The Meeting of the Board of Selectmen held on Tuesday, March 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

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VISITATIONS:

Mr. Gennette: We were supposed to have a 5:35 p.m. Capital Improvement Planning Committee. They were unable to make it, so we had to cancel that. We do have their requests and I'm going to read those as Chairman of the committee. Capital Improvement Planning Committee February 21, 2023. These are the suggested approvals for the requests that have come in from several departments. Starting at the top and working the way down. The Board of Selectmen, the new town hall desktop computers, $44,000. The Board of Selectmen pool vehicle, which is the vehicle that the inspectors and things like that use, needs to be replaced for $50,000. The fire replacement vehicle for the 2023 Chevy is $62,000. The fire engine, 5th year of a 5-year lease $134,000. The fire tower truck, second year of a 5-year lease $335,000. The new ambulance $300,000, and that's coming out of the annual subscription for the ambulance service. Police patrol vehicles, two, $90,00. That's pretty common for them to come through each year. The schools. The LHS replace office HVAC $78,732. The schools LHS replacement library HVAC $78,732. The school LHS replacement band room HVAC $62,370. Before I move on, those HVAC units, there's a lot of HVAC units between the schools in different buildings in town. It's not like there's just one that takes care of it. There's probably 12 of them just on the high school. They obviously get old. They're not going to last 100 years. They also came in looking for card access door buzzers and ADA compliant doors for Ludlow High School and that came in at $133,887. The Ludlow classroom upgrades display and sound systems $24,000. The school Baird Middle School card access door buzzer $36,977. That came in a little bit less because there's less doors. Baird Middle School classroom upgrades to display and sound system $24,000. East Street School card and access door buzzer and ADA compliance doors $57,371. East Street School classroom upgrades display and sound system $24,000. Westover Golf Commission parking lot security cameras $26,731 and this is coming out of their retained earnings. Westover Golf cart lease, the first year of a 3-year lease $88,690. Just a heads up, I think they want to move to a 4-year lease. They think they could probably save some money there and it's probably going to be more beneficial to move to a 4-year lease. We could probably hear more from Westover Golf Course as time goes on. There's some replacement equipment coming. Westover Toro Real Master 54-10-D $83,265 coming out of retained earnings. The object with their retained earnings is to buy a piece of equipment outright without putting everything on their retained earnings and trying to spread out the purchase of their equipment. The next one is a Ventrac, first year of a 6-year lease $16,127 coming out of retained earnings. The Sandpro 3040 first year of a 3-year lease $9,439 coming out of retained earnings. Last is the DPW Groundmaster with cab which is the 3rd year of a 3-year lease. That's closing out $41,348 of free cash. The total expenditures coming out of free cash are $1,000,701.94. Does anyone have questions on any of the items listed?

Mr. Silva: Retained earnings? So, this is coming out of free cash even though it's from retained earnings and the operating budget?

Mr. Gennette: Which one?

Mr. Silva: All of them.

Mr. Gennette: All of these are coming out of their retained earnings. Out of their operating budget.

Mr. Silva: You said coming out of free cash is one million seven.

Mr. Gennette: I apologize. The total is not coming out of free cash. The total expenditures is $1,000,701. I'm actually going to give you a breakdown here at the bottom for the free cash. The

total free cash is $1,776,417. The ambulance subscription fund is $300,425. The Westover Golf operating budget is $88,690. Westover Golf retained earnings is $135,562, making the total expenditures $1,000,701.94. Those are the different areas those monies will be coming out of.

Mr. Rosenblum: Marc, retained earnings is enterprise fund, right?

Mr. Strange: Yes.

Mr. Rosenblum: The only question I have with Westover is we're finishing up a lease and going back into another new fleet. You don't always need to renew your fleet. I know that at some courses you have, usually it's a 5-year lease and then you buy them out. You have them for a couple more years and you can start up 2-3 years later. I'm just trying to figure out why we're going right back into another lease. It seems we could save a little money for a period of time. There might be an answer they have. I don't know if when they came to Capital, they asked anything. Why they wanted to start a new lease.

Mr. Gennette: I think right now it fits their budget better, is what Ryan was explaining.

Mr. Rosenblum: I'm saying you don't need to turn your new fleet every 3 years. Most fleets go 5 years. Then you have a few years you don't even pay it because you buy them out.

