The Meeting of the Board of Selectmen held on Tuesday, February 21, 2023, began at 5:30 p.m. in the Board of Selectmen's Conference Room.

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

Members Absent: Antonio Goncalves

First Order of Business: The Pledge of Allegiance

CORRESPONDENCE

13. Ludlow Elks Lodge 50th Anniversary invitation to the Board of Selectmen.

Mr. DeBarge: I know this is in my calendar to attend the 50th anniversary. It's a big deal. For our purposes **Motion to file. Mr. Rosenblum second. All in favor Motion passed 4-0.**

14. Charter Communications annual complaint form 500 for 2022.

Mr. DeBarge: I just want to point out that the complaint form from Charter. Three complaints and all marked as resolution satisfactory to both parties. **Motion to file. Mr. Rosenblum second. All in favor. Motion passed 4-0.**

15. Mass DOT Highway Division Bridge Replacement Project #613119.

Mr. Strange: This is the Putts Bridge. The current estimate on this is 70 million dollars picked up by the State. It's in this environment of projects that could potentially get funded. It really requires advocacy both from us and our state delegation but also going to Joint Transportation Committee and MPO meetings, which are once a month. We need a representative from the Town to pound on the table saying this is a really important project. Luckily, we have Springfield as a partner so that will help us. The way this TIPS stuff works is there's so many different towns and so many different projects that we really need to advocate for it.

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Mr. Gennette: Does that mean you need a representative?

Mr. Strange: There is a designated representative from the DPW, I am the alternate for these meetings.

Motion made by Mr. Rosenblum to file. **Mr. DeBarge second. All in favor. Motion passed 4-0.**

16. Board to vote to abate invoice #50 for $25.00 for Joyful Joice as it is closed.

Mr. Rosenblum: There is a letter to Fred Pereira making notice of this. **Motion made** to abate the invoice #50 for $25.00 for Joyful Juice as it is closed. **Mr. DeBarge second. All in favor. Motion passed 4-0.**

17. Letter from resident Daniel & Michele DeGray regarding DPW/dead tree removal.

Mr. Gennette: Marc, do we know if this is from the DPW for the Eversource work they've been doing?

Mr. Strange: I'm not sure. It's a complaint letter from a resident who reached out to DPW to take a look at them. The Town has a tree warden, and the tree warden is usually in the DPW. The tree warden has to go out and take a look at the tree and see if it's a hazard or dead, and if so, the Town can take it down. It sounds like they were not responded to in a timely fashion, and they wrote this letter and copied the Board.

Mr. Gennette: Do we have any action we can take on this?

Mr. DeBarge: I actually helped out on similar thing with somebody. As Marc was saying, when you first contact the DPW they come take a look at it and decide if it's something they can take down or call Eversource to do it if it's something that too large for them. Then they have a shade

tree meeting and vote if they're going to take it down or not. This complaint from Mr. & Mrs. DeGray is kind of common for trees and I say common, unfortunately. I know Greg LeBlanc was an arborist doing that before for the DPW. He doesn't do it anymore. I don't know if they have someone that is designated to go look at these trees, but these are some of the things that need to be fixed quickly.

Mr. Gennette: Do we know if the Board of Public Works has responded? They say they haven't responded at all. It looks like Mr. DeGray stopped by the Board of Public Works on the 30th and then spoke with somebody on the 1st. Now we're looking at the 9th and now it's the 21st. We're not a month in yet I'm just wondering if we should at least allow the Board of Public Works 30 days to respond.

Mr. Rosenblum: It seems the concern is they're not sure if anyone is coming to do the measurement and also there's tree trucks that might not be available at this time because sometimes, they outsource to Northern, which I know does a lot of work where I am, so I see their trucks a lot. Again, this is the time of year its tough because the ground is soft, when someone says they can't get out there. The tree could be removed if it's deemed dangerous. I guess it comes down to somebody acknowledging the fact they've come out and measured it, to at least have looked at it. This was cc'd to the DPW?

Mr. Strange: This letter was sent to the DPW, and you guys were copied on it.

Mr. Silva: There's not much you can do with these situations. Unfortunately, the DPW is solely responsible for taking some action on it and it does have to go to forestry. Do we have forestry?

Mr. Strange: I'm not sure.

Mr. Silva: Usually every community does have a forester and he has to deem the tree able to be removed and then DPW looks at it. They also have to determine whose tree it is. If it's on the tree belt we're responsible. If it's on the property, then it's the owners. Certain things have to happen before anything can be done. All we can do is check with DPW and see where they're at.

Mr. Rosenblum: I'll follow up with it.

Motion made by Mr. Rosenblum to file. **Mr. Silva second. All in favor. Motion passed 4-0.**

VISITATIONS:

Patrol Interviews
5:35 pm – Sean Egan

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Mr. Gennette: Mr. Egan, pleasure to see you. Have a seat. We saw you not too long ago. You know how this goes. Why don't you go ahead and give us a couple of minutes and update us on what's going on.

Mr. Egan: I'm an Eagle Scout. Since the last time I was here I started reffing high school hockey. Took a jump in my reffing career. Trying to get more higher-level games. Trying to improve myself there. I started working at the Hampden County Sheriff's Department. I just graduated that academy the end of September. I was class President there. I was the go between the class and the academy cadre. I handled any situations that came up. I organized a lot of class events and some of the graduation stuff afterwards. Now I've been focusing on the night shift trying to adjust to that lifestyle again. Coaching the high school hockey team. We have playoffs coming up, so I've been busy trying to juggle everything.

Mr. Rosenblum: Mr. Egan, how are you?

Mr. Egan: Good, yourself?

Mr. Rosenblum: Good. Good to see you again. I went back to one of my staple questions. What do you see as your greatest weakness?

Mr. Egan: Communication. Communication can always be improved upon. A lot of times I get my information and I feel like I tell someone because I've said it so many times in my own head to make sure I have that right information for myself that I forget to actually communicate it to others that need to know what I'm doing as well. My schedule for hockey this year when I've been working. I get my game schedule for reffing, and I think I tell my parents, my girlfriend, that I'm reffing today this time but I didn't, I told myself it multiple times, so I don't forget, and I don't miss it. So, it just comes out later and we have to adjust some plans that we may have made.

Mr. Rosenblum: What motivates you?

Mr. Egan: Giving back, teaching. I love teaching and giving back to what's developed me and made me the person I am. I've been coaching for Ludlow Hockey, the youth organization, the high school organization now for several years. That's what made me the hockey player I am today. It's what I want to give back to the kids. I want to teach them the life skills that hockey has taught me. If I can teach someone and help them improve in their path and their direction and make them a better person, a better player, a better officer. I love helping out and teaching what I know so someone else can be better.

Mr. Rosenblum: I'm good, thank you.

Mr. Silva: Sean, welcome back. What intrigues you and why would you like to work for the Ludlow Police Department?

Mr. Egan: I've grown up in Ludlow my whole life. I want to learn more about the town, the heritage that's been brought up through it and all the history behind Ludlow. There's a lot of history. The mills that have been changed over now. The hiking trails in the back. I just want to learn more about it and more about what brought me to be the person I am today. And how the culture and everyone here has been passed down and raised this community.

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Mr. Silva: In your experience through whichever environments you had, give me an instance where you had pressure or traumatic experience and how did you handle it.

Mr. Egan: Recently I started working at the jail. There was a situation with 2 of the inmates arguing over whose food was whose. One of the guys took 2 trays. There was a potential for an escalated argument or fight or some type of situation that wasn't going to keep the pod peaceful and running smoothly. I stepped up and walked over. Instead of screaming from far away or overreacting and jumping and calling for extra help, I talked to them and found out what was going on. You take a step back, find out the whole situation, find out what's going on, try to deescalate it. Turns out the guy wanted his tray that day. So, I said give him the tray, you don't get 2 today, you're only supposed to get one anyway. You find out the problem, go step by step. Don't jump to the final step calling for everyone to come in and make the situation worse that could be handled in a different way.

Mr. Silva: Thank you, I'm all set.

Mr. DeBarge: Mr. Egan, welcome back. I appreciate your interest in joining our police department in the Town. My first question for you is in your opinion what traits are essential for being a police officer?

Mr. Egan: In my opinion, it's trustworthiness, integrity, loyalty. If you can't be trusted no one is going to take anything you say and believe it. They're going to think you're lying to make yourself look good. If you're not going to do the right thing when no one is watching you, why is someone going to think you're going to do the right thing all the time if they have to watch you to make sure you do it. You need to be able to do stuff on your own and make yourself be known as the person who's going to do the right thing all the time and keep going in the right direction. Loyalty. If you're not loyal to the people you're working side by side with, if they don't know that you're going to have their back and be there for them every single time they need something they're not going to go to you for any help. They're not going to trust that you're going to be there ready to help them when they need it.

Mr. DeBarge: Those are good traits to have. I agree with you. A couple of my questions were taken in a roundabout way, but I'm prepared. I have another one. How would your friends describe you if I asked them?

Mr. Egan: I think my friends would describe me as hardworking, motivated, willing to get the job done. As I said I was just the president of our class at the academy for the Hampden County Sheriff's Department. I stepped up when we had our first election and volunteered. I tried to help that class get in a direction instead of just running around with 10-15 different ideas going. I tried to make it so it was one unified idea. I originally didn't get the position. The officer who did ended up being relieved and they appointed me. So, I stepped up again. I really wanted to still help and put that leadership ability that I have in some of the trainings that I've had through the military and help that class move in the right direction. I was trying to work hard and build that class and make them one instead of 45 individuals. Motivated. I was always working hard. Every week we had a PT test and every week I got better at everything. I put in the extra work outside of the academy. I went running, did extra pushups and extra exercises to make sure that I stayed up and tried to be in the top of the class physically. I was also trying to be number 1 academically. I was really putting in the work studying. Even if I had hockey, I'd take the notebook in the car and study as I was driving down there and coming back. I'd always make sure I was working hard trying to get that extra step on everyone.

Mr. Gennette: Can you do me a favor and list off your educational steps like high school graduated?

Mr. Egan: I graduated high school in 2013. I went to Westfield for a semester then I went into the Military. I was a Special Forces Contract. I went to Jump School, Airborne School, I went to Selection and did not make it. I came back. I was deployed and we came back, and I never really got back to school. I took an EMT class at STCC. I was never nationally certified, but I passed everything else. Then I went to the academy for the Sheriff's Department.

Mr. Gennette: I think you might have just answered it, but I'm going to ask again anyway, what specific things have you done to prepare yourself for becoming a police officer recently?

Mr. Egan: After the academy, I've still stayed in shape. I've still tried to run, do the extra gym stuff. Working midnights is tough but I'm doing my best to try to stay in the gym and stay fit, eating right. Working and staying active, not getting relaxed and lazy and complacent and saying I'm here where I am now and going to stay there. That's not how it works. You drop off your physical level if you don't use it.

