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TOWN OF AYER
TOWN CLERK

Scopeland

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



Broadcast and Recorded by APAC

September 6, 2023
Open Session Meeting Minutes

SB Present: Scott A. Houde, Chair; Jannice L. Livingston, Vice-Chair; Shaun C. Copeland, Clerk (Via Zoom)

Also Present: Robert A. Pontbriand, Town Manager
Carly M. Antonellis, Assistant Town Manager

Call to Order: S. Houde called the meeting to order at 5:00 PM. S. Houde further stated that this meeting/hearing of the Ayer Select Board (SB) will be held in-person at the location provided on this notice. Members of the public are welcome to attend this in-person meeting. Please note that while an option for remote attendance and/or participation via Zoom is being provided as a courtesy to the public, the meeting/hearing will not be suspended or terminated if technological problems interrupt the virtual broadcast, unless otherwise required by law. Members of the public with particular interest in a specific item on this agenda should make plans for in-person vs. virtual attendance accordingly. This meeting will be live on Zoom and Channel 8. The public may access the proceedings by joining Zoom (Meeting ID# 897 9080 0793) or by calling (929-205-6099).

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

S. Houde stated that all votes will be taken by Roll Call due to Select Board Member Copeland attending via Zoom.

Approval of Meeting Agenda:

Motion: A motion was made by J. Livingston and seconded by S. Houde to approve the meeting agenda.

Roll Call Vote: J. Livingston, aye; S. Copeland, aye; S. Houde, aye. **Motion passed by Roll Call Vote 3-0.**

Announcements: S. Houde announced that the following Board and Committees have vacancies: Affordable Housing Committee, Capital Planning Committee, Finance Committee, Rate Review Committee and the Zoning Board of Appeals.

Public Input: None

Dan Van Schalkwyk, Director, Department of Public Works - Petition for Street Acceptance -

Curley Circle: D. Van Schalkwyk reported that Mr. Peter Decarolis has requested that the Town accept the John Carrol Reserve Subdivision, being Curley Circle. Upon the Select Board's affirmative vote to layout the road, DPW will notify the Planning Board for a non-binding approval, notify abutters with easements related to the roadway and then recommend that the Select Board vote to layout the street. The final acceptance will require a two-thirds vote at the Fall Town Meeting. He noted that the Developer must complete a punch list prior to the Town Meeting vote, or the Article shall be withdrawn.

Motion: A motion was made by J. Livingston and seconded by S. Copeland that the Select Board vote its intention to layout the John Carrol Reserve Subdivision as a public way. **Roll Call Vote:** J. Livingston, aye; S. Copeland, aye; S. Houde, aye. **Motion passed by Roll Call Vote 3-0.**

Amendment #2 – W. Main St. Sewer Trunk Repair – D. Van Schalkwyk presented Amendment #2 for the emergency repair work related to the West Main Street 24" line sewer repair. He noted that this is the final amendment for the project and includes additional work for sewer and water main repairs required as part of the work. The amendment is for \$60,983.86 for a total project cost of \$310,983.96 being funded through FY24 I/I Capital funds.

Motion: A motion was made by J. Livingston and seconded by S. Copeland to approve Amendment #2 for the West Main Street Sewer Trunk Repair in the amount of \$60,983 with GVC Construction, Inc. with signature by the Chair. **Roll Call Vote:** J. Livingston, aye; S. Copeland, aye; S. Houde, aye. **Motion passed by Roll Call Vote 3-0.**

DPW Project Updates (West Main St. Bridge & Sandy Pond Rd. Complete Streets) – D. Van Schalkwyk stated that the West Main Street Bridge is still on schedule to be bid this fall and substantial construction will begin in the spring of 2024. Relating to funding, he is still waiting to hear from MassDOT about the Town's 2nd application for a Small Bridge Grant in the amount of \$500,000. Additionally, Congresswoman Trahan has submitted an earmark in an upcoming federal budget in the amount of \$700,000, which is currently working its way through Congress.

He announced that the DPW would be hosting a Public Input Session at the Town Hall on September 13, 2023, at 6:00 PM for the Sandy Pond Road Complete Streets Program.

J. Livingston asked what funding was already in place for the West Main Street Bridge. D. Van Schalkwyk stated that Town Meeting authorized \$3M and the Town has already secured \$500,000 in an initial Small Bridge grant, have applied for the 2nd, and have the pending earmark in the federal budget. J. Livingston asked about the length of the bridge. D. Van Schalkwyk stated that in Massachusetts it qualifies as a small bridge, but federally it only qualifies as a culvert, so many federal funding programs are not available. She then asked if the bridge was safe. D. Van Schalkwyk stated that yes, it is being inspected every 6 months by MassDOT. C. Antonellis added that she and D. Van Schalkwyk, the Fire and Police Departments met with MassDOT several months ago and they are concerned with the bridge and really made it clear that the Town needed to get funding for repairs, sooner rather than later.

Report and Recommendations of the Senior/Community Center Building Committee - Dr. Katie Petrossi, COA Director, Chair of the Committee - Report and Recommendations of the Committee and Vote to Create a Senior Center Building Committee: Dr. Petrossi was joined by Ken Diskin, Planning Board and Dennis Curran, Council on Aging Board of Directors. K. Petrossi referenced a report in the meeting packet and stated that at the August 10, 2023 Park Commission meeting, the Parks Commission voted to revoke their prior authorization to use Field 6 of Pirone Park for a combined senior/community center. She stated that in the absence of support from the Parks Commission for using Field 6, and the conditions placed on partnering elsewhere in Pirone Parks, the Senior Center/Community Center Building Committee voted 9-0 to recommend the dissolution of the Committee to the Select Board. She stated that the need for the Senior Center still urgently exists. She is recommending that the Select Board create a new committee for site selection/building of a standalone senior center. Additionally, she is requesting that the \$150,000 previously allocated to the Senior/Community Center project, be reallocated to the new committee being created this evening.

