

**SELECT BOARD MEETING MINUTES
VIRTUAL MEETING
MONDAY, MARCH 8, 2021
APPROVED**

SB Members Virtually Present: Alison S. Manugian, Chair; Joshua A. Degen, Vice Chair; Rebecca H. Pine, Clerk; John R. Giger, Member; John F. Reilly, Member

Also Virtually Present: Mark W. Haddad, Town Manager; Dawn Dunbar, Executive Assistant; Melisa Doig, HR Director; Patricia Dufresne, Town Accountant; Michael Hartnett, Tax Collector/Treasurer; Hannah Moller, Assistant Tax Collector/Treasurer; Megan Foster, Principal Assistant Assessor; Michael Bouchard, Town Clerk; Chief Michael Luth; Tom Delaney, DPW Director; Sergeant Henehan

Ms. Manugian called the meeting to order at 7:00pm and reviewed the agenda.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Ms. Pine said that the Affordable Housing Trust was due to meet last week but had an issue with their Zoom link and apologized that they ended up having to cancel.

Ms. Pine said that the Affordable Housing Trust had not spent any money on evaluating the Surrenden Farm parcel and had no plans to spend any money on that parcel contrary to what had been published in the Groton Herald.

Chief Luth said that they had forged a partnership with the YWCA for domestic abuse services and was happy to make the announcement. He said that they had already used their services a couple of times since establishing this partnership.

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

1. Mr. Haddad said he sent to the Board updated correspondence from the CDC relative to COVID. He said that he had asked the Fire Chief to update their protocols in compliance with the CDC and would bring that back to their next meeting.
2. Mr. Haddad said that they continued to be a yellow community and were still trending down. He said he was hopeful that they would have been made green this week but again hoped that would happen next week.
3. Mr. Haddad said that he and Chief Luth had reached an agreement for the Chief to serve as the Police Chief for the next 3 years. He said that he had agreed to freeze his salary in FY22 and instead would receive a one-time cash payment of 1.5%, an increase of one additional weeks' vacation with a one-week vacation buyback, and an increase in his clothing allowance. He said that years 2 and 3 would revert back to a performance increase to his base salary of up to 3%. He asked the Board to consider ratifying the contract.

Ms. Pine made a motion to ratify the contract with Chief Michael Luth. Mr. Degen seconded the motion. Roll Call: Manugian-aye; Degen-aye; Pine-aye; Giger-aye; Reilly-aye

4. Mr. Haddad said that the only change to the warrant articles was an update to the CPC article for the Affordable Housing Trust to remove testing at Surrenden Farm as well as an updated summary from the citizen's petition by the proponent. He said that the public hearing was due to be held on Monday, March 15th at 7:15pm. He said that they would be meeting to discuss Town Meeting logistics tomorrow morning.
5. Mr. Haddad said that he sent out a copy of GD proposed budget in advance of the School District's public hearing on Wednesday night. Mr. Haddad said that they were \$93K under the levy limit right now. He said that he would be recommending to the Finance Committee tomorrow night to restore the Police Patrolman position based on his budget message.
6. Mr. Haddad reviewed the Board's schedule for upcoming meetings.
7. Mr. Haddad said that the AG put the Town under a compliance agreement 2 years ago because of some procurement compliance issues. He said that they just submitted their final compliance agreement last week and had satisfied their agreement with the AG. He said he was expecting a letter from them stating the same. He thanked Ms. Dunbar for her work on their compliance agreements over the past 2 years.

TRANSFER STATION FEES PUBLIC HEARING

Mr. Haddad read the public hearing notice into the record and asked the Board to open the public hearing.

Ms. Pine moved to open the public hearing to consider fee increases at the Transfer Station. Mr. Reilly seconded the motion. Roll Call: Manugian-aye; Degen-aye; Pine-aye; Giger-aye; Reilly-aye

Ms. Dunbar gave a brief presentation on proposed fee increases on both Transfer Station stickers and bag fees. The proposed fee increases were as follows:

<u>Sticker Type</u>	<u>Current</u>	<u>Proposed</u>			<u>Current Bag</u>	<u>Proposed</u>
	<u>Sticker Fee</u>	<u>Sticker Fee</u>			<u>Fee Rates</u>	<u>Fee Rates</u>
	<u>Rate</u>	<u>Rate</u>		<u>Bag Size</u>	<u>(10 bags)</u>	<u>(10 bags)</u>
Full Sticker	\$60.00	\$80.00		15 Gallon	\$11.00	\$15.00
Add'l Sticker	\$10.00	\$25.00		32 Gallon	\$19.00	\$25.00
Senior Sticker	\$15.00	\$20.00		45 Gallon	\$27.00	\$30.00
Replacement Sticker	\$2.00	\$5.00				

Ms. Pine said that no one liked an increase in fees, but the increases were needed to balance the budget and were still lower than our neighboring communities. Mr. Degen said that it was important to note that the work done on this was great and needed with the shortfall. He said that in order to raise the fees to the point where the revenue covered the expenses, he thought they should add an escalator of \$5.00 increases for the next 3 years on full, additional and senior stickers. He said he would like to propose that a group get together to do a cost analysis to look at this harder to see if a town wide hauler was more cost effective like the stormwater fee was assessed, as an example. Ms. Dufresne said she would have to review the revolving fund rules for something like this. Mr. Giger asked if this could be set up as an enterprise fund and not just a revolving fund. Ms. Dufresne said you could make an argument for an enterprise fund but might be a better fit as a revolving fund adding she would have to see how other communities handle this.

