

The Meeting of the Board of Selectmen held on Tuesday, September 17, 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, Antonio Goncalves and William Rosenblum

Members Absent:

First Order of Business: The Pledge of Allegiance

**CORRESPONDENCE**

292. Lisa Morrison, Faith Community Chapel – Requesting permission from the Board to have the Police Department do their CHIPS program and for the Fire Department to participate in a Touch a Truck event at their Trunk or Treat/Block Party event on Saturday, October 19, 2024, from 3-6 p.m.

Mr. Gennette: They obviously have to make sure the availability of the Police Department and Fire Department before they do it but I don’t see any problem with this.

**Motion made by Mr. Gennette** to approve Lisa Morrison, Faith Community Chapel – Requesting permission from the Board to have the Police Department do their CHIPS program and for the Fire Department to participate in a Touch a Truck event at their Trunk or Treat/Block Party event on Saturday, October 19, 2024, from 3-6 p.m. **Mr. Rosenblum second.**

Mr. DeBarge: I want to let everyone know Marc is working on the overtime that is going to come from this. I know Pastor Lisa said they are going to be paying for the Fire Department apparatus necessary, but the Police part of it, whatever overtime is needed, will come onto here. We’re going to need some type of policy when it comes to events for outside and inside town events because overtime is going to come up in budgetary processes in the future.

Mr. Gennette: Isn’t this CHIPS program and Trunk or Treat to benefit the Fire Department and Police Department? It’s not?

Mr. Strange: It’s a touch a truck event, a block party for the church and the kids can go on the fire truck.

Mr. DeBarge: Again, it’s not just this. We’re very good at agreeing to pay for police overtime for almost any event in this town and we’re starting to feel the bite of that and we’re going to have to reel in something with a policy. That’s all I’m saying. This item brought that up.

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

293. USAVE Food Store, LLC – Application for Common Victualler License.

**Motion made by Mr. Gennette** to approve the application for USAVE Food Store, LLC, common victualler license. **Mr. Rosenblum second.**

Mr. Silva: Marc, are they coming back? Do they need a hearing for this? This just says the application.

Mr. Strange: Do you do hearings for common vics?

Mr. Silva: We’re just approving the actual license.

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

294. Gerry O’Brien, Council Chancellor – Knights of Columbus Council 3535 – Requesting permission from the Board to use Memorial Park/War Memorial on East Street on Saturday, October 12, 2024, between noon and 1:00 p.m. for a Rosary Rally.

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Mr. DeBarge: I contacted Eric Segundo to see if he knew anything about this just in case because I read war memorial. This is a Knights of Columbus thing. My stance stays with that area as far as town sponsored committees and groups. I don't know what this is, to be honest with you. It's a rosary rally and I am not familiar with that.

Mr. Gennette: Knights of Columbus is a Christian organization and they're going to say the Rosary, so it's going to be a religious event. I agree with you, as far as it being a town sponsored event. We're in the middle of trying to create that policy and until we figure out that policy, I agree, I don't think this goes. I don't think there is a Knights of Columbus in Ludlow, so where are they coming in from?

Mr. DeBarge: There's no description. I know what a rosary is, there's just no description of what it is. It is religious and I would be a "no" on it anyway. I tried to find a little more information on it and I don't have it.

**Motion made by Mr. Gennette** to decline Gerry O'Brien, Council Chancellor – Knights of Columbus Council 3535 – who requested permission from the Board to use Memorial Park/War Memorial on East Street on Saturday, October 12, 2024, between noon and 1:00 p.m. for a Rosary Rally, with a letter of appreciation for their interest, but we can't at this time.

Mr. Silva: Should we just decline it or should we get some... I know the date is coming up. Should we get some information on exactly what it is? If it's something to do for the veterans. Like you I'm a little foggy on what exactly is going on. It is a veteran's memorial and if they're going there for a function.

Mr. DeBarge: The letter reads more of the gazebo area than just something for the Ludlow veterans on the memorial. I don't think it's specific to the veterans that are on our memorial, I think it's more. I don't know. I'm saying it's the Knights of Columbus, it's rosary, it's religious and my stance again for that area is that it is a town committee and board. I'm a "no" but it's up to the board.

Mr. Gennette: This is for October 12, which is coming up, so by the time they came in for a meeting and had a conversation and we got all that and figured out what was going on it might be too late for them to get established.

Mr. DeBarge: Do you want to withdraw that and we'll come back to it? We have pole hearings and I want to get the Babin's out of here.

**Motion made by Mr. Gennette** to withdraw his motion of item #294.

295. Kimberly Anne Babin, Resident – Requesting to be appointed as a Republican Election Poll Worker for the Presidential Election on November 6, 2024.

**Motion made by Mr. Goncalves** to appoint Kimberly Ann Babin as a Republican election poll worker. **Mr. Silva second. All in favor. Motion passed 5-0.**

Mr. Goncalves: Letter from resident. My name is Kimberly Anne Babin. I am a registered Republican, living at 517 Ideal Lane, Unit 607, Ludlow, MA 01056. I've been a resident since 2005. I am requesting to be considered/appointed as a Town of Ludlow election poll worker for the 2024 Presidential election on November 5<sup>th</sup>. I have been a member of the Republican Town Committee for several years and I also serve as a member of the Ludlow Housing Authority. Since my retirement in 2022 from the Department of the Veterans Affairs, a former retired Air Force Member after 25 years of service and former Municipal Veterans Director for over 7 years, I have been increasingly interested in politics and serving my community in a different capacity. I have a passion for civic engagement and bring to the table a strong work ethic, multitasker, and attention to detail. I am committed to dedicate my time and participate firsthand in the inner workings of our electoral system. Although a small but meaningful contribution to the electoral process, I feel my civic duty to uphold the democratic process and ensuring that every eligible voter has an opportunity to make their voice heard. I plan to continue, if appointed, and look forward to my next opportunity to serve as a poll worker in the Town of Ludlow. It is my hope that participating in the 2024 Presidential election for the Town of Ludlow, there will be equal representation between Republican and Democratic poll workers. I am willing to attend any poll worker training

being offered to gain further knowledge of the process. I look forward to hearing from you and a positive response. Thank you for your time and your efforts for all that you do for our town. Respectfully, Kimberly Anne Babin, (ret) MSgt, USAF.

**All in favor. Motion passed 5-0.**

## VISITATIONS

5:35 p.m. – Verizon Pole Hearing – Poole Street – PUBLIC HEARING

**Motion made by Mr. Rosenblum** to open the Verizon pole hearing for Poole Street at 5:41 p.m. **Mr. Silva second. All in favor. Motion passed 5-0.**

Mr. Vonner: I'm Don Vonner with Verizon. I just visited all 3 sites. I was under the impression I was just going to be speaking about 1.

Mr. Strange: That's right. We sent the notice to the paper for all 3 but they only put 1 notice in the paper. So whatever one they received you're going to be hearing that one then you'll be tabling the other 2.

