

Board of Selectmen
June 8th, 2023
Via Zoom Remote Conferencing*

Robert Czekanski, Chair
Stanley Wysocki
Brian Boyle
Don Lowe, Town Administrator
Jenny Jacobsen, Town Secretary

Mr. Czekanski called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT (ARPA) FUNDING REQUESTS

Meridia Electronic Voting System Expansion

Mr. Lowe requested approval for ARPA funds to purchase two hundred additional remote voting devices (“clickers”), reprogram existing devices, and purchase equipment to support multiple locations in anticipation of attendance which may exceed the capacity of the Nashoba Regional School District auditorium. The Board had concerns about the need to reprogram the existing devices, but it would be necessary to make our devices compatible with Harvard’s. The partnership will allow Bolton and Harvard to expand, as needed, to one-thousand devices without the need to rent devices in the future. Harvard is not in district and does not have Monday evening Town meetings. Ms. Jacobsen responded to questions and provided an estimate for the equipment that was recommended by Ron Eld, the IT Director for the Town of Stow bringing the total ask to \$12,404.82

On a motion made by Wysocki and seconded by Boyle, the Board voted by roll call vote unanimously to authorize the use of ARPA funds in the amount of \$12,404.82 to purchase an additional 200 clickers, and reprogram the existing 300 clickers to partner with the Town of a Harvard and to purchase the equipment as recommended to have a second location as needed. (Wysocki- yes, Czekanski-yes, Boyle-yes)

Percolation Testing on Town-Owned Properties

Tax Collector Michelle Carlisle was in attendance to request the use of ARPA funds to perc test five properties. The auctioneer, Paul Zekos, recommended the testing and indicated that it could increase the sale price by \$30K per lot. The five lots have the potential to be buildable lots. The cost is estimated to be \$3,500 per lot for a total ask of \$17,500. The estimate includes Nashoba Associated Boards of Health fees for the testing totaling \$425 per lot. The estimate for the work came from Brandon Ducharme. The lots vary in size.

On a motion made by Wysocki and seconded by Boyle, the Board voted by roll call vote unanimously to authorize the Town Administrator and/or Tax Collector to spend the estimated \$3,500 per parcel to conduct percolation tests on the five parcels (3.c-49.0 Berlin Road, 6.d-48.0 Corn Road, 3.e-74.0 Long Hill Road, 2.0-26.0 Main Street and 1.c-14.0 South Bolton Road. (Wysocki- yes, Czekanski-yes, Boyle-yes)

Waste Oil Disposal Fees

DPW Director Randy Heglin requested the use of ARPA funds in the amount of \$31,300 to remove accumulated waste oil that is not useable for the furnace. Mr. Heglin found a vendor to provide an estimate to test and remove the material. There was some spillage and the Town will need to hire an LSP to oversee the removal of the soil that was impacted. Mr. Heglin advised the Board that the estimate can change if contaminants are found in the waste oil. The transfer station is not currently accepting waste oil. Residents can bring waste oil to Devens or to the location it was purchased. By law they are required to take it back. Mr. Boyle was surprised by the \$10K for the LSP.

On a motion made by Wysocki and seconded by Boyle, the Board voted by roll call vote unanimously to approve DPW Director Randall Heglin’s request for characterization and removal,

soil disposal and LSP services for the waste oil at the highway department. (Wysocki- yes, Czekanski-yes, Boyle-yes)

BOLTON ACCESS TELEVISION

Nicky McGachey, of Bolton Access Television was in attendance to request the release of funds in the amount of for Quarter 1 operating expenses. Ms. McGachey update the Board on current events including the school graduation, concert and building committee meeting and the fire muster events. The graduation CDs can be purchased on the Bolton Access Television website. Mr. Wysocki noted that the amount of the request has gone down slightly. Ms. McGachey noted that Bolton has had smaller decreases than other towns probably due to Comcast being the “only game in town”.

On a motion made by Wysocki and seconded by Boyle, the Board voted by roll call vote unanimously to approve the request to release PEG funds in the amount of \$25,856.77 for Quarter 1 operating expenses. (Wysocki- yes, Czekanski-yes, Boyle-yes)

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR REPORT

Town Administrator Goals

Mr. Lowe requested that the Board finalize their recommendation for goals for the Town Administrator. Mr. Boyle asked to add returning to in-person meetings to the Town Administrator’s goals. Mr. Czekanski noted that hybrid meetings are a possibility but require an investment of equipment and technology. Mr. Czekanski noted that many towns have noted an increase in participation in the remote environment and suggested Mr. Lowe explore the hybrid meeting option.

Mr. Lowe suggested that the additional goal be to provide a report that assesses the pros and cons and incremental expense of a hybrid meeting option. Mr. Boyle commented that when the stakes of a conversation go up the communication is better in person but did not want to forgo participation. The Board does not have the information to make a decision.

Mr. Czekanski requested a policy to guide the receipts of gifts. He noted that boards and committees would benefit from a policy that lays that out. The Board agreed to the addition of the second goal.

