



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

## **Selectboard/Sewer Commission Meeting Minutes**

<b>Date / Time / Location of Meeting</b> November 20, 2019; 6:00 p.m.; Selectboard Meeting Room, 140 Worcester Street
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<b>Members Present</b> Patrick J. Crowley, Chairman Barur R. Rajeshkumar, Vice Chair John W. Hadley, Clerk Christopher A. Rucho, Selectman Michael J. Kittredge III, Selectman
<b>Members NOT Present</b>

<b>Invited Guests:</b>
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Mr. Crowley convened the meeting at 6:00 p.m. All members are present.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT:**

No one came forward for this agenda item.

### **APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES:**

1. November 6, 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 NOVEMBER 7, 2019 TO NOVEMBER 20, 2019: Town Payable Warrants FY2020-20 & 21; Town Payroll Warrant FY2020-10; Sewer FY2020-SE10; Municipal Light Plant #14 and School Warrant FY2020-S9**

Motion Mr. Rajeshkumar to approve the warrants as noted, second Mr. Hadley, all in favor.

### **TOM WELSH, FIRE CHIEF**

1. Fire truck bids - Board vote to consider accepting bid

Chief Welsh has received a bid in the amount of \$2,600 for Engine 3 and he recommends the town accept the bid.

Motion Mr. Hadley to accept the bid in the amount of \$2,600 for Engine 3, second Mr. Kittredge, all in favor.

2. Grant update - Board vote to acknowledge and accept grants

The Chief reports that he worked with the town's volunteer grant writer on the Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program and we were awarded a grant for a compressor system in the amount of \$53,729. This was one of the items he had requested on his capital list. We also received an Emergency Planning Grant in the amount of \$2,900 which will be used to purchase flash lights. We received a grant in the amount of \$1,716.47 from the Volunteer Fire Assistance Program to purchase forestry equipment and we received a grant from Walmart in the amount of \$1,000 for a Fire Safety Program.

Motion Mr. Hadley to accept the grants on behalf of the town, second Mr. Rajeshkumar all in favor.

### 3. Staffing update

The Chief reports that his current roster he has 5 active officers who respond for incidents. One of those five is Deputy Chief Mark Hopewell who will be retiring after 41 years with the Fire Department. He noted that he continues to have challenges recruiting and retaining call firefighters and pointed out that many of them are getting older and will be retiring shortly as well. He continues to receive applications from surrounding communities, however, none close enough to make the response required to be a member of the call department.

The Chief recently attended a workshop for the Assistance to Firefighters Grant program which opens on December 2 through January 10. The December 2 deadline will be equipment and building repair grant application. They can apply to have sprinklers or a fire alarm system to the station. They will also apply for a piece of equipment. He is also looking into applying for a SAFER Grant which opens in mid-January. That grant funds 75% for a new position for two years and in year three 35%. The SAFER Grant requires a letter of support from the town saying that they will support the grant if selected. That is required in order to apply. A town is able to apply for as many positions as they would like. The Chief hopes to get the new grant writer involved with the two applications.

### 4. Comstar Update

We have been informed by Comstar, our ambulance billing company that Medicare has selected West Boylston for the first round of mandatory ambulance service cost reporting. Chief Welsh reports that he is working closely with the Town Accountant and Town Administrator on this project, which is scheduled to begin on July 1, 2020. They are trying to increase the rates for Medicare billing.

### 4. Building project update

The Chief reports that he, the Town Administrator, and John Hadley met with the architect John MacMillan to answer general questions on the building project. We had the hazardous assessment done and Mr. MacMillan is working on drawings and coming up with ideas to stay within the footprint of the building. There is a lot of things coming up that if we do it certain triggers are required. He offered suggestions to see if we could appeal some of these requirements. One of the items is a sprinkler system and we are applying for that grant.

Mr. Rucho asked if Sterling and Boylston have better luck attracting part-time members. The Chief noted that they also have a good number on their roster and also struggle with having a small number coming back on a call. Mr. Rucho suggested keeping a list of who you know will come back. The Chief explained that periodically he reviews the roster and sends out letters asking if they would

do a per diem reminding them that they have to do one shift a month. Mr. Rucho suggested having the officers be on lists for West Boylston, Boylston and Sterling. The Chief noted that they do share per diems and when you get a good fire they will show up. We also worked with the Personnel Board to increase the pay which will go into effect in January. It is more of a logistical distance and Sterling and Boylston are having the same issues. Boylston is applying for two fire fighters and currently they have a chief and two firefighters, with 24-30 call members. They have a lot of people who live in their town. Mr. Rucho mentioned that we discussed Boylston and West Boylston getting together with a more regional Fire Department. While he understands that regional may not save money he would like to officially make a request through the Town Administrator. He feels if there was a bigger department there would be an opportunity for promotions.

