The Meeting of the Board of Selectmen held on Tuesday, April 6, 2021 began at 5:30 p.m. Remote participation due to COVID-19.

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

First Order of Business: The Pledge of Allegiance

Visitations:

5:30 p.m. – Eric Segundo, Veterans Services Director – Memorial Day Activities

Mr. Segundo, Veterans Services Director came before the Board to discuss Memorial Day Activities. Mr. Segundo stated as of today, the Governor's orders prohibit parade activities. Mr. Segundo stated due to the timing between now and Memorial Day, he recommends not planning for a parade, but rather a socially distanced, COVID compliant ceremony on Memorial Day at the memorial on East Street at 11:00 a.m. and the wreath laying the Friday before the ceremony.

Mr. DeBarge stated he is saddened but agrees the logistics do not allow at this time for a parade and supports the Memorial Day ceremony suggested by Mr. Segundo.

Mr. Segundo stated they will do the flag replacements at Island Pond on Tuesday, April 27th at 4:00 p.m. with a rain date of Thursday, April 29th.

Moved by Mr. DeBarge, seconded by Mr. Goncalves to go forward with the suggestion of the Memorial Day ceremony from our Veterans Services Director, Eric Segundo. Vote 5-0. All in favor.

Moved by Mr. DeBarge, seconded by Mr. Goncalves to inform the public and postpone the Memorial Day parade. Vote 5-0. All in favor.

Eric Segundo, Veterans Services Director - Veterans Clerical Staff Position and Hours

Mr. Segundo came before the Board to clarify the position and seek an additional hour for the position. Mr. Segundo stated the Clerical Staff position was split between Human Resources with 18 hours and Veterans Services with 10 hours which totals 28 hours per week. Mr. Segundo stated when COVID occurred and remote working took place, his office became all paperwork via mail and email. Mr. Segundo stated the remote working did not work for him however, this position is still needed. Mr. Segundo stated he currently has another 7-hour position in his office that comes in on Fridays to do the bills and veterans' benefits input. Mr. Segundo stated he wants to combine the 10 hours with that individual's 7 hours and add 1 more hour a week to the budget to make it an 18-hour position so that when the building does open, he can have staff 6 hours a day for 3 days a week. Mr. Segundo stated the current pay rate for the position is $22.62 per hour. Mr. Segundo stated the extra hour does not affect any additional benefits.

Mr. Segundo stated when the current budget was passed, halfway through the year there was a step increase for the administrative position for the Human Resource position, so the budget was never adjusted for that step increase or the contractual 2%. Mr. Segundo stated he is currently budgeted at $17,787 and it is going to be $21,172, an increase of almost $3,000. Mr. Segundo stated the current budget of $17,787 should have been $19,084 if the position stayed.

Ms. Villano stated to accommodate Mr. Segundo, the Board would be changing the Classification Plan to allow the Veterans assistant position to be an 18-hour position.

Moved by Mr. Gennette, seconded by Mr. Silva to approve the extra one hour for the Veterans Clerical staff position as requested by Mr. Segundo. Vote 5-0. All in favor.

Mr. Goncalves stated our community is very fortunate and thanked Mr. Segundo for all he recently did for the veterans with the vaccine.

Mr. Segundo stated it is a pleasure to work for the Town and the community and it is the community that helps him provide for the veterans. Mr. Segundo stated Ludlow is a very patriotic and supportive Town towards veterans and thanked the Selectmen.

5:45 p.m. – Police Chief Valadas – New Reform & FY22 Budget New Position Request

Chief Valadas appeared before the Board along with Lieutenant Brennan, Lieutenant Irwin, and Detective Sergeant Kornacki.

Chairman Rosenblum stated the capacity of the conference room is 10 people and the other officers could appear before the Board one at a time.

Chief Valadas came before the Board and presented his synopsis of the Police Department budget requests and the Ludlow Police Department Organizational Chart. Chief Valadas stated the duties of 9 new positions proposed which he feels would adequately staff the department for a period of 5 years.

Chief Valadas discussed recent legislation regarding mandates which currently have no funding sources such as grants. Chief Valadas discussed various Police Reform Municipal Agency Action Items provided by the Massachusetts Chiefs of Police Association, Inc. and noted some items require compliance by July 1, 2021. Chief Valadas discussed various training and certification requirements officers will also need to complete. Chief Valadas stated various data compilation and reporting will also be required which will take a lot man hours and takes away from police work.

Chief Valadas proposed organizing a 50-person police force to serve the Ludlow community.

Mr. Goncalves asked if Civil Service foresees an issue with recruits.

Chief Valadas stated he has a viable list of in-house promotions as well as candidates from the Civil Service list. Chief Valadas stated we have a very young police department.

Mr. Silva stated he believes Chief Valadas proposal is good but does not know how the Town can afford to fund nine new positions.

Mr. Goncalves asked if there was a possibility of officer sharing for any of the task force.

Chief Valadas stated we do have the support of State Police as well as limited support from the Sheriff's Department.

