The Meeting of the Board of Selectmen held on Tuesday, August 23, 2022, began at 5:30 p.m. Remote participation due to COVID-19.

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

First Order of Business: The Pledge of Allegiance

VISITATIONS:

5:35 p.m. – Laura Rooney – Ludlow CARES Coalition

Ms. Rooney introduced herself and Jack…, he is a sophomore at Ludlow High School and a member of the student advisory board. There are three students on the board, and they give great feedback to the Cares Coalition. They came in to give an update to the Board of Selectmen. On August 16th there was a program put on by the Board of Health. Paulina Matusik organized an informational session with the DA's office and the Sheriff's office. Police, fire and a pharmacist were there to talk about preventing accidental poisoning, which is overdose with drugs tainted by fentanyl. Young people experimenting with drugs, order these drugs to their home through Snap Chat by using certain types of emojis. Certain emojis mean certain types of drugs. Social media has made things much more accessible then when she was a child. Any pressed pills, like Adderall can be tainted with fentanyl. It is deadly. These sales can go undetected with the emojis. Ludlow has had an overdose due to this, so it is in our backyards. Parents need to be aware of this. The Hampden County Addiction Taskforce has a youth advisory board and they spoke at this presentation as well. They know what their exposures and risks are, and it is important for parents to know these things. A lot of parents do not know how accessible this drug is for their children. LCTV recorded this and she suggests all parents and grandparents take a look at this.

Mr. Goncalves stated that he saw the emoji table and took a picture of it and sent it to his daughter who is a teacher in Belchertown.

Jack explained that not from personal experience but from others, he knows that students are using emojis to code message their friends and request for drugs to be delivered to their homes. It is a way for a student to escape from parents who don't know as much about social media or aren't on social media as much.

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Mr. Goncalves explained that kids do not know what they are getting, and Fentanyl is cheap and in abundance right now. It is easy for drug dealers to hide it in a Percocet or something and it will kill you.

Ms. Rooney stated that the Pharmacists that was involved with the informational session really explained how that happens and why it happens. If you take something and grind it up and then press a pill with it, they don't know how much Fentanyl is in it. This is not scientific. You cannot tell if it is a legal Adderall or a homemade one. In 2021 in Hampden County, there were over 2,290 confirmed and estimated opioid related deaths. It is a 9% increase between 2020 and 2021; 119 or 5% of those overdoses were between the ages of 15-24. This is an accidental death because of Fentanyl, or another type of drug was too strong for them.

Jack thinks that people need to know what the emojis mean and that what they are ordering may not necessarily be what they are getting and what they are getting could kill them.

Ms. Rooney one of the things Chris Herring says is we need to talk about the first day. Why are people turning to alcohol or pills and what is going on with them? This is more normalized then when she was a child.

Jack a lot of people are turning to drugs because of mental health and as a way to escape from that and he thinks that they need to put out to people and encourage them that there are other options to help you. The problems they are experiencing are quite normal and a lot of other people are going through the same thing.

Mr. Gennette ask Jack what grade he is in? He also asked him if he has a good group of friends in the Ludlow Cares Coalition?

Jack stated that he is going into 10th grade and that they are looking to start a club in the school and get more involved.

Mr. Gennette asked if he believes the problem is social media?

Jack stated that he believes the problem is being fueled by social media and older adults do not know what it was like to have social media and to have followers or not fit in. A lot of people are turning to drugs to escape that. The anxiety of not fitting in at school and not having a lot of friends, they think that drugs are their only option.

Mr. Gennette asked Ms. Rooney how many of the overdose deaths in 2021 were older than 24 years old?

Ms. Rooney explained that they were over 24 years old. Overdose deaths can also happen in the older population by taking too many pills. One in five high school students in Massachusetts were offered, sold or given an illegal drug on school property in 2021. That is why the DA partnered with the Ludlow Board of Health. She gave kudos to Paulina for putting that together.

Mr. Gennette asked if prescription drug pricing for seniors is adding to the problem?

Ms. Rooney stated that she does not know that for sure. She stated that people would not go out and buy 10 pounds of hamburger off the street so she does not understand why people would want to buy drugs that way. She stressed for people not to do that.

