

**TOWN OF BELCHERTOWN
BOARD OF SELECTMEN'S MEETING MINUTES
MONDAY, January 13, 2020
Selectmen's Meeting Room, Lawrence Memorial Hall**

Present: Ed Boscher, Gail Gramarossa, Jen D. Turner, Brenda Q. Aldrich, Nicholas O'Connor

Call to Order: Chairman Boscher called the meeting to order at 7:15 p.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance.

2) Sign Documents:

- a) Warrant #2029 was signed for \$2,079,387.23 bringing the year to date total to \$39,454,446.44.
- b) Routine documents
- c) Approval of Minutes: Mr. O'Connor moved the Board accept the minutes of December 2, 2019. Motion seconded by Ms. Gramarossa. Motion passes 3 – yes, 2 – abstain (Turner, Aldrich). Ms. Turner moved the Board accept the minutes of December 16, 2019. Motion seconded by Ms. Gramarossa. Motion passes 4 – yes, 1 – abstain (O'Connor).

3) Additions to the Agenda:

- Public Hearing – Town of Granby – Granby Bow and Gun Club: This hearing will be held on January 27th at 6:30 p.m. to consider the petition of the appellant of the Granby Bow and Gun Club. Due to the timing of the meeting a Board of Selectmen member would not be able to attend nor would the town administrator. Mr. Boscher asked the board members if they are agreeable to sending a letter to the Town of Granby regarding the Board's concerns. Mr. Boscher moved the Board add this addition to the agenda. Motion seconded by Mr. O'Connor. Motion passes 5 – 0.
- Accept Resignation Zoning Board of Appeals Associate Member: Mr. Boscher questioned if this had to be added to tonight's agenda or if it could wait until the next meeting. He was told if the board accepted it tonight the office could begin advertising for letters of interest. Mr. Boscher moved the Board add the acceptance of the resignation to the agenda. Motion seconded by Ms. Turner. Motion passes 5 – 0.

4) Appearances Before the Board:

- 7:15 p.m. Erica Cross, Conservation Administrator – Conservation Restriction, Hickory Hills: Mr. Boscher commented that due to a death in Ms. Cross's immediate family this appearance has been postponed. The Board sent their condolences to Ms. Cross and her family.
- 7:30 p.m. Friends of the Greenway: LeeAnne Connolly was present for the appearance. There are nine members on the Greenway Committee and they began working together in 2018. She wanted to introduce the organization to the Board

of Selectmen and the residents watching the meeting on bctv. Their main goal is to look at the linear areas in town; the old railroad beds, the green ways to see if they can be made more accessible, to make people more aware of these areas and to make them safer and utilized. They are all volunteers. They are working primarily on the 3.2 linear section of the greenway area – from Franklin Street all the way to Springfield Road.

Ms. Connolly confirmed that the Board had the letter from the Friends of the Greenway. They are looking for funding. Their major purpose and goal is to work with Conservation, Planning and Recreation departments and to utilize an already existing structure or trail system that we already have in town. It is nice to open up the old railroad beds for the community to use them. They are looking at safety, an evaluation of the old trestle bridge over Jabish Brook, etc. There is a State grant from the department of conservation and recreation and the deadline for applying is February 1, 2020. The Conservation Commission is taking the lead on the grant application. They want to apply for funding to do a survey with this grant. They had a report done that identified areas of concern. She reiterated that they are primarily looking at the 3.2 section from Franklin Street to Springfield Road. They are looking for the Board's support and want the board to know that they exist. They also want to work on funding. The news that they have heard is that there is going to be a lot of funding from the State down to the towns. Before they take any initial steps they want to take the advice of the report that states the objectives and what they should look at first.

Dan Beaudette, Friends of the Greenway member asked to reinforce the idea of doing a survey on the property. He knows people will be concerned about what they are doing. He pointed out that when the Belchertown Land Trust took over some of that property between Springfield Road and Bay Road they found numerous encroachments. The markers have disappeared into the landscape so now no-one knows where the markers are.

