

BOARD OF SELECTMEN
APRIL 14, 2021
REGULAR SESSION

Members Present: Justin Sullivan, Chris Zorra, Adam Petronio,
David Andrade, Michael Healy

Town Administrator: Shawn E. Cadime

Asst. Town Administrator;
Director of Human Resources Carol-Ann Days

The meeting was held at the Seekonk Senior Center, 540 Arcade Avenue, Seekonk, MA.

Chairman Sullivan opened the meeting at 6 p.m. followed by the Pledge of Allegiance and moment of silence.

He announced that, per Governor Baker's Order suspending certain provisions of the Open Meeting Law, M.G.L. Chapter 30A Section 20, it is necessary to limit the number of attendees allowed to physically access this Board of Selectmen meeting to 25. Attendees are required to wear a mask.

The public could have submitted comments and questions to the Board in advance of the meeting by completing the Google Form prior to the meeting by Tuesday, April 13, 2021, at 4:30 p.m. The meeting is broadcast live via Seekonk Cable TV9 and streamed live on TV9's Facebook.

In accordance with M.G.L. Chapter 30A, Section 20(f), any person recording must notify the Chairman at the beginning of the meeting

BOARD AND COMMITTEE OPENINGS.

Mr. Andrade announced that volunteers are needed on the Board of Health (1 Board of Selectmen appointment), Capital Improvement Committee (2 BOS), Commission on Disability (5-13 BOS), Economic Development Committee (5 BOS), Energy Committee (1 BOS), Historical Commission (3 BOS), Parks & Recreation (1 BOS), Recycling Committee (3 BOS). Zoning Board of Appeals (2 Alternates).

COMMUNITY SPEAKS

Mr. John Alves welcomed Mr. Zorra back to the Board and congratulated Mr. Healy on his election.

He referred to the Town of Norton that passed a \$41M debt exclusion that has to go to town meeting. He commended the Norton Board of Selectmen for deciding to put it to the people. He would like to see Seekonk lump all four projects into one debt exclusion.

Mr. Tom Benoit proposed that the warrant article regarding the Town Charter be postponed indefinitely. Residents at Town Meeting should get a full and accurate presentation. He read the Town Charter and focused on items being added. There were 17 of those and 22 more that were not read. Fifteen pages were missing. He compared the Town Charter with the presentation made at Town Meeting.

He talked about the discussion on the sidewalks at Ledge Road and Arcade Avenue. It might have been different if it was in the warrant or presentation.

Chairman Sullivan said there was a discrepancy. Once it was clear that what was being presented was not transparent, he said to postpone it until they can get it right. He will take the blame. He noted that Mr. Petronio also had concerns.

Mr. Benoit offered to share his findings in order to move the process along.

Mr. Andrade said he does not want to speak to the prior speaker. His frustration was the insinuation that the changes to be implemented were not discussed.

Chairman Sullivan had an e-mail from Nancy Borges. She asked if there is any way to offer residents an opportunity to learn more about committees. She felt it is not enough to list openings. She said some residents are concerned about the overdevelopment in town.

Chairman Sullivan said the recommendation is to define what each committee does. It is a good idea.

Mr. Andrade explained that the late David Parker had started to have all chairs come in with a brief presentation on the committee. That was discontinued as the agendas got longer.

Chairman Sullivan suggested it could be an agenda item all at one time or spread over a period of two to three weeks.

Mr. Andrade suggested it might be a meeting that nobody is watching.

Mr. Healy suggested TV9 would probably be willing to do a show.

A motion was made by Mr. Zora, seconded by Mr. Petronio, and it was unanimously

VOTED: To move to Item A. Reorganization of the Board under General Discussion.

The vote: Mr. Healy – Aye; Mr. Petronio – Aye; Mr. Zorra – Aye; Mr. Andrade – Aye; Chairman Sullivan – Aye.

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Chairman Sullivan welcomed Mr. Healy to the Board and Mr. Zorra back.

A motion was made by Mr. Andrade, seconded by Mr. Healy, and it was unanimously

VOTED: To maintain the slate of officers with Mr. Petronio to serve as Clerk.

The vote: Mr. Healy – Aye; Mr. Petronio – Aye; Mr. Zorra – Aye; Mr. Andrade – Aye; Chairman Sullivan – Aye.