Motion Mr. Rucho to ask the Town Administrator to reach out to the Boylston Town Administrator, second Mr. Hadley, all in favor.

The Chief noted that technology tells him who is responding and the Dispatch Center sends the request out after West Boylston staff is called. Our ambulance could be in another town helping out when the call comes in. Mr. Crowley asked the Chief if he had any instances where the town requested mutual aid and it was not available. The Chief replied no, you will always find mutual aid. The Chief reports that he is working with the City of Worcester for mutual aid on the new Briarwood Building. It would be an automatic response for Briarwood. The Chief stressed that the younger generation is not stepping up to become a volunteer fire fighter.

**PUBLIC HEARING: RE, CLASSIFICATION HEARING IN CONFORMITY WITH M.G.L. CH 40, §56 TO ESTABLISH LOCAL PROPERTY TAX RATE OR RATES FOR FISCAL YEAR 2020 Board of Selectmen will sign off on LA5 following**

Regional Assessor Diane Peterson and Associate Assessor Heather Cheney joined the Board. Mr. Crowley opened the public hearing and Mr. Hadley read the following notice. Notice is hereby given that the West Boylston Board of Selectmen will hold a public hearing on Wednesday, November 20, 2019, at 6:15 p.m. in the Selectmen's Meeting Room, of the municipal offices located at 140 Worcester Street, West Boylston, MA, in conformity with the provisions of Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 40, Section 56 for the purpose of holding a Tax Classification Hearing so as to establish the local property tax rate or rates to be assessed to each of the following classes of property for fiscal year 2020, the period from July 1, 2019 through June 30, 2020: residential property, open-space property, commercial property, and industrial property. All interested persons, groups, and agencies are invited to attend and participate. Patrick J. Crowley, Chairman, Board of Selectmen, Town of West Boylston, advertised on November 6, 13, 2019.

Diane Peterson explained that Heather is the new face of the Board of Assessor's Office and she will be moving onto some other projects with RRG. She reports that the valuations in West Boylston are still on the rise, as they are across the state. In West Boylston they find a lot of properties selling for more than the asking price. The Board of Assessors continues to recommend maintaining a single tax rate. The Fiscal Year 2019 Levy Limit is \$17,321,101 New Growth revenues are \$212,459 an increase over last year. There was a lot of new commercial and several new houses and condo units. The Fiscal Year 2020 Levy Limit is \$18,827,302. We have an Excess Levy Capacity of \$4,379. The property tax rate, based on a single tax rate will be \$18.58 down from \$18.85 last year. To reduce the residential rate by one cent you would have to increase the commercial/industrial rate by five cents. Last year the average single family home value was \$303,576 with a tax bill of \$5,722. This year it is \$322,200 with a tax bill of \$5,986.

After tonight's meeting we will submit all the information to the Department of Revenue to get the official tax rate. We had a couple of significant increases in revenues and licenses and permits were up by \$147,000. Medicare came in at \$90,000 and was estimated at zero the year before. All the information will be posted on the Assessor's website as soon as we have a tax rate. The proposed motion is on page 5 of the hand out and then the Board will sign the LA5. Mr. Rucho pointed out that if we were to reduce the residential rate by \$.33 per \$1,000 it would increase the industrial/commercial rate by \$1.50 per \$1,000. There is no one present to speak on this agenda item.

Motion Mr. Hadley to close the public hearing, second Mr. Rajeshkumar all in favor.

Motion Mr. Hadley in accordance with MGL Ch 40, sec. 56, as amended, the percentage of local tax levy which will be borne by each class of real and personal property, relative to setting the Fiscal Year 2020 tax rates and set the Residential Factor at 1.09, with a corresponding CIP shift of 1.0, pending approval of the town's annual tax recap by the Mass Department of Revenue, second Mr. Rucho, all in favor.

