



Town of West Boylston
140 Worcester Street, West Boylston, Massachusetts 01583

Selectboard/Sewer Commission Meeting Minutes

Date / Time / Location of Meeting November 6, 2019; 6:00 p.m.; Selectboard Meeting Room, 140 Worcester Street

Members Present Patrick J. Crowley, Chairman Barur R. Rajeshkumar, Vice Chair John W. Hadley, Clerk Christopher A. Rucho, Selectman Michael J. Kittredge III, Selectman

Members NOT Present

Invited Guests:

Mr. Crowley convened the meeting at 6:00 p.m. All members are present.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Erin Palumbo, 184 Malden Street joined the Board to continue her discussion about the need for a full-time Recreation Director position. She thanked the Board for putting this on their agenda and noted that the Parks Commission will be here in regards to their recommendation on hiring a full-time recreation director position. She restated that the Open Space Plan recommended hiring the position as a top priority. She has collected 89 signatures on a petition and only 4 out of the 93 people she approached did not sign. Ms. Palumbo also noted that the Community Survey results included comments to hire the position and she feels it is in the best interest of the town to hire a full-time recreation director and recommends the Board ask the Parks Commission deep and thoughtful questions. She feels there is town interest in this, overwhelming support, and it brings an opportunity to meet neighbors. A recreation program brings together the opportunity to build a stronger town and community and every other town in Massachusetts has one.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES:

1. October 16, 2019, regular session
Motion Mr. Hadley to approve, second by Mr. Kittredge, all in favor.
2. October 21, 2019, regular session
Motion Mr. Rajeshkumar to approve, second by Mr. Kittredge, all in favor.
3. October 26, 2019, regular session
Motion Mr. Hadley to approve, second by Mr. Kittredge, all in favor.

REVIEW AND VOTE TO APPROVE WARRANTS FOR THE PERIOD COVERING OCTOBER 17, 2019 TO NOVEMBER 6, 2019: Town Payable Warrants FY2020-17, 18 & 19; Town Payroll Warrant FY2020-08 & 09; Sewer FY2020-SE09; Municipal Light Plant #12 and School Warrant FY2020-S8

Motion Mr. Rajeshkumar to approve the warrants as noted, second Mr. Hadley. Mr. Crowley announced that each weekend all the warrants are reviewed by either himself or Mr. Rajeshkumar. If they have a question it is flagged and answered prior to being placed on the agenda by vote of the full board. Vote on the motion – all in favor.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Consider setting the rate of compensation for the Town Clerk who also serves as a Registrar - Currently we have 5,432 voters and the rate of compensation can be from \$50 to \$100 per 1,000 voters

Now that town meeting has voted to accept MGL Chapter 41, Section 19J of the Massachusetts General Laws to provide additional compensation to the Town Clerk for also serving as a member of the Board of Registrars of Voters Ms. Lucier recommends the town compensate our Town Clerk with a \$500 annual stipend. The agenda packet includes a survey of other towns and the compensation they offer. Ms. Lucier noted that the town clerk is very dedicated and as such puts in a lot of additional hours covering the office for voter registration. She is a salaried employee and does not get compensated for these additional hours. Ms. Lucier feels that the \$500 is a fair amount.

Motion Mr. Hadley to approve a \$500 stipend for the town clerk in accordance with MGL Chapter 41, Section 19J, second by Mr. Kittredge, all in favor.

2. Update from Wachusett Watershed Regional Recycling Center

Ms. Lucier informed the Board that effective November 1 the Regional Recycle Center will be increasing their rates. This is due to the costs they incur to recycle their items. Their currently hauler has increased its various recycle contracts by \$18,000. Items such as tires and mattresses are costly to dispose of and the intent of the increase is to recoup the costs the Center incurs for such items. She noted that the town's annual assessment, which has not increased for several years, will also increase in FY21. Discussion ensued. Mr. Rucho voiced concern that the price increase may result in people not recycling certain items if it is going to cost them a fee. Mr. Rajeshkumar noted that they do make a profit and he thinks items may end up on along the roads. Mr. Hadley pointed out that they also have a building that needs to be maintained. Ms. Lucier noted that the facility is run mostly by volunteers and they only have one paid staff person. They have also recently made some site improvements. Mr. Rucho pointed out that in the Center they now sell things and initially we were told that everything would be free. He also feels that as the host community we should get something for our residents.

