

Improving The Town

Ayer Board of Selectmen Meeting

November 13, 2018

Writer: Anthony Winship, ASRHS Correspondent

Attention, the winter parking ban is now in effect. Residents are not allowed to park on streets between 12:00 AM and 6:00 AM; this ban will be in effect until April 15, 2019.

Also, the town is holding a debt exclusion election for the high school's Athletic Fields Project. The election will be held on December 11, 2018 from 7:00am-8:00pm at the Ayer Town Hall.

Superintendent of Public Works, Mark Wetzel, addressed many topics. First, he and the Board discussed the prices for the Transfer station. It was decided that the One Day permit price would be increased from \$10 to \$15. It was also decided that the Senior Citizen Permits would be increased from \$50 to \$55. This decision was made in order to not have to increase the price of the town's trash bags. Chairman Livingston suggested that the DPW send out flyers with information about the pricing with the water bills. Secondly, Wetzel asked to have the budget adjusted in order to upgrade a lot of the equipment in the water line. He asked for \$43,124.68, which was adjusted by \$15,000 by the company who will do the work. The board approved of his budget request. Third, Wetzel asked about a contract to hire Jay D'amico Inc. for the Barnum Road Water Main and Meter Vault. He was the lowest bid at \$193,993.63. The board approved of the contract.

The Director of Community & Economic Development, Alan Manoian, came to the meeting with a very special request for the town. He has proposed that we put up a fence at the train station off of Main Street. The fence would cover up the view from the train to the freight yard behind it. Mr. Manoian suggested that the fence contain pictures of ceramic tiles that currently adorn Town Hall, and use them as the art for the fence. The MBTA has already decided that they want to put up the fence and begun work on its construction. Manoian estimates the total budget for the project would be no more than \$6,000. The Town Manager even said that we will be able to get the MBTA to pay us back for the fence project. Mr. Manoian's hope is that if the town creates this art-based fence, will make the town more appealing to out of town guests. The board ecstatically approved this project.

Town Manager, Robert Pontbriand had a few points of note during his report. The Pirone Park Perimeter Path Contract has come back to being \$60,000. All of the bids came back at very high rates, making this one the lowest. The project is already underway because the project is weather sensitive. The board approved the bid. Another major point made: the Board openly condemned the Special Fall Meeting on Oct. 22, 2018. The Board openly called the town meeting "a confusing and embarrassing mess." Lauren Metzler was appointed by the Board, with Pontbriand's suggestion, to the Cultural Counsel for a term lasting until June 30, 2019. The Board also talked more about a Devens Disposition Study Committee. Pontbriand stated that he wants to create a system similar to what Harvard has done. The Board has decided that the

committee should be comprised of five members, at least two of the members should also be residents of Devens and the others residents of Ayer. There are no term limits written in stone yet and the Board of Selectmen will be allowed to appoint or remove any member of the committee for good reason.

Finally, Scott Houde shared his results of the Transfer Station Survey. He found that 61% of people who took the survey were unhappy with the current hours with the transfer station. 71% of the people who took the survey said that they did not want to increase the number of hours for the station to be open; they would like to keep it at 24 hours a week. The current hours are 7 AM to 3 PM and the summer hours are 6 AM to 2 PM. The Board discussed changing the summer hours as many people have said that they do not like the summer hours.