Mr. Gennette: I think that's part of the reason he's trying to go to the 4-year lease. He's trying to get that lease further out.

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Mr. Rosenblum: This is a new lease?

Mr. Gennette: This is a new lease for 3 years, but I think he's expecting to change that to a 4-year lease, even if we approved a 3 year lease for more money he could always back it down to that 4-year lease less money.

Mr. Rosenblum: The new lease is going to be on the new fleet. Turning a new fleet over in 3 years.

Mr. Strange: I think I remember the reasoning for this. Once they own the carts, they're responsible for maintenance. I don't know if they have the personnel to maintain the fleet and that would be an added expense. I think that was the reasoning for it.

Mr. Gennette: Do you want to make an alternate suggestion to this? We're here to approve these.

Mr. Rosenblum: Are we approving these tonight?

Mr. Gennette: We are.

Mr. Rosenblum: I think we're going 3 years at almost $90,000. The last lease was about 33-35.

Mr. Gennette: When does the warrant close?

Mr. Strange: There's time. You guys don't have to vote on this tonight.

Mr. Gennette: Do you want to hold off on that 1 item? Get some better knowledge about it. Then we can make an approval for just that afterwards?

Mr. Rosenblum: I understand the fact you lose the maintenance plan because in most of them the maintenance plan is included. Where I am, someone comes in once a week and checks carts, tire, whatever needs to be done. I'm just looking at it like if you added another part time mechanic or if he had another body to do it, he'd be saving money on it. I'm good with it.

Mr. DeBarge: I don't think I understand the question. The lease is coming out of the golf's operating budget. If they think that they need this, and it saves on the maintenance plan I don't understand what the problem is. Is it because it's more expensive than the carts they had before?

Mr. Rosenblum: No, my question is why are we turning a fleet over in 3 years and if it's because of a maintenance plan…I'm just saying most cart fleets can go 5 years and sometimes you go a couple years without having to spend $88,000.

Mr. DeBarge: If they did turn it over in 4 that would make it look better to you?

Mr. Rosenblum: That, but what's going to happen in 4 years? Are we going to get another new fleet?

Mr. DeBarge: I don't know. I can say from being there a new fleet is necessary, and I don't know about the turnover, but I do understand that maintenance is an issue. I don't know what other golf courses do, but…

Mr. Gennette: Why don't we do this? Make a recommendation. Let's approve the list if no one has any other questions, let's approve the list minus the cart fleet lease, let's get a message out to Ryan Linton and say let's get a better definition about what your 4-year plan is, what exactly is going to happen with the carts, and then we can come back and just approve that 1 later on.

Mr. Rosenblum: That's fine.

Mr. DeBarge: I don't agree with that, I would keep it in there but do what you want.

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Mr. Silva: I'm a little confused as well. This is probably something you want to bring to the Golf Commissioners.

Mr. Rosenblum: I just want clarification on it.

Mr. Silva: You're more knowledgeable about it because that's part of your job. Maybe you want to go to the commissioners and say why aren't we doing this? It seems to me we could save a lot of money by doing it…I don't know that we can change.

Mr. Rosenblum: The way that it breaks down it could be yes; I just want some clarification. Not to say I'm opposed to it, just clarification, because there's a lot of people that ride out their carts for 7-8 years. This fleet they have now has been there 3 years. It's just a question.

Motion made by Mr. DeBarge to approve the Capital Improvement list as stated by the Chairman. **Mr. Silva second.**

Mr. Rosenblum: My motion would have been to approve everything on there except to lease until we get further clarification on.

Mr. DeBarge yes, Mr. Silva yes, Mr. Rosenblum no, Mr. Gennette no. Motion tied 2-2. Tabled.

Mr. DeBarge: We could have had it before the meeting, is the other point too.

Mr. Gennette: Let's move on to correspondence. We're a little early for our 6:15 p.m. meeting with our facilities assessment.

CORRESPONDENCE

28. Maura T. Healy, Governor, Commonwealth of Massachusetts – informing the Board that Chapter 90 apportionment for FY24 for the Town of Ludlow is $684,585.56.

Mr. DeBarge: Marc, do we know what our number was last year?

Mr. Strange: This is $900 more.

Mr. DeBarge: That's 6" of pavement. Thank you.

