

BOARD OF SELECTMEN'S MEETING

September 26, 2022

A meeting of the Board of Selectmen was called to order by Chairman Collins at 6:30 PM, Northbridge Town Hall, 7 Main Street, Whitinsville, MA. Board Members Present: Ampagoomian, Collins, Melia and Paulhus. Also Present: Adam D. Gaudette, Town Manager.

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

A motion/Mr. Ampagoomian, seconded/Mr. Melia to enter into Executive Session Under M.G.L. Chapter 30A, Sec. 21 #2 - To conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with nonunion personnel or to conduct collective bargaining sessions or contract negotiations with nonunion personnel; and to reconvene in open session. Roll Call Vote: Mr. Ampagoomian/Yes, Mr. Paulhus/Yes, Mr. Melia/Yes, and Mr. Collins/Yes.

Open Session Adjourned: 6:32 PM

Executive Session Convened: 6:33 PM

Executive Session Adjourned: 6:50 PM

Open Session Reconvened: 7:00 PM

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by those present.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES/None

Since it was not yet 7:05 PM, the Board moved to appointments.

APPOINTMENTS/By the Town Manager: John Sullivan, Part-time Regional Epidemiologist / Present: Jeanne Gniadek, BOH Adm. and Lani Criasia, Board of Health Chair. Ms. Gniadek explained that the town received a grant for contact tracing, which allowed them to hire a public health nurse and an epidemiologist. The former chosen candidate has moved on to Medical School, leaving an open part-time position. Ms. Criasia added that she feels Mr. Sullivan will be a great asset to the town and with his prior municipal experience, he is best suited for the job. Mr. Sullivan stated that with his collaborations, he feels that can go a long way in forming data. A motion/Mr. Melia, seconded/Mr. Ampagoomian to affirm the appointment of Mr. John Sullivan as Part-Time Regional Epidemiologist. Vote yes/Ampagoomian, Melia, Paulhus and Collins.

By the Board of Selectmen: Lois Holmes, Council on Aging / Present: Kelly Bol, Senior Center Director and Jean Mistretta, COA Chair. Ms. Mistretta introduced Ms. Holmes and stated Ms. Holmes is a very accomplished, involved, and caring woman. She also expressed that she is grateful Ms. Holmes is bringing her expertise to the Council on Aging. A motion/Mr. Ampagoomian, seconded/Mr. Melia to appoint Ms. Holmes to the Council on Aging. Vote yes/Ampagoomian, Melia, Paulhus and Collins.

PUBLIC HEARING: 7:05 PM - The Philo Group LLC dba The Rock, 2043 Providence Road, Northbridge / Application for Alteration of Premises [Present: Joe Husson, Manager]. Chairman Collins read the public hearing notice aloud. A motion/Mr. Ampagoomian, seconded/Mr. Melia to open the public hearing. Vote yes/Ampagoomian, Collins, Melia and Paulhus. Mr. Husson explained that since the

pandemic, businesses have changed immensely. As a result, he mentioned he would like to offer food and thus he would be looking to add a food trailer. One of the main things his customers have asked for is outdoor seating. Mr. Husson noted that he would not be looking to increase the establishment's capacity. Mr. Melia expressed concern for noise. Mr. Husson replied that he has built a good rapport with all of his neighbors and has an open-door policy; that he is happy to work on any issues that arise. He also added that he has had nothing but positive feedback and they keep things low key. He advised that the back patio will be barricaded by a stockade fence and plans to close the outdoor area off by 11 PM just to be sure. Mr. Husson further explained that he reviews different scenarios with staff on how to handle and any issues that do come up they discuss afterwards to see how and if it could have been handled differently. Mr. Labrie stated that he has met with Mr. Husson to review his plans and gave him some suggestions. Chairman Collins asked if there were abutters present. Abutters were present in the crowd and stated they had no issues with what Mr. Husson was looking to do. A motion/Mr. Melia, seconded/Mr. Ampagoomian to close the public hearing. Vote yes/Ampagoomian, Collins, Melia and Paulhus. A motion/Mr. Melia, seconded/Mr. Ampagoomian to approve the application for an Alteration of Premises subject to the Police Chief's and Building Inspector's approvals and requests. Vote yes/Ampagoomian, Collins, Melia and Paulhus.

