

80

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN
MINUTES
MONDAY, MARCH 28, 2022**

Members Present: Shana M. Shufelt, Chair
Steven J. Ouellette, Vice Chair
Ann E. Boxler
Brian Valcourt

Absent: Richard Brewer, Clerk

Also Present: James Hartnett, Town Administrator

Select Board Chair Shana Shufelt, called the remote meeting to order at 6:02 P.M.

1. Acknowledgments & Recognitions

2. Discussion

Senator Rodrigues provided an update on South Watuppa Pond Study. He was able to secure funds that were matched by Bay Coast Bank to clean up and improve water quality in the pond. UMass was hired to do a water study, and to come up with proposed solutions. Round one is complete, the study showed the major issue is phosphorus in bedded in the bottom of the pond. In the warmer weather algae is fed by the phosphorus.

Representative Schmid thanked the board for signing the agreement, which includes three communities across two states which provides for additional grant opportunities. The communities will be applying for a Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) Grant, and he will keep the Board informed.

They also updated the Board on Route 6, \$1,000,000 in ARPA funds will be put aside for the engineering and design of the water and sewer project.

The state will be receiving 9-12 Billion Dollars for construction and will consider shovel ready projects Senator Rodrigues suggested maybe hiring a Clerk of the Works, to oversee the Route 6 project.

Rep. Schmid highlighted that the Commuter Rail is expected in November 2023, Senator Rodrigues added the project is on time, on budget, and it is in the construction phase in Fall River, Freetown and New Bedford. Rep. Schmid noted that things will continue to change with the Rail and the Route 6 Projects, zoning will need to be addressed for growth in a smart way.

Senator Rodrigues spoke about a couple of other areas that the state has been focusing on, Chapter 70 formula has been recalculated effecting K-12 Schools. Increases in the PILOT for the State Beach, and the Route 177 Roundabout is on the State Transportation Improvement Plan.

3. Public Hearings

4. Licenses/Permits

5. Appointments and Resignations

- a. Request to re-appoint Isabel Kochman to the Board of Registrars.

Postponed

- b. Request to appoint one of the following applicants to the Town Appointed Tenant Board Member seat of the Westport Housing Authority: Pauline L. Brodeur, Richard E. Ziomek, Dawn Lisa Provost and Arthur C. Rod

Ms. Shufelt asked the four candidates to introduce themselves and explain why they would like to serve on the Board

Pauline Brodeur was present and stated that she has been a tenant for one year, has attended most board meetings and been the only one there at times, she still plans on attending the meetings whether she's appointed or not.

Richard Ziomek was present and stated that he has been a tenant for six years, he is a handicapped veteran, has worked in the insurance industry, serves on The Internet Advisory Committee and has helped with the Veteran's Food Pantry.

Dawn Provost was present and stated that she has been a tenant for five years, has been a CAN since 1979, is a member of the National Guard, has attended meetings, and is aware of the Mass General laws and would like to enhance a better life for the residents.

Arthur Rod was present and stated that he has been a tenant for two years, he has an Associate's Degree in business management, is a part time manager, and would like to be sure that policies are in place and believes he could offer valuable insight.

Ms. Shufelt asked if any members of the Housing Authority would like to speak and if they had a recommendation. Veronica Beaulieu, Chair of the Housing Authority explained that there are over 1700 people on the waiting list for housing in Massachusetts. Housing at 666 State Road is State Funded and has 48 units, rent is \$400.00 a month with utilities, except telephone and cable/internet.

Ms. Shufelt asked if the Board was ready to make the appointment.

Mr. Ouellette praised Pauline Brodeur's meeting attendance, Mr. Valcourt agreed, that to have an idea of how the meetings are run is an advantage.

MOTION by Mr. Ouellette to appoint Pauline Brodeur as the Town Appointed Tenant Board Member to the Westport Housing Authority, seconded by Mr. Valcourt. The Board voted 4-0 in favor.

