The Meeting of the Board of Selectmen held on Tuesday, November 24, 2020 began at 6:00 p.m.
Remote participation due to COVID-19.

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

First Order of Business: The Pledge of Allegiance

Visitations:

6:15 p.m. – Tax Classification Hearing

Mr. Goncalves: I make a motion that we open the public hearing for the Tax Classification Hearing at 6:15 p.m.

Mr. DeBarge: Second.

Mr. Silva: Motion is seconded. Mr. Rosenblum?

Mr. Rosenblum: Yes.

Mr. Silva: Mr. Goncalves?

Mr. Goncalves: Yes.

Mr. Silva: Mr. DeBarge?

Mr. DeBarge: Yes.

Mr. Silva: Mr. Silva? Yes. We are officially open.

Ms. Villano: You might want to have Joe introduce himself.

Mr. Silva: Mr. Alves, if you would like to introduce yourself.

Mr. Alves: My name is Joe Alves. I'm the Assistant Assessor for the Town. So just to give you guys a status update. We are working to finalize our LA 3 and LA 15 this week so we can then go to do the tax rate and start LA 13 and LA 4 and such.

Mr. Silva: So, at this point you are saying that we are not ready to officially start the hearing and, um move forward until we do this, these final steps right?

Mr. Alves: Right, I think it would be a better spot for everyone so we can be ready and have enough time to provide you guys with the executive summary so we can analyze the data...to make a better decision.

Mr. Silva: So, your request is to um postpone, or continue the hearing until December 8th.
Mr. Alves: Correct.

Mr. Silva: Does any Board members have any questions?

Mr. DeBarge: I have none about the continuation Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Silva: Ok, so if we could have a motion to do such a thing. And also, if you could make sure you put on a time it is going to be continued to.

Mr. Alves: Thank you. If we could with what I spoke to Ellie about.

Mr. Silva: 5:30. Is everybody good with 5:30?

Mr. Goncalves: Sure.

Mr. DeBarge: For December 8th, yes.

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Mr. Silva: Ok.

Mr. DeBarge: Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Silva: Mr. DeBarge.

Mr. DeBarge: I make a motion that we postpone our Tax Classification Hearing until. . .what?

Ms. Villano: It's continue.

Mr. DeBarge: . . .sorry, to continue our Tax Classification Hearing until December 8, 2020 for a 5:30 p.m. hearing.

Mr. Rosenblum: Second.

Mr. Silva: Before we do go on I just want to make sure that there is nobody else on that has any comments or anything at this time. I don't believe there is. Mr. Gregoire is on but with the postponing, you're probably going to hold off on comments sir?

Mr. Gregoire: Yes Mr. Chairman that is correct. Thank you.

Mr. Silva: Ok, thank you. We have a motion and second. Mr. DeBarge?

Mr. DeBarge: Yes.

Mr. Silva: Mr. Goncalves?

Mr. Goncalves: Yes.

Mr. Silva: Mr. Rosenblum?

Mr. Rosenblum: Yes.

Mr. Silva: Mr. Silva? Yes. So, motion carries 4-0 to continue the hearing until next meeting, December 8th at 5:30. Can we now have, well no, we are not going to close the hearing because it is open now.

Ms. Villano: Right.

Mr. Silva: Thank you gentlemen.

Mr. Alves: Thank you everybody. Have a good night.

Mr. Rosenblum: Thank you. Good night.

6:30 p.m. – Board of Health Chairman, Health Agent, Public Health Nurse, Police Chief, Fire Chief, and HR Director to discuss strategy and enforcement since the Town has been placed in the high-risk category for COVID-19.

Andrea Crete, Health Agent and Angela Kramer, Public Health Nurse described how the Governor uses a daily rate metric over a two-week period based upon the population of a community and their positivity rate for COVID-19 being over 5% to determine which communities are considered high-risk. According to the report on the State's website, Mr. Goncalves read that for the two-week reporting period through November 19, 2020, Ludlow reached at 5.09% and had 126 positive cases.

Ms. Crete stated the Town is currently in Phase III Step 2, which does not affect our businesses in Town since the Town does not have any large venues.

Ms. Villano stated if the numbers do not improve over the next two weeks, the Town may need to revert back to Phase III Step 1 which will affect many of the smaller businesses in Town.

