

Select Board
Regular Meeting Minutes
March 14, 2022, 7:00 PM

Present: Chair Keyes, Selectman Arcudi, Selectwoman Hazard, Town Administrator Schindler

Chair Keyes called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Chair Keyes began the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Request for Approval of a Special, One-Day Beer/Wine License for Saturday, March 26, 2022, 11 am to 11 pm at the FMC Ice Sports located at 121 Plain Street in Hopedale, MA for Bay State Games Curling Competition: Ellen Argo, Member, Board of Director, Blackstone Valley Curling Club.

Chair Keyes confirmed that the one-day license application was included in the packet and complete. Ellen Argo, the applicant, spoke about the nature of the games and the history of the Bay State Games Curling Competition.

Selectman Arcudi motioned to approve the one a Special, One-Day Beer/Wine License for Saturday, March 26, 2022, 11 am to 11 pm at the FMC Ice Sports located at 121 Plain Street in Hopedale, MA for Bay State Games Curling Competition. Selectwoman Hazard seconded the motion.

Chair Keyes – Aye, Selectman Arcudi – Aye, Selectwoman Hazard – Aye

Consent Items

Approval of February 28, 2022, Regular Minutes

Approval of March 4, 2022, Regular Minutes

Selectwoman Hazard moved to approve the February 28, 2022, and March 4, 2022, regular minutes. Selectman Arcudi seconded the motion to approve the February 28, 2022, regular minutes, noting that he was not in attendance for the meeting on March 4, 2022. Chair Keyes seconded the motion to approve the March 4, 2022, regular minutes.

Selectman Arcudi stated that regarding the February 28, 2022 meeting minutes, the time that Selectwoman Hazard left the meeting needs to be clarified and corrected, he believes it should be prior to the code of conduct vote.

Approval of the February 28, 2022 regular minutes

Selectman Arcudi – Aye, Selectwoman Hazard – Aye, Chair Keyes – Aye

Approval of the March 4, 2022 regular minutes

Selectwoman Hazard – Aye, Chair Keyes – Aye

Appointments and Resignations

Appointment of Call Firefighter Jennifer Richard to Permanent Firefighter/EMT, effective December 6, 2021

Fire Chief Daige stated that Jennifer Richard has been with the Hopedale Fire Department since December 6, 2021, and for the record wanted to clarify that she is moving from provisional career firefighter to permanent firefighter. Chair Keyes read the letter from Fire Chief Daige that was provided in the meeting packet.

Selectman Arcudi motioned to Appointment of Call Firefighter Jennifer Richard from Provisional Career Firefighter/EMT to Permanent Firefighter/EMT, effective December 6, 2021 and Selectwoman Hazard seconded this.

Chair Keyes – Aye, Selectman Arcudi – Aye, Selectwoman Hazard – Aye

Appointment of Call Firefighter-Candidate Katherine D'Alessandro to Call Firefighter, effective March 1, 2022.

Chair Keyes read the letter provided in the packet regarding the appointments of Katherine D'Alessandro, Gavin Martin, Casey Sweet. Chair Keyes stated that these appointments will be motioned and voted on individually.

Selectwoman Hazard motioned to appoint Call Firefighter-Candidate Katherine D'Alessandro to Call Firefighter, effective March 1, 2022.

Chair Keyes – Aye, Selectman Arcudi – Aye, Selectman Hazard – Aye

Appointment of Call Firefighter-Candidate Gavin Martin to Call Firefighter, effective March 1, 2022

Selectman Arcudi motioned to appoint Call Firefighter-Candidate Gavin Martin to Call Firefighter, effective March 1, 2022, which Selectwoman Hazard seconded.

Chair Keyes – Aye, Selectman Arcudi – Aye, Selectwoman Hazard – Aye

Appointment of Call Firefighter-Candidate Casey Sweet to Call Firefighter, effective March 1, 2022

Selectwoman Hazard motioned to appoint Call Firefighter-Candidate Casey Sweet to Call Firefighter, effective March 1, 2022, which Selectman Arcudi seconded.

Chair Keyes – Aye, Selectman Arcudi – Aye, Selectwoman Hazard – Aye

Resignation of Linda McEwan from the Hopedale Cultural Council, effective March 14, 2022

Chair Keyes thanked Linda McEwan for her service while being on the Hopedale Cultural Council.

Selectwoman Hazard motioned to accept the Resignation of Linda McEwan from the Hopedale Cultural Council, effective March 14, 2022, which Selectman Arcudi seconded.