LICENSE HEARING

Consider the Request from EFL Auto Shop for a Class II Motor Vehicle License at 49 Mink Street, Unit B, Seekonk MA – Ned Lundgren

Mr. Lundgren and his daughter Hilary were in attendance. Mr. Lundgren said he turned the business over to his daughter. He requested a used car license. He has been dabbling in antiques and woodies. None of his cars will be on the lot at Champion Motor Sports property. He has been using his daughter's license but he wants his own.

Mr. Andrade stated 46 vehicles were observed on the lot during an inspection earlier today. There were 58 during the original inspection and two were possibly encroaching on the wetland buffer areas.

Hilary said she was not aware of the wetland parameter. The six cars over the limited amount will be leaving this week. There are two abandoned autos put there by the Police Department. They usually do not have that many vehicles.

Mr. Lundgren said they do a lot of repairs. There are cars coming and going for service. There haven't been any more than 40 vehicles for sale at any time.

Chairman Sullivan recommended site plans for all dealers in town.

He asked if the building inspector could go back out to the lot next week.

Mr. Andrade motioned, seconded by Mr. Petronio, and it was unanimously

VOTED: To hold off on any license until there is confirmation that EFL Auto Shop is in compliance with the 40 vehicles for both businesses.

The vote: Mr. Healy – Aye; Mr. Petronio – Aye; Mr. Zorra – Aye; Mr. Andrade – Aye; Chairman Sullivan – Aye.

Chairman Sullivan advised the Board will meet via Zoom next Wednesday.

Recognition of Ron Rickey for 20 Years of Dedicated Service as Dispatcher for the Town of Seekonk

Chairman Sullivan read the Proclamation presented to Mr. Rickey.

Consider the Appointment of Laura Majed to the Position of Part-Time Kennel Worker for the Animal Shelter

ACO Andrea Russo congratulated Mr. Zorra and Mr. Healy on their election. She presented Ms. Majed for the appointment of part-time kennel worker.

Mr. Cadime recommended the appointment.

A motion was made by Mr. Andrade, seconded by Mr. Petronio, and it was unanimously

VOTED: To appointed Laura Majed as part-time kennel worker at the Animal Shelter.

The vote: Mr. Healy – Aye; Mr. Petronio – Aye; Mr. Zorra – Aye; Mr. Andrade – Aye; Chairman Sullivan – Aye.

Consider the Reappointment of Christine DeFontes as Treasurer/Collector for an Additional Three-Year Term

Mrs. DeFontes was in attendance.

Mr. Cadime stated that everyone knows Mrs. DeFontes' work ethic and dedication to the Town. He recommended the three-year reappointment.

A motion was made by Mr. Andrade, seconded by Mr. Petronio, and it was unanimously

VOTED: To reappoint Christine DeFontes as Treasurer-Collector for an additional three-year term.

The vote: Mr. Healy – Aye; Mr. Petronio – Aye; Mr. Zorra – Aye; Mr. Andrade- Aye; Chairman Sullivan – Aye.

Consider the Appointment of Jeffrey Mello to the Position of Sealer of Weights and Measures

Mr. Mello was in attendance.

Mr. Cadime said Mr. Mello has done a phenomenal job with the Building Department. It was decided to bring this position in-house. The Town can apply to the State for training once Mr. Mello is appointed.

Deputy Police Chief Enos, who has over 20 years of experience as Sealer of Weights and Measures in other communities, has offered to work with Mr. Mello.

A motion was made by Mr. Zorra, seconded by Mr. Petronio, and it was unanimously

VOTED: To appoint Jeffrey Mello to the position of Sealer of Weights and Measures.

The vote: Mr. Healy – Aye; Mr. Petronio – Aye; Mr. Zorra – Aye; Mr. Andrade – Aye; Chairman Sullivan – Aye.

Mr. Petronio said he would like to see more in-house appointments.

Accept the Resignation of Michael Gould from the Position of Firefighter/Paramedic with the Seekonk Fire Department, effective April 11, 2021

Mr. Cadime recommended the Board accept the resignation with regret. He noted that Mr. Gould will be focusing on a personal business. Mrs. Days has conducted an exit interview.