Mr. DeBarge stated his main concern is the accuracy and dissemination of information being provided to residents. Mr. DeBarge stated information has been coming forth through the weekly robocalls and articles in The Register. Mr. DeBarge suggested the Board of Health, as the overseer, should become more involved with communicating the Governor's orders and specific public health issues to Town businesses and residents by doing their own weekly robocalls.

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Daniel Valadas, Chief of Police stated the restrictive Governor's orders given by executive authority to other law enforcement executives in their jurisdictions, give them the authority to enforce based on suspicion and probable cause. Chief Valadas stated although civil fines can be issued, such offenses are not arrestable criminal acts. Chief Valadas stated his officers will assist the Board of Health with the enforcement of the Governor's orders if needed. Chief Valadas also stated he has the support of State Troopers and National Guardsmen. Chief Valadas stated all calls received are prioritized and addressed by his officers.

Mr. Rosenblum asked for clarification as to how the numbers are calculated and if it is known where the cases of COVID-19 are coming from. Mr. Goncalves asked to what extent does the Town contact trace. Nurse Kramer stated the cases come from a variety of different situations. Nurse Kramer stated the cases are coming from ages 20 to 50, exposures from work, not schools but outside sporting events, inside social gatherings, and individuals who do not wear masks or do not properly social distance. Nurse Kramer also stated, in her opinion, the severity of the virus now is not like it was back in April.

Ms. Crete stated the weekly communication to residents will be centered around Nurse Kramer's findings as she traces positive patients, their behaviors, and identifies any high-risk areas in the community contributing to possible upticks in cases. Ms. Crete stated she does not want to penalize establishments and further regulate them by adding more strict guidelines. Ms. Crete advised all to wear a mask since more people seem to be asymptomatic, less afraid, and tend to let their guard down. Ms. Crete stated the Board of Health does not respond to social media and if any residents have specific questions to please contact the Board of Health.

Ms. Villano stated the Town of Ludlow does have an official forum only used for notifications. Ms. Villano stated postings can be found on the Town website, cable TV and the Town's Facebook page.

Mr. Silva asked if the numbers are coming down. Nurse Kramer said the numbers are coming down very little, however Thanksgiving numbers have not been counted yet. Mr. Silva asked if there is anything else we can do. Ms. Crete stated we are doing all we can as a Town, but it is the individual choices made by residents and their actions that are leading to a rise in cases. Mr. Goncalves stated residents need to reorganize their priorities and temporarily make sacrifices.

Fire Chief Pease stated every individual has the responsibility to follow the guidelines. Fire Chief Pease stated Town officials should continue monitoring public places, however private gatherings are where the spread is happening. Fire Chief Pease agreed it would be helpful for the Town to continue to keep residents informed.

Nurse Kramer suggested businesses such as pharmacies should return to counting the number of customers entering and leaving their establishments.

Ms. Ribeiro stated from the employee standpoint, she has seen how the upticks have affected Town employees and residents alike. Ms. Ribeiro encourages employees to follow safety protocols and precautions. Ms. Ribeiro stated Blue Cross and Blue Shield have provided information to employees for various types of health well-being and services.

Mr. Silva suggested the Town should provide information to residents about testing sites.

Nurse Kramer stated the State expects to receive vaccines in December which will first be distributed to healthcare workers. Nurse Kramer stated another round of vaccines are expected to be distributed in the Spring.

Police Chief Valadas advised residents to go to mask.gov to watch the videos put forth by Governor Baker.

Correspondence:

251. John R. Maher, Director of Governmental Affairs, Charter Communications – notification of
251a. upcoming channel line-up changes.

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Moved by Mr. Rosenblum, seconded by Mr. Goncalves to file. Vote 4-0. All in favor.

252. Massachusetts Municipal Wholesale Electric Company (MMWEC) News Release – notifying the Board of the five-year signed power flow rights agreements with Hydro-Quebec (HQ), a Canadian public utility.

Moved by Mr. Goncalves, seconded by Mr. DeBarge to file. Vote 4-0. All in favor.

253. Patricia DeTomas – notifying the Board of her resignation as a volunteer on the Ludlow Cultural Council effective November 4, 2020.

Moved by Mr. DeBarge, seconded by Mr. Rosenblum to accept Ms. Patricia DeTomas' letter of resignation as a volunteer on the Ludlow Cultural Council, send her a letter of thanks and advertise for the position. Vote 4-0. All in favor.