### **PUBLIC HEARING: RE, CONSIDER ADOPTING A COMMUNICATIONS POLICY IN CONFORMITY WITH GENERAL BYLAWS OF THE TOWN OF WEST BOYLSTON, ARTICLE XXIII - PUBLIC HEARING AND NOTICE**

Mr. Crowley opened the public hearing and Mr. Hadley read the following notice. Public notice is hereby given, in conformity with the requirements of the General Bylaws of the Town of West Boylston, ARTICLE XXIII - PUBLIC HEARING AND NOTICE, that the Selectboard Board will meet on Wednesday, November 20, 2019 at 6:30 p.m. for the purpose of considering adopting Policy L-25 Communication Policy. The meeting will be held in the Selectboard's Meeting Room of Town Hall, 140 Worcester Street, West Boylston. For additional information, or to review the proposed information, please contact the Office of the Selectboard/Town Administrator at 774.261.4012. All interested persons, groups, and agencies are invited to attend. Patrick J. Crowley, Chairman, advertised on November 6, 13, 2019.

Ms. Lucier explained that this policy was one of the goals established by the Town Administrator. Adopting and implementing a communications plan ensures that communication is effective, efficiently transmitted, and responsive. Much of the town's overall success is shaped by the quality of its communication efforts and it follows a proactive approach and helps foster effective two-way communication. The policy lists goals of the communication which include ensuing the Selectboard and the Town Administrator are an active and integral part of the overall Town Communication Plan. It includes the targeted audience which is people of West Boylston, members of town boards/committees, town employees and news media. The policy outlines the strengths and weaknesses of communications tools, both external and internal. External include the web page, social media and public access TV, newsletters, public meetings, news releases, annual town report, electronic sign board, constable postings, Code Red, annual budget, brochures, town meeting mailer. Internal communication includes department head meetings, department meetings, and financial management team meetings.

Discussion ensued with the Board requesting the population be removed as it would need to be constantly updated. Page 7 under Public Access TV we will add eliminate specific boards and include 'WBPA-TV broadcasts meetings of town boards and committees.' After YouTube we will include 'WBPA-TV'. Also under weaknesses add 'only available to residents that have Charter Cable.'

Motion Mr. Hadley to close the public hearing, second Mr. Rajeshkumar, all in favor.

Motion Mr. Rucho to accept the Communications Policy with edits, second Mr. Rajeshkumar, all in favor.

## **TOWN ADMINISTRATOR REPORT**

### **1.Update on Green Communities Projects**

In 2017, the Town of West Boylston was designated a Green Community and awarded a designation grant in the amount of \$145,435.00. The Town initially requested Green Communities funding for the following projects, with grant administration by the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission (CMRPC). The total projected cost of these projects was \$143,292.00. **Project 1)** Middle-High School Hot Water Circulation VFDs **CANCELLED**, **Project 2)** Middle-High School Vending Misers (\$237.32), **Project 3)** Middle-High School Smart Power Strips (\$836.69), **Project 4)** Middle-High School Lighting Upgrade (\$113,632.09), **Project 5)** Middle-High School Residential Refrigerator Replacement (\$656.10), **Project 6)** Middle-High School Reach-In Refrigerator Replacement (\$2,859.00), **Project 7)** Elementary School Efficiency Motors and VFDs **CANCELLED**, **Project 8)** Elementary School ECM Evaporator Retrofit (*\$1,314*) and **Grant Administration** (*\$7,600*)

The Town solicited quotes and put projects out to bid. The bids for the Middle-High School Hot Water Circulation VFDs and the Elementary School Efficiency Motors and VFDs (Projects 1 and 7) came in too high to complete with Green Communities funds. Total estimated cost savings for the school will be **\$15,791**.

We are now requesting approval of additional projects to utilize the remaining \$18,299 in the grant. Those projects include an upgrade to the Library lighting systems. The upgrade to efficient LED lighting systems will result in a significant reduction of energy usage, improve visibility, promote a safer environment for patrons and staff, and allow for installation of automatic light switches to reduce energy waste. The proposed project will save an estimated 16,435 kWh and **\$2,334.00** a year in reduced electricity. The quote for the work associated with this project is \$14,751.29. The remainder of the funds will be used to upgrade the refrigerators and a dehumidifier at the library to an energy start units and two air conditioners and a refrigerator at the DPW to energy star units. Total is \$18,353. We will complete this project by January 1, 2020 and be eligible to apply for additional funds during the next round of grants.

### **2.Revolving Fund Report**

Annually during the month of November we review all of our Revolving Accounts. The intent of the review is to insure that they are within the spending limits approved by town meeting. In the past we have made some adjustments to these limits and as of June 30, 2019 we are in compliance.