**Motion made by Mr. Goncalves** to table the Poole Street public hearing. **Mr. Silva second. All in favor. Motion passed 5-0.**

5:45 p.m. – Verizon Pole Hearing – East Street – PUBLIC HEARING

**Motion made by Mr. Goncalves** to open the 5:45 Verizon pole hearing for East Street. **Mr. Silva second. All in favor. Motion passed 5-0.**

Mr. Vonner: On the East Street one, the stakes were all mowed over so I had to remeasure. They were where they should have been but I had to put them back in place. The purpose of these 2 poles is there are some long spans there. There's some other poles that have gone in at this place. I believe their entire purpose is to strengthen this pole line, which looks relatively new and replaced. The stakes were at the spots they should be. I put them back in and measured them back out. They're pretty accurate to what you see here in measurements. 113, 112, 108. The other one was about 4' longer, about 112, because it was placed on the other side of where the pole should have been. That is essentially the story with this one.

Mr. Goncalves: So, we're just adding 2 additional poles there? There's no curb cuts? This is in front of the El Cid coming into that intersection.

Mr. Silva: From what I see the poles are...

Mr. Goncalves: These are on the condo side? Either way, there's no curb cuts there coming up all the way to Tower Road.

Mr. Vonner: The sidewalks are set well off the road.

Mr. Silva: I live up there and I come down that street all the time, when you're coming down on that curve the poles are so close. The visual is almost in the middle of the street. If these poles are being moved or adjusted can't they be pushed back a little bit away from the street?

Mr. Vonner: They're at least 10-12' off the road, maybe even further.

Mr. Silva: These are good but as you go up the street some of them are really close.

Mr. Vonner: I can't speak to that.

Mr. Silva: Is that a possibility that they can be moved? I think one of them might be 2' from the actual pavement.

Mr. Vonner: Do you have a pole number?

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Mr. DeBarge: No.

Mr. Vonner: What's it at the corner of?

Mr. DeBarge: Tower Road and East.

Mr. Silva: Right after Poole Street when you go right. If you could just have somebody look at the poles going all the way up to Poole Street.

Mr. Vonner: After this meeting I can go back there and get the pole number. I will bring that to their attention but again I can't speak to that.

**Motion made by Mr. Goncalves to approve the 2 new poles. Mr. Silva second. All in favor. Motion passed 5-0.**

**Motion made by Mr. Rosenblum to close the Verizon pole hearing for East Street at 5:47 p.m. Mr. Goncalves second. All in favor. Motion passed 5-0.**

### CORRESPONDENCE

Mr. DeBarge: Let's go back to 294. I'm going to read it again. Gerry O'Brien, Council Chancellor – Knights of Columbus Council 3535 – Requesting permission from the Board to use Memorial Park/War Memorial on East Street on Saturday, October 12, 2024, between noon and 1:00 p.m. for a Rosary Rally.

Mr. Rosenblum: Considering we have a policy pending right now and in the same sense we let Color Ludlow with Love go ahead and get their event, I'm kind of torn in the same sense it's cliché but I don't feel it's appropriate for myself, a politician, to be voting on something that's religious. I will be abstaining from this altogether but I do believe if we don't have a set policy the other part of me wants to say it should still go until that policy is set.

Mr. Gennette: The only reason Color Ludlow with Love was allowed to do it was because their application pre-dated the policy discussion.

Mr. Rosenblum: We don't have an approved policy.

Mr. Gennette: Right, but we didn't have an approved policy when they submitted it. We didn't even have a conversation when they submitted it. It pre-dated that. Once we started that we had no position to stop that. We're in a position now that anything that comes in after we start talking about the policy we can hold.

Mr. Rosenblum: I disagree with that.

Mr. Silva: I'd still like to know exactly what is going to happen.

Mr. DeBarge: I did make the attempt. I did try but couldn't get a phone number or anything.

Mr. Silva: We do not have the policy yet and I think we should put everything on hold until we do have a policy, that way we don't have any discussion to do it. We're on hold until we have the policy.

Mr. Goncalves: I agree. I abstained from the last petitioner that came in and I would do the same on this one. I think we need a policy. This one is a lot closer to what we've always talked about at that corner with the Ludlow based 5013C but it's still not what we've talked about with regards to town use and town functions along that line. There's other parks in town that they could use.

**Motion made by Mr. Silva to take no action on this request until we have the policy in place. Mr. Goncalves second.**

Mr. DeBarge: By taking no action, you're effectively denying it.

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Mr. Silva: I can't do anything. I can't say yes or no yet. If we don't have the policy within the time frame they're going to have to hold it another time if they see they want to come back.

Mr. Gennette: All we have to do is give them an answer. If right now we're holding them for the policy, just give them an answer so they know whether or not to do it.

Mr. DeBarge: We have a motion and second to take no action. My stance is the same. It's not town sponsored. I'm a "no", I will remain a "no", I think we should tell them yes or no, rather than we have no answer for you. I don't understand that. There's a motion on the floor to do nothing. All in favor to do nothing?

Mr. Rosenblum: Which means no because the policy won't be in place by this time.

Mr. Gennette: You don't need a motion to table anything.

Mr. DeBarge: Can you stop telling me the rules? We have a motion and a second.

**Motion passed 3-1-1.**

296. Linda Collette, Chair – 250<sup>th</sup> Committee – Requesting approval from the Board for two One Day Permits for All Alcohol for the "Fallin into Fun" event being held October 5<sup>th</sup> and October 6<sup>th</sup>, 2024, from 9:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.

**Motion made by Mr. Goncalves** to approve the One Day Permits for All Alcohol for the "Fallin into Fun" event being held October 5<sup>th</sup> and October 6<sup>th</sup>, 2024, from 9:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. and waive all fees. **Mr. Gennette second. All in favor. Motion passed 5-0.**

297. David Slowick, Section Chief Emergency Response, Department of Environmental Protection – Informing the Board of the Release Notification and Notice of Responsibility regarding 425 Center Street.

**Motion made by Mr. Silva** to file item #297. **Mr. Goncalves second. All in favor. Motion passed 5-0.**

298. Jodie Lambeau, Director of Programs – Ludlow Community Center – Requesting permission from the Board to hold their annual Rag Shag Parade from Town Hall to the Boys & Girls Club on Friday, October 25, 2024, beginning 5:00 p.m.

**Motion made by Mr. Rosenblum** to approve the Ludlow Community Center permission to hold their annual Rag Shag Parade from Town Hall to the Boys & Girls Club on Friday, October 25, 2024, beginning 5:00 p.m. **Mr. Silva second. All in favor. Motion passed 5-0.**

**VISITATIONS**

5:55 p.m. – Verizon Pole Hearing – Center Street – PUBLIC HEARING

**Motion made by Mr. Goncalves** to open the pole hearing on Center Street and table the same until we get further information. **Mr. Gennette second. All in favor. Motion passed 5-0.**

**CORRESPONDENCE**

299. Peter Mancuso, Resident Requesting to be appointed as an Unenrolled Election Poll Worker.

**Motion made by Mr. Gennette** to approve Peter Mancuso to be appointed as an Unenrolled election poll worker. **Mr. Goncalves second. All in favor. Motion passed 5-0.**

300. 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 August 28, 2024.

**Motion made by Mr. Rosenblum** to approve 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 August 28, 2024. **Mr. Gennette second. All in favor. Motion passed 5-0.**

301. Chief Valadas – Request to charge off to charge off medical expenses and lost wages to Chapter 41, Section 111F for an injury sustained by a Police Officer as a result of an incident that occurred on August 28, 2024.

