**Town of West Boylston**

140 Worcester Street, West Boylston, Massachusetts 01583

**Select Board/Sewer Commission**

**Meeting Minutes**

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| **Date / Time / Location of Meeting**  **November 18, 2020; 6:00 p.m.** |  |
|  |  |
| **Members Present**  **John W. Hadley, Chairman**  **Christopher A. Rucho, Vice Chair**  **Patrick J. Crowley, Clerk**  **Barur R. Rajeshkumar, Selectman**  **Michael J. Kittredge III, Selectman** |  |
| **Members NOT Present** |  |
| **Invited Guests:**  **Steve Migridigian**  **Lisa Clark Viklund**  **Elaine Novia**  **Lynn Harding-McGrail**  **Anna Shaw**  **Gary Kellaher** |  |

Mr. Hadley convened the meeting at 6:00 p.m. roll call taken.

**APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES:**

* **November 4, 2020 Regular Session**

***Motion*** *Mr. Crowley moved to approve; Mr. Kittredge second.*

***All in favor***

* **November 4, 2020 Executive Session**

***Motion*** *Mr. Rajeshkumar moved to approve; Mr. Crowley second.*

***All in favor***

**REVIEW AND VOTE TO APPROVE WARRANTS FOR THE PERIOD COVERING NOVEMBER 5, 2020 to NOVEMBER 18, 2020 : Town Payable Warrants FY2021-20 and 21; Town Payroll Warrant FY2021-10; School FY2021-S8; and Municipal Light Plant #10 & 13:**

***Motion*** *Mr. Crowley moved to approve; Mr. Rajeshkumar second.****All in favor***

**Janice Ash, Chair Council on Aging & Lisa Clark Viklund, Senior Center Director- Center Operations during COVID-19:**

Ms. Clark Viklund stated this are going well at the center and they just recently decided to close for classes but will continue with essential services like outreach, transportation, and Meals on Wheels. She stated classes had started back up in July with limited participated and have been going well. She explained with the Governors recent mandates, flu season upon us, and holidays they have made the decision to not hold any classes until after the holidays. She stated they reached out to 585 households of the services offered, they have been serving 1,100 meals up from 800 per month before COVID, they have also delivered emergency food boxes to those in need with grants from USDA and Food Pantry. She stated they are working with the Rotary Club to set up and delivery meals to Boylston and West Boylston residents, Shopping Buddies for those unable to leave their homes and Friendly Voice Program to keep in contact with seniors from March to July. She stated they have held drive thru programs which have had accommodated 150-160 people. Mr. Rajeshkumar asked what classes do they hold, Ms. Clark Viklund stated exercise classes, writers’ group, knitters’ group, quilting & crafting group and bingo. She explained they were able to accommodate these groups up to 10. Cannot hold also cannot hold pitch group, cribbage or any of the card playing because it is shared equipment. Mr. Rajeshkumar stated they used to have chair yoga and there was full house, Ms. Clark Viklund stated they are holding classes but limiting by using a lottery selection. Mr. Rajeshkumar asked about the pool room, she explained it will be closed to the public to allow a top to bottom cleaning of the center. Mr. Rucho asked why classes cannot be held if people are wearing masks, Ms. Clark Viklund stated they have concerns and do not want to risk it with all the gatherings for holidays will be happening. Mr. Rucho asked if the Board of Health has made these recommendations, she stated the instructors and participants all agree. Mr. Hadley agrees with the decision to close until after the holidays. Mr. Rucho asked who was working in the building, she explained is her, her assistant, van drivers and the staff for meals on wheels. Mr. Rajeshkumar asked if there will be the Annual Christmas Lunch, Mr. Clark Viklund stated they haven’t planned on it. She explained she is working on a plan to begin using Public Access for classes and entertainment to be viewed to bridge the gap of digital divide using Media Exchange where media can be downloaded and broadcast. The Board thanked Lisa for her work.