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Mr. Gennette: How do you ensure that you will work well with different personality types?

Mr. Egan: Coming from a military background, there's 150 different ways that people are going to come up to you. There's so many different types of people, different cultures, different genders. You have to adapt and be able to learn something that someone else does and be able to relate that back to you. You have to listen to them more than you try to talk to them. Let them come talk to you, express themselves. You can pick up on some of their ques, see what's really bothering them and continue and move forward from there with how you're going to react. At the academy there was people from different upbringings, backgrounds, and people like to but heads. You have to find the common ground that everyone has and piece it together like a puzzle to ensure everyone works together. You don't have to like each other all the time but you have to work together to achieve your goals and move forward and get to where you want to be.

Mr. Gennette: I agree with you, you're not going to get along with everybody. Any closing comments?

Mr. Egan: I hope I get to work for the Town. I'm going to put my best effort forward if I get the chance to. If not, I'll see you guys next time.

Chief Valadas: I have to make some advisements Sean. I will need to speak with every candidate this evening for certain reasons, but I have to notify you that we have pre academy screenings you will have to pass, the medical exam, Civil Service Standard, drug testing, psychological exam, PAT, PT test, you'll have to attend a Rock academy class. It'll be whichever one we can get you in. There's an FTO program afterwards. By state standards you have to maintain Mass license to carry, driver's license, meet all post certification standards under Chapter 16 Section 4, no smoking

products or tobacco, cannabis, or THC products. You have to live within 15 miles as the crow flies of Ludlow. It'll be patrolman's position midnight shift, which includes holidays, weekends, mandatory overtime assignments and one-year probationary period. I just have to tell you all these things according to the Massachusetts Hiring Authority.

Mr. Egan: Thank you.

5:50 p.m. – Shelby-Lynn Klekotka

Mr. Gennette: Ms. Klekotka, how are you.

Ms. Klekotka: Good, how are you?

Mr. Gennette: We saw you last year, I think.

Ms. Klekotka: Yes, you did.

Mr. Gennette: Then you know how it goes. You have a couple minutes to explain what you've been doing.

Ms. Klekotka: My name is Shelby-Lynn Klekotka. I grew up in Belchertown, Massachusetts on a farm. My mom was diagnosed with terminal cancer when I was in high school. I had taken time to take care of her and then after she had passed, I had gone to a community college to receive my GED. I currently am the Arms Site supervisor at the Monson Developmental Center ran underneath the Commonwalth of Massachusetts and I love it.

Mr. Silva: Welcome back. You probably had the same question last time but why would you like to work for Ludlow Police Department? What intrigues you about Ludlow?

Ms. Klekotka: I have grown up in Ludlow for most of my life. I've always been around the area. It seems like a great town. I love the community interactions I've had so far, and I would like to help the people within it.

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Mr. Silva: Tell us an experience you've had, whether it be in your job or any experience you've had that has been very traumatic or high pressure and how did you deal with it?

Ms. Klekotka: One of my friends who is a first responder, had a time where he was suicidal. He came to me and told me that and we went between his job and the right resources and got him help. We talked to the people to get him the time he needed with the people he needed to be at, and I was there for him the whole way through.

Mr. DeBarge: Ms. Klekotka, I appreciate your interest coming back for our Town and our Police Department. It's nice to see people that continue to come back. It's not always the outcome you want but it's nice to see people come back & try. I appreciate that. My first question is what traits do you think are essential for being a police officer?

Ms. Klekotka: Having personal integrity, your trust and I think your willingness to learn and adapt.

Mr. DeBarge: If I talked to your friends, how do you think your friends would describe you?

Ms. Klekotka: I'm trustworthy, I go above and beyond to try to accomplish the best things and outcomes I can. Also, I'm very compassionate and I love to learn.

Mr. DeBarge: Concise, right to the point. That's all I've got.

Mr. Gennette: I like that too and I like that people come back too. It shows interest. Can you just go back through your education again?

Ms. Klekotka: I went to high school at Belchertown High School. My mom had terminal cancer and I dropped out to take care of her and the farm at the time. I was younger when she passed away. I got my GED, and I did roughly 10 years of college but kept changing my major, so it never came out to a full degree. I have taken classes at my current job getting certified with CPR, AED.

I know we will be having gun qualifications soon. There are other trainings within my company that I go to. I supervise the site and I'm in charge of a total of 9 people that are all armed with OC spray, and we keep getting new certifications all the time.

Mr. Gennette: What specific things recently, within the past year, have you done to prepare yourself to become a police officer?

Ms. Klekotka: I had gotten the job in security to help myself get some type of understanding and experience. I carry a gun at work. We got OC trained, we got CPR certified, we have the AED certification. There's all different training activities we do and plan. I've been working the best I can finding ways to learn more knowledge and get more things under my belt to have more experience so that I can be trained the correct way at the academy.

Mr. Gennette: How do you ensure that you will work well with different personality types?

Ms. Klekotka: I have worked with all different personality types in jobs. A lot of the time we have people who are hunting on property who aren't happy about them not being able to be there. Just yesterday I caught a gentleman breaking into one of the buildings and we dealt with local police officers to find out what the solution was. We did look for him. They were going to call in the K9. There is plenty of people I encounter I might not agree with their views, but I respect them. If I don't understand I love to go educate myself to understand better where people are coming from.

Mr. Rosenblum: Thank you for coming back, thank you for your interest in Ludlow. I have 2 questions. What motivates you?

Ms. Klekotka: As cliché as it sounds, helping others. That's my goal in life. I want to help as many people as I can in my lifetime, and I can only help the people whose lives I actually touch. Also being able to teach others. One of my favorite things is being able to step in when somebody else isn't available. I do my best to make sure they're able to do what I do at all times. You're only as strong as your weakest link.

Mr. Rosenblum: Speaking of weakest link, what is your greatest weakness?

Ms. Klekotka: I would have to say delegating important tasks, because I know at least if I'm doing it it's going to be done correctly, timely and precisely. As long as I do train people where I trust they can, and I think they can. I feel like I'm going to do it to a T of what's expected.

Mr. Rosenblum: That's it for me. Thank you very much.

Mr. Gennette: We're going to give Chief a minute but any closing comments?

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Ms. Klekotka: Thank you for your time again. I really appreciate being able to be here and I hope to be able to work for Ludlow Police Department and help others in the community.

Chief Valadas: Shelby, I have to tell all the police candidates tonight a review list that we have to notify each candidate. One is that there will be medical exams screenings, drug test, psychological exam, a PAT which is an obstacle course, PT test, you'll have to attend a Rock academy class. I don't know which one, but we'll get you in one. There's an FTO program after graduation. You have to maintain a Mass license to carry and driver's license. You have to meet current post standards now for certification of Chapter 16 Section 4. You can't use any smoking or tobacco products or cannabis. You have to live within 15 miles of the town lines of Ludlow. It's a patrolman's position, midnight shift will be the assignment. It includes holidays, weekends, mandatory overtime, and you have to complete a 1-year probationary period. To that end, I'll walk you out and I do have to contact you tonight. Thank you.

6:20 p.m. – Brandon Teixeira

Mr. Gennette: Usually what we'll do is we'll give you an opportunity to introduce yourself and give a little background and we'll ask you some questions. We'll give you some closing comments and the Chief will have a couple things to say.

Mr. Teixeira: Good evening, my name is Brandon Teixeira. Born and raised in Ludlow. I'm currently a police officer at the University of Rhode Island in Kingston, RI. I served 6 years with the Army National Guard. Other than that, I'm a pretty simple guy. Outside of work it's just martial arts and going about my day.

Mr. DeBarge: Mr. Teixeira, it's a pleasure to meet you. Thank you for your interest in our police department. My first question for you tonight is what traits do you think are essential for being a police officer?

Mr. Teixeira: Communication above all else. You need to be able to communicate with the people you're policing. Overall physical fitness. Being able to do the job. Get out of the cruiser, chase somebody if they need to be chased. It will actually affect the arrest if there is one. Communication and physical fitness are probably the 2 biggest traits you would need.

Mr. DeBarge: I don't disagree with that. If I was to talk to your friends, how do you think they would describe you?

Mr. Teixeira: I think they would say I have a goofy but good personality. I get along with everybody. I'm easy to work with. I hate to say I would give the shirt off my back. It's a cliché but I'm that type of person. I think that's what they'd say. I'd help you regardless.

Mr. Rosenblum: Mr. Teixeira, thank you for coming in this evening. Congratulations for making it in the room. I have 2 questions. What do you see as your greatest weakness?

Mr. Teixeira: I think I'm a little bit too trusting sometimes, especially in this career field. I like to give people the benefit of the doubt. It hasn't come back to…when I'm in the job role I have to remind myself of that. Just because they're saying one thing that doesn't mean they actually mean it. I would say I'm just a little bit too trusting sometimes. I wouldn't say naïve. I give people the benefit of the doubt most of the time.

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Mr. Rosenblum: My last question is what motivates you?

Mr. Teixeira: I like to work by myself, but I also like to work as a team, and this is the perfect job for that. Working with people I get along with and serving my community, being a part of Ludlow. That's what motivates me to want to be part of this department. This is where my family is, my friends are. If I can respond to an emergency call that someone I know is potentially involved in I want to be there for that.

Mr. Silva: Brandon, how are you? Long time no see. I think you were maybe 3' tall.

Mr. Teixeira: I'm good.

Mr. Silva: Congratulation on the review board. You scored very well. An easy one for you. Why would you want to work for Ludlow Police Department and why Ludlow? Kingston is pretty nice.

Mr. Teixeira: It is pretty nice. I want to give back to my community. I work a 4- and 3-day schedule so my 3 days off I'm usually here. I very rarely stay over there. I always come back. I like to be around my family and friends. As I told you, martial arts is a big part of my life. My main gym is in Springfield. I like to come back and spend my time with my friends and family and be in the community.

Mr. Silva: I saw a couple videos by the way. I don't think I'd want to mess with you. My second question. Any experience that you've had, whether it being police or whatever, some high pressure, traumatic experience you've had and how did you deal with it?

Mr. Teixeira: One case I was involved in. It was a bit of a domestic. Not a bit of a domestic. There was an argument, one of the girls jumped out of the window, broke her ankle. She was intoxicated. She became increasingly difficult to deal with. Myself and my Sargent who was actually there at

the time, we had to talk her down and relax her. She had to go to the hospital because she did hit her head and she was acting erratically. Being able to calm down that situation and talk to her. Eventually, we did have to go hands on because she was being erratic. We got her in the ambulance, got her situated and she was transported to the hospital without any other issues.

Mr. Silva: Thank you.

Mr. Gennette: Can you do me a favor and just go through your education from high school, including military.

Mr. Teixeira: I graduated from Ludlow High School. From Ludlow High School I went to Worcester State University. I did 2 years there under a business major. I stopped going to school. I joined the National Guard. I did my initial training. Since it was reserves, I came back to STCC to get my criminal justice associates. From there I went on to Westfield State and finished my Bachelor's.

