The Meeting of the Board of Selectmen held on Tuesday, May 3, 2022 began at 5:30 p.m. Remote participation due to COVID-19.

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

First Order of Business: The Pledge of Allegiance

VISITATIONS:

5:30 p.m. – Class II Motor Vehicle License Hearing – Stingray Motors, LLC – 264 Moody Street

Moved by Mr. Rosenblum to open public hearing for the Class II Motor Vehicle License for Stingray Motors at 5:30 p.m., seconded by Mr. Silva. Vote 5-0. All in favor.

Mr. Silva asked Mr. Medeiros if he will have any issues with him voting on this license because he too has a Class II license in town.

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Mr. Medeiros stated that he has no problem with Mr. Silva voting.

Mr. Silva asked Mr. Medeiros if he had any responses from the abutters?

Mr. Medeiros stated that he had two responses.

Mr. Goncalves read the letters from the pertinent departments in town.

Mr. Medeiros explained that it will be 99% classic cars. There will be some retail out of there and some auction like Barrett Jackson.

Mr. Goncalves asked how many cars he will likely have on the property and how many cars he is allowed with the license?

Mr. Medeiros stated that he will likely only have 5-10 cars and the license is for 15.

Mr. DeBarge has no issues with it.

Mr. Gennette is happy to have such a distinguished family as the Medeiros family come into town.

Mr. Rosenblum is good with it.

Mr. Silva has no issues with it.

Mr. Goncalves is good with it.

Moved by Mr. DeBarge to approve the Class II Motor Vehicle License for Stingray Motors, LLC at 264 Moody Street, not to exceed 15 cars, seconded by Mr. Gennette. Vote 5-0. All in favor.

Moved by Mr. Rosenblum to close the Hearing for the Class II Motor Vehicle License for Stingray Motors at 5:38 p.m., seconded by Mr. Silva. Vote 5-0. All in favor.

5:45 p.m. – Steven Santos, Chairman – Board of Public Works – Logs Surplus/Special Municipal Employee

Mr. Santos gave the Selectmen some photos of the logs that they have cut down. He explained to them that in the past they hired a company that would come in and grind the logs for them, however they are looking at an anticipated cost of $50,000 to do this. There is also wood that has been chipped by the DPW that they had discussed with the previous Town Administrator to declare as surplus so they can make more room.

Mr. Goncalves asked if that would be for the logs and the chips?

Mr. Santos stated that it will be for both but they will probably put it on muni-bid separate because someone might want one and not the other. They will also be sure whoever takes them is insured.

Mr. Silva asked if it is all good burning wood? He also asked what the liability is if a resident goes and gets the wood?

Mr. Santos stated that he is not sure about that.

Mr. Strange stated that he will look into that and see if it is possible to do.

Mr. Santos stated that it is difficult because he will have to have an employee there watching what is going on and his budget is stretched already.

Mr. Silva stated that he thinks it would be a nice gesture to the residents especially with the cost of heating so high.

Mr. Santos stated that a lot of the residents will ask to leave the wood where they cut it down.

Mr. Silva said if they put a sign on the wood, someone would take it.

Mr. Rosenblum asked if the DPW could possibly put the wood at the entrance and just let residents take whatever they wanted.

Mr. Santos stated that it is a lot of work and he doesn't want anyone getting hurt lifting anything.

Moved by Mr. Silva to declare the wood chips and logs that the DPW has as surplus for disposal, seconded by Mr. DeBarge. Vote 5-0. All in favor.

Mr. Santos stated that he is a special municipal employee for the DPW but in order to pull a permit or anything from other departments in town like the Ludlow Fire Department or the Board of Health, he has to be designated a special municipal employee to each committee he serves on. He serves on the Bylaw Committee, the Senior Center Building Committee and the Radio Communications Committee.

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Mr. Strange stated it is for the committee members not Mr. Santos specifically.

Moved by Mr. Rosenblum to designate the Board of Public Works Members as Special Municipal Employees as a member of the following committees: Radio Communications Committee, Senior Center Building Committee and Bylaw Review Committee, seconded by Mr. Silva. Vote 5-0. All in favor.

6:15 p.m. – Mario Morton – Interview for Westover Golf Commission Vacancy

Mr. Morton resides in Ludlow and has been a resident for a number of years. He plays golf 3-4 times per week at Westover. He has worked at Mass Mutual for 23 years. He is in charge of 45 employees. He has a lot of fresh ideas for the course and moving it forward.

