Meeting of the Board of Selectmen held on Tuesday, March 22, 2022 beginning at 5:30 pm in the Selectmen's Conference Room, Town Hall.

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

First Order of Business: The Pledge of Allegiance

Mr. Rosenblum: Good evening. We do have a visitation at 5:35 but I believe there are some introductions that need to be in order this evening. It's his first meeting with the Town of Ludlow, or at least with the Board of Selectmen. I'm sure you've been to several meetings already in the past week and a half. I'd like to introduce our new Town Administrator, Mr. Marc Strange. Mr. Strange, would you like to say a few things?

Mr. Strange: I'm really excited to be here. It's been a really busy week and a day or so, but I'm super excited to be here. Everybody has been great, and I can't wait to see what the next days brings to us.

Visitations:

5:35 p.m. – Pond Commission – to present a proposal from a company for pond assessments.

Mr. Rosenblum: If you can all just introduce yourselves.

Elaine Hodgeman, Judy Breault, Julie Markiewicz.

Mr. Rosenblum: Thank you for coming in this evening. I received a message from someone who lives by the pond. Knowing the time of the season it is when things start to get evasive, once it gets warmer and mentioned that there was a program that you wanted to bring to us to discuss, so go right ahead.

Ms. Breault: I want to give you a little background but first thank you for allowing us to be here and getting us on the agenda so quickly. About a year ago a group of us raised our hands to participate in the Ludlow Management Pond Committee and try to understand what was happening with our ponds. So, we are really just trying to understand what is happening to our ponds, and our focus has been five different ponds. In the last year we have been forming a committee and we have done a lot of research, a lot of learning, sharing with each other what is going on and consulting with research companies that can help us and other towns. So, we have put together these brief presentations to show you what is going on. We came up with our mission statement which is, "We are a group of caring residents focused on creating a better tomorrow, by providing ongoing education for residents and visitors to improve and sustain a healthy ecosystem in our ponds." You will see a few of the ponds that we have been looking at. This is a list of all the committee members. There are nine of us that are actively involved, a great group of people, and we are having a great time getting to know each other. These are the different ponds. The reason that we are focused on these are because there was some work that the conservation committee was doing, some of them were working with an outside company and these are the five ponds that were in place. We know that there are many more ponds in Ludlow, but for the most part everybody on our committee lives by or is on one of these ponds so that has been very helpful. These are just some pictures that were taken in just the last year and little bit of details around them. So, Haviland Pond, we have the acreage of what it looked like in the last spring/fall area. We talk about different concerns within each of the ponds. As any of you may know, as you go past Haviland Pond, depending on the time of year, you are going to see a lot of geese, there can be algae, and we have heard there is a lot of weed growth in that pond. It was not used as a swimmable lake these last two years, and we thought it was from geese infestation, but we came to understand that it really is around a lifeguard situation. Minechoag/Miller Pond is located right off East Street right behind the golf course area. That green in that picture is really supposed to be water. So, these are things that we have heard. We have also heard about some dead fish found on peoples' properties, so there is obviously an issue here. The next one is Harris Pond, and that is what Harris Pond looks like and unfortunately this is the one that now boarders Harris Brook Elementary School. I know when they were building the school there was talk about using the pond for science projects for the children. These are some pictures of the growth and algae in this pond. Then we have Alden

