. EXECUTIVE SESSION/None**