

BOARD OF SELECTMEN'S MEETING WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 2, 2020

In attendance: Chairman Daniel Lee, Clerk Lindsay Vayda, Associate Pamela Campanella, Associate Richard McGaughey, James O'Mara, Interim Town Administrator, Emily R. Martin, Assistant to the Town Administrator

Absent: Vice Chairman Joshua Reilly

This meeting was held live on Zoom, and available to the public via a Zoom link and log in information posted on the agenda. The Zoom meeting was recorded and broadcast on the Community Access Channels, and available on the Holbrook Community Access and Media (HCAM) website.

1. Chairman Daniel Lee called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m. via Zoom. Mr. Lee thanked all who had worked to execute the November 2020 Special Town Meeting remotely, as the meeting was a success.
2. During the Citizens Forum, Patrick Duggan of 21 Fern Road asked the Board if the meeting start time of 6:00 p.m. is going to be the time when meetings are held going forward. Chairman Lee answered that there is a long presentation on the agenda tonight, as well as an Executive Session, so the start time was moved up to accommodate that.
3. Interim Town Administrator James O'Mara reported on the upcoming CARES Act expiration on December 30, 2020, noting that many workers in Town Hall have medical notes excusing them from working in person, and that the CARES Act workers have been helping to fill those gaps. He stated once the CARES funding stops, there is a decision to be made whether to close the building to the public, or request a fund transfer to the Town Administrator's office to continue employing the CARES Act workers. Mr. O'Mara also addressed the upcoming tree lighting ceremony, as the continued pandemic prohibits how the event is traditionally held. The Board discussed potential options to hold the event safely, Selectman Campanella recommended utilizing the school's cul-de-sac as a drive-through location, and have Santa positioned in the field so residents could participate in a pandemic-safe method.
4. Police Chief William Smith attended the meeting to provide his quarterly report. He discussed two new software programs being utilized by the Department, training for fire safety and mental health first aid/crisis response, and three grants received so far this year. Chief Smith also noted an uptick in identity theft, the arrest of a gun trafficker from Florida, some break-ins at local businesses, and a threat of a school shooting where the individual was charged and being prosecuted. He also mentioned the personal protective equipment procured by the Department for COVID prevention, the rise in reported cases of domestic violence and resources for any residents who need help in that situation.
5. Lindsay Vayda moved, Pamela Campanella seconded, and the Board voted unanimously, with Lindsay Vayda voting yes, Richard McGaughey voting yes, Pamela Campanella voting yes, and Daniel Lee voting yes, to accept the Byrne Memorial Justice Assistant

Grant to the Holbrook Police Department, in the amount of \$36,621, to be used to purchase bulletproof vests and other protective equipment, and to sign any related documents.

6. Police Chief Smith discussed the bid by Tower Construction to complete renovations to the exterior of the Public Safety Building. Rick Almeida of CBI Consulting also attended the meeting to answer questions about the renovation. Mr. Almeida stated that the walls and insulation of the building are in good condition, however the shingles and clapboard on the exterior are in poor condition and need to be replaced. The proposed materials will match the finish of the current façade, and will have an extended warranty of 20-25 years.

Lindsay Vayda moved, Pamela Campanella seconded, and the Board voted 3-0-1, with Lindsay Vayda voting yes, Pamela Campanella voting yes, and Daniel Lee voting yes, and Richard McGaughey abstaining, to accept Tower Construction Corporation's bid and award a contract in the total amount of \$543,000, which includes \$294,000 for base bid work and \$249,000 for Add Alternate #1 work.

7. The Chair reviewed that the November 2020 Special Town Meeting approved four new patrolmen positions for the Holbrook Police Department, and as such, the Board needs to call for the Civil Service List from the State to find candidates to fill those new positions. Chief Smith noted that as there are four vacancies, the State will provide nine names, which should provide sufficient applicants to be appointed.

