

BOARD OF SELECTMEN
SEPTEMBER 2, 2020
REGULAR SESSION

Members Present: Justin Sullivan, Chris Zorra, David Zorra, Adam Petronio

David Andrade was absent.

Town Administrator: Shawn E. Cadime

Chairman Sullivan opened the meeting at 7 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 that will be allowed to physically access the Board of Selectmen meeting to ten. Pre-registration is encouraged to reserve a seat. The public could submit comments and questions to the Board in advance of the meeting by completing the Google form by Monday, August 31, 2020 at noon. Any person recording the meeting must notify the Chairman.

BOARD AND COMMITTEE OPENINGS

Mr. Petronio announced that volunteers are needed on the Capital Improvement Committee (2 Board of Selectmen appointments), Commission on Disability (5-13 BOS), Conservation Commission (1 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 Alternatives).

COMMUNITY SPEAKS – None.

GENERAL BUSINESS

Recognition of Peter Fuller upon His Retirement with 24 Years of Service to the Town

Chairman Sullivan read and presented a Proclamation and Town of Seekonk tile to Mr. Fuller who served as Associate Director and Director of the Library for 24 years.

Mr. Fuller said he is deeply honored. He worked in other communities prior to Seekonk. Seekonk is the best. The wonderful sense of community. He thanked the Library Board of Trustees, a hard-working and dedicated staff and the support of the Friends of the Library, Seekonk Library Trust and the Coalition of the Quality of Life in Seekonk. He thanked Mr. Cadime and his team. It has been a pleasure. He thanked the Library Board of Trustees for appointing Kate Hibbert as his replacement.

Consider the Appointment of Michael Gagne to the Position of Truck Driver/Laborer for the Department of Public Works

DPW Supt. David Cabral and Asst. Scott Olobri were in attendance. Mr. Gagne was in attendance.

Mr. Olobri recommended Mr. Gagne for the position. Mr. Gagne first interviewed in October 2019 and his conditional offer was in July 2020. He has a vast experience as a mechanic and all aspects of small engine repair and also landscaping.

Mr. Cadime recommended as stated.

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

VOTED: To appoint Michael Gagne as truck driver/laborer with the Department of Public Works, effective September 8, 2020.

The vote: Mr. Petronio – Aye; Mr. Viera – yes; Mr. Zora – Aye; Chairman Sullivan – Aye.

Chairman Sullivan said he received a text message from a resident who was excited about the hiring of Mr. Gagne.

Mr. Zorra said the Department needed an individual with his experience.

Mr. Viera added that he is a Seekonk resident.

Consider the Conditional Offer of Employment to Joseph Goncalves for the Position of Truck Driver/Laborer for the Department of Public Works

Mr. Olobri advised another Seekonk resident. Mr. Goncalves has a Class A CDL. He has experience in truck driving and route driving. He also has landscaping and snow plowing experience.

Mr. Olobri requested the Board extend a conditional offer of employment to Mr. Goncalves.

Mr. Cadime recommended as stated by the Asst. Supt. of Public Works.

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

VOTED: To extend a conditional offer of employment to Joseph Goncalves as truck driver/laborer for the Department of Public Works.

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

Consider the Conditional Offer of Employment to Luke Carvalho to the Position of Special Police Officer

Police Chief David Enos advised Mr. Carvalho was a favorable candidate back in July. He is a reserve officer in Swansea and he is academy trained. Currently, there are 12 special police officers. The goal is to build that up to 20.

Chief Enos recommended a conditional offer of employment to Luke Carvalho.

Mr. Cadime recommended as stated by the Chief.

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

VOTED: To extend a conditional offer of employment to Luke Carvalho to the position of Special Police Officer.

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

Consider the Request to Dissolve the Seekonk Police Association (a.k.a. Seekonk Special Police Officers) Recognition as a Bargaining Unit and Accept the Proposed Hourly Rates

Chief Enos advised the agreement expired in 2015. There hasn't been any negotiations or raises since then. He has a department order ready to address equipment and clothing. The hourly rate for patrol shift reverts from \$40.32 to \$27.28 per hour. The rate for anything not patrol function is \$20 per hour. It meets all concerns of the special officers and moving forward utilizing them in other areas.

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

VOTED: To dissolve the Seekonk Police Association (a.k.a. Seekonk Special Police Officers) as a bargaining unit and approve the hourly rates at \$27.28 for patrol function and \$20 for non-patrol functions.

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

Mr. Viera and Chief Enos not sure when the Association was formed.

Chief Enos said there were about 40 to 60 members, strong more than full time officers. They did a lot of cruiser work.

This will make it easy to start a reserve program. In the future, there will be officers within when full time officers are hired.

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Mr. Viera recognized any special officers who are alive. They carried the Town of Seekonk for a long time.