Mr. Gennette asked if Chief Valadas' request was a 5-year plan and what is needed now.

Chief Valadas stated he cannot have one detective doing a single narcotic operation at night. Chief Valadas stated he needs a Detective Lieutenant because according to the chart, he takes the Detective Lieutenant, his existing Sergeant's position moves right into the second shift and creates a narcotics unit. Chief Valadas stated he would only need that Sergeant; two to three officers and he will have a narcotics unit. Chief Valadas stated he would get the most out of the two split Sergeants.

Chief Valadas stated if BJA grants become available he will apply but they are not for Sergeants.

Mr. DeBarge stated he reviewed all the mandates, police reform material, certifications and training requirements. Mr. DeBarge stated Chief Valadas' proposal is very aggressive and shows forward thinking. Mr. DeBarge stated the proposal for all 9 positions is very costly and estimates it to be more than a million dollars if career incentives, EMT stipends, overtime, retirement, and health insurance were all included. Mr. DeBarge also has a growing concern of sustainability with any hiring at this time since we do not know where we are going financially due to COVID. Mr. DeBarge stated each municipality will probably have to fund the body and cruiser cameras expenses. Mr. DeBarge stated he also considered the Uniform Crime Report where it equates one officer per 1,000 of the total population of a community and compared that with surrounding communities such as Agawam – population of 28,300, 50 officers, or 1.7 officers per 1,000 residents; Greenfield – population of 17,400, 32 officers, or 1.8 officers per 1,000 residents; and Auburn. Mr. DeBarge stated Ludlow has 41 officers or 1.9 officers per 1,000 residents and Massachusetts seems to be trending at 1.8 officers per 1,000. Mr. DeBarge stated the Uniform Crime Report says the national average is 2.2 officers per 1,000 residents. Mr. DeBarge stated 50 officers would bring us up to 2.3 officers per 1,000 residents and Massachusetts seems to be trending at 2.8 officers. Mr. DeBarge stated we are at our levy limit for the Town as far as expenditures. Mr. DeBarge stated even if we obtained a quarter of this additional expense, we would

be in a 2 ½ override which the Town has never voted in favor. Mr. DeBarge stated considering our tax base, he is more interested in a long-term plan. Mr. DeBarge stated previous police Chief McGowan and Chief Madera hired 16 officers during 2014-2020.

Chief Valadas clarified the 16 officers mentioned by Mr. DeBarge were not all new positions. Chief Valadas stated since he joined in May 1990 as a special, the department added approximately 7 sergeants because we put a full time sergeant in the detective bureau; in 2014 Chief Madera added a lieutenant on 2nd shift so only 2 supervisors were added; acquired grants for patrolmen; Chief McGowan and Lieutenant Madera at the time presented a plan to the Board asking for 5 officers and the Board of Selectmen approved two one year and another two in a year. In the 1990s, our department grew the most with a program called Cops Fast Cops More, in which 5 officers were hired. At one time 3 were hired through Cops Fast Cops More and our dispatch which freed those officers to go on the street. This was from the 1993 Omnibus Crime Bill which funded the growth of many police departments. We grew by at least 6 officers with that community policing funding and that was when School Resource Officers (SROs) started.

Mr. Rosenblum stated although he sympathizes with the request of Chief Valadas and acknowledges that the department is shorthanded in certain areas, his proposed budget increase would require a 2.5% override especially with the expected mandates coming with no State or Federal funds forthcoming. Mr. Rosenblum stated a better plan would be how do we build these positions over the next 5 years.

Mr. Gennette suggested to first see what is coming up with the budget and then come up with a plan for the next 3, 5, or 10 years in order to put something into action. This needs to be revisited and see what we can do and when we can do it.

Mr. Goncalves stated every community is going to have the same issue and we will need to implement mandates. Mr. Goncalves asked how much overtime would be saved?

Chief Valadas stated some costs are event driven. Chief Valadas stated call volumes have increased and there is a flood of illicit narcotics in the area.

Detective Sergeant Kornacki stated if we do not investigate drug cases in a proactive way, it seeps into the community. Detective Sergeant Kornacki stated the creation of a narcotics unit would be ideal to address issues. Detective Sergeant Kornacki stated we cannot expect an outside agency to police our community, we know our community best. Detective Sergeant Kornacki stated we are seeing an influx of drugs in our community like we've never seen before. Detective Sergeant Kornacki stated we do not have the manpower necessary to effectively conduct these investigations and it is becoming overwhelming, has cost us some personal lives in our detective bureau which ultimately costs our community. Instead of fighting from behind, it would be nice to get some help and get ahead of the game a little bit. Detective Sergeant Kornacki stated the department supplies law and order as well as grace and dignity by addressing these issues in a compassionate way, while conducting strong investigations and great partnerships with other agencies.

Mr. Goncalves stated most of the community does not have an idea on crime numbers.