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Pond, which is up past the Villa Rose, and again the same kind of concerns algae, milfoil, weed potential contamination. A lot of this information that we have is really based on some information that we got from Erika Launer who is in Belchertown, and she manages a pond committee in Belchertown. She was very helpful, came out to a couple of our meetings and presented a bunch of information and gave us some thoughts on what some of the issues are with these ponds and what things we need to do, what are the steps we need to take. This is Murphy Pond, Murphy Pond is on the corner of Evergreen and Holyoke Street. These pictures were taken in the fall last year. It is covered in lily pads or weeds. With that we have reached out to a couple of companies to really get some information and some thoughts about what we really need to do. I have shared with some of the companies these pictures so that they can get an idea of what we are dealing with. We talked to a company called Solitude Lake Management and that is who Penny had been working with last year. At best, their communication is very intermittent. It is really hard. I have been trying to work with them since last year and I've talked to a couple of other people in my network who have used them, and they have moved over to this company called Water & Wetland Management. I will tell you I called this gentleman two weeks ago and got a ton of information from him, more information than I got from Solitude. My understanding is that Solitude has gone through an ownership change and that is why we are proposing Water & Wetland Management, LLC. So, what they do in a high-level nutshell, and I will pause after this and give you a chance to ask some questions, but really what their process is they do a Phase I survey which means they come out and look at every single pond, they evaluate plant life, algae, and separate quotes for water quality. They do recommend we do the water quality because that helps us understand the bacterial content and any of that information. They typically do this between spring/summer so that is why time is of the essence at this point and gave us a cost estimate of $8,975.00. I have a copy of the whole proposal and Julie will hand that out to you. That would happen between now and the fall and what they really do is monitor how the algae, the growth, the vegetation all happens all summer long so they can get a sense of the problem; is it a problem with just algae; is it a lily pad problem because all these problems have a different treatment. Once we do this assessment, this survey, they will come back in the fall and give us a full report with all kinds of data points to tell us what the water quality should be, what it is and what are some options and if we are to move forward with them, there is a permitting process where we would have to go through the State of Massachusetts to get permits to do any work in these ponds. They will help us through this process. My understanding is it is a pretty convoluted process to get through and there are some things that you have to be concerned about whether there is plant life, animal life, species life that are protected through the State of Massachusetts. So, they would work with us to understand that and what our options are for that. That is what happens from the fall over the winter through into the spring because it gives us time to get through that permitting process and be ready for treatment plans. If the town, meaning the Town of Ludlow, is the applicant versus an individual person or group, the permitting fees from the state are exempt from those fees. I think there are other fees, but we need to get into those details to understand that. Phase 3 of this is the management of those ponds and based on all this information and based on those surveys they would come up with recommended treatments for each of the ponds. Based on that, they are telling me that it would be estimated about $1000 to $1200 per acre. So understandably whatever the extent of the treatment is, and which ponds we treat we may have to prioritize obviously from a cost perspective. One of the resources we have been working with is Jake Oliviera and he has offered to help us with grant writing to try to help us get grants. There are plenty of grants out there to help us with that aspect. Once we really understand the degree of the problem, we can really come up with our funding options; is it grants, recovery act funds, donations, budgeting. So tonight, we are just asking you to consider the $8,975.00 for the surveying aspect of the proposal. I'll pause there for any questions.

Mr. Rosenblum: Do you know how many total acres there are?

Ms. Breault: I do not know the total, but I have the total acres on each pond that I can share with you. Haviland is twenty-five acres, Minechoag is twenty-one, Harris is fourteen, Alden is four, and Murphy is six.

Mr. Rosenblum: 70 acres.

Mr. DeBarge: The treatment, what types of things are we talking about like getting that algae out of there, cleaning up fallen trees, things like that?

Ms. Breault: Yes, I will give you an example. When I sent him the pictures, he was looking at Murphy Pond. It is a relatively smaller pond. So, this pond to me looks like it needs a total reflex which means, basically it is a nontoxic chemical that you put into the water and clears the pond but does not disturb the wildlife. He estimated that between $6,000-$7,000. So that's an example we have on here. We think there is mill weed in these ponds and that's a much bigger plant that is a really hard plant to get rid of. We've done a little bit of research and think it might be mill weed but it may not be, and we won't know that until we do the study.

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2022 NOV -2 A 9:25
TOWN OF LUDLOW

Ms. Markiewicz: Last year we were lucky because we didn't have a lot of mill weed the year before, but by August 1st I had friends that couldn't go boating; they couldn't put their boat out because they were getting their boats stuck in all the weeds that were coming up in the pond.

Ms. Breault: One thing they also look at in this survey and Erika from Belchertown had shared with us. The other thing they look at is storm run offs that run into the ponds. So, when you think of storm run offs it's not just the rain, salt, dirt, fertilizer, there's oil, there's gas just flowing into these ponds. We do know that our last meeting a couple of residents from Minechoag actually attended and did raise a concern about a runoff that's going right into the pond on East Street. I had taken a note to contact Penny at the Conservation Commission to see what they know and maybe talk to the people at the DPW to understand this before we really know what's going on there. That can be of concern. There's ways to put a filter through that drain off that takes some of those toxins out but not necessarily move the runoff. So those are some of the ideas I'd say about treatment.

Mr. Gennette: With the acreage that Mr. Rosenblum asked about the 78 acres in this survey is it for all the ponds in Ludlow, or is it just going to focus on just these five?

