

The Meeting of the Board of Selectmen held on Tuesday, August 20, 2024, began at 5:30 p.m. in the Board of Selectmen's Conference Room at the Town Hall.

Members Present: Derek DeBarge, Manuel Silva, James Gennette and William Rosenblum

Members Absent: Antonio Goncalves

First Order of Business: The Pledge of Allegiance

## VISITATIONS

5:35 p.m. – Claire MacNeil and Family – 105<sup>th</sup> Birthday Citation

Mr. DeBarge: Tonight, we have another special start of our meeting where we have the opportunity to have a special guest for our first visitation and a celebration of an incredible milestone of a birthday. Ms. Claire MacNeil here with her family, Deb & Jack Alves. Ms. MacNeil has turned 105 years old on the 17<sup>th</sup> of August this year. Welcome and Happy Birthday. 105 years on this earth is an incredible thing. I have never met anyone at 105 years. You were born in 1919. The Treaty of Versailles was signed. The Great Molasses Flood in Boston killed 21 people and the very next day the prohibition started.

Mr. Silva: I've been a part of these meetings for a long time and this is historic to have somebody here 105 years old. I believe we had someone who was 101 but that's amazing.

Mr. Gennette: What is the secret?

Ms. MacNeil: Good people.

Ms. Alves: What is the secret to living to be your age?

Ms. MacNeil: Eat.

Mr. Gennette: Happy birthday to you. We're very happy to see you.

Ms. Alves: She has 37 in the line. 5 great-great grandchildren.

Mr. Alves: And another one on the way.

Mr. Rosenblum: I don't know what to say. It's amazing in itself. It's awe-inspiring to be in her presence. Congratulations on 105.

Mr. DeBarge: I have a proclamation to read, which we will hand to you. Board of Selectmen proclamation. Whereas Birthdays provide an annual opportunity for celebration and reflection upon one's lifetime. The year 2024 is a special one for Claire MacNeil because August 17, 2024, marks the 105<sup>th</sup> time upon which she will celebrate her birthday; and whereas: Claire MacNeil was born in Chicopee and raised in Springfield. She was married for over 50 years and raised her 2 children in East Longmeadow. She enjoyed a career as a telephone operator and security guard at Forbes and Wallace. In 2016 she joined us in the Town of Ludlow and continues to be loved by her 37 descendants, including her children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren and great-great grandchildren; and whereas: Claire MacNeil is being honored by the Board of Selectmen in the Town of Ludlow Massachusetts by the many people that admire her. Now, therefore, I, Derek DeBarge, Chairman of the Board of Selectmen in the Town of Ludlow Massachusetts, do hereby honor and salute Claire MacNeil and extend to her and her family sincere wishes for a joyous birthday and continued happiness in the future.

5:45 p.m. – Cheryl Allen – New Town Accountant

Mr. DeBarge: We have another visitation with our new Town Accountant, Ms. Allen.

Ms. Allen: Nice to meet you all.

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Mr. DeBarge: We are missing Tony Goncalves. This was kind of a quick process for us where you interviewed with Marc and Carrie. Usually, we bring in our department heads to interview with us but it was a quick process and they loved you and told us that your background was stellar and wanted to move quickly and had our approval. We saw your background and agreed with all of it. I know you come from a long way. I've been to Shanghai and it's a very beautiful area. I know you come with some great background. What do you think of our Town, Town Hall and the way the accounting works?

Ms. Allen: I love the environment of the Town and how welcome I feel when I started the job. In the Accounting Department I do see some gaps that hopefully we can fix and catch the historical issues and promote checks and balances for the best practice moving forward. That's my goal.

Mr. Gennette: You're in Stockbridge?

Ms. Allen: Stockbridge is great. It's a smaller community. I do love Ludlow and the opportunity for myself to learn more. How to do more stuff and learning on a day-to-day basis.

Mr. Gennette: I know Stockbridge. The main street you can walk there is a nice little coffee shop.

Ms. Allen: We walk there all the time.

Mr. Gennette: Welcome aboard.

Ms. Allen: Thank you.

Mr. Silva: Why Cheryl?

Ms. Allen: When I was around 6 years old my mom thought learning English was important. In Shanghai we don't start learning English until 3<sup>rd</sup> grade but my mom started in kindergarten. The teacher she hired is a guy from the States. His name was Thomas and he could not pronounce my real name. He kept repeating it to see what comes closest and he said how about I call you Cheryl instead? It was understandable because when I moved here no one could pronounce a name starting with an X.

Mr. Silva: Are you living in Stockbridge?

Ms. Allen: No, I live in Lee. The commute to here is 46 minutes if there's no traffic. Last Friday I ran into 2 semi accidents and I was stuck there for 3 hours.

Mr. Silva: Are you planning at all to come closer?

Ms. Allen: Maybe. Where I live is awesome. Ashley made fun of me the first week I was here because I brought my own gallon of milk. There is a farm next to where I live. Local Jersey cows are raised there.

Mr. Silva: Congratulations. Thanks for applying and hopefully you'll have a long tenure here.

Ms. Allen: Thank you for having me.

Mr. Rosenblum: I know the area up there very well. I was born in Pittsfield. I drive a little over a half an hour for work also and the pike is construction from border to border. There is traffic and accidents all the time. Congratulations. Thank you for choosing Ludlow. I look forward to having you on board with us.

Ms. Allen: Thank you for the chance.

Mr. DeBarge: Nice meeting you Cheryl.

## CORRESPONDENCE

280. Jeffrey, Lisa, Stephen and David Garrow – Letter thanking the Board of Selectmen for the tribute paid to Helen Garrow on July 23<sup>rd</sup>.

Mr. Gennette: Dear Chairperson DeBarge and Ludlow Board of Selectmen. On behalf of the family of Helen Garrow, we thank you for the tribute you paid to her and for inviting us to the Selectmen's meeting of July 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2024. It moved us, was very touching and we know she would have greatly appreciated it. We also thank all of you and those from the Town who appeared to offer tributes and vignettes about her work and personal life. It captured much of who she was and the way in which she helped and touched others. The plaque, which is now on the wall, will continue to keep her in mind for those deriving inspiration from her character and accomplishments and for what she believed public service is meant to be. Again, thank you very much. It meant so very much to us the effort you and many others made to pull this together. Gratefully, Jeffrey, Lisa, Stephen and David Garrow.

