The Meeting of the Board of Selectmen held on Tuesday, March 2, 2021 began at 5:30 p.m. Remote participation due to COVID-19.

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

First Order of Business: The Pledge of Allegiance

Visitations:

5:30 p.m. – Gary Blanchard, IT Manager – Classification Plan Change Request

Mr. Blanchard, IT Manager came before the Board to discuss updating his job description for IT Director and for a classification plan. Mr. Blanchard stated due to his workload and job responsibilities increasing, and his job description needs to be updated. Mr. Blanchard stated the size of the Town's information technology network has increased due to employees having remote access, the unification of dispatch at the public safety department between the police and fire departments including pending police reform technology, a new security camera system at the Senior Center, new software within various departments, promoting cyber security awareness and the implementation of network security measures and backup systems. Mr. Blanchard stated the Town has also been approved a cyber security awareness grant. Mr. Blanchard stated the Human Resource and Treasurer's departments are going cloud-based with some of the payroll information. Mr. Blanchard stated the IT department plays an integral role in emergency situations such as power outages, various weather events, and COVID. Mr. Blanchard stated during COVID, he enhanced the Town website to include Board of Health information and Board of Selectmen updates. Mr. Blanchard stated at one point, the COVID web page generated over 2,600 views per day and in November of 2020 the web page reached 90,000 hits on the Town website looking for information on COVID. Mr. Blanchard also stated his department saves the Town money by installing and performing maintenance on IT equipment.

Mr. Blanchard stated he has taken various state and local salary surveys. Mr. Blanchard stated the average salary for his current position is approximately $98,000 per year in comparison to surrounding communities with comparable networks. Mr. Blanchard stated his salary is currently $82,000 a year. Mr. Blanchard also asked the Board to consider moving him up to the next grade of the management scale which would not bring him near the average $98,000, but it would allow him steps to get there over the next few years.

Mr. Goncalves asked why there is such a disparity between the Town's IT Department and the School Department.

Mr. Blanchard stated the last time his salary was reviewed was approximately nine years ago. Mr. Blanchard stated the current IT Director at the School Department has been there approximately two years. Mr. Blanchard stated the top paid IT Department assistant at the School Department earns approximately $95,000. Mr. Blanchard stated they also have a database administrator and lower paid technicians.

Mr. Goncalves asked about the workload differentials and time spent getting those tasks completed during the day at the School Department versus here including during the summer.

Mr. Blanchard stated the workload is the same. Mr. Blanchard stated when he previously worked in the School Department, during the summer, time is spent cleaning up and wiping out various computers and laptops.

Mr. Goncalves asked Mr. Blanchard what responsibilities he will have regarding the Harris Brook Elementary School opening in the Fall.

Mr. Blanchard stated his staff will be responsible for only the installation of the fiber optic cables for the Harris Brook Elementary School.

Mr. Blanchard confirmed for Mr. Rosenblum that he is a non-union salaried employee. Mr. Blanchard stated the provision for time and a half for non-scheduled time of work is for emergencies that may occur on nights and weekends is negotiable.

Mr. Rosenblum asked Mr. Blanchard what his 1-5 years goals were, stated he finds our website difficult to navigate, and needs improvement. Mr. Blanchard stated the website is due for a facelift. Mr.

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Blanchard explained when he first created the website, the design idea was for the user to get to most things within two clicks. Mr. Blanchard also explained since outside website designers are expensive and beyond his budget, he will be redesigning the website.

Mr. Blanchard would love to see more departments utilizing the website for making more online payments, online applications for Town departments who process permits, and reporting purposes such as allowing residents to have the ability to report potholes to the DPW. Mr. Blanchard stated his department has one full time employee and another staff member who works 19 hours a week.

Mr. DeBarge stated he supports updating Mr. Blanchard's job description and his increase request however, Mr. DeBarge would like to hear from Ms. Ribeiro and schedule a subsequent meeting and does not think a decision can be made tonight.

Mr. Goncalves asked Mr. Blanchard what percentage of his current workload has to do with COVID. Mr. Blanchard stated 20% of his time is monitoring remote user access and 40% of his time is spent on security issues.