Ms. Breault: It will just be for these five initially and that total of $8,975.00 is just for those five. On the estimate, it breaks it out from doing the survey, which is the plant and wildlife vegetation, that kind of stuff and then the water quality is separate. So, you could do one or the other. They truly recommend you do them both because you will get the full picture and you will get a lot of the knowledge data from that. Joe from Water & Wetland Management had said it helps get grants if you have a lot of data and that background information.

Mr. Gennette: Yes, I got all that and there is a lot of state grant money for this right now.

Ms. Breault: I am not familiar with ARPA funding and what it can be used for or cannot. I am not familiar with the Town of Ludlow budget. So, I know asking for this is an ask but I am open to ideas as well.

Ms. Markiewicz: Also, people when they see the water is dirty like that, they do not want to go in it. If you want to go boating or kayaking, nobody wants to be in that. That is kind of hurting our public persona of not being able to say that we have ponds that we can do this at. To me it is a big stress for the community.

Mr. Gennette: I have one more question, will this keep the mosquito population down too?

Ms. Breault: That is one of the things I did ask also. He asked me if the Town of Ludlow sprays for mosquitoes and from my understanding we do not.

Mr. Rosenblum: No, we do not.

Ms. Breault: So, they do feel that would be very helpful. I must say just being on the pond, you cannot sit in your backyard through July and August no matter what pond you're on with these five ponds because of the mosquitos and there is a smell and there is a quality of life.

Mr. Silva: I think we shot ourselves in the foot. We make so many regulations around ponds and around wetlands, you cannot do this, cannot do that. The residents around Haviland Pond used to keep that pond clean, and I hear people talk and they are afraid to touch the water because they are afraid someone is going to be knocking on their door. That's where some of this started to let go and it snowballed. It's a shame. Boaters are out there and they see this stuff in their way so why can't they just pull it out.

Ms. Breault: We actually did an article last fall and reminded residents about dumping grass clippings by the pond, debris, and fertilizing their grass by the pond. We are going to continue that. We actually are in the process of drafting a spring article to remind people and if you live on the pond to use natural fertilizers and things like that. So, there is a lot of education that we are also putting out to the residents by the ponds, but this would really help us move forward and start really saving the ponds and maintaining them.

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TOWN OF LUDLOW

Mr. Goncalves: I know a lot of times we get reports where Haviland Pond has been shut down because of E-coli sepsis. Any of that testing being duplicated here or are we already getting a lot of it where we can save money here?

Ms. Breault: It is only tested when it is open to the public. When I talked to Penny and the Recreation Committee last summer, I was told that it was closed for the season. They're not required to do weekly testing. It is a great question. If Haviland is open for the season, that water will be tested weekly. As for the Pond Committee, we can do a lot but there will only be so much we can if we can't do some of the real study and understanding of the analysis of what's happening to the water.

Mr. DeBarge: First let me say what a fantastic presentation this is. I know for me I like visual aids so I can take my notes and things like that. I have to be totally honest with you when I saw Pond Commission on our Agenda, I was thinking okay new sand, maybe some upgrade for buildings, this is exactly the direction. I know I have been outspoken on how much of our town that needs to be cleaned up, and how bad these have gotten. It's our responsibility as the town government to do that. My number one hang up with any of this is what happens after that. You brought up getting information out to those that live around those areas and maintenance, maintenance, maintenance. What do we talk about all the time, whether it's track and field, whatever we do, it's always about maintenance. If we spend the money to fix something, we have to make sure we maintain it. That's the key, it's the community when it comes to this. We let it get this bad so we should do something to mitigate that, but the community has got to help with the maintenance.

Ms. Markiewicz: I don't think this is going to be something that is going to wipe out all the mill weed, and all that. I think it will be over the years.

Ms. Breault: I will say that when you contract with companies like Water & Wetland Management they stay involved. So initially it might cost us some dollars to clean up what we have got, but as you continue, they will survey them every year and that is part of the contract that they will do as you get to that phase. Again 2023 you would want to talk about it with the budgeting process but understanding now what the ongoing maintenance is to stay involved. There is a gentleman that I used to work with who uses these folks in Windsor and he showed me pictures of before and after, five years ago. At that time, it used to be swimmable, people jumping off docks and boating and all this, and you couldn't do any of that and five years later he's showing me pictures of crystal-clear water and that's because he has these management companies involved.

Ms. Markiewicz: I had a conversation with the person in charge of the DPW in Pittsfield and he was so kind. He stayed on the phone with me for over an hour giving me ideas of what they did. It was very informative.

