



BOARD OF SELECTMEN REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Monday, May 9, 2022

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

Also Present: James Hartnett, Town Administrator

Acknowledgments & Recognitions

The Chair noted that the Annual Town Meeting had been held in the new middle/high school for the first time, with over 300 voters attending the meeting. She expressed her appreciation to the Moderator and all those who worked to set up and conduct the meeting, and added thanks to all the voters who turned out to conduct the town's business. Mr. Ouellette noted the recent passing of several notable residents: U.S. Navy veteran Ray Parent, known for hydroplane racing on South Watuppa Pond decades ago; the well-known Isaac Tripp at age 92; and Donald Cruther, owner of Cruther's Restaurant.

1. Public Hearings

6:05pm – application request of Robert McAuliffe for a six-month seasonal trailer permit for recreational purposes to locate a trailer on 138 East Beach Road. The property is shown on Assessor's Map 76A, Lot 103. Mr. McAuliffe was present, indicating he had recently purchased the property where a seasonal trailer had been permitted in the past. He said yes when asked by Mr. Ouellette if he was familiar with the conditions and regulations concerning seasonal trailers in the environmentally sensitive area.

MOTION by Mr. Valcourt to approve a six-month seasonal trailer permit for 138 East Beach Road. Second by Mr. Ouellette. The motion passed on a 5-0 vote.

2. Licenses/Permits

a. Request from the Holy Ghost Club, Inc. 179 Sodom Road for One Day Alcoholic Beverage Licenses:

May 20, 2022 from 5pm – 10pm for a Chicken BBQ

June 11, 2022 from 12pm – 6pm for a Family Reunion

June 25, 2022 from 1pm – 7pm for a Fundraiser

MOTION by Mr. Valcourt to approve One Day Alcoholic Beverage Licenses for the Holy Ghost Club, Inc. at 179 Sodom Road for the times and dates listed. Second by Mr. Ouellette. The motion passed on a 5-0 vote.

b. Request from New England Race Events, LLC for a One Day Wine & Malt License at John Reed Road, from 10:00am – 1:00pm on Sunday, May 22, 2022.

MOTION by Mr. Valcourt to approve a One Day Wine & Malt License to New England Race Events, LLC for the event on John Reed Road, conditioned on compliance with Police Department recommendations. Second by Mr. Ouellette. The motion passed on a 5-0 vote.

3. Appointments and Resignations

a. Request from the Steve Souza, Cemetery Department to appoint Ryan Furtado as a seasonal employee starting May 15, 2022. Mr. Hartnett noted that Mr. Furtado had been previously employed in this position and recommended the appointment.

MOTION by Mr. Valcourt to appoint Ryan Furtado as a seasonal employee for the Cemetery Department. Second by Mr. Ouellette. The motion passed on a 5-0 vote.

b. Request from the Steve Souza, Cemetery Department to post a Seasonal Employee Position. Mr. Hartnett recommended the posting.

MOTION by Mr. Valcourt to post the Seasonal Employee position. Second by Mr. Ouellette. The motion passed on a 5-0 vote.

c. Request from Police Chief Keith Pelletier to re-appoint Officers Luke Sauve and Corey Mack as Full-Time Police Officers effective May 19, 2022. Mr. Hartnett noted the length of service for each officer and recommended their re-appointment.

MOTION by Mr. Valcourt to re-appoint Luke Sauve and Corey Mack as Full-Time Police Officers, effective May 19, 2022. Second by Mr. Brewer. The motion passed on a 5-0 vote.

d. Request from Police Chief Keith Pelletier to re-appoint Officers Michelle Donovan and Sarah Zielinski as Full-Time Police Officers effective May 9, 2022. Mr. Hartnett recommended the officers be re-appointed as recommended by the Police Chief.

MOTION by Mr. Valcourt to re-appoint Michelle Donovan and Sarah Zielinski as Full-Time Police Officers effective May 9, 2022. Second by Mr. Ouellette. The motion passed on a 5-0 vote.

e. Request to fill the vacant position on the Board of Registrars; Democratic Town Committee: Isabel Kochman. Republican Town Committee: Robert Alves, Paul Mann and Eve Mercer to be appointed as Registrar of Voters.

