

**TOWN OF BELCHERTOWN
BOARD OF SELECTMEN'S MEETING MINUTES
MONDAY, DECEMBER 17, 2018
Selectmen's Meeting Room, Lawrence Memorial Hall**



Present: George D. Archible, Gail Gramarossa, Brenda Q. Aldrich, Ed Boscher
Absent: Nicholas O'Connor

Call to Order: Vice-Chairman Archible called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance.

2) Sign Documents:

- a) Warrant #1925 was signed for \$1,353,154.48.
- b) Routine documents
- c) Approval of Minutes: None.

3) Additions to the Agenda:

4) Appearances Before the Board:

- 7:03 p.m. Police Chief Christopher Pronovost – K-9 Officer Apache, Promotion: Ms. Aldrich presented the details. K-9 Apache will be promoted this evening to Sergeant. She asked Chief Pronovost to explain how Apache is being promoted.

Chief Pronovost commented that we have a very active K-9 program in Town with a single handler, Officer Adam Brougham. Officer Brougham is extremely dedicated to the program handling two dogs that perform two completely different functions. Thea is huge in community policing and is also an explosive sniffing dog. Apache is a patrol dog who is multi-functioning. He works alongside Officer Brougham. He does building searches; he tracks people and over the years has been very successful in doing that. He has found people that were a danger to themselves or those who were wanted for a criminal activity. He has done very well tracking them into the woods or various places where it would be difficult for human officers to track. Apache has done very well and is a very loyal police dog to the department and provides a good service to this Town. Officer Brougham came up with the idea that is based mostly off the military and will let Officer Brougham explain the details. It is symbolic and appropriate given the work that Apache puts in alongside Officer Brougham.

Officer Brougham came before the Board and thanked them for hearing him out. A little over 10 years ago he came before the Board with a bunch of papers and facts and figures as to why he wanted to bring a K-9 unit to Town. He received the unanimous blessing of the Select Board to go forward with the program. His first dog was Falco and it was a high point in his career. He is now into his 11th year. Apache stepped up and took Falco's place and has done a great job and is the senior dog. Thea is the junior K-9. In a conversation with Lt. Pacunas this past summer he realized the dogs get nothing for all the work that they do. He realized that if Apache was human he would get a promotion for all the work he's done.

He did some research on Apache's father. Apache's father was a United States Navy working dog and he found out that his rank was higher than his handler. It is a tradition in the military to have the dogs have higher ranks than their handlers. Following further discussions with Lt. Pacunas it was decided that Apache would be promoted. He is happy that the Belchertown Police Department is starting this tradition tonight. He thanked the Board, his colleagues, command staff and everyone that came out tonight to show support for the unit.

At this time Apache had his ceremonial sergeant badge put on him. Ms. Aldrich thanked Officer Brougham for all that he and Apache do in helping to keep the community safe. She also mentioned the fund raiser for the K-9 unit. An anonymous donor had donated \$3,000. Greenfield Savings Bank was so impressed they challenged Belchertown to raise money for the unit and will match every dollar up to \$5,000. She encouraged the residents to donate and made a donation herself to the unit. Chief Pronovost also presented Officer Brougham with a certificate for Apache that will be placed on the wall at the Police Station.

- 7:10 p.m. Jim Barry, Green Communities Regional Coordinator – Solarize Mass 2019 Program and RFP Launch: Mr. Barry came before the Board to discuss the Solarize Mass Initiative. He gave a history of the Green Communities. The program he's here to discuss tonight is a citizen's program that would be spearheaded and run by the Town. He indicated that Palmer has enrolled and had Linda Leduc from Palmer with him to discuss Palmer's experience with the program.

The goals of Solarize Mass are to: increase education and community outreach; model to simplify process; reduce installation costs; reduce time to contract; and increase adoption. This program helps to reduce the cost of solar.

The Mass Clean Energy Center will spear head the initiative. A marketing grant of \$5,000 is available to offset the start of costs with advertising, etc. A team from the Town would work with people out in Boston to put together a RFP. They get answers back from say four to six installers. There is technical assistance from the folks in Boston to help with the decision of who to use and explain the differences.

The Town would have to create a team. The team would be someone from town hall, someone from the community who is very much interested in it and could act as a solar coach, three or four others that are willing to learn more about the process and can answer questions that residents may have. There would be multiple meetings where many questions could be answered. They would submit an application for the Town. There would be training and installer selection, pre-launch planning, campaign launch where you would meet the installer and maintaining momentum. A community needs at least 1,000 owner occupied homes to do this alone. The deadline to apply is in March.

Mr. Archible questioned if this program was only residential. Mr. Barry responded that small business could be included but it is basically roof-top size and not multi-acre systems.

Ms. Gramarossa questioned who should be on the team. Ms. Leduc from Palmer indicated that the municipal representative is key and the solar coach who is a resident of town. It should be someone who is very interested in getting solar on their own home. The team will have to invest a lot of their time but it is only for a certain length of time.

