

The Meeting of the Board of Selectmen held on Tuesday, April 16, 2024, began at 5:30 p.m. in the Board of Selectmen's Conference Room.

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Members Present: Derek DeBarge, Manuel Silva, Antonio Goncalves and William Rosenblum

2024 MAY - 8 P 12: 24

Members Absent: James Gennette

TOWN OF LUDLOW

First Order of Business: The Pledge of Allegiance

VISITATIONS

Mr. DeBarge: We have a packed meeting tonight for a ceremony for our Police Department. On behalf of the Town's deepest condolences to the Monaghan family for the loss of Eileen Monaghan and also Sheriff Cocchi and the Hampden County Correctional Center staff. We understand that the loss of Ms. Monaghan was a great loss as the Executive Secretary to Sheriff Cocchi. She was also Chief of Staff to a former State Rep and will be missed and loved by everybody. A very tragic loss. A victim of domestic violence, which will carry us into another domestic violence situation which will carry us into our awards with the Police Department. We have them scheduled for 5:45, so we're going to cover a little correspondence before that to let our honorees...

CORRESPONDENCE

224. Daniel Valadas, Chief of Police – Requesting the Board to appoint Lucas Dantas to a permanent Police Officer from alternate.

Motion made by Mr. Goncalves to appoint permanent police officer to Mr. Lucas Dantas. Mr. Rosenblum second. All in favor. Motion passed 4-0.

Mr. DeBarge: Grace Dias and Michael J. Dias we're going to skip and have you come up and discuss your request once the ceremony is over. It will probably take a little time for the discussion.

226. Planning Board Committee Assignments – No changes from 2023.

Mr. Silva: Administrative Review Committee Joe Queiroga and Chris Coelho. Open Space Recreation Committee Joel Silva, Cemetery Committee Joshua Carpenter, Safety Committee Chris Coelho, 40R Smart Growth Zoning Committee Joe Queiroga, Community Preservation Committee Ray Phoenix, Capital Planning Committee Joshua Carpenter, Long Range Planning Committee Joel Silva. I believe we disbanded the Long-Range Planning Committee and we discussed it last meeting as well but for now. PVPC alternate member Joel Silva, PVPC Commissioner member Ray Phoenix, Fair Housing Joshua Carpenter.

Motion made by Mr. Goncalves to file. Mr. Rosenblum second. All in favor. Motion passed 4-0.

227. Board of Health reorganization.

Mr. Goncalves: The Board reorganized and the Chairman continues to be Kelly Lamas, Antonio Tavares member, Adrienne DeSantis secretary.

Motion made by Mr. Goncalves to file. Mr. Rosenblum second. All in favor. Motion passed 4-0.

228. Recreation Department reorganization.

Mr. Rosenblum: The Recreation Committee on their April 2, 2024 meeting revised as follows: John Archambeau Chairman, Sean McBride Vice-Chairman, Sean Riopel member.

Motion made by Mr. Goncalves to file. Mr. Silva second. All in favor. Motion passed 4-0.

229. Louis Gilli, EH&S Engineer, Massachusetts Municipal Wholesale Electric Company – Informing the Board of their 2024 2nd quarter inspection of its natural gas pipeline during this calendar quarter.

Motion made by Mr. Goncalves to file. Mr. Silva second. All in favor. Motion passed 4-0.

230. Tamara Huntley, Resident – Requesting to be appointed to the Commission on Disability.

Mr. Rosenblum: Is there openings or just as many as possible?

Mr. DeBarge: There's openings.

Motion made by Mr. Rosenblum to appoint Tamara Huntley to the Commission on Disability. Mr. Goncalves second. All in favor. Motion passed 4-0.

231. Elsa Barros, Treasurer/Collector – Informing the Board of her retirement effective May 31, 2024.

Mr. Silva: That's going to be a great loss as we have just combined the two offices and Elsa was doing a great job. It's unfortunate her retirement is due to some health issues and I wish her well in her retirement.

Motion made by Mr. Goncalves to accept the retirement effective May 31 and wish her the best of luck. Mr. Rosenblum second.

Mr. DeBarge: I came into the Town in 2000 and started working for the Police Department and met Elsa. Since I've known Elsa I have never seen her not smiling. She's always been a great attitude to deal with, she's always giving the answer that's needed. I think part of this is because we've been making a lot of changes in Town and I think a lot of the public that deals with that office has been difficult to deal with. Patience is not a virtue of quite a few people that come into that office and that's unfortunate. I agree with Mr. Silva that it's going to be a huge loss. I have a great affection for Elsa and I think she does a great job. Another position that will be hard to fill.

All in favor. Motion passed 4-0.

232. Chief Pease – Request to charge off medical expenses and lost wages to Chapter 41, Section 111F for an injury sustained by a Firefighter/Paramedic as a result of an incident that occurred on April 8, 2024.

Motion made by Mr. Rosenblum to charge off medical expenses and lost wages to Chapter 41, Section 111F for an injury sustained by a Firefighter/Paramedic as a result of an incident that occurred on April 8, 2024. Mr. Goncalves second. All in favor. Motion passed 4-0.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Board to approve and sign the Selectmen Meeting Minutes of April 2, 2024.