Mr. Silva: Thank you for the thank you.

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

281. Carmen C. Desrochers – Informing the Board of her resignation as an Election Officer

Mr. Silva: I wish her well in whatever she is dealing with.

**Motion made by Mr. Silva to accept the resignation as an election worker. Mr. Gennette second. All in favor. Motion passed 4-0.**

282. Sean Riopel – Informing the Board of his resignation from the Recreation Commission effective immediately.

Mr. DeBarge: This is going to be like the School Committee resignation. Once our Town Clerk receives the formal written resignation, we'll start the process that we did before. A 30-day letters of intent for anyone wishing to join. We'll have a meeting here where we'll have the 2 members, John Archambeau and Sean McBride, join us for our Board of Selectmen meeting in September or October where we will interview any of the applicants to hold that 3<sup>rd</sup> seat. We will interview and then vote for the appointment of that 3<sup>rd</sup> seat until the March 2025 election.

Mr. Gennette: Do we know if anybody that has applied ran against Mr. Riopel in the last election?

Mr. DeBarge: There was a write-in and we interviewed that individual for Golf Commission but there wasn't enough write-in votes for us to put him on the vacant seat.

Mr. Gennette: Is that one of the people that has applied?

Mr. DeBarge: No one has applied because we don't have the official letter of resignation in the Clerk's office to start the 30-day process yet.

**Motion made by Mr. Rosenblum to accept Mr. Riopel's resignation and hope his health improves and thank you for the service to the Town. Mr. Gennette second. All in favor. Motion passed 4-0.**

Mr. Silva: We're talking about September for meeting and appointing. We're appointing and he's going to have to be elected in March. It's only a few months. I'm wondering if it's critical that we do go through this process for the couple months.

Mr. DeBarge: They only have 2 members. It's probably a good idea.

283. Gabriel Hoeft – Requesting the Board to appoint him as a Democratic Poll Worker

**Motion made by Mr. Gennette to approve Gabriel Hoeft as a Democratic poll worker. Mr. Rosenblum second. All in favor. Motion passed 4-0.**

284. Octavia Anderson, Animal Control Officer on behalf of "Friends of Ludlow Animal Control" – Requesting permission to use Hearing Room 1 on Saturday, November 23, 2024, or Sunday, November 24, 2024, for the annual Christmas Photo Fundraiser between 1-3 p.m.

Mr. Rosenblum: I know we approved this last year so this is a recurring event.

**Motion made by Mr. Rosenblum** to grant permission to use Hearing Room 1 on Saturday, November 23, 2024, or Sunday, November 24, 2024, for the annual Christmas photo fundraiser between 1-3 p.m. on behalf of Octavia Anderson, Animal Control Officer and the Friends of Animal Control. **Mr. Gennette second.**

Mr. Gennette: Have we looked to see if those dates are blocked off?

Mr. Strange: The only thing we have in Town Hall might be election activity but that should be over by then. It's on the weekend.

**All in favor. Motion passed 4-0.**

#### UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Board to approve and sign the Selectmen Meeting Minutes of July 23, 2024.

**Motion made by Mr. Silva** to approve and sign the selectmen meeting minutes of July 23, 2024, with all members present. **Mr. Gennette second. All in favor. Motion passed 4-0.**

Board to approve and sign the Selectmen Meeting Minutes of August 6, 2024.

**Motion made by Mr. Silva** to approve and sign the Selectmen meeting minutes of August 6, 2024, with Mr. DeBarge absent. **Mr. Gennette second. All in favor. Motion passed 4-0.**

Board to approve and sign the Executive Session Minutes of August 6, 2024.

**Motion made by Mr. Silva** to approve and sign the executive session minutes of August 6, 2024, with Mr. DeBarge absent. **Mr. Gennette second. All in favor. Motion passed 4-0.**

#### NEW BUSINESS

Mr. DeBarge: The next 2 items under new business to discuss the hours of operation for DPW office and the JPRO scan for the usage of the ARPA funds I'm going to leave for when Jamie is here.

Board to sign Town Accountant's contract.

Mr. Silva: With Marc and Human Resources have all agreed and everything is in order for our signature.

**Motion made by Mr. Silva** to approve and sign the contract between the accountant and the Town of Ludlow. **Mr. Rosenblum second. All in favor. Motion passed 4-0.**

Board to approve and sign the contract between the Town of Ludlow and DLT Solutions, Inc. formerly Blackboard for the Town PA system in the amount of \$17,460.14.

**Motion made by Mr. Gennette** to approve and sign the contract between the Town of Ludlow and DLT Solutions, Inc. formerly Blackboard for the Town PA system in the amount of \$17,460.14. **Mr. Silva second. All in favor. Motion passed 4-0.**

Board to vote to accept a MIIA grant award for stormwater mitigation work at Hubbard Memorial Library.

Mr. Strange: A couple months ago there was a major storm and there was flooding of the first floor of the library and the DPW has been looking at potential solutions to mitigate future storms. They received a quote from Santos Landscaping for \$9,850 and it just so happened we had a meeting with MIIA and Jim Goodreau from the DPW was talking about this and MIIA informed them it was eligible for a grant and we applied and got accepted. One of those happy stories.

**Motion made by Mr. Gennette** to accept the MIIA grant award for stormwater mitigation work at Hubbard Memorial Library in the amount of \$9,850. **Mr. Silva second. All in favor. Motion passed 4-0.**

## VISITATIONS

6:15 p.m. – Charter Committee – To discuss the proposed Charter

Mr. DeBarge: Ms. Ribeiro Dahan is here to provide the Board of Selectmen with the finalized proposed charter for change for our town to go from here to hopefully Town Meeting in October and hopefully on to the Legislature and Town election in March.