Mr. Goncalves asked if some of the CARES Act funds could be used to defray some of these costs. Ms. Villano stated almost all the equipment costs have been absorbed by the CARES Act funds. Ms. Villano stated Mr. Blanchard does not get paid overtime. Ms. Villano stated Mr. Blanchard's overtime hours are charged off to CARES Act funds.

Ms. Ribeiro stated she reached out to surrounding communities in the Pioneer Valley such as Agawam, Belchertown, and Wilbraham to compare salaries, job descriptions, and make up of other IT departments who support only the Town and not schools. Ms. Ribeiro stated the job description presented before the Board is a draft. Ms. Ribeiro stated an on-call internal policy is needed for the IT department especially for when Mr. Blanchard is out of the office and beyond the normal business hours. Ms. Ribeiro would like to have an opportunity to continue working on the draft before finalizing it.

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Mr. Silva stated the Board will schedule another meeting and get back to Mr. Blanchard regarding his request for a revised job description and classification change.

6:00 p.m. – Jorge Laires, Primavera – Alter of Premises

Mr. Goncalves: Mr. Chairman, I make a motion that we open the public hearing for Primavera, Laires Incorporated, Primavera Restaurant at 6:05 p.m.

Mr. DeBarge: Second.

Mr. Silva: We have a motion second. Mr. Rosenblum?

Mr. Rosenblum: Yes.

Mr. Silva: Mr. DeBarge?

Mr. DeBarge: Yes.

Mr. Silva: Mr. Goncalves?

Mr. Goncalves: Yes.

Mr. Silva: Mr. Silva, yes. Motion carries 4-0. With that Jorge if you could just update us on what it is you are looking to do and so on.

Mr. Laires: Basically, just adding an Alter of Premises to the license I guess it is to do outdoor dining.

Mr. Silva: So, you are looking to alter your license for outside?

Mr. Laires: That's correct.

Mr. Silva: Did everybody get their plan?

Mr. Goncalves: Yes.

Mr. DeBarge: Yes.

Mr. Laires: We went through the Planning Board already. So that was all approved.

Mr. Silva: It seems that it was all approved by the Planning Board, 5-0 I think the vote was.

Mr. DeBarge: It was unanimous.

Mr. Goncalves: 4-0.

Mr. Silva: Somebody absent.

Mr. DeBarge: Mmm.

Mr. Rosenblum: 35 seats?

Mr. Laires: Yeah.

Mr. Goncalves: Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Silva: Mr. Goncalves.

Mr. Goncalves: Is this the same plan that we approved when we did the temporary? Basically, so we've been through this already?

Mr. Laires: Yes.

Mr. DeBarge: There's nothing...

Mr. Goncalves: We are just making what was temporary, permanent to the license?

Mr. Silva: Right, but we should understand that was temporary and we kind of let some of the things slide a little bit to let businesses come on. . . so now that we are doing this, I don't believe that we've altered premises for outdoor for any establishments if any.

Mr. Rosenblum: I think Vanished Valley.

Ms. Villano: I want to say Vanished Valley recently. Open Door may have put on their, they have a deck.

Mr. Goncalves: Smoking area.

Mr. Silva: Smoking area, yea. So. . .

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Ms. Villano: I think that Mills Tavern at one point might have gone for an Alter of Premises. But to answer, to speak for Mr. Goncalves, these temporary Alter of Premises are going to end as soon as the Governor lifts the State of Emergency. So, I think that Mr. Laires is trying to do a permanent one. While the Planning Board has approved it, you just have to take a look at the enclosure portion of it.

Mr. Silva: Right and realize that we will be probably setting some kind of a precedence moving forward to other establishments that might want to do it.

Ms. Villano: Sure.

Mr. Silva: Ok, anybody have any questions of Mr. Laires?

Mr. Rosenblum: Mr. Chairman?

Mr. Silva: Mr. Rosenblum.