CITIZENS' COMMENTS/INPUT

Northbridge Junior Baseball League/Request for a one-day beer and wine license for their "Night Under the Lights" event on Saturday, October 1, 2022 from 4 PM – 9 PM on the grounds of the American Legion, at 198 Church Avenue/Present: Keith Brouillard, President, NJBL. Mr. Brouillard explained that they are looking to raise funds by hosting an event for the community and especially for the sponsors who helped get the lights installed. Current plans are to have a hit-a-thon, lighting ceremony, and an all-star game, and then finishing the night with a movie. Selectman Ampagoomian asked the Chief of Police if a police detail is needed. Chief Labrie advised that for some events a detail is needed but the location of the event is back off the main road, so he doesn't feel it is necessary. Selectman Ampagoomian asked if the brewery serving beer is TIPS certified. Mr. Brouillard replied that they are certified and copies were sent to the Town Manager's office. A motion/Mr. Ampagoomian, seconded/Mr. Paulhus to Northbridge Junior Baseball League's request for a one-day beer and wine license for their "Night Under the Lights" event to be held on Saturday, October 1, 2022 from 4 PM – 9 PM on the grounds of the American Legion, at 198 Church Avenue. Vote yes/Ampagoomian, Collins, Melia and Paulhus.

Vote to accept a monetary donation in the amount of \$17,500.00 from Stone Hill Partners, LLC [Stone Hill Condos] to be expended by the Planning Board for future projects & initiatives. Town Manager Gaudette explained that this is the last of the monetary donations. A motion/Mr. Ampagoomian, seconded/Mr. Melia to accept the monetary donation in the amount of \$17,500.00 from Stone Hill Partners, LLC [Stone Hill Condos] to be expended by the Planning Board for future projects and initiatives. Vote yes/Ampagoomian, Collins, Melia and Paulhus.

Vote to sign notes for the new Fire Station/Present: Julie Harris, Treasurer/Collector and Neil Vaidya, Town Accountant. Mr. Vaidya mentioned that before the Board is the first set of bonds for the new Fire Station. Ms. Harris advised that they received seven bids and the award went to Fidelity Capital Market at a rate of 4.06%, which is considerably higher than the rates we have received in the past. Mr. Vaidya explained that in the recent borrowings the rates have been extremely low and we were very fortunate, and unfortunately where the market is right now has lead to higher rates. He said that there are still some borrowings left to do, but hopes the rates are not as high. Selectman Melia asked if this would affect the price. Town Manager Gaudette noted that it would not affect the cost but the payback price it would. Town Manager Gaudette noted that there is a 465, which he asked Mr. Vaidya to explain. Mr. Vaidya noted that since the Town has a good bond rating, companies are willing to pay a little bit more for our bond. These companies give us money up front, which lowers the borrowing amount. Thus, for part of

the note, we are getting a premium for the bond that we are paying. A motion/Mr. Melia, seconded/Mr. Paulhus to sign the notes for the new Fire Station. Vote yes/Ampagoomian, Collins, Melia and Paulhus.

Special Town Meeting [October 25, 2022] / Vote to sign warrant upon completion and final review by Town Counsel. Town Manager Gaudette announced that the Board of Selectmen held a Special Selectmen's Meeting on Friday, September 16, 2022, to call a Special Town Meeting on Tuesday, October 25, 2022, which will be held at the conclusion of the Fall Annual Town Meeting. The purpose of the Special Town Meeting will be to allow for the inclusion of an article that would authorize a Tax Increment Financing Agreement between the Town and a Company known as Eyepoint Pharmaceuticals. A motion/Mr. Melia, seconded/Mr. Paulhus to vote to sign the Special Town Meeting Warrant upon completion and final review by Town Counsel. Vote yes/Ampagoomian, Collins, Melia and Paulhus.