Chair Keyes – Aye, Selectman Arcudi – Aye, Selectwoman Hazard – Aye

Appointment of Gail Brown to the Hopedale Cultural Council, effective March 14, 2022, for a 3-Year Term.

Selectman Arcudi motioned to appoint Gail Brown to the Hopedale Cultural Council, effective March 14, 2022, for a 3-Year Term. Selectwoman Hazard seconded the motion.

Chair Keyes – Aye, Selectman Arcudi – Aye, Selectwoman Hazard – Aye

Resignation of Saken Khokhar from the Economic Development Committee, effective March 8, 2022

Selectman Arcudi motioned to accept the Resignation of Saken Khokhar from the Economic Development Committee, effective March 8, 2022, which Selectwoman Hazard seconded.

Chair Keyes – Aye, Selectman Arcudi – Aye, Selectwoman Hazard – Aye

Accept Elizabeth Callahan's Notice of Disclosure

Town Administrator Schindler stated that this is a disclosure regarding Elizabeth Callahan who is on the Finance Committee, the disclosure document is in tonight's meeting packet. Schindler stated that this disclosure is regarding Callahan's relation to Don Keaveney, who is the legal representative of the Grafton Upton Railroad. The Finance Committee will be making a recommendation on the Town Meeting warrant article related to the Railroad. Callahan was advised to provide this disclosure by the State Ethics Commission. Chair Keyes and Selectwoman Hazard expressed their appreciation for Callahan having provided a disclosure.

Selectwoman Hazard moved to accept Elizabeth Callahan's Notice of Disclosure which was seconded by Selectman Arcudi.

Chair Keyes – Aye, Selectman Arcudi – Aye, Selectwoman Hazard – Aye

New Business

Request for Permission to Perform Volunteer Service Project, Clean Up Around Spindleville Pond; Justin Paulson, Den Leader, Hopedale Cub Scouts.

Paulson stated that there is not a set date currently. Town Administrator Schindler stated that once they have decided on a date, he can come back to the Select Board to notify the Town. Schindler also stated that each volunteer will need to fill out a volunteer release form. The updated volunteer release form will be discussed at tonight's meeting as well. Selectman

Arcudi suggested that Paulson reach out to the Hopedale Highway Department for assistance with this project.

Selectwoman Hazard moved to grant Permission to Perform Volunteer Service Project, Clean Up Around Spindleville Pond; Justin Paulson, Den Leader, Hopedale Cub Scouts, which Selectman Arcudi seconded.

Chair Keyes – Aye, Selectman Arcudi – Aye, Selectwoman Hazard – Aye

Update from Hopedale Schools re: COVID, Budget, and Related Matters - Superintendent Karen Crebase
Crebase shared a presentation with the Select Board. The schools will return to in-person learning with masks optional. The schools have increased in-person and home COVID testing along with additional sanitation of the schools. The schools will continue to provide support to students, mental health issues, and grade level appropriate instruction. The schools received \$50,000 grants for additional hybrid counseling, identification of areas where learning has fallen behind and development of an afterschool tutoring program, which has begun. The schools provided social and emotional screeners and support groups. Teacher training has been implemented, the schools have completed the first assessment of training and are currently working on their second assessment. Memorial Elementary School has provided Spanish classes to grades 5 and 6 and computer science classes from grades K-6. Crebase stated that the goal of these additional programs is to bolster anything lost during the pandemic. Crebase also stated that the schools took action regarding food insecurity measures and provided lunch and dinners to families during the pandemic. Crebase highlighted some of the Town and School collaborations, thanking Town departments for aiding the schools. Crebase stated that the school's budget is posted to their website. Crebase stated that Hopedale ranks 276th in the Per Pupil Expenditure, which is the bottom third. Crebase stated that the schools have received over \$400,000 in grant funding which aiding in the schools improving their programs; this funding helped the schools achieve student test scores in the top third state-wide. Chair Keyes, Selectman Arcudi and Selectwoman Hazard thanked Superintendent Crebase for the detailed presentation and the excellent work with the Hopedale Schools.