254. Daniel J. Valadas, Chief of Police – notifying the Board of a special thank you from a resident to Officer Nathan Goodrow.

Moved by Mr. DeBarge, seconded by Mr. Rosenblum to file. Vote 4-0. All in favor.

255. Peter Serafino – request to be appointed as a Democratic poll worker. Democratic Town Committee Chairman recommends appointment.

Moved by Mr. Rosenblum, seconded by Mr. DeBarge to appoint Peter Serafino as a Democratic Poll worker as recommended by the Democratic Town Committee Chairman. Vote 4-0. All in favor.

256. Daniel J. Valadas, Chief of Police – notifying the Board of the resignation of Officer Matthew Corbin.

Moved by Mr. Rosenblum, seconded by Mr. Goncalves to accept the resignation of Officer Matthew Corbin. Vote 4-0. All in favor.

257. Megan Rogers Coll, P.E., U.S. Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration – notifying the Board the letter received from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Historical Commission dated October 21, 2020 for the Ludlow Mills Riverside Drive Infrastructure Project has been approved and satisfies Special Condition 24 of the Financial Assistance Award.

Moved by Mr. DeBarge, seconded by Mr. Rosenblum to file. Vote 4-0. All in favor.

258. Marylou Sudders and Thomas Turco, The Commonwealth of Massachusetts Executive Office of Health and Human Services – notifying the Board Ludlow is currently considered higher risk for COVID-19 transmission. The letter includes guidance and resources that have been developed in partnership with other higher risk municipalities.

Moved by Mr. DeBarge, seconded by Mr. Goncalves to file. Vote 4-0. All in favor.

259. Daniel J. Valadas, Chief of Police – requesting the Board to activate the Civil Service Alternate Police Officer Appointment for candidate Mateusz M. Cieslak, to an appointment as a Full-Time Police Officer with the Ludlow Police Department.

Moved by Mr. Rosenblum, seconded by Mr. Goncalves to activate the Civil Service Alternate Police Officer Appointment for candidate Mateusz M. Cieslak, to an appointment as a Full-Time Police Officer with the Ludlow Police Department. Vote 4-0. All in favor.

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Unfinished Business:

Board to approve and sign the contract between the Town and Town Administrator.

Moved by Mr. Goncalves, seconded by Mr. DeBarge to approve and sign the November 23, 2020 contract between the Town of Ludlow and Ellie Villano, Town Administrator. Vote 4-0. All in favor.

Board to approve and sign Selectmen Meeting Minutes of August 4, 2020.

Moved by Mr. Goncalves, seconded by Mr. DeBarge to approve and sign Selectmen Meeting Minutes of August 4, 2020. Members present were Mr. DeBarge, Mr. Goncalves, and Mr. Rosenblum. Vote 3-0-1 abstention by Mr. Silva.

Board to approve and sign Selectmen Meeting Minutes of August 10, 2020.

Moved by Mr. Goncalves, seconded by Mr. DeBarge to approve and sign Selectmen Meeting Minutes of August 10, 2020. Members present were Chairman Silva, Mr. Goncalves, Mr. Rosenblum and Mr. DeBarge. Vote 4-0. All in favor.

Board to approve and sign Selectmen Meeting Minutes of September 15, 2020.

Moved by Mr. Goncalves, seconded by Mr. DeBarge to approve and sign Selectmen Meeting Minutes of September 15, 2020. Members present were Chairman Silva, Mr. Goncalves, Mr. Rosenblum and Mr. DeBarge. Vote 4-0. All in favor.

Board to approve and sign Selectmen Meeting Minutes of October 5, 2020.

Moved by Mr. Goncalves, seconded by Mr. DeBarge to approve and sign Selectmen Meeting Minutes of October 5, 2020. Members present were Chairman Silva, Mr. Goncalves, Mr. Rosenblum and Mr. DeBarge. Vote 4-0. All in favor.

Board to approve and sign Executive Session Minutes of September 15, 2020.

Moved by Mr. Goncalves, seconded by Mr. DeBarge to approve and sign Executive Session Meeting Minutes of September 15, 2020. Members present were Chairman Silva, Mr. Goncalves, Mr. Rosenblum and Mr. DeBarge. Vote 4-0. All in favor.

Board to approve and sign Executive Session Minutes of September 29, 2020.