Mr. Degen moved to open the public hearing and continue it until the conclusion of the current discussion. Ms. Pine second them motion. Roll Call: Manugian-aye; Degen-aye; Pine-aye; Giger-aye; Reilly-aye

Mr. Delaney thanked Ms. Dunbar for all her work and said that up till 2 years ago they were turning a profit but recycling markets had tanked since. He said that Littleton and Pepperell ran theirs as enterprise funds and why they charged higher fees. Ms. Dufresne said that the revenue on recycling was so volatile and wanted, with enterprise funds, to make sure they could be self-sufficient.

Ms. Pine said that people might be unhappy if they take their options away from them. She thought the \$5 a year escalator was a good idea. Mr. Delaney said they were still low enough in the market that they wouldn't lose revenue hopefully. Mr. Haddad said he was concerned about raising fees using an escalator in subsequent years but understood not wanting to revisit this next year. He said he would like to have some time to see what this initial increase looked like and revisit it next year. Mr. Degen suggested revisiting this at the end of the calendar year.

Mr. Delaney said that they would start selling new stickers at the beginning of May and asked that they use May 1st as a date.

Mr. Giger moved that they close the public hearing. Ms. Manugian seconded the motion. Roll Call: Manugian-aye; Degen-aye; Pine-aye; Giger-aye; Reilly-aye

Ms. Pine moved that they accept the proposed fee increase on Transfer Station stickers and bags as presented that evening to take effect on May 1, 2021. Ms. Manugian seconded the motion.

Mr. Degen asked if she would include revisiting sticker fees by December 31st 2021. Ms. Pine said she was more comfortable leaving that in the hands of the Town Manager and DPW Director to come back at a time when they feel it would best.

Roll Call: Manugian-aye; Degen-aye; Pine-aye; Giger-aye; Reilly-aye

TRAFFIC RULES AND REGULATIONS PUBLIC HEARING

Mr. Haddad read the public hearing notice into the record.

Mr. Degen moved to reopen the public hearing. Ms. Manugian seconded the motion. Roll Call: Manugian-aye; Degen-aye; Pine-aye; Giger-aye; Reilly-aye

Mr. Haddad said that the major changes to the traffic rules and regulations were on parking ticket fees, a complete review of the stop signs and speed limits. He said that Sergeant Henahan and the Officers on his shift had reviewed each stop sign in Town to make sure their list was updated and accurate and the speed signs to again make sure that those were updated and accurate. Mr. Delaney said that they were going to spend about \$8K to replace stop signs and poles.

Mr. Haddad reviewed some of the minor changes. Mr. Haddad said that they were recommending changes from no parking being allowed from 20 to 10 feet near a crosswalk or curb so that they wouldn't lose 10 spots on Main Street. Mr. Haddad said that they used Lunenburg's parking fees as a comparable and increased their fees from \$15 fines to \$25 and \$30 fines to \$50. Mr. Reilly said that parking in fire lanes should be \$100. Mr. Giger asked if 10 feet of fire hydrant was too little and asked if the Fire Chief had been consulted. Chief Luth said that they were following state law but could consult with the Fire Chief. Ms. Manugian said she was fine bumping the life safety fines up to \$100 and the others to \$50. Mr. Degen said he thought \$50 was a little high but would defer to the will of the Board. Ms. Pine said she also thought \$50 was a little high.

Ms. Pine suggested that they add language to Article VI-Advertising, pointing people to the Sign Bylaw. Mr. Haddad said he would make that change. Mr. Haddad said that there was a heavy commercial exclusion on Champney Street and had added that because it was missing. He said that they also added language for construction vehicles loading and unloading in the right of way.

Mr. Haddad clarified why school zones were updated removing Lawrence Academy and not having the High School listed. He said that you could not have school zones for grades 9-12 under state law. Mr. Haddad said that as he mentioned earlier, they updated the stop sign locations. He reviewed the speed limits and the new layout. Ms. Manugian asked what the process was for having a speed limit reviewed. Mr. Haddad said that the process of reviewing speed limits on streets required a speed survey to which they looked at the 85th percentile for speed on a road and used that speed in most cases. Chief Luth said that they could contact Sergeant Henahan for speed studies. He said that they rotated their speed monitoring based on requests from citizens and to move around town. Mr. Giger asked the Chief to take another look at the 35 mph speed on Whiley Road.

Mr. Haddad said that they updated the regulations with the approved snow policy. Mr. Haddad said that the last section was the listing of private and public roads. He said that Ms. Pine suggested identifying public and private roads separately.

Mr. Reilly said that state law said \$1,000 or more in property damage under the accident section. Chief Luth said that he wasn't sure there should be a dollar amount there adding that leaving the scene was against the law. He said that they had to report within 5 days. Chief Luth said he would make the hand signals section on page 10 reflect state law.

Mr. Haddad said that they would update the sections, double check the stop signs, change the fines as discussed, and bring back a final clean version for their meeting on March 22nd. Mr. Haddad asked the Board to continue the public hearing to March 22nd at 7:15pm.

Mr. Degen made the motion. Ms. Pine seconded the motion. Roll Call: Manugian-aye; Degen-aye; Pine-aye; Giger-aye; Reilly-aye

OTHER BUSINESS

Ms. Manugian said that he had reached out to Senator Kennedy and Representative Harrington and was waiting to hear back on their availability so she could schedule a forum.

MINUTES

Mr. Degen moved to approve the meeting minutes of February 22, 2021 and March 1, 2021 as presented. Ms. Pine seconded the motion. Roll Call: Manugian-aye; Degen-aye; Pine-aye; Giger-aye; Reilly-aye

Ms. Manugian adjourned the meeting at 8:16pm.

Approved: _____
Rebecca H. Pine, Clerk

_____ respectfully submitted:
Dawn Dunbar, Executive Assistant

Date Approved: 3/15/21