Motion made by Mr. Goncalves to approve and sign the Selectmen meeting minutes of April 2, 2024 with all members present. Mr. Silva second. All in favor. Motion passed 4-0.

Board to discuss the Selectmen liaison positions (Tabled from April 2, 2024).

Mr. DeBarge: Does anybody have anything they want specifically?

Mr. Rosenblum: Mr. Gennette made a mention of a couple that he would like to swap out.

NEW BUSINESS

Board to approve and sign the contract between the Town of Ludlow and Mott MacDonald for additional professional design services for Ludlow High School Sports Complex, not to exceed \$109,200. That's a million dollars of additional work at their standard 10%.

Mr. Goncalves: I'd like to hold off on that. I'm a little confused. That's a lot of money. That's a million dollars of additional work at the standard 10%.

Mr. Silva: I agree. \$109,000 additional.

Mr. Goncalves: Somebody needs to come in and talk to us about this, not just send us a letter.

Motion made by Mr. Rosenblum to table this and bring Mott MacDonald in to discuss the proposed \$109,200 professional design services. **Mr. Goncalves second. All in favor. Motion passed 4-0.**

Board to vote to designate a member or department head to authorize to approve all bills, drafts, orders, and payrolls and sign the approval.

Motion made by Mr. Goncalves to designate Chairman DeBarge authorized to approve all bills, drafts, orders, and payrolls and sign the approval. **Mr. Rosenblum second. All in favor. Motion passed 4-0.**

Board to sign the Mechanical Amusement Device License & Billiard Renewals for 2024.

Mr. Silva: All these licenses coming before us...

Motion made by Mr. Silva to approve the licenses as long as they have been checked out and visited for inspections and are all in compliance and sign them after.

Mr. DeBarge: All of them? Mechanical Amusement, Common Vic, all that?

Mr. Silva: Yes, Common Vic, Sunday Entertainment.

Mr. Rosenblum second. All in favor. Motion passed 4-0.

VISITATIONS

5:45 p.m. – Certificate of Commendation for Outstanding Service:

Officer Michael Whitney
Officer Ryan Churchill
Officer Timothy Goodchild
Officer Adam Roach
Lieutenant David Irwin
Dispatcher Samantha Jordan
Dispatcher Linda Zina
Dispatcher Michael Lynch

RECEIVED
TOWN CLERK'S OFFICE
2024 MAY - 8 P 12:34
TOWN OF LUDLOW

Mr. DeBarge: Now that we've got some business out of the way, we can get to the main point of tonight's event. We are here joined by Chief Dan Valadas and Chief Lennon from Wilbraham to celebrate and honor our own police officers and dispatchers from our department who responded to, aided, and assisted in Officer Cameron Prosperi's injury and call for service. As a retired police officer there's 2 main things that a police officer, dispatcher or anybody in law enforcement hates to hear. One of them is shots fired and the other one is officer down. It's something that makes everything in your body turn up about a thousand percent. To have those officers hear that, I know exactly what they did. They immediately wherever they were ran to their cruisers and they took off as fast as they could to Wilbraham to assist their fellow officer. It doesn't matter where they were or what they were doing, there was an officer in need of assistance and they were going. We're here to celebrate that and honor that. I know the Chief has his own citations for his officers. We at the Board of Selectmen wanted to do that as well and we wanted to do it in front of everybody. We thought it was important. I reached out to the Chief after I heard about the incident and said we wanted to have you in here. The officers, dispatchers, everyone involved so we can pay honor to them as they should be. We're happy to hear that Cam is doing well and we all hope he has a full recovery and a very vibrant and happy life. On to the ceremony. I'm going to read you each citation. We have a citation for the police officers and what they specifically did and one for dispatchers and what they specifically did. We have 5 officers, 3 could not be here, and 3 dispatchers, one could not be here. The first officer that arrived on scene was Officer Mike Whitney and immediately assisted in rendering aid by using a trauma dressing on Officer Prosperi to render that aid after he was shot, then Officer Whitney went into perimeter security, which Officers Churchill, Goodchild, and Roach arrived. With their experience, Officer Churchill with his tactical and medical experience, Officer Goodchild and Roach with similar experience knew that it was

very important to get a perimeter established around the residence to make sure the subject could not leave and get away. They did that without hesitation, putting themselves in harm's way. In law enforcement when you see civilians running away you see law enforcement running towards it and that should always be commended. The dispatchers are a whole different set of chaos. That is a small room of a whole bunch of phones and screens and incredibly busy. You have officers sometimes screaming on the radio, phone calls, different departments that want to get in and help because everybody wants to help when there's an officer in trouble. The tough part is trying to get all of your officers dispatched while still taking care of your own community. It's a difficult thing to do and that's why they're here. The police officers in recognition of your swift and courageous actions during an incident where a neighboring police department requested assistance for a police officer who had been seriously injured (shot) while responding to a call for a domestic disturbance. Your ability to remain calm under pressure and effectively respond to a life-threatening situation and render medical aid while securing a dangerous scene not only reflects your outstanding training, experience, and commitment to your fellow officers, but also your community and all that pass in it. Your bravery and selflessness are a credit to the Ludlow Police Department and to our entire community. On behalf of the Town of Ludlow and its citizens, we, the Board of Selectmen, extend our deepest gratitude and respect for your service and sacrifice. Your actions embody the true spirit of why the police uniform and badge are worn. For the dispatchers, in recognition of your swift and courageous actions during an incident where a neighboring police department requested assistance for a police officer who had been seriously injured (shot) while responding to a call for a domestic disturbance. Your ability to remain calm under pressure and effectively direct responding officers while still maintaining operations within our community not only reflects your outstanding training, experience, and commitment to your fellow officers and dispatchers, but also your community and all that pass in it. Your ability to maintain your composure while in a chaotic and stressful situation is a credit to the Ludlow Police Department and to our entire community. On behalf of the Town of Ludlow and its citizens, we, the Board of Selectmen, extend our deepest gratitude and respect for your service and sacrifice. Your actions embody the true spirit of the Ludlow Police Department.

