

Board of Selectmen
Regular Meeting Minutes
March 22, 2020, 7PM

Call to order 7:00 p.m. via Zoom Meeting

Present Chair Keyes, Selectman Arcudi, Town Administrator Schindler

Chair Keyes convened the meeting at 7:00PM, Chair Keyes and those attending recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Consent Items

Recognition of 100th Birthday Celebration of Dr. Vincent Arone (letter attached)

Chair Keyes read the letter provided by Carole Mullen, COA Director. Chair Keyes thanked the Council on Aging for their hard work and being so active within Hopedale. Selectman Arcudi stated that he would like to give a proclamation from the Select Board and send it to Dr. Vincent Arone, like they have done in past years for birthdays. Chair Keyes and Selectman Arcudi wished Dr. Vincent Arone a happy birthday.

Approval of January 25, 2021 Regular Minutes

Approval of February 8, 2021 Regular Minutes

Selectman Arcudi made a motion to approve the January 25, 2021 Regular Minutes and the February 8, 2021 Regular Minutes. Chair Keyes seconded the motion. Arcudi – Aye, Keyes – Aye

Appointments and Resignations

Public Hearing

7:00 PM – National Grid respectfully request permission to install new Intermediate Pole 34 Mendon ST for purpose of raising existing facilities for new Railroad Signal Gate.

In conformity with the requirements of Section 22 of Chapter 166 of the General Laws (Ter. Ed) you are hereby notified that a **Public Hearing** has been scheduled for **Monday, March 22, 2021 at 7:00PM**, via Zoom Meeting based upon the petition of MASSACHUSETTS ELECTRIC COMPANY, to erect and maintain poles and wires to be placed thereon, together with such sustaining and protecting fixtures as said Company may deem necessary to be owned and used in common by your petitioners, in the following public way or ways:

Mendon Street

To install new Intermediate Pole 34 Mendon St for purpose of raising existing facilities for new Railroad Signal Gate

Wherefore it prays that after due notice and hearing as provided by law, it be granted a location for and permission to erect and maintain pole and wires, together with such sustaining and protecting fixtures as it may find necessary, said poles to be erected substantially in accordance with the plan filed herewith marked:

**MASSACHUSETTS ELECTRIC COMPANY
Plan No. 28103831 Dated 01/25/2021**

Vote to Open Public Hearing

Selectman Arcudi made a motion to open the public hearing. Chair Keyes seconded the motion. Arcudi – Aye, Keyes – Aye

The public hearing opened at 7:05PM. Chair Keyes read the notice for the pole petition. Michael Parent with National Grid is present at this public hearing as a spokesperson.

Public Comment

Chair Keyes opened the hearing for public discussion. Selectman Arcudi asked Michael Parent for more clarification on the pole location because there was a similar pole petition in 2020. Michael Parent stated that this is a pole on Mendon Street that exists on the easter side. Michael Milanowski with the GU RR clarified that the

Heather DeRocher, an abutter to the pole and resident of Hopedale asked for clarification if the pole was going to be moved or if it will be taller. Michael Parent stated that it is a new pole that will be put in.

Vote to Close Public Hearing

Selectman Arcudi made a motion to close the public hearing. Chair Keyes seconded the motion.

Arcudi – Aye, Keyes – Aye

Board Decision and Roll Call Vote

Selectman Arcudi moved to install new Intermediate Pole 34 Mendon St for purpose of raising existing facilities for new Railroad Signal Gate. Chair Keyes seconded the motion. Arcudi – Aye, Keyes – Aye

New Business

Approve Contracts for Police Chief and Police Lieutenant (vote)

Town Administrator Schindler stated that the Select Board moved to roll the contract to FY22 and the Selectboard made some adjustments to what had been previously negotiated. Schindler stated that she clarified the discussions with the finance committee that the Chief of Police did not take a pay increase in FY21. Selectman Arcudi stated that the contracts try to make up for the no pay increase in the coming years. Schindler stated that the MOU's have been agreed and negotiated with the Board and will be made available to the public. Selectman Arcudi thanked the Chief of Police and Police Lieutenant and every town employee that did not take salary increases in FY21. Arcudi also stated that he wants to make sure that we take care of our public safety as best we can. He and Chair Keyes are very comfortable with what the new contracts hold for the Chief of Police and Police Lieutenant over the next 3-5 years. Chair Keyes echoed Selectman Arcudi's sentiments and thanked the Chief and Lieutenant again. Chief Giovannella thanked the Selectboard and the residents of Hopedale. Selectman Arcudi stated that during these negotiations in executive session, there was a full Board of Selectmen (3 members). During this time, there are two Board members.

Selectman Arcudi made a motion to approve the Police Chief's contract as noted in the negotiations over the past months in executive session and to be provided to the finance committee. Chair Keyes seconded the motion.

Arcudi – Aye, Keyes – Aye

Selectman Arcudi made a motion to approve the Police Lieutenant's contract as noted in the negotiations over the past months in executive session and to be provided to the finance committee.

Chair Keyes seconded the motion.

