

**TOWN OF BELCHERTOWN
BOARD OF SELECTMEN'S MEETING MINUTES
MONDAY, MARCH 28, 2016
Selectmen's Meeting Room, Lawrence Memorial Hall**

Present: Ronald E. Aponte, George D. Archible, Brenda Q. Aldrich, Nicholas O'Connor

Absent: William R. Barnett

- 1) **Call to Order:** Chairman Aponte called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance.

- 2) **Sign Documents:**
 - a) Warrant #1639 was signed for \$682,777.89.
 - b) Routine documents
 - c) Approval of Minutes: None.

- 3) **Additions to the Agenda:**
 - Mr. Aponte requested the Board allow a resident to ask questions regarding the Police Chief Search. The Board felt that it should not be allowed as an addition to the agenda. It was agreed that she could speak to the Board following the discussion/action items.

- 4) **Appearances Before the Board:**
 - 7:33 p.m. Pole Hearing - #2016-06, Gulf Road: Ms. Aldrich read the public hearing notice and opened the public hearing. The petition is from National Grid to install a solely owned and maintained pole on Gulf Road. The reason for the installation of the pole is to run a new service to house #730 Gulf Road. Diane Clowes from National Grid was present for the hearing.

There were no comment or concerns from the Board or the public, Steve Williams, Director of Public Works had no concerns. Ms. Aldrich moved to close the public hearing. Seconded by Mr. Archible. Motion passes 4 – 0.

Ms. Aldrich moved to approve petition #2016-06. Seconded by Mr. Archible. Motion passes 4 – 0.
 - 7:35 p.m. Pole Hearing - #2016-07, Bay Road: Ms. Aldrich read the public hearing notice and opened the public hearing. The petition is from National Grid to install two solely owned poles/two anchors for guying of Pole 8 and Pole 9 on Bay Road (Bay Road Re-conducting Project). Diane Clowes from National Grid was present for the hearing.

There were no comments or concerns from the Board of Selectmen or the public. Mr. Archible moved to close the public hearing. Seconded by Ms. Aldrich. Motion passes 4 – 0.

Ms. Aldrich moved to grant petition #2016-07. Seconded by Mr. Archible. Motion passes 4 – 0.

5) **Discussion/Action Items:**

- a. Review Articles Submitted for Special Town Meeting: The Board reviewed the warrant articles for the Special Town Meeting. They will proceed with finalizing as information becomes available.
- b. Discuss Remote Participation: Mr. O'Connor feels the Board should allow some level of remote participation. His understanding of MGL is that remote participation does not count towards a quorum but if a quorum is present the person who is remote participating is allowed to vote. Ms. Aldrich is in agreement with Mr. O'Connor. She believes it should be allowed if the individual is on a business trip but not on vacation.

Mr. Archible feels committee members should be available unless they are sick, addressing a death etc. He further agrees he is in the minority on this.

Mr. Aponte feels there is common ground and that the Board could limit this to business travel only with the Chairman's approval and advance notice. It should not be allowed for executive session.

Following discussion it was agreed that it would not be allowed for executive sessions. The Chairman of the Committee/Commission/Board has the final say. The Chairman must make the reason known if they are denying the request for remote participation. Anyone participating remotely will be allowed to partake in discussions and vote. It does not constitute toward a quorum.

Mr. O'Connor will draft a policy for remote participation.

- c. Discuss Letter Re: Opioid Crisis: Ms. Aldrich presented the details. Ms. Panto, Town Accountant is asking for support in assembling a local Opioid Task Force. She would like the Task Force to consist of the superintendent of schools, the chief of police or his designee, school resource officer, fire chief or his designee, board of selectmen member, board of health member and a religious leader. Gary Brougham, Town Administrator spoke in favor of the task force.

Craig Bodamer, EMS Director also spoke in favor of a Task Force. He believes that all families in Town know someone who is addicted. It is a crisis that is bad not just locally but nation wide. He thinks the Task Force could do a really good job of public education. He stated that a lot of the people addicted are functioning addicts. They go to work; they go to school every day. It is a crisis. He stated the police in Town have done a great job of getting to the calls before the ambulance and administering the Narcan reversing the effects of the overdose. They have saved lives in Town.

Ms. Aldrich wants to have Ms. Panto put together a list of individuals that she would like on the Task Force and then come back before the Board with that information as well as what the Task Force hopes to accomplish. Mr. O'Connor suggested adding a medical professional to the Task Force.

- d. MassDOT Highway Division Project Eligibility Notification – Project 608412, Improvements on Routes 202 & 21: Mr. Archible began the discussion and asked

Steve Williams, Director of Public Works to provide the Board with an update. He received notice that the Maple and State Street project has been approved as an eligible project. Traffic counts have been done at Rt.21/202 intersection, Whitlock Way, Stadler Street as well as the Center of Town. Last year these counts and delays at the intersection reached the thresholds. It is up to the Town to design the roadway, get it ready for bid specifications and work with massDOT, Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, Metropolitan Planning Organization to try and get this project funded. Some of the aspects of the project include increased lane width, increased shoulder width to accommodate bicycles, better sidewalks and more crosswalks. It will be a few years before the Town sees funding for this project. He also stated that right now we preliminarily have the approval of massDOT to extend the sidewalks from Rt 21 to the courthouse; Rt 202 at the intersection of Rt 21 reverts back to massDOT for their maintenance.

He also announced that work would begin again this week on the Rt 181 project. It is a little behind schedule because the utility work did not progress as quickly as had been hoped. He expects most of the work will be completed this year but there may still be some final touchups next year.

Mr. O'Connor suggested reviewing the findings of the DART Team while reviewing potential improvements. Mr. Williams stated that those findings would be reviewed.