CORRESPONDENCE

225. Grace Dias, President Michael J. Dias Foundation – Requesting from the Board \$100,000 to ensure the stability and quality of their existing facilities while facilitating the launch of their future women's sober home.

Mr. DeBarge: This is under correspondence not a visitation but since we have guests we're going to have a discussion.

Ms. Rooney: Maureen Rooney, 26 Warsaw Avenue, Ludlow.

Mr. Bartlett: Adam Bartlett 53 Montauk Road, Chicopee.

Mr. DeBarge: Great to have you here. We have a request here for the opioid settlement funding. I read your letter.

Ms. Rooney: We didn't know how much to request. As I reviewed I'm assuming there's guidelines and stipulations from the state. It certainly seemed like our organization fit the bill for most of these requirements. I would think the money that the state has provided is because of the amount of people that became addicted to opioids years ago, including my own son. Not only am I here as a proud member of the Board of Directors of the Michael J. Dias Foundation, I'm also here as a mother whose son was affected by the opioid problem years ago. Our houses are in Springfield. The reason we would love to have a house in Ludlow. Thirteen years ago, we couldn't afford a house in Ludlow and I'm not sure we would have been welcomed. Hopefully some of that has changed over the years. The other thing is we need houses where our guys can easily access public transportation. That's why Springfield happens to be our area right now. Our support group and office is located in Ludlow. We started all the work we did initially in Ludlow and our support group that we have every other Tuesday is at Our Lady of Fatima Parish Center. Our houses have seen many young men from the Town of Ludlow go through and have been helped. I will ask Adam, who's our Director of Operations, to talk a little bit.

Mr. Bartlett: My name is Adam Bartlett. I am the Director of Operations for the Michael J. Dias Foundation. This foundation is very near and dear to me. I was a police officer for 10 years and I lost my career due to addiction. I fell into the opioid crisis. I was injured on the job and given a

prescription and from there it was over for me. I lost my family, career, everything. I was introduced into recovery very quickly after. I'm a quick study. I know what I did wrong and wanted to get my life back and do the right thing. I found my way to the Michael J. Dias Foundation. From the first moment I went walking up those stairs I felt love. I felt like I was caring, different. I've seen a lot of sober houses and what they do. Give me your money, thank you. It wasn't like that at all. There was staff there 40-50 hours a week, somebody always watching overnight. I fell in love with it. My first week in the house all the board members came in and cooked food for us. They looked right at me and said you're new. They said tell us your story. I told them everything and they were amazing. They care about your families. At Christmas time they'll get gifts for the kids if you don't have the money for it. When guys come in they're supplying food. They're getting them their clothing, health & beauty supplies. It's so important that when the guys come in they're not ready to run out the door because they're ashamed to ask for food. More importantly we're there to help them with recovery. I've been sober 8 1/2 years and a large part of that is from the Michael J. Dias Foundation. When I was offered the job 4 years ago I jumped right at it. It wasn't about money; it was about giving back. I love this foundation. Our roots are strong. We help a lot of people. Our success rates are 32, 33 & 53% between the 3 houses. We have a high success rate because we work with the guys on a daily basis. We're there to provide them with another way of living knowing when they move on they're going to be safe. We also offer an alumni meeting where the guys come back once a month. We provide all the food. The guys cook together, put on a meeting, and eat and it's a great time. We're truly making a difference. Seeing a lot of men come out there successful. They walk in broken and walk out whole men. Thank you for your time. We appreciate this.

Mr. Rosenblum: Is this a one-time request? Obviously we get replenished funds over time. Would this be going solely to the women's sober home?

Ms. Rooney: Towards our operational expenses of the whole foundation. Our goal right now is to hopefully open a women's sober home. There are very few opportunities for women in Western Massachusetts to get sober. We've held off because the women's house is going to be a little more complicated because women tend to be a little bit more complicated. We feel now we're ready to address that. We've been in operation for 10 years. A lot of non-profits don't make 10 years. We take no state money, we raise all the money ourselves or grant money. We've decided we're going to run the women's house exactly the same way as the men's house. First of all, to be fair and also we know what works. We've had enough time to change our philosophies and look at different areas that need improvement. Some of the money will be the operation of it. We feel an obligation to raise the money for a house to support the house. We have a capital campaign going on right now trying to raise some money. We all know raising money certainly isn't easy. We've reached out to other communities because we take men, I was up there not too long ago and there were 2 guys from Tennessee. They heard about the program and there's nothing in Tennessee for them and they're at our house here so we take men from all over.

