The Meeting of the Board of Selectmen held on Tuesday, November 9, 2021 began at 5:30 p.m. Remote participation due to COVID-19.

Members Present: Derek DeBarge, James Gennette, William Rosenblum and Manuel Silva.

Absent: Antonio Goncalves

First Order of Business: The Pledge of Allegiance

Visitations:

5:35 p.m. – Ryan Linton and Mr. Mannix, Westover Golf – New Position Request

Mr. Linton explained that the Board is requesting two permanent part-time positions to the grounds staff at Westover. They will be 19-hour per week positions, non-benefited to help with the overall maintenance of the property.

Mr. Mannix explained that Westover Golf Course is doing very well this year and because over the past two or three years they were in the red some things were left undone. They have put some monies into the Enterprise Fund and they now have some money to fund these positions. This is a large piece of land including the pond and the open area. The golf course employees are the ones that keep that entire area up and they don't have enough people. The two part-time positions would help tremendously. The Massachusetts Golf Championship is going to be played there and this is going to be good recognition. Westover is one of the assets of the Town and we need to keep it in good shape.

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Mr. Linton stated that the two part-time positions would cost $31,600, $16.00/hr.

Mr. Rosenblum agrees that it needs to be cleaned up.

Mr. Linton stated that the secondary areas like the pond area have taken a hit over the years due to lack of staffing and budgetary constraints. They would like to get back to taking care of those areas now.

Mr. Gennette asked what the annual revenue of the golf course is currently?

Mr. Linton stated that last fiscal year the revenue was around $976,000. This fiscal year we are on target to be slightly ahead of last year. The golf course is totally dependent on the weather so if there is any significant weather in March and the opening is postponed until April, the golf course loses $50,000.

Mr. Gennette stated that his only concern is not being able to continue funding these positions moving forward.

Mr. Linton explained that their Board is discussing increasing rates without pricing them out. The goal is $1 million annually.

Mr. Silva explained that these two positions shouldn't cost the tax payer if the golf course is going to increase the revenues to pay for them. He asked if any of the employees at the golf course are in the union?

Mr. Linton stated that he and the Assistant Superintendent are appointed. The mechanic is in the DPW union. Barbara is in a split position and in LATOSS. All the other maintenance staff is seasonal. The season runs from March until December. They would like to have these two part-time positions year-round working 3-5 hour shifts during the week and 1–4-hour shift on the weekend.

Mr. DeBarge asked about the current golf course positions?

Mr. Linton explained that there are three full time employees. There are seasonal employees in the summer working from 24 – 40 hours.

Ms. Villano asked about the two full time employees that are in the classification plan?

Mr. Linton stated that those have not been funded since he's been with the golf course.

Ms. Collins stated that here is $337,000 in retained earnings currently.

Mr. Mannix believes that the golf course can add another $150,000 this year.

Mr. Linton wanted to reiterate that they were closed down due to COVID but that they were on schedule to turn a profit until they were forced to close.

Mr. Silva suggested Mr. Linton speak with the union before moving forward to be sure these two positions would be approved by them first.

6:00 p.m. – Jodi Zepke, Council on Aging – New Position Request

Ms. Zepke is requesting a 10-hour per week van driver and a 19-hour per week activities assistant. These positions are to help with their extended hours in the future.

Ms. Collins asked what the annual impact will be for these positions?

Ms. Zepke stated that the van driver would be $9,745.14 and the activities assistant would be $19,946.84 for a total of $29,691.98. She would also like to increase the current van driver hours from 20 hours to 25 hours and the clerk from 15 hours to 20 hours. The clerk position is already listed as a 20-hour work week on the books. However, this would now become a benefited position. The total for the increased hours is $11,245.73.

Mr. Silva asked if enrollment has increased at the new facility?

Ms. Zepke stated at the ribbon cutting ceremony on Friday, 75% of the people were new. There is a waiting list for their classes also. There were 169 residents that came for lunch today.

