

Board of Selectmen
November 5, 2020

Via Zoom Remote Conferencing*

Approved Via Loom
by PC, SW, JKon 11/19/20
SJ

Robert Czekanski, Chair
Stanley Wysocki
Jonathan Keep
Don Lowe, Town Administrator
Jenny Jacobsen, Town Secretary

Chairman Czekanski called the meeting to order at 7:02 pm.
Ms. Jacobsen announced that the meeting is recorded.

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR FINALIST

Mr. Czekanski recapitulated the process the search committee utilized to choose their finalist from the 30 applications received and 11 initial interviews conducted. The Search Committee included Mr. Czekanski, Town Administrator Don Lowe, Human Resources Director Kristen Noel, Conservation Agent Rebecca Longvall, Parks and Recreation Commission Chair Ed Sterling and Devens DPW Director David Blazon. The Search Committee selected Randy Heglin. Mr. Czekanski and Mr. Lowe acknowledged Kristen Noel for doing the lion's share of the administrative work of the Search Committee.

Mr. Lowe highlighted the experience that Mr. Heglin brings to the Town including 17 years as DPW Director for Jaffrey, NH. The Search Committee is excited to bring Mr. Heglin forward as the unanimous recommendation. The Board welcomed Mr. Heglin.

Mr. Heglin appeared before the Board stating his excitement to begin and hopes to be an asset to the Town. Mr. Heglin acknowledged the professionalism and thoughtful questions asked by the Search Committee. Mr. Heglin will begin on November 16th.

On a motion made by Mr. Wysocki the Board voted by roll call 3-0 to appoint Randy Heglin to the position of the Director of the Department of Public Works for the Town of Bolton. (Wysocki-yes, Keep-yes, Czekanski-yes)

POLICE DEPARTMENT

Mr. Czekanski asked the Board to consider eliminating the process of the Board of Selectmen appointing officers to the Police Department. Chief Nelson was in attendance and was in support of eliminating the practice citing the difficulties that arise in coordinating the hirings with Board of Selectmen meetings. Mr. Wysocki supported cutting the Board of Selectmen out of the process. Mr. Keep stated understanding of the issues raised by Mr. Czekanski. He supported the existing practice which he described as quaint as a nice way to introduce new officers to the community as they are public facing employees.

On a motion made by Mr. Wysocki the Board voted by roll call 2-1 based upon the recommendation of Chief Nelson and Mr. Lowe that the Board allow the Police Chief and Town Administrator to do the appointment of new police officers and stop the quaint tradition of having the appointments made by the Board of Selectmen. (Wysocki-yes, Keep-no, Czekanski-yes)

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR REPORT

Timeline of Negotiations with LoveCraft Inc., 58 Main Street

Town Counsel and Town Administrator had a second negotiating meeting and have a third scheduled for next week. Negotiations are progressing.

580 Main Street

Bolton Office Park approached the Town with a concept for a "Friendly 40B" at Bolton Office Park. Mr. Lowe listed the current challenges faced by Bolton Office Park including the continued high vacancy rate in the 495 corridor for office space in excess of 25% and the largest tenant vacated the premises last week bringing their vacancy to 70%. Zoning restrictions, limited infrastructure and Covid-19 are other challenges. Mr. Lowe gave a high-level overview. One of the pods would be torn down to accommodate

multifamily housing development consisting of 276 rental apartment homes in 8 3-story buildings, and one standalone, amenities building including a fitness center and pool. 421 parking spaces and 16 private garages. 25% would be made affordable for families making less than 80% of the area median income. Mr. Lowe would expect the applicants to have a comprehensive plan for the Board at the next meeting. Mr. Wysocki commented that the concept aligns with the recommendations of the Housing Production Plan. Mr. Keep had some concerns about the 3 story buildings. Mr. Czekanski commented that this would be a big win for maintaining the conservation goals that we have in town.

FY22 Budget Process Update

Mr. Lowe noted that he worked closely with Brian Boyle, Chair of the Advisory Committee in preparing the budget message which was sent out. It will be an extremely difficult budget year. Revenues are down and we are beginning with less free cash so we don't have as much running room. Mr. Lowe will be working on the capital plans for the DPW next week and has had a discussion with the Fire Chief related to vehicular requests of the department.