Ms. Gramarossa asked for clarification on the February 1st application. She wanted to know when they would find out if they received the grant and the time span of getting the work done. Ms. Connolly responded that she assumed the work has to be done in the year it is granted so it would be 2020. Ms. Connolly informed the Board that there is a 20% match. They have CP funds and they are working with Norwottuck Network Funding which is a 501c3 and they gave the funding to do the Conservation Works study and believes that we can count on their support for matching funds.

Jon Clements, Conservation Commission liaison to the Friends of the Greenway remarked that the property they are talking about is already owned by the town. The conservation commission has gotten the impression that they would be taking the lead on managing it or further developing it.

Mr. Brougham was in agreement that there are probably encroachments on the property being discussed. The section of property between Franklin Street and North Washington Street came in a single transfer of ownership of property from the Mill Valley Country Club. The town swapped 52 acres of land that we owned that was contiguous with Mill Valley Country Club and in return the town acquired 107 acres of their property. He thinks that property should be pretty clean. He provided additional information regarding all of the property in question.

As there is a February 1st deadline, Ms. Connolly questioned if the board could make a motion that if the conservation commission votes to accept it. Mr. Boscher requested that someone from the organization come back to the board's meeting on January 27th. Ms. Connolly was okay with his request. The board would like additional information regarding the grant amount. Mr. O'Connor does not want to endorse anything until the board has all the information but questioned if the board is in support of them proceeding with the grant application. The board agreed that they were in favor of the preliminary idea and will meet with them again on January 27, 2020. Mr. O'Connor feels that if we are applying for the grant it should include any of the town owned property.

5) Discussion/Action Items:

- a. Re-Vote Actions Taken at January 6, 2020 Meeting:
 - Vote to Endorse Meeting Minutes: December 2, 2019; December 16, 2019: Minutes were re-voted on – see approval of minutes above.
 - Accept Full-Time Police Officer Resignation: Ms. Aldrich presented the details to the Board. Officer Jeremy Burns has resigned as he will be going to the Massachusetts State Police Academy. The Board wishes him all the best. The Board accepted his resignation and a letter will be sent to Mr. Burns thanking him for his service to the town.
 - Appoint Part-Time Police Officer: Ms. Aldrich presented the details to the Board. Chief Pronovost is requesting the appointment of Stephen B. Rose as a part-time police officer, effective December 27, 2019 with his term to expire June 30, 2020. Motion seconded by Ms. Gramarossa. Motion passes 5 – 0.
 - Appoint Full-Time Emergency Dispatcher: Ms. Aldrich presented the details to the Board. Chief Pronovost is requesting the appointment of Joshua Orrell as a full-time emergency dispatcher, effective January 9, 2020. Ms. Aldrich moved the Board appoint Joshua Orrell as requested. Motion seconded by Ms. Gramarossa. Motion passes 5 – 0.
 - Appoint DPW Maintenance Worker: Mr. Boscher presented the details to the Board. Steve Williams, Director of Public Works is requesting the appointment of Robert Mileski to the position of Maintenance Worker. Mr. Boscher moved the Board appoint Robert Mileski to the position of maintenance worker, effective immediately. Motion seconded by Ms. Turner. Motion passes 5 – 0.
 - Appoint Charly Lawrence, Veterans' Agent to Memorial Committee and Veterans' Services Advisory Board: Mr. Boscher moved to appoint Charly Lawrence to the Memorial Committee effective immediately, with a term to

expire June 30, 2020. Motion seconded by Ms. Turner. Motion passes 5 – 0. Mr. Boscher moved to appoint Charly Lawrence to the Veterans' Services Advisory Board. Motion seconded by Mr. O'Connor. Motion passes 5 – 0.