Mr. Gennette: You did get your criminal justice?

Mr. Teixeira: Yes.

Mr. Gennette: Thank you for that. Thank you for your service too. One of the questions I have is what specific things have you done to prepare yourself for becoming a police officer? I'm going to change it a little bit because you are a police officer already, but what have you done in the past year to kind of improve your station?

Mr. Teixeira: Like I said before, physical fitness is a big thing for this job and for myself. I want to stay in shape because it helps make the job easier and makes being able to communicate easier because you don't get winded from coming up 10 flights of stairs. I like to invest in myself with the martial arts training, even if I have to pay for them myself, if it's not training that's offered by the department. I would like to continue to purchase or subscribe to different kinds of training. I read, especially law enforcement related. Whether it's reading, podcasts, stuff like that. I like to delve into what I'm doing. Law enforcement is my career, so I'd like to continue with that.

Mr. Gennette: How do you ensure that you will work well with different personality types?

Mr. Teixeira: I have an interesting personality myself. I am easy to get along with. That's the good thing about my department right now. A lot of them are retired but we do have a few younger guys. I can work with older guys and younger guys. I can communicate with the clientele, which is mostly college kids. But we do have the older staff members that work there so I can communicate with all kinds of different people, which makes me easy to work with. Like I said I get along with almost everybody.

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Mr. Gennette: Any closing comments before we let Chief talk?

Mr. Teixeira: If I do get this job, I'm looking forward to working here. I love this community, which is why I want to come back to it, not that I really left but I'd love to work here and I appreciate the opportunity.

Chief Valadas: Brandon, I have to go through a list of certifications that you'll have to meet. There will be a medical exam. There will be drug testing, a psychological exam, a PAT, which is the obstacle course, a PT test. The Rock Academy, I can explain that to the Board afterwards. You being a postgraduate, you still have to have a transition period. I'd have to grant you an exemption with the state of Massachusetts. There will still be an FTO program you'll have to complete. You have to maintain a Massachusetts driver's license and LTC. You have to meet the Massachusetts post standards similar to Rhode Island. Listed on your Chapter 16 Section 4. There's no use of tobacco products including cannabis and THC products. You have to live within 15 miles as the crow flies from Ludlow. It's a patrolman's position. The assignment is to the midnight shift, which

does include holidays, weekends, mandatory overtime, and a 1-year probationary period. I'll walk you out and I'll have to speak with you tonight.

6:35 p.m. – Brandon Bedore

Mr. Gennette: Brandon, how are you? Welcome. What we're going to do is give you an opportunity to introduce yourself, say a couple things, however you'd like to open. We're all going to ask you a couple questions, then we'll turn it back over to you for closing comments and we'll give the Chief an opportunity to finish it up.

Mr. Bedore: Good evening, my name is Brandon Bedore. I am 21 years old from the great town of Ludlow. I've lived here all my life. I graduated from Ludlow High School in 2019. I am currently employed at the Palmer Police Department as a public safety dispatcher. I dispatch police, fire, and ambulance services. I am also part time on call at the Three Rivers Fire Department. I worked day shifts. I have experience with medical calls, fire calls, hazmat calls, car accident rescue calls. I've been there for a little over 2 years now. I've been a dispatcher for about a year and a half.

Mr. Rosenblum: Thank you for coming in this evening and congratulations for making it into this room. What do you believe is your greatest weakness?

Mr. Bedore: I believe my greatest weakness is overthinking. I'm a very detail-oriented person. I take a very investigative approach to everything I do. I make sure I don't miss anything. I feel like sometimes I do overthink some of my actions. I try to make the best of it. I do recognize once in a while I do see a detail on call taking for example. If I'm on 911 I will almost second guess myself and see if I miss something. At the same time, I realize I know what I'm looking for. In a call, for example, like I said, I try to make sure I have details and that makes me overthink. Again, I try to spin it off. I look at it as a positive that I'm not missing stuff. Sometimes I think overthinking can have a delay in decision making. In the end I know that I'm grabbing crucial information.

Mr. Rosenblum: I can understand that. You make a decision and sometimes you gotta make it. Did I get everything? You overthink it sometimes. I get that. What motivates you?

Mr. Bedore: I think setting goals and surrounding myself with people that support me in my goals really motivate me. I'm very fortunate enough to have a family and good group of friends that all support me. Putting myself in an environment, working at a police department currently, seeing how police officers work every day. Seeing myself in their shoes and wanting to see myself patrol and go through the process they went through and challenging myself. I think that motivates me the most. Having a good support system and surrounding myself with things I'm interested in.

Mr. Silva: My question is why are you interested in working for the Town of Ludlow and what intrigues you mostly about Ludlow and why Ludlow Police Department? And before you answer, I know you worked somewhat in the Fire Department in Palmer so is policing your go to?

Mr. Bedore: Yes, I have an interest mostly in police. I would like the Town of Ludlow because as I mentioned before I grew up here and lived here my whole life. I went to school in the Ludlow School system. My mother is a teacher at Ludlow High. I feel like it's something I want to represent. Ludlow has been a great town to me and my family the whole entire experience. It's something I take pride in saying I'm from Ludlow. It's something I definitely want to represent. It's a really good town, it's very diverse. A higher population than the town I work in, Palmer. It's about 10,000 more people, 26,000 just about here. You have a lot of events in town. It's a very interesting town. It's similar to other towns around here, like the mill towns. I feel like we have a very special culture, like the Festa for example. I feel like it's a town where everyone is one. We set our differences aside and we all kind of enjoy living in the same town. I want to represent the town that has this almost like family feel to it.

Mr. Silva: My next question is you're pretty young but through your experience, whether it be life, through work or anything, give me a pressure position, traumatic, something you've dealt with and how did you deal with it.

Mr. Bedore: In my time on the fire department, right after I was signed off to be cleared to go to calls, this was in December 2020, so I was 19 years old. We had a call for a motor vehicle accident with entrapment. It was a single vehicle accident where the car flipped over. It was an old Nissan sports car with a glass roof. One of the occupants was still inside of it with a severe head injury. I was the only one at the station. I had worked my shift prior and was going home. I was paged. I went back to the station. I was the only one there. The Chief requested I take the engine alone to the scene. It was pretty nerve racking. We were originally going to cut the roof off of the vehicle but ended up taking the spreaders, also known as the jaws of life, and opened up the door. The woman was severely injured. One thing I remember, and I didn't realize it until after my dispatch training, is I had a certain tempo. I play guitar and I like playing along with music. If you're not playing with the music, it's not going to go too smooth. Keeping myself smooth, not going all over the place. My job was to open the door on this vehicle and get this lady out with the other agencies, Palmer Ambulance, the police department. Having good communication skills, multi-tasking, but also not forgetting what my job is at that moment, which was to get that lady out of the car, which we did. I had good communication skills with the officer, who was holding her neck. And the EMT. Once we popped the door open it was just a few minutes and we got her out and she was on her way to the hospital.

Mr. DeBarge: Brandon, welcome. I appreciate your interest in our police department. My first question for you is what traits do you think are essential for being a police officer?

Mr. Bedore: I think integrity is a real big one. I feel like that and honesty. In the police department I work in now, they have really good integrity, good communication skills. They admit when they make mistakes. They're open to learning new things. I feel like communication skills as well. Communicating problems or issues they may have, concerns, is really important. I think confidence is a real big one as well. You're dealing with the public. You need to have a command presence and be confident when you're speaking to people. But also realize at the same time that you're speaking to people as humans on a daily basis and that you're one too. They could be making a mistake; you could be making a mistake. You kind of have to recognize it goes both ways. Lastly, being fit. Not just physically, but mentally. At least on my time on the fire department and even reading reports on the police department you see a lot of things the general public doesn't really realize you see on a day-to-day basis. You see some really tragic things. Some things that will definitely stick with you for the rest of your life. I think being mentally fit, having healthy coping mechanisms, hobbies outside of work. Having the ability to disconnect work life from your personal life is really important as well.

Mr. DeBarge: I agree. If I was to talk to your friends, what would they tell me about you?

Mr. Bedore: One of my friend's sisters is a good friend of mine. She described me as driven and that has really stuck with me. I see something I want to obtain, like the goals I've mentioned, before. Eventually becoming a police officer. I see that and I want to touch every single base and get as much experience as possible to reach that goal. Really dip my toes into whatever I can get myself into to better myself as a future police officer. The fire department, for example, I have gone on medical calls, I've dealt with the public. At dispatch I've dealt with people who are suicidal. There was a young man who was on a bridge in Three Rivers, and he was going to jump. Having a bunch of different experiences really helps me see the big picture, where I want to end up. I feel like that really drives me. I think my friends mostly agree with that.

Mr. Gennette: I know your age, but you started with Ludlow High School. What did you do after that?

Mr. Bedore: I graduated in 2019 from Ludlow High. I attend, at this point, part time at Holyoke Community College studying criminal justice. Not this semester, I took a semester off. I originally was going full time. When COVID pandemic started in March of 2020 a lot of the classes I was

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2023 MAY 11 P 1:42
TOWN OF LUDLOW

taking were either cancelled or just exclusively online, which really put a damper on things. I took a more unorthodox approach of getting my feet wet. In the fall of 2020, I joined the fire department. We had in-house training where I did a firefighter I & II. They basically assessed my skills there. I can ride the truck, respond to calls, I have medical training, CPR training, Emergency First Responder. I don't have my degree yet, but I am working on it. Other trainings I have, Chief Valadas would know, I have IMC, which is software the police department uses for dispatch and report taking. All the Cegis applications, I'm pretty fluent in those. And operating all these law enforcement databases and interfaces. I've had a few active shooter trainings with the police department in Palmer. In the schools we've had some munition trainings. I've been going through the hiring process in Palmer as well and still waiting on things over there. At this point it's just part time in Holyoke and I do want to finish that and get my degree.

Mr. Gennette: What specific things have you done recently in the past year to prepare yourself to become a police officer?

Mr. Bedore: I would like to say I try to stay as fit as I can. I do a lot of outdoor activities with my friends. I've been running, push-ups, sit ups. Even when I was on the overnight in dispatch, which was pretty rough. I was working a split shift at one point from the evening shift to the overnight shift. I would do push-ups in dispatch to keep myself alert. As well as prepare myself for the possible academy. I have an interest in firearms. I learned how to shoot proficiently maintaining firearms on a small level. Again, getting my feet wet with first responder experience, going on these medical calls with the fire department. Exposing myself to high stress because I know it's a high stress job being a police officer. I see it with the guys I currently work with. Some of the things they deal with. As a dispatcher I'm giving them these calls. I take it in, I give it to them, and I see it when they come back to the station. Exposing myself to this has really prepared me for the lifestyle of being a police officer. Working overtime. I feel like I really prepared myself getting in the habits and lifestyles.

Mr. Gennette: How do you ensure that you will work well with different personality types?

