

**TOWN OF BELCHERTOWN
BOARD OF SELECTMEN'S MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY, MAY 28, 2019
Selectmen's Meeting Room, Lawrence Memorial Hall**



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

Call to Order: Chairman O'Connor called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance.

2) Sign Documents:

- a) Warrant #1948 was signed for \$1,893,524.16.
- b) Routine documents
- c) Approval of Minutes: Ms. Aldrich moved the Board accept the minutes of April 8, 2019, April 22, 2019 and April 29, 2019. Motion seconded by Mr. O'Connor. Motion passes 5 – 0.

3) Additions to the Agenda:

- Accept Resignation Wastewater Treatment Plant: The Board accepted the resignation of Terrance Yates, effective immediately. A letter will be sent to Mr. Yates thank him for his service to the Town.

4) Appearances Before the Board:

- 7:05 p.m. Present Award: Ms. Aldrich awarded the Employee of the Year award to Chief Pronovost as he was away on vacation during town meeting. The Board began receiving letters last summer nominating him as the employee of the year. The icing on the cake was the letter from Sgt. Henn about the Chief and how he is willing to jump right into any situation to help resolve it. Sgt. Henn applauded the Chief's decision making skills, professionalism, and courage that allowed for a peaceful conclusion to a recent potentially dangerous situation where a resident was threatening to hurt themselves. He went on to say that Chief Pronovost has created a new tradition of recognizing officers when they go above and beyond duty. He feels that the Chief's actions are worthy of a letter of accommodation but he does not have the authority to do so. He asked the Board to accept his letter to recognize Chief Pronovost's dedication, professionalism and service to the Town of Belchertown.

Ms. Aldrich presented the employee of the year plaque to Chief Pronovost. She thanked him for all he does for the town and for his officer's. She is very excited that he has signed a new three year contract.

Chief Pronovost thanked the Board and humbly accepted the award on behalf of everyone in the police department. He feels there couldn't be a finer group of people to work with. He is proud to be their boss. He thanked them for all the little things they do for the community as well as for coming out tonight to support him in receiving this award.

Ms. Aldrich thanked the officers for their support at the Memorial Day parade. She had many phone calls about it. It means a lot to see all the officer's out at this event. She thanked them for all they do on their off time.

Ms. Gramarossa added her comments for the Chief as well as the officers on how hard they are working on how to respond to a mental health crisis. The letter that Sgt. Henn wrote is one of those situations in town. She hears from the community how that way of responding is impacting and helping the community.

- 7:35 p.m. Skate Park Committee: Kyle Thibeault, Director of Parks and Recreation and Michelle Ricker, Chairman of the Skate Park Committee were present for the discussion.

Ms. Aldrich presented details to the Board. Mr. Thibeault had pulled together information from other skate parks in the area for the Recreation Committee's last meeting. She thanked Ms. Ricker for her patience with all the openings and closings of the skate park. Ms. Aldrich commented that at the Board of Selectmen meeting prior to the start of the town meeting the Board agreed to re-open the skate park. It was announced at the town meeting that the skate park was being reopened.

As she mentioned earlier Ms. Aldrich informed the Board that the Recreation Director had pulled information for skate parks in the surrounding areas to see what their policies are. It became clear that these surrounding towns don't have liability for incidents at their skate parks by posting the signs that you are skating at your own risk without wearing protective gear. She has spoken with Chief Pronovost about it. The police department will still keep looking out at the skate park. Ms. Ricker was at the Recreation Committee meeting and saw the signs that the City of Northampton had put up. So the Board now needs to agree on how they are going to sign the usage of the skate park. The signs indicating helmets must be worn will be taken down. Ms. Ricker indicated she has an old sign that does state skate at your own risk and that helmets must be worn. The newer signs indicate that helmets must be worn by all riders. She wondered if both signs could be put up. Mr. O'Connor commented that the sign needs to say "At Your Own Risk". The Board can make recommendations as to what can and can't be done but the "At Your Own Risk" needs to be clear. Ms. Ricker thinks the combination of signs she has might explain that. She does not have money in the budget to purchase new signs.

Mr. Boscher researched this topic. There is a recreation statute that says as long as the municipality does not oversee the skate park than they are not liable for any injuries that happen there. Ms. Ricker stated that she has tried to explain that for many years. The more involved the town gets and the more rules that are imposed and are trying to watch it and then don't watch it there is more liability.

Mr. O'Connor feels as long as people skate at their own risk they can do it. We can't put up rules that can't be enforced. He reiterated there is not a liability issue as long as the signage is appropriate. He advised Ms. Ricker to take the current sign down and install the sign that states at your own risk.