**Motion made by Mr. Rosenblum** to approve charging to charge off medical expenses and lost wages to Chapter 41, Section 111F for an injury sustained by a Police Officer as a result of an incident that occurred on August 28, 2024. **Mr. Gennette second. All in favor. Motion passed 5-0.**

## UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Board to approve and sign the meeting minutes from September 3, 2024.

**Motion made by Mr. Goncalves** to approve and sign meeting minutes from September 3, 2024, absent James Gennette. **Motion passed 4-0-1.**

Board to sign the USAVE Food Store, LLC Common Victualler License, if approved.

Board to sign the two One Day Permits for the 250<sup>th</sup> Committee, if approved.

Board to sign the contract with ITP for MUNIS Consulting Services not to exceed \$9,865.00.

Board to sign the contract with WJ Mountford for the Town Hall Renovation Project.

## VISITATIONS

6:05 p.m. – School Committee & Finance Committee – To discuss FY26 budget goals.

Ms. Bowler opened the School Committee meeting.

Mr. DeBarge: We are being met with the School Committee and Finance Committee so we can have a preliminary meeting for our budget calendar that Marc and Frank have worked diligently so we can meet multiple times together and have a good budget season and a good understanding of all our departments. Marc and Frank, you usually kick us off with early year expectations or projections.

Mr. Strange: We did this last year. We want to get the Board of Selectmen, School Committee and FinCom together early on to get on the table what our fiscal 26 budget goals and expectations are. I sent an email to everybody asking for input. We didn't get any input back so it's kind of an open discussion. I will tell you suggestions I had. One was the past 2 years we've popped in a 3% number for the schools as an increase in the budget. Without different direction, that's what we'll do again this year. We did that unilaterally; we didn't have a discussion about it. I think it's beneficial to have a discussion about school choice and outplacements. If the School Committee knows when the budget presentation is going to be, I think it's in February. That's me teeing it up for you guys to hit it out of the park.

Dr. Tiano: I'd like to introduce Mickey Buhl. He's our Business Manager. As you know, Kathy retired last year after all her good hard work and we're glad to have Mickey on board. Marc, I appreciate that you forwarded me a couple of those suggested topics, but at the outset we're starting our budgeting process as well. We start with 3 of our largest budget drivers. Our salary is number 1. As Mickey has come aboard, we do this every fall in terms of looking at our personnel, our positions ensuring they are in the appropriate cost centers and salaries are correct. As you know, our staff members as they get different degrees and change lanes, we're in good shape but we double check that because that's going to be our baseline we project for 2026. In years past we could do that forecast for salary for all of our bargaining units, even with folks we know would be changing lanes in FY26. This year our contracts are up. Salary is 74-75% of our budget. Right now, that's an unknown in terms of percent increases and so forth.

Mr. DeBarge: When do you start negotiations?

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Dr. Tiano: We're working with you today to start up as soon as possible. We've had a brief discussion with them and we'll get moving. We have 7 contracts to negotiate and the next one we look at in terms of impact to our budget is transportation. LPVEC is our transportation provider. Right now, they are still negotiating with their drivers. Their drivers have recently formed a bargaining unit and they're working with them in terms of their salaries. As you may or may not know, there's a shortage of bus drivers, like there's a shortage of everything, so the other bus companies around us pay higher wages and that's an unknown for us right now in terms of what that looks like. The 3<sup>rd</sup> is out of district tuition. This is always a variable for us and this is a driver of our budget and that was one of the questions you sent along, Marc. This past year in FY24 we had spent 2.164 million dollars in out of district placements. That was reduced. We have students that were either identified within our school district that we can no longer meet their needs within our schools or students move into our school district. Last year we had a few students move out so we came in under what we budgeted for. This year we budgeted 2.184 million. Those total dollars are still an estimate. We're still working on contracts with out of district placements for students. We anticipate an increase. Our history has shown that students will be identified, as I mentioned previously, or a student will move into the school district. While we welcome all students, oftentimes there are costs associated with that so that 2.1 could easily be 2.4-2.5 in January. For our budget drivers, typically our salaries are set, as I mentioned, so having that as a variable we'll put together projection models. Mickey and his team have already started to look at that. Per the Town Administrator's email, there is a question around school choice seats to be approved for FY26. The School Committee has a standard where they typically vote up to 110 spots for school choice. For point of reference, we currently have 84 school choice students within our district. Last year we had 89. FY23 we had 90.

Ms. Bowler: That was a decrease. We lowered the number this past year. We brought it down to a whole number.

Dr. Tiano: That's right. In FY20 we were at a high of 101 students. This year we were at 84. In terms of the email, I believe that's covered.

Mr. Gennette: So, you allocate for 110 seats, right?

Dr. Tiano: Yes.

Mr. Gennette: Up to so you have some space for the amount of students you have. You have 84 now so there's room in case. When you budget, do you budget for 110?

Dr. Tiano: We budget for our FTEs for our staff. I think we have 6 seniors so most of those students are already in our school district. If we lost 4 seniors last year, we have 80+ kids already enrolled in our school district. It's not like 80 kids coming in every year.

Mr. Gennette: You don't have some pre-notion about what to expect? If you're losing 6 seniors I don't know what are your expectations with that and what your plans are as far as budget goes. I know you have to cover yourself, to pay the bills, so I don't know what you're budgeting for. Do you try to budget for what you have or for the 110?

Dr. Tiano: We typically don't budget specifically for our school choice students. When we add a seat for grade 5, we would not add students to that grade level if it impacted adding another teacher. So we find space, or seats that would have otherwise gone empty without increasing our class size beyond where we feel is reasonable.

Ms. Bowler: So, there's not seats available in every single grade. When the lottery happens and people apply, there's only specific grades they can apply to. If there's not an opening in 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, they can't apply. They can only apply for whatever grades are listed on the website.

Mr. Goncalves: I think James' question was more of is there a direct number attributable to the number of school choice seats, right?

Mr. Gennette: Yes.

Mr. Goncalves: Not so much as what comes as the result of how many kids because there's not a direct number attached over 84. 10 more kids at \$24,000 that doesn't add up.

Mr. Strange: Can you talk a little bit about the calculation or reasoning behind the numbers you pick for school choice? What is the driver. Last year you said 84. What goes into deciding how many seats?

Dr. Tiano: Class size.

Mr. Strange: You look at the classes and say we can afford to absorb 84 kids?

Dr. Tiano: We already have 84 of them. They were in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade last year, they're in 4<sup>th</sup> grade now. It's not a year-to-year wash.

Mr. Strange: So, you're adjusting for a few?

Ms. Bowler: 10 seniors graduated.

Mr. Buhl: School choice numbers and school choice admissions are based on size and can we allow families that want to have their children in Ludlow schools instead of their home school attend is all based on class size and space.

Mr. Goncalves: What's the advantage for us to let those kids in?

Dr. Tiano: The money that comes along with it? It's \$5,000/kid. I'm not sure how long Ludlow Public Schools have been involved in school choice but it's common. That's where we are on the budgeting process right now. We're scheduled to present to the School Committee January 28 to provide a draft budget. I like to have the draft budget before the holidays in December. Not complete, and then work on it over the next couple of weeks. Our public hearing, and this is based on the Town's timeline which is based on last year's, is February 11. If anyone is planning on coming, the last 2 years was a snow day. We have a joint meeting tentatively scheduled for the 25<sup>th</sup>. Marc can share the timeline. We lined ours up with yours and that's what we have.