Ms. Breault: I think it's a great opportunity, the cleanup day. We've been talking as a committee about having a pond cleanup day. We would go out and clean around the pond; you walk around and see all the trash. We would love to partner with this group and to do this together. It can be posted in our register article as well and be a partnership.

Mr. Silva: Have you investigated, inquiring about any revenue for any of this for the future?

Ms. Hodgeman: They did ask if we have a CPO didn't, they?

Ms. Breault: They asked if we have a CPO which we don't. The only thing I did was I researched a little bit of the American Recovery Act and there was something in there about environmental. I know there's a question about how Ludlow is going to use those funds. I don't know if it falls in that and how much there is but that could be an option. This cannot start until the April/May

timeframe anyways but depending on the time that would be an option. Another option would be to take donations from people living on these ponds.

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2022 NOV -2 A 9:25
TOWN OF LUDLOW

Mr. Silva: Some ponds have a pond commission/committee and charge residents of the area that want to belong to that pond. I pay one hundred dollars to the one I belong to, and you know if you want to put a boat in or what not if you don't pay into that you can't.

Ms. Markiewicz: Or pay a little more in taxes for the people that live on the ponds.

Mr. Silva: That too.

Ms. Breault: The only pond that you can put a boat on out of these is Haviland Pond.

Mr. Goncalves: Phase one is definitely important to know what we are dealing with. I don't know if we have the 40R money at least to get this first part done?

Mr. Strange: I'm sure that there's programs that cover these types of things.

Mr. Goncalves: I know we have that kitty there with some 40R money. Some zoning funds were received from the state. I don't know if it would cover it or not.

Mr. Strange: I don't know if it covers environmental conservation type of projects but let me look into it.

Mr. Goncalves: If not there, I'm definitely in favor of the ARPA money at least for Phase one so we know what we're looking at. How big of a problem do we have or if it's not that bad. Phase two permitting doesn't look like it's a big deal.

Ms. Breault: Right, until we get into that process, but I agree, and I think there are grants and other things we can tap into.

Mr. Goncalves: Just for the purpose of not losing the season, there are people that are excited.

Mr. Genette: I don't think this is a whole lot of money, $8,975.00 just to get the process going to understand what we're looking at. We obviously are not going to get any better. It's just going to get worse and worse and cost more and more money. $8,975.00 for me personally I don't know how the rest of the Board feels would probably be coming out of ARPA. A couple of looks around here we're also thinking maybe it might be worth giving the Pond Commission a small budget; it wouldn't happen this year because it is too late, but two or three thousand dollars to help you guys get the word out to people throughout the community, maybe cover some of your expenses and those kinds of things. We would have to talk about it going into the next budget season but it's a little late this year. But that's how I feel about it.

Mr. DeBarge: As far as ARPA, I think this is what it's for. Any entity we have in town that wants to make the greater good, better is what we collectively agreed to use this money for. The only thing I would say is I'm starting to get picky about the total amount of ARPA because of the great ideas that our departments have had to use the money for. I'm getting worried about being able to do what we really need to do, not necessarily what we want, but things that we need to do. So, I would only ask is there another way to get this done in the timeframe as opposed to just using it out of ARPA. It's a small fee I agree, but this to me says grant all over it. I just wonder for timeframe purposes can we get something or not?

Ms. Markiewicz: Does anybody have any idea how that grant works?

Mr. Silva: I think a grant wouldn't work out for the timeframe. Grants take a significant amount of time, one to write, and two everyone talks at once.

Ms. Holdsworth: The town doesn't have a grant writer yet?

Mr. Goncalves: No, it's in the works.

Ms. Breault: We do know when we met with Jake Oliveira that he offered his assistance and his staff assistance with helping with the grant writing. I do think the first phase, and this is where we were hoping to be last year but having had a slowdown with the company was also good because we were able to learn a lot.

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Mr. Silva: With this amount being pretty small, nothing is small as far as taxpayers are concerned. We're spending their money but there are several funds that I think we can pull this out of. There is still money in some of them we use in case of emergencies that I think we can pull this out of. My first recommendation is that Marc look at these revenues in some of these accounts and that maybe you and the accountant can find those accounts that we pull money out of for emergencies for what not. I think we can find it quite honestly,

Mr. Goncalves: Why don't we make the commitment and then we try to figure out where the money is coming from after.

Moved by Mr. Goncalves to authorize $8,975.00 for the Phase I survey for the ponds as submitted with the understanding that the actual determination of where the money comes from will be determined at a later date depending on the funding availability from various accounts, seconded by Mr. Gennette. Vote 5-0

Mr. Rosenblum: I think we can find out relatively quickly as to where that money can come from.