Ms. Ribeiro Dahan: Thank you so much for having me here today. I'm very happy to discuss the culmination of all the work that the committee has done since our formation. I appreciate the opportunity you all gave me to serve on this committee. If it makes sense for you all I'd be happy to read the letter I submitted to the Board of Selectmen in addition to the charter proposal so that can be recorded for your minutes. Dear Board of Selectmen, As the Chair of the Ludlow Charter Committee (hereafter, the Committee), I am writing to formally submit the Charter proposal for your consideration and request that you add it to the October Town Meeting warrant. The Committee began meeting in September 2023 and was charged with researching and drafting a proposed Charter for the Town of Ludlow. With the assistance and expertise of the Collins Center, the Committee carefully considered the different forms of government available, which include Open Town Meeting, Representative Town Meeting, Mayor/Council, and Council/Manager. Important factors for members of the Committee including improved efficiency and transparency to support Ludlow residents. The Committee ultimately decided to recommend a Council/Manager form, which I will summarize in more detail below. Throughout this process, the Committee welcomed public input via email, during public comment at regular meetings and public forms, including two primary public information/listening sessions in June and July. All of the materials used by the Committee throughout this process are available on the Charter Committee page of the Ludlow website. Summary of Proposed Charter. The Committee is proposing a Council/Manager form of Government. In this form, the Legislative Branch (currently Town Meeting) is an elected Town Council, composed of seven at-large members. The Town Council is responsible for driving town policy and major strategic direction. Additional responsibilities include budget approval and appointing a Town Manager. The Executive Branch (currently the Board of Selectmen) is an appointed Town Manager. This Town Manager would be Chief Executive Officer and would be responsible for running the day-to-day operations of the Town, including overseeing the budget process and personnel decisions. Town Managers are skilled professionals with the necessary expertise and background to oversee municipal operations. In order to maintain maximum flexibility, the Charter proposal does not require a Town Manager to reside in Ludlow, nor does it preclude the Town Council from imposing a preference for a resident Town Manager when considering applicants for this position. Additional aspects of the Charter proposal include changing some elected positions in Town to appointed positions, including the Town Clerk, the Planning Board, the Board of Assessors, the Board of Health, the Housing Authority, and the Recreation Commission. The Library Board of Trustees and the School Committee will remain elected. The School Committee would be increased from five to seven members, with six members elected by the Town vote and the seventh member being the President of the Town Council. All currently elected board and committee members will continue to serve throughout the completion of their current term, at which point the positions will become appointed. The current members will remain in those positions until reappointed or another individual is appointed to the position. Town operations, including existing personnel, will continue uninterrupted if the proposed Charter is adopted. The Charter proposal also includes five distinct public participation mechanisms to ensure that Ludlow residents have a strong voice in their municipal government. These include open meeting of the voters, free petition, initiative measures, voter veto and referendums, and recall of elected officials. Next steps. I formally request that you add the Charter proposal to the warrant for October Town Meeting for consideration by precinct voters. If approved at the Town Meeting, the Charter would then be filed with the Massachusetts Legislature as a Special Act for approval before going before Town voters as a ballot question on a town-wide election. Charter adoption will occur only if approved by voters at a town-wide election; if rejected, the Charter will not be adopted and the form of government will remain unchanged. Sincerely, Marissa Ribeiro Dahan, Chair of the Ludlow Charter Committee. I'd be happy to answer any questions you have about our process or the proposal.

Mr. Silva: I am flabbergasted. You were a tiny little girl a short time ago and here you are. What you've done is absolutely excellent. The committee has done an excellent job with this proposal. I am not in favor of this. I'm sure you know by now; I've voiced it several times. I don't think it's for Ludlow, I don't think we need it, I don't see a point, but that's me. Through my travels, I've

worked with Town Managers and it's always chaotic. It seems they become way too empowered and it creates issues with morale and a lot of things. As far as this goes, moving it forward and seeing what the Town thinks, absolutely. For me it's an absolute thing that should happen. As you know, it went before them before and it was defeated. Whatever will happen will happen. Congratulations by the way.

Ms. Ribeiro Dahan: I completely understand that you recognize the importance of putting it forward for the Town to consider as a whole.

Mr. Gennette: Thank you for coming in. We really do appreciate it. From the moment we selected the members of the board, I had never seen such a skilled group of people before. As far as resumes. I feel comfortable knowing that people with good knowledge and know how to do this put this together and organized it. I have a lot more respect for it knowing who was involved, including yourself. I don't know how many people know your background and how extensive it is with this kind of thing and I think you're the perfect selection for a chairman. Does this specify whether or not we have a strong manger or weak manager or weak manager?

Ms. Ribeiro Dahan: We don't use that terminology within the Charter itself. It is a stronger manager form but we did include every citizen participation measure that was available to us to make sure there was transparency and accountability to the people.

Mr. Gennette: If this passes, is that Town Manager required to go to City Council meetings?

Ms. Ribeiro Dahan: I'm not sure if it's written in the Charter itself, but in order to perform their job they would realistically have to be involved in those meetings.

Mr. Gennette: I've heard some towns that have a problem because the Town Manager is not required to go to the City Council meetings.

Ms. Ribeiro Dahan: It may not be in the Charter, but it would likely be written into their job description when hired. The Charter is the bare bones so you write things in sparingly so that if something needs to be changed you don't have to go through the whole Charter Committee process to make an amendment.

Mr. Gennette: For you personally as the Chairman of this committee, a lot of times you have to sit and take in what other people are presenting and you have to be unbiased, do you fully support this document? Are you comfortable with this entire document? As far as your background, is this good for you?

Ms. Ribeiro Dahan: I am very comfortable with the document. Working with the group of folks on that committee was a pleasure through and through. There were differing opinions at times and it has always been incredibly cordial. We've always been able to come to a not necessarily unanimous agreement but we understood where folks were coming from even if we disagreed. Not everybody is going to have 100% of what they wanted in this document but we all feel comfortable we put together the best proposal to represent the Town.