The Board considered the complete list of goals as follows:

1. Continue to successfully manage Capital Planning Process including a 3 to 5-year plan with identified funding sources.
2. Present recommendations for ARPA-funded projects.
3. Continue to implement Long-Range Plan for improvements to town-owned buildings.
4. Present and begin to implement Long-Range Plan for culvert repairs.
5. Work with Advisory Committee to assist budget process for FY24.
6. Support the Master Plan Committee as needed.
7. Obtain a cost estimate for Engineering a rear egress from the Florence Sawyer campus and week funding for the Engineering of same.
8. Prepare a proposal to migrate to hybrid meetings.
9. Prepare a policy for acceptance of gifts to the Town.

On a motion made by Wysocki and seconded by Boyle, the Board voted by roll call vote unanimously to agree to the Town Administrator Goals for FY24. (Wysocki- yes, Czekanski-yes, Boyle-yes)

Update on the OEMS waiver

Mr. Lowe notified the Board that the waiver renewed smoothly as a result of the work that Representative Hogan did the previous year. Mr. Lowe expressed thanks to the state and to Representative Hogan.

Mr. Lowe notified the Board as an FYI that there were no audit findings. He attributed the success to the hard work of the Treasurer Kristen Noel and Town Accountant Ninotchka Rogers.

Public Service Announcements

There were none.

Future Agenda Items

Mr. Wysocki will have an agenda item following the June 14th School Committee building project meeting.

2% Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) for Worcester Regional Retirement System Retirees

The Board continued the discussion from the May 25, 2023 meeting. The Board received material provided by Treasurer Kristen Noel. The expense will not hit Bolton until Fy26. The resulting increase at that time will be \$10,733.58. Mr. Lowe stated that it would require a 2/3 vote by all of the member towns of the Worcester Regional Retirement System. Mr. Boyle had a question about the material provided. Mr. Lowe did not have the answer.

On a motion made by Wysocki and seconded by Boyle, the Board voted by roll call vote unanimously to accept the provisions of Chapter 269 of the Acts of 2022 to provide a one-time additional 2% cost of living adjustment for Worcester Regional Retirement System retirees, retroactive to July 1, 2022. (Wysocki- yes, Czekanski-yes, Boyle-yes)

Dog Warrant

On a motion made by Wysocki the Board voted by roll call vote unanimously to execute dog warrant in accordance with MGL c. 140, § 151A. (Wysocki- yes, Czekanski-yes, Boyle-yes)

Select Board Goals

Mr. Wysocki asked for clarification from Mr. Boyle on what he is looking for in regards to Select Board goals. Mr. Boyle explained that there may be areas where it makes sense for the Board to be more proactive than reactive and also noted an interest in establishing a code of conduct for the Board and participants if one does not already exist. Mr. Lowe added that a policy to establish time limits for comments might be good for the Board to consider. Mr. Lowe referenced the Code of Conduct policy that the Board revised on May 7, 2020. Ms. Jacobsen sent the policy to the three board members. Mr. Czekanski asked that the Board establish a plan for how much debt the Town is going to incur each year. The Board agreed to discuss the goals in meetings outside of the regularly scheduled meetings. Mr. Boyle volunteered to keep minutes. Mr. Czekanski suggested ground rules to not make any decisions in the meetings. Mr. Boyle will send a doodle poll to identify meeting times.

On a motion made by Wysocki and seconded by Boyle, the Board voted by roll call vote unanimously to execute dog warrant in accordance with MGL c. 140, § 151A. (Wysocki- yes, Czekanski-yes, Boyle-yes)

The Board repeated the dog warrant vote as there was no second.

On a motion made by Wysocki and seconded by Boyle, the Board voted by roll call vote unanimously to execute dog warrant in accordance with MGL c. 140, § 151A. (Wysocki- yes, Czekanski-yes, Boyle-yes)

Sign Board Discussion

The Board reviewed three draft policies. Mr. Boyle noticed that the policies authorize the Select Board or Town Administrator to approve requests. Mr. Lowe explained that the Houghton Community Message Board and Banner policies are currently handled by Town Hall and that the Town Common Sign Board policy is the only new policy. Mr. Lowe added that it builds flexibility in for timing issues and noted that

the key to the Town Common Sign policy is that requests need to be in conjunction with an event with Parks and Recreation approval.

On a motion made by Wysocki and seconded by Boyle, the Board voted by roll call vote unanimously to approve the Town Common Sign Board, Houghton Community Message Board and Banner policies as presented. (Wysocki- yes, Czekański-yes, Boyle-yes)

Future Agenda Items

Mr. Czekański asked that all policies be placed in an accessible location. Ms. Jacobsen gathered the policies on an intranet portal which can be moved to the website.

Bills/Payroll Warrants

On a motion made by Wysocki and seconded by Boyle, the Board voted by roll call vote unanimously to approve bills/payroll warrants W23-23 & W23-23A (Wysocki- yes, Czekański-yes, Boyle-yes)

Minutes

No Minutes to approve.

On a motion made by Wysocki and seconded by Boyle, the Board voted by roll call vote unanimously to adjourn at 8:11pm. (Wysocki- yes, Czekański-yes, Boyle-yes)

Respectfully submitted by J. Jacobsen.