Mr. Rosenblum thanked Ms. Rooney for coming in and for getting into the school with the peers encouraging others not to buy drugs.

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Mr. Silva asked how they scare people away from this? He explained that he just went to a funeral for a young lady that battled with addiction for a long time.

Ms. Rooney explained that it is just easier and easier for people to get their hands on this stuff. They have to look at the first day and why it starts. Cares tries to reinforce to listen to their children and what they may be going through. Parents need to put their cell phones down and really listen to their kids.

Jack stated that he wants his peers to know that there are people out there that will listen to you and help you. That is what the guidance counselors are there for and other specialists out there. He stated that you just need to reach out. As far as scaring people, having good speakers coming into the school to speak about their experiences if very helpful.

Mr. DeBarge agrees with what Ms. Rooney and Jack stated. The most important is getting involved in the school and engage with the community.

Ms. Rooney explained the next program coming up is a speaker from Colorado, Laura Stack. She was known as the productivity pro. In 2019, her son Johnny passed away due to using high potency marijuana at the age of 14 and in college he committed suicide, and she believes that it was due to cannabis-induced psychosis. She breaks down what marijuana does to the brain and its impact on the brain. Its use has been normalized and not combated to youth as a dangerous thing to them. With all of the billboards stating that it will make you feel better and make you study better, etc. This presentation will be held on September 29th for the students and then a webinar at night for the parents which will be available for 30 days. This is a large investment for Cares, but it is a strong message. She educates the kids because the kids want to know why they shouldn't take drugs or use marijuana. A local mom who lost her son will also speak to the kids. It is suggested to start talking to your children at the age of 10 about drugs. The name of Laura's book is "the dangerous truth about today's marijuana", focusing on much higher potencies then what it was in the 70's and 80's and much more available. Ms. Rooney also gave the board a handout, 'Marijuana in Massachusetts, what you need to know' and this focuses on why it's so dangerous for young people under 25. The industry will flourish if they can keep a young population and they can get them early and bring them through. It won't do as well if they can't get that younger population, very similar to the tobacco industry. There are reasons for young people to stay away from marijuana and it's a lot about their brain development. They also have a day for kids on September 17th at the Boys and Girls Club. They will be at that community fair on September 24th and 25th. They will be helping the ski team with the Hope Stroll as September is national suicide awareness month. Red Ribbon week will be October 23rd through October 30th. They will partner with the Michael J. Dias Foundation on October 23rd to do the Walk to Remember at the Boys and Girls Club. The Cares Coalition tries to encourage people to reach out and not stigmatize their problem. They are trying to reinvigorate Baird Cares this year. Paulina, along with Cares is trying to move forward with some mental health initiatives.

Jack explained that the theme for September and October is mental health awareness and the stop of use of drugs by encouraging people to reach out. He feels that Cares will definitely help with that.

Mr. Goncalves asked how much it costs to have a speaker like Laura Stack to come into the schools?

Ms. Rooney explained that every once in a while, CARES spends a lot of money on speakers and Laura Stack because she is a known author and a national figure, each presentation is $2,000 and Ludlow is having 3 of them. The ones that go into the middle school which aren't as hard-hitting costs about $2-3,000 per presentation. Cares has not been able to get into the schools since COVID. Cares is in the middle of their fundraising campaign. Every year they raise their own money to operate, which is about 20-25,000 annually. Since 2012 they have done this. You can donate on their website. There is different donation levels also. In addition to the speakers, they also do a Valentine event for senior's where they hand out bags to shut-ins and they do the share the care event, as well as the ultimate dance parties for families. There were about 200 people that attended that event. They also do the slide into summer event with the Boys and Girls Club and PV Financial. Cares would like to put their hat in the ring for the opioid settlement funds as well. This will help with the prevention. Ludlow is one of the only towns that does Red Ribbon Week for all 12 grades.

Mr. Strange explained that the town is going to get $70,000 this year as part of this settlement and he is not sure how the Town can dispense these funds. They are looking at the best way to use these funds and what they can be used for.

Ms. Rooney explained that they are spending money now for Red Ribbon Week.