Mr. Gennette: That's wonderful. I am in support of a Charter change. I know Manny voiced his opinion so I'm voicing mine for anybody that might be listening. This is something I will vote for.

Mr. DeBarge: I don't know if myself or Mr. Rosenblum have any questions for you. We're on the committee. Do you have any comments you want to say about this before we move on?

Mr. Rosenblum: I will say I nominated Marissa knowing her background. As soon as we knew she was on the committee I already said I'm making the nomination for her to be the Chairperson. Her qualifications are much better than any of us or anyone else on the committee. Thank you for the work you've done as a chairperson. As we've all been Chairperson of this Board, the duties are much more than a regular committee member. If it does pass what happens is the first thing the Council will be elected. Their first duty is to draw up the job description posted for Town Manager. Basically, the Charter is the bare bones. Anything on the back side, bylaws. There were times, and Derek said it, I changed his mind once.

Mr. DeBarge: I never said that.

Mr. Rosenblum: You said that you were surprised I changed your mind. There was many times we didn't agree on things. It was very cordial and everyone had their opinion and many people would say I understand your point of view but I believe this. It was a great group and thank you for all the work you did.

Ms. Ribeiro Dahan: I wanted to go back. We do have in the Charter in Article 3 Section 3-2 Part E; the Town Manager shall attend all meetings of the Town Council unless excused except meetings in which the Town Manager's performance is being considered and shall have a voice but no vote in all of its deliberations.

Mr. Rosenblum: I believe this Charter gives the people more voice than what we currently have. The voice of Town Meeting twice a year getting the budget 2 weeks before approval. This gives 3 meetings in order to meet with the budget during the budget process to voice opinions and listen to everything. This has more community involvement than where we're currently at right now. I'm happy with that aspect of it.

Mr. DeBarge: We added our Vice-Chair of the Charter Committee, Kathy Green. I moved Marissa up because we were ahead of the game. I moved her ahead of our DPW Director because we have a lot of business with him. I didn't want to keep you too late. Marissa read the letter to the Board of Selectmen. Manny and James have asked their questions. We're closing up. Do you have anything you want to add to those that are interested in the Charter?

Ms. Green: I believe in the product we've developed and research we did. I feel very good about the committee and collaborative we were. We listened to each other. Most of our decisions were unanimous after discussions and thoughts. I believe in the product and I hope it moves forward to the point where we can get it to the public to vote on it next year.

Mr. DeBarge: James, I glad you asked our Chair if she believed in the Charter itself. It's a lot of work, a ton of pages, a boring read at times. To ask the 11 of us that started, a lot of professionals, a lot of different people, a lot of walks of life, a lot of diversity, and we've had some heated discussions but in the end everyone agreed on the issues completely. All of the votes came out unanimously. This Charter turned out to be a package amongst all of us that we all agreed on, which was something I didn't think was going to happen. Each section I didn't think would happen. We'd have some contentious points where we'd agree to disagree and have a 5-4 or 7-3 vote but it didn't happen. I think this is a great product. I believe in this as well. I fully endorse this and I look forward to Town Meeting. Marc, do we need a vote for the article?

Mr. Strange: No, I'm working on the warrant now. This is going to be the last article on the warrant. I have draft language for the article and we'll put in the actual language of the Charter. We'll have Town Counsel review. I should have a draft for the September 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting and you'll close it on September 17<sup>th</sup>.

Ms. Ribeiro Dahan: I really appreciate all the public engagement we were able to get. We heard from a lot of folks. I appreciate they were looking at this. I really hope that this will be able to go to a town-wide vote following October Town Meeting. As Mr. Silva said, the folks at Town Meeting may not all agree with it but I want to reiterate I hope they'll put it forward to be considered for a town-wide vote and give the folks here in Ludlow a chance to say whether or not they think it's right for them. I'm looking forward to answering any other questions they think might come across.

Mr. Gennette: Is there a way for residents now to reach out and get answers about anything they might have? Even though we've closed this and they might not understand if they want to find somebody and ask.

Ms. Ribeiro Dahan: We do still have our email address live if folks have clarifying questions to ask. We won't be meeting on our regular bi-weekly cadence at this point since we've put forward the proposal. All of our materials, including the final proposal are up on the website and I would encourage folks to take a look at that. We'll be putting out continued information as we go through the process on our social media page and trying to get some more plain language out to help them understand what it is that we've proposed.

Ms. Green: As a committee we talked about waiting to see what happens at the Town Meeting. if the Town Meeting votes to put it on the Town ballot. Then we'll have some communication challenges ahead to make sure we get everyone's questions answered and that they understand it. Our hope would be that if it does get defeated it would be because people understood it and didn't agree with it. I would not want it to be defeated by fear that people didn't understand it. So, we're waiting to see what happens with the Town Meeting and we'll have some communication plans going forward.

Mr. Gennette: Will you have a representative at Town Meeting to answer any questions?

Ms. Ribeiro Dahan: We will. It's a bit up in the air based on my personal situation whether or not I will be able to be there or if we will be sending another member of the committee to represent us.

Mr. Rosenblum: Ms. Green has been an all-star not just as a secretary but doing a lot of legwork on social media and getting the word out and dealing with the newspaper to get out as much information as possible. She has a FAQ's document of questions we encountered as a committee as to the concerns. Those concerns are answered and how the committee thought. A lot of effort went into it. It wasn't just the 11 of us sitting around a table. There was Town Managers, Mayors from different towns all over the State. Everything we tried to do was representative similar to the Town of Ludlow. One person wanted to compare it to Brookline, which you can't. There was a lot of work that went into it. There will be stuff coming out in the future that says these things and it will all be out at once. We don't want to kill people with too much information at once. Just some questions people had.

Ms. Ribeiro Dahan: We were put together by the Board of Selectmen so if you have any feedback on what you see our role to be at this point moving forward we're very open to that and look forward to continue dialogue.

Mr. Gennette: At some point we dissolve the board once it's all said and done. I'm sure the thank you's will go out at that point.

Mr. Rosenblum: If it gets past Town Meeting we continue to help with the information and education. If it gets to the town wide vote it would be dissolved then.