In response to Mr. Healy's question, Chief Rave advised the Fire Department is down to 37. Vacant positions are Deputy Chief, Lieutenant, and Firefighter.

A motion was made by Mr. Zorra, seconded by Mr. Petronio, and it was unanimously

VOTED: To accept the resignation of Michael Gould as Firefighter/Paramedic with the Seekonk Fire Department, with regret.

The vote: Mr. Healy – Aye; Mr. Petronio – Aye; Mr. Zorra – Aye; Mr. Andrade – Aye; Chairman Sullivan – Aye.

Consider the Request for the Seekonk Fire Department Paramedics Intern Ride-Along Program

Chief David Rave requested Board approval to allow non-Seekonk paramedic students to complete their field internship, called "Ride Time." He said it takes six months of classroom, 200 hours of hospital in-service and 300 hours of field internship ride time and emergency service in order to become a licensed paramedic. The paramedic will not be an employee of the Town. Seekonk paramedics are sent to other communities in order to see how other areas operate.

The National Medical Education & Training Center provides liability insurance. Students also carry liability. Students sign a waiver and confidential clause for HIPA.

Mr. Zorra supports it.

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Mr. Petronio said it is an excellent program and we should have been doing it right along.

Mr. Cadime said KP Law vetted the waiver and agreement. It was sent to HUB International to make sure the Town is fully covered.

Mr. Healy asked if Mr. Cadime is comfortable with the EMS Coordinator signing the waiver.

Mr. Cadime said as long as the Chief is comfortable with it. Chief Rave said he has confidence in Firefighter Goodman and his ability to evaluate students.

A motion was made by Mr. Petronio, seconded by Mr. Zorra, and it was unanimously

VOTED: To approve the Seekonk Fire Department Paramedic Intern Ride-Along Program.

The vote: Mr. Healy – Aye; Mr. Petronio – Aye; Mr. Zorra – Aye; Mr. Andrade – Aye; Chairman Sullivan – Aye.

Discussion of the Seekonk Speedway Operational Procedures and Reopening Plan

Mr. Ed St. Germain presented a comprehensive safety plan for the reopening of the Seekonk Speedway. The plan has been approved by the State Department of Public Health, Seekonk Health Agent Brian Darling, and Police and Fire Departments. It meets CDC requirements. Tickets will have to be purchased on line. The grandstand capacity is 12%. Masks will be provided to those who do not have one. There is signage around the Speedway. They are looking to decrease the number of police coverage while at 12%.

Mr. Zorra would like to see a cap on administrative fee of 10%.

Mr. Cadime said we are not capturing a true cost. He would recommend not to do it if looking to do it across the board. It would be up to Board members.

Mr. Zorra said he wanted to do it just for the Speedway.

Mr. Andrade noted costs are incurred processing paperwork. Those fees are to offset that.

Chief Isabella said he met with Speedway staff and he is comfortable with the number for details.

Mr. St. Germain is okay with it. The number is five.

Chairman Sullivan appreciates Mr. Zorra's suggestion. He felt they should wait to see the impact on reduced amount of details.

Mr. St. Germain said they are anxious to get fans back in the stands.

Chief Rave said the Fire Department has the same amount – 3.

A motion was made by Mr. Petronio, seconded by Mr. Andrade, and it was unanimously

VOTED: To approve the Seekonk Speedway operational procedures and reopening plan.

The vote: Mr. Healy – Aye; Mr. Petronio – Aye; Mr. Zorra – Aye; Mr. Andrade – Aye; Chairman Sullivan – Aye.

Mr. Zorra noted his suggestion was to give businesses a break.

Consider Accepting the Donations for the Animal Shelter

A motion was made by Mr. Petronio, seconded by Mr. Andrade, and it was unanimously

VOTED: To accept the various donations made to the Animal Shelter totaling \$1,597.

The vote: Mr. Healy – Aye; Mr. Petronio – Aye; Mr. Zorra – Aye; Mr. Andrade – Aye; Chairman Sullivan – Aye.

Consider Accepting the Warrant from the Animal Control Officer

ACO Andrea Russo presented an amended warrant dated April 1, 2020 to March 31, 2021 in accordance with M.G.L. Chapter 140.