### **3.Town Administrator's Commitment to Excellence Award**

Nominations are open for the Town Administrator's Commitment to Excellence Award. This is an annual award to recognize the achievements of a municipal employee who has excelled in his or her position. This year board and committee members are also eligible for this consideration of this award as well. The Town Administrator will consider nominees who have increased productivity,

performed appropriately beyond job responsibilities, provided cooperative and positive working relationships, demonstrated a pattern of high-quality work, has offered a creative or innovative idea to improve town operations, efficiency, or saved costs to the Town, and provided courteous service to the public and other departments. Nomination forms can be found in the Town Administrator's office or on the Town Administrator's Website at [www.westboylston-ma.gov](http://www.westboylston-ma.gov). Please submit the forms by December 31<sup>st</sup> in order to be considered for this award.

### **NEW BUSINESS:**

#### 1. Select Senior Center Photos

Mr. Rucho suggests selecting a photo we would not be able to take ourselves. After reviewing all the photos it was agreed to go with photo #1 and #6

Motion Mr. Kittredge to select Photos #1 and #6, second Mr. Hadley, all in favor.

#### 2. Consider approving the following individuals as seasonal snow plow drivers driving town vehicles for the Department of Public Works effective November 21, 2019 at a rate of \$18.65 per hour: Donald MacKenzie, West Boylston and Robb MacKenzie, West Boylston

Motion Mr. Hadley to approve the hirings, second Mr. Rajeshkumar. Vote on the motion – Messrs. Crowley, Rajeshkumar Hadley and Rucho yes, Mr. Kittredge abstains.

### **FISP UPDATE: General Update on Senior Center**

Mr. Hadley reports that everything is done except the striping of the parking lot. The contractor went to the Planning Board and submitted the asbuilts. The building has some minor maintenance items we still have warranties on.

### **MEETINGS, INVITATIONS & ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

1. Adult Book Discussion Groups on Thursday, November 21 at 12:30 p.m. for a discussion of the book: *Unmentionables* by Laurie Loewenstein. Copies are available at the Library. Nonfiction Book Group 1 p.m. on Friday, November 22 to discuss the book *Educated*, by Tara Westover. Copies are available at the Library.

2. Library Teen Advisory Group Meeting on Thursday, November 21 from 6:30-7:30 p.m. They are looking for Teens to help plan upcoming events and programs.

3. Wednesday, December 4<sup>th</sup> Senior Holiday Lunch @ Wachusett Country Club, sponsored by West Boylston Business Association

4. Santa Claus is Visiting Beaman Library- Saturday, December 7 from 11 a.m.-1 p.m. Join us for our annual visit from Santa himself! He will be here to listen to all your Christmas wishes. Please bring your cute kids and a camera -- posing with Santa is completely free! When you arrive, simply place your name on the "good" list and go upstairs to play while you wait for your turn. We will call you when he is ready; no waiting in a long line!

5. December 18<sup>th</sup> Board meeting changed to December 16<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 p.m.

6. All offices will be closed on Thursday, November 28 in observation of the Thanksgiving holiday. Just a reminder that a number of offices will be taking time off during the holiday season and many offices will have adjusted hours the day before and after the holiday. If you plan to stop by town hall or other departments during this holiday period, please call the office prior to stopping in to make sure they will be open for business

7. The tree lighting ceremony will be held on Sunday, December 1 at 5:00 p.m. and the Historical Society will hold an open house from 3-5 prior to the ceremony.

8. Ms. Lucier announced that last night the line striping contractor had another town cancel and they attempted to paint some of West Boylston. The paint is a waterborne product, not a hazard to the environment, and when applied during the rain it washed away. This was not authorized or approved by the town or by contacting the DPW Director. The operator will be reprimanded. We apologize for any inconvenience it caused our residence.

**FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS/SELECTMENS REPORTS:**

Mr. Rucho reports that he was at the Council on Aging meeting on Monday at which time they discussed the building use fees. It will be included on a future agenda.

The Board would like to know if it typical to paint the lines on the street at this time of year and asked if they sweep before they do the striping.

Mr. Rucho would like to add to a future agenda a discussion of looking for a full-time DPW Director. He feels the person doing the job is doing a great job however, he would like to start the process to hire a full-time person.

With no further business to come before the board, motion Mr. Rucho at 7:10 p.m. to adjourn, second by Mr. Hadley, all in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Approved:

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Nancy E. Lucier, Town Administrator

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Patrick J. Crowley, Chairman

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Barur R. Rajeshkumar, Vice Chairman

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John W. Hadley, Clerk

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Christopher A. Rucho, Selectman