**Anna Shaw, Director Beaman Memorial Public Library- Library Operations during COVID-19:**

Ms. Shaw stated the Library staff has been providing service to patrons during the hours of for a total of 44 hours, she explained the hours were extended on Saturdays thanks to a donation from Holy Cross. She stated they have created a contactless pick-up system on Tuesdays through Saturday 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Wednesdays 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. for 38 hours per week. She stated they are checking out over 110 items daily and expect more in the days coming, and stated the feedback from patrons has been overwhelmingly positive. She explained all programs are virtual now and plan between 30 to 40 programs each month and expect attendance to increase over the winter, and gave an overview of activities and programs being offered. Ms. Shaw explained all the new books are listed on the website and on social media. She stated the Friends of the Library pay for a subscription to the Magazine Book Page which offers reviews on recent releases and that is available online and in library vestibule. She stated they have implemented Book Bundles for adults which are handpicked books by the staff. She stated this new process is time consuming and the transit times are longer and ask for people patience. She stated they miss their volunteers and only the staff are currently working, the volunteers would typically complete 44 hours weekly. Ms. Shaw explained they have expanded the wireless services outside of the library and now offer live chat with a Librarian. She stated they are working on a trial plan for fax and scanning services, the Trustees are working with the Board of Health on this and also on computer and copy use in building. She explained the Trustees want to ensure the safety of the staff and community and want to do this safely. Mr. Rajeshkumar asked how many transactions are completed in a day, Ms. Shaw responded they are not currently tracking individual transactions now but they have 2,500 to 3,000 in circulation each month. Mr. Rajeshkumar asked when in person will begin, Ms. Shaw state she believes Charlton Library is open and Shrewsbury by appointment only for computer use in a cordoned off location of the building. Mr. Rajeshkumar asked about printing and faxing, Ms. Shaw stated she asks patrons to send via email to them and they then print and fax and leave in the pickup. Mr. Rucho asked what the other Library groups are saying about re-opening, Ms. Shaw stated each library is different based on staff, size of building and resources available to them so there is not a consensus amongst them. Mr. Crowley stated he has concern with people that do not have access to digital access, Ms. Shaw stated they are working on a plan for that as they also feel that is most important. Mr. Rucho stated it has been seven to eight months and would like to see the library open soon, Ms. Shaw agreed and hopes it will be soon. Mr. Rajeshkumar asked what is actually keeping them from opening, Ms. Shaw stated they are concerned that the libraries HVAC is more than twenty years old. Mr. Rajeshkumar stated with masks on they should be safe. Mr. Rucho asked why they cannot have in person classes; Ms. Shaw responded the room had a flood and the repair has not been completed but they have considered using the front lawn. Mr. Rucho asked Ms. Lucier what is the status of the repair, Ms. Lucier explained the library had an outside lantern project the contractor potentially pierced the conduit line. Mr. Rucho asked if the contractor has been contacted, Ms. Shaw stated they have not. Mr. Kittredge stated the town needs to be sure the contractor punctured the pipe before anything.

Mr. Kittredge exited the meeting at 6:29 p.m.

**Gary Kellaher, Director of Public Works:**

* **Sewer Abatement Request – Daniel Cronin, 66 Woodland Street:**

Mr. Kellaher stated the Water District says their usage has been accurate for the entire calendar year. He explained the only issue if any was in the last quarter of 2019 the Water Department had an issue with the transponders. He recommended $13.69 abatement which was for the interest and charges from September 2019 through January 2020. He explained the usage was adjusted from 11,410 and on April 30 changed to 13,360, they were charged for 2,000 gallons less and the Water District felt that was offset for the issue with the transponders.