Mr. Rosenblum: I'm glad that you are coming forward and doing this because I think this is the next step for people that if it comes down the road and we have a surge, at least you are already prepared to take care of the outside dining. So, um, it's good to see this. I mean it's sad that in the 22 years I've been in Town I've never eaten there, and I only live up on Green Street. So, I'm definitely going to go. But, I'm glad to see this. I'm in full support of it because we need to deal with the smaller businesses like yourself that are in Town. We need to be able to keep them going if we get back into another situation like we are in now and if it gets worse. I'm in full support of it.

Mr. DeBarge: Mr. Chairman?

Mr. Silva: Mr. DeBarge.

Mr. DeBarge: I think this is fantastic. I'll just say the same thing. Who knows with this. . .with the pandemic, with the Governor, with how we go back and forth we go with the rules, who knows how long this is going to go. I think it's great. I think all restaurants that are capable to do this should do this. I am in favor of it 100%. I think it looks fantastic.

Mr. Laires: Thank you.

Mr. Silva: One question, Ellie now we'll have to deal with the ABCC to alter that as well? Will they be involved?

Ms. Villano: Yes, they have to approve the alterations.

Mr. Laires: I submitted that all already.

Mr. Silva: They will be looking for us to approve it.

Ms. Villano: So, the Board has a form that they have to complete saying that they approve it and it all goes and then an inspector usually comes out and views the whole plan to site. I think the biggest concern when I said the confines of it is, and I think the ABCC looks at this when you do a permanent Alter of Premises is the inability to get up and walk away with a drink.

Mr. Silva: I just have one more question George, and I know you went to the Planning Board and got it approved and what not. I see that the parking goes right over to the section where there's parking. Hopefully, there's, and I didn't look at the plan that great, hopefully there's barriers that will prevent any cars from. . .

Mr. Laires: Yea, there is.

Mr. Rosenblum: Like big cement potted plants or something.

Mr. Silva: Yea, something.

Mr. Laires: Yea, it's in the site plan.

Mr. Silva: Ok, I just wanted to make sure.

Mr. Laires: I agree.

Mr. Silva: Very good. Thank you. Anybody else have any questions?

Mr. Goncalves: No. Mr. Chairman?

Mr. Silva: Mr. Goncalves.

Mr. Goncalves: I'd like to make a motion that we approve the alteration of premise as submitted with the attached plan.

Mr. DeBarge: Seconded.

Mr. Silva: Motion seconded. Mr. Rosenblum?

Mr. Rosenblum: Yes.

Mr. Silva: Mr. DeBarge?

Mr. DeBarge: Yes.

Mr. Silva: Mr. Goncalves?

Mr. Goncalves: Yes.

Mr. Silva: Mr. Silva, yes. Motion carries 4-0. You're in business George. I keep calling you George because I know you so well. I'm sorry.

Mr. Laires: That's ok. Thank you all. (Laughter)

Mr. Rosenblum: I make a motion that we close the hearing at 6:12 p.m.

Mr. Goncalves: Good catch. Second.

Mr. DeBarge: At least someone is paying attention.

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Mr. Silva: Motion seconded. Mr. DeBarge?

Mr. DeBarge: Yes.

Mr. Silva: Mr. Goncalves?

Mr. Goncalves: Yes.

Mr. Silva: Mr. Rosenblum?

Mr. Rosenblum: Yes.

Mr. Silva: Yes. Motion carries.

6:15 p.m. – Eric Segundo, Veterans Services – Grant Opportunity

Mr. Segundo discussed a grant opportunity for the Town to apply for a matching grant up to $20,000 specific to Veterans Memorials or anything to restore or maintain anything related to Veterans especially historical Veteran monuments.

Mr. Segundo stated volunteers began the cleaning process last year on some of the gravestones on Center Street. Mr. Segundo stated this grant has two requirements which are a letter of support from the community, or Selectmen, and a letter of commitment of matching funds. Mr. Segundo stated if we were to apply for the full $20,000, the Town would need to commit to $10,000. Mr. Segundo stated the grant does allow for both direct and indirect expenses, third party contributions, in kind donations and volunteer time. Mr. Segundo also provided an estimate to repair some of the larger monuments that are in the Center Street Cemetery such as the Captain Hubbard memorial.