Ms. Shufelt noted that the vacancy may be filled with a resident from either major political party. Both parties had been asked to make recommendations for the post. Mr. Valcourt noted that Ms. Kochman had previously served as a Registrar.

MOTION by Mr. Valcourt to appoint Isabel Kochman to the vacant position on the Board of Registrars. Second by Mr. Ouellette. The motion passed on a 5-0 vote.

f. Request from Southeastern Regional Planning & Economic Development District (SRPEDD) to appoint a designee to the Joint Transportation Planning Group (JTPG).

MOTION by Mr. Valcourt to appoint Mr. Hartnett as the town's representative to the Joint Transportation Planning Group, with Highway Surveyor Chris Gonsalves as the alternate. Second by Mr. Ouellette. The motion passed on a 5-0 vote.

g. Request from Southeastern Regional Planning & Economic Development District to appoint a Board of Selectmen Representative to the SRPEDD Commission. Mr. Ouellette indicated he was willing to continue as the Board's representative.

MOTION by Mr. Valcourt to re-appoint Steven Ouellette as the Board's representative to the SRPEDD Commission. Second by Ms. Boxler. The motion passed on a 5-0 vote.

h. Request to approve the resignation of Jeremy Dellecese from the Westport Police Department effective April 30, 2022.

MOTION by Mr. Valcourt to accept the resignation of Jeremy Dellecese from the Westport Police Department effective April 30, 2022, with a letter of thanks for his service. Second by Mr. Ouellette. The motion passed on a 5-0 vote.

4. Discussion

a. Caring for Historic Cemeteries in Westport– Betty Slade and Todd Baptista.

Ms. Slade detailed her 16-year history of identifying and caring for Westport's 103 historic cemeteries, all registered with the Mass. Historical Commission. A website (westportmacemetery.org) has been established containing maps and records of the burials in each cemetery, and a Facebook page (Westport Gravestone Cleaning and Restoration) is providing updates on cleaning, repairs, and stories of the interesting people under the gravestones. Ms. Slade noted that the D2 non-toxic cleaning agent has been donated by a manufacturer's representative since 2019, when cleaning workshops were held to start training volunteers. Mr. Baptista reported beginning his involvement as a gravestone cleaner, and later joined the gravestone repair team. He noted both Community Preservation Act funds and private fundraising have financed ongoing cleaning and repair efforts. He indicated 357 gravestones have been repaired by the volunteer teams, an estimated \$100,000 worth of service if performed by paid professionals. Ms. Slade indicated that the town Cemetery Department maintains 40 public cemeteries with the help of some perpetual care funds, and suggested that the department's budget is inadequate to properly maintain those sites. She further suggested that space at Beech Grove Cemetery was running out, and planning for development of a new 20-acre burial ground is needed. Both she and Mr. Baptista also detailed ongoing vandalism problems at different cemeteries, as well as issues with dog walkers leaving animal waste on the grounds. They requested that the Board approve the posting of signs at public cemeteries noting that dog walking is not allowed. Mr. Ouellette raised the issue of the lack of trash cans at the cemeteries, and was told the barrels had been removed because of abuse problems. There was general agreement among Board members that signs prohibiting dog walking should be requested from the Highway Department for posting at the larger cemeteries.

b. Beach Committee Update

Beach Committee Vice Chair Sean Leach reported that the committee was preparing for the coming season, but was having difficulty hiring enough lifeguards to fill all shifts; only five of nine positions have been filled. He indicated that 2,814 beach stickers for 2022 have been sold so far, about 600 less than this time last season. There was some discussion of problems at Boater's Beach and other town properties, and potential capital needs for public beach operations. Mr. Hartnett commended Mr. Leach for faithfully opening and closing the public beach parking lot each day; the Chair also offered her thanks for the continuing public service he performs.

c. Open Meeting Law Complaint 4/25/2022 Patrick Higgins

Mr. Hartnett noted there were two issues raised by Mr. Higgins' complaint. The first was that the Board's emailed agenda did not properly list the location of the meeting; he indicated the address was properly listed on the official posted notice at Town Hall. The second point was that the agenda item for the AFSCME contract did not identify the union as representing Highway Department employees; Mr. Valcourt noted that the Highway Department staff is the only group on the municipal payroll represented by that union.