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

29. Robert Mishol – requesting to be appointed to the Board of the Ludlow Council on Aging.

Mr. Silva: Before we appoint this, do we have something from the Council on Aging? A letter that they're requesting some other people. Marc, do we have that later on in the agenda?

Mr. Gennette: Do you want to hold off on this?

Mr. Silva: No, not hold off. I'm just wondering if that's going to take off some of their requests.

Mr. Strange: That's a good question. This came in on March 6.

Mr. DeBarge: How do you mean, Manny? One resigned.

Mr. Silva: They're requesting either advertising or I'm just wondering if that's going to solve one of their requests.

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Mr. DeBarge: I think it will.

Mr. Gennette: We're seeing 3 here and there's 3 positions available.

Mr. Silva: A one year term, two-year term and one alternate. Is this one going to take care of the one-year term?

Mr. Strange: I would say it probably will. These communications pass in the middle of the night.

Mr. Silva: The other question is do we need to post this before we appoint?

Mr. Strange: I don't think so, they're open.

Motion made by Mr. Silva to approve Robert Mishol to be appointed as a new member of the Board of the Ludlow Council on Aging. We have a one year and two-year term. Should we appoint him as a two-year term or one-year term?

Mr. DeBarge: Shouldn't he express that? I'm sure their board can take care of that.

Mr. Strange: When we reach out to him, we can find out what he prefers.

Mr. Silva: I'll leave it as appoint him to the Council on Aging.

Mr. DeBarge second. All in favor. Motion passed 4-0.

30. Kelly Porfilio – requesting to be appointed as an Election Poll Worker – she is registered as an independent. **Motion made by Mr. Silva** to appoint Kelly Porfilio as an election poll worker as an independent. **Mr. DeBarge second. All in favor. Motion passed 4-0.**

31. St. John the Baptist School – requesting a One Day Permit for Wine & Malt for a Purse Bingo to be held on Friday May 5, 2023 at St. John the Baptist Pastoral Center, 201 Hubbard Street, Ludlow. **Motion made by Mr. DeBarge** to approve the St. John the Baptist one-day permit for

wine & malt for a purse bingo to be held on Friday May 5, 2023 at St. John the Baptist Pastoral Center, 201 Hubbard Street, Ludlow and waive the fee for the permit. **Mr. Silva second. All in favor. Motion passed 4-0.**

32. Maryann & Francis Wdowiak Jr. – requesting the Board to abate the amount of $1,206.50 for a building permit due to a recent change in the Building Department fees.

Mr. Silva: Marc, I believe they paid the fee and a couple days later we reduced the fee to $500, so I think it probably would be appropriate.

Mr. DeBarge: I think so too.

Motion made by Mr. Silva to waive the $1,206.50 for a building permit by the building department. **Mr. DeBarge second. All in favor. Motion passed 4-0.**

34. Anthony Alves – informing the Board of his resignation as a Precinct Member for Precinct 3 effective immediately. **Motion made by Mr. Silva** to accept Anthony Alves resignation as a precinct member. I don't know that we've done that before, accept the resignation of precinct members.

Mr. Strange: He subsequently contacted the Clerk's office and I think she took care of the formality.

Mr. DeBarge: I think in his letter he had written that he wanted to let people know in case they wanted to jump in for the election.

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Mr. Silva: It doesn't hurt.

Mr. DeBarge second. All in favor. Motion passed 4-0.

Mr. Strange: I think we skipped over number 33.

Mr. Gennette: Before we do that, I wanted to say Thank You for your service Anthony. I know Anthony from the Capital Planning Committee. I hate to see that he's resigning from all these committees and boards. He's a pretty intelligent guy and it was nice to have him.

33. Stephen Santos – informing the Board that the Department of Public Works Snow and Ice Removal Budget has been over expended as of March 1, 2023.

Mr. Gennette: Dear Mr. Goncalves, please be informed that the Department of Public Works snow and ice removal budget has been over expended as of March 1, 2023. In accordance with Chapter 44 Section 31 of the Massachusetts General Law, the Board of Public Works is requesting that the Board of Selectmen officially declare a state of emergency in the Town of Ludlow and to notify the Massachusetts Department of Revenue so that the over expended invoices may be processed for payment. Thank you for your assistance and we await your reply. Sincerely, Chairman, Stephen Santos. There's also a supporting document here that has the breakdown for the snow budget. As of today, the budget was $180,000. $60,000 of that is for labor. We spent $23,327.31 in labor. We had $16,691.72 in vehicle repairs and maintenance. We had $46,206.50 in snow plowing contract. We had $174,019.05 in Morton salt. We had $15,545.60 in additional public works supplies and $100 advertisement. The deficit is $35,896.18.