- c. Request from Bernadette Oliver; Town Clerk to appoint the following Poll Workers effective April 1, 2022 to June 30, 2023.

Republican: Mary McCarthy, Nancy Cook, Carin Wehrmeister, June Hebert, Marjori Pavao, Amy Lawton, Marilyn Simons, Paul Trial, Paul Mann, Evelyn Mercier & Jacqueline Marmen

Democrat: Geraldine Fortier, Almerinda Tenchara, Mary Freitas, Merline Toupin, Barbara Marcotte, Wilfred St. Michel, Phyllis Michalewich, Steven Anderson, Madeline Freitas & Claudette Bisson

Unenrolled: Denise Toohey, John Gifford, David Lalima, Reginald Deschenes & Claire Parent.

Substitute Poll Workers – Democrat: Claude Lovecraft, Judith Souza, Ann Maguire & Maureen Murphy

Substitute Poll Workers – Republican: Judith Brightman

Substitute Poll Workers – Unenrolled: Carol Borden, Marshall Ronco & Jan Caouette

Bernadette Oliver mentioned that since Covid she has lost 12 Poll Workers, she reached out to the Town Committees, lists have been submitted, it takes 30 workers for the regular election.

MOTION by Mr. Ouellette to appoint the Poll Workers as recommend by Bernadette Oliver as listed, seconded by Mr. Valcourt. The Board voted 4-0 in favor.

6. Discussion

a. Mass Highway Bridge Replacement Project

Mr. Hartnett has been working with Keith McDonald from Pare Engineering on the state's bridge replacement program. Possible locations include the Drift Road Bridge structure just north of Charlotte White Road, the Old County Road Bridge spanning the Westport River and the Bridge Culvert on Cornell Road. Applications need to be filed by April 1, 2022. Mr. Hartnett stated that Mass Highway provides up to \$100,000 for design, project would be about \$150,000 – \$200,000 for design and \$500,000 for construction, more funding is not guaranteed.

Looked at Drift Road, may be something more than residents are looking for, he does not recommend this project. The Highway Department recommended the Old County Road location. Mr. Hartnett also recommends the Old County Road Project, he will check with Pare Engineering to see if we can get the application in on time.

MOTION by Mr. Valcourt to proceed with the Old County Road Bridge Project, seconded by Mr. Ouellette. The Board voted 4-0 in favor.

b. Fiscal Year 2023 Budget and Town Warrant Articles

Ms. Shufelt stated that the Finance Committee has not finalized the budget. She asked Mr. Hartnett if any changes were made, Mr. Hartnett answered no major changes from the Board of Selectmen's approved budget. The Finance Committee made some changes. Ms. Shufelt mentioned that Mr. Hartnett increased the IT Budget for the override portion, and she feels that an onsite employee would be beneficial. She also stated that an override budget will be approximately \$6,000,000 including the schools request.

c. School Committee Request – High School Expense Agreement

School Department is requesting use of the old high school building through 2024. Ms. Shufelt questioned who was funding what for the building now. Mr. Hartnett stated that there is \$200,000 in a warrant article for anticipated expenses of the building, there is also an additional \$100,000 in the operating budget. The school department is looking to fund the first \$50,000.

Ms. Shufelt doesn't have a problem with them remaining in the building, maintaining the building, plowing, etc. However she is not comfortable with locking in past June of 2023. Mr. Valcourt stated that the School Department needs the building. Mr. Ouellette posed his concern about if something breaks down and there is a benefit in keeping the building occupied.

Ms. Shufelt once again stated that occupancy through 2024 is questionable. Mr. Valcourt suggested to sign through 2023, until we have a better feel as to what the town is doing with the building, he questioned what the RFI deadline was, Mr. Hartnett stated the deadline has passed. Mr. Ouellette stated that with the business office there, the gym being used, at least the water is being used, etc. He feels that details in the agreement need to be worked out. Mr. Aubin stated that they would like something in place sooner than later.

