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TOWN OF AYER
TOWN CLERK

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

Broadcast and Recorded by APAC

May 2, 2023
Open Session Meeting Minutes

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

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

Call to Order: J. Livingston called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM. J. Livingston stated that this meeting/hearing of the Ayer Select Board 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.

Approval of Meeting Agenda:

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

Motion passed 3-0.

Announcements: J. Livingston announced: the Annual Town Election will take place on May 9, 2023, the current list of Board/Committee vacancies; and that the Memorial Day Parade will be taking place on Saturday May 27, 2023.

Public Input: Dennis Curran, Pleasant Street had a question relative to the amount of Opioid Settlement money the Town of Ayer is receiving vs. the Town of Harvard. He referenced a recent article in the Harvard Press. The Town of Harvard, which has a smaller population and had 3 opioid-related deaths received \$346,114 dollars. The Town of Ayer which had 18 opioid-related deaths and a higher population is only set to receive \$37,681. J. Livingston stated that Harvard receives a higher amount in Lottery Aid (UGGA) although Harvard does not sell lottery tickets. D. Curran is requesting that the Town reach out to our state delegation to find out the reason for the difference. R. Pontbriand stated that a decision on how to use the funds has not been made final yet.

Dr. Katie Petrossi, Director, Ayer Council on Aging - Approval of Anonymous Donation: Dr. Katie Petrossi was in attendance requesting that the Select Board accept an anonymous donation in the amount of \$2,000.

Motion: A motion was made by S. Houde and seconded by S. Copeland to accept the anonymous donation to the COA in the amount of \$2,000. **Motion passed 3-0.**

Transfer of Class II License - 77 Fitchburg Road - From Edward J. Morin d/b/a Route 2A Auto Sales Center, LLC. to Broadway Motoring, Inc.:

Edward Gukasov, applicant was joined by building owner Ed Morin. Mr. Morin will be leasing out space to Mr. Gukasov; Mr. Morin currently has a Class II License and will be transferring it to Mr. Gukasov. C. Antonellis has reported that all Departments have reviewed the request and there are no issues.

Motion: A motion was made by S. Copeland and seconded by S. Houde to approve the Class II application for Broadway Motoring, Inc., as presented. **Motion passed 3-0.**

Chuck Shultz, Facilities Director - Update on Proposed Great Hall Improvements: C. Shultz joined the Select Board to provide an update on the Great Hall Acoustics Project. He reported that the Town Hall is currently bursting at the seams, and that we are in need of storage and meeting space. He showed conceptual drawings of renovated cubicle space in the Great Hall, which will accommodate for both meeting space and storage. He will also be submitting two projects to the Green Communities Competitive Grant, the window weatherization and insulation of the Town Hall attic. C. Shultz also presented plans for improving the acoustics and multimedia options in the Great Hall. He will be working with Rosati Acoustics (proposal in the packet) to analyze and engineer a solution that will work within the Great Hall footprint.

J. Livingston stated that she noticed the metal pieces hanging from the Town Hall ceiling and suggested draping that would look nice and help with the acoustics. C. Shultz stated that he had looked into it, but it would interfere with the sprinkler system. J. Livingston then asked about replacing Town Hall windows, noting that the Massachusetts Historic Commission had issues with the replacement about 8 years ago. R. Pontbriand stated that it has been a considerable amount of time since the Town worked with Mass Historic relating to the windows, but that all work done in the Great Hall will need their approval. C. Shultz stated he had been to Harvard and Groton's Town Halls to look at their setups. J. Livingston asked about the possibility of rolling out a carpet for certain events to help with the noise. C. Shultz stated that he is sure it could be incorporated into the overall project.

Pauline Conley, 40 Cambridge Street asked if the Town was eligible for MassSave. C. Shultz has been working with the Department of Energy Resources and they feel that insulating the attic would be all grant funded. She also asked if the acoustics in the First Floor Meeting Room would be addressed. C. Shultz stated that he would be asking the acoustics engineers to analyze the room.

Dan Van Schalkwyk, Director, Department of Public Works - Update - W. Main Street Public Infrastructure Project (MassWorks): Dan Van Schalkwyk was in attendance and stated that the project was mostly completed last year, and the remaining work is the curbing, sidewalks and driveway aprons, paving, line striping and signage. The target completion date is June 30, 2023. He showed all work presented to date and plans that were approved by Mass Highway. He stated that the curb extensions were originally designed at 8 feet, and they were supposed to be 6 feet, therefore the curb extensions will be taken in 2 feet on each side.

J. Livingston stated that there were a lot of issues with the 8 feet curb extensions and people felt uncomfortable because of how tight it was. D. Van Schalkwyk stated that the widening of that area will start in the morning.

S. Houde asked if the speed limit would be reduced. Police Chief Gill said they have been reevaluating the speed limit, which is currently at 35 mph. They are looking to have it reduced to a posted 30 mph or a townwide non-posted 25 mph.

J. Livingston asked if trucks are really able to get in and out of the Devens Plaza parking lot. D. Van Schalkwyk stated the design is to Town of Ayer's regulations, which are done to MassDOT standards.