Mr. Bedore: I like building connections with people, even if it's really small. I feel like I talk to people really well. I like to make small talk. I find a common interest, even if they're completely different than me. I also like building small connections and it really goes back to me wanting to work in a small town as a police officer. I like building small connections. I really enjoy developing a small sense of personal relationships with people. I like dealing with the same people, even if they're different from me. Working in a completely different town, even though it's a town over, it's surprising how different it is. How the town is run. Where people go to get groceries. Finding a common thing and talking about it. Building these small connections, I feel like really, really helps.

Mr. Gennette: I think that's the end of our questions. Do you have any closing comments before Chief talks?

Mr. Bedore: I would like to thank everyone for having me tonight. It's been a really good experience. I look forward to hearing back from the town and I would be honored to work for this town.

Chief Valadas: Brandon, I have a list of notifications I have to make to you as a candidate. There will be a medical exam, drug testing, psychological exam. There's a PAT test, which is an obstacle course, PT test. If you're appointed, you'll attend a Rock Academy. I don't know which one yet, but we'll get you into one. There will be an FTO program after academy graduation. You have to maintain, per Massachusetts Post standards, a license to carry, driver's license. You have to meet all Chapter 16 Section 4 certification standards. There's no use of tobacco products, cannabis, THC products. Your residence has to be within 15 miles as the crow flies from Ludlow. It's a patrolman's position, midnight shift assignment which includes holidays, weekends and mandatory. You must complete a 1-year probationary period. I'll get your number on the way out.

Mr. Gennette: We'll hear from Chief when he comes back in. Chief, what do you think?

Chief Valadas: Going over these candidates, there were 5 candidates, one who was hired by the City of Holyoke, as we talked about earlier, when I read the same packet that all of you have, there's an exempt candidate, which is Brandon Teixeira, because he's a post certified police officer in another state. I received an email last week explaining the process. As an out of state police officer, his transfer would have to come with an exemption by this state, and as I understand from the Director, they've done them for Rhode Island and other states, but they've definitely done it for the academy that he graduated from, so it shouldn't be a problem. He'll have to do a core competency training here, which is a 1- or 2-week training period, and then you'd have to transfer of Mass standards completely, which is firearms and different things. So, he's your exemption right off the bat because he's a police officer and there's a proven track record on him. He's an excellent well-rounded candidate. There isn't a police department in Massachusetts that wouldn't view Mr. Brandon Teixeira as an exemplary candidate. Because of everything he's accumulated, veteran status, he's got his bachelor's degree, he's already on the job for 2 ½ years. There's an automatic track record and yes, we've already looked into what we needed to look into as you can see by the way he presents himself here. He's your exception candidate so he's automatically different than the other three. Based on the other 3 candidates that we have here, Mr. Brandon Bedore scored very well on the board, by the way I don't participate in. I read the same synopsis you do. He definitely seems like he's very motivated. He does currently work as a dispatcher for a neighboring police department. There's a lot of certifications and similarities. Also, a former civil service police department. Many police dispatchers become police officers. You do see some transfers from fire departments into police departments, you don't see many police officers go into fire departments. The other candidate, Mr. Sean Egan, again has military background and his current employment with the Hampden County Sheriff's department also makes him a very good candidate by making it through their academy and also being a correctional officer, many police officers start off as corrections officers. I think it's a valuable experience. Ms. Shelby-Lynn Klekotka, I think she's also taken steps to better herself, as far as building her own skills by becoming this armed security officer for a state agency. At this point in time, I would ask the Board, as well as Mr. Rosenblum had mentioned, you do have the opportunity. There are 2 positions, they're budgeted positions and they're open. You could actually have 2 appointees and alternates in case something was to happen, which has happened before. I would ask you give me at least one alternate in case something happens we can just slide them right in, so we don't delay the process. I don't think we're going to make the Western Mass Academy but maybe we'll make Boyleston, and we'll just keep rolling with it. It just makes it so much easier. If you want to give 2 alternates you can do that. There are 2 full-time positions.

Mr. Silva: If we have 2 budgeted for next year why is it we're only appointing 1 today?

Chief Valadas: You're appointing 2.

Mr. Silva: I'm very confident on what the Board did. It seems to me like they got it right with their scores. Brandon, while I do know the family, I think he's above and beyond some of the others with experience, schooling, almost every notch you want to give him. The others need more experience and education. I don't see any issue with the way the Board, the Police Board.

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Mr. Gennette: That's one. We need 2.

Mr. Silva: I got them the way the Board has them. Mr. Teixeira, then Mr. Bedore. I have good faith in them.

Mr. Rosenblum: When I looked at everything, I put down what weaknesses separated them and I found with Mr. Egan and Mr. Klekotka, finishing the education is important because I know in the past a lot of positions we've gone through, especially with police, we do look for the military background, the B.S. in criminal justice and any other certifications. Those are the 2 things I would look for them to do. I'd like to see Mr. Egan follow up a little more on his goals but I'd also like to see him keep interviewing. Ms. Klekotka, excellent communication. She handles herself very well in an interview, which translates very well on the street and handling very difficult situations. As Mr. Silva is saying, the way the review board sees it that's pretty much where I would put it

too. It's hard for me to find any weakness with Mr. Teixeira. He is a police officer, and he has his B.S. Mr. Bedore. I notice one of the comments is he's mature beyond his years and he holds himself very well. The thing for me is experience more for police. He seems like he has it on the EMT and fire side. I think that translates into those difficult situations as a police officer. Obviously, his thing is the education, so if we're appointing 2, I'd go with 1, Mr. Teixeira, #2 Mr. Bedore. If we were to do an alternate, I would do Shelby-Lynn Klekotka.

Mr. DeBarge: I have been doing the same process since I've been a Selectmen, as far as the questions, scoring the questions, I write down your questions and I score how I perceive the answers to be. Rarely does it come up with a time I have 2 tied because I don't tally until we're all done. I have Mr. Teixeira and Mr. Bedore tied by the way I score. I thought both their interviews were very impressive. I could go on with a lot of the answers they gave that I thought were impressive. But mostly I thought answers to their questions were thought out. They were able to put good examples to the answers to their questions. In going with Ms. Klekotka and Mr. Egan, I liked Mr. Egan's answers and the way he interviewed. Ms. Klekotka came back with much more experience than she had the first time, which means she's building on her experience, which as Selectmen we look for what's the best experience in our eyes. I love the evaluation process from the Police Department and Fire Department. I think your departments are second to none when it comes to that in evaluating your own staff. If I was to remove a process, I would remove our process. I would give that solely to our Town Administrator, HR Director, and the respective departments with how thorough these are. I am in complete agreement with the order. For having these 2 tied then you take in the intangibles, the completed Bachelor's degree, the fact that he is a sworn police officer and most importantly could start right away. That would put Mr. Teixeira on top for me. The alternates, anything can happen. I think it's important that we have them. I don't know if we want to give 1 or 2.

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Mr. Rosenblum: I had Shelby-Lynn as first alternate.

Mr. DeBarge: I wouldn't disagree with that either.

Mr. Silva: Same.

Mr. Gennette: I'm kind of in a similar boat. I want to start at the bottom. I think Mr. Egan is a very nice man. I think he's probably into his hockey more than he is with the police. I think I ranked him last. Not because of anything other than he's finding himself a comfortable spot where he is. I think he may be shooting for the police department, but he's really not driven. I was blown away by Ms. Klekotka from the last interview we had to this interview. I think she was on point. She was sturdy, up strong. She brought everything to the table. That education does hang over her and she knows it. You can see it when she explains it and she's going to struggle with that one for a very long time. Brandon Bedore, when he first started talking, I wasn't overly blown away until I got to my first question, and he started about having to try and figure things out through Covid because stuff wasn't available for him to be able to do it. He found ingenuity and drive and he's putting things together and working on a degree now. When I was done with that I was completely impressed. I think we've all said that Brandon Teixeira is on a different level. He comes in and sits down and he's a police officer. He already talks like a police officer. I think he's the number 1 candidate right out of the gate. We have to take the police officers when we can get them. My second would be Brandon Bedore, if for no other reason than they're the top 2 civil service scorers in the recommendations that we have, and I would put Shelby-Lynn as the alternate as well.

Mr. Rosenblum: I always look for, you know how you say that thoughtful answer when you hear something a little bit different about with Mr. Bedore, is the fact of the guitar. My oldest daughter plays guitar, I play a little, is the fact of the rhythm. You fall back because you're always tapping your foot with the rhythm. That's a great thought process for someone that's going to be dealing with difficult situations as a police officer. That you get into a methodical, don't get ahead, don't panic. I thought that was a great comment.

Mr. DeBarge: It should be mentioned a little bit more I think, with Mr. Teixeira and his MMA prowess because that is calm in the middle of a storm and being able to do that out in the street,

whether you're hands on or not, is a very big asset. It's also an asset to the other officers in our department too because if you need back up you want someone who's not going to just be there but be able to handle it and get it over with quick but also one that can handle the storm with their training. I think it's a plus for that.

Motion made by Mr. Rosenblum to appoint Brandon Teixeira as a Ludlow patrolman effective immediately. **Mr. Silva second. All in favor. Motion passed 4-0.**

Motion made by Mr. Rosenblum to appoint Brandon Bedore as a Ludlow patrolman effective immediately. **Mr. Silva second. All in favor. Motion passed 4-0.**

Mr. DeBarge: For the record, because the motions were made separately, we're going to do that order, right? Mr. Teixeira first, Mr. Bedore second?

Mr. Gennette: Yes

Mr. Rosenblum: That was my intention with Mr. Teixeira going first.

Motion made by Mr. Silva to appoint Shely-Lynn Klekotka as the alternate for the Police Department. **Mr. Rosenblum second. All in favor. Motion passed 4-0.**

Chief Valadas: Thank you very much.

Mr. DeBarge stepped out.