Moved by Mr. Goncalves, seconded by Mr. DeBarge to approve and sign Executive Session Meeting Minutes of September 29, 2020. Members present were Chairman Silva, Mr. Goncalves, Mr. Rosenblum and Mr. DeBarge. Vote 4-0. All in favor.

Board to approve and sign Executive Session Minutes of October 13, 2020.

Moved by Mr. Goncalves, seconded by Mr. DeBarge to approve and sign Executive Session Meeting Minutes of October 13, 2020. Members present were Chairman Silva, Mr. Goncalves, Mr. Rosenblum and Mr. DeBarge. Vote 4-0. All in favor.

New Business:

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Board discussed Cultural Council vacancies. Ms. Villano stated the Cultural Council currently consists of three members and no Chairman. Ms. Villano stated four letters of interest have been received.

Moved by Mr. Rosenblum, seconded by Mr. Goncalves to appoint Darlene Cincone, Janet Settembro, Matthew Tibbitts and Robert Radowski as members of the Ludlow Cultural Council. Vote 4-0. All in favor.

Board to approve and sign Mechanical and Billiard/Pool Table Licenses for 2021.

Moved by Mr. Goncalves, seconded by Mr. DeBarge to approve and sign Mechanical and Billiard/Pool Table Licenses for 2021. Vote 4-0. All in favor.

Board to approve and Chairman to sign Sunday Entertainment Licenses for 2021.

Moved by Mr. Goncalves, seconded by Mr. Rosenblum to approve and Chairman sign Sunday Entertainment Licenses for 2021. Vote 4-0. All in favor.

Board to approve and sign the Junk Collector's License for Treasures of the World for 2021.

Moved by Mr. Goncalves, seconded by Mr. Rosenblum to approve and sign the Junk Collector's License for Treasures of the World for 2021. Vote 3-0-1 abstention by Mr. Silva.

Board perused Selectmen Meeting Minutes of September 1, 2020.

Board perused Selectmen Meeting Minutes of September 29, 2020.

Board perused Selectmen Meeting Minutes of October 13, 2020.

Board perused Executive Session Minutes of October 27, 2020.

Mr. DeBarge stated the Recreation Commission needs to expand their internet capabilities at Whitney Park. Mr. DeBarge stated they ultimately would like to run a fiber optic cable to one of their buildings so kids can have internet capability. Mr. DeBarge stated since Charter is not able to do that, they want to create two to three hot spots in the area instead. Mr. DeBarge stated the fee would be $50 a month per hot spot to provide them with unlimited access which would be reimbursable through the CARES Act.

Moved by Mr. DeBarge and seconded by Mr. Rosenblum to approve the Recreation Commission to explore internet capabilities to no more than four hot spots for Whitney Park. Vote 4-0. All in favor.

Closing Comments:

Mr. Goncalves wished everyone a safe and Happy Thanksgiving. Mr. Goncalves reminded residents to keep their distance, respect the rules, and be careful.

Mr. DeBarge congratulated Jake Oliveira, our new State Representative. Mr. DeBarge also thanked Chip Harrington for saving the Town money by not having an election recount.

Mr. DeBarge stated Taylor Neveu, Girl Scout Troop 11139, wanted to do a clean-up project at Riverwalk. Mr. DeBarge stated the Girl Scout Troop were not able to connect with the Lions Club clean-up project. Mr. DeBarge stated the Troop will be cleaning up the flower pots on East and Sewall Streets Street this Saturday.

Mr. DeBarge stated the signs need to be put back up on Chapin and Swan Streets. Mr. DeBarge stated West Street and Old West Street needs a mirror on the opposite side of the road and would like to discuss this with Justin Larivee, Building Commissioner and Safety Committee.

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Mr. DeBarge wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving.

Mr. Rosenblum wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving and asked all to be safe this holiday season.

Ms. Villano stated she expressed the Board's request to have those signs put back up on Chapin and Swan Streets with the Chair of the DPW.

Mr. Silva wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving and reminded residents to stay safe.

Moved by Mr. Goncalves, seconded by Mr. DeBarge to adjourn the meeting at 7:42 p.m., enter into Executive Session for the purposes of discussing a pending litigation matter, and negotiations for the Police Dispatch union contract. Vote 4-0. All in favor.

Ludlow Board of Selectmen

All related documents can be viewed at the Board of Selectmen's Office during regular business hours.