Chief Enos said they are not dissolving the Association, just their bargaining unit.

Chairman Sullivan concurred with Mr. Viera's sentiments.

Consider Accepting the Donation of Four (4) Yards of Loam from Paul Medeiros of MDC Trucking for the Town Playground

DPW Asst. Supt. Scott Olobri extended the Department's appreciation to Mr. Medeiros. He noted this is the second time he has donated loam for that site and he has also donated to the ballfields.

Mr. Viera noted that Mr. Medeiros was a special police officer in the past.

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

VOTED: To accept the donation of four (4) yards of loam from Paul Medeiros of MDC Trucking for the town playground.

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

Consider Signing the Bond Anticipation Note for the Aitken School Project

Mr. Cadime advised the bond is in the amount of \$9,708,000. BYM Mellon won the bid at .37% net interest cost. This is to bring in revenue until the town goes long term for the project.

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

VOTED: Motion attached.

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

Consider the Proposal from "Environmental Consulting and Management" to Conduct Environmental Consulting Services for the 540 Arcade Avenue Project

Building Committee Chairwoman Michelle Hines explained she requested an agenda item because she felt this was a contract that had to be approved by the Board of Selectmen. She found out today that it is not a contract but rather an agreement with the consulting firm. She sent e-mails to committee members and a majority responded in favor of accepting this.

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The Town Administrator's office contacted four consulting firms recommended by DPW Supt. David Cabral to set up a site visit. Two came for the walk through.

Mr. Cadime said it has been reviewed by legal counsel. It is good to go.

Consider the Application for the Massachusetts Department of Transportation's Shared Streets and Spaces Grant

Town Planner John Aubin III, Conservation Agent Jen Miller, and Asst. DPW Superintendent Scott Olobri were in attendance. Mr. Aubin advised this program was announced in June. They are requesting the Board authorize the Town Administrator to act as the official signatory. It was reviewed with the technical review committee. A meeting was held with the Town Administrator, Planning, Conservation, and DPW to review potential projects that might qualify. The Grant program is designed to provide improvements to sidewalks, streets, off street parking lots, in support of public safety, renewed commerce, safety and mobility. The corridor along the eastern side of Arcade Avenue from the senior center to Ledge Road was identified for sidewalk improvements. This is intended for shovel-ready projects. Ransom Engineering did consulting work and put together preliminary plans and numbers. They looked at what might be a further phase in the future.

Mr. Viera asked why stop at the Ledge Road intersection.

Mr. Aubin said cost. The maximum grant request is \$300,000. It is significantly over that amount. Looking to CPC for funding.

Mr. Viera asked about cost to do in front of the high school.

Mr. Olobri said that wasn't targeted. They went back to Route 44. The plan is for pedestrian lights at the intersection of Ledge Road and Arcade Avenue and access to a trail that opens up to Arcade Avenue.

Mr. Aubin suggested they could look at the area from the high school to Newman Avenue during another phase.

Mr. Cadime said they talked about a number of projects. They intend to prepare a list of projects trying to get them shovel-ready when these grants come out.

He said they want to do sidewalks on Olney Street to Anthony Street.

Mr. Viera suggested a traffic light instead of a pedestrian light.

Mr. Cadime advised it would take studies to do a traffic light. Therefore, in the interest of time, the pedestrian light.

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Mr. Aubin noted the project has to be implemented by October 9, 2020.

Mr. Olobri had slides showing the scope of work. He noted there is a significant drop off at a point. They will have to install a retainer wall through DPW. He noted the involvement of DPW has helped to make the project shovel-ready. The full project cost is \$486,000.

Mr. Aubin advised that notification if the grant has been awarded should be in two weeks. It is through Mass. DOT.

Mr. Viera suggested contacting Rep. Howitt.

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

VOTED: To approve the application for the Massachusetts Department of Transportation's Shared Streets and Spaces Grant and authorize the Town Administrator to sign.

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

Consider Opening the Warrant for Fall Town Meeting

Mr. Cadime advised opening the warrant today for the November 9th Town Meeting would allow for review by town counsel and submission to the Finance Committee. The Board would discuss at the meeting of September 30, 2020.

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

VOTED: To open the Fall Town Meeting warrant as of today's date (September 2, 2020) and close at the end of business on September 16, 2020.

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

Discussion of a Board of Selectmen's Memorial

Chairman Sullivan said this was brought up a couple of weeks ago in honor of the recent passing of David Parker. The family expressed interest in planting a tree at the animal shelter. Mr. Andrade had put forward a proposal to do a bigger sitting area. He sent out sketches.

Chairman Sullivan would like to identify an area to plant a tree in Mr. Parker's honor. There are various feelings on this.

Mr. Petronio said the Board should focus on a site selection and coordinate with the Parker family. The memorial could be discussed later.
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Mr. Viera said that Mr. Parker served on many committees in town.