Mr. Silva: One more question. Did you get any other quotes or anything?

Ms. Breault: I did get one from Solitude later and it doesn't have the detail that this one has.

Mr. Silva: It's just to comply with the regulations. I know this is under.

Mr. Goncalves: $10,000.

Mr. Silva: This is under $25,000. Actually, I believe it's $25,000 now for procurement, but because you don't really need to go to procurement you still have to make due diligence.

Ms. Breault: I will try to get a quote in the next couple weeks. This is great. Thank you on behalf of the committee.

Correspondence:

59. The Riverwalk Creamery located at 116 East Street – application for a Common Victualler's License.

Mr. Silva: Again, I'm going to put Marc on the spot Marc have you checked into this are all the requirements put into place? The inspections have been done, I'm sure. Probably wouldn't be before.

Mr. Strange: Yes, as far as I know.

Mr. Silva: Wait a minute, this is an application. Is this for approval to grant a common vic?

Mr. Strange: Yes, the license is in unfinished business. So, the correspondence lead to the license.

Mr. Silva: So, we're voting to, this is a common vic.

Mr. Strange: So, if you want to do that now or later on. It's up to you.

Mr. Rosenblum: We would have to approve it here and then sign it in unfinished.

Moved by Mr. Gennette to approve The Riverwalk Creamery's, located at 116 East Street, application for a Common Victualler's License, seconded by Mr. Silva. Vote 4-0

60. Brian Shameklis, Safety Chairman – asking the Board to have Eversource put up LED lighting on existing poles in 782 Moore Street.

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2022 NOV -2 A 9:25
TOWN OF LUDLOW

Mr. Silva: Do we have any further information or is this a request? I don't see any issue. If it's needed, it's needed, probably better lighting. I'm just wondering if there is more information.

Mr. DeBarge: We've discussed asking Eversource about replacing all of our streetlights with LEDs. I know I was told that if we ask them, they have to put us on a list to do it whenever that list comes up. We have a rep we can find this out.

Mr. Silva: I don't have an issue with it. I just don't want a person to ask for an LED light next to their house and then this one is going to ask, you know what I mean, but I don't have any problem.

Moved by Mr. Silva to approve the request by the Safety Committee to ask Eversource to put LED light on the pole at the area of 782 Moore Street, seconded by Mr. Gennette. Vote 5-0

61. Kim M. Batista, CMMC, Town Clerk – requesting the Board to appoint Marc Strange, Town Administrator, as Records Access Officer for the Board of Selectmen's office.

Moved by Mr. Goncalves to appoint Marc Strange the Records Access Officer for the Board of Selectmen, seconded by Mr. DeBarge. Vote 5-0

62. Joao (John) Bernardo – request to be appointed as a democratic poll worker. The Town Clerk recommends approval.

Mr. Silva: Mr. Bernardo has been asking me over and over and over again when I am going to be approved. I've told him listen you have to wait it has to go through a process. The clerk has to recommend you. So, he's excited.

Moved by Mr. Silva to appoint Mr. John Bernardo as a democratic poll worker, seconded by Mr. Goncalves. Vote 5-0

63. Douglas J. Stefancik, Town Planner – is requesting to meet with the Board of Public Works, Safety Committee and Board of Selectmen to discuss the traffic problems surrounding the Mass Turnpike & Center Street commercial area.

Mr. Rosenblum: They would like to meet and discuss it on Thursday, April 14 of this year at 7:15.

Mr. Silva: Is that one of our meetings Mr. Chairman?

Mr. Rosenblum: No that's a Thursday.

Mr. Silva: They are requesting the Board. I'm just wondering if it is necessary to have the full Board there because if we do have the full Board then they are going to have to have an open meeting and we have to go through the whole, all the postings and what not.

Mr. Goncalves: We have a meeting that Tuesday and we'll be able to see which one of us can go.

Mr. Silva: One more Mr. Chairman. We're going to agree to schedule this meeting so that they can process it.

Mr. Rosenblum: We might as well stick to the time that they have already set up.

Moved by Mr. Silva to approve the request by Doug Stefancik to have a meeting with the Board of Public Works, Safety Committee, and our representative to this meeting about the Mass Turnpike and Center Street commercial area traffic issues, seconded by Mr. DeBarge. Vote 5-0

Mr. Rosenblum: Do you have a question?