Mr. Goncalves: We have a new project coming in on the corner of Fuller and Chapin. Are you starting to think about the numbers that could produce?

Dr. Tiano: We have started to and we need to gather more information. I believe those are set to be online in the springtime. We have not collected that but I'm very curious about that.

Mr. Goncalves: You have to figure a 2 bedroom will put 1 child; a 3 bedroom will put in 2

Ms. Bowler: Possibly.

Mr. Goncalves: I don't think they're going to rent a 3 bedroom to someone with no children

Dr. Tiano: That's part of what we have along our budgeting road. You can't anticipate. Say it's after Town Meeting, budget has passed and 50 kids move in. If they're spread across Pre-K-12 we could probably absorb that. If they're all 3<sup>rd</sup> graders we're going to have a problem.

Mr. Kelliher: I was on School Committee when this was discussed and Wayfinders came in to talk to us. Their estimate at the time was about 40.

Mr. Goncalves: The lions share is going to be elementary.

Dr. Tiano: I would guess.

Mr. Strange: I feel like nobody wants to have the hard conversation. I think it's worthwhile to have this conversation. There has been a lot of rhetoric about percentages and having to cut teachers. Percentages that the school needs for level services. If we put in 3% into the budget and the schools are going to present they need 7% for level service, at the very least we should talk about what that means, at least for the people that are watching.

Mr. Buhl: You're just pulling 7% as a potential?

Mr. Strange: Last year it was 7-9. Something other than 3%.



Dr. Tiano: That's the difficulty and those were our preliminary numbers in October, November, December. When we're sharing with our board and everything is in public that's where we are in time. When we first looked it was at 9%. No way in the world would we ask for 9%, what we're saying is right now this is what it would look like for a level service. We keep our cards close and come out at the end. To keep my committee updated I share as we go. I hear what you're saying.

Mr. Strange: There's a divide between the schools and the Town and when we put rhetoric out there that we're going to have to be cutting teachers in this process, it divides the Town even more.

Dr. Tiano: Just to be clear, I would never put that out unless that was a real possibility.

Mr. Strange: It's been part of the presentations.

Dr. Tiano: Absolutely.

Mr. Strange: So, by the schools putting that out in a presentation it becomes part of the narrative. Am I wrong about this?

Mr. Gennette: I think you're on point.

Mr. Silva: You're right.

Mr. Strange: It's not good for the Town to say, if the Town gives us 3%, we need 6 1/2 % we're going to have to cut 8 FTE's. People in Town are going to be saying what are the Selectmen doing, we're killing our schools. Which is not what's happening.

Dr. Tiano: I hear and respect what you're saying.

Mr. Strange: Particularly with how much the schools give back to the Town at the end of the year. All things we know but the public doesn't know. And the public is upset about this whole divide. There's other causes but putting that into the narrative I don't think is good.

Dr. Tiano: Just to push back, my first year here we laid off 20 FTE's.

Mr. Strange: We only received 7. We have the documentation and we went through it. There were 14 transfers and 7 pink slips. As an example, we're not losing 21 mouths not getting fed. It's not going to help the divide in Town.

Dr. Tiano: What I'm hearing you say is that to put out potential guts, this is my 3<sup>rd</sup> year, my first year we cut 20 FTE's. We've talked about it's a full time equivalent, whether that's one person occupies a .5 and .5. That's 19 people. We cut those. I have given you folks every position that was. In order to work with our staff about potential layoffs, having done it the year before and having received feedback that I had not been sharing that with our staff early enough, last year I took another route and said we could have a gap, knowing we could have a gap and sharing with the committee that potentially we could reduce and still keep class size not necessarily where we want it, but we could do it without hurting what we provide for students, which is why we're here.

Mr. Strange: Again, all I'm saying is the numbers that was presented and put into the ethos are not the numbers we see and it's not the number that the public sees. We know how much money the school gives back at the end of the year.

Ms. Bowler: What did we give back this year?

Mr. Strange: \$500,000-600,000.

Dr. Tiano: For FY24?

Mr. Strange: Yes.

Dr. Tiano: The books aren't closed on that yet.

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Mr. Buhler: They're closed in Munis. My number I have is lower than that but that was an unusual year.

Mr. Strange: The fiscal year is closed.

Dr. Tiano: Which is under 1% of the budget.

Mr. Strange: But how many FTE's is that? I understand there's reasons for that but we can't explain that to the public in a way they understand. All they hear is 21 FTE's, which is not accurate.

Dr. Tiano: Two years ago, it was dead on.

Mr. Strange: They were mostly transfers and then pink slips.

Dr. Tiano: 20 positions, forget pink slips and people. Talk about positions and service that we can provide for our kids unavailable. If you go from 5 third grades to 4 class size balloons, if that 5<sup>th</sup> 3<sup>rd</sup> grade teacher retired, we still reduce service for our kids.

Mr. Strange: We understand that but they don't. So, when you're talking about getting rid of FTE's you're not talking about laying people off.

Mr. Buhler: I'm hearing a couple things. The difference between positions and people. In almost every year you have to cut positions. So, if you cut 10 positions some of them are going to be able to be absorbed through attrition. You still lose a position you just don't have to send a person away, because that person retires or moves to another district. That is a difference. The positions are still lost so when you compare what you're able to serve the kids with this year and next year. I'm hearing that articulating those differences is helpful. The positions we think we can reduce and have the least impact on student learning and the service to students.

Mr. Gennette: I'm going to try to paraphrase and if I'm off base please correct me. I think what most of what Marc is trying to say is this is a communication thing. You have a lot of budgeting you have to figure out. We have a lot of things on our side we have to do too and until we start getting towards the point where we can start getting into the really difficult things like cutting positions, we should probably just stay on budget. We should probably stay at where we're at with money. Where we're coming in, where we're going to fall and we can talk about down the road at the end when we're really getting where you might have to start talking about positions. I think it's the timing of the whole thing where we're trying to have budget conversation that included now we're cutting teachers if this doesn't happen.

Ms. Bowler: This year is going to be different than the last couple years because we're in negotiation season. The teachers are going to know what the numbers mean. If we are at a certain percentage and they're at a different percentage, they know if we get to a certain percentage that means if we can't get you guys to that number it means cuts. They're not unintelligent people. They know cuts are coming and they're sharing that information with their teachers and the masses. It's not about us being transparent.

Mr. Gennette: I respect that. I really do. How you are with you and your staff is up to you guys. We're talking about budgeting and we don't want to lose any teachers. All we're talking about is what are we going to do as far as the budget. Where are we going to fall, and we're trying to meet you guys on common ground. We don't want to incorporate the animosity. We want to try to work together.

Mr. Strange: The process has been so divisive. I hear it from my people. I read it in the paper. It's divisive. They pick up sound bites from the various meetings. They don't know how the sausage gets made. We know how the sausage is getting made. I think we have to be more careful about the rhetoric and the message we send because that does not help us come together.

Dr. Tiano: Going back to my first year here, we've talked about what a level service budget is. For our committee and providing them with the fixed cost increases, I lay that out there for our folks. If that's the sausage being made, to be as transparent as possible, it's where we are in time. We've worked it so we got over our ESSR hump so we're not anticipating not having that as an anchor around our neck. You breathe more easily. To be transparent with my committee we do things in

open. I give them the state of the state. I hear what you're saying and if that has caused a rift, I hope the insinuation is that it's not politicized. That's my sharing with my committee.

