

Select Board  
Regular Meeting Minutes  
October 25, 2021, 7:00 pm

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

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

Present: Board of Health, Chair Don Howes, Member Walter Swift, Member Jason MacDonald, Secretary Carol Villa

Chair Howes called the Board of Health meeting to order at 7:01PM.

Finance Committee, Chair Chris Hodgen's, Member Colleen Strapponi, Member Ken Wilson, Member Dennis Madigan, Member Elizabeth Callahan

Chair Hodgen's Called Finance Committee meeting to order at 7:02PM.

7:00 PM Joint Meeting with Board of Health & Finance Committee, 1. FY23 Solid Waste/Recycling Contract, 2. Animal Control Officer Inter Municipal Agreement Discussion

Chair Howes stated that regarding the EL Harvey Contract, he has had preliminary negotiations with the principle of the company. The Board of Health would like to renew the contract for two 1-year extensions which would end in 2024. Tentatively, there would be a 3% raise per year in these renewals. The Board of Health would also like to remove the bulk item pick up being paid for by the Town through taxes and instead have the residents using this service pay for bulk item pick up directly to EL Harvey. Chair Howes stated that the Board of Health would like to discuss actual numbers and contract agreement possibilities with EL Harvey and present it to the Select Board. Selectman Arcudi asked the Board of Health within the next two or three years to complete an analysis of if the Town residents are capable to pay for trash themselves so when the contract expires, the information will be there for new members of the Boards to reference. Chair Howes stated that there has been some discussion with joining with the Town of Upton in contract agreements, but nothing has been finalized.

Chair Howes stated that the jurisdiction for the appointment and management of the Dog Officer falls under the Board of Health as of 1995. Chair Howes stated that the Board of Health has been in conversations with a person that could potentially be the new ACO for the Town of Hopedale. This person is currently an ACO and Animal Inspector for another Town, the Town of Hopedale would share this person with one other Town if he is hired. Town Administrator Schindler stated that the Administrator from the Town Chair Howes is referencing stated that they do not wish to share this person. If the Town of Hopedale hires this person, Hopedale will not share any of the service provided by the Town.

Chair Howes stated that the Board of Health has very little interest with renewing the current ACO's appointment, the Board of Health feels that the ACO is not producing the proper paperwork and completing the tasks that goes with this position.

Town Administrator Schindler stated the current ACO is independently appointed by the Towns of Hopedale, Millville, and Blackstone. The ACO is also a part of a regional IMA for the Town of Mendon, Uxbridge, and Douglas. Town Administrator Schindler stated that the Town of Hopedale is not a part of the inter-municipal agreement for the current ACO, the Board of Health appointed him without an inter municipal agreement. Town Administrator Schindler stated that the ACO has specific responsibilities related to the capturing of stray animals, care and custody of animals, sheltering of animals, etc. There are some items such as rabies, where the ACO would work alongside an Animal Inspector, this includes the Keeper of Animal Permits. Schindler stated that the Board of Health informed her that the ACO was an employee for another Town while working for the Town of Hopedale. The Town of Hopedale has been utilizing the services from the regional IMA without contributing monetarily for years. The Town of Uxbridge, through its Police Chief Montminy, has informed Schindler that if the Town of Hopedale is not a part of the IMA, then we can no longer utilize the services. Town Administrator Schindler stated that recreating the current situation with another ACO is not beneficial to the Town and will not correct the Board of Health's concerns regarding the current ACO. Schindler stated the best form of action would be to become a part of the regional IMA, which is offering a robust staffing plan of two full-time ACO's, two part-time ACO's, administration, sheltering, equipment, and services. The Town would bring in more money because the licensing and fines would be administered. Schindler stated that the current ACO has informed the Board of Health for the past year that he does not have the capacity to complete the licensing/fines because he is stretched so thin. The IMA program is estimated to cost \$24,000 annually, in licensing the Town currently collects \$15,000 without pursuing late licenses. Chair Howes stated that he disagrees with Town Administrator Schindler's recommendation.

Selectman Arcudi stated that the points Town Administrator Schindler gave are valid, and the Board of Health should take the information she has provided into account. However, it is the Board of Health's decision to make.

Chair Howes stated that the Board of Health is aware of the current ACO's statements regarding needing assistance. Chair Howes stated the Board of Health stands by their decision to continue conversations and possibly hire the person that is the ACO and Animal Inspector for another Town. Howes stated that this avenue is costly by comparison to what the Town is currently paying for, but the Board of Health does not have a number of what it costs. Chair Keyes asked Chair Howes to provide the Finance Committee with the contract so they can review and provide a recommendation. Chair Howes stated that the Board of Health will need to meet twice in November to work this out.

Town Administrator Schindler stated Chief Montminy has asked the Town of Hopedale decide before January 1, 2022, regarding if Hopedale will join the IMA. If Hopedale decides to join the IMA, the pricing for the other towns involved will change. Chief Montminy was hoping to put the IMA in place by January 1, 2022.