Mr. Strange: This is a pretty common thing in towns. Every town overspends their snow and ice budget. It's a nuance in the budgetary laws that allows towns to overspend, and you can recapture that at October town meeting and pay for the balance.

Motion made by Mr. DeBarge to approve the request of the Department of Public Works to declare a state of emergency in respect to the statement you just read for snow and ice removal. **Mr. Silva second** for discussion.

Mr. Silva: I just want to point out we had such a weak winter we should be rolling in the snow removal and that's not the case. As anyone has heard what the expenditures run out to. We generally budget very low for snow and ice. We never budget over.

Mr. DeBarge: We also have to pay a lot of money out in contracts too because we don't have a lot of employees to plow.

Mr. Rosenblum: Also, the price of salt went way up over the last year and a half to two years. That's one of the costs that's gone through the roof.

All in favor. Motion passed 4-0.

35. Jackie Kassis, Massachusetts State Lottery Commission, Licensing Department – requesting the Board to approve the issuance of a KENO license for Casa Pizzeria, 325 East Street, Ludlow.

Mr. Silva: Again, Marc, is this new?

Mr. Strange: Yes.

Mr. Silva: I would say this is new because I don't recall getting any KENO being requested for approval by the community.

Motion made by Mr. DeBarge to request for approval the issuance of a KENO license for Casa Pizzeria, 325 East Street, Ludlow. **Mr. Silva second. All in favor. Motion passed 4-0.**

36. Diane Walton – requesting the Board to appoint her as a Democratic Poll Worker, Mia Alves, Democratic Town Committee Chair has recommended approval.

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Motion made by Mr. DeBarge to appoint Ms. Diane Walton as a democratic poll worker. **Mr. Silva second. All in favor. Motion passed 4-0.**

37. Janice Grimaldi – informing the Board of her resignation from the Council on Aging effective March 2023.

Motion made by Mr. Silva to accept Janice Grimaldi's resignation from the Council on Aging effective March 2023 and thank her for her service. **Mr. Rosenblum second. All in favor. Motion passed 4-0.**

38. Diane Peacey, Chairman, Council on Aging – informing the Board of the following vacancies to be filled; one 1-year term, one 2-year term and one alternate 1-year term.

Motion made by Mr. DeBarge to file. **Mr. Silva second.** As we discussed it before, we will be putting it on cable advertising. **All in favor. Motion passed 4-0.**

39. Brian Shameklis, Chairman of the Safety Committee informing the Board they are recommending permanent removal of 2 parking spots in front of 263-271 East Street.

Mr. Gennette: This is the one I think they had blocked off for a little while.

Mr. Silva: Do we have anything on what they proposed to do or no parking signs?

Mr. Strange: I'm not sure.

Mr. Silva: If they're recommending the approval…it would be nice to see something a little better designed than barriers there. If a merchant comes in it's a nightmare.

Mr. Gennette: Should I approve it and send it down to Planning Board.

Mr. Silva: I think we should approve it. They're going to make it no parking anyway. If we see they should do something else later on…

Mr. DeBarge: Obviously, the business owner isn't for this but if Safety Committee did the study…

Mr. Silva: Saving lives, I think…it's really a nightmare trying to cross there.

Motion made by Mr. Silva to approve the Safety Committees recommendation for the permanent removal of 2 parking spots in front of 263-271 East Street. And I'm going to add to see that it's done in a proper fashion.

Mr. DeBarge: Aesthetically pleasing.

Mr. Rosenblum second. All in favor. Motion passed 4-0.

40. St. Elizabeth's Parish – requesting a One Day Permit for Wine & Malt for a Dinner/Dance to be held on Saturday, April 22, 2023 at St. John the Baptist Pastoral Center, 201 Hubbard Street, Ludlow.

Motion made by Mr. DeBarge to approve a one-day permit for wine & malt for a dinner/dance to be held on Saturday, April 22, 2023 at St. John the Baptist Pastoral Center, 201 Hubbard Street in town and also to waive the permit fee. **Mr. Rosenblum second. All in favor. Motion passed 4-0.**

Mr. Gennette: Is he here, should we take him early?