5)

Discussion/Action Items:

- a. Endorse State House Note for Parsons' Field Renovations: Mr. O'Connor presented the details. This is in reference to an existing CPA award that was given to fund Parsons Field improvements. Lisa Banner, Treasurer-Collector is seeking the Board's endorsement of State House Note #999 in the amount of \$312,500 for 1 year at a rate of 2.14%. This is a renewal of the borrowing of the Parson's Field improvements as well as funding to purchase two parcels of land on North Washington Street approved at Special Town Meeting on May 13, 2019.

Mr. Boscher moved the Board endorse State House Note #999. Motion seconded by Ms. Aldrich. Motion passes 5 – 0.

- b. Accept Cultural Council Member Resignation: Ms. Gramarossa presented the details. The Board accepted the resignation of Carey Southwick-Fink from the Cultural Council. A letter will be sent to Ms. Southwick-Fink thanking her for her service to the Town.
- c. Accept Conservation Commission Resignation: Mr. O'Connor presented the details indicating that Eric Wojtowicz sent in his letter of resignation as he needs to turn his attention to his professional development. The Board accepted the resignation and will send a letter thanking him for his service to the Town.
- d. Appointment of Conservation Commission Full Member(s): Per the recommendation of Erica Cross, Conservation Administrator, Mr. O'Connor moved to appoint David Lamb to a full commission member, term to expire June 30, 2021. Motion seconded by Ms. Gramarossa. Motion passes 5 – 0. Per the recommendation of Erica Cross, Conservation Administrator, Mr. O'Connor moved to appoint Dough Beach as a full commission member, term to expire June 30, 2020. Motion seconded by Ms. Aldrich. Motion passes 5 – 0.
- e. Accept Resignation Town Common Lighting Committee Member: Mr. O'Connor presented the details. Gloria Fortunato resigned from the Town Common Lighting Committee, effective immediately. A letter will be sent to Ms. Fortunato thanking her for her service to the Town.
- f. Appointment of Skate Park Committee Member: Per the recommendation of Michelle Ricker, Chair, Skate Park Committee, Ms. Aldrich moved to appoint Lori Allen to the Skate Park Committee, term to expire June 30, 2019. Motion seconded by Mr. Boscher. Motion passes 5 – 0.
- g. Appointment Heavy Equipment Operator I: Per the recommendation of Steve Williams, Director of Public Works, Mr. O'Connor moved to appoint Christopher Czupryna, to the position of Heavy Equipment Operator I, effective immediately. Motion seconded by Ms. Gramarossa. Motion passes 5 – 0.
- h. Request to Close July 5, 2019: Mr. O'Connor presented the details to the Board. Non-essential offices are asking to close on Friday, July 5th following the 4th of July holiday. Personnel will use their personal time or vacation time for this day. Mr. O'Connor moved the Board allow the request for non-essential personal offices to close on Friday, July 5th. Motion seconded by Ms. Aldrich. Motion passes 5 – 0.
- i. Review Special Permit/Accessory Apartment Application – Jeffrey D. Plant – 311 Turkey Hill Road, Map 254, Lot 74: Mr. O'Connor commented that there is no action for the Board to take other than their awareness of the application. The Board remanded the application back to the Planning Board for their review. The public hearing will be held on June 11th.

As this is a private well and septic, Mr. Boscher questioned if the Board of Health is part of that decision making process. The town administrator confirmed that the Board of Health received the same packet for their review.

- j. Review Preliminary Subdivision Plan off Pondview Circle: This plan along with the other four preliminary subdivision plans were filed to effectively freeze the zoning by-laws prior to the change made at the Annual Town meeting of May 2019 as they were filed prior to the meeting. There is a time limit on the freeze. There is nothing for the Board to do other than to be aware of the application.
- k. Review Preliminary Subdivision Plan off Gulf Road: This plan along with the other four preliminary subdivision plans were filed to effectively freeze the zoning by-laws prior to the change made at the Annual Town meeting of May 2019 as they were filed prior to the meeting. There is a time limit on the freeze. There is nothing for the Board to do other than to be aware of the application.
- l. Review Preliminary Subdivision Plan off Green Avenue: This plan along with the other four preliminary subdivision plans were filed to effectively freeze the zoning by-laws prior to the change made at the Annual Town meeting of May 2019 as they were filed prior to the meeting. There is a time limit on the freeze. There is nothing for the Board to do other than to be aware of the application.
- m. Review Preliminary Subdivision Plan off Waterford Drive: This plan along with the other four preliminary subdivision plans were filed to effectively freeze the zoning by-laws prior to the change made at the Annual Town meeting of May 2019 as they were filed prior to the meeting. There is a time limit on the freeze. There is nothing for the Board to do other than to be aware of the application.
- n. Review Preliminary Subdivision Plan off Gulf Road: This plan along with the other four preliminary subdivision plans were filed to effectively freeze the zoning by-laws prior to the change made at the Annual Town meeting of May 2019 as they were filed prior to the meeting. There is a time limit on the freeze. There is nothing for the Board to do other than to be aware of the application.
- a. Executive Session – MGL Ch. 30A, Section 21, Subsection 3: Ms. Gramarossa 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 Ms. Aldrich. Roll call vote: O'Connor – yes, Gramarossa – yes, Aldrich – yes, Boscher – yes, Turner - yes.
- o. Reorganize Board / Review Liaison Duties: Mr. O'Connor recommendation is to table the liaison duties until the next meeting but install the new officers. Mr. O'Connor moved to reorganize the Board as follows: Ms. Turner as Clerk, Ms. Gramarossa as Vice-Chairman and Mr. Boscher as Chairman. Ms. Aldrich did not agree with the reorganization. Ms. Turner seconded the motion. Ms. Aldrich recommended Ms. Gramarossa as Chairman, Mr. Boscher as Vice-Chair and Ms. Turner as Clerk. Ms. Gramarossa has served as on the Board of Health for many years and was Chairman of it. She has been very active with the marijuana by-laws and served on the committee for the Marijuana Host Agreement. We have several businesses looking to open their marijuana stores in town. She has the background to deal with these businesses. There is also the issue of Sportshaven and having served for many years on the Board of Health she is very familiar with what is happening and still needs to happen with Sportshaven. She feels Ms. Gramarossa is in a better position to be chairman to deal with these issues. Ms. Gramarossa thanked Ms. Aldrich for her comments. Hearing no further discussion