Ms. Shufelt questioned Mr. Hartnett as to what he needs from The Board. The Board agreed that Mr. Hartnett, Ms. Shufelt and Mr. Valcourt will work on contract.

7. Action Items

- a. Request from Elephant Rock Beach Club for a crosswalk and required signage. George Crowell from The Elephant Rock Beach Club explained that in speaking with the Police Department, the crosswalk is necessary for the safety of the beach goers.

MOTION by Mr. Valcourt to approve the crosswalk request from Elephant Rock Beach, with Police and Highway recommendations, seconded by Mr. Ouellette. The Board voted 4-0 in favor.

- b. Request from Bernadette Oliver; Town Clerk to approve the Warrant for Annual Town Election.

MOTION by Mr. Ouellette to approve the Warrant for the Annual Town Election, seconded by Mr. Valcourt. The Board voted 4-0 in favor.

- c. Request from School Committee to transfer the Campground Property on Old Country Road from the Town to the School District.

Tony Viveiros, school committee member, stated that a couple of years ago the town purchased the campground property, last year Town Meeting authorized the transfer of the campground to the School Department which is a more efficient process. He would like to keep the campground committee active and the committee will be reorganized to under the School Department. Mr. Valcourt stated that the Campground Committee agreed to transfer.

Ms. Shufelt asked would the Board have to dissolve The Campground Committee, then the School Department would re-form the Committee, the consensus was yes they would need to dissolve the Committee.

Mr. Ouellette questioned if the property is transferred, would CPC funds still be able to be used for rec-open space, walking paths, etc. The consensus was yes the funds could still be used.

MOTION by Mr. Valcourt to approve the transfer of the Campground Property to the School Department. Seconded by Mr. Ouellette. The Board voted in favor 4-0.

- d. Request from the School Department to approve Change Order for the Roof Replacement Project at the Westport Elementary School.

Mr. Aubin explained that back in October 2020, \$4,510,000.00 was appropriated for the Westport Elementary School Roof. Capeway Roofing planned to start in June 2021, but the start was delayed due to supply chain issues related to COVID. With the delay, the cost of the project has increased by \$435,000 bringing it to \$3,81635.00. MSBA will not cover the increase.

MOTION by Mr. Valcourt to approve the change order, seconded by Mr. Ouellette. The Board voted 4-0 in favor.

- e. Request from Town Administrator to approve contract for Pioneer Consulting Group, Inc. to reconcile Water Enterprise Account.

Mr. Hartnett explained that over the past six years there has been a lot of discrepancies in the Water Enterprise Account, and feels it needs to be reconciled, with the cost not to exceed \$9,500.00.

Ms. Shufelt agreed it needs to be reconciled.

MOTION by Mr. Valcourt to approve the Pioneer Consulting Contract, seconded by Mr. Ouellette. The Board voted 4-0 in favor.

- f. Request approval of the 2022 Seasonal Trailer Permits.

MOTION by Mr. Valcourt to approve the 2022 East Beach Trailer Permits per the recommendation of Jim Hartnett and Paula Brown with required documentation, seconded by Mr. Ouellette. The Board voted 4-0 in favor.

- g. Request to release Westport Housing Rehabilitation Program Lien recorded in Book 5945 Pages 306-310.

MOTION by Mr. Ouellette to release the Westport Housing Rehabilitation Program Lien recorded in Book 5945 Pages 306-310, seconded by Mr. Valcourt. The Board voted 4-0 in favor.

8. Town Administrator Report

Westport Town Hall and Annex Inspections

The Town Hall and the Annex were recently inspected by Ralph Souza and Captain Mark Brisk. For the most part the buildings were in conformance with some minor issues that need to be addressed. Safety signage needs to be updated, storage areas need to be cleared, there are two oil tanks in the basement of the Town Hall that should be evaluated or removed (tanks were removed on Wednesday March 23, 2022) Electrical outlets and extension cords will also need to be addressed.

