

Town of Ayer
Board of Selectmen
Ayer Town Hall – 1st Floor Meeting Room
Ayer, MA 01432



Thursday March 23, 2017
Open Session Meeting Minutes

Present: Gary J. Luca, Chair; Christopher R. Hillman (*Entered at 7:06 PM*), Vice – Chair; Jannice L. Livingston, Clerk

Robert A. Pontbriand, Town Administrator
Carly M. Antonellis, Assistant to the Town Administrator

Call to Order: G. Luca called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

Pledge of Allegiance: BOS members and meeting attendees stood and recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Review of Warrants: G. Luca stated that he signed the following warrants on behalf of the BOS:

- 2017-03-13 17-18 Payroll \$292,085.23
- 2017-03-21 17-17 Accounts Payable \$956,292.73

Review and Approve Agenda:

Motion: A motion was made by J. Livingston and seconded by G. Luca to approve the agenda. **Motion passed 2-0.**

Announcements: None

Public Input: None

Mr. Mark Wetzel, Superintendent, DPW: *Appointment of DPW Office Assistant Position* – M. Wetzel was in attendance with Ms. Ramona Bean, his recommended candidate for the position of DPW Office Assistant. He stated that Ms. Bean is the current Assistant Tax Collector and is well qualified for the position, has experience with MUNIS and excellent customer service skills.

Motion: A motion was made by J. Livingston and seconded by G. Luca to appoint Ms. Ramona Bean as the DPW Department Assistant effective April 3, 2017 with a 6 month probationary period pursuant to Article 13 of the AFSCME Town Hall/Clerical Union Agreement. **Motion passed 2-0.**

R. Pontbriand thanked Ms. Bean for her service and stated she would be missed at Town Hall but is glad she will still be working for the Town of Ayer.

C. Hillman entered at 7:06 PM.

Washington Street Drainage Improvements – M. Wetzel and Town Engineer Dan Van Schalkwyk were seeking approval of the Agreement for the Washington Street Drainage Improvement project. Drainage infrastructure upgrades on Washington Street need to be completed prior to paving the road. The project was engineered in house and the project funding will come from Chapter 90 and the Stormwater operating budget. The low bidder for the project was Ricciardi Brothers Inc.

Motion: A motion was made by J. Livingston and seconded by C. Hillman to approve the agreement between the Town of Ayer and Ricciardi Brothers Inc. in the amount of \$112,825.10 for the Washington Street Drainage Improvement project. **Motion passed 3-0.**

Update on DPW Parking Management Study – M. Wetzel and a representative from World Tech Engineering made a presentation to the BOS, giving them an update on the Parking Management Study currently underway. The goal of the study is to better manage parking for residents, businesses and visitors through optimization, pricing, regulation and the phased supply of parking spaces; designation of specific on-street and off-street parking; identification of necessary signs locations; inclusion of a phased implementation timeline and monitoring plan; establishment of a parking management program that will encourage investment in Ayer, encourage additional residential development, and enhance the business climate.

Conceptual Design for the MART Commuter Rail Parking Project: Mr. Larry Keegan and Ms. Alyssa Peck from Weston & Sampson and Mr. Mo Khan, Mr. Bruno Fisher from MART and Mr. George Kahale from MRPC were in attendance to present their recommendation for a final schematic design for the Commuter Rail Parking Project. The goal of the Commuter Rail Parking Project is to maximize parking (up to 200 spaces for commuters and rail trail users); improve the Depot Square area and enhance Main Street pedestrian crossing. BOS members were presented with two options: Option 1a which is at-grade parking. It has lower conceptual construction costs but higher probability of hazardous soils removal. It will achieve 149 parking spaces and Option 1b, which is to construct a parking deck. The parking deck will have higher conceptual construction costs, but lower the probability of hazardous soils removal. It will achieve 184 parking spaces and maxims the FTA grant funds used in Ayer by MART. The recommendation to achieve the project goals is to construct Depot Square, Main Street pedestrian crossing and Option 1b the parking deck.

Mr. Ron Morrison of Remax Realty stated that option 1b would be the best protection to the value for the condos behind the rail trail lot.

Ms. Beth Suedmeyer from the Open Space and Recreation Committee stated that she likes the idea in Option 1b and the green space/open space. She also likes returning the identity of Ayer back to the train and that the Town has an opportunity to make Depot Square a landmark.

Ms. Lauri Sabol, 1 Winthrop Ave had questions about the number of egresses in each option.

C. Hillman asked Chief Murray if he was comfortable with the deck concept and the Chief said that the closed circuit cameras will help with overall security. C. Hillman stated that he would also like to see designated handicap spots on the Depot Square side of the project.