Mr. Strange: Part of the sausage being made is we meet every month. Me, you, Mickey, Cheryl, FinCom and we talk about all this stuff so we're on the same page and in that process we weren't. What happened was we had been communicating and there was a presentation to the School Committee that you needed 9% or whatever it was. That blew everything up. It was never communicated.

Dr. Tiano: Not that we needed. That was the delta barrier between level service.

Mr. Strange: We talked about the delta. Again, we're talking about the sausage getting made here. All I'm saying here is we have a process and we know how that process goes. They don't. I want to be very careful about how we're messaging.

Mr. Silva: I think what Marc is talking about is I've been in Town a long time and I know a lot of teachers and they would come up to me and say what's going on. Are we going to lose our jobs? And we were not even close to where we should be and nobody is going to lose their jobs at this point. They were all nervous about it. It was out there that the Selectmen don't care about our children and I'm sure you all heard that.

Dr. Tiano: That did not come from anybody on this side of the table.

Mr. Silva: Understood. I'm sure that didn't come from you but that's the rhetoric that gets out there. Selectmen don't care about our children; they don't care about our schools. That's so far from the truth and it's hard to hear.

Mr. Strange: Thank you.

Mr. Silva: If we can stop that, it would be great somehow.

Dr. Tiano: In terms of the communication that Mr. Gennette brought up, every presentation I have is on our website the next day. All of our budget documents. So, we truly try to make it. Marc, when you say they don't get it, the townsfolks, it's not from a lack of sharing how that budget is put together.

Mr. Strange: But for a layperson, if I go on my Town's school and I see all this information it's fabulous, but unless you have some sort of context or expertise you're not going to know what it means. The other thing is they don't see how it's spent. They see the budget but they don't see how it's spent.

Dr. Tiano: We have every expense line item.

Mr. Strange: Does it have the \$600,000 that was sent back to the Town this year? That's what I'm saying.

Dr. Tiano: We have our expense lines. Every Munis report every month gets published and is available.

Mr. Gennette: As far as the communication you mentioned, my only point is budgeting. When we're trying to come together on budgeting, how you need to handle your budget and where you need to go forward with your staff, and I fully understand you're going to talk to the School Committee about where you are with the budget currently and what it looks like for positions and stuff like that. Certainly, everything you can give the community is a benefit on that level, but we come together and we start talking about budget, we can't take what the FTE cost is in the budget. We can't figure that in. We have to figure out how all the departments are going to come to the table and be funded. That's what we're trying to figure out. The only thing I'm saying is we need to talk about the money. As soon as we get entrenched and embroiled in what the ramifications are it hinders our ability to solve the problem of where are we going to get the money from, who is it going to go to, and that's for you guys too. The money that had come back there was money that you had allocated to the benefit of your departments. I'm just saying we need to come together

with the budgeting. As soon as we include all of the other stuff around it we kind of lose site of what we need to do leading up to the Town Meeting.

Dr. Tiano: I apologize if I'm getting a tad defensive. Just going back through last year, as Kathy and I would update our committee exactly where we were and the possibility of reductions and where those may come from, I believe I'm obligated to do that for my committee.

Mr. Gennette: I agree. I just said I fully expect that you're going to have that conversation.

Dr. Tiano: But the fallout is you folks took a hit.

Mr. Gennette: That was in our budget conversation meeting. That was in presentations that you had given about what the cost would be as far as the FTE goes to us. When we're trying to come together on budget stuff. We're trying to come together on money. The last time we met there was some pretty good back and forth. Mr. Stratton challenged me on one thing I brought up and we came back at you about positions funding. I thought it was a great debate back and forth.

Dr. Tiano: I believe we have a good working relationship.

Mr. Gennette: I think we do too. I think we want to improve that. That's all we're looking to do.

Mr. Stratton: Please correct me if I'm misunderstanding it but when we pen in 3% for school increase, last year the teachers got 3% raises as part of the contract and that's 75% of the budget, so I think there's a couple other drivers there that Frank had talked about. Transportation had gone up quite a bit, as well as out of district tuition, so I think that contributes to the scariness of we started at 3% and suddenly we're asking for 7% because of those other costs. It's not just the cost of living or salary increase, it's others. I don't know what the solution to that is and I don't know how we get a better estimate of that. Maybe if we focus about why there's a little more of this delta you're talking about or if you can realize we're just accounting for the contractual increase but there's these other costs that have changed too.

Mr. Goncalves: That's basically half of the budget. We've got the same situation with the balance of the Town and the other 10 departments. They're getting their increases; their cost of living and all the other expenses are also going up. The insurance, the retirement money that nobody sees. The \$30,000 an employee. The 1% of that entire budget is \$170,000.

Mr. DeBarge: Who are we negotiating this year with Marc?

Mr. Strange: DPW, Dispatch, we just finished up with Library and Fire.

Mr. DeBarge: We have multiple contracts this year and multiple departments that we're negotiating as well so that's the other half of it. When I first got on the Board of Selectmen it was like everybody gets 2's and I think that's why the Town never grew. Everybody just stayed on a flatline and that's why the numbers in most of our departments didn't grow over the years and why our apparatus didn't grow over the years, why our roads were terrible. When you get a 3% and go to that high number it just goes to the point of the public perception is different than what the truth is. The Town side of it is so many more departments that we're negotiating with so when you budget for 3% and then you get asked for 9, 7 or whatever then ultimately you have to pull from other departments in order to try to meet that.

Dr. Tiano: 9 was never asked and quite clearly the Town Administrator said this is the delta and we know that would be insane.

Mr. DeBarge: It was the needed for level funding phrase, which was masterful by the way, level service, I'm sorry. That's a pretty strong statement to say to somebody that doesn't understand per se what exactly that number means.

Dr. Tiano: Again, baked into that was the reduction of ESSR monies.

Mr. DeBarge: But to try to explain that to everybody else, which I think is why Marc is explaining that we take the hit on that without a proper explanation.

Mr. Goncalves: I think the idea is we've got 2 ½ % to play with for the whole Town and it's going to be tough on every department. Again, you represent half.

Dr. Tiano: 44%.

Mr. Goncalves: With a small amount of people vs all the other people we have to deal with we're hoping nobody is thinking about throwing anybody under the bus. Bottom line. Last year we didn't hire anybody. There was no new hires in the Town. A couple of promotions and that was about it. We're buying vehicles and ambulances. We've got money there and we're trying to shift it around. We've got some enterprise funds we're able to tap. We gave them how much money out of capital?

Mr. Gennette: 4 ½ million.

Dr. Tiano: Which is totally separate from us.

Mr. Goncalves: Right but for a lot of the other departments a lot of that money needs to come out of the budget.

Mr. Gennette: You also mentioned 44 million, I apologize 44%, I don't think that includes insurance, right?

Mr. DeBarge: I thought it was 48.

Dr. Tiano: This year it's 44 on the nose.

Mr. Gennette: 44% not including health insurance for the entire employee base, of which the school accounts for most of it. I'm just saying, there's more involved with the school than just what you're seeing. There's other monies coming out. We have to figure out those too.

Dr. Tiano: For me, personally, I fully appreciate working within the parameters of what the Town can afford. Not once have I said we need 9% and we need to go to the mattresses for that. We've worked monthly on this. I fully understand.