Mr. DeBarge: People need to know that the Charter Committee is still here. We are still here for them to call and ask questions. Reach out to the Charter Committee Facebook page. Our website is still there. Informational stuff is still there. We are still here until this is done. Whether its passed or not. We are here through the end.

Ms. Green: We are going to have the remaining concerts in the park a table there for people to ask questions and a QR code for the website. We're going to have a presence at Fall into Fun so we can engage as well.

6:00 p.m. – Jamie Tomas – DPW Director – To give updates on the DPW

Mr. DeBarge: Every once and a while we like to ask for a State of the Union address from our Director of the DPW. I have a couple questions I get asked once and a while. How are we doing?

Mr. Tomas: Thanks for having me. We have a ton of stuff going on at the DPW, as usual, so I'll give you a rundown of the important stuff. We had a couple paving projects. Grimard, Grimes and a section of Cady Street that are now complete. We have moved onto 3 more streets for paving and they're roughly 70% complete. They're Laconia, Merrimac and Cambridge Streets. We have a section of sidewalk I believe was finished Friday from East to Winsor on Laconia Street. It's all re-done sidewalk. The final coat of pavement is going on Thursday. We're hoping to have everything wrapped up before school starts. We're looking to move towards the future with our pavement plan to move onto the next few streets before it gets too cold. Looking into the future towards spring so we can get a few more roads line up for paving. We have some line painting we are trying to get finished with thermoplastic line striping. We have roughly \$65,000 worth of work estimated. We usually pay close attention to the heavily trafficked roads that seem to get the most use that we will focus on first and foremost.



Mr. DeBarge: I'm told Cherry Street is pretty bad. The lines are either gone or erased. I'm told a couple people are having trouble staying in their...

Mr. Tomas: I'm pretty sure that's one on the list. We're doing a lot of painting this year in house. School zone signs, stop bars, crosswalks. As much as we can do in house we like to do in house. Unfortunately, our painting machine conked out on us last week. We're in the process of trying to get that repaired. We have our mechanic working around the clock to get our equipment maintained and up to par. I hate to say this but winter is coming. It's our busy time trying to get the salt trucks ready to go and all our plow trucks ready. We took one of our foremen, Rich Kolodziej who was our mechanic at one time, we took him off the street and he's in the garage helping get some of the equipment ready to go. There was a back log of stuff. Either oil changes or welding or things of that nature. Our Parks Department is out there working every day getting the fields ready for fall sports. Field lining, mowing, field prep for football, baseball and soccer. The new track and field is coming into play shortly. We've been working very close with the School Department, especially Tim Brillo, coming up with a maintenance plan. I think there's going to be a little bit of fine tuning with that once we get up and going but we have a pretty solid plan at this point. We have the turf company coming in tomorrow to give us a whole lesson on proper turf maintenance. I can't wait to see that come together with the kids playing on it.

Mr. Gennette: Whose initiative was it to seek that out?

Mr. Tomas: It was collaborative.

Mr. Rosenblum: It was part of the program.

Mr. Tomas: There is a 2-year maintenance contract but when that goes away then we're going to have to take over. I have a couple of our guys going to the training, and myself so we can make sure we maintain it properly. A lot of money spent there and we have to keep it clean and nice. I want to make sure the residents on Stivens Terrace don't think we forgot about them. I just received an email from Amir from Pioneer Valley Planning Commission this afternoon with the last piece of information we need to submit the application for the commercial vehicle exemption on that road. We had a traffic study done on Stivens and finally got all the information and data they collected. It gives you speed, how many 2 axle vehicles, motorcycles, 3 axle, 6 axle. It's pretty amazing stuff.

Mr. Gennette: Would you say the residents touched on something there? They weren't calling it out for no reason.

Mr. Tomas: We see it. It's rush hour. From the data that I've seen really quick it looks like from 1:00 in the afternoon till 5:00 in the afternoon. They use it as a cut through and of course that's going to happen.

Mr. Gennette: They reached out to me and said they don't understand why the State has to be involved with it and I talked to you and the signs are out on Center Street, which is 21 and it's a state highway.

Mr. Tomas: That's what plays a big role in that. There's a whole application process and they need all the data, pictures and all kinds of stuff. I want them to know we're working for them.

Mr. Gennette: I got a text tonight before this meeting.

Mr. Tomas: I'm sure you did. We're working and I'd like to see that come to life. I've been down that road and they try to see which one can get to Chapin Street the fastest. Two months ago we did put out a sign board and I guess it's helped. Our Tree Department is out there every day. We get 5-10 tree service reports a day. Typically, we received a service order, we go out, we will evaluate the tree and if it poses a hazard of any kind we put it at the top of the priority list and if not we put it in que for a trim or removal. It's a lot of trimming. We've also been working with Hubbard Memorial Library. Melissa is doing a fantastic job down there. Jimmy Goodreau secured a grant through MIIA. It was \$9,850 to complete the upgrade to the drainage system that goes down the walkways towards the main entrance of the building that we've been getting a lot of flooding with the heavy rains we've been getting. Hopefully that upgrade to the drainage system with mitigate and help out with any more flooding.

Mr. Gennette: How were they through this last bout of rain?

Mr. Tomas: Fine. We changed the grates out at the bottom of the ramp before you go into the building with bigger ones and it seemed to help. We're going to add more grates and drainage to that walkway and a piece in front of the door so whatever water rolls over the existing grates will get picked up by the new grate in front of the door and get the water out of that area. We're working on finalizing the lease agreement for a new loader that we need. Thank you for approving all that for us. That's going to work out very well with winter.

Mr. Gennette: Have you got your capital requests planned for this year? Are you going to put anything in?

Mr. Tomas: Yes, we're putting stuff together.

Mr. Gennette: I think it's November 26<sup>th</sup>.

Mr. Tomas: I think it's the 15<sup>th</sup>.