Mr. Strange spoke to the Town Accountant, and she does not believe that this can be brought to the October Town Meeting. They don't think the funds can be allocated until May.

Mr. Goncalves suggested to put in an enterprise fund or revolving fund that can be controlled by the Town.

Ms. Rooney stated the best thing to do is to talk about it. Visit our website at Ludlowcoalition.org. and you can donate or see the emoji list.

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Moved by Mr. Gennette to declare October 23rd to the 30th, Red Ribbon Week in Ludlow, seconded by Mr. Rosenblum. Vote 5-0. All in favor.

5:50 p.m. – East Street Coffee

Mr. Strange explained that they were coming in because they hadn't paid for their permit for 2022, but they came in Friday and took care of that.

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Mr. Strange Special Town Meeting is scheduled for October 3, 2022, and there are 18 articles on the warrant that was closed tonight. They will review the articles on September 6th to determine which articles to include in the meeting.

Community Compact is a program that the Baker/Polito administration created which allows towns and cities to apply for grant funding every two years. This year Ludlow is eligible two grants. Mr. Strange spoke to the Cohen Center yesterday regarding Economic Development Planning to target areas adjacent to the Ludlow Mills. They should have a scope of work for Ludlow in the next week or so and that will come to the Boad for approval.

PVPC has a program to become a green community. Currently, towns are granted $125,000 for energy efficiency upgrades and then you can apply for retrofits, HVAC, energy improvements, weatherization, solar and other things in subsequent years. This will be on the September 6th agenda.

We received a mockup of what the town signs might look like. They are maroon with white lettering and made out of PVC and aluminum which are a little more durable. However, because there are so many signs in town, they are trying to get the RFP together to get a graphic designer to get some options. So, it is on hold right now.

Facilities Condition Assessment – they met with Colliers who will be doing the assessment of the building next week. The timeline is about 3 months. Target date is around Thanksgiving. They will evaluate all of the different needs of each building, provide cost estimates and then prioritize those projects.

Mr. Strange and Kim Collins, Town Accountant meet with Superintendent, Frank Tiano and Kathy Demetrius, School Business Manager, monthly and this has been very helpful. They are putting together budgeting calendars so that they know what we are doing on the town side and what they are doing on the school side. It also keeps the conversation open if anyone has anything they see and want to ask about.

CMD came around last week to introduce themselves to staff. Matt will be in town hall Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday each week to help the current IT staff for general IT support.

Business West does community spotlights on all the towns, and they would like to feature Ludlow next month. They spoke to Mr. Strange, Mr. Stefancik, Town Planner and Jeff Daley from Westmass.

Mr. Strange, Town Administrator, Ms. Collins, Town Accountant, Mr. Barros, Town Treasurer, Mr. Stefancik, Town Planner spoke to the S & P regarding bond anticipation notes in the amount of $9,165,000. The also requested Ludlow's long-term rate be increased. It is currently AA- but has not been rated since 2019. Since 2019 Ludlow has implemented new financial policies and increased reserves in certain accounts. They are hopeful it will be increased to AA.

Mr. Rosenblum agreed with Mr. Strange that meeting with the schools earlier is a great idea. This will help with transparency as well.

Mr. Goncalves agreed with Mr. Rosenblum and Mr. Strange as that is 46-47% of the Town's budget.

Mr. Gennette thanked Mr. Strange for the updates and said it is very helpful.

CORRESPONDENCE

142. Letter from Allie DeLong, President of the Friends of the Public Library, notifying the Board of a metal foldable bench being donated to the Hubbard Memorial Library for outside story times.

Moved by Mr. Silva to accept the bench and send a letter of thanks, seconded by Mr. Rosenblum. Vote 5-0. All in favor.

143. Letter from Jason Codding, Ludlow Fire Department MDA Committee requesting permission to hold its annual Boot Day to benefit the Muscular Dystrophy Association. The date planned for this event is Friday, September 2, 2022, from 1:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. at the Fire Station.

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Moved by Mr. Rosenblum to approve the Annual Boot Day to benefit the Muscular Dystrophy Association for Friday, September 2, 2022, from 1:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. at the Fire Station, seconded by Mr. Gennette. Vote 5-0. All in favor.