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6:30 p.m. – American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Funds

Ms. Collins explained that anything that was eligible under CARES should be eligible under ARPA. Examples she gave were backfilling for employees who had COVID and paying overtime, PPE, HVAC or improved air quality for buildings. Recreational areas that are open to the public, specifically lower income areas, like Whitney Park. Storm water projects that have been approved under EPA would be approved under ARPA. Infrastructure would have to be looked at individually.

Mr. DeBarge asked about equipment like Firetrucks for example, if they would be covered under ARPA?

Ms. Collins explained that there must be a specific impact due to the pandemic in order to get approved.

Ms. Villano suggested that before the Town goes out to bid on any project the state's approval should be sought first. A comprehensive list needs to be put together first and then determine what we can use the money for.

Ms. Collins stated that for CARES she was able to email someone specifically to ask questions but for ARPA they will not do that. The Town must read through the guidance and make a determination on their own. They will need to rely on the consultant to help them with this.

Ms. Villano stated that there is an agreement with the consultant to work with them on the ARPA funds and the fee for him is paid through the CARES and ARPA funds.

Mr. DeBarge suggested creating a process to go forward.

Mr. Rosenblum would like to get input from the community by possibly putting a survey on the Town website or possibly putting a committee together.

Mr. Silva asked what happens if you don't use all of the money from ARPA?

Ms. Collins stated that the money will go into a designated fund and if it's not used, it will be returned.

Ms. Villano stated that you have to earmark where the money will be used before the end of 2024 and then you have to exhaust the funds by 2026.

Ms. Collins also added that ARPA can be used to help businesses with the façade or outdoor dining patios, etc. You can also do a grant system for businesses; however, they must prove loss of income or some type of impact due to the pandemic. We would have to come up with the guidelines and then the businesses would have to apply for these grants.

Mr. Gennette agreed with Mr. DeBarge to create a strategy to utilize the ARPA funds and eliminate the things that are a definite no, like broadband because it would exhaust all of the funds. He believes that the projects should help everyone in the community. Agrees that the parks would be the best option.

Ms. Collins did remind the Board that the broadband option is very specific and has to meet certain minimum speed requirements and it must be designed to serve unserved or underserved residents and businesses.

Ms. Villano explained that emails went out to all of the departments requesting their ideas and guestimates to the costs. Asked if the Board of Selectmen would like to put a committee together or just continue putting it on the agenda to discuss each week?

Mr. Rosenblum stated that the broadband could start with the underserved and unserved areas and then increase from there. He also would like to spread the money around a little more. He would like to put a committee together.

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Ms. Villano explained that the IT Manager has been tasked with getting the quotes on the broadband request and will present his findings to the Board at a later date. There will also have to be a maintenance agreement for this as well.

Mr. DeBarge would like to see the parks improved for the entire community. He also believes that there must be a maintenance plan in place for any of these projects. Mr. DeBarge is also for providing grants to the businesses, especially the ones that were not able to do outdoor dining. He does not agree with getting a committee together, it takes too long and the Board of Selectmen should be able to handle this.

Mr. Gennette does not agree with giving businesses grants but would not mind helping to improve the façade of the business, etc. He agrees with Mr. DeBarge about the committee.

Mr. Silva would like to add Veteran's Park fields and the track and field at the high school to this list.

Mr. Rosenblum would like to reach out to the residents somehow.

Mr. DeBarge would like to get a town meeting with the residents to show everyone the plan.

Ms. Villano stated that the reason a committee was suggested was because this is a daunting task and it is taking up a lot of everyone's time and they still have to do their normal jobs on top of this.

Ms. Dos Santos asked why the Board hasn't talked about the hazard pay for the essential workers that worked during the pandemic and would like to know how it will be allocated?

Mr. Rosenblum explained that hazard pay is not mandatory to give out.

Mr. Silva explained that all the surrounding communities rejected hazard pay.

Ms. Dos Santos explained that Springfield did pay hazard pay and Ms. Villano had given her paperwork where ARPA does say that hazard pay can be given to essential workers. She feels that the Board should consider that. Mr. Dos Santos explained that she is a cafeteria worker at the high school and during the pandemic when the kids were not in school, her and her coworkers worked through the pandemic by providing breakfast and lunch five days per week for takeout and when some of the kids came back,

they provided breakfast and lunch five days per week for inhouse and takeout. Currently they are only doing inhouse and she is advocating for the cafeteria workers to receive compensation for this. Other town employees were able to stay home, the cafeteria workers were not.