Mr. DeBarge: Do you go to other communities this and is there a cap or number you're trying to get to with this opioid money from other communities for this house? If you go to Chicopee, Springfield, Ludlow, and other communities, is there a number you're looking to get to?

Ms. Rooney: We have reached out to Chicopee and haven't heard too much I'm aware about right now, we meet with them on Thursday. We've reached out to Springfield, certainly our houses are there. We're not looking to gouge money from any community but we feel this is important work, lifesaving work. My son is 6 1/2 years into recovery about to become a father. We have Adam. To me this is what this money is meant for. It's to affect the guys whose lives have changed because of their addiction problems. I'm a board member. I don't know the answer.

Mr. Bartlett: The goal is \$675,000 to raise for the houses. That's not what we're looking for here. That would be to purchase a women's house and start it off with everything they need. We furnish everything.

Ms. Rooney: We need staff,

Mr. Rosenblum: Once you get there it's almost like a municipal budget. If we put something in new the expenses are there. Your expenses are going to increase with staff if you're buying it

outright or anything like that. Operational expenses going beyond the money you raised for the house would that be mostly through fundraising?

Ms. Rooney: Fundraising and grants. Once we purchase a house we're able to secure grants. They want to know the address of the house. Once we have that we're able to look into some money through grant money. To raise that money is very difficult.

Mr. Rosenblum: You take on something new and all the expenses, how are you going to take care of the expenses down the road?

Ms. Rooney: We outright own 3 of our houses. There's no mortgage on any of them. We charge \$640/month rent. If somebody is not able to pay it we pay it for them or we find another source that will pay it for them. We have never and will never throw out anyone because they can't make rent payment. These guys come in owing back child support, probation money, it's not easy for them. We certainly help them in any way we can.

Mr. Silva: Maureen, as you well know we have several organizations that are vying for these funds and we can't just give them as requested so we're going to have to take a look at the needs of the police, fire, board of health, yourself, and CARES. We're going to have to take a look at that and see where we can best spend the dollars. I'd like to be a little more local. We like to help our own, not to say we don't want to help others. You definitely deserve some money. I don't know if \$100,000 will be in our budget. As far as I know we haven't received any numbers from police & fire. Laura talked to me a while ago and talked about funneling some of this money to prevention. Is there something you guys are going to be focused on to try to prevent some people from getting in drugs?

Ms. Rooney: The guys have the meetings within the houses. In the spring and fall our guys go into Ludlow High School with the freshman class and present in the health classes so that after a year they've met with every single freshman in Ludlow High School. We often work with CARES and through our support group. We tend to not talk about our support group much but our support group, which is held right here in Ludlow, has helped many Ludlow residents help them to deal with this issue of their loved ones being addicted to a substance.

Mr. Bartlett: Prevention for us is on a daily basis. I have an open-door policy. For example, I had a guy come in today. He's new to the house. He's just coming back. He's 24 days sober and he found out he couldn't get his id today. He didn't have his birth certificate from Rhode Island. I could tell he was getting real nervous. I said how about we make a plan. I'll get you a ride. We'll get to Rhode Island; we'll get your birth certificate and we'll come back. We'll even go to lunch. That's what we do. These are little things that are an everyday daily basis down to the middle of the night when I'm getting text messages like Adam, I'm feeling off. We're 24-7. I don't go home at 5:00 and done for the day. In the middle of the night if we get a phone call we're there. Our job is prevention 24/7 every day. I come from this side so I understand. When a guy is in my office and I see he's about to run out that door that's the guy I grab on to. Prevention is an everyday thing for us.

Mr. Goncalves: I've been a supporter of Michael J. Dias for years and you do great work. What percentage would you say are Ludlow people?

Mr. Bartlett: Most of our outreach we do is in Ludlow. We go to Minechoag and we do a lot of work with the probation parole in the jails. We're more like 7-10% in the success rate of the men that have gone through.

Mr. Goncalves: When you're doing the outreach at the high school how much money is that costing you?

Mr. Bartlett: Nothing. I don't want to bash any other sober houses, but we're different. Most sober houses you go in is coin-op laundry, we don't charge for laundry. When the guys come in they get their Tide pods, everything they need. If a guy needs help getting his license and it's \$35, we're going to foot the bill for him because we don't want him to lose that or a potential job. We offer different things most places don't. When it comes to rent we have a quality person in the house working very hard and he says he lost his job today, don't run out the door. We got you. We're not worried about that because we want you to stay sober. If a guy comes in we buy him groceries. We offer a little more because we want them to know we care. That's what makes us different.

None of the 15 board members get paid a dime. The only paid people are our employees. Thirteen years ago, when we started this whole thing, there were 5 women. We didn't know anything except we had children that were addicted to drugs. I got so sick of bringing Ryan throughout the state to sober homes, leaving him there, looking at them and cringing. They were disgusting. I remember the 5 of us sitting in the kitchen of Michael's house which needed to be renovated and our big pledge was we want to have homes that the guys that go through here feel good about. That's going to help with their recovery. If you're putting somebody recently off of drugs in a house where the guy next door might be using or there's mice running around, that's going to impact. We wanted to have nice homes. I don't mean nice meaning beautiful but where the guys that enter can feel proud and have it work towards their advantage for their recovery and we've done that. What's the state average for recovery? 5%.