Detective Sergeant Kornacki stated that is testament to the police department. Detective Sergeant Kornacki stated he would love to go into detail with any of the selectmen to share a handful of cases and explain the level of work required to conduct a proper investigation. Detective Sergeant Kornacki stated we have a responsibility to this community to have an adequately staffed detective bureau and police department to protect its citizens and the community at large from lawsuits.

Mr. DeBarge stated the police department is doing a fantastic job with the current level of officers. Mr. DeBarge asked if an influx of staff all at once is necessary. Mr. DeBarge stated the cost must be discussed. Mr. DeBarge stated we have a chance to have a very low tax rate this year. Mr. DeBarge stated it is incumbent upon us to take every request and keep the tax rate in the same conversation especially when we have numbers that show that things are not out of control without being able to tell where the future is going.

Ms. Collins stated based on budget requests that came in, we looked at, for Level 1 budget, no new positions that had not already been approved by the Board of Selectmen, only contractual obligations and union agreement salary contracts. We only have $557,000 left in excess levy. Even if the Board decided to take this on, we would still be in an override. In addition, there are other things that have been brought to the Board and Finance Committee totaling $372,000 that the Finance Committee is

recommending approving. If those were all to be approved, we only have $184,000 in excess levy which would only support one of these positions. The other concern would be, any other additional training required in fiscal year 2022, and body cams would be outside of this and Ms. Collins is not sure what the plan was for them if they were going to be capital items brought to Capital Planning but again, that would be next year's budget in fiscal 2023. Ms. Collins doesn't know if anything is mandated in the current fiscal year 2022 budget. Ms. Collins stated she was confused about what was being mandated.

Chief Valadas stated the only mandates are the certification dates. There's no exact date the department needs body cams, plate readers, implicit bias or use of force trainings completed. For this fiscal year and next, some training mandates will have to be accomplished through the MBTC which can be done virtually but does involve some overtime. Chief Valadas asked if we have a Stabilization Fund.

Ms. Collins stated we have a Stabilization Fund. Typically, we do not fund your budget with free cash or stabilization funds, it would be a one-time purchase because we will end up in the same situation next year where we would need to fund it with stabilization funds and for many years the Town did use free funds to reduce our tax rate. We stopped doing that a few years ago, because we were borrowing so much money and we needed bond rating, the Town is getting comfortable with what our tax rate should be. We should only be seeing those 2.5% increases every year which over the past couple of years I think we are getting there. However, to go back and pull free cash or use stabilization, that is just a band-aid and not a permanent funding source.

Chief Valadas thanked Ms. Collins for the explanation. Chief Valadas stated he does not want his request to get lost and proposes he can do something over the next five years. He asked for the immediacy of a couple important positions.

Mr. Gennette asked if the split Sergeant position was one of Chief Valadas' high priority requests.

Chief Valadas stated a lieutenant allows him to take the existing and immediately partner up with a detective on the second shift. He stated even if it is two officers, that's a unit. The split sergeant between the midnight and second shift would help tremendously not only with overtime but if he's down an officer he will not have to fill in overtime. One split sergeant on the second and third shifts and one detective lieutenant, those two positions will significantly help our police department.

Mr. Gennette asked what the increase cost would be for those two positions.

Chief Valadas stated he would be hiring within from an existing active civil service list. We would have to backfill those. Those two positions with the promotions would be two patrolmen coming up. We would cover the raises or rather the differences of the patrolman going to sergeant, and one sergeant going to lieutenant. Chief Valadas stated it would be approximately $120,000 meaning $60,000 each.

Mr. Gennette stated he needs to see the budget with actual numbers before entertaining this.

Mr. Rosenblum stated he does not see a decision being made on this tonight, suggests it needs to be discussed further after reviewing the preliminary budget and it needs to be fiscally sound to the taxpayers.

Mr. Silva stated having one narcotics detective out on patrol alone, is unsettling.

Chief Valadas stated he doesn't let his officers endanger themselves.

Mr. Rosenblum stated after further discussion, he will invite Chief Valadas to appear before the Board at a future date.

Chief Valadas stated he will be meeting with the Finance Committee next Wednesday and thanked the Board for listening to his proposal.

Lieutenant Brennan stated Chief Valadas presented a very bold plan because he wants his office to succeed. Lieutenant Brennan stated in order to start digging for these grants, we need the Board's support. Lieutenant Brennan discussed State, local and pro certification needs and training commitments.

Lieutenant Irwin is the Operations Lieutenant and advocated for officer wellness and the technology needed to support our officers. He stated the three things that gets an officer into trouble in this job are failure to discipline, supervise, and train. Lieutenant Irwin stated you can't get around it to keep our officers safe.

Chief Valadas thanked the Board again, stated he's informing the Board on what his department can do for the community, understands it is a lot, and that it cannot all be done at once.