Mr. Rosenblum asked where Mr. Morton sees the most need for Westover Golf Course?

Mr. Morton explained that he would like to look at the cutting schedule to influence a first cut because when the weekend comes, the course becomes unbearable and that's when it has the most play. Irrigation is a big issue also and this really needs to be updated.

Mr. Rosenblum asked about other areas besides the course itself?

Mr. Morton stated that a facelift on the clubhouse would be great. However, first and foremost he would need to understand the expenses there.

Mr. DeBarge thanked Mr. Morton for coming in and agreed with him about the irrigation issue. He asked what Mr. Morton thought the biggest positive of the course is and then the biggest negative of the course or need, if he had to pick one thing?

Mr. Morton stated that the layout of the course is definitely the positive. He stated that for the money, it is a great course. He would like to take a look at the operations of the course to see where they could make changes.

Mr. Goncalves asked how he feels about the commission's decision not to do tournaments there? Also, would you just hang out there or only golf there?

Mr. Morton stated that a conversation needs to be had about it but does it make financial sense. Inevitably you have to shut down the entire course for at least a half a day for tournaments so it has to be worth it. Mr. Morton stated that he normally will hang out there a bit after a round of golf but not necessarily just to go to dinner.

Mr. McBride stated that they do have tournaments just not on the weekends.

Mr. Silva stated that the eating portion of things are not in the commissioner's realm. That is something that is bid on every year.

Mr. Goncalves thanked Mr. Morton for coming and his interest.

6:30 p.m. – Harry Mills – Interview for Westover Golf Commission Vacancy

Mr. Mills stated that he was the commissioner there from 2017 – 2021 and he enjoyed it very much. He would like to see new tournaments there in the future. Tournaments bring in new people and more income.

Mr. Rosenblum asked Mr. Mills where he sees improvements that need to be made either on the golf course or the facilities in general?

Mr. Mills stated that the facilities are old and could be updated. The course itself is in great shape and he plays it 3 times per week now. One nice thing about Westover is the greens have improved over the last few years. The building itself is old but I'm not sure what else you could do to it.

Mr. Silva asked what the number one asset that Mr. Mills would bring to the commission itself?

Mr. Mills stated that he is an avid golfer and he knows what people look for when they go to a golf course. He knows how to budget and he understand that it is a business.

Mr. DeBarge asked Mr. Mills what he thought the number one positive thing about the course is and the number one negative thing about the course is?

Mr. Mills explained that the positive thing about the course is the fact that the rates are competitive and the course itself is the best public golf course in the area. It's in exceptional shape and the costs great. He also stated that Bill Kubinski is a real asset to the golf course as well. He does not see any negatives at the golf course, other than having security cameras there.

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Mr. Goncalves asked Mr. Mills what he thinks about the lack of weekend tournaments?

Mr. Mills believes tournaments bring in revenue and new golfers and he believes it is a big plus for the golf course. He would like to see more tournaments during the week.

Mr. Goncalves thanked Mr. Mills for coming in.

Mr. McBride stated that he just received a revenue update for the golf course and wanted to share that with the Selectmen. He stated that for the month of April, it was $103,472 which is a 25% increase from last year. The annual revenue so far is $717,117 which is a 1 ½% decrease over last year. They will probably turn money into their enterprise money this year as well. There have been some issues with the irrigation and they need to be updated. They did do some updates to the clubhouse as well and it looks great. Their staff does a great job keeping everything in great shape and keeping their expenses down. Mr. McBride believes that both of the candidates here today would be great assets.

Mr. DeBarge likes the idea of the business model and having fresh eyes on the budget so he is leaning towards Mr. Morton.

Mr. Gennette explained that he does not know much about running a golf course and thinks both of these candidates are great but feels he should abstain from the vote.

Mr. Rosenblum agreed with Mr. DeBarge in that a golf course is more of a business now. He would also lean towards Mr. Morton. Even though the town owns Westover they are self-sustaining.

Mr. Silva agreed with Mr. Rosenblum about the town owning Westover and finds that it is a good thing and believes that the town has great services for their residents. Mr. Silva is also leaning towards Mr. Morton, but believes both candidates are great.

Mr. Goncalves was happy that both candidates agreed that there wasn't a lot of negatives at the golf course. He does like the fact that Mr. Morton brings some new excitement to the position. The golf course is definitely an asset to the town.