Mr. DeBarge: I think we're in a very unique situation in that we have opioid settlement money to be able to distribute, in that we have a CARES Coalition and Michael J. Dias. We have prevention here to here to here. Then we have houses. I've been to Michael's House; I've been to Shawn's Place. I think they're fantastic and I think the opportunity to be able to go from Red Ribbon Week when they're young and show them that it's ok to say no, it's ok to be clean but when this happens we have this here. I think Ludlow is the only community that is able to do this. Because we have you guys that are here that can do this from birth to when they need help I think it's incumbent on us to be able to distribute that money to these organizations as opposed to departments that are just going to do your normal governmental bureaucratic b.s. with the money that don't actually go to addicts or potential families that need the education that you guys provide. I am more inclined to distribute that money to these organizations as opposed to our departments. As Manny said, we are going to listen to everybody. We're going to Town Meeting in May. We have \$135,000. Now it's changing. First it was Town Meeting decides how to distribute the money and now it's the Board of Selectmen. I've asked the Board of Health to provide us with the rules and regulations because I seem to be getting different things from different people. Once it's crystal clear, and I don't know if it will ever be, it will end up being most likely like Covid money and it will just open, if it's not already.

Ms. Rooney: My name is Laura Rooney, I'm from Ludlow CARES Coalition. I know Adam and Maureen is my sister-in-law. I like that Maureen gave you some history. I think most people know the history but when CARES and Dias Foundation started working together, the conversation with Grace was about CARES will do the prevention side, Dias Foundation is going to focus on recovery and assistance to families. We were in the midst of the opioid epidemic. We have Fentanyl and a lot of other things that have changed the way this looks but both sides of this are equally important. As an advocate for CARES Coalition, we are looking to sustain the coalition. We have already talked to you guys. The Dias Foundation through the last 12 years that we've been doing this has worked with the CARES Coalition. We've had Adam come into the schools on the prevention side. Their work is important. I would like to see the Dias Foundation go to the different towns as a match. If we're going to give \$50,000 then you get \$50,000 from all the supported towns to match that money. Yes, only 6-7% go but this is a group from Ludlow. I think we owe it to the Dias Foundation to reward them with some of this money because they have done groundwork before the Sheriff had his place. No one was doing it. They want to continue doing it. If someone from Ludlow has an issue, we have cell phone numbers, we don't call an 800 number. As a coalition I think we are looking to sustain our group as some of our original members are retiring. The Dias Foundation deserves some of that money. I would like to see a match with other towns. If we give a percentage of our money the Springfield gives or something that makes it seem like it's a weight that everyone is going to carry, not just Ludlow. It is unique. Their success rates are higher. They do have a lot of support for many communities so they can pull from other resources. They do deserve a piece of this money. I read the different iterations of the grants for the opioid money and how it's distributed and we do have to have an organization that does diversion and treatment. I don't know what other organization that is affiliated with Ludlow that does treatment. That houses and provides this resource. Our nephew came through it. We have other people that came through it. Two of the houses are named after families from Ludlow. I'm here to say I'm supporting what you're doing. I think it's really important that there's a framework that other towns are giving you the same, and I think they would. Maybe we step up first and say here's what we're doing we expect the same percentage from all others because all others will have more hands than Ludlow has reaching out. Springfield is going to have many hands reaching out.

I don't know who else has done this work in Ludlow the past 12 years besides CARES and the Dias Foundation. The police have done police work and investigation and have been a super supporter of both of our organizations so they've contributed as much as they can. The Health Department has been supportive. That's where CARES is. We appreciate the support from all over. As a facilitator CARES needs the money to sustain. In order to continue the work and perhaps build a women's home they deserve a portion of this money because they've been doing it for nothing for a long time.

Mr. DeBarge: We won't be voting on any funds tonight but when we do you're going to be notified.

Ms. Rooney: I've offered before if anyone wants to tour our houses. Derek, you have dropped off food, which we appreciate, but you're certainly welcome to walk through our homes and see what we do on a daily basis. Thank you.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Board to discuss and insert the warrant articles for the May 13th Special Town Meeting within the Annual.

Mr. DeBarge: Last time we went through article for article to discuss these. Do you want to do that again?

Mr. Silva: We're not doing the Town Meeting we're just doing the Special.

Mr. Goncalves: There are 3; unpaid bills, police overtime and snow and ice deficit.

Motion made by Mr. Goncalves to approve, sign, and insert the Special Town Meeting agenda into the Annual Town Meeting. **Mr. Rosenblum second. All in favor. Motion passed 4-0.**

Board to close the Special Town Meeting Warrant and the Annual Town Meeting Warrant.

Motion made by Mr. Goncalves to close the Annual and Special Town Meeting Warrants. **Mr. Silva second. All in favor. Motion passed 4-0.**

Board to discuss and possibly vote on opioid settlement fund distributions.

Mr. Goncalves: Is there a reason the other people didn't come in?

Mr. DeBarge: There wasn't enough time for a discussion. There was going to be a state person here. Also, with Michael J. Dias here it just wasn't the right time.