7:15 p.m. - Steve Santos, BPW - Staffing Positions Request

Mr. Santos stated at one time the department had an entry level position called a PW1 which is a laborer with a driver's license, trims weeds, and shovels. Mr. Santos discussed and distributed the job description to the Board members. Mr. Santos stated he is asking for two PW1 positions to be put back into the classification plan. Mr. Santos is not sure how or when those positions were taken out, but they are on the classification for compensation but not our classification plan. A PW2 position, it is the same as a laborer with a CDL license which enables them to drive the salt and sand vehicles. A PW3 position requires a hoister license. A PW4 position is a foreman. Currently, there are 14 union employees, 2 PW2s, 11 PW3s and 1 PW4. Five years ago, we had 18 full time positions, 1 part-time and 6 summer help. The entry level starting pay is $18.52 and the maximum is $20.50 after 5 years. With benefits for the PW1 it would be approximately $36,000-$38,000 per year. We did have a part time position in the transfer station for $25,000. We were also going to cut our summer help to two which we appropriated $27,000 for five summer help. We would rather have the money spent on a PW1 position where we would have the person all year long. What we save in the summer help and the part time position in Solid Waste, it would be enough to cover one of the PW1 positions. We are asking the Finance Committee to finance the full second PW1 position. He has a meeting with the Finance Committee on Monday. Mr. Santos asked the Board if he could put the two PW2's into the classification plan. We do have some positions on a classification plan that are not funded. We are looking to fund two PW3's that were unfunded last year but those are already on a classification plan.

Mr. Silva asked Mr. Santos if he was adding one and a half positions to the department?

Mr. Santos stated he is seeking to add two PW1's to the classification plan.

Mr. Silva asked if the 25-hour position was a benefited position.

Mr. Santos stated the 25-hour position was not a benefited position.

Mrs. Villano stated a permanent 25-hour position is benefited. Mrs. Villano clarified that Mr. Santos is seeking to add two positions that were unfunded from last year and asking for two additional positions. Of those additional two positions, he will be funding them from the $25,000 plus four summer help.

Mr. Santos stated for the two summer help, it is a total of $16,800. Last year we had $27,000 for four summer help. He believes there is $4,200 left for the summer help.

Mr. Silva asked Mr. Santos if he had a number as to what this will add to your budget as far as personnel.

Mr. Santos stated he did not bring that number with him.

Ms. Villano stated the 25-hour position was a part-time position that allowed for a retired employee from the DPW to come back to work. He was maxed at the number of hours he could work and was not benefited under the hours but the retired with full benefits.

Mr. Silva asked Ms. Collins what the increase in the budget is that Mr. Santos is looking for.

Ms. Collins stated Mr. Santos requested $78,540 in the budget which would cover two new positions but now it sounds like you have funding that would cover a portion of that? I think you said $16,800 plus $125,000?

Mr. Santos said yes.

Ms. Collins stated Mr. Santos has $41,800 to cover the two requested positions which total $78,540 available.

Mr. Santos stated that is correct, we input the total until we do the budget because overtime was included in those two line items.

Ms. Collins stated all Mr. Santos needs is $36,740 to cover the two positions because you have current funding which you can transfer over.

Mr. Santos stated that is correct.

Mr. Silva stated so we are looking at $36,000 for two PW1 positions. So, let's go back to the unfunded positions from last year.

Ms. Collins agreed they were not funded last year. They were removed last year due to COVID. The positions were not filled, and we were trying to reduce the budget. Those positions are in Mr. Santos' Level 1 request for fiscal year 2022.

Mr. Silva reiterated that the total number for staffing is $36,000 for this coming year plus benefits and Mr. Santos agreed.

Mr. Goncalves asked if Mr. Santos had 18 employees and is now down to 14.

Mr. Santos agreed.

Mr. Goncalves asked what suffered with the loss of those four employees that you need to get two back over the last year?

Mr. Santos stated it's a slower response. The athletic fields suffer. We have issues on the roadways, public safety is the biggest thing. Overtime to get people to cover in emergencies. It takes everything a little bit longer. We'd like to do more on Saturdays such as lining the fields. The transfer station is killing us. From March until December, you are paying the highest rate of a PW3 at the transfer station for 8 hours for that period of time is costing $36,000. At least the overtime in this would be substantially less for one PW1. The issue that we have with the transfer station is when we open the back, we usually have a loader pushing up the piles so that would have to be a PW3, but then we could put a PW1 in front with another PW1 depending on the rotations. Last year we were short from Trial Court. We rely heavily on them and they are a huge help. Mr. Santos stated he doesn't think it is cost effective having a gentleman making $26.00 an hour when he can have someone making $18.52 to pick up trash.

Mr. Goncalves asked is there a reason with these new hires, you can't have somebody that works Tuesday to Saturday and stop the overtime on Saturdays?

Mr. Santos stated he believes something has to be written in the union contract about hours. Mr. Santos stated he has had previous discussions about getting a part-time, non-benefited, non-union employee and it didn't go through. That's why if we can get a PW1 it would be in their job description.

Mr. Silva asked how much money has been spent on overtime?