- Review Planning Board Common Drive Special Permit – Bell Property Corp., Woodland Lane: Ms. Turner commented that the special permit is for a common drive on Woodland Lane. The recommendation at the Board's last meeting was to send this back to the planning board. Chairman Boscher asked the town administrator to recap the Woodland Lane discussion that they had last week.

Mr. Brougham commented that he gave his personal observations about the application being applied for. In his opinion the road is a common drive and was never meant to be accepted as a public way. He reminded the Board that the planning board has not met yet regarding this application. He feels that the 12 ft. is pushing it. The common drive as proposed has no turning area but ends abruptly. He feels this common drive is intentionally an end run around the subdivision regulations that would limit the length of a cul-de-sac. He provided other times when this has occurred. As time goes on developers and their consultants are becoming more creative on how they make use of these by-laws and how they develop properties that would otherwise not be developable. These properties will have frontage and addresses on North Washington Street but will be accessed off of Woodland Lane. Emergency responders will not know where they are going. He believes it needs a great deal of revision and plan oversight from the planning board if they are going to approve it.

Mr. Boscher is very concerned about the emergency vehicles and how they are going to maneuver on Woodland Lane. Ms. Turner commented that she spoke with a member of the planning board about this and one of the things is if the board of selectmen is going to recommend they look at the common drive by-laws it should be done as a whole and not on each individual application. Mr. Boscher requested the town administrator to add to his letter that the planning board look at the by-law for common drives in general. He feels the by-law should be updated to reflect the emergency vehicles that the town now has and how they can maneuver.

- b. Set Warrant Article Submittal Deadlines for STM and ATM on May 11, 2020: Mr. Boscher presented details to the Board. The STM is May 11th at 7:00 p.m. and the ATM is May 11th at 7:30 p.m. The board needs to set the deadline for the submission of warrant articles for these meetings. The office staff has recommended that the deadline for submission of warrant articles for STM is Wednesday, February 26, 2020 at 4 p.m. Mr. O'Connor moved the Board accept the recommended date and time for submission of warrant articles for the STM. Motion seconded by Ms. Aldrich. Motion passes 5 – 0.

Mr. Boscher remarked that the office staff has recommended the deadline for submission of warrant articles for ATM is Wednesday, February 19, 2020 at 4 p.m.

Ms. Gramarossa moved the Board accept the recommended date and time for submission of warrant articles for the ATM. Motion seconded by Ms. Turner. Of note, Mr. O'Connor remarked that the warrant articles for ATM are due the week before those for the STM. Mr. Boscher commented that it is imperative that these deadlines are met especially for the complex articles that require multiple pages. He asked that warrant articles be submitted properly. Motion passes 5 – 0.

- c. Accessory Apartment Application – Thornton, 4 North Washington Street, Belchertown: Ms. Turner presented the details to the board. A special permit application has been submitted for an accessory apartment at 4 North Washington Street. The intention is to allow their elderly parents to age in place at their residence. The construction would include an addition to their existing residence as well as a new garage.

Mr. Boscher commented that the intent of the request is consistent with the by-law. Mr. O'Connor questioned if the director of public works was aware of the application and if he had reviewed it. Mr. Williams replied that he has reviewed and has no concerns. Ms. Turner added that there will be a public hearing on January 28th regarding this application and if there are any concerns they will be addressed at that time. The Board will remand the application back to the planning board for their review.

- d. Endorse New Contract(s) – Western Massachusetts Regional Recycling Program: Steve Williams, Director of Public Works presented the Board with a recap of the recycling program. This contract is with Waste Management Recycle America and they are the operator of the material recycling center in Springfield. The Department of Environmental Protection is actually the owner of that facility. WMRA is the future operator of that facility. The DEP put out a solicitation for all waste management companies to operate the facility for the next 10 – 15 years and they were chosen. Our contract renewal is due by the end of the month and they are looking for the town to sign on by the end of the month. The big news is that the recycling industry has turned itself upside down. We have never had to pay to dispose of recycling. There always was cost associated with it at the transfer station such as personnel costs, transportation, and rental of the equipment but now we are going to be paying a tipping fee to dispose of recyclables. It is impacting every community in western Mass. We have gone from a zero tip fee to a year one tip fee of \$93.50 and over a five year period it will increase to \$103.21 for dual stream customers with the option of two five year extensions if we want to continue with them. He recommended that the Board endorse this contract.

