



BOARD OF SELECTMEN

CHARLES E. SHEPARD MUNICIPAL BUILDING

48 High St. • P.O. Box 609 • Warren, MA 01083-0609 • Tel. 413-436-5701 • Fax 413-436-9754

BOARD OF SELECTMEN MINUTES OF March 11, 2021

PRESENT: Mr. John Nason: Chairman, Mr. Marc Richard: Vice-Chairman, and Mr. David Dufresne, Clerk.

ATTENDEES: see attached list.

Opened the Meeting at 6:02 PM

Mr. Nason called the meeting to order and led with the Pledge of Allegiance. He advised all that this meeting is being video/audio taped and will be rebroadcast following the meeting.

MINUTES:

Motion to approve and sign the Minutes of March 4, 2021 as written, made by Mr. Dufresne; second: Mr. Richard – AIF.

CORRESPONDENCE, read by Mr. Dufresne:

1. The Town received the monthly reports of the Fire and Police Departments for February 2021.
2. The Town through the Board of Selectmen, will conduct a performance hearing regarding their ongoing Community Development Block Grant Programs. Future projects under consideration as well as the Town's current FY2019 CDF programs will be discussed. The Hearing will be held on Thursday, March 25th at 6pm at the Shepard Building.
3. The Town received the letter of resignation from Marc W. Richard/Vice-Chairman to the Board of Selectmen. Mr. Richard's hope is to stay until the may election, which would allow for two open seats to be filled. Interested candidates for the Board of Selectmen have until Tuesday March 16th to pull Nomination Papers. Please call the Town Clerk Nancy Lowell for information.
4. There are openings on the Warren Cultural Council. Interested candidates may contact Diane Banfield via email at: jbanfield@msn.com
5. Warren Baseball & Softball registration is now live for the 2021 Spring Season. Please see the Town's website for more information, and the Link for registering.

Mr. Nason thanks Mr. Richard for his service; he has been an asset to the town and will be missed.

APPOINTMENT:

Police Chief Gerry Millette is requesting the Appointment of Officer Garrett Fortin from part-time to full-time. Officer Fortin is looking forward to continuing to serve the town. Mr. Dufresne motions to appoint Mr. Fortin as full-time police officer; second by Mr. Richard – AIF.

Police Lieutenant:

Lieutenant James Early in attendance, stated that he is happy, thankful, and appreciative to be in the leadership capacity as lieutenant. Lt. Early stated that he is down to earth and open to questions. Currently his shift is 7-3pm or 10-6pm, and eventually 3-11pm will be his shift. Fire Chief Adam Lavoie stated that he has known both Lt. Early and Officer Fortin for years, and both are easy to work with and a pleasure to work with.

First Right of Refusal: Map #11-Lot#47 Brimfield Road – Gift vs. Refusal

Mr. Nason does not see any use in the land, it is not useable land- right now the beavers control the land, and it would cost the town money for taxes. Mr. Richard stated that in the past 20 years, the town has not accepted this type of gift; we appreciate the gesture, but not at this time. Mr. Dufresne motion to not accept the land gift Map11, Lot47; Mr. Richard second – AIF.

Board of Selectmen Annual Report 2020: Mr. Dufresne motion to accept the BOS Annual Report as written; Mr. Richard second- AIF. Mr. Nason thanks Ms. Clowes for drafting the annual report.

Motor Vehicle Class II License Renewal: Chris Mendrek of Subaguru of Mass., LLC at 120 South Street, West Warren submitted the application and fee to renew their Class II Motor Vehicle license. Mr. Dufrene motion to approve the license renewal; Mr. Richard second – AIF.

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR/MANAGER DISCUSSION:

Andy Sheehan and Charlie Blanchard in attendance to Town Administrator and Manager benefits, responsibilities and information on having an article and advertising the position. Mr. Nason stated that his BOS term expires in May, Mr. Richard is retiring – cannot dedicate the time to run the town properly. The Board constantly changes and generally can only devote part-time to their BOS duties with full-time day jobs. The town needs someone stable to lead the town where it needs to be. Mr. Sheehan stated that the biggest benefit of a Town Administrator/Manager is the continuity that this position would provide. The demands, challenges, and requirements keep growing to run the town, and professional management would enable the operations to run smoothly on a day-to-day basis. It is hard to run the town with volunteers, even with good intentions. Mr. Blanchard stated how important it is to have someone here day to day- to put the budget together, personnel issues, goals, and advising the BOS on the day-to-day business. The description of Manager vs. Administrator depends on the duties assigned to the position, there would be a contract in place, with the ability to add or subtract responsibilities as needed. Example: A Chief Executive Officer may act as the BOS- to be more efficient with the ability for quicker decision-making. Mr. Blanchard stated that with our town's size and needs, an Administrator for Warren is probably the best solution. The Administrator would report to and advise the BOS, but the BOS would still be the Chief Officers. Mr. Richard stated that the municipal process can be snail's pace and the paperwork kills you, decisions need to be made, signatures need to be acquired; it is very frustrating on a daily basis keeping up with everything. Mr. Richard stated that two other occasions, the Town Manager position was on the town meeting and it went down in flames. Many towns have changed to having a town manager/administrator and it is the way to go. Mr. Blanchard will work with Mr. Dufresne to move forward with this town administrator project.