Mr. Santos stated he does not have the exact number on the Transfer Station. The Transfer Station on Saturday is all overtime. Approximately, $70,000. I have all Monday through Friday employees. I have no Saturday employees.

Mr. Silva stated the trash on West Avenue should be picked up by the Turnpike Authority because that is State property. We should not be spending money on that.

Mr. Santos stated he will check into it.

Mr. Goncalves stated Mr. Santos should come back before the Board after meeting with Finance.

Ms. Villano stated the Board could approve of the classification of the PW1 pending discussion with Finance and discussion with getting rid of the overtime. Ms. Villano asked if two people are working on Saturdays?

Mr. Santos stated two people are working on Saturdays for eight hours all winter long.

Ms. Villano stated she computed based on seven hours, $19,000 per year in overtime for a year on Saturday alone. If you were so inclined to approve the classification to add the two PW1's pending further review of the budget, but you could also make it tangent on these two PW1's successfully work Tuesday through Saturday shifts thus getting rid of the overtime winter and summer. Ms. Villlano stated she did it based on 50 weeks because chances are the Transfer Station will not be open every Saturday.

Mr. Goncalves asked what happens in the winter on Saturdays?

Mr. Santos stated two employees work the Transfer Station and one works the composting and trash pile from April 1st through December 15th. Compost is closed during the winter.

Ms. Villano asked if it was approximately $30,000 in overtime for Saturday work between the Transfer Station and compost?

Mr. Silva stated that should take care of the position you are looking for and the amount of money has been cut out of the overtime.

Mr. Santos stated he needs to clarify with the union that he can do a Tuesday through Saturday work week schedule.

Ms. Villano stated Mr. Santos could do it pending successful negotiation.

Mr. Silva asked if permits were needed for compost and brush?

Mr. Santos stated permits were always needed for compost and brush.

Mr. Batista stated no permits were needed last year because of COVID.

Mr. Santos stated the union contract reads, "The regular hours of each work day shall be consecutive except for interruptions for meals. The work week for full-time employees and the highway division, sewer division, park division, street division and golf course shall consist of five consecutive eight hour working days Monday through Friday inclusive except modified below in paragraphs three and four. The work week will be full time employees at the same landfill shall consist of five eight hour working days scheduled by the Town but excluding Sundays."

Mr. Goncalves stated we'll just have to label that area as landfill.

Mr. Santos continued reading the following, "The normal work day for full time employees shall consist of eight work hours within an eight-and-a-half-hour work period with 24-hour period. Each employee shall be scheduled to work a shift with regular starting and quitting times except for emergency situations. Work schedule shall not be changed unless employees involved are given notice of seven calendar days. Only by agreement or between dates of December 1st and March 31st in the Park Division, the employees and the supervisors may agree to modify the above-mentioned hours of work."

Moved by Mr. DeBarge, seconded by Mr. Goncalves to approve the two PW1 positions for the Department of Public Works provided that the positions are scheduled Tuesday through Saturday, all parties agree, and if approved by the Finance Committee. Vote 5-0. All in favor.

8:00 p.m. Kim Collins, Town Accountant – Discussion of the Budget

Ms. Collins presented a spreadsheet of the budget in front of the Board which showed increases that the Board approved, additional salary requests, and additional general expenses.

Ms. Collins: Some of them you can see are highlighted in a darker gray than the rest. For instance, Information Technology, Emergency Management, Council on Aging and the School Department. The reason they are highlighted in green is because it was approved by the Board or based on discussions between Ellie, me, Finance Committee, or the Board. Those are things we see as high priority items that should happen in fiscal year 2022. In Information Technology, $2,941.00, that was the IT Director's increase that you approved last meeting. The $79,874.00 is the payroll and HR automation, the security in MUNIS support that's required for the IT Department, then underneath that the $1,000.00 for Emergency Management, that's just an increase in that contract price we added that in. The $78,540 for DPW, we are adjusting that to $36,740 based on the conversation with Mr. Santos this evening. The next one is Council on Aging. There is $5,000 imbedded in the additional salary request for the cook becoming a full-time position. Jodi Zepke came before the Finance Committee about the $35,000 new L.A.T.O.S.S. position but she has not been in front of the Board and she did not have a very good understanding as to what type of a position she would need. I do not think this will happen in fiscal year 2022 but possibly in fiscal year 2023. There's another $24,000 in the General Expense Edition and that was specifically for food, to increase her food budget for the larger building and the larger quantity of seniors they are servicing. There was also something the Board approved increase tonight for $3,385.32 for the Veterans Services Department. The last one is the School budget. Initially when the School Superintendent requested his budget, it was a about a 6% increase and based on levy, we asked him if we could reduce that initial request to 2%, more in line with the rest of the Town. After doing that in discussions with him, he had said that if we increased it an additional $260,000 it would bring him to a