Arcudi – Aye, Keyes – Aye

Old Business

Reduce Annual Election Hours, May 11, 2021, "COVID" election with reduced hours from 12:00-7:00pm; Readdress Special Town Meeting; Annual Town Meeting

Town Administrator stated that these are the same hours as the previous election. The towns people responded positively to these hours during these trying times. Chair Keyes clarified that election day and the hours will be held in the Draper Gym.

Selectman Arcudi made a motion to reduce the election hours on May 11, 2021 from 12PM-7PM. Chair Keyes seconded the motion.

Arcudi – Aye, Keyes – Aye

Town Administrator stated that the Special Town Meeting will take place before the Annual Town Meeting in May 2021. She clarified that the special town meeting is needed due to the deficit of legal bills in the town budget. Selectman Arcudi stated that the legal bills will continue to accrue through May 2021 with KP Law due to standard legal work that is not litigation related. Arcudi stated that Attorney Peter Durning and Environmental Partners have invoices that have not been paid as of yet. Town Administrator Schindler stated that currently, Attorney Durning and Environmental Partners are not aware of non-payment until May 2021. Town Administrator Schindler stated that at the projected overage for legal bills is currently \$100,000. Selectman Arcudi stated that this may become greater due to another litigation that will be taking place.

Administrator Schindler stated recommended that the annual town meeting be held on a Saturday, as opposed to Tuesday because of the abundance of warrant articles. Selectman Arcudi stated that he would defer to the Finance Committee regarding setting the date for town meeting. He recommends that they are prepared for town meeting. Arcudi stated that prior to setting a date, the Board should be aware of summer sports (taking place on Saturday) and that it is important to give the opportunity for all town residents to participate.

GU RR Settlement Agreement Execution Updates: Town Prevailed on Initial Motion re 10 Citizen Lawsuit, Legal Expenses; Reserve Fund Transfer, Presentation to Hopedale Foundation to Readdress Donation due April 21, 2021, Land Acquisition Closing per Settlement Agreement

Administrator Schindler stated that as of now, a hearing date regarding the appeal to the motion re 10 citizen lawsuits has not been set. Schindler stated that she received an email from Attorney Riley, KP Law stating that they have received papers from the plaintiffs for a single justice of the appeals court appeal. Attorney Riley stated that he will file an opposition by Thursday, March 25, 2021. Attorney Riley will provide more details once they arise. Town Administrator Schindler stated that the Hopedale Foundation has scheduled an April meeting and has asked the Town to provide the parameters of the agreement (land area and the amount of money). Chair Keyes asked Schindler to relay this information to Attorney Durning, Peter from Environmental Partners and Ed Burt, Hopedale Water Commissioner. The Hopedale Foundation has scheduled a meeting for the Trustees on April 29, 2021, to readdress the money that was offered/donated since the sale agreement/settlement has changed. Schindler stated that after speaking with Mike Milanowski, the land acquisition closing per settlement agreement date is expected to be delayed 30 days while the roll back tax amount and land survey is still being worked on.

Public and Board Member Comments (votes will not be taken)

Selectman Arcudi stated that he would like to have joint meetings with the Finance Committee regarding budgeting prior to town meeting.

Chair Keyes stated that he was contacted by boy scout Will Adamski to hold an interview. This is a requirement to earn his eagle scout badge. Chair Keyes looks forward to this interview and thanked Will Adamski for the opportunity.

Correspondence and Selectmen Informational Items (votes will not be taken)

Xfinity 2020 license fee payment 995 subscribers as of December 31, 2020. Xfinity notice dated March 9, 2021 – Copy of Comcast's policies and procedures, sample subscriber bill, work order and rate and channel line-up information.

Town Administrator Schindler stated the cable contract from Comcast is about to expire. Typically, there is a cable advisory committee to ascertain a contract or review the current contract. Hopedale does not have this committee formed as of yet. Schindler is going to work with Hopedale Cable who is the beneficiary of the money to carry out initiatives with cable access stations. The current contract is offering the Town 4% of the current franchise fees and \$40,000 in capital costs. Schindler stated that she will put the cable advisory committee on a future Selectboard agenda to discuss further.

Requests for Future Agenda Items:

Appoint Cable Advisory Committee members for renegotiation of Comcast Cable Contract
Joint Meeting with Finance Committee

Administrator Updates (In Packet)

Administrator Schindler provided an update regarding current Town projects i.e., Master Plan Committee updates, the MVP workshop sessions and listening sessions and the permitting guide for the DLTA application.

Executive Session

Selectman Arcudi made a motion to enter executive session per the items that Chair Keyes stated. Chair Keyes seconded the motion.

Roll Call – Arcudi – Aye, Keyes – Aye

To move into Executive Session, pursuant to M.G.L. c.30A, § 21(a) for item # (2) To conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with non-union personnel or to conduct collective bargaining sessions or contract negotiations with non-union personnel; **Purpose: Fire Chief;** and

For item # (3) To discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation that an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the litigation position of the public body and the chair so declares, which he does. **Purpose: Collective Bargaining; All units.**

Roll Call Vote

Chair Keyes dissolved the meeting at 8:44PM

Submitted by:

Lindsay Mercier

Lindsay Mercier, Executive Assistant

Adopted: _____