NEW BUSINESS

Board to sign the One-Day permit for the purse bingo to be held at St. John the Baptist Pastoral Center, 207 Hubbard Street, on May 17, 2024 from 5:30 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. and fees to be waived if approved.

Motion made by Mr. Goncalves to approve and sign the One-Day permit for the purse bingo to be held at St. John the Baptist Pastoral Center, 207 Hubbard Street, on May 17, 2024 from 5:30 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. and fees to be waived. **Mr. Silva second. All in favor. Motion passed 4-0.**

Board to appoint Erik Wight, Building Inspector, as the interim ADA Coordinator.

Motion made by Mr. Goncalves to approve acting Building Inspector Erik Wight to become the interim ADA Coordinator. **Mr. Rosenblum second. All in favor. Motion passed 4-0.**

Board to re-vote on Assistant Town Clerk's reclassification effective July 1, 2024.

Ms. Ribeiro: This is for Chris Szlosek, who is in her office. She is going to be reclassifying her into the management scale. Originally when she did the request back in the fall. We told all of the non-union employees to use a 3% increase. That was before we got into the nitty gritty with the budget. The non-union COLA was then dropped to 2% and the Board did approve these positions at 3% so there wasn't much of an increase for the Assistant Town Clerk's salary so Kim brought that to our attention and asked that we re-vote on it to bring the Assistant Town Clerk to M1 Step 5 with a 2% COLA.

Mr. Silva: Carrie, that's something you looked at and find it to be...

Ms. Ribeiro: I ran the numbers for them and for her to reclassify and go into a management position for the 2% increase it was not worth it. It was not even \$1,000 increase. So, she wanted to give her a little more incentive. She is going to be an exempt employee and now she's a non-exempt employee that gets overtime so there had to be some incentive for the employee. This will fix that.

Motion made by Mr. Goncalves to re-vote and approve the Assistant Town Clerk's reclassification effective July 1, 2024 as an M1 Step 5. **Mr. Silva second.** All in favor. **Motion passed 4-0.**

Board to discuss and possibly sign the agreement between the Town and Sodi, Inc. for a permanent easement on Santina Drive for all purposes for which a public way may be used as well as a permanent easement to drain stormwater from Santina Drive.

Mr. DeBarge: Is this the same as Maria Way?

Ms. Ribeiro: I believe if the Town accepts and agrees to the easement then we own the management and maintenance of the stormwater.

Mr. Rosenblum: We voted once before when it came to lights and also the stormwater on Maria. Was that an HOA?

Mr. DeBarge: They tried to form an HOA.

Mr. Rosenblum: We don't have other areas in the town, usually the development is the one that takes care of the stormwater.

Mr. Goncalves: It is a requirement in the Town of Ludlow that every subdivision have an HOA. It's in the bylaws so I'm not sure why they're not doing it but HOA is a requirement in subdivision control.

Mr. Rosenblum: If I'm reading this right they're asking for us to, obviously it's going to be a recognized way and we have to plow and do all that with it, if they're also asking for us to manage the stormwater is that one on them?

Mr. DeBarge: That's my understanding.

Mr. Goncalves: If we look at I believe Hundred Acres would be the test it's probably the earliest approved and I'm not sure what's happening there with stormwater.

Mr. Rosenblum: Do you know how many they have there? Once you come in where they blew through on Parker there's one right there.

Mr. Goncalves: I don't know. For there to be some kind of continuity find out what's happening there and that's probably what we should be doing for everybody.

Mr. Silva: Are we contemplating taking just the easement to the street? We're not taking the maintenance of the stormwater or ponds like these subdivisions are doing all over the place. We discussed that several meetings ago that we're not going to be taking these over because we don't have the manpower to.

Mr. Goncalves: Number 2, a permanent easement to drain stormwater from Santina Drive as shown in the above referenced plan as recorded into a stormwater basin shown on stormwater parcel including the right to enter to do inspections, repairs, maintenance, and replacements as set forth in the stormwater management operation maintenance and inspection agreement between the Town of Ludlow and Sodi, Inc.

Mr. Silva: I don't recall ever doing that.

Mr. Rosenblum: We don't have one place in town that we manage stormwater.

Mr. DeBarge: This is already a public way?

Mr. Goncalves: It's a public way it's not approved yet. It has to be approved at Town Meeting. This has nothing to do with the approval part of it, this is additional because all those easements are in place on the subdivision plan itself and they're all recorded already, whether it's the utilities, the gas company, electric, cable, all those easements have already been granted.

Mr. DeBarge: I thought this was a no just like Maria Way.

Mr. Goncalves: I'd like more clarification. Maybe I'm wrong.

Ms. Ribeiro: Our attorney has said that the Town is under no obligation to do anything with this. The town has to accept interest in real estate, like this easement, but it's usually a function of Town Meeting unless it says here there is an exception. He's saying I don't think the easement is recordable without the acceptance and if they manage to record it without the acceptance I don't think it's a valid easement.

Mr. Goncalves: We have to table this and revisit it if we're going to do anything with it after it's approved at Town Meeting.

Motion made by Mr. Goncalves to table pending Town Meeting. Mr. Rosenblum second. All in favor. Motion passed 4-0.