Audience Member: The Board meeting would not be an open meeting?

Mr. Goncalves: Their meeting would be open, the Planning Board. We would send one or two representatives from this Board not to create an open meeting violation and have three of us there creating a quorum where we would have an actual meeting within their meeting.

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2022 NOV -2 A 9:25
TOWN OF LUDLOW

Mr. Silva: The same goes for the Board of Public Works. I don't know if they would send three of their members. If they do, they have to open a meeting for it and the same with the Safety Committee. It doesn't really say that the Planning Board is having a meeting, says Doug Stefancik.

Mr. Rosenblum: It says the Board would like to discuss this matter at the Planning Board meeting of Thursday. So, it would be a meeting.

Unfinished Business:

Board to approve and sign the Memorandum of Agreement between the Town and the Firefighters Local 1840.

Moved by Mr. Silva to approve and sign the Memorandum of Agreement between the Town and the Firefighters Local 1840, seconded by Mr. Goncalves. Vote 5-0

Board to sign the Common Victualler's License for The Riverwalk Creamery, if approved.

Moved by Mr. Gennette to sign the Common Victualler's License for The Riverwalk Creamery, seconded by Mr. Goncalves. Vote 5-0

Board to approve and sign Selectmen Meeting Minutes of September 14, 2021.

Moved by Mr. DeBarge to approve and sign Selectmen Meeting Minutes of September 14, 2021, seconded by Mr. Silva. Vote 5-0

New Business:

Board to approve the Town of Ludlow Clean Up Day and to advertise.

Mr. DeBarge: Our Veterans Service Director put this together. He and I talked about setting up a day. Eric Segundo and I talked about doing something like this and obviously with spring coming, what would be a perfect time to plan it than National Cleanup Day which is May 7th. The idea is to not make it a big task, make it easy, but get everybody involved in it. If you have a store front, if you live in a house that has a piece of sidewalk, on this day go outside and clean that piece of sidewalk that's in front of your house, in front of your business, get rid of the leaves. Everybody is going to be involved with this, the Rotary Club, the VFW. I talked to a representative from the Sheriff's office yesterday and the Sheriff's office is going to get involved with this. The Pond Commission is going to get involved with this. The Lions Club, the 250th Committee is going to be involved with this, the American Legion, everybody is going to be involved with this. So, if you own a business, like I said you're near one, this is the time for all of us to make Ludlow look a little bit better. These flyers will be around. We will get them around to businesses and everywhere else, into our local papers and hopefully we all continue to talk about this so that on May 7th it will be something to see.

Moved by Mr. DeBarge to approve the Town of Ludlow Clean Up Day to coincide with National Cleanup Day on May 7th, 2022, seconded by Mr. Silva. Vote 5-0

Board to appoint Marc Strange, Town Administrator, to town committees/officer positions previously held by Ellie Villano.

Mr. Gennette: The week before last, the Capital Planning Committee, all members present, voted for Mr. Strange to be a member of that committee in Ellie's absence.

Moved by Mr. Gennette to appoint Marc Strange, Town Administrator, to town committees/officer positions previously held by Ellie Villano, seconded by Mr. DeBarge. Vote 5-0

Mr. Rosenblum: Would you like to know all the committees that you are going to be on now?

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2022 NOV -2 A 9:25
TOWN OF LUDLOW

Mr. Goncalves: Cable Committee, Capital Improvement Planning Committee, Chief Procurement Officer, Communications Officer, Computer Advisory Committee, Dog Park Committee, Energy Research Committee ex officio, Fair Housing Committee ex officio, Harris Brook Core School Building Committee, Information Officer, Insurance Advisory Committee ex officio, Local Emergency Planning Committee, Long Range Planning Committee, MVP/HMP Core Committee, and Pioneer Valley Planning Commission.

Board to appoint Marc Strange, Town Administrator, to approve and sign the bills and payroll.

Moved by Mr. Gennette to appoint Marc Strange, Town Administrator, to approve and sign the bills and payroll, seconded by Mr. DeBarge. Vote 5-0

Board to close the Special Town Meeting Warrant.

Moved by Mr. Silva to close the Special Town Meeting Warrant, seconded by Mr. Goncalves. Vote 5-0

Mr. Goncalves: Do we have to accept this article into it before we close it?

Mr. Strange: No.

Mr. Goncalves: I don't know that we've seen this before.

Mr. Silva: What article is that?

Mr. Goncalves: Article One.

Mr. Silva: We've gone over the articles.

