

Board of Selectmen Meeting  
Memorial Town Hall Conference room & Go to Meeting

Feb 16, 2021, 6:00pm  
Diana Szynal, Chair  
Approved: April 6, 2021

Present: Selectmen Brian Moriarty, Edmund Jaworski, Diana Szynal, Marlene Michonski, Town Administrator, Claudia Sarti, COVID Coordinator, Lydia Szych, Town Clerk, Laurie Dell O'lio, Accountant,  
Finance Committee – Sean Barry, Darryl Williams, Diane Brzozowski, Betsy Rider

Selectman Szynal called the meeting to order @ 6:00pm.  
She read the public participation policy.

#### Announcements-

Selectman Moriarty announced there are some Board openings and suggested those interested check the website.

No one was present for public forum.

#### Minutes –

The Board of Selectmen meeting minutes of Feb. 3, and executive session of Jan 27 and executive session of Dec. 1, 2020, were approved on a motion made by Selectman Moriarty and seconded by Selectman Jaworski.

#### COVID Update-

Selectman Szynal noted that Kerry Flaherty has resigned as COVID Coordinator and thanked Kerry for her unbelievable work. Selectman Szynal went on to say that Kerry was a member of the Board of Health when COVID began and immediately educated herself on COVID, working over the summer, addressing school issues and much work was involved. Selectman Szynal said that in addition to all her work, Ms. Flaherty was also subjected to poor treatment by the school department where nothing was done to support her. Selectman Moriarty agreed saying that the town had the good fortune of Ms. Flaherty being on the team working on this from Feb/March of last year. The Board relied on information that Ms. Flaherty provided. Selectman Szynal noted Ms. Flaherty's knowledge and authority were undermined.

Selectman Szynal has been incredibly frustrated on Ms. Flaherty's behalf. She has been an unbelievable resource in town. The Board welcomed Claudia Sarti, who Selectman Moriarty said is very qualified, with a background in public health. She is a health agent who has done contact tracing. Charlie Kaniecki and Scott Pomeroy are still involved. Selectman Szynal requested Ms. Sarti come to the next meeting. Geri Rodgers, Council on Aging Director can assist seniors to sign up for vaccinations.

#### Ambulance Abatements-

Fire Chief Bob Flaherty explained the ambulance abatements process as revenue for which collection efforts have been exhausted. Such accounts need to be cleared off the books. The amount at this time is \$21,000. This may be done quarterly, or every 6 months in the future. Selectman Jaworski said he appreciates Chief Flaherty's efforts to clean this up.

Change of DBA – RV World.

The Board approved a DBA change from Gander RV to RV World on a motion made by Selectman Jaworski, seconded by Selectman Moriarty seconded.

Appointments-

Nick Hebert was appointed to the Recreation Committee and Luke Longstreeth to the Conservation Commission on motion made by Selectman Szydal and seconded by Selectman Jaworski.

Selectman Moriarty reminded that these individuals need to be sworn in.

Emergency Management Committee –

Town Clerk, Ms. Szych said it takes 6 weeks to do the annual appointments. She would like to have the Board differentiate between the voting and non-voting members of the Emergency Management Planning Committee so that she can do the work necessary for annual appointments. After discussion it was decided there would be 9 appointed members. Chief Flaherty said people's input is needed but only 9 voting members are necessary.

Conservation Restriction-

Old Stage Road 2.3 acres/and The Jog 1.970 acres, this has been reviewed by the state and town counsel. The area will be available to the public for hiking. Town Clerk will be available Thursday to notarize signatures on the document.

Selectman Moriarty moved to approve/accept conservation restrictions to The Jog and Old Stage Road. Selectman Jaworski seconded. The motion was approved.

Chapter 61A – Smiarowski Bros LLC

Regarding 6 acres of land near the Whately border, Selectman Jaworski moved to not exercise the right of 1<sup>st</sup> refusal. Selectman Moriarty seconded. The motion was approved.

Auditor – Tony Roselli

Finance Committee members in attendance - Kim Baker, Diane Brzozowski, Darryl Williams –

Mr. Roselli said there is much evidence of improvement in this process. He said the Treasurer/collector's office has become more accurate through Ms. Strzegowski's efficiency. He is giving the town good grades for turning things around. He did the audit remotely. Hatfield came to the finish line in good shape. Communities are reminded that employees working from home has created an environment for hackers.

Under findings/recommendations - Melanson/Heath and the Collectors Office can address unreconciled receivables before the next audit. Mr. Roselli noted a cash variance of \$50,000 that has existed for over 4 years. He suggested having the town raise it in the tax recap and move forward with a clean slate. Regarding the tax recap, Baystate Municipal Accounting did it for FY20. Free cash was submitted incorrectly but the impact of this has been corrected since the audit. Smaller items included Police Department details and Ms. Dell O'lio is reconciling with the Police Chief. Also mentioned were variances, which Mr. Roselli described such as school grants which may not come in until Sept/Oct so it looks like deficits. Ms. Dell O'lio foresees no variances next year.