Moved by Mr. Rosenblum to select Mr. Mario Morton as the next Golf Commissioner, seconded by Mr. DeBarge. Vote 4-0-1. One abstention.

CORRESPONDENCE:

95. Philip Brodeur, Committee Member, Boy Scout Troop 180 – inviting the Board to attend the Eagle Scout Court of Honor for Zacharia Flebotte on Sunday, May 22, 2022 at 2 p.m. in the Pastoral Center at Saint Elizabeth Parish, 191 Hubbard Street, Ludlow, MA.

    Moved by Mr. Gennette to file and congratulated Zacharia Flebotte, seconded by Mr. DeBarge. Vote 5-0. All in favor.

96. Priscilla A Pettell – informing the Board of her resignation as a poll worker.

    Moved by Mr. DeBarge to accept the resignation of Priscilla A. Pettell as a poll worker, seconded by Mr. Gennette. Vote 5-0. All in favor.

97. Brian Shameklis, Safety Chairman - recommending the Board to consider forming a committee to focus on the preparation and writing of the Shared Streets Grant, valuable for long term planning and awards up to $500,000 for street safety projects.

    Moved by Mr. DeBarge to forward this information to the Town Administrator to move this project forward, seconded by Mr. Silva. Vote 5-0. All in favor.

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98. 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 April 22, 2022.

    Moved by Mr. Rosenblum 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 April 22, 2022, seconded by Mr. Silva. Vote 5-0. All in favor.

99. 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 April 24, 2022.

    Moved by Mr. Rosenblum 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 April 24, 2022, seconded by Mr. Silva. Vote 5-0. All in favor.

100. Board Reorganizations – Recreation Department, Board of Assessors.

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

101. James Dias – informing the Board of his support of erecting a new track and field for the Ludlow High School.

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

UNFINISHED BUINESS

Board to vote on the replacement/upgrade of the IMC public safety software system at the Public Safety Complex with the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds.

Moved by Mr. Rosenblum to approve the replacement upgrade of the IMC public safety software system

at the Public Safety Complex with the ARPA funds, seconded by Mr. DeBarge. Vote 5-0. All in favor.

Board to review and approve the FY23 Town Budget to be submitted to Town Meeting.

Mr. Goncalves asked Mr. Santos to give the Board an update about the trash issue.

Mr. Santos handed out a spreadsheet to the Board of Selectmen and asked Jesse English to explain to them what had been done.

Mr. English, Director of the DPW, stated that he has been working over the past week with Waste Management and Republic to get the RFP numbers down. He did get the collection fees reduced with Waste Management by $110,760 the first year and then by the third year, they will be down $349,171 over the life of the contract. It will be a manual pick up for the first year so there are no interruptions but they would not come down in the automation prices. The upfront costs would be too great in order for them to reduce it. Republic came down a little bit in the municipality fees, they came down from 71,055 to 48,196.

Mr. Santos stated the fee for Republic would cover all of the dumpsters at all municipal buildings except the schools. He believes there are 13 of them.

Mr. Silva asked if the schools does theirs on their own?

Mr. Santos stated that they do, they have it in their budget. They tried to combine them years ago but the schools wanted something with the rebates on the recyclable, therefore we kept them separate.

Mr. Silva asked if it went out to bid and if they can negotiate them before awarding the contract?

Mr. Santos stated that it did go out to bid and stated that they can negotiate because they are not 30B required. They sent the bid to 4 vendors, Casella and USA did not want anything to do with manual so they would not bid on it. Republic and Waste Management were the only two that would quote on manual pick up. The containers were included in the RFP because we originally wanted the company to supply the containers but now there is talk about the town purchasing the containers.

Mr. Silva stated that it is a 3-year contract with the first-year manual and the other two years possibly automated.

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Mr. Silva asked why the town doesn't just go fully automated right away?

Mr. Santos stated that the issue is the cost of the containers. If the town buys the containers, based on 7100 households it is going to cost $1.4 million because the 35-gallon trash can cost $49.45 each and each household will need two and then the 64-gallon trash can cost $56.59 each and each household will need one. The 64 gallon will be for cardboard and the 35 gallon will be for trash and cans and bottles that are being recycled. The DPW currently has 8 more years left on their contract for dual stream recycling. He also reminded the Board that they pay $90/ton to dispose of the trash also.