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Mr. Strange: Some budget updates. The school committee is currently considering a 9% increase, which represents 3.1 million dollar increase over Fiscal 23 budget. That would be a level service budget for the schools. Level 2 budget currently has a 3% increase for the schools and that 3% increase represents a little over a million dollar increase over Fiscal 23. The Board of Selectmen, School Committee and the Finance Committee are all meeting jointly next Tuesday to talk about the budget, so we look forward to that. On the town side of things, we're anticipating some changes to the Level 2 budget. All these potential changes were communicated to the Finance Committee last week and the Board of Selectmen's office. We are consolidating 2 LATOSS 3 positions into 1 LATOSS 4 position. In the accounting department, we have a new Town Accountant starting who has a different salary than our previous Town Accountant. We also brought on a Municipal accounting consultant who may or may not be continuing into Fiscal 24 and an accounts payable person who will be a LATOSS 3. The Health Department for Fiscal 24 is TBD. There has been some correspondence back and forth between the Board of Health and Board of Selectmen, so there may be some changes happening there to the Level 2 budget. The Treasurer and Collectors offices are contingent upon the town vote on whether or not to consolidate those 2 departments. If the town does vote for that we should be able to save some money in those budgets. The Assessors, we should be issuing a new RFP next week for a new assessing consultant and we're also moving our residential inspections in house so that should save us some money. The veterans benefits are going to have to go up slightly from last year's amounts. Overall, those changes should be large enough to make up for the $162,000 we are currently over on the town side and bring us under the levy capacity for Fiscal 24, again on the town side. In addition to that we took a look at some special article funds that still have money in their accounts. We've identified about $214,000 in funds that were previously appropriated but not spent. They represent $150,000 for Covid-19 expenses, $8,620 for the master plan, which I think was completed back in 2012. $30,000 for emergency preparedness. We used to supplement the Blackboard Connect subscription through this account, but we don't do that anymore. Those funds are just hanging out there. I spoke to Chief Pease about that earlier. $19,613 for Senior Center professional services. I reached out to Jodi to ask about what's left for the Senior Center and whether we're going to have to hire a professional for any services and she wasn't quite sure about that. $7,700 for consultant for the needs of the radar assessment fees of the communications project. Obviously, the radio com project is complete and that's active now so those funds are no longer needed. Almost $10,000 for dark fiber at the

Senior Center and Chapin Street School. That project is also completed. $15,000 for LATOSS classification study, similar to the non-union study that was just before the board late last year. We feel like we can do a LATOSS classification study in house. Do you have any questions about those? Also, with an eye toward increasing our budget revenues for Fiscal 24 to help with the school's budgetary deficit we asked every department to provide a list of fees at the local level. Some fees are statutory at the state level. Some are in our bylaws. Some are set by boards. So, we're gathering that information. With the Board of Selectmen's blessing, we would meet with each department, review all the fees and see which ones might be right for an increase. Often times fees go a long time without being increased and we just want to make sure that our fees are in line with similar fees in neighboring cities and towns. That could help us bridge that budgetary gap. Finally, we have the Town Hall and Public Safety projects. There's 3 of them. The new town hall roof and asbestos remediation came in around 1.1 million. The Town Hall HVAC upgrade is 2.4 million and the public safety HVAC is also 2.4 million. There is $300,000 currently allocated through capital for the Town Hall roof project. Again, we've discovered $645,000 in previously authorized but unspent funds from previous projects, including the DPW roof, Golf course roof, Public Safety complex roof and upgrades at East Street School. We checked with our accounting consultant on this. We can reallocate those funds into another project as long as the life expectancy of that project is equal to or greater than the life expectancy of the other projects, which are roofs and upgrades at East Street School. That means we will have access to another $645,000 or so that we can use for the Town Hall roof project. That leaves us with 2 HVAC upgrade projects, both of which have to be bonded at some point if the Town decided to bond the public safety HVAC upgrade. We could reallocate the ARPA funds, $525,000 in ARPA funds reserved for that work. We could reallocate those funds to bridge the gap for the Town Hall roof project or ARPA eligible projects in town. With that, I'll take questions.

Mr. Rosenblum: Obviously I'm going to start right at the top with 9.1% being 3.1 million dollars. That's not going to happen. Dr. Tiano has been put in a difficult situation and so has the School Committee in the fact that with ESSR funding being budgeted in and wanting to continue using those ESSR positions and the town funding them. I've gone over the Fiscal 23 budget a little bit and seen the increases from Fiscal 22 and there's some line items that take some serious jumps that I would have questions about. There might be answers for them but they're going to be questions I'm going to have at the meeting. Seeing something go from 590 to 857, hundreds of thousands. I don't know how you justify those jumps. Another one going from 160 to 255 and now we're going to 365. How do we justify those? There might be an answer and then I can say ok I get it. That's a lot of money. I think in the past years around this time in the budgeting process and saying how the Select Board had no feelings and you're really sticking it to the school. No really, I think a year ago the schools put themselves in a bad situation by budgeting with money they didn't have. Money they had through ESSR. Just like ARPA the #1 thing with ESSR and ARPA funding is not to fund permanent positions. This is what's trying to be done. Funding positions that were meant to be temporary but now funding them is permanent. That's the #1 thing you can't do with this funding. There might be answers. With CIP and looking at the ARPA funding we had allocated $525,000 just over getting the amount of time costing it out with inflation 7-8% goods and services have gone through the roof in that whole time. I see the same things in the projects that I'm working on in my job. I've seen a project go from 1.1 to almost 3 million. It's just over the course of a year because that's what it costs and you're at the beckon call of the services. I talked with Chief Pease last week and I said that's going to be a lot more than that isn't it? He said Oh Yea. One other thing, with the $645,000 we'd be able to bond a smaller amount if that 1.1 is bond like 365? Or find that elsewhere through ARPA funding? The Town Hall roof.

Mr. Strange: We would either ask the Capital Committee to supplement that other $200,000 or look at reallocating some of those ARPA funds to cover the gap in the Town Hall so we can pay for Town Hall without bonding it. It would be local funds and/or ARPA.

Mr. Silva: Marc, how do you expedite some of these things? It seems to me like we discuss something, and it takes us 2-3 years to get anything done. I know we have to do RFP's and all that but for some reason we've been talking about HVAC for how long? Here we are now. These numbers are crazy. Hopefully it won't keep happening for years to come but it's crazy. It's almost like you can't budget for this. We talked about demolishing the school. Those ARPA funds are

going to be expended no problem. Somehow, we gotta figure out a way that we decided this, let's do it.

Mr. Strange: I think we should look at bonding the public safety HVAC because next year it will just get more expensive. We can look at funding it either through the budget or do a debt exclusion. I think there wouldn't be a big hit in Fiscal 24. A Fiscal 25 hit would be $180,000.

Mr. Rosenblum: To answer Mr. Silva's questions, is basically the form of government and municipal red tape in a sense. A lot of the companies you're asking are back logged too. I know some of the companies that do the design on a couple projects I'm looking at; they're supposed to start 6 months ago but because they're back logged is they're overwhelmed with business as well. It's a combination of things. We hate to put everything on the pandemic, but it really messed up with the structure and how you get things moving on CIP.

Mr. Silva: I agree with that and if that's the case then we need to speak to a representative and maybe change some legislation so we don't have to wait this long. They went up 3, 4, 5 times. It's crazy.

Mr. DeBarge: I have a lot of numbers swimming in my head and I'm not a numbers guy. It confuses me. First, we brough up ARPA and I know what that number is and how much we got as a community and I know what we discussed and voted on as a board that we were going to take as a priority for the 6+ million dollars that we got and that was the track and field, demo of Vets Park and Whitney. Since that time it has come to a point where for me I need to take a step back and say hang on a second and reassess everything because this number that the school department is coming in with, I understand you have to do the numbers and report everything, knowing that 9.1% is ludacris to think of it brings me back to when we met with them the first time recently and it was at 7.5%. Back to the numbers, I'm confused. 3% is level funding with the increases that they were given but they needed 4.5% more to cover what they spent with their ESSR funds, which doesn't sustain that past the ESSR funding. How did it go up to this? And then they're going to have to explain to me, the population of the school is dropping, and the foreseeable future is going to show that as well. I understand that a drop in enrollment doesn't necessarily mean a drop in a budget request but my God. If we are going to try and we are partners together in this town if we are going to try to meet and help them, which as Marc has pointed out they have been doing a fantastic job at finding monies here and there on the town side to get us where we need to be as far as a levy goes ,but bonding for these projects and all of this as opposed to using ARPA as we had hoped to means more taxes and everything else. It's a tough pill to swallow. I'm interested in the meeting with the school department in 2 weeks because I'm going to need to hear some drastic changes from that school department with this budget going forward. How do we continue to move forward with this kind of a burden.

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Mr. Rosenblum: You go ahead, and you give 9%, which we know we're not going to give, even if you give 6 or 7%, you set a bad precedent. If we did it, you'd eliminate every other project we want to do in this town, fund it then go ask for a 2.5 override. That's where you're going with it, and we all know 2.5 is not happening. People need to understand that even if we had the money, we wouldn't want to do it because it sets the precedent that you can come back in 3 years and ask for 11%. The new superintendent and his school committee got put in a bad spot with some bad management of the ESSR funding. There might be answers we don't know once we sit down and tell us this is why this is happening. If you can give me a feasible answer to this then ok, but you're not getting 9.1.

Mr. Gennette: As far as the HVAC units go and much to what Manny said before, the Capital Planning Committee had decided to send the Town Hall project up because it got so dynamic and big that it was outside the capabilities of the Capital Planning Committee to be able to handle it. We voted to send it up to the Board of Selectmen for us to make the decision here. It's a lot of money. We're talking about bonding now. It's no longer just a Capital project. We were very blown away that the cost for that had gotten so much and the question was how do you get an estimate for a project of 525 and then it comes in at 2.1 million when it's time to do it. It's crazy extreme. It's not good. It's not good valuation when your estimation up front didn't include

everything. We've been working at the Capital Planning Committee to try to improve the process for all of these items. We're not there yet. Hopefully next year we can be a little more settled in it but for now this one had to come up to the Board of Selectmen. I'm really happy to find $600,000 in money that hadn't been spent and also the new Facilities Manager should come in with the HVAC estimates to be able to identify some of this stuff earlier that we can kind of plan for it and get ahead of it. I'm excited to see how Jamie works out. As far as the school goes, I'm not going to be at the meeting. I'm going to be in Washington. As far as the 9.1 goes, I agree that it's completely ridiculous. If the school department wants to have all their projects, if they value the special education program, that's fine. If they want a robust athletics department, that's fine. Low class size, that's fine. But they have to decide what it is that they want because they obviously can't afford everything. For me, if they can't afford all the brick and mortar, maybe it's time to figure out how to move East Street. If they can bring the kids over to Harris Brook and we can do 3 schools instead of 2 elementary schools, then they're going to save themselves a lot of money. They had $975,000 that they had spent in ESSR funds that they haven't been able to clear off their books because they don't have that money. It was just a one-time thing they can't get out of there. I forget what it was for. I believe it was $975,000 and I think that's dogging them.

Mr. Strange: I don't know the answer to that.

Mr. Gennette: If that's the case, if they're sitting on almost a million dollars and that's 3% of their budget and it was temporary money that was put in there, we may have to come to the table and take care of that because it's not going to go away. They're not going to improve it in their budget and they're going to keep asking for more money until it does because they don't have the money to do it. We may have to figure out a way to take care of that one-time thing they paid and clear that off of their books. I don't know how that works or the dynamics but I'm not going to be in the meeting, so I want to put this stuff out on the table now. If you can't afford the things you're doing, you have to change what you're doing. I don't know if they're prepared to go stand in front of town meeting and tell the members that they're going to go 2.5 override because I'm not going to do it. They can stand up and explain why that happens. I believe they let go of 13 positions that were temporary positions originally back in May prior to the Town meeting and I believe they hired 9 people in August. If you couldn't afford the people in May, how are you hiring them in August? I have to take a look at the numbers but that's where I'm at. Thank you for your report.

