The Meeting of the Board of Selectmen held on Tuesday, June 1, 2021 began at 6:00 p.m. Remote participation due to COVID-19.

Members Present: William Rosenblum, Chairman, Derek Debarge, James Gennette, and Manny Silva.

Absent: Antonio Goncalves

First Order of Business: The Pledge of Allegiance

Visitations:

6:00 p.m. – Joint meeting with the School Committee

1. **Harris Brook Opening/Transition**

Mr. Kelliher sent the Board of Selectmen a schedule for the opening/transition of Harris Brook School. Today was the day we reached are substantial completion date. Furniture is coming in this week. Computer and phones will be installed over the next couple of weeks. As soon as school ends, the building is going to be emptied out, any items that can be reused we will put aside. All the furniture is going to Vets Park. The modular classrooms are going to be removed and then that building is going to be demoed. The last day of school is the 15th and the building is scheduled to be demoed on the 20th. This needs to happen quickly because they have to get the building down, they have to cut the driveway from Chapin Street down to the community entrance, they have to regrade from Chapin Street back down to the building, retaining walls, etc. So, we can be ready for school on August 30th. We are on schedule for August 30th and our budget looks good. There's about $7 million in contingency. If we would have waited an additional year, our costs would have been significantly higher. The field will be completed by August 30th but now ready for play because grass will have to be planted. This will be about a year before it can be used. There's a process after the project is completed, where MSBA comes through, audits the entire project and while that's happening, they're holding back 10% of the final grant until that closeout happens. This will hold up the final borrowing for a little bit. It will probably be a year to 18 months before everything is completed. The furniture that will go over to Veterans Park may be able to be used in other Town Departments. Once everyone has picked what they want, we will have to declare what's left over as a surplus and possibly donate it, sell it or dispose of it. We do have some interest in the kitchen equipment already and that money would go back into the general funds.

2. **Polling Locations**

Mr. Kelliher explained that the polling locations will be moved due to Veterans Park being closed and Chapin Street transitioning to Harris Brook. We will need to decided which entrance will be used to bring the polling equipment in and out of the new building and are both precincts going to be combined at Harris Brook now.

3. **Hand Over of Buildings**

Mr. Kelliher explained that the keys for Vets, Chestnut Street and Windsor Street will be handed over to the Board of Selectmen. We have not determined what to do with these buildings. After looking at the feasibility studies from a few years ago, Vets Park need extensive code upgrades and repairs which is about $9.4 million. In order to take Vets Park down, it's just under $3 million. If the buildings are left vacant, they still need to be insured. The two buildings on Chestnut and Windsor Street, one is the central office and the other has tenants in it. Head Start and Holyoke Community College adult learning center and they have a year-to-year lease with them.

Dr. Gazda explained that the lease was up in June but they extended them through August. They are both looking for a new space but haven't found anything. The problem is the shared heating system with the Housing Authority. At the minimum there will have to be an agreement with the Housing Authority to keep the heat on in order to not burst any pipes.

Mr. Kelliher suggested trying to sell those buildings. Even though you may not get a lot of money for them, it's a better option then leaving them vacant. Central office will be moving to the new building in mid-July. If Vet's Park is used for anything other than a school it will have to be fully code compliant.

4. **Track/Fields Project at Ludlow High School**

Mr. Kelliher explained that something needs to be done about the track at the high school, it's not getting any better. Possibly wrap the field project in with the Vets project.

Mr. Harrington explained that the track and field committee may be able to do some fundraising to the tune of about 3-400,000 but not $2 million. We will have to go back to the Town.

Mr. Rosenblum asked Dr. Gazda about using money from ARPA because schools are allowed to use it for any purpose.

Dr. Gazda agreed that it can be used for anything, however, he is hesitant to do that because of the wording of the act and setting off bells and whistles to the Federal Government which could trigger an audit. He did mention to Mr. Brillo that they might be able to take some funds out of the operating budget and at least get the audio system and score board replaced.

Mr. Gennette asked what the cost would be?

Mr. Rosenblum stated that the estimate is $2.8 for everything and $1.9 without turf and the $1.3 is just the track.

Mr. Debarge believes that Vets Park cannot be used and should be demoed. Agrees that we are in need of better fields but wants to do the entire project all at once.

Mr. Kelliher explained that a lot of people are asking about the funds for Harris Brook which were under budget and those funds cannot be used because it's an MSBA project. The funds cannot be redistributed.

Mr. Silva asked if that was accurate because Vets Park was part of the project initially.

Mr. Kelliher stated that it was asked numerous times and it cannot be used because Vets Park is not on the same site as Harris Brook. Also, wanted to remind residents that there is no money in an account which they are drawing from it's just how much they will actually have to borrow once to project is complete.

Mr. Harrington commented that the Town was willing to borrow $60 million for Harris Brook and if that were to remain the same then the track and field and the demolishing of Vets Park could happen.

Mr. Kelliher stated the tax rate was based on the $60 million and if it comes in lower then that then the tax rate projections will be lower. We will not know that number until the closeout.

Mr. Silva agreed with Mr. Harrington in taking this information to the residents and try to use the $7 million "extra" from the Harris Brook School project for the track and field and demolishing Vets Park.

Mr. Kelliher recommended putting this on the ballot again next March.

Mr. Silva asked if that is enough time to have a good picture of the numbers?

Mr. Kelliher they will have a decent estimate but not exact numbers. Fortunately, there was only 2% in change orders. The trick will be what part will be MSBA money and what will be borrowed.

Mr. Gennette asked when the estimates were done?