He spoke to Mr. Cadime about doing a plaque at the old town hall recognizing all members of the Board of Selectmen. He felt a memorial is overkill. He felt the Board needs to come up with a policy on how to handle this in the future.

Chairman Sullivan said the Parker family wants to plant a tree at the animal shelter this month.

Mr. Zorra said as long as they coordinate with DPW so it is far away from the building unless it is a smaller tree. He feels it is honorable and he is on board with the tree.

Chairman Sullivan agreed that a plaque is a bit much. There are others beside the Board of Selectmen who serve this town. A number of residents have given of their time over the years. The animal shelter makes sense since for Mr. Parker is a founding member.

Mr. Viera noted the late David Bowden was instrumental in the old animal shelter and the new senior center.

Chairman Sullivan will continue to coordinate with Mrs. Parker.

Consider Accepting the Minutes of August 5, 2020

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

VOTED: To accept the Regular Session minutes of August 5, 2020.

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

COMMUNITY SPEAKS- None.

OTHER BUSINESS – None.

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

No updates on Radio Project, DPW Facility, Playground at Town Hall and Cable Contract.

Mr. Cadime reported bids were solicited to have crosswalks painted. The bid was awarded to Markings, Inc. The work should be completed by September 11, 2020. School opens on September 14, 2020.

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BOARD OF SELECTMEN LIAISON REPORTS AND COMMENTS

Aitken School Expansion Building Committee Report

Mr. Zorra stated that National Grid installed the pole. Stripes are done on the parking lot. Jim Roy and his crew have cleaned every room as the construction team moves out. The Fire Department is satisfied. Walls are going up in the addition.

540 Arcade Avenue Building Committee Report – Nothing further.

Veterans' Council

Mr. Viera reported the council would meet shortly to discuss plans for Veterans' Day.

Mr. Petronio asked about National Grid doing tree trimming.

Mr. Cadime said approximately 170 locations of trees going over power lines.

Mr. Viera said there has been complaints about trimming the trees. He noted when trees come down during a storm and there is loss of power, that's when people wish the dead trees were taken down.

Mr. Cadime noted this Board requested and received a \$10,000 donation from National Grid to replant trees.

Mr. Petronio said it doesn't make sense to take down half trees.

Chairman Sullivan felt they were supposed to trim as far down as possible.

Mr. Olobri said they got derailed and will be coming back.

Mr. Petronio talked about communications from Comcast. He wanted to include Internet Essentials during discussion on the contract.

Chairman Sullivan explained those are general program notifications that go out to users.

Mr. Cadime noted the town does not control Comcast rates.

Mr. Viera suggested Mrs. Faria should know so she can pass along information to senior citizens.

He expressed concern about vandalism at the Veterans Memorial. He wanted to make sure lights stay active and the door for the flagpole is locked.

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Mr. Zorra mentioned trees sometimes look good but are actually rotted inside.

He cautioned people to drive carefully now that schools are opening.

He stopped by the playground on Sunday. It was nice to see a police officer there. Parents who were there were impressed that the wall was done by DPW workers. They did an excellent job.

Chairman Sullivan remarked that the work done by DPW is underappreciated and cannot be acknowledged enough. It represents thousands and thousands of saved funds. There will be further comments during the official opening of the playground.

He noted the playground is still a little under construction. We are in a pandemic and the Governor has mandates. He suggested that residents use masks and practice social distancing while at the playground as per the Governor's mandate.

Mr. Viera suggested a sign asking parents not to leave their children unattended at the playground. There are some challenging obstacles.

Mr. Petronio said the turf is definitely quality grade.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

At 8:22 p.m., Mr. Viera motioned, seconded by Mr. Petronio, to go into Executive Session to discuss United Steelworkers of America Clerical Unit Local 9517-10 per M.G.L. Chapter 30A, Section 21(a)(3), to discuss United Steelworkers Unit Local 9517-09 per M.G.L. Chapter 30A, Section 21(a)(3), and to conduct strategy sessions with respect to negotiations with the Police Chief 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; not to return to open session.

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

Respectfully submitted,

David Viera, Clerk

Prepared by:

Patricia Gamer, Secretary

Items Distributed at the September 2, 2020 Board of Selectmen Meeting

Resume from Michael Gagne for the position of truck driver/laborer with DPW

Resume from Joseph Goncalves for the position of truck driver/laborer with DPW

Memo from Chief Enos to extend an offer of conditional appointment to Luke Carvalho to the position of special police officer

Donation of 4 yards of loam from Paul Medeiros of MDC trucking for the town playground

Documents for Massachusetts Department of Transportation's Shared Streets and Spaces Grant

Proposal from Environmental Consulting and Management to Conduct Environment Consulting Services for the 540 Arcade Avenue Project

Bond Anticipation Note for the Aitken School Project