***Motion*** *Mr. Crowley moved to approve abatement; Mr. Rucho second.*

***All in favor***

* **Update on Line Painting:**

Mr. Kellaher stated the line striping is approximately 30% completed and will be complete by Thursday. He stated the cost went up from his quoted price from 3.5 cents to 5 cents per linear foot with 300,000 feet at $14,700, he stated he added in 26 hours for the police detail cost of $50.00 per hour $1,300 for a total Chapter 90 request of $16,000. He has spoken to the Police Chief and they will not charge the detail fee as usual. Mr. Hadley asked about sweeping prior to stripping and also the skipped sections, Mr. Kellaher explained this was a last-minute plan and the guys went out and cleaned up what they could. He instructed the contractor to skip anywhere there is an abundance of leaves or standing water and they will take care of it when it was dry. Mr. Rajeshkumar stated it is visible and some areas had leave painted on, Mr. Kellaher stated they use a blower and any locations without lines they will come back and do over. Mr. Rucho asked for clarification on what the DPW completing striping, Mr. Kellaher explained they can complete small sections and will request reimbursement on the sections the DPW completed. Mr. Crowley asked why do they wait till the fall to do the striping, Mr. Kellaher explained he does not like to do in the fall but likes to do after road projects are completed and money gets tight. Mr. Crowley would like to not do in the fall if possible and would like to plan in the future to go with the striping that last 3-5 years rather than the water base annually. Mr. Rajeshkumar would like Nancy to keep track of this and make sure it is completed in the summer even though this is a DPW role.

Mr. Migridigian commented that the roads from Tivnan Drive to Hartwell north and south of railroad tracks are a disaster due to a recent contractor digging up the road up and the patch is two inches to high. Mr. Kellaher responded the work was completed on a holiday and he is correct it is too high and he plans to address this.

Mr. Rajeshkumar asked about North Main Street, Mr. Kellaher stated they plan to do the overcoat before Thanksgiving.

Mr. Migridigian also commented that at Hartwell and Shrewsbury Street when you look left the line of sight by some ornamental trees, Mr. Rucho asked if this can be placed on future agenda and Mr. Kellaher can provide an update then.

* **Updates:**
* Mr. Kellaher provided the Board with an update on the sidewalk project and stated the last of the curbing is being installed and will be paved.
* Mr. Rajeshkumar asked for update on the wall repair, Mr. Kellaher stated it is completed.

**Elaine Novia, Town Clerk & Lynn Harding-Smith – Election Day Wrap Up Report:**

Ms. Novia stated a lot of extra work and a lot of hours to get the elections completed due to pandemic and keeping staff and voters safe and also many changes mandates and procedures from the State. She stated they have an ongoing issue with Verizon internet line with the State computer and whenever there is weather, they have connection issues and system goes down. She explained they had all positive feedback from residents, voters and Raj and thinks the election was well run and was safe. She thanked everyone that helped; DPW, Police, Lisa at the Senior Center, they had 36 workers and volunteers and they assisted with opening mail, filing applications, picking up and dropping off mail, cleaning pens and surfaces and voting booths and was approximately 1,488 hours of time dedicated to making this election safe, legitimate and honest. She gave an overview of the process for the early voting by mail. She stated there was no chance of duplication with mail in voting. She stated town meeting was also held on the same day as the start of early voting and all went well. Mr. Rajeshkumar asked if the votes have been sent to state, Ms. Novia stated it was and certification was due November 18th they sent in on the 18th and was postmarked at 11 a.m. Ms. Novia gave statistics of the election; registered voters in town 5,757, early by mail and in person 3,425, provisional votes which are service members, people living out of country, and prisoners and people who were never registered to vote in town but live here was 83, in person votes on November 3rd was 1,338, for a total vote casted 4,846 which represented 84.2% of registered voters. Mr. Hadley stated they all did a phenomenal job and they know how hard they worked and it was an amazing amount of work. Mr. Crowley asked about the Verizon line and would like to see if the town can switch it to Charter internet, Ms. Lucier stated Verizon needs to replace the conduit and it has been like this since they moved in here. Ms. Novia stated she will communicate with the State to see if being on the Verizon line only. Mr. Rajeshkumar stated there is fiber in town and would like to look into connecting to that, Mr. Rucho stated it may be in town but not available but the Municipal Light Plant is working to create an option to have fiber in town. Ms. Lucier stated they are working on grant funds for technology. Ms. Lucier stated to check with other town clerks to see if they also have an issue with the connection on the State computers and will also reach out to the State Representatives for help.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