Mr. Gennette explained that he is 100% against hazard pay because everyone had to deal with COVID in some way. He asked if Ms. Dos Santos was being compensated for working?

Ms. Dos Santos explained that she received her regular pay and that's it.

Mr. Gennette asked about all the people who lost their jobs due to COVID?

Ms. Dos Santos explained that they received an extra $600 from the State, she did not get any extra money and had to come in every day to work and still do her job. The school department could not use their monies for hazard pay they could only use it for ventilation and other things, which is why is came to the Board of Selectmen.

Mr. Gennette thanked her for coming in and explaining everything but he is not for the hazard pay.

Mr. Silva stated that a decision would need to be made and it would have to go across the board to all the departments.

Ms. Collins read the section of ARPA funds regarding premium funds. This should be for lower income workers first and foremost. She is unsure how Springfield paid hazard pay to employees who make $80-100,000 per year.

Mr. Rosenblum explained that hazard pay is on the list the Board will be addressing it.

Ms. Collins stated that the feasibility study for the parks, the pond and the recreational areas, the recreational areas themselves, hazard pay, HVAC, culvert issues at the golf course and the body cams for the Police have already been given to the consultant for approval.

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Mr. DeBarge asked if they can request Police equipment as a whole?

Ms. Collins explained that you have to be able to tie the requested item to a rise in crime, mental health issues or drug abuse due to the pandemic and must be done line item by line item.

Mr. Rosenblum read through the items on the list to decide which ones should be removed. Westover pump station, removed. Salt shed, removed. Street sweeper, removed. Press-box wiring, PA, include. Whitney clubhouse upgrades/refurbishing, include. Bleachers a Whitney, included. Veterans Center, store front close to Indian Orchard bridge, need to look into more. East Street playground, should be able to include. Cafeteria workers, Fire and Police hazard pay, should be able to include but need to look into. IT, ICM upgrade/replacement, include.

Ms. Villano would like to add camp white because they have soccer fields and they use to have a swing set also.

Mr. DeBarge stated that they are already building a soccer field at the new Harris Brook school to replace the Chapin Street field. An additional 90' baseball diamond is definitely needed in town.

Ms. Villano stated that this could include purchasing a parcel of land for a park.

Ms. Collins asked where the specific payout for hazard pay on the request sheet came from?

Ms. Villano explained that the Fire Chief gave it to her and was based on Springfield's numbers. It was only a recommendation and we do not need to give that amount.

Mr. Gennette suggested using any excess funds, if there are any, towards hazard pay.

Mr. Rosenblum stated that the HVAC and RTU units for the safety complex have pretty much already been approved.

Ms. Villano stated that the safety complex HVAC and RTU was capital approved and will be funded by ARPA funds.

Mr. DeBarge stated that the Mr. Segundo, Veterans Services is looking for a store front closer to downtown to assist veterans. The question was would ARPA funds cover refurbishing a space that was being rented?

Ms. Collins doesn't think ARPA funds would cover a building that wasn't town owned.

Mr. Silva asked if it was possible to update the heating system at the old school department and letting Veterans Services use that?

Ms. Villano stated that the old admin building does not have an elevator and could not be used. It would have to be the old childhood building. They will look into that.

Mr. Gennette asked if they can put cameras in the parks?

Ms. Villano stated they can because it is a public space.

Mr. DeBarge asked about Town Hall updates like carpeting, etc.?

Ms. Collins will inquire about the Town Hall items, including the HVAC system. Also mentioned that COVID vaccine incentives are already approved and she wanted to let the Board know.

Ms. Villano asked on behalf of the Board of Health if hand sanitizers for businesses in town would be approved by ARPA?

Ms. Collins stated that is an approved item, it is considered PPE. She will have the consultant come in on December 7th if possible.