Board to discuss and possibly vote to reallocate Jail Impact funds to provide support for Treasurer/Collector's office.

Ms. Ribeiro: There's \$37,000 undesignated funds. \$17,000 were used for first floor carpet of Town Hall.

Mr. Goncalves: When it says support for Treasurer/Collector's office...

Ms. Ribeiro: Consultant. We're looking into bringing in a consultant to help streamline the process and work with Elsa before her retirement.

Motion made by Mr. Rosenblum to approve to reallocate Jail Impact funds to provide support for Treasurer/Collector's office. Mr. Goncalves second. All in favor. Motion passed 4-0.

Board to approve and Chairman to sign the WestMass ElderCare FY25 Contract – Non-Federal Match for the Town of Ludlow.

Motion made by Mr. Goncalves to approve and Chairman to sign the WestMass ElderCare FY25 Contract – Non-Federal Match for the Town of Ludlow. Mr. Rosenblum second. All in favor. Motion passed 4-0.

Board to appoint Kathy Green from alternate to member of Charter Committee.

Mr. Rosenblum: I don't think Kathy Green has missed a meeting as an alternate. She's always got input and has helped out with Senior Center in getting open houses or open forum for the Charter Committee to go in and speak in front of the seniors and by doing that we have people that come in and sit at our really exciting Charter Committee meeting every 1st and 3rd Thursday at 6:00 p.m. here in the Selectmen's room. Even as an alternate, Kathy has been invaluable so with a glowing yes...

Motion made by Mr. Rosenblum to appoint Kathy Green from alternate to member of the Charter Committee. Mr. Goncalves second. All in favor. Motion passed 4-0.

Mr. Rosenblum: The discussion was we're going to hold and not do anything with another alternate?

Mr. DeBarge: Correct.

Board to approve and sign the contract between Vision Government Solutions and the Town of Ludlow for Cyclical CIM Reinspection Program & Professional Appraisal Services for FY2025, 2026 & 2027.

Mr. Silva: I believe this is our new CAMA system we're going to be going into, which is the Vision Government Solutions. We moved away from Kapinos, which is the top Cama system provider in Massachusetts and Connecticut and across the country. Marc reviewed with them and it was decided they move forward. I was reading through it and it does have exceptions. It's a little ambiguous where it says cyclical reinspection. To do cyclical is something they have in the back where they charge \$30/parcel but they have not included it in the data collection service. I believe the Assessors would have to contract with Vision to do some of those extra things. This is just for the implementation. They're going to be converting the data.

Ms. Ribeiro: Which also speaks to the building department.

Mr. Silva: They'll support just about anything. Vision is expensive, not as far as the program itself, putting it in-house but technical support that you get they're very good. I just got off the phone with them a week ago for something for another town and they're very good with that. As far as when you go into Vision and try to get those cyclical and additional stuff they can be expensive. \$1,200 per diem for abatements is a lot. Hopefully the Assessors office can take over some of this stuff through their own program, which I was able to do. I use Vision strictly for their software package.

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Motion made by Mr. Goncalves to approve and sign the contract between Vision Government Solutions and the Town of Ludlow for Cyclical CIM Reinspection Program & Professional Appraisal Services for FY2025, 2026 & 2027. **Mr. Rosenblum second. All in favor. Motion passed 4-0.**

Board to approve and sign the contract between Biermann Services and the Town of Ludlow (DPW) for a new Fuel Management System (FMS) in the amount of \$14,467.50.

Motion made by Mr. Goncalves to approve and sign the contract between Biermann Services and the Town of Ludlow (DPW) for a new Fuel Management System (FMS) in the amount of \$14,467.50. **Mr. Silva second. All in favor. Motion passed 4-0.**

BOARD UPDATES/MISC

Mr. Rosenblum: We had our Charter meeting a couple weeks ago, we have another one coming up this Thursday at 6:00 p.m. in the Selectmen's room. Anyone is invited to come and sit in on the meeting and listen to what's going on. We also have an open comment section of the meeting in the beginning and you can also send in an email to the committee if there are questions or comments in general. Anything this committee is doing right now isn't set in stone. We've made decisions on things but we also are looking to go out to open forums and other areas to get feedback from people before we finalize. I know there's been discussions, it's still out there. It doesn't mean that everything we've discussed and put pen to paper means it's set in stone. You're welcome to come in and you're also welcome to email any suggestions or comments that you have.

Mr. DeBarge: We have a lot of events coming up. Wednesday, April 17, 2024 – Summer Safety with the Town Nurse at Hubbard Library @ 10 a.m., Saturday, April 20, 2024 – 250th Tag Sale at the Ludlow High School. Friday, April 26, 2024 – Sgt. Joshua D. Desforjes Pasta Dinner Fundraiser at the Polish American Citizen's Club 5 p.m. – 7 p.m. Saturday, April 27, 2024 – Sgt. Joshua D. Desforjes Run Walk Challenge at Ludlow High School beginning at 9 am. Tuesday, April 30, 2024 – Charter Committee informational update at the Senior Center at 5 p.m. Saturday, May 4, 2024 – Town Wide Community Clean Up Day beginning at 9 a.m. at the Veteran's Memorial, 11 East Street.