Jim Pedone, Chair Parks Commission

Discussion on the need for a full-time Recreation Director position

Erin Palumbo states that she is here to advocate for a full-time recreation director in keeping up with other towns who do a successful program for children and families interacting with peers in their towns. She spoke with 93 people and 89 signed her petition. She hopes the Board received comments through their Board of Selectmen's website. She feels a recreation director provides intangible benefits for a town and builds a community. It helps to meet new families and friends and she feels it is very important to continue building a community. She appreciates the Board's time and attention to this. Mr. Crowley reports that ten people emailed the Board of Selectmen in support of this. Mr. Rucho asked when you spoke to the residents are they also the ones who say our taxes are high and the school could use more money, do you tell them this will be an increase in their taxes. Ms. Palumbo noted that for the 4 people who did not sign, it was their concern that taxes would go up. Mr. Kittredge asked if she has spoken to other towns about their positions and the hours they work. Ms. Palumbo replied, it varies based on the town's size. Sterling has one full-time position and one part-time position. The salary will be different based on the scope of the work. Mr. Rucho questions if someone could stay busy enough for a 40 hour a week position. Ms. Palumbo reports that Sterling has adult and children programs, and a ski program. She feels it is an essential position and the Open Space Committee is on board they say it is a top priority. It is a function of money and it was run by a volunteer. Mr. Rajeshkumar questions how many students could benefit from this. Ms. Palumbo feels all of them as the half day program ran at a profit. It can benefit all the children as it is easily accessible, local affordable programming. Mr. Rucho looked at the Sterling website and noted that they have a lake. He reports that our recreation program ran good when we had the pool and he cannot imagine anybody wanting to put their child in a program without a pool as that is a big feature of summer recreation. Ms. Palumbo mentioned the half day programs they that we done included one which was the lego program.

Mike Peckar, 22 North Main Street and member of Open Space Implementation Committee endorses the comments. It was identified as one of the top 5 priorities in the Plan based on a survey of the entire town. He also spoke with Vincent Vignaly, member of the Open Space Implementation Committee who recalled the recreation program was in the summer and it was where he learned to swim. He thinks this is an answer to kids on screens all day.

Janice Fitzgibbons, 61 Malden Street is in favor of the hiring. She moved to Massachusetts 41 years ago. Brimfield had 3,000 people and they had a recreation department with all kinds of things to do. She moved here and was surprised we do not have a recreation program for kids or older people. Mr. Rucho noted in regards to what Mr. Vignaly said he was on the Parks Commission and they hired a director and had all the other things kids loved because they knew in one hour they would be going to be in the pool.

Mr. Pedone, Chairman of the Parks Commission addressed some of the public comments. He noted that Ms. Breen was not a volunteer, she was paid pennies an hour and she had a Facebook Page, recreation email, website and backpack fliers were sent out. Fireworks and scarecrow contest were not part of the recreation department. When they did hire another person they posted the job and it took quite a while to get someone. They hired someone paying more than double what they paid the previous person. The person didn't have a place to run programs. The Parks Commission asked for a motion to recommend to the town to hire a full-time Recreation Director, the motion was seconded and the conversation was there was not a lot of interest. The after school programs was run by the schools. The person was not available because they had to do professional development on half days. They did the half day program but it was not a single individual, additional staff were hired and it was an added expense which barely profited. This is about a department not just one person and salary.