* **Review and consider voting TIF package being recommended for D&S Realty:**

Mr. Crowley recommended the Board is to offer a five-year TIF in the amount of 80/60/40/10 with a total value of $300,149.63 and would start in 2023 and is something that will need to be looked at if this is approved. Mr. Migridigian if the proposed tenant selects his location the project would break ground in the spring and anticipated being completed this time next year. Mr. Crowley stated they should start 2022 not 2023 is the construction is completed as stated. Mr. Hadley stated he felt this is great for the town because right now they are collecting taxes on a vacant property, Mr. Crowley added the current taxes are $4,443.46 and once a building is completed it would be $142,297 and even with year one TIF at 80% would be $27,000. Mr. Migridigian stated the property is currently vacant and after year one of the TIF the tax payment will be $142,297.Mr. Rucho asked if they are in negotiations with other towns for TIF’s, Mr. Migridigian they may be but he does not know. He does not have a letter of intent, no lease agreement yet from them as they are waiting on the town.

***Motion*** *Mr. Crowley moved to approve to recommended to Town Meeting the TIF as presented; Mr. Kittredge second.*

***All in favor***

Mr. Hadley stated this will still need to go to town meeting and may be difficult, Mr. Migridigian stated his tenant offered to host town meeting on the property but they are not sure if that would be biased. Mr. Rucho does not believe they will get a quorum and would not vote to hold a town meeting indoors, Mr. Hadley asked if there is a way to hold town meeting in a parking lot. Ms. Lucier asked when they are thinking of having town meeting and asked if there is an issue waiting until May. Mr. Migridigian stated they will not wait until May, Mr. Rucho stated they may have to wait until May for a town meeting. Mr. Crowley stated if Cogmedix moves forward and signs deals and they begin building prior to town meeting, he will stand up and not support a TIF at town meeting. Mr. Rucho stated it should not go on town meeting warrant if the building is already started but will have to wait and see what happened from now to May.

* **Concurrence on the hiring of Linda Taylor as Administrative Assessor effective November 23, 2020 for 19 hours a week at a rate of $18.52 per hour:**

***Motion*** *Mr. Rucho moved to approve; Mr. Crowley second.*

***All in favor***

* **Vote to approve and sign 3-year employment contract, as recommended by the Selectboard, with the Chief of Police effective March 3, 2021 for a term to expire on March 2, 2024:**

***Motion*** *Mr. Crowley moved to approve; Mr. Kittredge second.*

Mr. Rucho expressed his discontent with the process and believes the Board should have voted to instruct the Town Administrator to negotiate the contract. He stated the Board usually meets and reviews the contract for any changes or issues then vote to have Town Administrator start negotiations and then come back to executive session to discuss any further changes. He would like it to be the correct way for the future and would like to go back to the way they have done this in the past. Mr. Rajeshkumar stated he has some reservations approving this contract and disagrees with the Chief’s view on traffic enforcement and hopes to see change.

***All in favor***

* **Social Media Policy Discussion (PC):**

Mr. Crowley stated he would like to form a subcommittee to review and work on getting a policy in place. He stated West Boylston Connect Facebook page is not a place for town employees to comment or where town business is conducted. Ms. Lucier stated she sent and email out to all employees reminding them of the policy in place. Mr. Rajeshkumar stated this would be a grey area. Mr. Rucho stated employees are different than Board members in regards to commenting online. Mr. Rucho does not believe employees should be on social media while at work for personal use. Mr. Rucho would like to be on the subcommittee and would be interested on being on it, and Rajeshkumar also volunteered.