Mr. Rosenblum stated he was amazed at the cleaning process of the monuments.

Mr. DeBarge stated he worked with Mr. Segundo to clean up the monuments and endorses the grant.

Mr. Segundo stated when the grant is submitted, the Town has to commit to the funds and he seeks approval in the event that we need to allocate monies separate from the volunteer time or if I am not meeting the volunteer time requirement, that the Town does authorize the department to expend the funds up to the $10,000 which is currently in his budget or seek the funds through the DPW's Perpetual Care Fund for cemeteries.

Mr. DeBarge stated the DPW's Perpetual Care Fund is an option and should be specifically used for these expenses.

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Mr. Silva asked if funds could also be used toward cleaning the memorial at the Lusitano Club.

Mr. Segundo stated the funds should be able to be used towards cleaning the memorial at the Lusitano Club especially since it is the starting point of our Memorial Day Parade and a center piece of honoring our veterans each year.

Mr. Segundo stated this grant is not just specific to the Town of Ludlow. Mr. Segundo stated if the Lusitano Club has a 501(c)(3), or any non-profit organization, and they want to apply for this grant, if they match the 50% and get it approved, that is additional monies for that item.

Mr. Segundo stated the deadline for the grant is April 15, 2021.

Moved by Mr. DeBarge, seconded by Mr. Goncalves to approve a letter of commitment from the Town to our Veterans Service Director to apply for a grant to the Massachusetts State Historical Records Advisory Board for the Veterans Heritage Grant and the appropriate funding share through fundraising and in-kind donations up to the matching amount. Vote 4-0. All in favor.

Mr. Segundo stated the Town of Ludlow has been approved by the VA as a vaccination site. Mr. Segundo stated the minimal commitment of 150 vaccines will be at the Elks on March 16th strictly for veterans enrolled in the VA system. Mr. Segundo stated appointments can be made between 9AM-12P and after 12P walk-ins will be accepted if supplies are available. Mr. Segundo stated, although a conservative maybe, it will be Johnson & Johnson vaccine. Mr. Segundo stated veterans enrolled in the VA system can begin calling on March 10th to schedule appointments, the telephone number will be published, including on social media, and robocalls. Mr. Segundo stated those veterans who are not

enrolled in the VA system should call his office for assistance with enrolling. Mr. Segundo stated if a veteran goes to the Elks on March 16th and are not enrolled, they will have someone there to assist them with enrolling, if eligible, but this will take longer.

Mr. DeBarge commended Mr. Segundo for all his hard work with contacting the Eastern part of the state regarding vaccinations for veterans and asking why the Western part of the state was not being treated the same.

6:45 p.m. - Linda Collette - 250th Town Anniversary

Ms. Collette discussed the logistics of organizing Ludlow's 250th Semi-quincentennial Celebration in 2024. Ms. Collette stated when the Town did a similar event for their 200th Anniversary, the planning process took approximately 4 years. Ms. Collette would like to get started with forming a committee of 4-5 people as well as subcommittees to begin discussing ideas, introduce this idea to the Town and begin getting volunteers and the community excited about it.

Mr. Silva asked if this could be incorporated with Celebrate Ludlow.

Ms. Collette agreed but does not want to take away anything from other Town committees or events.

Mr. Silva recommends a committee up to 11 people made up of volunteers and Town department representatives.

Mr. DeBarge suggests asking for volunteers from the community, appointing a safety committee member, police, fire, and a community member as chairman such as Ms. Collette.

Ms. Collette stated she reached out to a woman organizing similar events for a much smaller town and suggested that with the size of our Town, and the amount of people willing to come forward to volunteer, we would have a successful event.

Ms. Collette stated she has people in mind to assist her with organizing the event.

Mr. Silva stated the committee will be advertised on cable and all letters of interest should be submitted to the Board of Selectmen.