2.79% increase which was a more bearable place for the school budget. But, I do want to point out, if we were to fund the school at the $337,342.06 we would be looking at the percentage over net school spending of 35.2% and that is in comparison to the prior years of 34.8%, 35.4%, 32.6% and 34.6% so we've always been around the 34-35%. If we do increase it by the $260,000, that's going to put us closer to the 36.01%. We would be funding at a higher percentage at net school spending than we have in the past, but I just thought you would want to have that information available to you when you are making decisions about what to do with this extra $500,000 in excess levy. But that $260,000 after discussions with the Superintendent, that was something we expected would get approved prior to these meetings. The other thing that I want to point out on the last page where you see the tax rate and excess levy capacity. If we did nothing and left Level 1 alone, never approved anything else, we'd be looking at an estimated $0.13 decrease in the tax rate and we'd have $557,000 in excess levy. Based on all those items above that were highlighted in the dark gray, there's $372,000 in additional requests. If we were to approve them, we'd leave our excess levy at about $184,000 and looking at about a $0.16 increase in the tax rate. If you use the levy down to zero, you are looking at an additional $0.08 so you have this swing of your tax rate coming down $0.10 or you have it going up over $0.22 depending on the decisions that you make. The other thing is if you want me to ever adjust this and show you scenarios if we approve this, if we approve that, I can bring it with me to the next meeting and we could plug those in and see them real time.

Mr. Silva: Recreation, 38% can you refresh me on what that is?

Ms. Collins: During COVID because we were looking to reduce the budget, and they were closing everything, they didn't have summer camps, they didn't have before and after school for quite a while, we had reduced their budget for the year. This brings them back to where they would be because they plan on opening everything this summer. I believe they have not met with the Finance Committee yet, so they still have to meet with them to discuss their budget.

Mr. Silva: Dispatch is also up quite a bit.

Ms. Collins: So, Dispatch what I believe happened is that they had a position that was not filled in the prior year. They must have just recently filled it because they do have an additional position that is being paid out of that department compared to the prior year and in addition to that, they were asking for the Dispatch Supervisor which is the other $55,000.

Mr. Silva: And the Cable TV another 35%?

Ms. Collins: Theirs includes $150,000 for their capital project over at the school. The video recording broadcast system at the high school.

Mr. Silva: Golf is up a little, the Enterprise Fund?

Ms. Collins: I'm not exactly sure what that increase is. I'd have to look into that.

Ms. Villano: Didn't we decrease golf because of the closure? I thought we anticipated about 75% revenue.

Ms. Collins: I'm not sure we did that at Town Meeting. We did do it as kind of a let's look at the budget and let's reevaluate how we do it. This must be something specific.

Mr. Silva: I did see the insurance policy has gone up significantly.

Ms. Villano: You are adding three brand new buildings and you are going to have three vacant buildings.

Mr. Silva: And we are going to have to insure those which are usually more expensive.

Ms. Villano: Yes, and I spoke with the insurance carrier. That money just reflects the increases to the buildings.

Mr. Silva: Everything else seems like it is falling in line. Thank you.

Mr. Goncalves: Thanks Kim.

Ms. Villano: We just really wanted you to keep in mind when you start thinking of everything, there is only about $100,000 - $200,000 in our excess levy. The IT really needs to be added in, the $24,000 for the food, the $5,000 for the cook, without the $260,000 it may have only brought it down like a $100,000 Kim?

Ms. Collins: Yes, a little over $100,000 if you add the $260,000 and we are up to $372,000.

Ms. Villano: So, without the $260,000 for the school, it would bring us down to $400,000 in excess levy and you have to be cognizant and aware of that when you are looking at all of the other requests for positions because there is very little in the budget.

Ms. Collins: That doesn't include the $36,740 for DPW which you just approved so we have to add that in.

Mr. Rosenblum: That is in addition to the $78,540 right?

Ms. Collins: We are getting rid of the $78,540 and replacing it with $36,740.

Mr. Goncalves: That's a $41,800 savings on that line item.

Mr. Silva: Mr. Chairman, one more question if I could.

Mr. Rosenblum: Mr. Silva.

Mr. Silva: What assessment did you use to compute the tax rate? Last year's?

Ms. Collins: Yea, oh no. . .so there's $538,861.

Mr. Silva: That's the growth, I'm talking about the assessment itself.

Ms. Collins: What do you mean the assessment? The assessed value of the property values? I used the same added value as last year. I'm saying we are going to go up about the same amount as we did last year... $53 million.

Mr. Silva: The growth is 500 so how much is the value for the growth? Do we have it?

Ms. Collins: No. I think I calculate this a little differently than you do.

Mr. Silva: The average home went up another $5,000.

Ms. Collins: Which I used a 2% increase based on...

Mr. Silva: So, you take $5,000 and try to figure out what your overall value is going to be plus what the growth value is going to be and then divide it out. It usually reduces the rate a little bit more.

Ms. Collins: The concern I have with that is, in the past, because it does take into account $53 million in increase property value and that new growth in the tax rate equates to the $538,861. I've increased that number in the past and it's come back to bite me, so I've increased a little too much in the past. After talking to Joe, we both agreed leaving it leveled is probably the best.