Westport Water Billing

The Town continues to work with the City of Fall River on the water billing account. A new account was set up by the City as of January 1, 2022, but water consumption still appears to be on the high side based on local meter readings. The accuracy of the older meters will be determined once the new meters are installed. Water meter replacement work should start within the next two weeks. There was a three week delay due to difficulty in getting some of the fittings.

Charter Communications

Charter Communications has notified the Town and will be notifying customers of a rate increase that will take effect on or after April 15, 2022. These rate increases will not affect current customers' promotional rates until the end of the promotional period. (Rate increases are in the file folder)

Bridge Replacement

I have been working with Keith McDonald from Pare Engineering on the state's bridge replacement program. Possible locations include the Drift Road Bridge structure just north of Charlotte White Road, the Old County Road Bridge spanning the Westport River and the Bridge Culvert on Cornell Road. Applications need to be filed by April 1, 2022.

9. Approve Minutes

- a. March 9, 2022
- b. March 14, 2022

MOTION by Mr. Ouellette to approve the March 9, 2022 and March 14, 2022 Minutes, seconded by Mr. Valcourt. The Board voted 4-0 in favor.

10. Report on Bill Warrant

Ms. Boxler stated that the warrant was fine, smaller without all the school bills.

11. Selectmen Liaison Committee Reports & Suggestions for Future Agenda Discussion / Action

Mr. Ouellette – Senator Rodrigues and Representative Schmid summarized what he had.

Mr. Valcourt – Nothing to report on the Long Term Building Committee, Energy and Campground are meeting next month.

Ms. Boxler – Affordable Housing, the house on Sodom Road is coming along, there will be more volunteer opportunities opening up.

Ms. Shufelt – Entry Point will be presenting at the next Board of Selectmen meeting on April 11th

Climate Resiliency Committee is very busy, with 5 sub committees; Agriculture, Health, Infrastructure, Water, Funding & Engagement.

12. Comments and Statements

13. Boards/Committees/Commissions Vacancy List

14. Topics not reasonably anticipated forty-eight (48) hours in advance of the meeting.

15. Executive Session – pursuant to the provisions of MGL c 30A section 21(a), Chair declares an open meeting will have a detrimental effect to:

- a. To discuss the reputation, character, physical condition or mental health, rather than professional competence, of an individual, or to discuss the discipline or dismissal of, or complaints or charges brought against, a public officer, employee, staff member or individual.
- b. Discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining - Westport Police Association.
- c. Discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining - Highway Department
- d. Approve Minutes
 - March 9, 2022
 - March 14, 2022

MOTION by Mr. Valcourt at 7:43 p.m. to enter into Executive Session for the reasons declared by the Chair, seconded by Mr. Ouellette. The Board voted 4-0 in favor by roll call vote, Valcourt, aye, Brewer aye, Ouellette aye and Shufelt aye.

Adjournment

The Board returned to open session and the Chair called for adjournment.

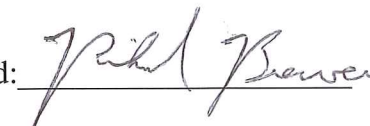
MOTION by Ms. Shufelt to adjourn the meeting at 8:30p.m., seconded by Mr. Ouellette. The Board voted 4-0 in favor.

Respectfully submitted,



Paula M. Brown
Administrative Assistant

Approved: _____



Richard Brewer, Clerk
Select Board Member

Files:

5b Arthur C. Rod
5b Dawn Lisa Provost
5b HOUSING AUTHORITY current positions
5b Pauline L. Brodeur

5b PHN 2021-01 Tenant Board Member v2
5b Richard E. Ziomek
5c Poll Workers
5c Poll Workers
6b Override FY23 Budget for BOS meeting 03-28-2022
6c School Department Agreement
7a Elephant Rock
7b Town Election Warrant
7c School Committee Request – Campground
7d WCS Change Order
7e Pioneer Consulting
7g Release of Lien
7g Release of Lien
7g Release of Lien
9a 03092022 Regular Meeting Minutes
9b 03142022 Final Minutes