Mr. Kelliher: It sounds like there are a lot of contracts up in the air this year. Your monthly meetings, which I think are fabulous, and I'm hoping that's being communicated back and forth because what the school contract comes in at is obviously going to be the big driver. Having sat and negotiated those, what will often happen is the opening of those negotiations are X unit got this, X unit got that. I've tried to organize this once or twice and we did one time, but it's important for everybody to get together a little bit. Obviously you're not going to get into each other's negotiations but to have some idea what the overall budget for the Town can be if this unit takes this much, those are conversations that would be good to have in that small group setting where you can really get into some of those numbers. I can see that being a big issue this year with all those units up. What the Town can and cannot afford. If the schools come in and make a contract that puts a hole in the budget then that's a problem. There are things that a discussion should be happening prior to.

Mr. Strange: Absolutely. We have our first meeting in a couple weeks and we'll put that on the agenda.

**Motion made by Mr. Stratton to close the School Committee meeting. Mr. Laing second. All in favor. Motion passed 4-0.**

## **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

Board to close the Special Town Meeting Warrant.

Mr. Rosenblum: We picked it apart last meeting.

Mr. Gennette: Are there any big changes from last time?

Mr. Strange: There's just a couple. Very minor. For article 1 we added unpaid bills and right before I came in here we got 3 more from the schools so we're going to have to add those to article 1.

Brian cleaned up article 2, which is Animal Control. Nothing substantive he just cleaned it up a little. There are 5 zoning articles, which is the Planning Boards doing so you don't have to worry about that.

**Motion made by Mr. Goncalves** to close the Special Town Meeting warrant. **Mr. Silva second. All in favor. Motion passed 5-0.**

Mr. Gennette: If we run across any kind of serious situation that has to get added or changed to the Special Town warrant we can open, fix it and close it? We have enough time?

Mr. Strange: The Clerk has to send these out by Thursday. If something changes we can always make amendments on the floor.

## NEW BUSINESS

Board to vote on Fall 2024 Community Center field rental request.

Mr. Goncalves: We did this last meeting.

Mr. Strange: It's a different one.

**Motion made by Mr. Goncalves** to approve the field rental requests for Western United Pioneers in the gymnasium on the specified dates. **Mr. Silva second. All in favor. Motion passed 5-0.**

Board to discuss and possibly vote to adopt a town procurement/purchasing manual.

Mr. DeBarge: Jamie is here. Does anybody have any questions about that manual?

Mr. Silva: I believe we discussed it when she was here last time.

Ms. Morrow: Last time I asked the Board to adopt designer selection procedures so the Town can legally perform RFQ's. This is a financial policy manual. The Mass Department of Revenue and our bond counsel that appeared before you a few weeks ago, these are the type of policies that bond companies are looking for. Cities and Towns have financial policies in writing adopted by an executive board. It's the right thing to do.

Mr. DeBarge: I read it. It's above my pay grade but I thought it was pretty nice.

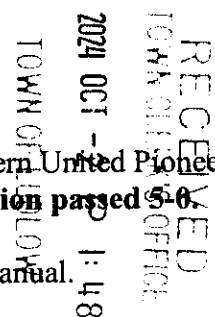
Mr. Rosenblum: I work with procurement a little bit and the bidding process. The process is long but you have to protect yourself and the Town.

**Motion made by Mr. Silva** to adopt the town procurement/purchasing manual. **Mr. Rosenblum second. All in favor. Motion passed 5-0.**

Board to discuss and possibly vote to adopt a remote work policy.

Mr. Strange: I'll give you the background. I just cued Carrie. She will be coming up. She's the one who wrote it. A couple things. One is we need to be more flexible to make the Town more attractive. For example, our Town Accountant is working remotely 2 days a week and she's dynamite. She's still got some stuff to learn but she's going to be great. We wouldn't have had her if she couldn't work remotely. We have people that can work remotely if a need arises. Some positions just don't lend itself to working remotely or having flex hours but we wanted to have a policy that at least gave us that flexibility in the event that the situation presented itself. Did I get that right?

Ms. Ribeiro: Yes, from what I heard. Obviously, this is all due to Covid. You did have some positions in the world in corporate America that worked from home. A lot of insurance companies and that kind of thing. But it didn't start trickling down to a lot of other industries until Covid hit. When the pandemic happened, we developed an essential employee list, a check list of supplies and technology and Town property that was going out of Town Hall and in people's homes while they were working from home. We never fully developed a policy that incorporated a work-life balance. That was just a necessity to keep the Town running so people could not be in the building





because you had to stay home. It was geared more towards emergency management vs now the reality of it is in 2024 you have to be competitive in the marketplace to hire qualified candidates for certain jobs. Like Marc has said, the Town Accountant that we just hired is one position where very few people from the public, if any. Maybe other departments are coming in but certainly they're not dealing with residents like the Town Clerk's office is. There's a need for it on the recruitment side. You're losing people. You can go online and look at municipalities that are offering hybrid positions and it is everywhere. It's not just private companies that are offering remote, hybrid opportunities anymore. It's something that we need to have. We need to have this for the flexibility and to keep good candidates. There's days where you get a lot of interruptions here. This isn't in the policy it's just a benefit of being able to work at home and not be here. You can close your door all day long but people know you're here. When you're not getting those interruptions and distractions, which I get are part of the job; however, you're able to focus more. I think that's a fringe benefit of something like this. The biggest thing is it allows us to be flexible. We want to attract good candidates. We want to be an employer that people want to come to Ludlow and work here. This policy just sets the stage for it. Who would be eligible. Who is not eligible. The fact that it could change at any time. It's not a guarantee. I don't know if you looked at the application and checklist and there's an approval process. Right now, we have been letting individuals work from home as needed on an as needed basis but we need a formalized policy. Especially now that we've had to advertise positions hybrid. That's where we're at. I think it's a pretty good policy. It allows us to make changes to it as far as if it's not working. There's write ins if somebody has a medical condition where they need to work from home. The policy allows that to happen for a couple months. Those things do come up. People can still work even if they're not physically able to come to work.

Mr. Strange: This came from Kate, right? Our attorney's.

Ms. Ribeiro: Correct. There's been some small little tweaks here and there but she has blessed this policy.

Mr. Silva: The fact is that this is happening everywhere. How are we monitoring that they are in fact working?

Ms. Ribeiro: Right now, it's only Cheryl working from home on a regular basis that has a set schedule. There's a few other employees in the Board of Health that have been afforded that opportunity as well.

Mr. Goncalves: The employees that came in from the collaborative?

Ms. Ribeiro: Yes, the shared services. It's relatively new with Cheryl. We don't have the funding or resources to make sure that somebody is logged on. That would be an IT question and I'm sure that would cost us a lot of money for a handful of employees that are probably going to actually work from home on a regular basis. It says right in the policy they have to be available. You have to be expected to be available. If you're not available you need to notify your department head.

Mr. Silva: We can always check the workload.

Mr. Goncalves: I can tell you that during Covid when the insurance companies had that policy it was the worst time in the world for you to have a payment question because you got in trouble on a bill or to have a claim. The absolute worst time in the history of insurance was when people were working at home. There's too many distractions. I don't know how many times I would call and there was kids screaming in the background. I need a little more convincing that this makes that big of a deal. I want to know what departments, not a blanket policy that says we can do it to anybody anytime. A case by case and why it's not important that they're here.