Marcy Logan, Sculley Road asked how long the port-a-potty would be there. She stated it is from the train derailment in late March. She then stated that she helped clean Sculley Road during the Townwide cleanup. She asked if there is a way to get the businesses on Sculley Road and in Molumco Park to show up and help clean during the Townwide clean up day. D. Van Schalkwyk stated he will look into the port-a-potty issue. Ms. Logan also stated that it took her effort and time to widen Sculley Road. She said she now feels safe travelling on Sculley Road. There was additional discussion. S. Houde suggested the Adopt-a-Road program for Sculley Road.

Change Order 1 – W. Main Street Public Infrastructure Project (MassWorks) – D. Van Schalkwyk presented Change Order 1 for the construction of the Ayer West Main Street Public Infrastructure Project. The change order includes additional work due to unknown utilities, unforeseen concrete base material, winter pavement markings, curbing changes, time extension for winter shutdown, and overages for some actual quantities versus estimated quantities at time of bidding; for a total amount of \$339,393.76. He is recommending approval.

Motion: A motion was made by S. Houde and seconded by S. Copeland to approve Change Order No. 1 for the Ayer West Main Street Public Infrastructure Project in the amount of \$339,393.76 and including the time extension for signature by the Chair. **Motion passed 3-0.**

Execution of Contract – Pleasant Street Drain Improvements – D. Van Schalkwyk presented a contract for execution for drain improvements on Pleasant Street. The project is located near 109 Pleasant Street and Pleasant Street Extension to replace a poor condition drainage pipe that failed and includes improvements to structures being replaced. Eight bids were received for the project; bids ranged from \$70,750 to \$147,950. The low bidder is CHB Excavating of Westford, MA, already contracted to complete Third Street Water and Drain Improvements this year. He is recommending execution of the contract as presented.

Motion: A motion was made by S. Copeland and seconded by S. Houde to approve the contract with CHB Excavating for the Pleasant Street Drain Improvements project in the amount of \$70,750 with signature by the Board. **Motion passed 3-0.**

Local Devens Committee Discussion: R. Pontbriand provided an overview of the status of the local Devens Committee. The Select Board approved the formation, composition, and charge of a local Devens Committee back in November 2018. The main challenge has been getting the Committee populated; as well as clearly defining the scope of the Committee. Efforts were further delayed due to COVID-19. In the SB Meeting Packet are the following documents: the November 2018 memo creating the committee as approved by the Select Board; a proposed Committee interest document developed by the Director of Community and Economic Development; and a proposed questionnaire for interested applicants as developed by the Director of Community and Economic Development. R. Pontbriand further stated that from his vantage point, three initial issues are the appropriate name for the Committee; developing the charge/scope of the Committee (specifically the tasks of the Committee); and appointing the Committee. Having some type of informational questionnaire as proposed in the packet would make sense so that individuals understand what is involved with the Committee.

S. Houde stated that as the individual originally appointed by the Select Board to represent the Select Board on this Committee and to lead the effort he would like to do so. J. Livingston and S. Copeland concurred.

J. Livingston stated that in terms of a name for the Committee, that is important. The use of "2033" may be confusing in the name of the Committee as proposed.

S. Houde stated that he did not like the use of "2033" and that he would give the issue of the appropriate name as well as a defined charge and scope for the Committee some serious thought for further review and discussion at the next meeting.

Alan Manoian, Director of Community and Economic Development stated that he is available and willing to work with S. Houde. C. Antonellis asked for clarification at this point if there was anything that was expected or needed of from the Office of the Town Manager. S. Houde stated not at this time but in the future, he will let the Town Manager's Office know.

P. Conley stated that she realizes that she is not the Board's favorite person but that she would be interested in serving on this Committee and would like the Board to seriously consider it. She has a lot of knowledge about this issue and probably has more documents than anyone related to this subject.

J. Livingston stated that she took issue with the characterization that P. Conley is not the Board's favorite person. She stated that P. Conley should submit a letter of interest.

Town Manager's Report - Administrative Update/Review of Town Warrant(s): R. Pontbriand provided a brief Administrative Update to the Select Board on the various activities, initiatives, and projects of the Town since the Select Board last met and referenced the Town Warrants that are in the Select Board's packet that were approved since the Select Board last met. He gave a brief Administrative Update thanking all Town Departments, Boards, Committees, Commissions, the Select Board, and Finance Committee, and the residents of Ayer for a successful Town Meeting on April 27. All 29 Articles passed including the FY 2024 Budget as submitted. He stated that the Town will now be focused on the end of the fiscal year which will include some potential Reserve Fund Transfers for consideration by the Select Board and Fin. Com. before June 30. He also advised that the Town will be updating MUNIS, the Town's financial software system this Friday, May 5, 2023 and there may be some financial functions not available that day. Advanced public notice will be given. It is also that time of the year when the Select Board will be conducting annual appointments/re-appointments over the two meetings in June.

New Business/Select Board Member Questions: None

Approval of Meeting Minutes:

Motion: A motion was made by S. Copeland and seconded by S. Houde to approve the meeting minutes from April 18, 2023. **Motion passed 3-0.**

Adjournment:

Motion: A motion was made by S. Copeland and seconded by S. Houde to adjourn at 7:10 PM. **Motion passed 3-0.**

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

Date Minutes Approved by SB: May 16 2023

Signature Indicating Approval: 