Covid-19

Mr. Lowe announced that the Town of Bolton dipped into the red category for the first time since they've been doing the ranking. We will be updating the Town's website with changes to that status. Mr. Lowe is monitoring the situation and will consider closing Town Hall for appointment only.

FY20 MassWorks Update

Bicycle lanes will be painted as soon as the weather permits. The oversized street signs on the mast arms have been taken down. The Town will be looking at smaller signs. The germination of the seeds looks good.

Land Grant Update

The Town has been awarded \$308,000 on an effort that was led by Conservation Agent Rebecca Longvall. Only 11 communities in the state received this award. Awards ranged from \$61,050 to \$400,000. We will be able to apply it directly to the debt. We are awaiting to hear about a second grant. The Board and Mr. Lowe congratulated Ms. Longvall on a job really well done.

Town Census

Mr. Lowe announced that Bolton came in #1 in the state for 89.3% of census returns.

BOARD OF SELECTMEN BUSINESS

Public Service Announcements

Mr. Wysocki asked the public to wear masks, follow social distancing and hand washing.

Mr. Keep announced that the Boy Scout's bottle and can shed is open. They have new protocols in place for Covid. It is a big fundraiser for the Boy Scouts.

Mr. Czekanski addressed comments that were made at the November 4th school committee meeting noting that the meeting requested by the Chair of the School Committee (SC) was exclusive and would have been in violation of open meeting law. Mr. Czekanski reminded the SC Chair that the Town Administrator was appointed by the Board of Selectmen as the intermediary for official business. The Board of Selectmen have invited the Bolton representatives to the School Committee to a Board of Selectmen meeting.

Mr. Czekanski addressed the SC Chair's decision to read a letter signed by 67 teachers in the Nashoba Regional School District which grossly misstated the content of the recent Tri-Town meeting. Ms. Clenchy was not in attendance and Mr. Czekanski noted that had she been he would hope she would have dissuaded the Chair from reading the letter.

Mr. Wysocki added that if residents read the letter, they should also watch the Tri-Town Meeting. He requested that the link to the meeting be placed on the Tri-Town portion of our Town's website.

Mr. Wysocki invited parents to reach out to him with their concerns related to the schooling of their children and he will work toward a resolution.

Fire Chief Performance Evaluation

Mr. Lowe explained that in the Fire Chief's contract includes a performance evaluation by the Town Administrator with input from the Board of Selectmen.

On a motion made by Wysocki and seconded by Keep the Board voted by roll call 3-0 to delegate the responsibility of the performance evaluation for our Fire Chief to the Town Administrator. (Wysocki-yes, Keep-yes, Czekanski-yes)

Mr. Lowe agreed to inform the Board of intentions to conduct evaluations to allow time for the Board to contribute to the process if desired.

Bills/Payroll Warrants

On a motion made by Keep and seconded by Wysocki the Board voted by roll call 3-0 to approve the bills/payroll warrants FY21-9 & FY21-9A. (Wysocki-yes, Keep-yes, Czekanski-yes)

On a motion made by Keep and seconded by Wysocki the Board voted by roll call 3-0 to approve the bills/payroll warrants FY21-10 & FY21-10A. (Wysocki-yes, Keep-yes, Czekanski-yes)

Minutes

On a motion made by Keep and seconded by Wysocki the Board voted by roll call 3-0 to approve the minutes of October 15th regular session. (Wysocki-yes, Keep-yes, Czekanski-yes)

On a motion made by Keep and seconded by Wysocki the Board voted by roll call 3-0 to adjourn at 8:00 pm. (Wysocki-yes, Keep-yes, Czekanski-yes)

Respectfully submitted by J. Jacobsen.

**All attendees participated remotely via Zoom Remote Conferencing pursuant to Governor Baker's March 12, 2020 Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A Section 18, and the Governor's March 15, 2020 Order imposing strict limitations on the number of people that may gather in one place.*