***Motion*** *Mr. Crowley moved to appoint Mr. Rucho and Mr. Rajeshkumar to the subcommittee; Mr. Kittredge second.*

***All in favor***

**TOWN ADMINISTRATOR’S REPORT**

1. **Town Administrator’s Commitment to Excellence Award:**

The Town Administrator’s Commitment to Excellence Award was established in 2007. At that time the Selectboard wanted to highlight the importance of recognizing both volunteers and employees. This program annually recognizes the achievements of a municipal employee who has excelled in his or her position. Board and committee members are also eligible for 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. Nominations are open for the Town Administrator’s Commitment to Excellence Award and forms can be found in the Town Administrator’s office or on the Town Administrator’s Website at www.westboylston-ma.gov. Please submit the forms by December 31st in order to be considered for this award.

1. **Review of Revolving Funds:**

Annually during the month of November, we review all of our Revolving Accounts. The intent of the review is to ensure 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.

Our land use boards are beginning to build up their numbers again. The municipal budget includes $1,800 for Conservation Commission salaries, $4,000 for Planning Board Salaries and $3,000 for Zoning Board Salaries. Once those funds are depleted the revolving fund is charged. We just began charging our landfill monitoring expenses to our Landfill Lease fund and I just emailed the MLP their invoice for 2020 in amount of $10,000. Parks Field Receipts are down due to COVID but we have been able to fund bark mulch from our DEP grant and the Green Communities LED light project will reduce future outside lighting.

1. **FY22 Budget Packages:**

FY22 Budget Packages have been distributed to the various municipal departments, boards and committees. They are due back on January 15, 2021.

**APPOINTMENT AND RESIGNATIONS:**

* **Acknowledge resignation of Patrick Novia from the Council on Aging.**

Mr. Rucho asked how many are on the Council, Ms. Lucier stated full Board of 7 with Associate Members the Committee is now 6 and will post that there is a vacancy .

**MEETINGS, INVITATIONS & ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

* **All offices will be closed on Thursday, November 26th 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 plant o 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.**

Mr. Rajeshkumar would like a notice with changes to be placed on town website.

* **Sunday, December 6th from 1-4 p.m. the Agricultural Commission will be hosting a food drive in the parking lot of the Congregational Church, 26 Central Street to benefit the West Boylston Food Pantry. The Food Pantry welcomes all non-perishable food items and paper products. Questions may be directed to Commission member Amy Marold 508-353-9696**
* **Residents and businesses who wish to get more information about the Light Up West Boylston Event may do so by emailing** [**lightupWB@gmail.com**](mailto:lightupWB@gmail.com) **they also have a Facebook page.**
* **This year the Town will receive a 28.6% CPA Fund match from the State in the amount of $71,759. Last year we were at 19.1%, $40,900 and in 2018 we were at 17.2%, $34,576.**
* **The Town received notice that it did not receive the $100,000 PARC Land Grant we applied for the Mixter Field Project**
* **Tax Classification Public Hearing will be held on December 2nd.**

**FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS/SELECTMANS REPORTS:**

* Mr. Crowley announced the State has changed how it funded the CPC and now increased fees at the Registry of Deed and more towns have joined and is unsure how that will change the percentage going forward.
* Mr. Crowley would like to send a thank you to Mr. Novia for his service to the town.
* Mr. Crowley stated he is excited to see the Light up West Boylston bringing everyone in town together by a private group of people.
* Mr. Rajeshkumar would like to work on more days for Yard Waste and would like it on the agenda in the future, Ms. Lucier has spoken to Mr. Kellaher and they will add one more day in December 1st. Mr. Rajeshkumar would to discuss adding more days next year, Ms. Lucier stated there is a cost to everything.
* Mr. Rajeshkumar asked about annual reviews and asked when they were all completed, Ms. Lucier stated they should be completed on your anniversary dates will place on a future agenda.

Motion Mr. Rucho to adjourn at 7:20 p.m. Mr. Crowley, second all in favor.

Respectfully submitted, Approved: December 16, 2020

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Faye D. Zukowski, Municipal Assistant John W. Hadley, Chairman

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Barur R. Rajeshkumar, Vice Chairman

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Patrick J. Crowley, Clerk

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Christopher A. Rucho, Selectman

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Michael J. Kittredge III, Selectman