Chief Giovanella stated that the Police Department is the direct department for receiving and dealing with animal control calls. Chief Giovanella stated that he is willing to sit in on the Board of Health meetings regarding the ACO decision. Chief Giovanella stated that there are certain aspects that the Police Department is looking for regarding the ACO and support.

Chair Keyes asked that the Select Board and the Board of Health meet again in December of 2021. Keyes asked for the Board of Health to come to a decision regarding the ACO topic. Chair Howes stated that the Board of Health will hold additional meetings to get to a decision regarding the ACO.

Walter Swift moved to adjourn the Board of Health meeting. Jason MacDonald seconded the motion.  
Swift – Aye, MacDonald – Aye, Howes – Aye

Colleen Strapponi moved to adjourn the Finance Committee meeting. Elizabeth Callahan seconded the motion.

Strapponi – Aye, Callahan – Aye, Wilson – Aye, Madigan – Aye, Hodgen's – Aye

#### Consent Items

Approval of October 12, 2021 Regular Minutes, Approval of October 14, 2021 Regular Minutes

Selectman Arcudi moved to accept the October 12, 2021 and October 14, 2021 Regular Minutes.

Selectwoman Hazard seconded the motion.

Arcudi – Aye, Hazard – Aye, Keyes – Aye

Selectman Arcudi moved the appointment of Stephen Johnson as the Assistant Building Commissioner, effective immediately to discussion prior to accepting the Rural and Small-Town Grant Program.

Selectwoman Hazard seconded the motion.

Tim Aicardi, Building Commissioner stated the position is called Assistant Building Inspector. Building Commissioner Aicardi shared some information regarding Stephen Johnson and recommended Stephen for this position. Stephen is currently the Assistant Building Commissioner for the Town of Bellingham.

Selectwoman Hazard moved to accept the appointment of Stephen Johnson as the Assistant Building Inspector, effective immediately for a 1-year term. Selectman Arcudi seconded the motion.

Arcudi – Aye, Hazard – Aye, Keyes – Aye

Accept the Rural and Small-Town Grant Program Award of \$75,000 from the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD)

Town Administrator Schindler stated that she believes this grant award has been publicly disclosed because she received a letter dated October 21, 2021 the contact. Schindler stated that the contact informed her that the Town can not commission a press release because it is embargoed. The Town applied for a traffic violation and circulation study for the village center, primarily to focus on the redevelopment of the village center and to deal with the current traffic and circulation issues. The Select Board thanked Town Administrator Schindler for the hard work that was put into obtaining this grant award.

Selectwoman Hazard moved to accept the Rural and Small-Town Grant Award of \$75,000 from the Department of Housing and Community Development. Selectman Arcudi seconded the motion.

Hazard – Aye, Arcudi – Aye, Keyes – Aye

#### New Business

Adopt FY23 Budget Calendar for distribution

Town Administrator Schindler shared the proposed budget calendar with the Select Board. Schindler stated that the budget calendar is a standard practice that many Town's use and she will share the proposed budget calendar with the Finance Committee and apply the Committees feedback to updating the calendar.

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

Selectwoman Hazard stated that she was grateful to be a part of the Abby Lawrence Tribute. Chair Keyes and Selectman Arcudi echoed her sentiments.

Chair Keyes stated that it was brought to his attention by some residents that after a joint meeting the Select Board had with the Water Sewer Commission, the Water Sewer Commissioner's discussed West St and the Railroad. Chair Keyes felt that these topics and comments should have been made while the Select Board was in the joint meeting so there could have been a discussion and that the correct information could have been provided to the Water Sewer Commission and the residents. Chair Keyes thanked Town Administrator Schindler for correcting incorrect comments during the Water Sewer Commission's meeting when she was able to. Chair Keyes stated that spreading misinformation is detrimental to the Town.

Requests for Future Agenda Items:

Update regarding Draper Falls Redevelopment with Worcester Business Community Development (WBCD) and CMRPC (Date to be Determined), Tax Classification Hearing (Proposed for 11/22)

Selectman Arcudi requested to have a joint meeting with the Water Sewer Commission to discuss what Chair Keyes had touched on earlier in this meeting.

Administrator Updates (In Packet)

Schindler shared the administrator updates excel sheet regarding ongoing Town projects. She stated that she will share this with Department Heads as well.

Chair Keyes stated that the executive session will be passed over tonight.

Selectman Arcudi moved to pass over executive session. Chair Keyes seconded the motion.

Arcudi – Aye, Keyes – Aye

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. **(Clerical, DPW, Dispatch Units, DLR Case No. JLM-21-8830).**

Selectman Arcudi moved to adjourn the regular meeting. Chair Keyes seconded the motion.

Arcudi – Aye, Keyes – Aye

Chair Keyes dissolved the meeting at 8:53PM

*Submitted by:*

*Lindsay Mercier*

*Lindsay Mercier, Executive Assistant*

*Adopted:* \_\_\_\_\_