Ms. Ribeiro: It is a case-by-case basis. You have to file the application and it has to be approved by the Department Head, Town Administrator and HR. That's 3 levels of approval. If the Department Head feels like that individual is going to benefit from working from home or they have a hardship then we wouldn't have been able to hire our new Town Accountant. We wouldn't have gotten her. We would still have a vacancy. She wouldn't be here. Her personal situation is that she needed to be able to work from home. She was working from home where she came from and that would have been a deal breaker. We wouldn't have gotten her. We don't have anybody else that regularly works from home right now. She is the only one.

Mr. Silva: So, what we're looking at is practically isolated cases where we're going to have very few people working from home. When we had Covid you had disgruntled people who said they get to work from home, why do I have to go in.

Ms. Ribeiro: There are certain positions that absolutely can't work from home.

Mr. Goncalves: Is it better that rather than a generalized policy we decide on those up front?

Mr. Strange: It's fraught because people are going to feel like there's favoritism. If we have something in writing and there's a process for applying for it, like Carrie is saying, the Town Accountant and Accounting office is not a public facing department so they don't necessarily have to be in Town Hall to service. The Clerk's office or Collector's office are public facing departments. Those positions are less likely to be approved.

Mr. Goncalves: In the Health Department we have shared services people here that are working from home. That's kind of tough to for a nurse to see a patient.

Ms. Ribeiro: The Town doesn't oversee the shared services employees but I know they were afforded the ability.

Mr. Goncalves: The Town got a bigger increase to watch those people so indirectly it's costing the Town money.

Ms. Ribeiro: I'll have to confirm. I was in the hiring process. That was done to be able to be flexible to hire qualified people. We weren't getting tons of people for those positions either. Even though they are shared services and not directly funded by the Town, your concern is addressed in the policy. The person can't work from home and their office be closed. They can't not be there without proper staffing in the office. If I decide I need to work from home one day, Lisa and Anita need to be there. It's not going to be a day when they're both on vacation or out of the office. This is most likely going to be a Department Head or managerial level position to be able to do this. Most admin positions need to be here that are dealing with the public. It's just formalizing it. Advertising positions as hybrid we need to have a policy. Wilbraham has a policy. Most towns have a policy. This is something that developed after Covid.

Mr. Gennette: Nowhere in here do I read work from home, hybrid, remote. This says flexible hours work policy. In here it talks about hours for employees on a part-time intermittent or permanent basis, but nowhere in it does it detail anything. I struggle to find work from home, remote or anything. This just gives us the ability for us to give people random work hours. I don't understand what this policy accomplishes. It certainly doesn't accomplish a work from home policy.

Ms. Ribeiro: The flexibility...

Mr. Gennette: This is flexible hours.

Mr. Goncalves: Flexible hours away from here.

Mr. Strange: When I read it I had the same reaction. It doesn't specifically say work from home or remote but the context lends itself to flexible hours.

Mr. Goncalves: With the exception that the first line says they have to maintain the same work levels.

Mr. Gennette: I think it opens up the door to not work their full hours. They can do whatever they want. It opens up the door for people to work half their hours if they want and say you gave me flexible hours.

Ms. Ribeiro: On the application it talks about the actual schedule.

Mr. Gennette: It doesn't say anything on the application about working from home either.

Mr. Goncalves: Can we get Wilbraham's or other communities and look at them?

Ms. Ribeiro: It wouldn't do well here. You're going to create a management nightmare.

Mr. Gennette: I'm not in opposition to people working from home. I do have some IT concerns about their devices if they're not at home. If they're at some coffee shop or public thing and the laptop disappears I have some concerns. We can manage that on an IT side.

Ms. Ribeiro: That's separate from this. We would have an agreement as far as inventory wise what's getting checked out. Most people have computers, printers and scanners at home right now.

Mr. Gennette: At home is the point. It depends on if they're working from home. I don't have a problem if people work from home or whatever you determine but this doesn't accomplish that. That's my only problem.

Ms. Ribeiro: That's an easy fix. It's more of a hybrid. Hybrid means you're working here in the office in Town Hall.

Mr. Gennette: Show me where it says hybrid. It doesn't say anything about hybrid. Once we define what that is it's not a policy to work from home, hybrid or remote. It doesn't say it in there.

Ms. Ribeiro: The only thing that would change, and we could talk to the attorney, would be that specific wording. Nothing else in here would change.

Mr. Gennette: Then I need to see that specific wording before I vote positive.

Ms. Ribeiro: We're not a corporate company where we're set up to manage when people log in or monitoring emails. We're just not there.

Mr. Gennette: If you're going to make a work from home policy I want you to present me with a work from home policy.

Mr. DeBarge: James wants specific information added to this. Is anybody ok with this as is? He wants it to say at home or hybrid rather than flex hours.

Mr. Goncalves: It should say work from home. Are we ok with them going on vacation and working?

Ms. Ribeiro: People do it now. We're not going to put that in the policy.

Mr. Goncalves: If something happens and they need to come in tomorrow morning and they can't get here because they're in Mexico, Florida or Europe or on a cruise.

Mr. Strange: I totally understand what James is saying. We should take a look at that. That's easy.

**Motion made by Mr. Silva to table the remote work policy until we get more definition added to it. Mr. Gennette second. All in favor. Motion passed 5-0.**

Board to discuss and possibly vote to adopt a town vehicle use policy.

Mr. Strange: That has been tabled.

Board to discuss and possibly vote to adopt an employee performance appraisal policy.

Mr. Silva: What's the difference with a performance appraisal? Don't we have an evaluation policy now?

Ms. Ribeiro: We do not. It never passed. We started working on it and it never passed.

Mr. Silva: We haven't been evaluating our employees?

Ms. Ribeiro: Not regularly. There's some departments that do it. There's some departments that are very good and do it annually and there's some departments that do not do it. We started talking about it a few years ago when Mr. Gennette came on the Board and I agreed with him. I remember

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when I first started here almost 10 years ago and I brought a performance management policy up at a Department Head meeting and it did not go over well. I am a firm believe that we do need evaluations. We worked on a policy together and it did not go well, if you remember. At that point we started negotiating the performance evaluation process with the unions. We have been successful in getting some evaluation language into a few of the contracts. We have a few that don't have any performance evaluation language, but we have more than half of them that do and there are departments that are doing them. This specific policy is for all employees who are not covered by a collective bargaining agreement, so I just want to make that point. This is all non-union. Anybody that is not covered by a CBA.

Mr. Silva: How many do we have? We have 28 unions in this Town.

Ms. Ribeiro: We have about 35-40 on the Town side. This is not school. It's important to have evaluations and we're not doing them. This is very basic. When you write a policy you can't think about everything. Like we just talked about flexible work. My interpretation of it, and the attorney's interpretation of it and you see it differently. That's why we're talking about this. You can't think of everything when you're writing. Instead of honing down on every single detail, now that we don't have a policy, I think if we have something more broad we can work with and start and as we go through the process if we need to tweak it then we can do that. This is very basic. It breaks it down into 3 different areas. You have your initial review, which we're doing on a very informal basis now. We hire somebody and 30 days later and some departments do it in writing. We have a checklist of are you meeting the basic performance standards. Other departments is just kind of how is so and so doing. Everything is going well. They're learning this and that. Very informal. This just kind of takes that piece for the initial evaluation part and the first 3 months of somebody's employment it makes it more formal in writing that you will be evaluated. Everybody is hired here with a 6-month probationary period anyhow. All the positions have a 6-month probationary period. At that point is when you really want to be looking at performance. It's easy to get away from that. There's been times where you get back that 6-month probationary period and those performance issues could have been addressed if we had something formal to follow. You have your periodic informal review, which I think we do a lot. If there's a big problem or big issue it's going to get addressed. The big piece of this is the annual review we would sit down and do. We've chosen May as a time of year to conduct these reviews. This policy also talks about doing the 360-review model.