Mr. DeBarge: Before we get into any questions or comments about anything DPW related we have 2 DPW items on new business that I saved for you. One was Board to discuss and possibly vote on changing the hours for the DPW office from Monday through Friday 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. to Monday through Friday 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Mr. Tomas: The reason for that is we've noticed a lot of contractors are coming in earlier in the morning and they can't conduct any business. I'm usually there for 7 and we'll see that a lot of contractors and residents come in trying to get into the office, trying to get transfer station stickers, trying to get permits and before we catch them they're gone. After 3:30 the traffic dies down. From 8-4 is when you get the most amount of traffic and I think it would be beneficial for contractors and residents if we were open a little bit earlier. I don't see the need to stay until 4:30 when there's no traffic or anyone coming through the doors.

Mr. DeBarge: Are you good with that?

Mr. Strange: I'm good.

Mr. Silva: Any thought of having a couple office hours during the evening?

Mr. Tomas: We have and we've talked about possibly keeping the transfer station open later.

Mr. Silva: It's great the hours you're doing it for people that are working early but people that work 9-5 can't get to you. For stickers and a lot of stuff it would be nice to get there in the evening sometimes to do whatever it is they need.

Mr. DeBarge: Are there any other DPW's in any other municipalities that have 1 night? Is it necessary to do one until 5:30?

Mr. Tomas: What's worked out really great is we're now selling transfer station stickers on Saturdays at the transfer station. It alleviates a lot of foot traffic. We've been doing it for a while and it's been working out really well. The hours on Saturday are 7:50-2:50. And they can purchase transfer station stickers at the dump.

Mr. Gennette: Instead of us trying to approve specific hours if you tell us the window you need throughout the week and you can schedule whoever you need, wherever you need and however you need them. I would do something like that. To approve a set schedule and have to come in and approve a set schedule when you want to make a change we could do a window of operation and you can operate your staff within that. I don't mind making this change today because we're there but in the future...

Mr. DeBarge: Marc, does the hour change need to be voted on by us?

Mr. Strange: Yes.

**Motion made by Mr. Rosenblum** to approve changing the hours for the DPW office from Monday through Friday 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. to Monday through Friday 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. **Mr. Gennette second. All in favor. Motion passed 4-0.**

Mr. Rosenblum: By purchasing them at the transfer station it's by check only, correct?

Mr. Tomas: Correct.

Mr. Rosenblum: Check only. No debit card. Check only.

Mr. DeBarge: The last thing we have on new business is Board to discuss and possibly vote to appropriate ARPA funds for the purchase of a JPRO scan tool for DPW heavy equipment.

Mr. Tomas: That's a diagnostic scanner. Our mechanic is in need of one. A lot of equipment now a days is very sophisticated and without a scan tool you can't diagnose a vehicle of any kind. It was about \$9,800.

Mr. Strange: \$9,814.25.

Mr. Tomas: We just had our John Deere loader that had some electrical issues and the instrument cluster was bad that controls all the electronics on the machine and we had to call in Schmidt Equipment. The bill just for that diagnosis and repair was \$1,800.

**Motion made by Mr. Silva** to approve the funds of \$9,814.25 to purchase the diagnostic analyzer for the DPW. **Mr. Rosenblum second.**

Mr. Gennette: Marc, we're good to approve this through ARPA?

Mr. Strange: Yes.

Mr. Gennette: I wanted to make sure. At the same time, I wouldn't have normally done this with ARPA. I'm going to back it because we're up against a wall as far as timeframe and we've got to get this money spent. I'm going to do it but normally I wouldn't.

Mr. Tomas: Just so you're clear on this scanner, we were thinking about it for a few years now and our mechanic brought up a good point. This scanner is not only for the DPW, we could use it for Police & Fire or the School Department. If Police or Fire has a check engine light we could go over and plug in the scan tool and within a half an hour, our mechanic is very savvy, one of the best mechanics I've seen at the DPW. He could probably have it diagnosed within a half an hour and more than likely have a fix. I want to make sure it's clear that it can be used town wide.

**All in favor. Motion passed 4-0.**

Mr. Gennette: You were talking about moving people around, how's your staffing? Are you up to speed on your open positions?

Mr. Tomas: We are. We're still short-handed. At the end of the day, our Parks Department lacks. We could use another couple people in that, especially with the track coming up and turf management. The guys are doing a heck of a job.

Mr. Gennette: You're talking new positions?

Mr. Tomas: Yes.

Mr. Gennette: I'm talking about existing positions not filled.

Mr. Tomas: Existing positions are all filled. It's working out great. We hired a good group to fill all the positions we had open. Everything is working out great. Everybody is doing a fantastic job. Our guys that everybody sees, our laborers and machine operators that everybody sees on a daily basis are doing a fantastic job. I also want to let everyone know our office staff is doing a fantastic job. They're keeping all the ducks in a row in that office.

Mr. Gennette: The lamp on East & Hubbard that fell over and I sent you the pictures.

Mr. Tomas: We have a work order into Eversource for 5-6 poles that are gone and were never replaced. Hopefully, they'll come through shortly and repair. There's one in front of Ludlow Memorial that's had a cone on that for 2 years. We do have a work order in for several locations. Hopefully they can get out there and repair those.

Mr. Rosenblum: It's good to hear you're working with the school and Tim Brillo on the maintenance plan for the track & field because out of 6.3 million dollars of ARPA funding, we put 5 million into that project. Looking at communities around us where there's been some that after a short period of time they're having turf issues, this is a project that everybody is going to have an eye on knowing that money has been spent for that and knowing that in the past maintenance has been an issue. I'm not saying it's you. Follow-up. My hope is that the school and your department work well together on it and make sure it's taken care of. I would jump out there and help too because I want to see it stay the way it is. The baseball field and track & field.

Mr. Tomas: We do too. Our guys are excited.

Mr. Rosenblum: I'm getting texts from people. We're waiting on some of the pervious from the track. It's going to be great when that place opens.

Mr. Tomas: We go there weekly to keep our eyes on it. It's moving right along. I think Mountainview has done a fantastic job with that project and keeping it on course. As soon as its done hopefully we can maintain it and keep it up.