After the half day program stopped there was an uproar and then it stopped. We did run a tennis program after the rec program stopped. They gave them the courts and charged for \$10 each child it was run once and the attendance was low, with only 10 kids. Historically it has been difficult to get participation in the programs. The Parks Commission voted 1-3 against the motion and no one is calling or asking about any programs.

Mr. Rucho looked at the Sterling Recreation Department website and kids Zumba for resident or non-residents is \$53 with 7 spots open. Mr. Palumbo feels people will pay because people are going to go to Zumba with their friends, it is community. Mr. Crowley asked if they had data from non-pool activities. Mr. Rucho reports that the Commission hired a director to run the summer rec program and somebody did a basketball camp. After summer rec we didn't have any other person running the programs. Summer rec had 5 or 6 staff and one year they bussed kids to a water source and then it died off. On the Community Survey we asked assuming no change in the amount of money the town has to spend please indicate whether you would prefer to raise, maintain, or reduce spending on each of the following town services. Parks, Recreation and/or Athletic Fields, 62% said maintain. For the question assuming an increase in the amount of money the town has to spend please indicate your interest in the following potential new services and for a pool, 58% replied not interested and 19% replied somewhat interested. Mr. Rajeshkumar asked how long we had a recreation director. Mr. Pedone replied Ms. Breen was there for just over three years and she has been gone for two years. Mr. Rajeshkumar asked do you remember the programs she had. Mr. Pedone replied, the half day program, tennis, golf, skiing she had a difficult time keep the cost down due to busing which was expensive. The people who went to the half day programs were already in the half day program, and the youth basketball league already exists, soccer has 200+ kids in the program, baseball, softball, football, lacrosse all run through leagues. He doesn't know how much more time people have. Mr. Rucho noted that Sterling has lego robotics for 8 weeks at a cost of \$175. He noted that people thought the programs were expensive when Ms. Breen ran them. Mr. Rajeshkumar feels that generally people like some of the programs like the Easter egg hunt. Mr. Pedone replied that was the one free event. It was also suggested that the Celebrations Committee could be approached to see if they would be interested in adding any programs. Ms. Palumbo feels people would like to see the program back. Mr. Rucho pointed out that it was difficult getting two volunteers to work on the Celebrations Committee for other town events.

Mr. Pedone commented that no one is banging down their door. Ms. Palumbo states we are the only town without one. Mr. Rajeshkumar feels we need to know how many kids will really participate in the programs, what are the programs, and how many hours they should work. Mr. Kittredge thinks it will be a hard number to come up with. Mr. Crowley pointed out that no matter what we decide we can't hire a recreation director right away. It will be in next year's budget for July 1 at the earliest. Mr. Rucho noted that everything Boylston has is already offered at the senior center. Boylston has a knitting program offered on their website which is being held in Northborough.

Mr. Rucho noted that a lot of senior things are done at the Senior Center. Mr. Rajeshkumar asked about school programs. Mr. Pedone reports that the Middle/High School had a drama club and other clubs and they ran a late bus three days a week. Ms. Palumbo doesn't think after school programs are all we could look at. Ms. Lucier noted that the lego program is no longer offered as the instructor mentioned that they needed dedicated space which he didn't have.

Mr. Crowley thinks they are looking for a recreation program not the addition of a full-time recreation director, and he thinks we need a recreation program in town. Mr. Rucho pointed out that we have to look at where we go to get the funding for the position and program and where we are

going to cut. Ms. Palumbo thinks we should look at what the Town of Sterling is doing. Mr. Kittredge noted that we need to know how long it took to build up participation. Mr. Pedone reports that when Ms. Breen was the Director there was a decline. It was an up and running program. He also stated that the Sterling costs are high. He suggested looking at Boylston and their costs for programs which he feels it is a better comparison. It was agreed that we will do a survey asking towns if they have a director, if so, what are they paid and what kinds of programs are offered. We will also ask if there is a fee for residents and nonresidents. We will also ask if fees cover the cost of the program. Mr. Rucho pointed out that for space, we have town hall and the senior center we could use. The Board questioned whether the neighboring town of Boylston would be interested in sharing a position. It was agreed that this will be discussed on a future agenda.