Mr. Goncalves: Talking to the other people in the department.

Ms. Ribeiro: Basically, you're talking to subordinates, co-workers, people that would have a better understanding. It's not just Marc evaluating me. He would talk to my coworkers and maybe some other department heads I work with to get an idea of how I work. It's not just one person, it's a broader view in a fair way, in my opinion. That's what this is all about. It's an opportunity. Professional development. We hear sometimes that there's no place to grow and move, which may be the case. A review is not going to get you a promotion, but it could. It's not guaranteed. If there's nowhere to go there's nowhere to go. Maybe somebody tells you they're interested in procurement or learning safety training. You don't know until you sit down annually and talk to people about their goals and what they want. People like feedback, whether it's positive.

Mr. Gennette: I'm all in favor of it. We were talking about it 4 years ago and we had nothing in place for something like this. There's no self-evaluation part of this, so a department manager can't just hand an evaluation over to the employee and say it's a self-evaluation.

Ms. Ribeiro: That's part of the 360. You're going to evaluate yourself. Marc gives me an evaluation sheet. I evaluate myself. He'll evaluate me. He'll ask you to evaluate me. He'll ask my staff to evaluate me.

Mr. Gennette: We're not flying solo on just a self-evaluation?

Ms. Ribeiro: No.

Mr. Silva: It says here board to discuss and possibly vote to adopt. We don't have to be in front of us.

Ms. Ribeiro: There's going to be different evaluation forms. That's the policy. The only thing different with this is the changes are accepted. The red strike outs are not on here.

**Motion made by Mr. Gennette to adopt the employee performance appraisal policy. Mr. Goncalves second. All in favor. Motion passed 5-0.**

Mr. Rosenblum: I go through this because I'm non-union salary. Is it easier for you to do it on the anniversary date of the hire?

Ms. Ribeiro: We talked about it and in my opinion I think it's easier because we're not talking thousands of people, it's easier to get it done once a year. You're focused on it because anniversary dates are constantly changing.

Mr. Rosenblum: I was wondering because your circumstances are probably different from the municipality I work in.

Ms. Ribeiro: If we find that it's too much in May we can change it and go to the anniversary date.

Board to approve and sign the contract with McGovern MHQ, Inc. for the purchase of two (2) Chevy Tahoe Vehicles for the Ludlow Police Department in the amount of \$149,526.50.

**Motion made by Mr. Goncalves to approve and sign the contract with McGovern MHQ, Inc. for the purchase of two (2) Chevy Tahoe Vehicles for the Ludlow Police Department in the amount of \$149,526.50. Mr. Gennette second.**

Mr. Gennette: Are these the ones that came out of capital? I wanted to make sure.

**All in favor. Motion passed 5-0.**

Board to sign the Library Collective Bargaining Agreement.

Board to approve and sign the contract with Tighe & Bond for Whitney Park Improvements in the amount of \$109,825.00.

**Motion made by Mr. Goncalves to approve and sign the contract with Tighe & Bond for Whitney Park Improvements in the amount of \$109,825.00. Mr. Gennette second. All in favor. Motion passed 5-0.**

Mr. Rosenblum: Is that physical improvements or design?

Mr. Silva: It says improvements.

Mr. Goncalves: Tighe & Bond is design services.

**Motion by Mr. Goncalves withdrawn. Second by Mr. Gennette withdrawn.**

**Motion made by Mr. Goncalves to approve and sign the contract with Tighe & Bond for design services for Whitney Park Improvements in the amount of \$109,825.00. Mr. Silva second. All in favor. Motion passed 5-0.**

**Motion made by Mr. Gennette to sign the warrant. Mr. Gennette second. All in favor. Motion passed 5-0.**

## **CLOSING COMMENTS**

Mr. Goncalves: We had the pleasure of all going to Encompass Health and they cut the ribbon on a new dialysis center that they've opened within the rehab. It enables patients to not have to be taken out of that rehab to go other places for that service. For now it's not going to be open to the public as a replacement for where you're getting any type of dialysis now but it's a welcome addition. It's great for the patients and the hospital. It makes the hospital more desirable. If somebody has an issue with kidney problems. Unbeknownst to me they're putting on a massive addition of 17 more private rooms, which is about 20% increase to what they have now at 73-74

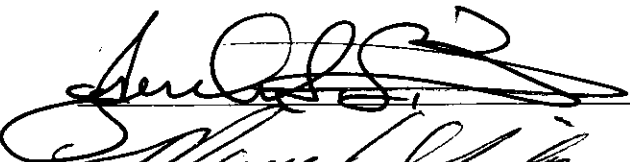
rooms. Another 20% capacity, which is great. About 2 meetings ago, we had a young man in here, Charlie Soffen, the wrestler. We talked about his sister that's a wrestler at the high school level, Sam Bertini. Sam was invited to train at the US Olympic Camp, so that's huge. I'm really happy for the Soffen's. Hopefully, everything works out for her. That's fantastic.

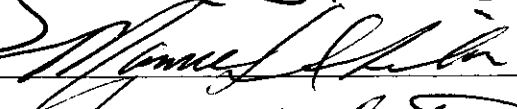
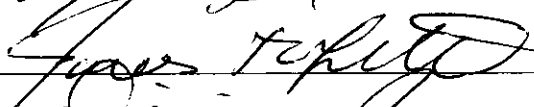
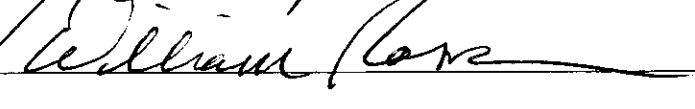
Mr. Gennette: About the School Department and Town coming together conversation earlier. We're always never on the same page. It's never going to be we walk out the gate and everybody gets what they want. It's a matter of whittling it down. It's the same stress every year over again. So just hang on through till we get to the other side.

Mr. Rosenblum: I'm good this evening.

Mr. DeBarge: If you're looking to get your flu shot, October 2<sup>nd</sup> you can get it at the Veteran's Center. Our Public Health Nurse is doing a flu shot clinic at the Veteran's Center October 2<sup>nd</sup> 9:30 – 12:00. Also, Veteran's Day is coming in November. The Vet Center and Vanished Valley will be doing our event together. A launch party on November 7<sup>th</sup>. This is with the Thank You For Your Service beer that Vanished Valley always makes for Veteran's Day. November 9<sup>th</sup> is our annual pig roast for our veterans at Vanished Valley. I will repeat this. Don't forget, the Fall into Fun with the 250<sup>th</sup> October 5 & 6.

**Motion made by Mr. Goncalves to close the Selectmen's meeting at 7:30 p.m. Mr. Gennette second. All in favor. Motion passed 4-0.**

  
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Chairperson

  
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