Mr. Rosenblum: When it comes down to these projects and estimates, that's an estimate right now. Once it goes out to RFP and you put the scope in there, the RFP could come back even more expensive. Those are the things that we're looking at, 1.1 and the RFP goes out and you put in for that scope it could come back at 1.5. These are just estimates. These numbers are going to go up. We are seeing a little bit of a leveling. You might be able to see it too. We're starting to see a little bit of a crest and little bit of leveling, but these numbers could possibly go up.

Mr. Gennette: Another thing I keep forgetting to mention is the school operates in the micro and we have to look at the macro. Look at all the departments in the grand scheme of things. When they built the administration building and that got bonded, that gave us a million-dollar interest payment every year that the school doesn't figure in. Every time they come in here with a percentage, you can automatically tack on 3%. If they're coming in looking for 9.1, it's costing us 12.1 because we have to figure in the interest rate on that administration building. This stuff is important to them, and they keep saying it's our fault but they're not figuring in all of the macro that we have to figure in.

Mr. Rosenblum: When central building, when it was being bonded, if it comes under budget, that money can be reallocated, unlike the schools where the 60 million and the funding through the state. Apparently from what the building committee said in the past, I think Mr. Kelliher, we're going to come in under $200,000. Last year interim superintendent Nemeth said that money was gone, and we talked to someone else, and they said no that money is still there. I'd like to be able to see if that's going to come in. I know that a year after the project there's the cleaning up of the project and assessment of everything, but I'd like to know if there's going to be anything left out of the bonding from the central building. They said they were going to be under budget and that came right from the building committee.

Mr. Gennette: We'll have to see how that plays out. I'm not going to be there, so I said my peace on air this week. We are late for a 7:15 appointment. We did not have Lydia Chagnon come in from East Street Coffee, but we do have Leslie Ward, Building Inspector.

Ms. Ward: I came in with what I think is going to be zero net change adding a couple things and decreasing a couple things that I think are unreasonable. If you look at the handouts I gave you, the previous fee schedule for the building department residential fees. The first is the proposed and I'm looking to have you look at the fees for the residential effective 2/26/18. Not the proposed but the actual fees.

Mr. Gennette: The new construction permit?

Ms. Ward: The sheet you're looking at there is the proposed changes I want to make but I'm trying to give you some background first. Looking at the residential building permit fees down towards the bottom. Renewal of permit expired after 1 year one half the original cost. Building permit fees for new construction of single family and multifamily homes are $9 per thousand of project cost. That equates to thousands of dollars. After one year if these folks have not been able to finish their project, they're on the hook to pay one half the original permit fee and that can also be thousands of dollars. What I'm looking to do is get rid of that and have it be half the original cost of the permit fee. A minimum of $50 a maximum of $500 so that people don't have to come back and give $2-$3,000 additional at the end of their project to get their project approved.

Mr. Silva: Wouldn't it be more prudent to say a renewal $500, rather than say half of it. Just have an amount.

Ms. Ward: Sure, I don't see much difference I just wanted to make sure it got capped at $500. Realistically I don't see many permit fees being less than $500. I could take that off and do a straight fee of $500. I'm all for simplification. That's what I wanted to do down the line with certificate of inspection fees. That's an excellent idea. The permit amendment change fee is essentially a fee for service. People come in and want to change their project and right now we don't charge them to do that. What's happened in the past that I've seen, which I don't agree with, is that folks have been made to take out a whole new permit, which confuses the system, confuses the data, and costs a lot of money. Straight permit amendment fee of $50 per project. All I need is the basic change. That's what I did in Holyoke. It worked well and simplifies things. The $50 does go toward the cost of administration. Doing the fee, changing it in the system. The zoning determination letter.

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Mr. Gennette: Does anyone have a conversation about the permit amendment change?

Mr. Silva: I think that's great because I did have a complaint from a resident. Exactly that situation happened and you got to get a new permit and it's like what? I totally agree with that.

Ms. Ward: The zoning determination letter, some of these are just copied down to the commercial side you'll see. Part of the Zoning Board of Appeals process is that a zoning determination letter or denial letter is required from me. It's fee for service. It takes time to do that. I know that in years past it hasn't been done at all.

Mr. Silva: Say someone comes in and says I want to do this, you actually tell them that's not allowed, unfortunately you can't do that, now they would have to pay $50 for you to tell the zoning department the same you've told him.

Ms. Ward: Part of the ZBA process is they require that. If I'm not asking them for a permit application to deny, they want a denial letter, what am I denying. No one has made a request. It's a typical fee for service. Part of what our process is with the ZBA. I can't change the ZBA's application process. That's what they require.

Mr. Silva: It's well know, that's been standing forever.

Mr. Gennette: Have you talked to anyone at the ZBA about it?

Ms. Ward: I have not. This also covers the questions of people calling up and asking the question, can I do this in this zone, and many of them do want a letter stating why they can or cannot do what they're doing and apply for permitting purposes. If a lot is buildable. That sort of thing. Reinspection fees, this is another fee for service type of situation. So far, what it says is the first call back is free. Second call back and any subsequent permits, then we start charging; however, we have to pay our electrical and plumbing inspector to go out whether we collect a fee or not on a failed inspection. This is not how I did it where I was. We just charged a straight $50 reinspection fee. It just makes sense to me. I'm not sure why we're allowing the first call back to be free. Is there a reasoning on that anyone can think of?

Mr. Rosenblum: If we have to pay someone to do an inspection, there should be some kind of reimbursement for it. We're giving money away.

Mr. Gennette: I think what this was about is that an inspector goes out there and they find something very minor to get fixed and they have to come back out they don't go give me another $50. Your wires need to have red tags not blue tags, now you gotta pay another $50 for it. I think that's part of the reason they did that. You don't want a spiteful inspector at some point to just start finding stuff and hitting people for $50 every time they go out. I don't know if there's a conflict there. That's the only consideration I have.

Ms. Ward: That's where common sense and a decent inspector who has some experience would be able to make a determination like that. A lot of times I will accept a picture if it's something minor and not call for a reinspection.

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Mr. Silva: This would be the responsibility of the homeowner?

Ms. Ward: The homeowner or contractor.

Mr. Silva: The homeowner doesn't know any of this and the inspector goes out there, it's not the owner's fault that something was missed by the contractor and the homeowner is going to have to pay the fee, unless you have a contractor with the fee structure in there.

Ms. Ward: It's my habit and my process to let the homeowner know that this is the contractor's responsibility. I agree with you.

Mr. Silva: You get an estimate and they put the fees on there.

Ms. Ward: I agree with you. If I have a homeowner in front of me who has paid a contractor, I definitely let them know that this is the contractor's responsibility.

Mr. Silva: I wouldn't want to see the contractor pay these fees when the contractor is messing up.

Mr. Gennette: Anything else on the reinspection fees? New construction permit resubmission fee.

Ms. Ward: I did not send this out in the packet. This is the listing of what is required for a new building permit for a house or a two-family. This is quite a list.

Mr. Silva: What happened to the structure that years ago was discussed that we were going to simplify things to get a permit and get things rolling?

Ms. Ward: This is not my list. I adopted this list. I wanted to bring this in because I do want to simplify this list.

Mr. Silva: From what I recall the state was adamant about getting consolidations to get building in a structure where you have a list here and the planning board has a list. It was so difficult and costly.

Ms. Ward: I do want to simplify this list and at least make it more user friendly. It can be very confusing. Simplifying this also goes along with simplifying the permit process because this incorporates all of the signatures from all of the different departments, which is something I've tried to widdle down. I need to work on the form and change things. We're talking 2 different issues at this point. The way it stands right now it, it's a lot for me to review when I get a packet. I've had several instances where I've had to review the same application 2, 3, 4 different times, which is a heavy investment. It takes 45 minutes to an hour to get through this entire list. Time that I don't have. My point is I've had instances where I've taken this out, sat with a homeowner or contractor and gone through to try to explain each one of these things and they were all good in front of me and I tell them what they needed and they come back and hand me another incomplete packet and half the time I'm not in the office when that happens. Shawn is good and getting better but he's not an inspector. He can't discern whether or not something is accurate, so I'm left to review the whole application again. This fee I'm proposing is in line with what the Board of Health does for an incomplete application package. Thoughts?

Mr. Silva: Are you going to work on this permitting process and come back to us? Do we have to OK this or are you going to work on it, simplify it and move forward with it?

Ms. Ward: I'm just going to move forward.

Mr. Gennette: My only interest is existing permits that are out there, are those automatically going to be subject to this? This is a resubmission fee, so they've already got the permit?

Ms. Ward: No, I'm talking about an application package. No permit approval. I can't approve a permit that isn't complete.

Mr. Gennette: Moving on to commercial.

Ms. Ward: Commercial is a rehash of what we've already talked about. The electrical and plumbing reinspection fee, we need $50 per inspection. That goes without saying. Moving along, if there's no discussion on that, the certificate of inspection fees.

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Mr. Gennette: Are you guys all set with everything through the commercial end?

Mr. Silva: Pretty much, just explains why a 20 x 44 house now costs you $350,000 to build.

Ms. Ward: The energy code is really making building a single- or two-family home very expensive. Certificate of inspection fees. In your packet, I believe 2nd or 3rd page, I want to simplify this to what you see here on my proposed changes of fees. Some of this is wrong, as far as what I'm supposed to be inspecting as required by the state. We have to figure the fees out for people because they can't navigate this list.

Mr. Gennette: Seriously, you can take all of this down into these 2 sentences?

Ms. Ward: Some of these will be changing. Take a little here, give a little there. I think it all nets out.

Mr. Gennette: You seemed hesitant on the zoning determination letter.

Mr. Silva: I was just a little off on that but if Leslie thinks it's good, then we should do that. The only problem I have with it is it's not their fault they go to Leslie and they think they're going to build and she says they can't because of this, so now they have to go to the ZBA and they're going to have to pay $50 to go there, even though we have a board. That's their purpose. I would like to see it $25 maybe.

Ms. Ward: I don't have a problem with that.

Mr. Silva: We're going to explain to them it's because we have to do a letter, take the time, and $50 seems… I'm almost at the state level where services the town does for people was $6 or $12 an hour, minimal fees.

Mr. Gennette: And gas used to be $1.

Mr. Silva: It's on record you can only charge certain things.

Mr. Gennette: Are you two coming to an agreement at $25.

Ms. Ward: Let me discuss this a little bit more. Along with these zoning determination letters, they have to go out certified and regular mail, there's a cost there.

Mr. Silva: Why do we have to certify?

Ms. Ward: It's a legal document.

Mr. Silva: I didn't realize that was happening because I've gotten them before and there was nothing certified. You just handed me a letter and I brough it to the ZBA. If that's what's got to be done that's fine.