Mr. Boscher asked Mr. Williams to explain the difference between dual stream and single stream. Single stream is where all recyclables go into one bin. Nothing gets separated. It sounded like a really good idea as nothing had to be separated and it encouraged recycling. The down side is that someone has to separate everything. The incentives for communities to go to single stream were less if there was an economic benefit. Belchertown participated in MERF and we received some payments but we did not switch over to the single stream but stayed with the

hybrid of a dual stream that we were using. We have a four stream system where we separate our cardboard and our plastic.

Ms. Gramarossa moved the Board approve the new contract between the Town of Belchertown and Waste Management Recycle America for the provision of recycling processing services beginning July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2030. Motion seconded by Ms. Turner. Motion passes 4 – yes, 1 – abstain (O'Connor). Motion was amended to authorize the chairman of the board to endorse the contract. Motion seconded by Ms. Aldrich. Motion passes 4 – yes, 1 – abstain (O'Connor).

- e. Endorse Commercial Agreement for Disposal Services – Casella of Holyoke, Inc.: Per Mr. Williams this is for the disposal of solid waste – the trash. We are currently contracted with Casella. This new agreement is about \$3 more a ton than what we currently have. There is just as much uncertainty in the solid waste market as there is in the recycling market. In order to keep the cost low we stayed with a short contract. The town has the option of two one-year extensions but the price of those haven't even been negotiated yet. Casella has been a good company to work with.

Mr. Boscher questioned how many tons of solid waste the town ships out every year. Mr. Williams said the town has ranged from about 730 to 1200 over the years 2016 to 2018. Mr. Williams commented that we had a record year of sticker sales.

Ms. Aldrich moved the Board endorse the commercial agreement for disposal services with Casella of Holyoke, Inc. for three years. Motion seconded by Ms. Gramarossa. Motion passes 4 –yes, 1 –abstain (O'Connor).

- f. Approve Changes to Transfer Station Rules & Regulations for 2020: Mr. Williams explained the changes to the transfer station rules and regulations to the Board. Bag fees can be adjusted mid-year if needed unlike sticker fees which get set in January for the start of sales in February for the March 1st deadline. When he came before the Board about a month ago he was expecting a much higher increase however; the free cash in the enterprise account, the revenue stream which is up this year and all things considered he was able to keep the increase to \$.20 a bag or \$2.00 for a bundle of ten of the large bags. Large bags will now cost \$25.00 for a bundle of ten. It will generate about \$9,400 a year in revenue. The sticker fees have gone up \$20. The sticker fee has not increased since 2009. This will generate about \$34,500 in additional revenue for the transfer station. The increases in bags and stickers brings the increase in revenue up to about \$44,000 increase in revenue. He believes it will cover the deficit this year.

There are also some changes to what they will accept. Shredded paper and aerosol cans are no longer accepted.

Ms. Gramarossa questioned if Mr. Williams had considered any configuration of numbers that would have been less of an impact on seniors and to not raise the fee

to much on those who are not seniors. He explained how the revenue streams are generated and how he came up with the increases. His figures are about as low as he wants to risk going. He is concerned that he should have put a little bit more of a buffer into the increases but he doesn't want to lose too many of those that use the transfer station because then the revenue streams disappear. It is an enterprise system so whatever they make there stays there it is not designed to be a "cash cow" for other departments. If there are any excess in revenues it carries over to the next year.

Ms. Turner moved the Board approve the changes to the Transfer Station Rules and Regulations for 2020. Motion seconded by Ms. Aldrich. Motion passes 4 – yes, 1 – abstain (O'Connor).