144. Letter from Richard D. Moskal resigning as election officer effective August 12, 2022.

Moved by Mr. Gennette to accept the letter of resignation from Mr. Moskal and thank him for his service, seconded by Mr. Silva. Vote 5-0. All in favor.

145. Letter from Maurice A. Lavoie requesting to be appointed a Democratic Poll Worker.

Moved by Mr. Gennette to approve Maurice A. Lavoie to be appointed a Democratic Poll Worker, seconded by Mr. Silva. Vote 5-0. All in favor.

146. Letter from Chief Ryan Pease requesting the Board to vote on raising the ambulance subscription from $40.00 to $50.00 effective for the 2023 Annual Subscription Period.

Chief Pease explained that the ambulance subscription began in 1993 and was $20.00 per household. At that time, they were to support the ambulance service as well as unpaid balances. In 2010, it was voted at Town Meeting to allow the Selectmen to control the rates and then it was used for the ambulance service only. Currently, the Fire Department has used that fund to purchase new ambulances and those prices have continued to increase substantially in the past few years. In 2019 they purchased a new one and it was $221,000. He has a new one spec'd out right now and it's just over $300,000 and is going to take up to 24 months to get it. There is about $197,000 in the funds currently. The last year, there was 2,500 subscribers which raises about $100,000 in funds. Therefore, if they raise the rates by $10, the fund will be self-sustaining. Since 2019 there has been a steady increase with this fund. An ambulance run can

be anywhere from $800 - $2,200. Ludlow's rate is on the low side in comparison to surrounding communities.

Mr. Silva stated that this is a great program and believes anyone that does not subscribe to it is foolish.

Moved by Mr. Rosenblum to raise the ambulance subscription fee from $40 to $50 effective for the annual 2023 subscription period, seconded by Mr. Silva. Vote 5-0. All in favor.

147. Letter from Chief Daniel Valadas and Lieutenant David Irwin requesting conditional appointment of two Special Police Officers, Albert Witkowsky and Edward Hiney, effective August 24, 2022.

Moved by Mr. Silva to appoint two Special Police Officers, Albert Witkowsky and Edward Hiney, effective August 24, 2022, seconded by Mr. Rosenblum. Vote 5-0. All in favor.

148. Letter from Cristina Conceicao, proposing the new track and field be named in memory of David G. Goncalves.

Mr. Goncalves explained that they will take this under advisement but it's a long way off.

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

UNFINISHED BUINESS

Moved by Mr. Gennette to approve and sign the Selectmen's Minutes of February 1, 2022, with all members present, seconded by Mr. Rosenblum. Vote 5-0. All in favor.

Moved by Mr. Gennette to approve and sign the Selectmen's Meeting Minutes of February 15, 2022, with All members present, seconded by Mr. Rosenblum. Vote 5-0. All in favor.

Moved by Mr. Gennette to approve and sign the Selectmen's Meeting Minutes of March 8, 2022, with all members present, seconded by Mr. Silva. Vote 5-0. All in favor.

Moved by Mr. Gennette to approve and sign the Selectmen's Meeting Minutes of April 12, 2022, with all members present except Mr. DeBarge, seconded by Mr. Rosenblum. Vote 5-0. All in favor.

Moved by Mr. Gennette to approve and sign the Selectmen's Minutes of April 19, 2022, with all members present, seconded by Mr. Rosenblum. Vote 5-0. All in favor.

Moved by Mr. Gennette to approve and sign the Selectmen's Meeting Minutes of April 26, 2022, with all members present, seconded by Mr. Rosenblum. Vote 5-0. All in favor.

Moved by Mr. Gennette to approve and sign the Selectmen's Meeting Minutes of July 12, 2022, with all members present except Mr. Gennette, seconded by Mr. Rosenblum. Vote 5-0. All in favor.

Moved by Mr. Gennette to approve and sign the Executive Session Meeting Minutes of May 24, 2022, with all members present, seconded by Mr. Rosenblum. Vote 5-0. All in favor.

Moved by Mr. Gennette to approve and sign the Executive Session Meeting Minutes of June 7, 2022, with all members present, seconded by Mr. Rosenblum. Vote 5-0. All in favor.