3. Acknowledge receipt of Chapter Land Report from the Board of Assessors

This list is provided to the Board on an annual basis by the Board of Assessors. The Board does have a policy that should any of these properties be sold, the town would have first right of refusal. The Board has no questions on the report.

4. Woodland Street water connection

Mr. Hadley recused himself. Ms. Lucier was requested to include this item on the agenda. Mr. Evangelista is building new houses at 239 Woodland Street and the Water District cannot allow a water connection to be made that is not directly in front of the property, especially when there is a water main available in this location. This issue was sent to DPW Director Gary Kellaher, who is unable to be at the meeting this evening. He met with the builder on site to discuss his new plan for water hook-up and will allow him to cut the road in front of the property as per the following; surface to be saw cut and milled, properly compacted gravel, flowable fill, tack coat and State mix for the top coat pave.

The Board agreed it was the Superintendent's decision. Mr. Evangelista suggested developing a Road Opening Policy. Mr. Hadley returned to the meeting.

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR REPORT

1. Cemetery Land Update

We will be investigating the property the town owns on Tivnan Drive to determine whether it could be the site of a new cemetery. Ms. Lucier reached out to MLP Manager Jonathan Fitch who provided the geotechnical report on the lot where the flywheel is located. Our lot is next to that. She also has the Tivnan Drive Soil Report which was updated earlier this year. The next step will be for the town to dig some test pits to determine whether this is a viable option for the town to move forward with.

2. Update on Board Goals for FY19

1. Develop an OPEB Liability funding policy

OPEB Policy was adopted and it was agreed that this goal was met. We will continue to work on funding this liability by including it as a line item in the annual budget.

2. Minimize tax impacts of budget increases/debt excluded projects

We have and will continue to identify areas of potential budget savings. We will continue to work on this goal during budget preparation and during the year.

3. Enhance the island at Rt. 12 and Beaman Street

The DPW Director has sketched out the triangle and is on board with his department removing two sections of the curbing for food truck parking. We have also investigated purchasing 100% recycled plastic accessible picnic tables and benches with a 50 year life expectancy. We have to insure that the area is accessible so we could either connect with a concrete path or cover a portion of the area with concrete/hot top and have a grass perimeter. To limit that, we plan to position the handicapped picnic table closer in proximity to the vendor trucks.

4. Develop a formal Communication Plan and Policy

Draft Policy was provided to the Board. A public hearing will be held to consider adopting the policy. This

5. Evaluate the feasibility of a merger of Cemetery with DPW

The Cemetery Trustees voted to include the Cemetery employees under the umbrella of the DPW Union. We have asked both the DPW and the Cemetery unions to vote to consider being under the same union. The unions will be putting together a list of questions they have on how the department would function. This will be a carry over goal, work to merge the Cemetery with the DPW.

6. Develop a marijuana regulation bylaw

Approved at town meeting.

7. Develop a Town Facilities Management Position

Job description was approved by the Personnel Board. We advertised for a part-time position and did not receive any acceptable applicants. A meeting was held with the Berlin Town Administrator who seems interested in going forward with a shared position. She met with her Board of Selectmen and they have agreed to continue the conversation and plan to include funding in their budget for next year. This will be a carry over, entitled fill the position of Facilities Manager. The Board designated Mr. Rucho to serve as their liaison for further discussion with Berlin.

Carry Over Goals

1. Town Beautification – develop proposed Blight Bylaw

A subcommittee was established to meet with the Board of Health and after reviewing the information collected the Board of Health does not have an interest in adopting a formal bylaw. The Building Inspector will continue to follow up on code infractions.