Chairman to approve and sign all bills, warrants and abatements. A record of all warrants is in the Selectmen's office for perusal until provided to the Town Accountant.

Mr. DeBarge: We have Building Inspector interviews next meeting.

CLOSING COMMENTS

Mr. Rosenblum: I had the pleasure of catching the Board of Health meeting from the 26th, the day after the elections. As they were going into reorganization there was a comment that was made that caught me off guard. A question had been asked, that particular board was doing a reorganization and talking about a possible new Chairperson and the question was other boards in town rotate their chairperson. The comment made back by the current Chairperson, who is now the Chairperson again was that the only reason the Board of Selectmen rotate their Chair is because of money, because the Chair makes more money than the rest of the board members and the Board of Health Chair makes the same money. A clarification on that, we don't rotate our Chair because of money, we rotate the Chair so each Selectmen understands the duties of the Chairperson. There are differences in responsibilities that we all have and the sub committees that we serve. Chairperson doesn't have to be the most qualified person because as a non-chair you can still exert your expertise on items that come to the Board. Most Chairpersons, their main duty is to create the agenda and run the meeting. It kind of caught me off guard and almost seemed like a slap across

the face that we do it because of money. The comment has been made several times that when I became Chairperson I didn't even know there was a pay increase. When I first came on the Board my first year we were discussing Chairpersons, I think in the past they kept the same Chairperson in more than one year. I made the comment myself that I think we need to rotate it so every person on the board understands there are a lot of duties the Chairperson does that the rest of this Board doesn't do. In certain instances, there were things with the ZBA I had to deal with when I was Chairperson. There was a decision I pretty much made. Did I go back to the board to ask about it and get their input, yes, but there are things when it comes to signing, Mr. DeBarge has to sign certain things, he has to sit in certain meetings because you need that Chairperson there. There are many more responsibilities and more in depth as the Chairperson on the Board of Selectmen than it is just a regular person on the Board. The comment to say we do it only for the money is laughable because every month I take home \$300 after taxes. The fact that we do it because of the money is a bad comment. I reached out to the Chairperson and I haven't heard back from her. People like to sit there and say drain the swamp and we're useless but we don't do it for the money. I've got 17,000 other things I do between hockey for my kid, driving back and forth and being at other meetings and committees in the City of Hartford. I don't do it for the money I do it because I'm vested in my community.

Mr. Silva: To go along with that, it's a lot of money between the Chairman and regular members.

Mr. DeBarge: It's \$1,000 more.

Mr. Silva: Did you watch the reorganization? I was just notified there's probably an issue with it because there wasn't a second for the nomination and if there's wasn't then they declare to do it under Roberts Rules out of necessity. Without a second you can't be the Chair. A Chairman cannot vote for herself unless it is coming out of necessity.

Mr. Rosenblum: Depending on where the Charter goes because you never know if that Board will still be there with the Charter or not. We don't know. We have to look into the laws and bylaws. Maybe the Board needs to go from 3 to 5. In a board of 3 in most instances you probably don't have to vote on anything. We see that board now; we know how it sits. It's 2 to 1.

Mr. Silva: You have to be on the same page and do the right thing. I don't know if they did that reorganization right or not. One of the members doesn't think so.

Mr. Goncalves: 250th, follow all their events, everything they're doing. They're incredible with the amount of energy they have and how much they're putting out there for people to enjoy here in Town. Golf tournament is coming up. Tag sale coming up. The parade is going to be incredible.

Mr. DeBarge: Just a couple things from me. Along the lines of the other boards, I was watching a meeting the other night with the Safety Committee and they were talking about the East Street DIF project revitalization. I took it as unfortunate because there was a lot of negative comments about everything looks good, it's pretty, but it's not safe. I want to make a point across. Committees can communicate with one another. If they have a question they can question each other, but these street plans, that's just in its infancy. We have no money for this. This is a plan and we plan on bringing all parties that have a say in this to go over plans so that we don't make a mistake that we did last time with the bump outs and not all departments in town were brought in on that discussion. So everybody knows, it's very new, it will take time to get through all that stuff. The other thing I want to bring up is the Mills. There's been a lot of talk about the Mills because we see the scaffolding up on the clock tower, the new windows put in Mill 8. I'll be down there tomorrow with the President of WestMass so I can get a walkthrough and see what's going on. There's other work going on in some of the other buildings. I'm getting questions about the 36 buildable acres that are clear. The extension of Riverside Drive. We have a lot of positive stuff going on in the future and a lot of it is based down at the Mills. In preparation for all the 250th events, the Memorial Day parade and our big party on the 15th. The hero banners that Eric Segundo and Veteran Services put together and got going, we are ready to start putting them up so you will see them start to go up tomorrow and leading up to the Memorial Day parade.

Mr. Goncalves: A lot of people have been questioning me regarding at the end of Stevens and State at the corner it's being cleared and people are going to be concerned that it's an exit or entrance into the Mills. It's not. It's going to be a detention area and service access for that detention area but it's not going to be cars coming in and out of there. It's going to be an emergency basis only.

Motion made by Mr. Rosenblum to adjourn the meeting at 6:55 p.m. Mr. Goncalves second.
All in favor. Motion passed 4-0.



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