Dr. Gazda stated that those were from about three years ago. The demolishing part is pretty accurate.

Mr. Kelliher stated that they escalated the numbers as well.

Mr. Gennette asked why Vets Park wasn't included into the project.

Dr. Gazda explained that it was discussed but it wasn't something that could be wrapped into the project because it's a different site. It is not reimbursable by the MSBA. Three years ago, when we started this, the Senior Center and the Radio projects coming were also coming through and financing an additional $3 million would have been challenging.

Mr. Debarge asked when the tenants lease ended?

Dr. Gazda stated August 31st because he extended it.

Mr. Debarge wants clarification as to when the transition from the School to the Town will be official with those buildings and will the tenants lease' end at the same time.

Dr. Gazda stated that it will be up on August 31st.

Mr. Debarge does not know if the Town wants to be in charge of these tenants.

Dr. Gazda does not recommend extending the leases because the upkeep on those buildings is challenging.

Mr. Harrington recommended asking Wayfinders if they wanted to take over those two buildings instead of across from Chapin Street School.

Mr. Rosenblum does not believe there would be enough space for them there. They are looking for about 43 units I believe.

Mr. Kelliher stated it may worth the conversation regardless.

Mr. Harrington suggested putting fields at Veterans Park.

Mr. Kelliher agreed with Mr. Harrington but also would like to get something done sooner rather than later with the track and field at the high school.

Mr. Rosenblum suggested getting the committee back into fundraising and raising awareness amongst the community with the options they just spoke about.

Mr. Kelliher asked if the track and field committee should include the demolishing of Vets Park.

Mr. Gennette asked if the school could get the numbers together as to what they can cover for the track and field project.

Dr. Gazda stated it was under $60,000.

Mr. Rosenblum would like to be more proactive then reactive with long range planning.

Mr. Kelliher would not mind doing the project in phases; however, they have to remember that if you only do one project then it may affect the next project in the future.

Mr. Rosenblum would like to meet again in a few months with the track and field committee.

Mr. Harrington will get the committee back together and discuss this issue again with the Board of Selectmen.

CORRESPONDENCE

106. Massachusetts Municipal Association – News Article: Treasury Announces American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Allocations for Non-Entitlement Communities.

Moved by Mr. Silva, seconded by Mr. Debarge to file. Vote 4-0. All in favor.

107. Marcia Wellman, Senior Project Manager, Project Services, Eversource Energy – informing the Board of an update of their operations during the ongoing coronavirus public health crisis.

Moved by Mr. Silva, seconded by Mr. Debarge to file. Vote 4-0. All in favor.

108. Board to approve a request 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 May 12, 2021.

Moved by Mr. Gennette, seconded by Mr. Silva to approve a request 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 May 12, 2021. Vote 4-0. All in favor.

109. Governor's Press Office – Governor Baker files legislation to extend certain COVID-19 Emergency Measures.

Moved by Mr. Silva, seconded by Mr. Gennette to file. Vote 4-0. All in favor.

110. Eversource – notification of being aware of scams.

Moved by Mr. Silva, seconded by Mr. Gennette to file. Vote 4-0. All in favor.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Moved by Mr. Debarge, seconded by Mr. Silva to approve and sign the Executive Meeting Minutes of March 30, 2021. All members were present. Vote 4-0. All in favor.

NEW BUSINESS

Board perused the Executive Session Meeting Minutes of April 6, 2021.

BOARD UPDATES/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.

CLOSING COMMENTS

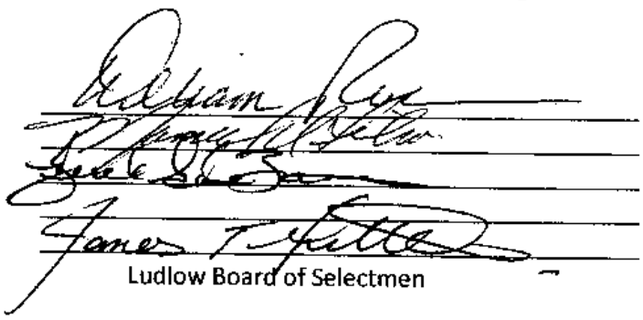
Mr. Debarge stated that the Memorial Day ceremony was inspirational and had a good turnout. Thanked Mr. Segundo for planning the ceremony and calling out the names of 75 lost at combat.

Mr. Gennette also thanked Mr. Segundo for everything and stated that the Memorial Day ceremony was great. Mr. Olivera's speech was great as well. Reminded residents not to judge those who chose to continue wearing a mask.

Mr. Silva was unable to attend the Memorial Day ceremony but heard very good things about it. It's good to see that the residents were able to get out a little bit for this and thanked Mr. Segundo as well. Thanked Mr. Segundo for securing Home Depot to help repair and beautify one of the monuments.

Mr. Rosenblum agreed with Mr. Silva and thanked Home Depot. Mr. Debarge and Mr. Rosenblum did the wreath laying in town at 5 cemeteries. We started at Island Pond, then to Gremio, then to Center Street and ended at First Church, the Civil War Monument and Josh Desforge's memorial as well. Kudos to all those who participated in cleaning up the old headstones as well. Thanked Mr. Segundo as well for all his work putting that ceremony together. Agreed with Mr. Gennette about wearing masks and varying comfort levels.

Moved by Mr. Silva, seconded by Mr. Gennette to adjourn this meeting at 7:10 p.m. and not return to open meeting but enter into Executive Session for the purposes of discussing strategy for negotiations with all labor unions. 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.