Mr. Silva: That shows me that the rates should be less based on that because the values should be more. Ok, I'm good. Let's not take the rate and run with it because what most people do, what's Ludlow's tax rate and this one's tax rate, they really don't mean much. What means a lot is what is the average tax bill and even though we are looking at a thirteen-cent decrease in the tax rate, taxes are actually going up about $70 for the average person. So, it's still an increase even though it's a decrease in rate.

Ms. Villano: It could end up being flat again as a rate.

Ms. Collins: That's just the way it works.

Mr. Rosenblum: We're the 20th or 30th highest tax rate but it's also on the value of your home so it's your tax bill.

Mr. Silva: It's where we are as the average tax bill community for the services that we have and the average tax bill. That's what is important.

Mr. Rosenblum: Thank you.

Correspondence:

65. Brian Shameklis, Safety Chairman – recommending to the Board that a traffic study be performed for East Street School on East Street due to the on-going traffic issues with student drop-off and pick-up at the school.

    Mr. DeBarge stated he would reach out to the Safety Committee for an update on the traffic study done on West Ave. and Fuller Street, and Cherry and Fuller Street, and Chapin Street and Fuller Street.

    Ms. Villano stated the traffic at East Street School is stemming from the pandemic due to the reduced bus loads and the number of parents dropping their children off at school. Ms. Villano stated there is only eight weeks left of school and by the time the study is completed, school is close to being done. Ms. Villano stated to wait to do the study in September.

    Moved by Mr. Silva, seconded by Mr. DeBarge to table and have Brian Shameklis, Safety Chairman provide further explanation as to what this study will do and what he expects the outcome to be. Vote 5-0. All in favor.

66. Brian Quinn, Massachusetts Municipal Wholesale Electric Company (MMWEC) Director of Engineering and Generation Assets – reminder of the Public Awareness Program.

    Moved by Mr. Silva, seconded by Mr. DeBarge to file. Vote 5-0. All in favor.

67. Donald H. Kibbe – advising the Board he does not wish to renew his term to the First Meeting House Committee.

    Moved by Mr. Silva, seconded by Mr. Goncalves to send a thank you and letter of appreciation. Vote 5-0. All in favor.

    Mr. Gennette stated he may know of someone in Town who would be interested in this position. Ms. Villano stated the position will be posted on the website and the individual would need to submit a letter of interest to the Selectman's office.

68. Sean McBride, Chairman Westover Golf Commission – advising the Board the term for Mr. Harry Mills of the Westover Golf Commission is expiring in April 2021 and requests to start the process for appointing a new commissioner.

    Moved by Mr. Silva, seconded by Mr. Goncalves to advertise and start the process for appointing a new commissioner. Vote 5-0. All in favor.

69. Nicole B. Caprioli, Assistant Attorney General – notification that the State has approved Article 13 from the October 5, 2020 Ludlow Special Town Meeting.

    Moved by Mr. Goncalves, seconded by Mr. Silva to file. Vote 5-0. All in favor.

70. Board Reorganizations – Zoning Board of Appeals.

    Moved by Mr. Silva, seconded by Mr. DeBarge to file. Vote 5-0. All in favor.

71. Ryan M. Pease, Fire Chief - informing the Board of the following donations to Ludlow Ambulance Service - $100.00 by Antonio DaSilva, $10.00 by Fernando Soares; $40.00 by Roland Savoie; $10.00 by Alfred Halama; $40.00 by Diane Douches; $10.00 by Elizabeth Crinella; $20.00 by James O'Donnell; $60.00 by Mr. & Mrs. Dennis LaPlante; $60.00 by Mary Gagliardi; $60.00 by Susan Mizko; $60.00 by Mr. & Mrs. Joe Salvador; $10.00 by Mr. & Mrs. Roger Bernier; $50.00 by Mr. and Mrs. Bruce Fenney.

- Board to accept as gifts to the Town.

Moved by Mr. Silva, seconded by Mr. DeBarge to accept as gifts to the Town as read by the Chairman. Vote 5-0. All in favor.

Unfinished Business:

Board to approve and sign the Seasonal Liquor Licenses for Gremio Lusitano Club, Inc./Franklin Field; Ludlow Fish & Game Club, Inc.; and Ludlow Country Club, Inc./9th Hole Concession.

Moved by Mr. Goncalves, seconded by Mr. DeBarge to approve and sign the Seasonal Liquor Licenses for Gremio Lusitano Club, Inc./Franklin Field; Ludlow Fish & Game Club, Inc.; and Ludlow Country Club, Inc./9th Hole Concession. Vote 5-0. All in favor.

Board to approve and sign ten copies of the May 10, 2021 Annual Town Meeting Warrant.

Moved by Mr. Silva, seconded by Mr. Gennette to approve and sign ten copies of the May 10, 2021 Annual Town Meeting Warrant. Vote 5-0. All in favor.