R. Pontbriand referenced his memo in the meeting packet relating to the creation of a new Building Committee. The proposed charge of the Committee is to identify and recommend a viable site; oversee and administer the necessary due diligence and conceptual design for the purposes of recommending the site to the Select Board for appropriate consideration by a future Town Meeting for the acquisition of the recommended site(s); oversee and conduct the necessary public outreach; identify and secure

funding for the land acquisition and design of the project to include Town Meeting approval; oversee the final design and construction of the project; develop, oversee, and administer a construction budget for the project to include Town Meeting approval and to conduct all meetings of the Senior Center Building Committee in accordance with the provisions of the Open Meeting Law and in accordance with the provisions of the Public Records Law. The Committee will also provide periodic public updates and shall be provided with appropriate and reasonable levels of professional and administrative support from the Town Manager's Office; Town Departments; and professional consultants as warranted and with approved funding. He is recommending a 9-member committee composed of the following: One (1) Member of the Council on Aging; the COA/Senior Center Director; the DPW Director; One (1) Member of the Planning Board; and five (5) Ayer Residents.

J. Livingston stated that she thinks that the Committee should be called the Site Selection Committee to avoid confusion. She also thinks that \$150,000 of ARPA funding is too high and is recommending the Committee be authorized up to \$60,000. S. Houde asked what the funding would be used for. K. Petrossi stated that it would be used to issue an RFP looking for land, preliminary land investigation fees (21e report/testing; appraisals; wetlands flagging; survey work) and the engagement of an architect. J. Livingston and S. Houde stated the Committee could always come back to request additional funding if needed.

D. Curran stated that the Committee may not be spending all of the \$150,000 and any unused funds would revert back. He is concerned that waiting weeks in between meetings could result in project delays. S. Houde stated he disagreed and that there is a process; when the \$150,000 was initially authorized there were known expenses. He stated that the Select Board has shown support and will convene a meeting within three days if necessary. C. Antonellis stated that there was also some remaining funding in a prior UDAG appropriation, approximately \$8,000-\$12,000.

K. Diskin stated that based on the prior committee's experience any site looked at by the Committee will need some level of due diligence done whether for environmental testing or wetland flagging, etc. There was additional discussion. S. Copeland is also in favor of \$60,000 in initial ARPA funding. S. Houde asked if there was any objection to moving forward with a Community Center with a space carved out for a Senior Center. K. Petrossi said she is not opposed to the idea, because there is a lot of synchronicity between the COA and Parks Department, however; without having an active partner in the Parks and Recreation Commission, she doesn't think a project would pass. J. Livingston stated that it appears that the Parks Commission doesn't want a community center at this time.

Pauline Conley, Cambridge Street stated that in previous administrations staff members working on the committee would be considered "ex-officio"/non-voting. She feels that the 5 residents that will join this new committee should all be registered voters. She also offered a thought that non-residents that are employees should not be committee chairs because of comments made on a private Friends of Pirone Park Facebook page. J. Livingston asked if the Committee charge should be changed to have it stated that the Chair should be a resident.

R. Pontbriand stated that he feels that the Committee name should be changed from the Building Committee to the Site Selection/Building Committee since the two - finding the site and construction of the building - are intimately connected. There was additional discussion.

Motion: A motion was made by J. Livingston and seconded by S. Houde to dissolve the Senior Center/Community Center at Pirone Park Committee. **Roll Call Vote:** J. Livingston, aye; S. Copeland, aye; S. Houde, aye. **Motion passed by Roll Call Vote 3-0.**

Motion: A motion was made by J. Livingston and seconded by S. Copeland to rescind the \$150,000 in ARPA funds for the Senior Center/Community Center at Pirone Park Committee. **Roll Call Vote:** J. Livingston, aye; S. Copeland, aye; S. Houde, aye. **Motion passed by Roll Call Vote 3-0.**

Motion: A motion was made by S. Copeland and seconded by J. Livingston to vote to approve the formation of the Senior Center Site Selection/Building Committee. **Roll Call Vote:** J. Livingston, aye; S. Copeland, aye; S. Houde, aye. **Motion passed by Roll Call Vote 3-0.**

Motion: A motion was made by S. Copeland and seconded by J. Livingston to approve the allocation of up to \$60,000 dollars in ARPA funding for the newly formed Senior Center Site Selection/Building Committee. **Roll Call Vote:** J. Livingston, aye; S. Copeland, aye; S. Houde, aye. **Motion passed by Roll Call Vote 3-0.**

Approval of Meeting Minutes: C. Antonellis stated that she received an email from resident Sara Withee who is requesting that the line "she did not attend the meeting of the Parks Commission and she is disappointed because she wanted to hear what a citizen-elected board had to say". C. Antonellis stated she reviewed the tape, the Ms. Withee did say that, and she has added it to the DRAFT minutes in front of the Board.

Motion: A motion was made by S. Houde and seconded by S. Copeland to approve the meeting minutes from August 15, 2023, as amended. **Roll Call Vote:** J. Livingston, aye; S. Copeland, aye; S. Houde, aye. **Motion passed by Roll Call Vote 3-0.**

Adjournment:

Motion: A motion was made by J. Livingston and seconded by S. Copeland to adjourn at 5:59 PM. **Roll Call Vote:** J. Livingston, aye; S. Copeland, aye; S. Houde, aye. **Motion passed by Roll Call Vote 3-0.**

Minutes Recorded and Submitted by Carly M. Antonellis, Assistant Town Manager

Date Minutes Approved by SB: 10/3/2023

Signature Indicating Approval: 