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CORRESPONDENCE

216. Heather Jolicoeur, Program Coordinator, Ludlow Senior Center – requesting the Board to consider signing an Age-Friendly Community Compact Best Practice with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts which helps the Town receive grant money towards Town projects. If approved, the Board allows the Town Administrator to apply online.

Moved by Mr. Silva, seconded by Mr. DeBarge for the Board to sign the Age-Friendly Community Compact Best Practice with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and allow the Town Administrator to apply online. Vote 4-0. All in favor.

217. 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 November 4, 2021.

Moved by Mr. Gennette, seconded by Mr. DeBarge 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 November 4, 2021. Vote 4-0. All in favor.

217a. 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 November 4, 2021.

Moved by Mr. Gennette, seconded by Mr. DeBarge 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 November 4, 2021. Vote 4-0. All in favor.

218. Jason Martowski, Chairman – requesting the Board to include the Ludlow Conservation Commission in discussions as to what will happen with the Veterans Park Elementary School and recommends a wetland scientist be brought into the discussion along with our local DEP office.

Ellie will reach out to Jason Martowski and notify them that the request above is the intent of the Board.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Moved by Mr. Silva, seconded by Mr. Gennette to rescind the vote taken at the meeting of November 2nd to approve the request to add the position of Assistant Assessor as a non-union position and eliminate the union position L-III. Vote 4-0. All in favor.

Board will table any further discussion or revote in regards to the above subject until next week's meeting.

Moved by Mr. DeBarge, seconded by Mr. Silva to approve and sign Selectmen Meeting Minutes of June 22, 2021 with all members present. Vote 4-0. All in favor.

Moved by Mr. DeBarge, seconded by Mr. Gennette to approve and sign Selectmen Meeting Minutes of July 13, 2021 with all members present. Vote 4-0. All in favor.

Moved by Mr. DeBarge, seconded by Mr. Silva to approve and sign Selectmen Meeting Minutes of August 3, 2021 with all members present. Vote 4-0. All in favor.

NEW BUSINESS

Moved by Mr. Silva, seconded by Mr. Gennette to approve and the Chairman to sign the change order between HB Communications and Ludlow Community TV. Vote 4-0. All in favor.

Perused Selectmen Meeting Minutes of July 20, 2021.

Perused Selectmen Meeting Minutes of August 17, 2021.

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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.

Mr. Silva the memorial at the Lusitano Club is being cleaned up. Home Depot is beautifying this memorial for them and Mr. Silva is very impressed with them. Mr. Segundo spearheaded the project.

CLOSING COMMENTS

Moved by Mr. Silva, seconded by Mr. Gennette to adjourn this meeting at 8:02 p.m., and not return to open session but enter into Executive Session for the purposes of discussing a litigation matter. Vote 4-0. All in favor.

Mr. Gennette suggested doing a slow role out for the broadband.

Mr. Silva reminds residents to stay vigilant with COVID. Congrats to the boys' soccer team for their win.

Mr. DeBarge would like to say Godspeed and good luck to Maryann Moura, nurse for the Board of Health who just retired. Wanted to say that she is a fantastic person. Last Saturday Vanished Valley held a pig roast for the veterans which was put on by our Veterans Services Director and volunteers. It was a great turnout and we had a beautiful day for it. Wished all his brothers and sisters in the Marine Corp a Happy Birthday, tomorrow is the Marine Corps birthday. Requested that the lights outside of town hall to be changed to scarlet & gold for the day and then to green for Veterans Day. Reminds everyone of the Veterans Day ceremony at the high school on Thursday at 10 a.m. Unfortunately, he

will not be able to attend, however, he is very happy that the town is able to do this again. Ludlow is very supportive of the military and first responders. Thanks all the Veterans.

Mr. Rosenblum congrats to all of the fall athletic teams at the high school. It's great to see the kids back on the fields. The ribbon cutting ceremony at the senior center was incredible. Nice to see so many people came out. Encouraged the seniors in town to go and take a look at the center. Thanked the Friends of the Senior Center for all of their fundraising. Reminds residents to be careful ordering packages for Christmas, be sure to bring them in right away. Read event calendar. Happy Veterans Day.

Ludlow Board of Selectmen

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

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