Moved by Mr. Rosenblum, seconded by Mr. DeBarge to form a Ludlow 250th Semi-quincentennial Committee, nominate Linda Collette as the Chairperson, and to also form a committee of up to 11 people. Vote 4-0. All in favor.

Correspondence:

37. Charles D. Baker, Governor, MassDoT – informing the Board that the Chapter 90 apportionment for FY22 for the Town of Ludlow is $693,601.

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

38. John R. Maher, Director of Government Affairs, Charter Communications – informing the Board of rebranding to the channel lineup serving the community.

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

39. Marylou Sudders, Secretary, Executive Office of Health and Human Services – informing the Board with an update regarding the state's effort regarding vaccination distribution.

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

40. Director, U.S. Census Bureau – requesting Chairman Silva to confirm or update contact information using the online contact update form on the Boundary and Annexation Survey (BAS) website.

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

41. Michael Szlosek, Town Moderator – notification of his appointment of Christopher Ganhao to the Town of Ludlow Finance Committee effective immediately to fill a 3-year term.

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

42. Board to vote to abate Invoice #388 for Kentucky Fried Chicken for their Common Victualler license due to their paying the Board of Selectmen prior to the invoicing.

Moved by Mr. Goncalves, seconded by Mr. DeBarge to abate Invoice #388 for Kentucky Fried Chicken for their Common Victualler license. Vote 4-0. All in favor.

43. Hampden County Regional Contributory Retirement System Audit Report – January 1, 2014 – December 31, 2017.

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

43a. The Towns of East Longmeadow, Hampden, Longmeadow and Wilbraham – asking the Board if the Town of Ludlow would like to take part in a regional meeting with the Board of Hampden County Regional Retirement System to discuss audit findings.

Moved by Mr. Goncalves, seconded by Mr. DeBarge to file. Vote 4-0. All in favor. Mr. DeBarge and Ms. Villano will participate in the regional meeting.

44. Board to approve a request to charge off medical expenses and lost wages to Chapter 41, Section 111F for an injury sustained by a Firefighter as a result of an incident that occurred on February 19, 2021.

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Moved by Mr. Rosenblum, seconded by Mr. DeBarge to approve the request to charge off medical expenses and lost wages to Chapter 41, Section 111F for an injury sustained by a Firefighter as a result of an incident that occurred on February 19, 2021. Vote 4-0. All in favor.

44a. Board to approve a request to charge off medical expenses and lost wages to Chapter 41, Section 111F for an injury sustained by a Firefighter as a result of an incident that occurred on February 24, 2021.

Moved by Mr. Rosenblum, seconded by Mr. DeBarge to approve the request to charge off medical expenses and lost wages to Chapter 41, Section 111F for an injury sustained by a Firefighter as a result of an incident that occurred on February 24, 2021. Vote 4-0. All in favor.

45. Joseph Zebian, Senior at Minnechaug Regional High School – requesting permission to place a link on the Town website to his survey which is evaluating residents on their awareness of what Westover Air Reserve Base is doing in response to the effects of anthropogenic climate change.

Moved by Mr. Rosenblum, seconded by Mr. DeBarge to grant permission to place a link on the Town website for Joseph Zebian, a Senior at Minnechaug Regional High School for a survey evaluating residents on their awareness of what Westover Air Reserve Base is doing in response to the effects of anthropogenic climate change as per Mr. Blanchard's recommendations.

Mr. DeBarge stated requests to put links on our website will be taken on a case by case basis.

46. Stephen Santos, Chairman – informing the Board that the Department of Public Works Snow and Ice Removal Budget has been over expended as of January 31, 2021. Board to declare a State of Emergency. Board of Selectmen to approve the snow and ice deficit spending.

Moved by Mr. DeBarge, seconded by Mr. Goncalves to declare a State of Emergency as so requested by the Chairman of Board of Public Works to approve the snow and ice deficit spending as of December 31.

47. Ryan Linton, Superintendent, Westover Golf Course – requesting the Board to declare the equipment listed from Westover Municipal Golf Course as surplus.

Moved by Mr. Rosenblum, seconded by Mr. DeBarge to grant the request to declare the equipment listed from Westover Municipal Golf Course as surplus. Vote 4-0. All in favor.