Ms. Gramarossa thanked Mr. Williams for the swap shed that has been installed at the transfer station. She has put items on the shelves to have them picked up right away by another resident. Also, there is a documentary on the state of recycling internationally on Netflix that talks about all the things Mr. Williams has told the Board. It's called *Broken* and again it is on Netflix and is very informative.

Mr. Brougham requested that Mr. Williams give an update on the snow budget. Mr. Williams responded that at the end of December his snow budget was just a little over 50% spent. Even though we are ahead of our snow accumulation for the year the ice storms also cost a lot of money putting out the de-icing material.

- g. Vote to Remove Member from CP Committee (moved/not sworn in): Ms. Turner presented the information to the Board. There was a member that was appointed to the CP committee but was never sworn in. The chairman of the committee is asking the Board to vote to remove the member so that they can advertise for that seat.

Mr. Boscher moved the Board remove Lindsay Peterson from the CP committee. Motion seconded by Ms. Turner. Motion passes 5 – 0. Mr. O'Connor questioned how many people are on the CP committee. He was told there are nine individuals on the committee.

- h. Appointment of Architect Seat Member – Historic District By-Law Commission: Ms. Aldrich presented the details to the Board. Per the recommendation of the Historic District By-Law Commission, Ms. Aldrich moved the Board appoint Craig Schumacher to the architect seat on the commission, term to expire June 30, 2021. Motion seconded by Ms. Turner. Motion passes 5 – 0.
- i. Appointment of Assistant Animal Control Officer: Ms. Aldrich presented the details to the Board. Per the recommendation of Anna Fenton, Animal Control Officer, Ms. Aldrich moved the Board appoint Sarah Byrnes to the position of Assistant Animal Control Officer, appointment to expire on April 30, 202. Motion seconded by Ms. Turner. Motion passes 5 – 0.
- j. Succession Planning Discussion: Mr. Boscher presented the details to the Board. There are several senior department heads that will be retiring in the next couple of years. It can be looked at in two different ways. The first being that the board

takes control of everything – the search process, the interviews. The other way would be to delegate it all out to maybe a consultant. The board gets the final decision as to who will get those roles. One of the things he found interesting in his research is how we develop our own Belchertown talent. He questioned what our professional development program looks like. As an example, he questioned what the director of public works is doing to help the highway foreman along in his development and this example can be used across all departments. He wants the board to think about what those look like. During budget season maybe a department head brings someone in to learn about the budget process. He asked board members for their initial thoughts on this process.

Ms. Gramarossa mentioned that succession planning has multiple components; developing internal talent, helping employees to be mentored and hopefully they will move along in their professional development. She also thinks many towns are facing long established senior management who are getting to the age of retirement. Maybe partnering with some neighboring communities who are also facing this issue and brain storming on recruiting, retaining employees. She thinks that the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission can be a good resource for the town to utilize.

Ms. Turner believes it ties in with volunteer opportunities on committees in town. She commented on how she began volunteering on a committee and is now sitting on the other side of the table.

Mr. O'Connor commented that there is professional development, there's colleague engagement/satisfaction, movement of personal careers and such that are part of the succession plan. There is also emergency succession planning. Who steps up when a department head is not available due to something unforeseen? Those may be two different individuals. He feels those aspects need to be defined. The town has traditionally done some type of a committee to fill department head positions.

Mr. Boscher asked the town administrator for his thoughts on what works and what doesn't work for succession planning. He remarked that when the State offered early retirement many years ago the town had either 11 or 13 employees take advantage of it. These employees all left within six months of each other. The town navigated through it utilizing different processes. There was a search committee for the chief of police, an in-house committee for the treasurer-collector and the town accountant. Ultimately the board of selectmen conducted the final interviews and two of those employees are still employed by the town. Those employees had been working in the town prior to being promoted to their positions. In the more recent hiring of new department head we initially had a sub-committee made up of people with specific skill sets to review preliminary applications and conduct initial interviews. He feels that all of the department heads are doing a good job of teaching their assistants so if something did happen

they would be able to fill in for the department head. Mr. Brougham will provide a list of potential retirement dates for department heads.