Mr. DeBarge asked why they cannot have two 64-gal barrels instead?

Mr. Santos stated that they have a contract with DEP for the 35-gal trash can to encourage more Recycling and less trash.

Mr. Silva agreed with Mr. DeBarge that there should only be two containers and stated that would save them over $400,000.

Mr. Gennette agrees with Mr. DeBarge also that there should only be two barrels, not three in order to save money. He asked Mr. English if the second year that he has on the spreadsheet with Waste Management is an automated price?

Mr. English stated that it is not.

Mr. Gennette clarified that they just need to get through this year with manual and then renegotiate for next year being automated?

Mr. Silva asked what the price difference is between manual and automated?

Ms. Collins stated that if we went into the contract manually this year, in year two it will go up $388,000 and then year three it will go up $51,000 and that does not include any increases that they are unaware of. Republic shows automated verses manual and the bins will cost $1.3 million over three years, then they would have to use $110,000 from ARPA to cover MS4, $50,000 from the recycle budget and $150,000 from levy and there would still be a $39,000 deficit for automated and $81,000 deficit for manual. This deficit would either have to be absorbed by their budget or pull more into the levy.

Mr. Santos is a little nervous about using any funds where he has as a buffer because last year they ran into a problem where Bondi's Island closed and he had to find another place to dispose of the trash and then this year the same thing happened with Eco; they went bankrupt. They negotiated with Wilbraham and now they are paying $90/ton to get rid of the trash. They extended it one more year and then it has to go out to bid next year.

Mr. Gennette stated that this needs to be manual this year so there aren't any interruptions and it needs to be managed inside of the DPW's budget going forward. They don't want to use up all of their free cash either.

Mr. Santos stated that Waste Management said they will negotiate and could get into automation slowly. They would consider going automated trash and curbside recycling.

Mr. Gennette stated that would be better because then they could stage it.

Mr. Goncalves asked if Attorney Crowley is looking at the contracts that the DPW is signing?

Mr. Santos stated that they have not sent anything over yet because they just received these numbers.

Mr. Goncalves is concerned that they won't have the flexibility the next year or the year after.

Mr. Silva stated that the residents are not happy with the trash pick-up. He also asked if the trash fee will continue from now on?

Mr. Santos stated that the trash fee is permanent from now on, $650,000 was collected last year. Mr. Santos also stated that Waste Management only went up 3% in the past 5 years which is great. He also wanted to let the Board know that if they sign a three-year contract with Waste Management now for manual trash pick-up, they can try to renegotiate with them for automated for the remained of the two years but they cannot break the contract with Waste Management.

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Mr. Goncalves asked what the automated cost would be?

Mr. English stated that the cost for automation for year two is $1,379,606 and for year three is $1,448,586 and this does include bins but this is for a 5-year contract not a 3-year.

Mr. DeBarge asked if they would sell the bins on a lease?

Mr. Santos does not believe they would do that.

Ms. Collins stated that they could use the free cash to purchase the bins and then fund the rest through the general fund.

Mr. Silva asked if they could extend the contract to five years for automated?

Mr. Santos stated they can do that but he would like to put the automated bid out to all of the trash companies first because a few companies would not quote unless it was automated and a five year contract.

Mr. Goncalves stated the 35-gallon bin would cost $351,000 and the 64-gallon bin would cost $401,000.

Mr. Santos reminded the board that they will actually be purchasing bins for 7,400 households now, not 7,100.

Ms. Collins stated that if the Board is planning on approving the trash budget at the $1.89 million, they would have to put $110,000 to the MS4 and fund with ARPA Funds and then take $150,000 from the levy. They would have to take $50,000 from the DPW's recycle budget and transfer that to the trash budget. A $340,000 deficit needs to be covered.

Mr. Gennette is not happy with using $110,000 from ARPA for this.

Mr. Silva would rather take the $340,000 from free cash and just get this done for this year.

Mr. Rosenblum asked if there will be a short fall in years two and three?

Ms. Collins stated that it would not necessarily be a short fall but the budget will increase $388,000 in the first year and $51,000 in the second year and they will just have to find it in the tax rate.

Mr. Silva does not want to put anymore on the tax payers. The tax rate has already gone up to $252 on the average homeowner and this will push it up to $400-500.

Mr. Gennette is opposed to using the stabilization funds for this but he also does not want to put any more on the taxpayer. He thanked Mr. English for renegotiating the contract and saving $110,000 there.