Update from Hopedale Water/Sewer Departments; Tim Watson, Water/Sewer Superintendent
Watson began the update with a list of items the Water/Sewer department has been maintaining. Starting with the wastewater plant, he stated that the facility is almost 40 years old. The Water/Sewer department is trying to maintain and keep up with DEP and EPA mandates, discharge permits, a collections system that in some portions of Town is over 100 years old. The Water/Sewer department, over recent years, has completed 6 million dollars of upgrades. Watson stated the Water/Sewer department's goal is to invest at least \$100,000-\$200,000 a year into the collection system and the wastewater plant for upkeep and modernization, while maintaining mid-range water and sewer rates and tie-in fees. Watson stated that they do not receive complaints regarding the rates and the concerns are regarding the high cost of assessments. The assessments are based on debt, the water department has \$3 million of debt, and the sewer department has \$6 million of debt. The assessment is based on all users paying this equally. Watson stated that he does not feel the departments will ever be debt-free due to DEP and EPA regulations constantly changing. Watson did say that the Water/Sewer Department is looking at the timing of the next set of projects with the timing of the debt dropping off before borrowing more money. Watson stated that there was a study done on the wastewater plant regarding its operations and needs. There is a 3-phase \$12 million project, and phase 1 is complete. Watson stated that with the Board's approval, the Water/Sewer Department plans on going forward with \$120,000 further upgrades; these funds are within the budget so the Town will not need to borrow.

Watson next discussed the PFAS (polyfluoroalkyl substances) issue, stating that \$3.2 million is needed for corrective treatment. The Town filed litigation in this matter which could result in the Town being awarded money. Regarding water exploration, the water/sewer department has spent close to \$350,000 in their efforts to identify water sources but, to date, no new sources have been found. Watson stressed the importance of finding a water source close to the infrastructure and water treatment plant so the Town would not need to build a new facility. Watson also provided an update regarding a new water tank for the Town, stating that this water tank would be a 900,000-gallon water tank. Watson continued that the land for the new tank has been secured and there is a commitment from a developer to contribute a major portion of the engineering costs. Further, the Water/Sewer department has received a \$2 million grant for construction of the water tank. Watson stated that this water tank will be very beneficial to the Town by doubling the water storage capacity and increasing fire protection considerably. Chair Keyes brought up the condition of the fire hydrants in Town and asked Watson to have the Water/Sewer Department meet with the Fire Chief regarding any out of service fire hydrants and to discuss testing. Watson clarified that there are 291 fire hydrants in Town and around 8-9 of those hydrants are out of

service and will be repaired. Watson stated that the water/sewer department does not service hydrants or water mains that are located on private highways. Chair Keyes stated that any hydrants on private ways should be ordered to be repaired.

Execute & Sign Memorandum Of Agreement (MOA) for Clerical Unit through June 30, 2022 (vote)

Town Administrator Schindler stated that the MOA is in the meeting packet. Schindler stated that she is looking for a vote from the Select Board at tonight's meeting so the MOA can be signed and be placed on the Special Town Meeting warrant. Schindler walked the Board through the MOA, stating that the terms of this MOA are similar to those of the Dispatch and Public Works Department MOAs. This is a one-year agreement which provides for the addition of the holiday of Juneteenth (June 19, 2022), a 0% raise for 2021, a 4% raise in 2022, and a cellphone stipend to offset members' costs due to use of cellphones for Town business. Schindler shared this MOA with the Finance Committee. Selectwoman Hazard expressed her support for this MOA, Hazard said this is similar to the terms of contracts for the other unions. Selectman Arcudi stated that he does not support a one-year contract and feels that the MOAs should provide for three-year contracts, and further he does not support a phone stipend. Chair Hazard stated that one-year contracts will not be the norm, multi-year contracts will be made going forward.

Selectman Arcudi moved to accept the MOA for Clerical Unit through June 30, 2022. Selectwoman Hazard seconded the motion.

Chair Keyes – Aye, Selectman Arcudi – Nay, Selectwoman Hazard – Aye

Review Counsel Opinion re: 187 Freedom Street as Location of Water Tank; Execute & Sign Confirmatory Deed (vote to approve conservation commissions vote)

Town Administrator Schindler stated that documentation on this item is provided in the packet. She explained that this is necessary due to an incorrect reference in the original deed; the Board needs to accept and vote on this confirmatory deed after the Conservation Commission votes. Both the Select Board and Conservation Commission need to sign because this land is considered open space. Schindler stated that this item will be on the next agenda for a vote after the Conservation Commission has voted to approve.

Schedule Pre-Special Town Meeting Information Session Regarding the Town/GU RR Settlement Agreement

Selectman Arcudi stated that there is a Town Meeting coming up and he would like to schedule a joint meeting of the Select Board, Water Commission, Finance Committee and Conservation Committee prior to the Town Meeting. This would be a public forum to provide an opportunity for Attorney Durning to discuss the settlement agreement and for attendees to ask questions. This will be in-person and over Zoom. Selectman Arcudi stated that no changes can be made to the settlement agreement as a result of this meeting; it is an information session.