- k. Executive Session – MGL Chapter 30A, Section 21, Subsections 3 and 6: – Pursuant to MGL Chapter 30A, Section 21, Subsections 3 and 6: Ms. Turner moved the Board enter executive session at the conclusion of their regular session pursuant to MGL Chapter 30A, Section 21, Subsections 3 and not to reconvene in open meeting. Motion seconded by Mr. O'Connor. Roll call vote: Boscher – yes, Gramarossa – yes, Turner – yes, Aldrich – yes. O'Connor - yes.
- l. Miscellaneous Matters: None.

6) Town Administrator's Report:

- He and Judy Metcalf spent most of the morning at Hampshire Housing Court along with various other agencies. There was a lengthy status about Sportshaven and potential CDBG funding. They discussed the list of items that need to be resolved prior to DHCD actually providing any funding. Following these discussion they went before Judge Fields to update him. Judge Fields continues to be supportive and offers the full support of the court. The next appearance is March 23rd. Mr. Brougham brought the board up to date on the things that he needs to accomplish prior to the March 23rd appearance. He also updated the board on the things that the Tenant's Association have accomplished.
- Last Thursday he held a department heads meeting at which time they were provided budget packets. They will be level service budges as the board of selectmen has requested. New items will be submitted with a priority and capital will come on a separate list.
- We continue to struggle with free cash – there is no number yet but we are working on it.

7) Review of Weekly Mail:

8) Individual Board Members' Reports:

Ms. Gramarossa:

- The subcommittee with budget and finance of the school committee is rescheduling their meeting.
- She had volunteered to look at opening up the volunteer of the year for the annual town meeting. She is hoping to come up with a draft of an application that can be used within town government but also opened up to the wider community.

Mr. O'Connor: Thanked Jill Panto, Randy Shankman and the photographer that took pictures on behalf of the cultural council for the pictures they submitted for the new website.

Ms. Turner: She had a lot going on last week.

- She is very excited to formally announce that on Thursday the Belchertown Cultural Alliance received a \$10,000 grant that is a matching grant. it is for a feasibility study
- She is meeting next week with PVPC and the town planner to review the town community plan.
- The CPC committee met. They received ten applications for funds. They distributed it out to all their liaison.
- The cultural council is looking to be a sign board somewhere. It would be a permanent standing board with cultural council event information. She will get additional information as to the size/type of board the cultural council is looking for and pass the information back to the town administrator.

Mr. Boscher: He spoke about the performance review system paperwork that each member received. He asked that they all look at them and in two weeks the board will have a discussion to see what things they should review the town administrator on. The board discussed in greater detail performance evaluations.

- 9) **Questions from the Press:** Steve Hill from the *Sentinel* asked Mr. Williams for confirmation on the increase of the cost of trash bags and also the size of the large bags. Mr. Williams provided the information. He also questioned the cost and size of the small bags. That information was also provided. He asked for confirmation on the revenue that will be raised with these increases. Mr. Williams provided that information as well. He also questioned why the Board had to revote all of last week's agenda items. He was told the agenda was not posted on the town's official notification board which is the town website.

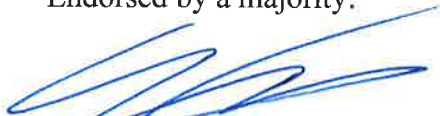
- 10) **Adjournment:** Meeting adjourned at 9:17 p.m.

Minutes submitted by Gary L. Brougham, Town Administrator


Board approved/endorsed: 2/10/20

Board of Selectmen - Town of Belchertown

Endorsed by a majority:




 Ed Boscher, Chairman




 Brenda Q. Aldrich



 Gail Gramarossa



 Jen D. Turner



 Nicholas O'Connor