5. Action Items

a. Request from the Recreation Department to accept a \$100.00 Donation from Donna Amaral for purpose of recreation.

MOTION by Mr. Valcourt to accept a \$100 donation from Donna Amaral for recreation purposes. Second by Mr. Ouellette. The motion passed on a 5-0 vote.

b. Request from The Buzzards Bay Coalition to hold their Annual Road (Bicycle) Race through town on Sunday, October 2, 2022, from 8:00am – 10:00am

MOTION by Mr. Valcourt to approve the Buzzards Bay Coalition's use of town roads for the Annual Road Race on Oct. 2, 2022, conditioned on compliance with Police Department recommendations for the event. Second by Mr. Ouellette. The motion passed on a 5-0 vote.

c. Request from the Westport Education Foundation, Friends of Council on Aging and the Westport Middle-High Parent Teacher Organization, to hold the 2022 5K Walk/Run on Sunday, October 23, 2022.

MOTION by Mr. Valcourt to approve the Westport Education Foundation, Friends of Council on Aging and the Westport Middle-High Parent Teacher Organization to use town roads for the 2022 5K Walk/Run on Sunday, Oct. 23, 2022, conditioned on compliance with Police Department recommendations for the event. Second by Mr. Ouellette. The motion passed on a 5-0 vote.

d. Request to approve contract for AFSCME Council 93 Local 1701, Highway Department.

MOTION by Mr. Valcourt to approve contract for AFSCME Council 93 Local 1701, Highway Department. Second by Mr. Ouellette. The motion passed on a 5-0 vote.

e. Request from the Planning Board for comments regarding the Special Permit and Site Plan for Borrego Solar, located on the west side of Division Road between 355 and 403, owned by John and Marie Ciccotelli. No comments.

f. Request to release Westport Housing Rehabilitation Program Lien recorded in Book 8138 Page(s) 248-251.

MOTION by Mr. Valcourt to release Westport Housing Rehabilitation Program Lien recorded in Book 8138 Page(s) 248-251. Second by Mr. Ouellette. The motion passed on a 5-0 vote.

g. Request from the Council on Aging to accept the following donations \$120 Misc Donation for Tech Class, \$150 from Ralph Urban, for Best Use. Totaling \$270.

MOTION by Mr. Valcourt to allow the Council on Aging to accept the listed donations for the stated purposes. Second by Mr. Ouellette. The motion passed on a 5-0 vote.

h. Request from Denise Bouchard, to refund Elizabeth Colby of 107 Davis Road, \$15.88 in Demand/Penalty Fees due to an error in Water Department Billing.

MOTION by Mr. Valcourt to approve the refund of \$15.88 in fees to Elizabeth Colby of 107 Davis Road. Second by Mr. Ouellette. The motion passed on a 5-0 vote.

i. Request from Chris Leonard; Marine Services to advertise the Shellstock Fundraiser Banner over Main Road, from now until the event which is August 13, 2022.

MOTION by Mr. Ouellette to conditionally approve the request from Marine Services to post the banner over Main Road, with dates to be verified by Mr. Ouellette after a check of availability of space. Second by Mr. Valcourt. The motion passed on a 5-0 vote.

j. Request from Westport River Watershed Alliance to hold their Annual Cherry & Web Clean-up Day on Saturday, May 14, 2022 from 10am – 12 Noon.

MOTION by Mr. Valcourt to approve the request from Westport River Watershed Alliance to hold their Annual Cherry & Web Clean-up Day on Saturday, May 14, 2022. Second by Mr. Ouellette. The motion passed on a 5-0 vote.