A community needs at least 1,000 owner occupied homes to be a part of the program on their own. The deadline to apply is in March. Doug Albertson, Town Planner is interested in being a part of the team.

Following more discussion the Board agreed that there will be a follow-up discussion with the Board at their second meeting in January.

5) Discussion/Action Items:

- a. Appoint Full-Time Police Dispatcher: Per the recommendation of Chief Pronovost, Ms. Aldrich moved to appoint Eric Girard to the position of full-time emergency dispatcher, retroactive to December 3, 2018. Motion seconded by Mr. Boscher. Motion passes 4 – 0.
- b. Appoint Member to Animal Control Advisory Board: Per the recommendation of Nicole Miner, Chair, Animal Control Advisory Board, Ms. Gramarossa moved to appoint Paul Kopulos to the Animal Control Advisory Board with a term to expire June 30, 2021. Motion seconded by Mr. Boscher. Motion passes 4 – 0.
- c. Accept Community Preservation At-Large Member Resignation: The Board accepted the resignation of Judy Healy as the At-Large member of the Community Preservation Committee. A letter will be sent to Ms. Healy thanking her for her service to the Town.

Ms. Gramarossa reminded the Board that Jim Natle had been on the Community Preservation Committee for a long time as the representative of the Planning Board. He recently had to step down from that position but expressed his interest in the at-large member seat and Mike Hofler of the Planning Board would fill the seat as the representative of the Planning Board for the Community Preservation Committee.

Ms. Gramarossa moved that Jim Natle fill the at-large seat on the Community Preservation Committee and that Mike Hofler serve as the representative of the Planning Board to the Community Preservation Committee. Motion seconded by Ms. Aldrich. Motion passes 4 – 0.

- d. Special Permit and Site Plan Review – Clean Focus Renewables, Inc., 357 Daniel Shays Highway: Mr. Brougham presented the details to the Board. This application involves up to 5 mW solar array on property owned by the Shattuck family. The land is partially wooded and partially open. He has no comments or concerns regarding the nature of the project. They will have to obtain an access permit from massDOT as they control that side of the road if they are going to construct a new road from what already exists. This plan is less destructive to

forest land and visibility from the travel lane as it is set back pretty far from the travel lane. His recommendation is to remand it back to the Planning Board for their review and to listen to any comments or concerns from any boards or committees that may have concerns. The Board of Selectmen agreed to send it back to the Planning Board for their review.

e. Miscellaneous Matters: None.

6) Town Administrator's Report:

- We are in a good position with the 2019 license renewals. One that we are working on has a bonding and lease issue. Another license holder is arrears with real estate taxes and sewer charges and he will do a letter tomorrow to inform them that they will not have a license January 1st if those issues are not resolved.
- We are soon to start the FY'20 budget process. Right after the first of the year he and the town accountant will meet with department heads to hand out the preliminary budget.

7) Review of Weekly Mail: Reviewed, no discussion held.

8) Individual Board Members' Reports:

Ms. Gramarossa:

- She will be in contact with Chairman O'Connor to see when we can have the Historical Commission and the Historic District By-Law Commission come before the Board. This would be to discuss the certified local government process that local communities can apply to the State which gives the community a leg up on some grant funding. Both committees have agreed that they want to pursue it.
- She has been attending the school committee finance and budgeting subcommittee meetings. They are also very much aware that the annual budget process is about to get under way.
- She has been in touch with some of the folks in the Conservation Commission and they are hoping to convene a meeting of all of the various groups that are interested in walking trails in town.
- Happy and safe Holidays to everyone in town.

Ms. Aldrich: She went down Jackson Street this morning and the lights on Carriage Drive are absolutely gorgeous.

Mr. Boscher: He has been in contact with the Council on Aging and they are trying to raise funds for a new van.

Mr. Archible: He was shocked when he read that the superintendent of schools in town wants to build a new school. Enrollment is down and we are talking about a school.

Ms. Aldrich defended building a new school. She stated that Jabish Brook Middle School is costing too much money to renovate. Something needs to be done. Things are being replaced all the time at that school. Ms. Gramarossa was in agreement with Ms. Aldrich. Ms. Aldrich also stated it could mean restructuring. Mr. Archible was in agreement with that but not a new school building.

- 9) **Questions from the Press:** Jim Russell from the *Republican* questioned if there was any rough estimate for a new school or will they have to wait and see until after the presentation by the school committee and the superintendent of schools early next year. The Board had no answer.

He also questioned if the request from Country Crossroads for a full liquor license had been acted on. He was told the Board just received the request. Mr. Brougham stated that the Town has no full liquor licenses available.

- 10) **Adjournment:** Meeting adjourned at 8:25 p.m.

Minutes submitted by Gary L. Brougham, Town Administrator

Board approved/endorsed: January 14, 2019

Board of Selectmen - Town of Belchertown

Endorsed by a majority:

(Absent)
Nicholas O'Connor, Chairman

Gail R. Gramarossa
Gail Gramarossa

Ed Boscher
Ed Boscher

George D. Archible
George D. Archible

Brenda Q. Aldrich
Brenda Q. Aldrich