Lindsay Vayda moved, Pamela Campanella seconded, and the Board voted unanimously, with Lindsay Vayda voting yes, Richard McGaughey voting yes, Pamela Campanella voting yes, and Daniel Lee voting yes, to call for the Active Civil Service List from the Massachusetts State Civil Service Unit.

8. Public Works Superintendent Chris Pellitteri, Town Accountant Beth Mosley, and Doug Gardener of Pioneer Consulting Group presented their findings from doing a water and sewer rate study. The goal and objective of the study was to find a fair and equitable rate structure, which led to the creation of a two-tiered billing system. In addition to a new system that bills more accurately based upon usage, there is a proposed minimum charge to provide the capital to run the department. As almost 800 residents currently use less than the minimum usage, this system would only charge for what is used instead of an unmet minimum, which currently has those residents subsidizing the residents with a higher consumption rate. The two-tier system will also encourage residents to conserve water to avoid paying at a higher rate.

The major component that requires a rise in rates is to increase the balances of the Water Enterprise and Sewer Enterprise Funds, which Holbrook has been advised to combine into a singular Enterprise account, so the Town can appropriate money for either service when needed. The current balances are insufficient for the amounts Holbrook will owe for the construction of the new Tri-Town Water Treatment Plant. In recent years the Public Works Department has needed to submit Reserve Fund Transfers to cover the difference in revenue versus payouts for water and sewer service. Had the Town

implemented more frequent, smaller increases in rates, the deficit would not be so large, but as that did not happen, a larger increase is necessary for covering previous revenue shortcomings. It was noted that if Holbrook does not make the necessary changes in rates to make providing water and sewer services sustainable, the State may intervene and set its own rates as to what it thinks is necessary to get the Town's budget on track. If that were to happen, the rates proposed by the State will likely be larger than what is currently being proposed. Superintendent Pellitteri asked the Board to consider the substantial amount of information presented over the coming weeks, and asked the item be on a future agenda in January to revisit the matter.

9. Superintendent Pellitteri discussed the Municipality Vulnerability Preparedness grant which had been awarded to the Town. The total grant value is \$32,000, with \$20,000 allocated for vulnerability planning, and the other \$12,000 for hazard mitigation planning. However, Holbrook currently doesn't have the resources to undertake and invest in the second category of planning, therefore the Superintendent requested that the Board amend the award so that the remaining money can be disbursed to the Town.

Lindsay Vayda moved, Pamela Campanella seconded, and the Board voted unanimously, with Lindsay Vayda voting yes, Richard McGaughey voting yes, Pamela Campanella voting yes, and Daniel Lee voting yes, to approve the amendment to the Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Award for a reduction in the grant amount of \$12,000, for a total award of \$20,000, and to authorize Superintendent Chris Pellitteri to sign any related documents.

10. Fire Chief Luke McFadden presented the quarterly request for ambulance abatements submitted by New England Medical Billing, noting the majority of the appeals are adjustments or write-offs based upon medical billing allowances and agreements.

Lindsay Vayda moved, Pamela Campanella seconded, and the Board voted unanimously, with Lindsay Vayda voting yes, Richard McGaughey voting yes, Pamela Campanella voting yes, and Daniel Lee voting yes, to approve an ambulance abatement in the amount of \$446,056.98 for the period of July 1, 2020 – September 30, 2020.

11. The Board discussed a contract on the agenda for approval between the Board of Assessors and Environmental Partners for an updated map of parcels and land splits. The contract is from the prior fiscal year and the money has been encumbered to pay it, but the Town Accountant requires all contracts to be approved by the Board, hence its inclusion on this agenda.

Lindsay Vayda moved, Pamela Campanella seconded, and the Board voted unanimously, with Lindsay Vayda voting yes, Richard McGaughey voting yes, Pamela Campanella voting yes, and Daniel Lee voting yes, to approve the contract between Environmental Partners and the Board of Assessors for Phase 1: Lot Splits/Map Updates, in the amount of \$4,800.