Mr. Goncalves: I don't know if we had this one.

Mr. Strange: Have you guys not seen the article before?

Mr. Goncalves: I don't know if it was in the last meeting?

Mr. Silva: What's the article?

Mr. Goncalves: Unpaid bills for prior year $3,100.

Mr. Silva: That was on there.

Mr. Goncalves: Ok we're good just making sure.

Board perused the Executive Session Meeting Minutes of February 1, 2022.

Board perused the Executive Session Meeting Minutes of February 8, 2022.

Board Updates/Misc.:

Mr. Gennette: Just a brief update for the Capital Planning Committee. We've met on two past Monday's now. There was quite an extensive list that came through regarding requests for ARPA funds, requests for Capital. So, we are reviewing visitors now. We've already brought in the DPW, the Rec Department. We've met with the School Department and next Monday is Police, Fire and for the Town Administration building. So, I just wanted to give you an update on that. We are still reviewing all those requests and they are being televised on LCTV. You can go back and see those meetings.

Mr. DeBarge: May 7th is Clean Up Day. For groups, we will have a designated area and time. It looks like the Veterans Memorial is where we'll meet. So, mark that day on your calendar.

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Mr. Rosenblum: American Rescue Plan Act/ARPA funds updates. I know that we all received something just kind of updating the actual total funding and a different way of approaching it, it's an ever-changing landscape, I think. It used to be this and now it's this. So, the door is opening but again I think that we've all agreed on this Board that this funding needs to go towards areas of need and also thinking about any future cost that may be associated with them. Obviously new positions is something that would probably be a big no no with this because we're going to incur larger budgets that go with it. So, bear with us. As the information keeps coming in, I think we are at a point now where we're very close to where we need to be to try and start moving on decisions as a whole.

Mr. Silva: We got notice and we got the whole sixty page and now it's my understanding that we can actually take that money in and approve it all at once into a special fund and then use it from there. So, maybe we should have the Town Accountant come in and bring it forth to us so that we can make a decision or if everybody is ready to do that and what is required for us to do something like that.

Mr. Rosenblum: It might be something good to put on the next agenda to make that movement into a special fund and then we can start allocating.

Mr. Silva: It's time.

Mr. DeBarge: I agree.

Mr. Gennette: We have had a lot of people coming into Capital that are asking for ARPA funds. So, those we are taking a look at to see what needs to get kicked up to this Board, kind of vet out some stuff that doesn't need, figure out what's going to go on Capital so that everything can come into the Town Warrant. So, we have one more week to go. I don't know with the committees that we have coming in if we're going to have enough time to review that night and come up with items that night to be able to kick up. So, I'm just saying maybe not the next meeting but the meeting after we can talk about the ARPA funds. Let's at least put something on the Selectmen's table.

Mr. Rosenblum: And to that point I also had reached out to Finance before expressing our timeline at this point tentatively was really about April 5th would be the last time that we can sit down with Finance and go over the budget and get it done because then we need the Town Clerk to have the time to get everything out to Town Meeting. So obviously that agenda would be an agenda I would set until we have reorganization of the Board. So that's a priority for me to get them in April 5th.

Mr. Gennette: We have a meeting right I think the day before that. We're trying to finish up. We've met the past two Mondays. We're really trying to just get them in, but we had to give all the different departments a chance to schedule in. We're working with them, it's going well, and I just want to make sure that we can put some lucid information up to this Board.

Mr. Silva: To go along with that, I know that we've had some preliminary numbers for some of the things that we need to do and want to do. It seems like the top two that this Board has really focused on is going to expend most of those funds. I think by having a list of things that we'd like to have, maybe put it down on the list and just go right down as the money is available because right now, we don't have any concrete number of what it's going to cost us for Vets Park or the track. So, I think we need to get those numbers before we even say yes to move this money or take this money. Those two items are significant.

Mr. DeBarge: We've discussed engineering for that. So yes, that's what we have to get moving on. I couldn't agree more.

Mr. Gennett: With ARPA funds, we have quite a bit of time before we spend them.

Mr. Rosenblum: 2024 and then 2026.

Mr. Gennette: We've got a little bit of time. I don't think we need to beat April 5th as far as ARPA goes but I know we're trying to get to Town Meeting with our other items.

Mr. Rosenblum: April 5th would be just getting to the point where we can get all the materials out to Town Meeting and be ready for it. I think once we get past the budget itself and we get past Town Meeting then we can probably dive in more into it and at least get to the point where we allocate the funds to a special fund maybe in the next meeting and then after we get past Town Meeting then dive into it more and then do the list as we talked about before.