Board to approve and sign ten copies of the May 10, 2021 Special Town Meeting Warrant.

Moved by Mr. Silva, seconded by Mr. Goncalves to approve and sign ten copies of the May 10, 2021 Special Town Meeting Warrant. Vote 5-0. All in favor.

Board to approve and sign Selectmen Meeting Minutes of February 9, 2021.

Moved by Mr. Goncalves, seconded by Mr. Silva to approve and sign Selectmen Meeting Minutes of February 9, 2021 attended by Mr. Silva, Mr. DeBarge, Mr. Rosenblum, and Mr. Goncalves. Vote 4-0-1. Mr. Gennette abstained.

New Business:

Board to acknowledge and approve the Citation for the upcoming 100th birthday of the following Ludlow resident for the month of April: Ann M. Condon. Vote 5-0. All in favor.

Moved by Mr. Silva, seconded by Mr. Gennette to acknowledge and approve the Citation for the upcoming 100th birthday of Ludlow resident Ann M. Condon for the month of April.

Board to discuss the Selectmen liaison positions.

The Board discussed and reassigned various Selectmen liaison positions.

Board to approve and sign the 1st Amendment to the Communications System Agreement between the Town of Ludlow and Marcus Communications, LLC.

Moved by Mr. Goncalves, seconded by Mr. DeBarge to approve and Chairman to sign the 1st Amendment to the Communications System Agreement between the Town of Ludlow and Marcus Communications, LLC. Vote 5-0. All in favor.

Miscellaneous:

Mr. Gennette updated the Board on item #64 from the Board of Selectmen meeting on March 30, 2021, which were letters addressed to Senator Lesser and Representative Oliveira regarding a grant project.

Mr. Gennette suggested a possible project involving the Chicopee River and local bridges. The Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) through the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA) initiative for improvements for climate change and conservation. Mr. Gennette stated the bridge on West Street needs to be updated. Mr. Gennette proposed to put an initiative together to repair the bridge on West Street. Mr. Gennette stated there are also three hydro plants on them that generates electricity and operates itself. Mr. Gennette proposed to improve the appearance of it.

Mr. Gennette stated he reached out to the Exit 7 Chairman and requested if he is listening to please contact him.

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.

Closing Comments:

Mr. Silva stated he was approached by someone interested in buying the Trailer Park on Miller Street, currently owned by Mountainview, and is proposing a slight increase in the rent. Mr. Silva stated he is amazed at the horrendous condition of the property. Mr. Silva stated that he and Ms. Villano have scheduled a meeting this Thursday with the Board of Health, Police Chief, Building Inspector, Mobile Home Rent Control Board and a couple of other Boards to discuss what can be done. Mr. Silva also provided his condolences to Fire Chief DuBois' family.

Mr. Goncalves stated he agrees with Mr. Silva's assessment of the Trailer Park on Miller and looks forward to the meeting on Thursday to discuss the possible buyer interested in purchasing the property. The scam of the week is that scammers are indicating FaceBook was hacked and they are trying to get users to provide their passwords by saying they are part of the 50 million users affected, and then they take over their accounts. Mr. Goncalves stated he could not believe the amount of trash against the sound barrier on West Avenue and suggests contacting the Sherriff's Department.

Mr. Gennette stated during the last Board of Selectmen's meeting on March 30, 2021, the HR Administrator, Carrie Ribeiro had communicated that the Town does not actively or regularly engage in 90 day or annual performance reviews. This infers that some departments do have reviews, but most do not and alludes to an issue where Directors or Administrators are not being held accountable by this Board. Proper review of staff and accurate reporting makes it possible for this Selectboard to make an educated decision on behalf of the residents when deciding municipal employee's classification and wage requests.

At this time, Mr. Gennette requested that the Human Resources Administrator make available the existing documentation for the review process by the next scheduled Board of Selectmen's meeting, if possible. If the current protocol documentation does not meet the HR Administrators criteria or is not available, then Ms. Ribeiro should submit her suggested review process documentation to the Town Administrator. This documentation should include any suggestions towards verification that department Directors and Administrators are properly performing their reviews and that this Board is being properly notified that reviews have or have not taken place. The HR Directors documentation should be accompanied by a written request for this Board of Selectmen to determine if the protocol can be adopted as a standard practice, is fair to town staff and is in the best interest of the community.

Once the request is submitted, the Town Administrator and the Board of Selectmen can review the HR Administrators submission for any By-Law conflicts or Union related issues.

Mr. DeBarge offered his condolences to Fire Chief DuBois' family.

Mr. Rosenblum offered his condolences to Fire Chief DuBois' family. Mr. Rosenblum stated the Annual Town Meeting is scheduled for May 10th.

Moved by Mr. Goncalves, seconded by Mr. Silva to enter into Executive Session at 8:46 p.m. and to not return to an open meeting 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. Vote 5-0. All in favor.

Ludlow Board of Selectmen

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