Mr. Roselli said he is glad to see a reconciliation process in place for Ambulance Receivables. He also suggested that some billings didn't get on the GL. Ms. Dell O'lio believes that a year didn't get put on the GL. Student activities was out of balance by about \$18,000. Other imbalances are now in the process of being reconciled. Mr. Roselli said nice job. There has been major progress. Doing the audit in October is a good idea. Mr. Roselli said it looks like there will be a happy ending; everyone in town is friendly, and give us what we need.

Selectman Moriarty thanked Mr. Roselli, Ms. Dell O'lio, Ms. Strzegowski and everyone who is part of the process. Selectman Szynal said Ms. Strzegowski has been really great. She also thanked the Finance Committee for being present. Mr. Williams thanked everyone at town hall for putting this together.

#### Financial Update-

##### Tax Title Funding-

Ms. Strzegowski requested authority to spend money for collections. She has collected \$339,000 in tax title money and has been going to land court as needed. The town now has 8 people on payment plans. There is still \$640,000.00 out there to be collected. Ms. Strzegowski described her process and explained using a lien certificate which enables the town to collect back taxes if someone sells their house. Tax title was extended because of the pandemic. We are at 74% collection.

Selectman Moriarty moved to increase tax title amount for a one-time change for 2021 to \$50,000.00. Selectman Jaworski seconded. The motion was approved. Selectman Moriarty thanked Ms. Strzegowski and staff for helping the town get on its financial feet. Selectman Szynal said there have been times when these were not pursued.

Ms. Michonski reported that the Accountant and Treasurer are continuing to reconcile. According to expense and revenue reports Expenses are up to date. She shared some handouts from the MMA Annual meeting which was held virtually. She gave some information regarding state tax revenue, Meal tax and occupancy were down while marijuana was up. The Police reform bill will likely affect part time officer training. Also noted was an Open meeting law change regarding online meeting notice accessibility because of power outage and members of boards, and committees posts on social media.

PVPC – transportation Improvement program. DPW Director and Highway lead are reps. The spreadsheet contains a list of projects.

FEMA Levee Analysis – CT River – This process started a year ago. Fire Chief Flaherty and Stephanie Slys, Planning Committee attended a meeting. Organizations and towns are to submit data for evaluation. Selectman Szynal thanked Ms. Slys for this information. There will be a workshop/conference call in the near future.

#### Memorial Town Hall Renovation Update-

Selectman Jaworski noted he met with Kathie Gow, Bob Wagner, Bob Osley and Amy Hahn. In order to open the second floor an ADA compliant bathroom is needed. Selectman Jaworski gave a brief history of the permissions for the historical society's use of the second floor. Additional money and an engineering study would now be necessary for reinforcement under the balcony area. He is not sure what the intent of the town was because it was voted down. The Board discussed the topic but had several questions: would the collection stay under lock and key? would the elevator not be allowed to go upstairs? how much room would be necessary upstairs? Selectman Jaworski will check with Kyle Scott, Building Commissioner to see if ADA bathroom changes would still be necessary if the area is not open to the public.

Selectman Moriarty there are still a lot of questions. He said there needs to be a conversation between the Historical Society and the Historical Commission about which one is running the show. Selectman Jaworski noted a previous Board gave them permission. Ms. Michonski added it was in 2012. Selectman Szynal would like to have another meeting with the Board of Selectmen, Kyle Scott and others.

#### CARES Spending Update-

Ms. Michonski reported that some costs incurred were not on the report. We are being told that @ 30% of expenditures were not qualified. FEMA funds are for 1<sup>st</sup> responders. Ms. Michonski has contacted Senator Comerford's office. We were told we had a certain amount of money allocated and we were relying on what they said would be covered. Ms. Flaherty said all departments were responsible for anything that CARES/FEMA did not cover.

#### FY22 – Cap Planning -

The Board briefly discussed capital requests including the Fire Department's communications equipment upgrades and self-contained breathing apparatus, Police Department radios, town garage fuel tank replacements, and walk-in freezer at the school. Also mentioned were piping at Elm Court necessitated by water main breaks and upcoming items such as clarifiers, hydrant replacement, school parking lots and chrome books, and final design of the Route 5 water main project.

Selectman Moriarty moved to adjourn. Selectman Jaworski seconded. The motion was approved. the meeting ended at 8:37pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Ki J. Eno  
Executive Assistant