

BOARD OF SELECTMEN
DECEMBER 16, 2020
REGULAR MEETING

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

Town Administrator: Shawn E. Cadime

Asst. Town Administrator/
Director of Human Resources: Carol Ann Days

The meeting was held via teleconference due to COVID-19.

Chairman Sullivan opened the meeting at 7:05 p.m.

He advised that, per Governor Baker's Order suspending certain provisions of the Open Meeting Law, M.G.L. Chapter 30A, Section 20, the public was not allowed to physically access this meeting. Public comments and questions could have been submitted to the Board in advance of the meeting by completing the Google Form prior to the meeting by Tuesday, December 15, 2020, at 4:30 p.m. The meeting will be broadcast live via Seekonk Cable TV9 and streamed live on Seekonk Town Hall Facebook.

Chairman Sullivan advised that M.G.L. Chapter 30A, Section 20(f) requires that any person recording the meeting must notify the Chairman at the beginning of the meeting.

The agenda included a link to join the webinar.

BOARD AND COMMITTEE OPENINGS

Mr. Zorra announced that volunteers are needed on the Board of Assessors (1 Board of Selectmen appointment), Capital Improvement Committee (2 BOS), Commission on Disability (5-13 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 Alternates).

GENERAL BUSINESS

Consider the Appointment of David Mahoney to the Position of Patrolman 3rd Class

Chief Dean Isabella recommended the appointment. He stated no negative information was revealed in the background investigation. He welcomed Mr. Mahoney back to the Seekonk Police Department.

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

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VOTED: To appoint David Mahoney to the position of Patrolman 3rd Class with the Seekonk Police Department, effective on a date to be determined in January 2021.

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

Consider the Appointment of Nathan Gongoleski to the Position of Truck Driver/Laborer for the Department of Public Works

DPW Supt. David Cabral advised Mr. Gongoleski was first interviewed on August 11, 2020. He had a second interview with Mr. Cadime on August 18. He has a CDL Class C license and extensive home improvement and customer service experience. He has a great work ethic and is very interested in coming to work at DPW.

Mr. Cabral noted the start date would be Monday, December 28, 2020. However, with the impending storm, he is available to start some time tonight or tomorrow morning.

Mr. Cadime approved as recommended by Mr. Cabral.

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

VOTED: To appoint Nathan Gongoleski to the position of Truck Driver Laborer, effective tonight.

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

Comcast Contract Discussions

Representatives from TV9 Michael Dressler and David Saad were in attendance to present a budget. Chairman Sullivan advised this is a follow up to the public hearings held in November. The Board will meet with Comcast in January 2021.

Mr. Dressler said he was asked to provide a budget for capital projects. Member of the Cable Committee agreed on the \$175,000 which is the same amount to TV9 over the last nine years. A more realistic budget would be \$400,000. They could actually use \$600,000. The biggest difference is TV9 equipment and high school and town hall equipment replacement.

Mr. Viera noted any increase is passed onto consumers.

Mr. Andrade asked what amount they really need.

Mr. Saad said the \$175,000 streamlined budget would not be enough should there be an unexpected emergency.

Mr. Andrade said he would not settle for less than \$175,000.

Mr. Saad said going to the table with the \$175,000 would make residents and members of the Board of Selectmen happy.

Chairman Sullivan thanked Mr. Dressler and Mr. Saad and others at TV9.

Mr. Cadime publicly acknowledged them. He said TV9 is a major component to getting out messages to town residents.

Discussion Regarding Increased Road Traffic on Plainfield Street

Mr. Cadime advised there were a number of complaints. Police Chief Dean Isabella and DPW Supt. David Cabral were made aware of it. The Chief contacted some of the residents.

Chief Isabella explained there was a complaint on December 3 of trucks and vehicles using the rear lot access to the Stop & Shop Plaza causing hazardous traffic and excessive noise. Officers responded to the scene. They spoke to store management and advised them to instruct truck drivers to use the main entrance. The officers also spoke with a resident who had been using the rear entrance. This resident was one of the complainers. On December 10, Chief Isabella and Deputy Chief Enos met with the on-duty manager to discuss a long-term solution. The manager informed them that he had been instructing truck drivers not to use that as an exit. The manager was very helpful and cooperative.

Chief Isabella also contacted the property manager and discussed blocking that entrance using jersey barriers.

The long-term solution would be to limit access to that rear lot.