48. Matt Fontaine, Troop 180 Boy Scout – requesting the Board's permission to place a money donation box at the walk-up window at Town Hall for donations to go towards his project to make COVID Relief Kits for the Springfield Rescue Mission.

Moved by Mr. Goncalves, seconded by Mr. DeBarge to accept the idea and allow permission to Matt Fontaine to utilize the Town services with regard to establishing a location for a drop box to enable people to drop donations off for the COVID relief packages that he is putting together. Vote 4-0. All in favor.

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Unfinished Business:

Board to approve and sign the Common Victualler's License for Shivshankar LLC d/b/a Subway, 34 East Street due to change of ownership.

Moved by Mr. Goncalves, seconded by Mr. DeBarge to approve and sign the Common Victualler's License for Shivshankar LLC d/b/a Subway, 34 East Street due to an ownership change. Vote 4-0. All in favor.

Board to approve and Chairman to sign the Contract Amendment #2 – Agreement Between the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission and Town of Ludlow for the Disbursement and Use of Emergency COVID-19 Funding.

Moved by Mr. Goncalves, seconded by Mr. DeBarge to approve and Chairman to sign the Contract Amendment #2 – Agreement Between the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission and Town of Ludlow for the Disbursement and Use of Emergency COVID-19 Funding. Vote 4-0. All in favor.

Board to discuss and approve an extension to the grant administrators contract between the Town of Ludlow and Westmass for the Riverside Drive Infrastructure Project. This would include an extension on the length of the contract and an increase to the monetary contract which would be covered under the MassWorks/EDA grants.

Moved by Mr. DeBarge, seconded by Mr. Goncalves to approve an extension to the grant administrators contract between the Town of Ludlow and Westmass for the Riverside Drive Infrastructure Project. Vote 4-0. All in favor.

New Business:

Board to approve and Chairman to sign the WestMass ElderCare FY22 Contract – Non-Federal Match: Title IIIA Older American Act for the Town of Ludlow.

Moved by Mr. Goncalves, seconded by Mr. DeBarge to approve and Chairman to sign the WestMass ElderCare FY22 Contract – Non-Federal Match: Title IIIA Older American Act for the Town of Ludlow. Vote 4-0. All in favor.

Board to approve and sign ten copies of the call of the election for the March 22, 2021 Town Election.

Moved by Mr. Rosenblum, seconded by Mr. Goncalves to approve and sign ten copies of the call of the election for the March 22, 2021 Town Election. Vote 4-0. All in favor.

Board to approve and Chairman to sign the 4th amendment to the contact between the Town and Wright-Pierce for the Riverside Drive Project.

Moved by Mr. Goncalves, seconded by Mr. DeBarge to approve and Chairman to sign the 4th amendment to the contact between the Town and Wright-Pierce for the Riverside Drive Project. Vote 4-0. All in favor.

Miscellaneous:

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

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Closing Comments:

Mr. Goncalves advised residents to be aware of telephone scams involving social security and vaccine appointments asking to disclose personal information. Mr. Goncalves advised to be careful and be kind.

Mr. Rosenblum stated he did not have any closing comments.

Mr. DeBarge stated his son's cohort went back to school. Mr. DeBarge stated his son is attending many of his classes by himself and hopes his son will be back full time before the semester is over. Mr. DeBarge questions whether his son is getting the same education as his teacher teaches others virtually. Mr. DeBarge stated he is sympathetic to the teachers. Mr. DeBarge stated restaurants are back to 100% capacity and bars are at 0% capacity. Mr. DeBarge stated he recently became a victim of an Amazon scam, and had to change his banking information, and warned residents to beware.

Mr. Silva asked residents to stay safe and not let their guard down.

Moved by Mr. Rosenblum, seconded by Mr. DeBarge to enter into Executive Session and to not return for the purposes of discussing a litigation matter. To discuss strategy with respect to litigation if an open meeting, may have a detrimental effect on the litigation position of the public body and the Chair so declares at 7:19 p.m. 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.