A motion was made by Mr. Andrade, seconded by Mr. Petronio, and it was unanimously

VOTED: To accept the warrant from the Animal Control Officer.

The vote: Mr. Healy – Aye; Mr. Petronio – Aye; Mr. Zorra – Aye; Mr. Andrade – Aye; Chairman Sullivan – Aye.

Approval of the Fiscal Year 2022 Budget

Mr. Cadime advised there are no changes on the budget he presented to the Board.

A motion was made by Mr. Petronio, seconded by Mr. Zorra, and it was unanimously

VOTED: To approve the Fiscal Year 2022 budget.

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The vote: Mr. Healy – Aye; Mr. Petronio – Aye; Mr. Zorra – Aye; Mr. Andrade – Aye; Chairman Sullivan – Aye.

Prior to the vote, Mr. Healy said he is confident that Mr. Cadime and his financial team put a sustainable budget together.

Discussion of Proposed Financial Policies

Mr. Cadime said he had a goal to put together all financial policies with the hope of submitting to bond rating agencies with the goal of going to AAA Bond rating.

Mr. Alexander, Mrs. DeFontes, Mrs. Days. and he worked together. Some of these policies are operational. The goals and objectives are how to spend free cash, how to invest into the stabilization accounts, capital municipal, building and structure accounts and some into OPEB, keeping a \$200,000 balance to offset any unforeseen deficits that may occur.

Corrections on page 31 half way through under “Finance Director payroll” wording in parentheses should be eliminated.

Mr. Andrade said these are policies not mandates. He asked about including the goal to carryover \$200,000 into the policy.

Mr. Cadime said, once approved, the financial team will follow it to the letter of the law. There will be exceptions. Only the Board of Selectmen can make changes.

The independent audit will ask for financial policies.

Chairman Sullivan pointed out the \$200,000 is a target.

Mr. Cadime said they have been putting capital items in the operating budget. Replacement of trucks for DPW is now in the operating budget.

He noted that Mrs. DeFontes and Mr. Alexander were in attendance to respond to questions.

Chairman Sullivan had a few questions. On page 6, it says the Board of Selectmen shall present a budget.

Mr. Cadime said the Charter says the Board of Selectmen shall present the budget at Town Meeting. The Finance Committee makes a recommendation. A resident at Town Meeting can make an amendment to the Board of Selectmen’s budget.

On page 8, Chairman Sullivan added the language, “contracts should be sustainable with consideration to existing contracts.”

On page 13, marijuana money going into building and infrastructure fund.

Chairman Sullivan requested Mr. Alexander e-mail him current balances on the reserve funds.

Mr. Petronio asked for the target on the Other Post Employee Benefit (OPEB) fund.

Mr. Cadime said no date yet. It is 2029 for the pension.

Mr. Petronio concerned about reducing the OPEB fund. We need to fund the building and infrastructure.

Chairman Sullivan commended Mr. Cadime and the financial team. Great work.

A motion was made by Mr. Zorra, seconded by Mr. Petronio, and it was unanimously

VOTED: To approve the Financial Policies with the amendment “contracts should be sustainable with consideration to existing contracts” (page 8).

The vote: Mr. Healy – Aye; Mr. Petronio – Aye; Mr. Zorra – Aye; Mr. Andrade – Aye; Chairman Sullivan – Aye.

Continued Presentations of Proposals for Cannabis Licenses:

Mr. Andrade and Mr. Zorra recused themselves and left the room.

Cannaverse, LLC Proposed Marijuana Cultivator and Product Manuring License to be located at 32 Hollister Road

Atty. Brainsky was in attendance on behalf of Cannaverse, LLC.

He extended best wishes to Mr. Zorra and Chief Healy.

Chairman Sullivan explained this meeting is to provide response to questions raised during the presentations. This is not the time to discuss charitable contributions, etc.

Mr. Thomas Gallagher, Vice President of Operations for Cannaverse, spoke about odor mitigation. Board members had received information in a packet. It is a closed loop system. They will circulate the water, add nutrients and put it back in the plants. With regard to “Seed to Sale,” they have an agreement with one of the largest facilitators in the U.S. They intend to provide medical marijuana.

Mr. Cadime asked about a booster for odor control on days that are overcast.