Fire Chief Rave's only concern was access to the fire hydrant. He would be OK with a fence with a locking gate.

The Police Department has been monitoring for other traffic issues.

Mr. Viera said it has been an on-going problem since the early 1990s. It is not only the hydrant but the North End Fire Station is on Pine Street, across from Plainfield Street. With a barrier, they will have to go down Pine Street to Central Avenue. He would be in favor of a fence as long as the Fire Chief agrees.

The Board had received a petition. Resident Carla Wahnon appreciated the efforts. She noted this is a school bus stop.

Joyce Silvestri said she has lived on Brewster Street for 35 years and has never seen reckless speeding like this year. Vehicles go through to avoid the red light. It is a dangerous situation. It is a school bus stop. There are nine children under the age of 7 years old on Brewster Street. She is concerned someone will get hurt. She suggested speed bumps.

Mr. Andrade said with, due respect to the chiefs, there are residents that are going through this piece of land to gain access to this back area and also a fire truck trying to access this parcel of land through a back street where there are primary entrances like most other commercial lots throughout the town. It is creating a hazard. He stated put up a barrier or a fence.

Mr. Zorra is not in favor of speed bumps. He felt that most times the one that is speeding is a resident that is a complainer. He checked the area. He is concerned about access for fire. A gate might hinder fire operations.

Mr. Viera said that entrance at the end of the building is more of a convenience for the Fire Department. The residents will not be able to cut through once barriers go up and stay up.

Mr. Petronio suggested a sign for local traffic only or no commercial vehicles.

Mr. Andrade said signs are well and good until ignored. He repeated a jersey barrier or a fence.

Mr. Viera agreed.

Chief David Rave said the Fire Department would not be opposed to a locked gate. His main concern is for the neighborhood.

There was discussion about access to the hydrant which is located at the end of Plainfield Street.

Ms. Silvestri said the fire hydrant is a town hydrant on the property of Robert Fontaine of 5 Brewster Street.

Mr. Cabral recommended a jersey barrier and a locked fence. It would take care of the problem.

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

VOTED: To place a jersey barrier on either side of the opening with a chain in the middle.

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

Mr. Cabral felt jersey barriers could be done within two weeks.

Discussion Regarding Increased Violence on Mink Street

Chief Isabella advised a complaint was received on December 7 regarding increased activity at Champion Motor Sports. On December 8, Chief Isabella and Capt. Jardine met with Ms. Lundgren. She said people are coming from the Colonial Inn located directly across from her business. He explained that the police will be taking long term actions to address issues at that motel and others also. Police will pay special attention to that area. He gave her his cell phone number to call directly if any other issues come up.

Chief Isabella then went to talk to the owner of the Colonial Inn. He was cooperative and has taken steps to increase the quality of his clientele. The Chief talked about scheduling a meeting in the future when the COVID-19 pandemic is over to discuss solutions to systematic problems at the motels. The Police Department is working on strategy. Chief Isabella will personally visit all locations and make direct contact with owners.

Ms. Lundgren expressed her appreciation to the Chief and police officers. She gave examples of incidents that have occurred on her property by guests of the motels in that area. She noted there are some good motels and hotels in Seekonk. She felt they need to get together as a community to create some sort of law to hold these motel owners accountable for activities in their businesses.

Chairman Sullivan noted they have discussed in the past about what to do with nuisance motels. Some of the information she provided were appalling.

Mr. Petronio said he is familiar with the Mink Street area. It borders Rhode Island. He definitely agrees something has to be done and he would be more than happy to work on a solution to prevent crime in that area. He is pleased to see the good relationship Ms. Lundgren has with the Police Department.

Mr. Andrade noted that, several years ago, Seekonk worked with Warwick on the same issue. The Police Department was allowed to go in and check the registration list. That came to an end when the ACLU brought a lawsuit against Warwick.

Mr. Cadime stated that in 2014 or 15 Seekonk was invited to go there with Chief Mace at the time to talk about some of the ways to improve the quality of life. At the time, they had agreed to give police registration books to verify. The lawsuit was filed and that put an end to the town's ability to go ahead and do that. The biggest piece is to address the nuisance ordinance. If fines are imposed on the number of calls from these establishments, there might be a little more of a willingness to address some of these issues. During the interview process, Chief Isabella talked about coming up with a way to address it.