Ms. Collins stated that there is $1.1 million in free cash and would have to bring up at the Town Meeting.

Mr. Strange stated that is would be in the budget article at Town Meeting.

Mr. Silva stated that things are very difficult for the tax payers right now, between the cost of gas and food and now the taxes. This is also hitting small businesses very hard as well.

Ms. Collins stated that at the Town Meeting they can also adjust the budget if necessary. They could fund the $380,000 with free cash now and if they get more revenue then expected, they can change that at the Town Meeting in October.

Mr. Gennette asked if they will take it out of free cash again next year?

Ms. Collins stated that it is going to depend on what revenues look like.

Mr. Santos stated that trash collection may not be sustainable for the town in the future.

Mr. English stated that he pays for trash where he lives and it is $130 per quarter.

Mr. Rosenblum stated that it they would actually have to use $288,000 if the $50,000 in recycle funds was transferred into the budget.

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Mr. Santos stated that some of the weight restrictions will go away if they go automated. The only requirement is that the top stays closed and that should eliminate some of the complaints from residents.

Moved by Mr. Silva to take $288,912 from free cash to supplement the trash budget, seconded by Mr. Rosenblum. Vote 3-2. Two opposed.

Ms. Collins stated the total budget will now be $77,485,733.

Mr. Silva asked if the total was in the packet that went out to the precinct members?

Mr. Strange stated that the total was not in the packet, it will be in the motion at the Town Meeting.

Mr. Goncalves stated that we are down to $845,000 in free cash now.

Moved by Mr. DeBarge to approve the FY23 town budget in the amount of $77,485,733.00 and submit to Town Meeting, seconded by Mr. Gennette. Vote 5-0. All in favor.

NEW BUSINESS

Board to discuss and consider using ARPA funds to pay for the asbestos/hazardous materials assessment services and to prepare asbestos/hazardous material abatement and demolition specifications for the former Veteran's Park Elementary School demolition project.

Mr. Strange stated that this project needs to be prioritized. A quote was received from OTO for the asbestos survey for $17,700. This will need to be done before the demolition is done.

Moved by Mr. Rosenblum to approve ARPA funding in the amount of $17,700 to pay for asbestos/hazardous material assessment service and to prepare asbestos/hazardous material abatement and demolition specifications for the former Veteran's Park Elementary School demolition project, seconded by Mr. Gennette. Vote 5-0. All in favor.

Board to review the vote for the use of ARPA funds for COVID testing kits ($80K).

The Board agreed that the COVID testing kits are not necessary right now.

Moved by Mr. Silva to rescind the vote to allocate $80,000 from ARPA for test kits at this time, seconded by Mr. DeBarge. Vote 5-0. All in favor.

Board perused Selectmen Meeting Minutes of January 4, 2022.

BOARD UPDATES/MISC.

American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Funds Updates.

Mr. DeBarge reminded the residents that the town wide clean up day is Saturday, May 7th at 9 a.m. beginning at the gazebo in Memorial Park.

Mr. Goncalves wanted to let everyone know that there were 206 cases of COVID in Ludlow in April and 148 of them were vaccinated. There were 33 flu cases in April as well. Reminded everyone to stay safe.

Chairman to approve and sign 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.

Event Calendar:

May 7	Town of Ludlow Clean Up Day
May 9	Annual Town Meeting
May 30	Memorial Day – Veteran's Day Activities and Parade

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CLOSING COMMENTS

Mr. Gennette sends his condolences out to the Thomas family; John Thomas was a great man and a positive influence on Mr. Gennette. He was part of Brigham Lodge, the Shriners and the Methodist Church in town.

Mr. Silva sends his condolences to the Thomas family also. He also reminds the precinct members to come to the meeting and be prepared and also if anyone is interested in being a precinct member, come to the Town Meeting on May 9th.

Mr. DeBarge thanked everyone for coming out Friday night to the Joshua Desforges scholarship fundraiser, as well as the challenge held on Saturday morning. It is a great scholarship.

Mr. Rosenblum stated that you can find out which precincts need members by checking online or calling the Clerk's office.

Moved by Mr. Gennette to adjourn this meeting at 8:22 p.m., not return to open session, seconded by Mr. Rosenblum. Vote 5-0. All in favor.

Chairman

Ludlow Board of Selectmen

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