Ms. Ward: The only other comment I would like to make on that is it's not just for the ZBA. This also…it's a zoning determination letter for any letter. Say someone is looking to buy a lot and they want to know whether or not this is buildable, they want it in writing.

Mr. Silva: There I can see you saying you need this letter, so it's going to cost so much. It's a service for them. The other way, we're doing a service for Zoning Board of Appeals. See the difference there?

Ms. Ward: I do. I can take that off for now and talk to the Zoning Board of Appeals and see what they have to say about that.

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TOWN OF LUDLOW

Mr. Silva: I would do that because it might be that they require you to do it.

Ms. Ward: I'll talk to them.

Mr. Silva: If they say it's good, then it's all good.

Mr. Gennette: Marc, are you ok with all of these?

Mr. Strange: Absolutely, these are great ideas.

Motion made by Mr. Silva to approve the building inspector's fee changes excluding the zoning determination fee of $50. **Mr. Rosenblum second. All in favor. Motion passed 4-0.**

Mr. Gennette: I have a question outside of this. It has to do with plumbing. Are we just approving copper and that's it?

Ms. Ward: No.

Mr. Gennette: So, we're using PEX? For commercial properties as well?

Ms. Ward: That's a question for the plumbing inspector.

Mr. Gennette: I think we're one of the last towns that doesn't allow PEX.

Mr. Silva: On some things. I only say that because I work with a plumber. Certain things have to be copper.

Mr. Gennette: Certain things do depending on what's going into them. I understand that from the ice cream shop. It seems like we're making businesses go out of their way for a lot of money to bring their plumbing up to something that's not the current standard. I wondered if maybe you would take a look at that.

Ms. Ward: I'll definitely ask. It's not going to be a simple question only because every instance has its own code limitations and situations. I'm sure that my plumbing inspector will have quite a bit of information and I'll let you know but remember he does teach plumbing at Pathfinder so he's got to be up on the codes. I don't think he would require something that isn't code.

Mr. Gennette: I've heard a couple of horror stories, that's why I'm bringing it up. Thanks Leslie So, Lydia Chagnon from East Street Coffee Company, she's non-compliant regarding Common Victualler Entertainment license for 2023 was supposed to be here at 7:00 p.m. We never saw her. Last year she didn't have it either. I was told she came in day of and paid it. But that was after we already scheduled time for her to come in. Any conversation? I believe it's a $75 fee.

Mr. Silva: Is she non-compliant because of the $75 or because of some issues going on?

Mr. Strange: She doesn't have her license, so she never filed her application.

Mr. Silva: So, if she never filed her application then inspections weren't done, it's a little more than just the $75. I would send a letter saying you must comply and get your inspections done and application in.

Mr. Strange: We've been doing that.

Mr. Silva: You did that already, wonderful.

Mr. Strange: This was a last resort.

Mr. Gennette: What's your recommendation Marc?

Mr. Strange: As we know, East Street is such a popular place and everyone loves going there, including myself, but they need to operate with a license, so we need to enforce the law.

Mr. Silva: Now that we're allowing her to operate without a license the liability is on us if something…

Mr. DeBarge: Everybody else does it so the next step in the process should be followed.

Mr. Gennette: Which is close her doors until she complies.

Mr. Silva: Or send a zoning officer down there.

Motion made by Mr. Silva to send our zoning officer to the East Street Coffee Shop and notify her that she's non-compliant and has two weeks, March 6, to come in with compliance or she must close. **Mr. Rosenblum second. All in favor. Motion passed 4-0.**

Mr. Gennette: Please Lydia, I like going to your place. So, we finished correspondence, Town Administrator's report.

Mr. DeBarge: Can we go back to the Town Administrators report? Just to finish up with that because we did get into the visitation. All of this discussed, the massive increase in assessments for the projects we talked about. Since we've all talked about it and complained about the school's request for 9%, what are we going to do? We have to do something. Are we going to reconsider

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2023 MAY 17 P 4:48
TOWN OF LUDLOW

anything? The track & field? I don't want to reconsider any of that. HVAC systems are important for both of our buildings. What kind of options are we going to have to make a decision on so we can continue to move?

Mr. Strange: The funding for these projects are coming from different buckets. With respect to the operating budget, that's why we looked at all the places we could consolidate and become more efficient on the town side but also the funds that we haven't spent. That $214,000 is real money we can use to increase our budget and that would be beneficial for the town. The other thing is we've been underestimating our local receipts for the last few years by several hundred thousand dollars, which is one of the reasons why our free cash is up. What we're looking at year to date local receipts to extrapolate out and see we can expect over year end and compare that to what we estimated. If we're still way under what we expect it might be we might be able to increase our local receipts estimate for revenue. I don't know that we're going to be able to get to $700,000 but those are ways that we can try to compromise with the schools. In terms of the projects, the ARPA funds…you haven't technically voted on some of the stuff. The high school is ARPA, Vets Park is ARPA, Public Safety HVAC was ARPA but if we bond it then we can reallocate those ARPA funds. The Public Safety HVAC would be a minimal hit in Fiscal 24, about $180,000 in Fiscal 25 and we would know it's coming so we could plan for it. As we said, those projects are just going to get more expensive. The HVAC in this building is horrible, but they really have problems over there.

Mr. Silva: I don't think we can do anything until they come into that meeting and we discuss this and see where we're going. It's an impossibility. We can't do anything until the school comes in. I knew this was going to happen. We have to tell them; I don't know what you have to do but you gotta do what you gotta do unless you put a campaign to go forward and override. Quite honestly, Ludlow has never passed one so good luck. They're going to have to come into budget. There's nothing we can do. We might be able to find a couple dollars here & there, but it won't be anywhere near that.

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2023 MAY 10 P 4:45
TOWN OF LUDLOW

Mr. Strange: I think we can probably get them the 4% but I don't know if I can get much more than that. There's a lot of variables. I don't want to set that expectation. I think it is important for us to try to help them out and compromise because we're just going to kick the can next year and we're going to be right back here again. We have to get them where they need to be over a period of time, not in one year. We need to gradually get them back up and running.

Mr. Rosenblum: They also have to realize it's to a point where it's macro vs. micro. If it's 4% this year, then it's 3.5 or 4 next year. At some point you're going to get back to another 1.5 because the Town can't afford it. When they come to us and show us what 9.1 is and they might have valid reasons for it. In the same sense 4 for me would be the absolute highest. Even coming in at 5 is over $600,000. The other step was 5%. That's 680, 640, 660 something like that. Again, that eliminates other projects in other places. ARPA going into anything like that is a big fat no. All we're doing is taking free money and subsidizing something that next year you're going to have to make that cut anyway.

Mr. Silva: It's all going to the schools as it is.

Mr. Rosenblum: I've had that comment made to me. Hey, you're doing ARPA funding. That number is 3.7, 3.8 wait until that goes to RPF and it's 4.2. Now our numbers have shifted. Someone said to me in theory we're giving the schools 4 million dollars in ARPA funding. Everyone points a finger and who's getting this and who's getting that. In essence, the schools are getting 4 million dollars of the money of the 6.3.

Mr. Gennette: I don't think they realize the ramifications of spending that's been happening here. We're running our seniors right out of their homes. We have a large senior population, and we keep driving up their taxes to keep paying for 1,700 students and it's unbearable for our seniors. We cannot keep hitting them with this. The problem with the schools is they're not fixing the problem; they're just trying to figure out how to get more to be able to do more. I get it but we're talking about in that moment last year, now we're talking about in this moment this year 9.1 and

next year it's going to be the same thing. They have to bring that level budget down and figure out what their long-term scaling is going to be because they're not figuring it out. They're just saying we need we need, and we can't give, give, give. You can't get blood from a stone and you're taking directly from the seniors. I can't think of anyone else that's funding most of what's going on at the school. They're the largest portion of our community.

Mr. Rosenblum: People might sit here and watch this and say they don't care about the kids and you're heartless. That's the farthest from the truth. I think everyone on this board at one time has sat there and done something for the schools. Derek, you've been on LDAA, I've been on LDAA, president of one booster, vice president of another booster at the high school, coached at the Boys & Girls Club, coached Ludlow Hockey. If we had the money to give you 9.1, we would give it to you. You need to have a strong school system to attract the right homeowners and be able to drive taxes through higher valued homes but at some point, we have to hit the brakes and do a hard assessment. It's hard because you don't see. School budgets are hard because nobody knows. Business managers for the schools and superintendents. We still don't know how that whole budget works. We can see the line items. I will give that to Dr. Tiano and that school committee, they've gone ahead and been a lot more transparent. The summary packet we were given was awesome. It really spelled it out. It showed the numbers going down for enrollment. Whatever we can do we're going to do. Not just us, it's whatever the taxpayers can do. Seniors. Big hit.

Mr. Gennette: That's the reason I brought up East Street School. As much as I would hate them to not have that anymore, we would do with it on the backside. If you can't afford it and if you have a small to medium class size across your elementary grades, why wouldn't you try to figure out how you can save that money for that extra brick and mortar. The extra teachers, extra expenses, utilities, and things of those nature. If you can't survive, you got a decrease in class size, then you've got to figure some stuff out. It may hurt but you've got to make the tough decisions because no one wants you to give up your special education program. No one wants you to give up your extra curriculars after school. Your dramas and cooking and things like that. No one wants to give up the athletics. You've got to cut somewhere. It's going to have to be your class size. I can't do this stuff for you. You're the school department. You're supposed to be figuring this stuff out. Anyway, let's move on from here.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

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Board to approve and sign Selectmen's Meeting Minutes of February 8, 2022. **Motion made by Mr. DeBarge** to approve and sign Selectmen's Meeting Minutes of February 8, 2022 with all members present. **Mr. Rosenblum second. All in favor. Motion passed 4-0.**

Board to approve and sign Selectmen's Meeting Minutes of May 9, 2022. **Motion made by Mr. DeBarge** to approve and sign Selectmen's Meeting Minutes of May 9, 2022 with all members present. **Mr. Rosenblum second. All in favor. Motion passed 4-0.**

Board to approve and sign Selectmen's Meeting Minutes of August 9, 2022. **Motion made by Mr. DeBarge** to approve and sign Selectmen's Meeting Minutes of August 9, 2022 with all members. **Mr. Rosenblum second. All in favor. Motion passed 4-0.**

Board to approve and sign Selectmen's Meeting Minutes of October 3, 2022. **Motion made by Mr. DeBarge** to approve and sign Selectmen's Meeting Minutes of October 3, 2022 with all members present. **Mr. Rosenblum second. All in favor. Motion passed 4-0.**

Board to approve and sign Selectmen's Meeting Minutes of October 4, 2022. **Motion made by Mr. DeBarge** to approve and sign Selectmen's Meeting Minutes of October 4, 2022 with all members present. **Mr. Rosenblum second. All in favor. Motion passed 4-0.**

Board to discuss the FY21 Melanson management letter with recommendations for town audit. (Tabled from 2/7/2023)

Mr. Silva: I believe we discussed this a little bit last meeting, and we found the letter has not many crucial things on there, Marc, was there?