Mr. O'Connor called for a vote on his motion. Motion passes 3 – yes (Boscher, O'Connor, Turner and 2 – no (Aldrich, Gramarossa).

p. Miscellaneous Matters: None.

- 6) **Town Administrator's Report:** Nothing to report.
- 7) **Review of Weekly Mail:** Reviewed, no discussion held.
- 8) **Individual Board Members' Reports:**
Ms. Turner: She is excited to be on the Board.

Ms. Gramarossa:

- Kalyx, the second marijuana retailer looking at establish a business in Belchertown, is holding their community outreach meeting on June 3rd at 5:30 p.m. at the VFW.
- She congratulated the newly appointed School Superintendent, Mr. Brian Cameron.
- This is the first time in the history of Belchertown that there are three women on the Board of Selectmen. In light of it she has received many phone calls and email asking the process to change the name from the Board of Selectmen to Select Board. In order to officially change the name it is a fairly complex process and from what she understands in speaking with Linda Barron it may have been talked about briefly in the past but never pursued. There are three steps to making the change include a public hearing, a vote at town meeting and then goes to the State Legislation as a home rule petition which has to be approved by the legislation and signed by the governor. She is requesting the Board agree to scheduling a public hearing to get more input from public. Mr. O'Connor commented that he would endorse the change.

Mr. Boscher:

- It's been a busy few weeks with town meeting, elections and finishing up with Memorial Day parade.
- On Election Day he spent some time with Mr. Archible and he thanked him for his many years of service to our community but to our country.
- The weather for the Memorial Day parade couldn't have been better. It was great to see everyone come out to support it. It was nice to see the police force as well as the high school band and everyone who came out to remember those who sacrificed everything so we could enjoy a nice day.
- He looks forward to serving the Board as the chair in the next year.

Ms. Aldrich:

- Congratulated her daughter as the new Chair of the South Hadley Select Board.
- Congratulated Jen on her election to the Board and welcomed her.
- She thanked Mr. Archible for his many years of service not only to the Board, the Town and our country. He was a wonderful mentor and she enjoyed working with him. She wishes him all the best.
- The parade was fabulous.

Mr. O'Connor:

- It was a great parade. Don Slesser who was our first time home town hero recipient was at the Memorial Day ceremonies. The Memorial Day ceremonies are one of his most favorite traditions for the Board of Selectmen.
- He also thanked Mr. Archible for his many years of service not only to the community. He was always a part of conversation. He will be missed and he wishes him the best of luck.

- 9) **Questions from the Press:** Steve Hill from *The Sentinel* questioned why they decision was made two weeks ago at the town meeting about the skate park. Mr. O'Connor gave the background on the decision indicating that there had been a Board of Selectmen meeting prior to the town meeting. It was a unanimous decision by the Board.

Mr. Hill also questioned that there was no layout of residential streets or anything on the preliminary plans that were submitted. Mr. Brougham indicated that the preliminary plans all have a name and that most of them are referencing the access corridor. They are very preliminary plans showing three lots with an access point off of a town way.

- 10) **Adjournment:** Meeting adjourned at 7:52 p.m.

Minutes submitted by Gary L. Brougham, Town Administrator

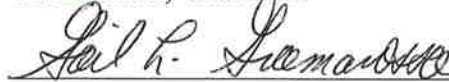
Board approved/endorsed: June 10, 2019

Board of Selectmen - Town of Belchertown


Endorsed by a majority:



Ed Boscher, Chairman



Gail Gramarossa



Nicholas O'Connor



Brenda Q. Aldrich



Jen D. Turner