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT/1. Key Meetings Attended: Monday, September 12, 2022 – Participated in a weekly Fire Station Project call. Monday, September 12, 2022 – Attended the Board of Selectmen Meeting. Tuesday, September 13, 2022 – Attended a Mass Managers Meeting in Southborough. Tuesday, September 13, 2022 – Met with the Dispatchers Unit and Chief Labrie to discuss scheduling. Tuesday, September 13, 2022 – Attended the Parks & Recreation Meeting to discuss the Linwood Basketball Courts/Lights Project. Wednesday, September 13, 2022 – Separate meetings with Heather Elster (WCC), Chief White, and Brandon Pyers for the Eyepoint TIF project. Thursday, September 14, 2022 – Met with Dennis Rice regarding ARPA money for Open Sky. Thursday, September 14, 2022 – Attended the Fire Station Construction Site Meeting. Friday, September 15, 2022 – Video Conference Call with David Eisen, architect for the NES Study. Monday, September 19, 2022 – Participated in the weekly Fire Station Design Team video conference. Monday, September 19, 2022 – Met with Gary Bechtholdt and Glenn King to discuss details for the CPC's article to purchase the Castle Hill Farm property. Monday, September 19, 2022 – Met with David Labonte from MIIA to discuss Fire Station Builder's Risk Insurance Policy. Monday, September 19, 2022 – Attended the Cable Advisory Committee Meeting. Tuesday, September 20, 2022 – Attended a Worcester County Highway Association Event with Howard Stein Hudson. Wednesday, September 21, 2022 – Attended the BPC Meeting. Wednesday, September 21, 2022 – Attended the Finance Committee Meeting. Thursday, September 22, 2022 – Attended a ceremony at the Whittin Community Center for being awarded \$500,000 from the State and \$600,000 from the Town's ARPA funds for gym renovations. Friday, September 23, 2022 – Held a Department Managers Meeting via ZOOM. **2. Fire Station Project:** Weekly design team meetings continue to occur every Monday morning and weekly construction meetings every Thursday afternoon with the project team, the GC M. O'Connor, and the site contractor Leahy. The site has been cleared and erosion control and fencing has been installed. The GC has completed all blasting and there have been no complaints to date. The GC has begun foundation installation. The BPC met this past week on September 21st to discuss budget status, project schedule, and approved change order #1. The GC expects to begin erecting steel in early December. **3. Northbridge Elementary School Reuse Study:** The architect team from Abacus recently conducted a site visit to evaluate the buildings' construction. Abacus has met with several stakeholders and is developing a public participation process possible for later this fall. The Town will also be planning a site survey and DEP Phase I study. **4. Linwood Basketball Courts Project:** The field survey has been completed by Activitas, the site engineer. The designer, Activitas, the Town Manager, and the DPW Director met with Parks and Recreation last week on September 13th to discuss design programming. The next meeting is scheduled for October 18, 2022. **5. Fall Annual Town Meeting:** The Fall Annual Town Meeting Warrant has been posted. The Special Town Meeting Warrant was closed today. The Board will vote their positions on Monday, October 17, 2022. Town Meeting is scheduled for 7 pm on Tuesday, October 25th. The Finance Committee met this past week on September 21st and will meet again next week on the 28th, and also on October 5th.

SELECTMEN'S CONCERNS: Selectman Paulhus noted that the School Building Committee met last week and discussion included some of the concerns on the flooding and drainage issue. The drainage system

that is at the end of the driveway, which had issues last winter, was not the one that caused the current issue. It turned out the problem was the field drainage, which was coming off the sidewalk and the warning track of the outfield. Some work has been done to the field, which included overseeding, fertilizing, slit seeding and the grass has taken off. They feel the drainage issue has been resolved. Mr. Luchini noted the same. **Selectman Melia** advised that they received an email regarding the Community Aggregation Program and those enrolled in the program will not be affected by the price hike set forth by National Grid. He asked if this would go through the entire winter. Town Manager Gaudette replied that the Aggregation rate is stable, and the contract runs through December of 2023, at which point they would begin the bidding process. Selectman Ampagoomian added that the rate will still go up as National Grid has raised their transition fees and their green energy fees. Town Manager Gaudette further explained that there are two parts to the bills one being supply, which won't change for those enrolled in the aggregation program, and the second part is the distribution rate.

ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDA: 1) October 3, 2022: Vote to write off uncollectible accounts from the Ambulance Fund. **2) October 17, 2022:** Vote positions on the Fall Annual Town Meeting Warrant Articles and the Special Town Meeting Warrant Article.

Selectman Ampagoomian asked if the new Whitinsville Water Company's General Manager could be added to a future agenda so they can meet him. Town Manager Gaudette stated his name is Terry McGlone, who is an Interim, as he plans to retire next year. They will begin looking for a replacement soon. Selectman Ampagoomian then mentioned that they could wait until there is a replacement hired to have them come before the Board.

Town Manager Gaudette noted that the drought restriction has been reduced. Even number houses can water on even days and odd numbered houses can water on odd numbered days.

Chairman Collins noted that the next meeting is scheduled for October 3, 2022.

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

Meeting Adjourned: 7:36 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Brian Paulhus, Clerk

/mjc

LIST OF DOCUMENTATION

BOARD OF SELECTMEN'S MEETING - OPEN SESSION

September 26, 2022

EXECUTIVE SESSION 6:30 PM

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

I. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

II. PUBLIC HEARING: A. 7:05 PM - The Philo Group LLC dba The Rock, 2043 Providence Road, Northbridge / Application for Alteration of Premises [Present: Joe Husson, Manager]

- Copy of public hearing notice
- Copy of Alteration of Premises application
- Copy of Entity Vote
- Copy of letter from the Lessor approving the use
- Copy of lease for 2043 Providence Road
- Copy of Layout
- Copy of License Routing Slip

II. APPOINTMENTS/ B. By the Town Manager: John Sullivan, Part-time Regional Epidemiologist / Present: Jeanne Gniadek, BOH Adm. and Lani Criasia, Board of Health Chair

- Copy of offer letter for John Sullivan, Part-time Regional Epidemiologist
- Copy of John Sullivan's resume

C. By the Board of Selectmen: Lois Holmes, Council on Aging / Present: Kelly Bol, Senior Center Director and Jean Mistretta, COA Chair

- Copy of Talent Bank form for Lois Holmes

IV. CITIZENS' COMMENTS/INPUT

V. DECISIONS

D. Northbridge Junior Baseball League/Request for a one-day beer and wine license for their "Night Under the Lights" event on Saturday, October 1, 2022 from 4 PM – 9 PM on the grounds of the American Legion, at 198 Church Avenue Present: Keith Brouillard, President, NJBL

- Copy of application for special license
- Copy of Revenue Enforcement and Protection Attestation
- Copy of Workers' Compensation Affidavit
- Copy of Hold Harmless Agreement
- Copy of Certificate of Insurance
- Copy of email permitted use for the field for the event

E. Vote to accept monetary donation gift in the amount of \$17,500.00 from Stone Hill Partners, LLC [Stone Hill Condos] - to be expended by the Planning Board for future projects & initiatives

- Copy of Memo regarding Stone Hill Condominiums

F. Vote to sign notes for new Fire Station/Present: Julie Harris, Treasurer/Collector and Neil Vaidya, Town Accountant

-Copy of Vote of the Board of Selectmen for the Fire Station Project Notes

G. Special Town Meeting [October 25, 2022] / Vote to sign warrant upon completion and final review by Town Counsel.

-Copy of Draft Warrant

VI. DISCUSSIONS/None

VII. TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

-Copy of Report from September 12, 2022 – September 23, 2022

VIII. SELECTMEN'S CONCERNS/No documentation

IX. ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDA

H. October 3, 2022: Vote to write off uncollectible accounts from the Ambulance Fund

-No documentation

I. October 17, 2022: Vote positions on the Fall Annual Town Meeting Warrant Articles and the Special Town Meeting Warrant Article

-No documentation

X. CORRESPONDENCE/None

XI. EXECUTIVE SESSION: J. 6:30 PM Under M.G.L. c.30A, Sec. 21 #2 – To conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with nonunion personnel or to conduct collective bargaining sessions or contract negotiations with nonunion personnel.