Drive-In Style Movies – Parks & Rec:

Ms. Sue Ramsey and Ms. Lisa Boucher of Parks & Rec, stated that they have researched the best way to hold drive-in movies for residents. They are ready to roll, but just need the BOS permission. They are proposing to use the Shepard Building to anchor a white 20'x40' tarp screen to the side of the building facing Hitchcock Ave, and residents would park their vehicles (approx.. 50 max. vehicles) in the level, flat, open field- to take place on Friday and Saturday nights. A projector was just purchased for this project. Ms. Ramsey stated that it is \$300-\$600 royalty fees incurred per movie & they would rent a sani-can, and hopefully with concessions and parking could pay for costs. Mr. Nason stated concerns of tarp coming loose from building and injuring people, also concerned of building damage. Ms. Ramsey reassured that eyeball anchors into the mortar of building would hold the tarp securely, and if an extremely windy day or bad weather the movie would not be scheduled. There are two egress in and out, and with Cert. teams to help direct traffic before and after the movie it would be safely done. Ms. Ramsey stated that Dean Park would not be a good spot for this, with baseball and softball being held there. Also, Dean Park

does not have a spot for the tarp, to be erected at least 6 feet from the ground. Ms. Ramsey stated that they have invested \$5,000 into this project, and town surveys people's ideas: movie drive-in is well received. Mr. Nason requested Ms. Ramsey research more to prove that the tarp could be safely put up, and Ms. Clowes to inquire with the town's Miia Insurance Company to see if any concerns of liabilities, etc.

Budgets: Parks & Recreation – Tax Collector – Town Clerk - Treasurer:

Parks & Rec- has level-funded budget, except for \$550 extra request for scheduling software. This software would allow residents to look up events, schedule and pay for events via credit card process. Myrec.com cost is \$2,500 per year and it does interface with unibank-unipay- Treasure did confirm this as well. Mr. Nason stated that we are still in the process of figuring out spending and where we can spend.

Tax Collector- Ms. Kerry Schmidt/Collector of Taxes stated that her Budget is pretty level-funded, except to meet obligations of potential increases in postage and insurance (\$196.78 increase) and expenses (\$223 increase). Also, Ms. Schmidt is requesting a salary increase, due to lack of increase in past six years. Mr. Nason stated we will be supporting the Collector, Clerk and Treasure raises, once we review all numbers. An Article would have to be put on for this pay raise increase for elected officials. Mr. Nason stated that we need to whittle down the Budgets, then we will talk about Articles. Mr. Richard stated we are not entertaining any Articles just now.

Town Clerk- Ms. Nancy Lowell/Clerk – Budget request \$10,000 extra for Elections and Registrations due to the need to rent chairs, floor coverings, etc. for town meetings due to covid-19 restrictions-also, with automated voter registration there is more of a workload, and early voting and mail-in voting is much more work than a year ago. Ms. Lowell inquired if RAO is to be designated with Town Clerk's office. Mr. Nason stated that RAO will be moved to Clerk, to create a benefited position to utilize with additional hours to help out and work with other offices as well.

Treasurer: Ms. Dawn Swistak/Treasurer – Budget is level-funded except for salary increase line. There is an 8% increase in Payroll, based on new positions. Also, medical increases with new employees.

COMMENTS & CONCERNS:

Mr. Richard sends out thanks, appreciation and recognition to Mr. Lacey, Tricia Valiton, Priscilla Clowes, and Brianna Dunn for helping out the community with Board of Health issues and handling the covid-19 pandemic. Thanks to Mr. Lacey for organizing the vaccinations and thanks to Council on Aging for all of their efforts and help in registering seniors for covid vaccination shots. Mr. Richard sends out thanks to John and Carrie Fijol and the many volunteers that performed trash pickup around town last Saturday. Mr. Fijol paid for the cost of disposing the trash. Thank you for your community help, it is much appreciated.

Mr. Richard stated that it has been his pleasure to serve on the Board and to accomplish some great things. Due to health issues that he needs to take care of, this is his top priority right now.

Motion to adjourn meeting at 8:46 pm by Mr. Richard; second by Mr. Dufresne – AIF.

Respectfully submitted,



Priscilla J. Clowes
Administrative Secretary



David P. Dufresne, Sr., Clerk