Mr. Strange: No. That suggested best practices.

Mr. Silva: There's a few recommendations by Melanson. I would make sure that these recommendations are stating we have departments that are deficient and get them to compliance.

Mr. Strange: We're going to review this letter. We have a finance team meeting every month, so we'll review the letter and make sure it gets addressed.

Motion made by Mr. Silva to file the Melanson letter and have Marc bring it to the Finance team meeting and rectify some of the issues. **Mr. DeBarge second. All in favor. Motion passed 4-0.**

NEW BUSINESS

Board to open the warrant for the May 8, 2023 Special Town Meeting to be held within the Annual Town Meeting. Articles are due to the Selectmen's Office by Thursday, March 23, 2023 at 4:00 p.m. **Motion made by Mr. Rosenblum** to open the warrant for the May 8, 2023 Special Town Meeting to be held within the Annual Town Meeting. Articles are due to the Selectmen's Office by Thursday, March 23, 2023 at 4:00 p.m. **Mr. Silva second. All in favor. Motion passed 4-0.**

Board to discuss revisions to the town's sign policy.

Mr. Strange: I'm applying for a grant for the physical signs. This has been on the back burner since early in my tenure. Someone came in about the Desforge banner by the turnpike bridge and there was some discussion about where are we with our sign policy. I had it on my list of things to do to ask the attorney about and they have a templated policy for flag raising that they could easily amend for signs. His strongest recommendation was you don't have to allow any signs and it's not a first amendment violation it's just the town doesn't allow signs. This is not for action tonight but maybe for discussion and if we want to go back to the attorney and see if he can amend the flag raising policy into a sign policy for the Board to review.

Mr. DeBarge: I asked to have this on the agenda because this is more about the 250th committee than anything else. Everything you read here as far as the Board of Selectmen being the governing body and authorizing banners and signs, that is basically what should be there, it's how we should govern all of this. Here's the point. With Ludlow's 250th anniversary coming up, technically the anniversary is in the month of February 2024 and our celebration will be in June 2024, there's a lot of things the committee wants to do. There are banners we're having made and most importantly, we want to put up those signs that looks like a thermometer because we are collecting money and raising money. We want to put one up here in the property between the Town Hall and the high school and we want to put one down by the library, not on the tree belt but in the empty lot. I believe the committee has a little over $60,000. The goal is much higher than that. The goal as a Board of Selectmen, in my opinion, should be to make sure that the advertisement of the 250th anniversary of our community of this town should be bannered, flagged, and signed everywhere at all times at any point in time, without going overboard of course, but the restriction of being 2 weeks before the event that it says in some of these bylaws and all of that would have to be excluded obviously. Didn't the track & field try the thermometer thing.

Mr. Rosenblum: There was one years ago at town hall.

Mr. DeBarge: I don't remember what it was for, and I don't remember if I was on the Board of Selectmen or not, and I don't remember having to approve something like that. In order to avoid all of that we just want to make sure the Board of Selectmen is a governing body so if a sign needs to be put up then it's going to stay up until 2024, case in point the 2 thermometer signs, we're not going to have an issue with it. Banners and all the other things for celebrations because the 250th committee, case in point, CARES coalition goes right along with this as well, do events all along the year. Multiple events throughout the year. So, coming up and requesting us to put a sign up

TOWN CLERK OF LUDLOW
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because it's red ribbon week as opposed to just being able to call our Town Administrator and saying you guys finalized all of this and the Board of Selectmen says you can do it, especially town events, CARES, 250th, they shouldn't have to go through red tape. We're trying to avoid that and make things a little more easy.

Mr. Silva: As far as I'm concerned, this is something the community is doing, and we are the community, I don't see where anyone is going to have an issue doing these signs. It's for the benefit of the whole Town. Certainly, any other organization that wants to do something, they have to notify us and come before us, and we discuss it and see whether or not it can be done. If it can, it can, if it can't, it can't. I don't see an issue.

Mr. Rosenblum: This might have been 2-2 ½ years ago, I originally wrote this, but we put it on hold because we wanted to have it looked at because we wanted to make sure it was airtight. This came about because it's mostly any signs we discussed in the original writing of this was to do it for charitable events within town that are based in town for non-profits and anything of that nature. We didn't want anything political in nature to be in certain areas in town on town property, especially with banners. That is where this originally came from. It got put to the back burner. I agree with Mr. DeBarge, with something like the 250th, there's going to be signage around town. I don't have a problem with this as long as it's just being careful on the wording with it.

Mr. Gennette: I think we got 2 different things happening here. If we're going to talk about signs and banner and whatever we're going to do for the 250th, I think we should open up the door to town properties, town entities to be able to fly their 250th items. I think as far as the sign policy goes, we still need to go through this as far as legal goes, to hone it in. I think we have to open up the signs for the 250th. We can do that anytime.

Mr. DeBarge: I just want to clear up any issues with signs and make sure the committee can go ahead with their…

Mr. Gennette: It has to be relevant to the 250th.

Mr. Strange: The current sign policy says signs and banners that are for a community involved event and not for profit organization will be allowed to be placed on town property for the sole purpose and permission of the Board of Selectmen.

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2023 MAY 11 P 1:48
TOWN OF LUDLOW

Mr. Rosenblum: The main thing being that those nonprofits are based in the town of Ludlow.

Mr. Gennette: Do we need to make a motion on the signs? No? So discussed.

Mr. Strange: I think they fall within our sign policy.

Board to declare 2010 Dodge Charger as surplus property. **Motion made by Mr. Silva** to declare 2010 Dodge Charger as surplus property. **Mr. Rosenblum second. All in favor. Motion passed 4-0.**

Board to vote on Cub Scouts request to use the Town Hall parking lot for their Mother's Day flower sale on May 13, 2023. **Motion made by Mr. Rosenblum** to approve the Cub Scouts request to use the Town Hall parking lot for their Mother's Day flower sale on May 13, 2023. **Mr. Silva second. All in favor. Motion passed 4-0.**

Mr. Gennette: Marc, can we put that on the calendar for that day, so we don't double book the parking lot.

Mr. Strange: I don't think we have a calendar for the parking lot.

Mr. Rosenblum: The trailers come in for Wreaths Across America, Toys for Tots, Rag Shag to go to the Boys & Girls Club.

Mr. Strange: This is not the Town Hall parking lot we're talking about, the parking lot at the mills. I know it says Town Hall, but that's not what they requested. Apparently, we have a town owned parking lot right across from the mills.

Mr. Rosenblum amended motion to allow the Cub Scouts request to use the mills parking lot for their Mother's Day flower sale on May 13, 2023. **Mr. Silva second. All in favor. Motion passed 4-0.**

Board to approve a request to charge off medical expenses and lost wages to Chapter 41, Section 111F for injury sustained by a Police Officer as a result of an incident that occurred on February 5, 2023. **Motion made by Mr. Rosenblum** to charge off medical expenses and lost wages to Chapter 41, Section 111F for injury sustained by a Police Officer as a result of an incident that occurred on February 5, 2023. **Mr. DeBarge second. All in favor. Motion passed 4-0.**

Board to review, approve and sign the Right of First Refusal for the Kevin Martins property – Lot 13 on Lyon Street (Board to vote to not exercise the option to purchase the described premises).

Mr. Silva: I believe most of the Boards that were required for him to notify have come back with a letter stating they had no interest in acquiring the property and that would probably include us unless Marc wants it. **Motion made by Mr. Silva** to approve and sign the Right of First Refusal for the Kevin Martins property – Lot 13 on Lyon Street. **Mr. DeBarge second. All in favor. Motion passed 4-0.**

Board to sign ClearGov contract for cloud-based budgeting and transparent online budget book.

Mr. Strange: I'm really excited about this. This is going to replace the spreadsheets we've been using for budget season. The back end of it is it syncs with MUNIS so departments will put their budgets into MUNIS and then MUNIS will talk to ClearGov. The transparency of it is really exciting. There's a bunch of cities and towns that use it. Grafton is a good example. There will be a link on our website to our digital budget book and all the information is there. In addition to the information we put in, they add value with graphs and charts. You can also write a message from the Chairman of the Board of Selectmen or the Town Administrator. It's however expansive you want to make it. I saw it at MMA, and I checked out some of their products in some other towns and it adds a little something.

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2023 MAY 17 P 1:45
TOWN OF LUDLOW

Mr. Silva: What is the cost of this program?

Mr. Strange: It's $4,000 for the set up then $21,000 for Fiscal 24.

Mr. Silva: And we have these funds available?

Mr. Strange: Yea, the flip side of that is we have been overpaying for MUNIS for years now, paying for modules that we have not been using. So, we're going back to MUNIS and saying we finally know what modules we're not using, taking those out. It will be a net positive.

Motion made by Mr. Silva to sign the ClearGov contract for cloud-based budgeting and transparent online budget book. **Mr. Rosenblum second. All in favor. Motion passed 4-0.**

BOARD UPDATES/MISC

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.

CLOSING COMMENTS

Mr. DeBarge: I have none tonight.

Mr. Silva: No, I've spoken too much today.

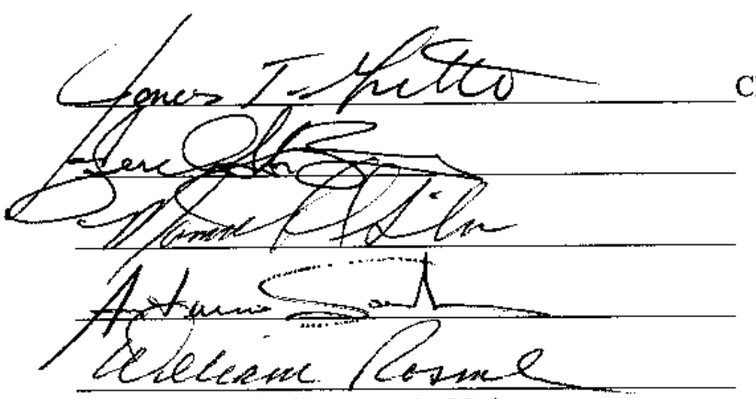
Mr. Rosenblum: I just wanted to double check. I looked it up and I'm sure it was addressed in a BPW meeting, but trash pick-up this week is on a normal schedule?

Mr. Silva: There was a robocall.

Mr. Rosenblum: I get so many spam calls I probably ignored it. I just want to remind people that trash pick up is on a normal schedule. Otherwise, that's all I have.

Mr. Gennette: The only thing I have is a reminder that I will not be at the joint meeting.

Motion made by Mr. Rosenblum to adjourn the meeting at 8:17 p.m. **Mr. DeBarge second. All in favor. Motion passed 4-0.**



Chairman

Ludlow Board of Selectmen

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2023 MAY 17 P 1:49
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