Mr. Rosenblum: With equipment, have you done an assessment to see where the age is and maybe 2-3 years down the road you're going to see it going to capital or anything? Seeing what pieces you know in 2-3 years are going to have to be done that their useful hours are used up.

Mr. Tomas: Absolutely. We're really good on our bigger equipment, especially now with the purchase of the new bucket loader. What we're focusing on now is our pick-up trucks and dump trucks. They're getting to that age. They're working on a truck today that has over 200,000 miles and the idling time probably gives the truck 300,000 miles. They're falling apart. They're rusting. The frames are starting to get beat up from the salt and weather. Hopefully, we'll come up with a game plan for our smaller equipment and then we'll be in pretty good shape once we start to change that over.

Mr. Rosenblum: Is Stivens on the list for paving?

Mr. Tomas: It is. We'd like to continue and finish that. We've been getting a lot of calls on Stivens Drive also. That is in really poor condition.

Mr. Rosenblum: Stivens Drive gets a lot of flooding, doesn't it?

Mr. Tomas: It's a low area and the road is flat there. It's beyond repair.

Mr. Rosenblum: It floods in the grass and in the street.

Mr. Tomas: Even the upper area at the cul-de-sac from the trash trucks turning around there really beats that area up.

Mr. Gennette: Over at West and Holyoke there was a water leak coming down the hill right across adjacent to the Mobil station last winter and I knew you had some intentions on trying to make an improvement there because it kept creating an icy situation at the intersection.

Mr. Tomas: We have. We put some drainage in the tree belt on the right-hand side going up towards the jail. We put some drainage in there and it seems to be helping. One more thing, we are going to overlay State Street from Ana Dias Field, Chemigraphics, all the way down around the corner. They're going to be overlaying that after they finalize the paving on Laconia.

Mr. Gennette: Do you have any intentions on Moody?

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Mr. Tomas: I'm not sure if that's on the list but I can look into that.

Mr. Gennette: I'm not a road guy and nobody has complained about it to me but I walk it all the time and it looks really thin and I can't imagine with the trucks going down there that we're not going to have a mess in a year or 2.

Mr. Tomas: Another one we're looking at is Cady Street. Cady Street is getting pretty beat up. Chapin is another one we're looking at from the Fire Department down to Fuller to complete that stretch.

Mr. Silva: Is there anything you can do to clean up those tennis courts? I'm not even going by the complaints we have. There's cracks, there's weeds going through. Can't we fill in those cracks, do something. I would like to have one of the tennis courts lined for pickle ball. You have no idea how many people bother me with the pickle ball. Why does every other community have pickle ball and Ludlow can't get one? Why can't we line one?

Mr. Tomas: We could.

Mr. DeBarge: Could we just skim coat the top of the tennis courts, paint pickle ball on it for the rest of the money we have left, put up the nets and get them going. Can we do that?

Mr. Strange: It depends how much it is.

Mr. Silva: I know we have a big plan for it but that's going to be years.

Mr. Tomas: We can crack seal the cracks. It works for a while. They have portable pickle ball courts that you could buy in a kit.

Mr. Rosenblum: I was out in Boston for a hockey game once and I saw people on a tennis court pull out their net and you can use half of a court to play pickle ball. We do have pickle ball in town at the tennis center. When we did the pricing on it you're talking almost \$400,000, a brand new one.

Mr. Silva: You don't need a brand new one from start to finish. At the park just move 1 or 2 to makeshift and at least have something. The residents, we have to give them something. Belchertown just put in 6 brand new ones.

Mr. Gennette: Put a whole park in the mills behind the Senior Center. You can put 30 of them down there.

Mr. Tomas: We can paint one or buy a portable kit and put it out there.

Mr. Strange: During Covid I played for a little bit inside. We just had our kit on a basketball court.

Mr. Rosenblum: Could we have it at Whitney where you could sign it out and go through the Rec Department. There might be hours at night where someone wants to play at 7:00. They might not be able to.

Mr. Silva: I go by there at times in the middle of the afternoon, the kids are gone, and it looks like a park that is completely dilapidated. It's awful. When I went there it was people playing basketball, tennis and all of the sudden nothing.

Mr. Rosenblum: Your crack seal is different from what the tennis courts are, you're talking crack seal like over behind Baird? The road crack seal?

Mr. Tomas: Just like they did at the high school.

Mr. Rosenblum: When a ball hits it, replay the point. I know on the basketball court you did what you use on the street.

Mr. Tomas: That's the stuff we would use at Whitney.

Mr. Rosenblum: The stuff at the high school works if someone doesn't get hurt. When the ball hits it, it sounds like paper mâché.

Mr. Silva: If not pickle ball, maybe we could clean it up a little.

Mr. Tomas: I agree with you with pickle ball. We get a lot of requests for pickle ball.

Mr. Gennette: When the residents complain about it I'm going to say I told you so.

Mr. Tomas: I think we start with a portable kit, even if we put a job box out with a combo lock and people sign it out.

Mr. DeBarge: We do that with our baseball fields with the bases.

Mr. Tomas: One more thing in case people are wondering. We had a shed at East Street School. They were going to buy a new one and Mike Bertini offered the shed to us. We had the shed moved from East Street School to Reservoir Cemetery to use as storage for our greens and devices for now.

Mr. Rosenblum: We don't run DPW. We oversee, we check in with you. You're the expert. Your staff is the expert with it. We oversee it as we would oversee Police or Fire. I remember seeing the comment the Board of Selectmen took it over. We didn't take it over, the Town voted it in. We wanted the experts to be able to do it.

Mr. Tomas: We like the feedback for the main reason that we want to know what we're doing wrong and what we're doing right. The feedback helps because if we're doing something wrong we want to fix it.

Mr. Gennette: To correct you Bill, we oversee him, he oversees him.

Mr. Tomas: We're moving along. We're trying to pick away at things. Our compost area, they're finishing up tomorrow, we had 1,800 yards of ground brush removed from there today, and 250 logs removed.

Mr. Rosenblum: I noticed that wall was shrinking.

