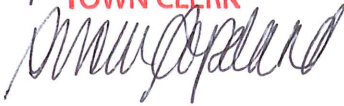


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DEC 13 2021

9:30am TOWN OF AYER  
TOWN CLERK



Town of Ayer  
Ayer Select Board  
Ayer Town Hall – 1<sup>st</sup> Floor Meeting Room  
Ayer, MA 01432



Broadcast and Recorded by APAC

**Tuesday November 16, 2021**  
**Open Session Meeting Minutes**

**SB Remotely Present:** Shaun C. Copeland, Chair; Scott A. Houde, Vice-Chair; Jannice L. Livingston, Clerk

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

**Call to Order:** S. Copeland called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM. Due to the ongoing COVID-19 Pandemic, in accordance with Chapter 20 of the Acts of 2021, suspending certain provisions of the Open Meeting Law (OML), public bodies otherwise governed by the OML are temporarily relieved from the requirement that meetings be held in public places, open and physically accessible to the public, so long as measures are taken to ensure public access to the bodies' deliberations "through adequate, alternative means." This meeting will be live on Zoom and Channel 8. S. Copeland stated that all votes will be taken by Roll Call.

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

**Approval of Meeting Agenda:**

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

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

**Recognition of Lauri J. Fritz, Assistant Town Clerk:** The Select Board and Town Clerk Susan Copeland recognized retiring Assistant Town Clerk Lauri Fritz who is retiring after 31 years. The Select Board wished Lauri well on her well-deserved retirement!

**Public Input:** None

**Discussion on Future of Town Fireworks:** R. Pontbriand was joined by Police Chief Brian Gill, Fire Chief Tim Johnston and Deputy Fire Chief Jeremy Januskiewicz to have a discussion on the future of the Town's fireworks. No decisions are being made tonight, as this is more informational. To recap this issue, he stated that the former Police Chief and Fire Chief raised significant safety concerns following the 2019 Fourth of July event held at Pirone Park due to Pirone Park being very small and the very large crowd that attends the event. On October 15, 2019, the Select Board voted to support any necessary changes to the Fourth of July event, as recommended by the Chiefs for public safety purposes. On November 5, 2019, the SB hosted a meeting at the Ayer Shirley Regional High School and presented the public safety concerns at Pirone Park and made the decision to cancel the long-standing event. He noted that in March of 2020, COVID-19 happened, and the Commonwealth was shutdown and large crowds were prohibited from gathering. In 2021, COVID-19 crowd limits were supposed to be in effect until August and the Governor in May made a surprise announcement, stating that all restrictions would be lifted at the end of May, thereby not leaving enough time to purchase fireworks and/or plan for a community event. R. Pontbriand stated that he asked both Chiefs to look at the issue. Chief Gill and Deputy Chief Januskiewicz made a presentation, presenting various scenarios related to launching fireworks, crowd capacity and public safety access. After consulting with the State Fire Marshall's Office, it was determined that either Willard Field or Rogers Field at Devens could safely accommodate the fireworks launching, the crowd size with multiple entrances and exits for attendees and public safety. R. Pontbriand stated that he and the Chiefs are meeting with MassDevelopment and Fort Devens in early December to discuss a joint event between Ayer and Devens.

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S. Copeland asked if there was a way to limit the number of attendees at Pirone Park. B. Gill said it would be a challenge. J. Livingston stated they had discussed, in the past, making the event resident only but it would be impossible to police.

S. Houde thanked everyone for spending time working on the presentation. He also noted that parking at Pirone Park is very limited. He thinks the best option is to pursue a joint event with MassDevelopment.

Chief Johnston added that he was born and raised in Ayer and that it is upsetting that the event has outgrown the area.

**Town Manager's Report:** *Administrative Update/Review of Town Warrant(s)* - R. Pontbriand provided the Select Board with an update on the various activities, initiatives, and projects of the Administration since the Select Board last met. He also provided a list of signed Town Warrants in the meeting packet. R. Pontbriand thanked Ayer Fire Department for hosting the upcoming annual turkey party. He said that the Annual Holiday Stroll will be held on December 4, 2021. The ice sculptures will be at Town Hall on December 18, 2021. He noted that the FY '22 Tax Classification Hearing will happen at the next SB meeting on December 7, 2021.

*FY '23 Budget Update* - R. Pontbriand noted that the Capital Planning process is well under way and the next meetings are tomorrow, December 1<sup>st</sup>, and December 8<sup>th</sup>. The FY '23 Budget Directive will go out on December 1, 2021. He will be presenting FY '23 budget needs. R. Pontbriand then wished the SB a Happy Thanksgiving!

**New Business/Selectmen's Questions:** None

**Approval of Meeting Minutes:**

**Motion:** A motion was made by J. Livingston and seconded by S. Houde to approve the meeting minutes from November 2, 2021. **By Roll Call Vote:** J. Livingston, aye; S. Houde, aye; S. Copeland, aye. **Motion passed 3-0.**

**Executive Session pursuant to MGL Chapter 30A, Section 21A Exemption #3 (Contract Negotiations) Fire Contract; DPW Contract; Police Superiors Contract:** A motion was made at 6:48 PM by J. Livingston and seconded by S. Houde to enter into Executive Session pursuant to MGL Chapter 30A, Section 21A Exemption #3 (Contract Negotiations) Fire, DPW and Police Superiors Contract and to adjourn from Executive Session. J. Livingston further stated to discuss these items in Open Session would be detrimental to the Town's negotiating strategy. **By Roll Call:** J. Livingston, aye; S. Houde, aye; S. Copeland, aye. **Motion passed 3-0.**

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

Date Minutes Approved by SB: 12/7/2021

Signature Indicating Approval: 