Board to approve and sign Point Software Contract (tabled from 8/9/22).

Mr. Strange explained that they are not ready to sign this as of yet and it should be tabled again.

Moved by Mr. Silva to table the signing of the Point Software Contract, seconded by Mr. Rosenblum. Vote 5-0. All in favor.

Board to close the warrant for the October 3, 2022, Special Town Meeting.

Moved by Mr. Rosenblum to close the warrant for the October 3, 2022, Special Town Meeting, seconded by Mr. Silva. Vote 5-0. All in favor.

Board to sign the contract with Tighe & Bond for Town Hall HVAC Study.

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Moved by Mr. Silva to sign the contract with Tighe & Bond for the Town Hall HVAC Study, seconded by Mr. Rosenblum. Vote 5-0. All in favor.

NEW BUSINESS

Board to approve and sign the Otis Elevator Maintenance Contract for the Community Center.

Moved by Mr. Silva to approve and sign the Otis Elevator Maintenance Contract for the Community Center, seconded by Mr. Gennette. Vote 5-0. All in favor.

Board to discuss and vote on new positions on the Classification Plan.

Mr. Strange stated that one of the articles is requesting funds for a Facilities Director, which the Town currently does not have on the Classification Plan and we are hoping that will position will be added. In addition to that there is also an article to fund a local building inspector and Leslie will provide more information on September 6th, but this position is not currently on the Classification Plan.

Mr. Goncalves suggested holding off on discussion until the next meeting.

Moved by Mr. Rosenblum to table discussion voting on the new positions on the Classification Plan, seconded by Mr. Silva. Vote 5-0. All in favor.

BOARD UPDATES/MISC.

American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Funds Updates.

Mr. Goncalves gave an update on the Track and Field project and the Engineers are working on expanding and doing some things with the baseball dugout, some netting and fencing down the first and third base lines and accommodate a larger area, changing out the dirt in the infield and going to clay. As soon as these changes are done, the board will discuss again and then it will go out to bid. The money has already been approved.

Mr. Silva thinks these are great projects to fund and after hearing Ms. Rooney speak about the drug problem in town, this will help give our youth something to do.

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.

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EVENT CALENDAR:

2022 Concert Series:

- August 28 – Hofbrauhaus Bavarians
- September 11 – Acousiticca
- September 18 – Irish Music with Bill Eagen
- September 1-5th – Festa 2022
- September 24 & 25 – 2nd Annual Ludlow Community Market

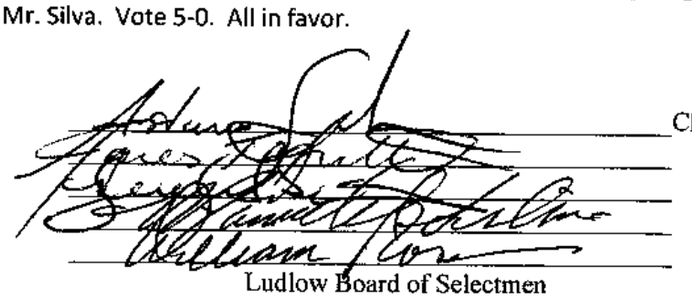
CLOSING COMMENTS

Mr. Gennette thanked Ludlow CARES for coming in tonight and he is not a proponent of marijuana in town. It is scary out there and they are not breaking the cycle with the heroin and fentanyl out there, so it's nice to know that Ludlow CARES is out there and doing everything they can to be proactive. Mr. Rosenblum agreed with Mr. Gennette about the CARES program. It was very nice to see students getting involved also.

Mr. Silva reiterated his comment about giving the youth something to do and reminds everyone to stay safe.

Mr. Goncalves stated that CARES has been doing a great thing for the community and he thinks the opioid settlement will allow them to be more visible and do more for the community. The track and field is moving in the right direction and we are hoping that it will be open by December 2023.

Moved by Mr. Rosenblum, to adjourn this meeting at 6:55 p.m. and not return to open meeting but to enter into Executive Session for the purposes to conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with nonunion personnel or to conduct collective bargaining sessions or contract negotiations with nonunion personnel; and to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation in an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining or litigating position of the public body, seconded by Mr. Silva. 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.

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