Mr. Tomas: It's gone. That was huge for us. Our yard was getting very limited space.

Mr. Rosenblum: Do you use all the way back by the parking lot of the Boys & Girls Club?

Mr. Tomas: Yes. It's a pile of millings, hard pack and that's where we stockpile all our compost. There's a lot of compost back there. Hopefully we can get a screener in very shortly to start processing some loam we can use for the new cemetery.

Mr. DeBarge: Sir, is there anything we can do for you?

Mr. Hoeft: I'm on the agenda so I thought I'd come and sit in. 283.

Mr. DeBarge: You're in. We approved.

Mr. Hoeft: Any next steps? Will I be hearing from the Town Clerk.

Mr. DeBarge: You will.

Mr. Hoeft: Thank you very much.

Mr. Tomas: If I missed anything, just let me know.

Mr. Silva: I'm glad you have big shoulders on your back.

Mr. Gennette: If we reach out to you, you have to get back to us. You're not good at getting back to us. I send you texts and you don't respond. I get ghosted.

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Mr. Tomas: Do you know how many texts and calls I get a day? Marc knows.

Mr. Silva: You would get a lot more...I just don't do it.

Mr. Tomas: We try hard to get back to everybody.

Mr. Gennette: You could throw me a thumbs up.

Mr. Tomas: Alright, I'll throw you a thumbs up.

Mr. DeBarge: Ma'am, is there anything we can do for you?

Resident: I'm on the list, number 284.

Mr. DeBarge: The Animal Control fundraiser. Yes, we approved the hearing room.

Resident: We would like Saturday because it says either or.

Mr. DeBarge: As long as the room is vacant, we approved it.

Resident: If there's a snow date it would be that Sunday. That's the reason we gave 2 dates.

Mr. DeBarge: As long as the room is vacant it's approved.

#### **CLOSING COMMENTS**

Mr. Rosenblum: An update from the Charter Committee, the update was here. We had a meeting last week.

Mr. Silva: For Marc, the charging of fees when they pay taxes for a service. I think I explained it to them. The Town does not collect that. The service having the service for fees.

Mr. Strange: What's this for, Manny?

Mr. Silva: The credit card fees, which is illegal. It's illegal to charge fees for a community. Communities cannot charge fees for using credit cards.

Mr. Strange: It goes to UniBank.

Mr. Silva: It goes to UniBank and maybe UniBank is doing it. Why can the Town do this and we, as employers, or business owners cannot? Nobody can charge you a fee on a credit card.

Mr. Strange: UniPay offers the service free and the way we are able to offer that service to residents is they charge the fee.

Mr. Silva: Exactly what I told them. The Town does not collect any fees. We have to make commitments. We can only collect what's committed. It's the services that are hired. They could not understand why it is they have to pay a fee. They're paying their taxes and getting service charges and they're not liking that because they're business owners.

Mr. Strange: The same when a customer comes in and pays with a credit card they can't tack on a fee.

Mr. Silva: They were doing it for a while but now you can't do it. There's another section that says the credit cards to not allow you to charge fees. That's why you can't charge because the credit card company itself does not allow you to do it. I just wanted to make sure. I don't want to give out wrong information and say the Town does not charge a fee. If you want to pay through this service then you have to pay a fee. It took a while to explain and they were adamant. For Marc, I'm wondering about the sign on Miller Street. Is it close to getting one?

Mr. Strange: Jamie went out there and marked the spot. We sent it out to Chucks. They typically take a little bit.

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Mr. Silva: How did we miss that? Coming over the Miller Street bridge and not having a Welcome to Ludlow sign?

Mr. Strange: Jamie said there was one if you come up over the bridge up at the intersection. There's some space to the right after the bridge.

Mr. Rosenblum: From Granby into Ludlow there used to be one before you go down the dip in the road. It used to be on the right. If you come from 5 corners in Granby into Ludlow there used to be a sign on the right.

Mr. Strange: Do you want us to look at that?

Mr. Rosenblum: Yes, it is another entrance that's very much used.

Mr. Silva: We will not have a meeting before Festa so I'd like to tell anyone that's going to be attending to have a great time; however, drink and act accordingly and hopefully we'll have a nice year again with no issues and nothing crazy happening. It's a great time. It's 5 days. Enjoy.

Mr. DeBarge: I want to remind everybody the Ludlow Cultural Council's concert this past Sunday was rained out so they moved it to tomorrow night. Acoustica is performing and Batch Ice Cream is going to be there. I can't wait for Festa. I'm praying for great weather, no incidents, great people. I'll be there working and having fun myself. Come out to Festa. It's a great 5 days, Thursday through Monday. Have a good time and celebrate with us.

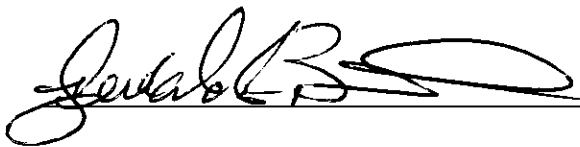
**Motion made by Mr. Rosenblum to close the Selectmen's meeting at 7:00 p.m. Mr. Gennette second.**

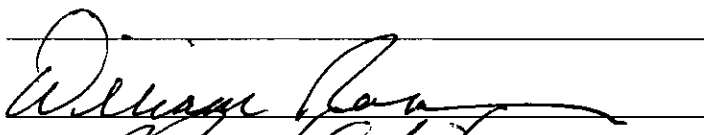
Mr. DeBarge: Good luck to everyone going back to college, as this is the week when everybody is headed back. Good luck. Have a great year.

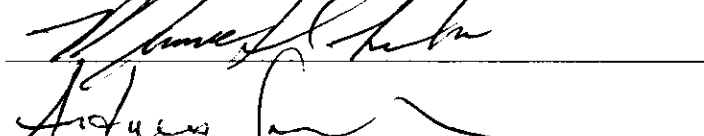
Mr. Rosenblum: Drive safe around Town. Kids are going back to school.


Mr. DeBarge: Welcome back to the school year.

**All in favor. Motion passed 4-0.**

 Chairperson







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