Chief Isabella said the symptom of the problem is the crime that is being generated. Right now, the police are working as security for the motels. That is not productive and does not eliminate the problem. He dealt with this elsewhere. The hotel owners have decided to develop a business model that attracts the clientele that is creating these problems. The goal is to try to get hotel owners to drop that business model. There are others that operate with a different business model that are successful. The problem is they will not do that unless there is a monetary or punitive process if they fail to do that. That is where the nuisance ordinance comes in. There are stipulations within the ordinance based on how many calls for services per month and for what types of offenses. Once a preset limit is reached, a warning is issued (usually a sticker on door) and every time after that a monetary fine is issued to the business owner. That has been very successful.

The first step is to meet with business owners to explain what is going on and show them the data and evidence and explain they need to change their business model or there are consequences if they don't. Some hotels have changed their business model and are successful. A local hotel was forced to change the business model because it was sued. That business is now successful.

Mr. Viera concurred with Chief Isabella and Mr. Cadime. He said it is done with the fire alarm by-law. He felt the presence of a cruiser on site would deter someone from renting a room for several hours. He said getting a list of calls to hotels before issuing a license would go a long way.

Mr. Cadime said KP Law is working on language for licenses.

Chief Isabella said the long-term solution is a by-law that holds owners accountable.

Mr. Andrade said he looks forward to a by-law. Hopefully, within four weeks. He suggested putting owners on notice through an e-mail.

Board members agreed. Chairman Sullivan said maybe by the end of January.

Mr. Cadime said it requires a town meeting vote.

Mr. Viera suggested language that prohibits renting a room for less than ten hours.

Chairman Sullivan thanked Ms. Lundgren.

Consider Accepting the Donations Totaling \$1,740 to the Seekonk Fire Department in Memory of Mr. Charles G. Chadsey

Chief David Rave stated that Mr. Chadsey and his family requested donations to the Seekonk Fire Department. Mr. Chadsey was Postmaster in Seekonk.

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

VOTED: To accept the \$1,740 donation to the Seekonk Fire Department in memory of Charles G. Chadsey.

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

Chairman Sullivan thanked the Chadsey family. Mr. Andrade noted Mr. Chadsey and his family thought about the Fire Department at the time of his death.

Consider Accepting the Donation of \$100 from Judith Knox to the Police Department

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

VOTED: To accept the \$100 donation to the Seekonk Police Department.

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

Consider Accepting the Donation of Three Wreaths to the Town of Seekonk from the Rehoboth Garden Club

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

VOTED: To accept the donation of three wreaths from the Rehoboth Garden Club to the Town of Seekonk.

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

Consider Accepting the Donation of \$30 from Karen & Alfred Travers to the Human Services Gift and Donation Account

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

VOTED: To accept the \$30 donation from Karen & Alfred Travers to the Human Services Gift and Donation Account.

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

Consider Accepting the Donation of \$200 from Lianne & Eugene Maymon to the Human Services Gift and Donation Account

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

VOTED: To accept the \$200 donation from Liane & Eugene Maymon to the Human Services Gift and Donation Account.

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

Consider Accepting the Donation of Four \$25 Visa Gift Cards to Human Services

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

VOTED: To accept the donation of four \$25 Visa Gift Cards to Human Services.

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

Consider Accepting the Donation of Five \$20 Shaw's Gift Cards to Human Services

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

VOTED: To accept the donation of five \$20 Shaw's gift cards to Human Services.

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

Chairman Sullivan expressed his appreciation to all those who donated to the Town of Seekonk.

Mr. Andrade noted there was a donation from Cardi's Furniture that was not listed on the agenda.

Mr. Viera said it is a foosball table. He is concerned that it will fit in the same room with the pool table. Tabled to the next meeting.

Consider Accepting the Regular Session Minutes of November 18, 2020, November 21, 2020, November 23, 2020, and December 2, 2020

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

VOTED: 4 Ayes; 1 Abstention; To accept the Regular Session minutes of November 18, 2020;

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

and unanimously

VOTED: To accept the Regular Session minutes of November 21, 2020, November 23, 2020 and December 2, 2020.

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

2021 LICENSE RENEWAL HEARING

Mr. Cadime advised all are in compliance. There were no issues with these. It is a matter of timing for the agenda.

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

VOTED: To approve all alcohol license renewals.

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

Mr. Andrade verified that 99 Restaurant is closed but renewing the license.

Mr. Cadime stated that several are closed by holding licenses.