6. Town Administrator Report

Mr. Hartnett provided details on the SRPEDD annual meeting, with Mr. Ouellette planning to attend; and an update on the South Coast Rail construction project and Rt. 177 roundabout planning effort. He reported a \$50,000 earmark in the proposed state budget for Hix Bridge Landing improvements; receipt of a \$200,000 Green Communities grant for lighting upgrades in various buildings; and a Board of Health application for grant funding for shared public health staffing with partnering communities. He also noted an award of \$457,000 in state grant funds through a winter recovery assistance program. The Chair suggested the need for a system to record all grant awards made to the town.

7. Approve Minutes

a. April 25, 2022

b. May 3, 2022

MOTION by Ms. Boxler to approve the minutes of the April 25, 2022 and May 3, 2022 meetings as submitted. Second by Mr. Valcourt. The motion passed on a 5-0 vote.

8. Report on Bill Warrant

Ms. Boxler reported all was in order.

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

Mr. Brewer reported his attendance at the Bristol Agricultural High School ribbon-cutting ceremony, and a recent meeting with Kirby Brook neighborhood residents and the Town Administrator. Once a potential plan of action is decided, he suggested the residents be invited to a Select Board meeting to discuss the proposal. Mr. Ouellette reported his attendance at the Bike Committee meeting, the Complete Streets program, and the last SRPEDD meeting. He commended residents for their cooperative spirit on financial matters at the Annual Town Meeting. Mr. Valcourt said he is acting chair of the Long Term Building Committee due to the resignation of the Chair. He suggested more volunteers are needed to assess options for the old high school; the potential for use as town offices, its value if sold, etc. He noted the need to update the building to meet current codes if used for anything but educational purposes, and reported that an independent appraisal of value is being sought. Mr. Valcourt indicated a consultant was proving valuable to the Energy Committee in its pursuit of additional grant monies. He also noted the obscene sign recently posted on Hix Bridge Road, suggesting it was an exercise of free speech, but also a classless and rude gesture to the rest of the community. Ms. Boxler indicated plans to attend upcoming Council on Aging and Affordable Housing Trust search subcommittee meetings; the Trust is seeking a replacement for its departing Housing Specialist. Ms. Shufelt advised that the Internet Advisory Committee is now meeting bi-weekly, and the School Building Committee's steering committee continues to meet. She noted that Memorial Day observances are in the planning stages.

10. Comments and Statements: None.

11. Boards/Committees/Commissions Vacancy List

The Chair noted the many opportunities available to residents for volunteer service on various boards, committees, and commissions. Candidates should apply to the Select Board office.

12. Topics not reasonably anticipated forty-eight (48) hours in advance of the meeting. None.

13. Executive Session – Passed over.

Adjournment

MOTION by Mr. Ouellette at 7:33 p.m. to adjourn the meeting. Second by Mr. Valcourt. The motion passed on a 5-0 vote.

Respectfully submitted, Robert Barboza, Recording Clerk

APPROVED:  Ann Boxler, Clerk, Select Board Member

1-138 East Beach McAuliffe
2a Holy Ghost Club
2b NE Road Race One Day Liquor
3ab Cemetary
3c WPD Appointments
3d WPD Appointments 2
3e Democratic Town Committee Registrar
Nominee
3e Republican Town Committee Registrar
Nominees
3f SRPEDD JTPG Appointment Form 2022-
2023
3g SRPEDD Commisioner Appointment
3h WPD Delecese Resignation
4a Cemetary
4a Cemetery
5a Recreation Dept. Donation
5b Buzzards Bay Run
5c WEF PTO COA Walk
5d 04202022 Final Westport Highway 2020 -
2021 CBA
5d 04202022 Track Changes Westport Highway
2020 - 2021 CBA
5e Borego Solar Division Road
5f Rehab Lien Release
5g COA Letter – Donations

5h Colby - Water Refund
5i Shellstock
5j WRWA Beach Clean Up
6 TA1 2022 SRPEDD Annual Meeting Invitation
6 TA2 SC Rail Updates
04252022 ES Minutes
04252022 Minutes
05032022 Minutes