Mr. Gallagher explained the systems are pressurized and the air does not stay in the room.

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In the case of complaints about odor, they would have to go back and determine how to fix it within a reasonable amount of time.

Mr. Petronio said the area is very windy. He asked if there is a carbon emission requirement.

Mr. Gallagher said it is energy efficient and has to comply with guidelines.

Chairman Sullivan asked about a timeline if they are awarded the license.

Mr. Gallagher said about a year for approval process.

Chairman Sullivan appreciated the black market outline. There are almost 16,000 products. He appreciated the level of detail.

Atty. Brainsky said the principal applicant has a long standing interest with the investor. He thanked the Board members.

Queens Bridge, Inc. Proposed Cannabis Cultivation, Manufacturing, Transportation and Possibly Research Laboratory Licenses to be located at 1853 Fall River Avenue

Mr. David Gagastinho was in attendance. He advised Atty. Lauren Medeiros Forrester of Burns and Levison is available on the telephone. He distributed a packet of information to Board members, which included responses to questions raised on February 24, 2021..

Tiffini Isom, Kyle Seyboth, and Leal Isom were in attendance.

Mr. Seyboth advised they have \$1.5M committed for license and \$5M for construction. He had renderings of the building.

The air is circulated through the building. They developed a flow chart. Units will control odors.

In response to Mr. Petronio's question, it was stated that the product will leave the building through a dedicated loading dock. That area will be kept until negative pressure.

Mr. Healy would prefer to have more time to review all the information.

Chairman Sullivan said they will have a decision at the meeting of April 28, 2021.

He thanked both groups for the presentations.

COMMUNITY SPEAKS – None.

OTHER BUSINESS – None.

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT - None.

BOARD OF SELECTMEN LIAISON REPORTS AND COMMENTS

Bristol County Advisory Board – None.

Aitken School Expansion Building Committee Report

Mr. Zorra said the Committee will meet on Thursday at 6:30 p.m. He will have an update at the next meeting. .

EXECUTIVE SESSION

At 10:11 p.m. Mr. Andrade motioned, seconded by Mr. Petronio, to go into executive session to::

- A. Consider the purchase, exchange, lease or value of real property pursuant to M.G.L. Chapter 30A, Section 21(a)(6) as having the discussion in open session would be detrimental to the negotiating position of the town (170 County Street);
- B. Conduct strategy sessions with respect to negotiations with the Assistant Director of Public Works, per M.G.L. Chapter 30A, Section 21(a)(2) as having the discussion in open session would be detrimental to the litigation or bargaining position of the town;
- C. Consider the purchase, exchange, lease or value of real property pursuant to M.G.L. Chapter 30A, Section 21(a)(6) as having the discussion in open session would be detrimental to the negotiating position of the town (472 Taunton Avenue);
- D. Conduct strategy sessions with respect to Seekonk Public Library Employee Association, MLSA, AFT Massachusetts, AFL-CIO per M.G.L. Chapter 30A, Section 21(a)(3) as having the discussion in open session would be detrimental to the litigation or bargaining position of the town;
- E. Consider the approval of Executive Session minutes of March 10, 2021; not to return to open session.

The vote: Mr. Healy – Aye; Mr. Petronio – Aye; Mr. Zorra – Aye; Mr. Andrade – Aye; Chairman Sullivan – Aye.

Respectfully submitted,

Adam Petronio, Clerk

Prepared by:

Patricia Gamer

Patricia Gamer, Secretary

Items Distributed at the April 14, 2021 Board of Selectmen Meeting.

Request for Class II Motor Vehicle license for EFL Auto Shop d/b/a Auto Shop, 49 Mink Street

Resume and application for Laura Majed for the position of part time kennel worker at the animal shelter

Resignation of Michael Gold from position of firefighter paramedic with the Seekonk Fire Department

Documents for Seekonk Fire Department Paramedic Intern Ride-Along Program

Seekonk Speedway Operational Procedures and Reopening Plan

List of Donations to Animal Shelter

Warrant for Animal Control – April 1, 2020 to March 31, 2021

Documents for Cannaverse, LLC, 32 Hollister Road

Documents for Queens Bridge, Inc., 1853 Fall River Avenue