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Mr. Gennette: Correct, I agree.

Mr. Silva: I would just hate to issue any funds and start giving funds and then come down the road we're doing this and then all of the sudden we need another million dollars and then we have to go back to the voters. They're going to have to foot the bill. I would rather not do that at all.

Closing Comments:

Mr. Gennette: As far as voting goes, there's been a lot of community members that have had a lot to say over the past couple of years. They've spoken up and have been saying a lot of stuff. I think departments are trying to hear them, trying to accommodate them. The best way to reach any of these boards is by voting. So, get out to the polls and vote.

Mr. Silva: Covid is not done. As a matter of fact, it seems to be coming back with a new strain and hopefully we don't go back to masks. Keep staying vigilant with it and do your best.

Mr. Goncalves: Cybersecurity in general seems to be a really big problem right now. It's becoming more and more prevalent and dangerous, especially as a business owner where you have a lot of employees controlling your systems. It seems to be in the air more now than ever. Just don't click anything if you don't know what it is, don't press on a button, don't give anybody any information. The cyber attackers are getting really good with the Amazons and the CVS's and all these different surveys, and you win a prize. If they are going to give you something, don't believe it. On the Covid front, yes congratulations Ludlow. You did a great job. We're only at 28 cases for the month as opposed to January where we had about 2,600 cases at this time of the month. There is a new strain on the way. Be careful, be vigilant. Get out there and vote March 28th. It's an important election. Polls are open from 10 am to 8 pm. Don't forget those people that were voting at Vets Park are now at the middle school. I think we have a meeting tomorrow night. We're going to be talking budget with the school committee here at 5:30.

Mr. Gennette: I would like to follow up on something Tony said. Just so you know I put out an alert yesterday from the FBI and CSAW about USB sticks showing up in people's mail. They are saying that they're instructions for COVID and you put it in your computer, and it will compromise your computer. Never plug anything into your computers.

Mr. DeBarge: First I would like to welcome Marc and I would like to remind everybody the school committee and the superintendent search committee has hired a new superintendent. I know the DPW is interviewing for a new director so within no time at all we go through three of our big leaders in town with new eyes and a new perspective in my opinion. I'm not saying people aren't paying attention, but I just like people to know a new superintendent, Town Administrator and soon to be director for the DPW is big news for a town like ours. The Pond Commission is coming in and wanting to clean up the ponds and some of us are getting involved with other cleanup projects. Our boy scouts and girl scouts are constantly out picking up trash. Trial Court is back out picking up trash on West Ave and other places. I don't like to talk about Covid anymore. I want to move on so maybe this is a good thing with all of these positions being new and getting people out to clean up and all of this. I'd like to think this is a positive step forward.

Mr. Rosenblum: I too would like to welcome Mr. Strange to our family here in Ludlow. Big shoes to fill and I'd like to shout out to Ellie Villano. I know she's watching tonight. The Board will be meeting with the school department, the school committee, the Business Manager for the school, the Town Accountant and Finance, I believe, if she can make it; I know that she has been a little bit under the weather. It's more to really look at a budget obviously that accounts for 40 to 45, almost 50% of our town budget and we just want to make sure that we do the right thing for the schools and that the schools are accountable for their budget as well. I have to be honest there is a big ask coming from the school department and there are questions on it and to make sure to be fair to every other department in this town that has made requests. Please get out and vote. The

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one thing I would say is there's been a lot of dirty laundry aired on social media when it comes to the School Committee election. I saw someone post something and it was a very good point and everything that's been going on about this campaigning for School Committee has been kind of concerning, but in the same sense you never hear anyone address anything about their school budget; what would you differently with your budget; what is your goal as being on the school committee? In the next week or so if you can get those answers, I think their good answers to get besides the traditional banter that's going back and forth. There's a lot more to it. We all sit here, and everyone looks at our Board as I guess the top Board in town, and we make decisions. I came in here thinking I want to do this, and I want to do this and then you learn that you can't do those things. Those candidates hopefully they've done their research and hopefully they understand what they're getting into, and I think that they are going to find out in the same sense that there are some things they won't be able to change, and some things they will be able to change that they didn't think they could.

Moved by Mr. Goncalves meeting to adjourn at 6:44pm, seconded by Mr. Silva. Vote 5-0

Chairman

Ludlow Board of Selectmen

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