Old Business

Review and Approve Hopedale Volunteer Release Form, Revised by Berry Insurance (vote)

Schindler stated that there were some items that Berry Insurance had revised. Chair Keyes asked to add a parental consent form for anyone under 18 years of age so if anyone under the age of 18 wishes to volunteer they have the option.

Schindler stated that this item will be added to the next agenda to get voted on once the parental consent form has been created.

Request to Review Host Community Agreement (HCA) and Change of Address for Green River Cannabis, Constant Poholek, Owner

Poholek stated that the host agreement the Select Board has is for 5 Condon Way. Poholek filed for a special permit with the Zoning Board. Poholek stated that this location is zoned for a retail cannabis business and has the requisite amount of parking spaces, but the Zoning Board felt there were not enough parking spaces and was not the right location for this type of facility. Poholek stated that he held a community outreach meeting at which Gavin & Associates were the only attendees; Poholek stated he has an agreement with Gavin & Associates to lease an additional 6-10 parking spaces in their parking lot across the street but the Zoning Board still felt that this was not acceptable. The Zoning Board indicated that if Green River Cannabis continued to go forward, it would result in a negative vote. Poholek stated that he did not want to be in a position where he needed to appeal this case or file legal action. He withdrew the application without prejudice and will try to work with the Town to find another location. Poholek feels that the Select Board, the Zoning Board and the

Planning Board are not on the same page because the area is zoned for a retail cannabis business, but he keeps getting stopped by the Zoning Board. Poholek stated that he has come to the Select Board tonight to work with the Board to find a location for his business. Poholek proposed two locations, 150-156 Hartford Avenue and 8 Charlesview. 150-156 Hartford Avenue has ample parking, but it is not zoned for retail cannabis; rezoning requires a 2/3rds majority vote at Town Meeting. Poholek stated that the 8 Charlesview location allows retail cannabis, although he feels that 150-156 Hartford Avenue would viewed more favorably by the Zoning Board but, again, this site requires rezoning. Selectman Arcudi suggested that Poholek speak with the Planning Board regarding the location of 150-156 Hartford Avenue to discuss a zoning change with them, then return to the Select Board to add this proposal to the Town Meeting warrant if that's the direction he wants to go in.

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

Selectman Arcudi asked Town Administrator Schindler and Selectwoman Hazard for an update regarding the Finance Committee and whether there is going to be an override proposed. Schindler stated that the Finance Committee was concerned about some department budgets. Selectwoman Hazard stated that she was not present at the last Finance Committee meeting. Schindler stated that the Finance Committee is beginning to hold department head meetings regarding the upcoming budget. Schindler stated that an override is a possibility, but they are just in the first round of budget discussions. As of now, there is roughly a \$500,000 overage. Schindler will provide the Board with updates regarding budget discussions with the Finance Committee.

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

A/P Warrant #22-18, \$819,840.06, 2/24/2022

P/R Warrant #22-18, \$922,274.19, 2/24/2022

A/P Warrant #22-19, \$705,007.69, 3/10/2022

P/R Warrant #22-19, \$787,848.38, 3/10/2022

Xfinity – Changes to Xfinity TV Services: 1. On April 26, 2022 HSN2 will move from expanded Basic, Entertainment, Xfinity TV Starter and Xfinity TV Economy Plus to Limited Basic, 2. Effective May 12, 2022, FS1 will no longer be offered as part of Digital Economy, but will continue to be available in the Sports & News and Expanded Basic tiers
Town's Chapter 90 Apportionment for Fiscal Year 2023 is \$173,447

Requests for Future Agenda Items:

Freedom Street Dam Alternatives Analysis, Presentation by Tighe & Bond

Selectman Arcudi requested to have a joint meeting with the Finance Committee to discuss the Town Budget prior to the Annual Town Meeting.

Administrator Updates (In Packet)

Town Administrator Schindler stated that the Select Board should pass over the executive session tonight because she has some items she needs to follow up on prior to a discussion.

Executive Session

In accordance with G.L. c. 30A, §21(a)(3) (Purpose #3), to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining and litigation that an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining and litigation position of the public body and the chair so declares, which he does. (Collective Bargaining; Hopedale Call Fire/EMS.)

Selectwoman Hazard moved to adjourn the regular meeting. Selectman Arcudi seconded the motion.

Selectwoman Hazard – Aye, Selectman Arcudi – Aye, Chair Keyes – Aye
Chair Keyes dissolved the regular meeting at 9:50PM.

Respectfully submitted:

Lindsay Peterman

Select Board approval: 1/23/2023