2. Citizen & Employee Survey

The Citizen Survey was completed and has been posted on the website. Hard copies are available at the library and the office of the Town Clerk. Of the 7,831 residents in town, we received 490 responses. A draft of the Employee Survey was presented to the Board and, although the survey is anonymous, the Board felt that they would be easily identified by the questions posed. It was agreed that this goal is complete. We will not be going forward with an employee survey.

Town Administrator Goals

1. Develop a Succession Plan for key staff

This plan has not yet been drafted. It will be a carry over and combined with a Continuation of Operations Plan.

2. Expand the Use of Muncity for all permitting boards

Muncity would require a major upgrade and be very costly to be used as intended. A demonstration was given to all permitting boards. At that time the feedback received indicated that what is currently used works. The City of Worcester is in the process of updating their software we will continue to explore software options and pricing.

3. Establish regular staff workshops on Communications, Team Building and Customer Service

A staff team building workshop was held on August 9, 2019 and a department head workshop was held on November 15, 2019 entitled What Constitutes Effective Communication. It was agreed that this goal was met.

4. Replace the 10-year capital Plan with a 20-year capital plan

Department heads will provide their plan by January 1, 2020. The plan will then be incorporated into the plan developed by the CIB.

3. Announce Board Goals for FY20

The Board received 31 suggestions and will move forward with the following goals. Hire a Town Facilities Management position, continue to minimize the tax impacts of annual budget increases or debt excluded projects for our residents, review dangerous intersections in town and develop a plan to improve them and a method to control speed, identify the top three dangerous intersections in the town and develop a plan to improve same, continue to evaluate the feasibility and effectiveness of a merger of the Cemetery Department into the DPW, schedule additional trainings for town boards/committees, and improve the condition of the DPW property inside and outside,

The Town Administrator goals will to fill and train the Municipal Assistant Position, complete the Wage & Classification Project, reorganization of Town Hall Basement Storage Area and to complete Succession Planning Document.

Mr. Rucho feels the goals established are perfect.

4. Update on improvements to area around Police Department Sign

To improve the ability for travelers on Route 12 to be able to see the driveway and the sign to the Police Department, the DPW has cut back the brush and trees along the left side of the driveway. In addition, Mass Highway installed two additional large Police Department Signs with arrows pointing to the building, one on the northbound side across from the driveway and one on the southbound side of Route 12 closer to the driveway. The Chief is very pleased with what was done.

FISP UPDATE:

1. General Update on Senior Center

Mr. Hadley reports that the field is 98% complete and they have a meeting scheduled with the Planning Board for the parking lot and as built. We will also notify the Water Department that we no longer need access to water for our plantings and thank them for their cooperation during our project.

MEETINGS, INVITATIONS & ANNOUNCEMENTS:

1. Monday, November 11th Town Offices are closed in observance of the Veterans' Day Holiday
2. Monday, November 11th, 9-11 a.m., Thank you Veterans' Breakfast at the Senior Center
3. Monday, November 16th, 8-noon – Wachusett Regional Recycle is offering FREE document shredding
4. Parking Ban begins November 15 through April 30th – no parking on the street from midnight to 5:00 a.m. – also no parking on the streets during daytime hours when it would hamper snow removal efforts.

Mr. Crowley reminded residents that if they have a fire hydrant in their neighborhoods to please clear the snow away three feet to the left and right so if there is an emergency it is available for the Fire Department immediately when they arrive at the scene.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS/SELECTMENS REPORTS:

Mr. Crowley would like to get a copy of the petition Ms. Palumbo referred to in her remarks.

With no further business to come before the board, motion Mr. Rucho at 7:40 p.m. to adjourn, second by Mr. Hadley, all in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Approved: November 20, 2019

Nancy E. Lucier, Town Administrator

Patrick J. Crowley, Chairman

Barur R. Rajeshkumar, Vice Chairman

John W. Hadley, Clerk

Christopher A. Rucho, Selectman