12. The Board discussed a water abatement request from the Holbrook Historical Society at 320 Union Street in the amount of \$55.51, with a demand date of September 14, 2020. Clerk Lindsay Vayda questioned if the building is Town owned property or not. She noted that if it is owned by the Town the water bill should be considered in its budget, and would not want to abate the bill, especially given the earlier presentation about the need for a rate increase on water and sewer bills. Public Works Superintendent Chris Pellitteri stated he is unsure who owns the property, and that the building only recently had a meter installed. Mr. McGaughey stated the building is Town owned, Mr. Pellitteri answered that if that was the case, the budget would support the water bills. The Superintendent said he would check with Chief Assessor Patrick Harring to confirm, and that his Department has enough money in its budget to pay for Town owned building water and sewer usage. Mr. Pellitteri also informed the Board that it is his intention that in the future, if it is amenable, is to bundle all of the abatement requests into a quarterly agenda item, much as the Fire Department does with the earlier ambulance abatements.
13. Attorney Bill August, of Epstein & August LLP, attended the meeting via Zoom to discuss the ascertainment findings of the public hearing at the Board's October 21, 2020 meeting. The hearing had invited comments from the public to be compiled into the ascertainment report, which is a statement of needs of the Town to help the Board in its consideration of the contract conditions Verizon proposes.

Lindsay Vayda moved, Rick McGaughey seconded, and the Board voted unanimously, with Lindsay Vayda voting yes, Richard McGaughey voting yes, Pamela Campanella voting yes, and Daniel Lee voting yes, that, as the Cable Licensing Issuing Authority, to adopt and sign the Preliminary Ascertainment Findings report for the Verizon Cable License Renewal.

14. The Board discussed extending the contract of consultant Mary Beth Bernard of HR Key Solutions, who had worked for Holbrook during the maternity leave of the Human Resources Director. Ms. Bernard proposed to stay on for an additional two months for HR oversight; consulting on forms, policy reviews, and templates. Clerk Lindsay Vayda emphasized that she would like Ms. Bernard to finish the work she started on creating several policies for Holbrook to implement, and that she would follow up with her on it.

Lindsay Vayda moved, Pamela Campanella seconded, and the Board voted unanimously, with Lindsay Vayda voting yes, Richard McGaughey voting yes, Pamela Campanella voting yes, and Daniel Lee voting yes, to approve a proposal for Mary Beth Bernard of HR Key for the provision of HR related services from the estimated dates of November 19, 2020 through January 19, 2021, at the rate of \$3,000 per month, not to exceed \$6,000.

15. The Board revisited Section 2 of Article 12 of the November 2020 Special Town Meeting; the minimum hourly rates of Special Police Officers, Public Safety Dispatchers, and the Health Agent. In its discussion, Selectman Campanella noted that the Board is not voting to raise the minimum hourly rate on the salary and wage schedule, but rather to provide for current workers in those positions a raise. Town Accountant Mosley

reminded the Board that the rates for the other positions on the schedule had been voted to be retroactive to July 1, 2020.

Lindsay Vayda moved, Pamela Campanella seconded, and the Board voted unanimously, with Lindsay Vayda voting yes, Richard McGaughey voting yes, Pamela Campanella voting yes, and Daniel Lee voting yes, to raise the FY21 rates of the following positions, retroactive to July 1, 2020; Special Officers at \$22 per hour, Public Safety Dispatchers at \$22 per hour, and the Health Agent to \$36 per hour.

16. Chairman Lee moved, and the Board voted unanimously, with Lindsay Vayda voting yes, Richard McGaughey voting yes, Pamela Campanella voting yes, and Daniel Lee voting yes, to adjourn to Executive Session to discuss strategy with respect to non-union personnel (Communications Center Director and Deputy Director), and not return to Open Session.