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

VOTED: To approve 2021 Class I motor vehicle license.

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

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

VOTED: To approve all 2021 Class II motor vehicle licenses.

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

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

VOTED: To approve all 2021 entertain licenses.

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

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

VOTED: To approve all 2021 amusement facilities licenses.

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

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

VOTED: To approve all 2021 amusement machines licenses.

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

Please see attached list for the above.

COMMUNITY SPEAKS – None.

OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Cadime provided an update on COVID-19. He recorded a Public Service Announcement along with Interim Health Agent Brian Darling, Fire Chief David Rave, and Police Chief Dean Isabella that will air tomorrow. They have met internally about the increase in numbers. From March to now, the Town did a good job in controlling the virus. Recently the numbers are the worst in the state at 16% over a two-week period. People are reminded to avoid large crowds, wear masks, wash hands. The spread is coming from households. The Board of Health is working with the CTC regarding contact tracing. A problem is that Seekonk is on the border of Rhode Island. There has been a lot of media attention with regard to the CVS situation. The State had to intervene to make sure kiosks are safe.

Eventually, that will be a vaccine distribution center at CVS. The Building Inspector has been in contact with the contractor building a testing facility for CVS. Testing facilities are in Attleboro and Fall River. Trying to reach out to our legislators to get a testing facility in the south end of town. It is important to quarantine if in contact with someone who has COVID-19.

Mr. Andrade noted he was on a task force committee in March. He inquired if that will happen again. There should be an agenda item so the Board can appoint a member to be prepared. Will be on the January 6, 2021 agenda.

Mr. Viera wanted to be clear on the role of the Board member selected.

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Mr. Cadime advised Executime should be in effect in February.

Due to the snowstorm expected later tonight, Mr. Cadime advised trash and recycling pickup will be delayed one day. There is a parking ban until further notice.

Mr. Cadime extended best wishes for a safe and healthy holiday season.

BOARD OF SELECTMEN LIAISON REPORTS AND COMMENTS

Bristol County Advisory Board – None.

Aitken School Expansion Building Committee Report

Mr. Zorra visited today. Work is moving along.

540 Arcade Avenue Building Committee Report

Mr. Viera advised a virtual meeting is scheduled for Thursday, December 17, 2020, to discuss final plans for Phase 2.

Veterans' Council – None.

Mr. Zorra extended holiday greetings.

Mr. Andrade asked when the South End Fire Station will appear under Liaison Reports.

Mr. Viera said the committee has only met one time virtually. Currently, working on the OPM and then will go out with RFP for architect. That should be by early 2021.

Mr. Andrade suggested having a list of questions for the architect.

Mr. Petronio advised a Zoom meeting will be held on Thursday, December 17, from 6 to 7 p.m. and broadcast on TV9. It is the Open Space and Recreation Plan coordinated by the Conservation Commission. Public input is welcomed.

He suggested everyone follow guidelines for a safe and healthy holiday and to contact the Health Agent with any questions. He extended best wishes for a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Mr. Viera also extended best wishes. He thanked his colleagues for a great year. He hoped 2021 will be better than 2020.

Chairman Sullivan echoed his colleagues. He said this is a holiday season like no other. Keep family gatherings down to a minimum, wear your mask, and stay safe.

At 9:07 p.m., Mr. Petronio motioned, seconded by Mr. Viera, to go into Executive Session to discuss negotiations with the United Steelworkers of America Clerical Unit Local 9517-10 per M.G.L. Chapter 30A, Section 21(a) (3) and negotiations with the United Steelworkers Supervisors Unit Local 9517-09 per M.G.L. Chapter 21(a) (3) as having discussion in open session would be detrimental to the litigation or bargaining position of the town; not to return to open session.

Respectfully submitted,

David Viera, Clerk

Prepared by:

Patricia Gamer, Secretary

Items Distributed at the December 16, 2020 Board of Selectmen Meeting

Correspondence from Police Chief Dean Isabella re: appointment of David Mahoney as Patrolman 3rd Class

Resume for Nathan Gongoleski for position of truck driver/laborer with DPW

Comcast Contract Seekonk Cable Access Documents

Petition from residents re: road traffic on Plainfield Street

Fire Chief David Rave re: donations in memory of Charles Chadsey, Postmaster in Seekonk

Police Chief Dean Isabella re: \$100 donation from Judith Knox of Westford, MA

Documentation re: various donations to Human Services

2021 License Renewals