Mr. Williams suggested the Board did not have to sign the agreement at tonight's meeting as he does not have all the fine details. He will be meeting with massDOT tomorrow.

- e. Zone Change Application – 330 & 336 Chauncey Walker St., Belchertown: Mr. Brougham presented the details. The applicant is looking to build just condominiums above the Cold Spring Golf Course. Mr. Archible feels this is revenue for the Town and is a good thing. Mr. O'Connor was in agreement. The Board of Selectmen refers the Zone Change back to the Planning Board with no concerns at this time. They request that consideration be given to any concerns or comments from other Boards or Committees.
- f. Mary Lane Hospital Resolution: Ms. Aldrich presented the details. Mary Lane Hospital will be closing their emergency room. Mr. Brougham stated that the immediate plan is to close the hospital (overnight stays) and to keep the emergency room open for up to two years.

The Board has before them a resolution to keep Mary Lane Hospital open. Ms. Aldrich is asking that the Board endorse the resolution to keep Mary Lane Hospital open and to keep care local. Ms. Aldrich read the resolution to the Board.

Craig Bodamer, EMS Director stated that from what he's heard the emergency room services will remain in place for the next two years. It is the admitting patients to the floors that is changing. He received an email from Mary Lane Hospital today stating that it will be called an Emergency Satellite Facility of Baystate Medical Center. Things will not change in the emergency room. Nothing is known as to what will happen after the two years is up.

Mr. Brougham indicated that there is a forum tomorrow night at the Ware Middle School to discuss keeping Mary Lane Hospital open. He feels the Board needs to show support for keeping the hospital open.

Ms. Aldrich moved the Board endorse the Mary Lane Hospital Resolution. Seconded by Mr. O'Connor. Motion passes 4 – 0.

- g. Review Small Wind Energy System By-Law: Mr. O'Connor presented the details. It was referred back to the Planning Board with no comments or concerns at this time.
- h. Executive Session – MGL Chapter 30A, Section 21, Subsection 3: Ms. Aldrich moved the Board enter executive session at the conclusion of their regular session pursuant to MGL Chapter 30A, Section 21, Subsection 3 and not to reconvene in open meeting. Seconded by Mr. O'Connor. Roll call vote: Aponte – yes, Archible – yes, Aldrich – yes, O'Connor – yes.
- i. Miscellaneous: Maureen McGarrett works for the *Sentinel* and was not able to be present for the meeting announcing the finalists for the Chief of Police. She wanted to ask questions regarding the process. She stated though that she is not here for the newspaper but for herself and the community in regards to the Police Chief search.

She questioned the rumor that the three finalists were not a unanimous choice as stated by the Chairman of the Police Chief Search Committee. She questioned the Board if they knew it was not a unanimous vote. The Board does not address rumor. She then questioned how the Board members would feel if they had worked 20 years in their jobs and were passed over for a promotion.

She questioned why there were no Belchertown Police Officers on the Committee and was told that they could not serve on the Committee as it would be a conflict of interest. She feels the Board of Selectmen did not listen to the Community.

- 6) **Town Administrator's Report:** Mentioned the Ware forum tomorrow night to discuss the potential closure of Mary Lane Hospital. It will be held at the Ware Middle School beginning at 6:30 p.m.
- 7) **Review of Weekly Mail:** See Ms. Aldrich's member report.
- 8) **Individual Board Members' Reports:**
 - Mr. O'Connor: Met with Judge Estes to discuss PVTA services to the Court House. Met with the Council on Aging and they want to proceed with the second phase of the Senior Needs Assessment. The Recreation Director Search Committee has been advertised for in the newspaper. He questioned if the Recreation Director's position should now be advertised. Mr. Brougham advised the Board that a retirement notice has not been received from the current Director. It was decided that once the retirement notice was received then the office staff would advertise for the position.

Ms. Aldrich: Attended the Pathfinder budget meeting. The Town's assessment has gone up for a number of reasons. She also attended the Belchertown School

Committee budget meeting last week. The Town received two thank you letters from the Town of Amherst for recent mutual aid for the "Blarney Blowout". The temporary Amherst Town Manager and the Amherst Chief of Police sent the thank you letters.

Mr. Archible: At last year's Annual Town meeting the Town residents voted to approve the purchase of a new dump truck for DPW. The DPW now has the new dump truck.

- 9) **Questions from the Press:** Steve Hill from *The Sentinel* asked the Board to repeat the makeup of the proposed Opioid Task Force. The information was provided.

Jim Russell from *The Republican* questioned the details regarding remote participation. He was told that the Board of Selectmen will have some criteria to give the various Chairmen's to use to determine the appropriateness of remote participation for a committee member. He also questioned if there will be anything on the Annual Town meeting warrant about the Town remaining as a member of the Hampshire Council of Governments. He was told that the Annual Town meeting warrant has not yet been drafted. He raised the question if the Mary Lane Hospital Resolution included the information that Belchertown ambulance transports the majority of their patients to Mary Lane. That information is not on the resolution and it is not known if it can be added. Ms. Aldrich believes the Board can also do a letter that provides that information. He confirmed the interview date for the three finalists for the Chief of Police as well as the appointment date the following week.

- 10) **Adjournment:** Meeting adjourned at 9:18 p.m.

Minutes submitted by Gary L. Brougham, Town Administrator

Board approved/endorsed: May 2, 2016

Board of Selectmen - Town of Belchertown

Endorsed by a majority:

Ronald E. Aponte, Chairman

George D. Archible

Nicholas O'Connor

Brenda Q. Aldrich

(Absent)
William R. Barnett