Ms. Linda Garant, 38 Cambridge Street said she is concerned with the number of cars that will be accessing Groton Street.

J. Livingston stated that the crosswalk and the approach to the crosswalk on Groton Street are not safe and she'd like to see additional improvements at that pedestrian crossing.

Mr. Ed Kelley, 20 Oak Ridge Drive stated that MART should have nothing to do with the project and the Town should manage it. Mr. Mo Khan stated that the revenue received from the parking fees will go towards the operation and maintenance of the facility.

Ms. Carolyn McCreary, 6 Wachusett Avenue East stated that she has concerns about aesthetics. She would like to see a lower fence or green fence in the Depot Square area.

Motion: A motion was made by C. Hillman and seconded by J. Livingston to approve the Option 1b schematic (deck) with a 7' clearance and to pursue all avenues with handicap accessible spots.

J. Livingston stated that she really struggled with choosing a design, but felt comfortable with the deck option. **Motion passed 3-0.**

Town Administrator's Report: *Reclassification of Police Chief Office Manager* – Chief Murray stated that there have been fundamental changes to the job description and that his Office Manager supervises one staff member. The position is currently ranked at an Grade 8 Step 2 and he is recommending, along with the Town Administrator and Benefits and Payroll Director, the position be classified as a Grade 10 Step 1.

R. Pontbriand stated that because of the lack of quorum with the Personnel Board, the reclassification request goes directly to the BOS.

Motion: A motion was made by C. Hillman and seconded by J. Livingston to reclassify the Office Manager at the Police Station from a Grade 8 Step 2 to a Grade 10 Step 1 to be retroactive to March 8, 2017 per the recommendation of the Town Administrator and Benefits and Payroll Manager. **Motion passed 3-0.**

Administrative Update – R. Pontbriand gave a brief Administrative Update stating that the Warrant for the Annual Town Meeting closes at 12:00 PM on Friday April 14, 2017. He also stated that the Town will be undertaking a study to finally remedy the acoustics in the Great Hall.

Discussion of Reorganization of Personnel Board Functions – R. Pontbriand wanted to have an initial discussion with the BOS on the reorganization of Personnel Board functions. He stated that this is in no way a reflection of the remaining Personnel Board members, but the current system in which the Personnel Board operates does not work for the Town of Ayer. He stated that based on research, Personnel Boards were mostly created in the 1960's and 1970's when there were no fulltime professional administrative staff in Town Halls. He stated that in his 7 years working for the Town, the Personnel Board has been without a quorum 11 times. He stated that personnel administration should be centralized with oversight by the BOS. He stated the Town cannot continue to operate in the current construct. R. Pontbriand stated he will be working over the summer to craft a new Personnel Bylaw that he plans to have taken up at the Fall Town Meeting.

Approval of Aquatic Weed Control Contract – R. Pontbriand stated that he is recommending that the BOS approve the contract in the amount of \$51,500 from Solitude Lake Management for the Town's aquatic weed control program. He stated that Solitude was the most responsible and responsive bidder.

Motion: A motion was made by J. Livingston and seconded by C. Hillman to approve the contract between the Town of Ayer and Solitude Lake Management in the amount of \$61,500 with signature by the Chair.

Motion passed 3-0.

New Business/Selectmen's Questions: G. Luca stated that he is hearing that the Town of Harvard has a warrant article upcoming that seeks to reclaim their portion of Devens and that the JBOS would be setting up a meeting to discuss in the near future.

J. Livingston asked for an update on the recreational marijuana and where the Town was in interpreting the recently passed state ballot initiative. R. Pontbriand stated that more information would be available at the next meeting.

Approval of Meeting Minutes:

Motion: A motion was made by J. Livingston and seconded by C. Hillman to approve the meeting minutes of February 13, 2017, February 21, 2017, and March 7, 2017. **Motion passed 3-0.**

Executive Session Pursuant to MGL c. 30A, §21A: A motion was made at 9:24 PM by G. Luca and seconded by G. Luca to enter into Executive Session pursuant to MGL c.30A, section 21A Exemption #3 (Litigation Strategy) Police Reserve Officer Compensation, Exemption #3 (Collective Bargaining) AFSCME 93 Contract Negotiations and to adjourn from Executive Session. G. Luca further stated that to discuss these items in Open Session would be detrimental to the Town's negotiating study. **By Roll Call:** G. Luca, aye; J. Livingston, aye; C. Hillman, aye. **Motion passed by Roll Call 3-0.**

Minutes Recorded and Submitted by Carly M. Antonellis

Date Minutes Approved by BOS: 4 APR 17

Signature Indicating Approval: 