Mr. Strange: We have to set up the computer so it may take a minute. I can set it up.

Mr. Silva: Should we wait? It's no hearing but just in case anyone has anything they want to discuss or have a recommendation.

Mr. DeBarge: This is all stuff Marc has to discuss anyway unless we go to.

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Mr. Gennette: There was something here for Fred Pereira that's not on the agenda I'd like to get out of the way. This was read today. Fred's retirement was here and we're sorry to see him go. We, the Board of Selectmen, this was read today, and he was given a certificate to Fred Pereira, and I'd like to read what was said here. We, the Board of Selectmen, are proud to present this certificate of recognition to Fred Pereira upon the retirement of the Town Collector. Fred Pereira began his career with the Town of Ludlow when he was elected as the Town Collector on March 26, 1984. He is a certified Massachusetts Municipal Collector with the Massachusetts Collectors and Treasurers Association. Fred moved from Valdanta, Portugal to Ludlow in 1966. He was a Ludlow soccer hero and considered to be one of the greatest soccer players in Western Massachusetts history. In 1971 Fred was a senior at Ludlow High School and scored 50-78 goals in an 18-game regular season. He attended Suffield Academy for one year and went on to be an All American at Brown University while obtaining his degree in economics, was a member of the US National Team, played 4 seasons in the North American Soccer League and one season in the Major Indoor Soccer League. After his professional soccer career, he went on to be a high school and college referee and was a Ludlow Youth coach. In an effort to make the Collectors office more efficient, Fred attended Springfield Technical Community College at night to take computer classes. In 2015 he started online banking. He has respectfully served the residents of our community for the last 39 years with a high standard of professionalism. His level of dedication and commitment will be hard to replace. With deep appreciation for your outstanding contributions and dedication to the community, we, the Board of Selectmen, present this certificate of recognition to you, Fred Pereira, and extend our congratulations and best wishes for a long and healthy retirement filled with special moments with your family and friends. Antonio Goncalves, Chairman, James Gennette, Vice Chair, Manuel D. Silva, Derek DeBarge and William Rosenblum, Ludlow Board of Selectmen. Thank you and congratulations Fred on your retirement. I'm sure we'll see you around town. We're going to move into unfinished business. We're going to hold off on Level 2 budget until Marc's all set.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Board to discuss the latest BPW/DPW developments.

Mr. DeBarge: Let's go to the next one because Marc's going to be in on this.

Board to approve and Chairman to sign change order #24 for the Radio Communications Project. **Motion made by Mr. Silva** to approve and Chairman to sign change order #24 for the Radio Communications Project. **Mr. DeBarge second. All in favor. Motion passed 4-0.**

Board to discuss and vote on using ARPA funds for Mott MacDonald's services in the amount of $77,000 for Ludlow High School Sports Complex Project. (Tabled from 3/7/2023)

Mr. Strange: The estimate from Mott MacDonald to do the engineering for the high school is $77,000. Tony remembered there was $100,000 grant from the state and there was a previous authorization by this Board to use $75,000 from 40R. That $75,000 is still available and has not been spent. And related to that, there was a $26,000 appropriation from the smart growth fund for some of the Riverside Drive work and pond committee for $25,000. During that pond committee discussion, the question was how much do we have left in the 40R. We had our accounting consultant take a look. The available balance after those appropriations, $26,000 for Wright Pires and $25,500 for pond committee, there's $129,000 left in that smart growth fund for whatever we want to use it for. The question is, there's $75,000 already voted and accounted for in this $129 for this expenditure. It's not quite enough. You'd have to up it to $77,000 if you wanted to use 40R funds or you could use ARPA funds. It's a bit convoluted but hopefully that came through.

Mr. Gennette: For me, and I'm speaking out of turn, but I would think that we would use this out of ARPA funds because we're going to be using ARPA funds for the sports complex anyhow. Whether we use it out of this now or later…

Mr. DeBarge: I think it's almost robbing Peter to pay Paul. Can we use it now? Or for something else?

Mr. Strange: You can use it for whatever they want.

Mr. DeBarge: I'd stay with ARPA anyway because it's already there. Does it matter at this point?

Mr. Silva: The only thing that would matter to me is to leave as much in there for finishing what we initially were trying to do, which I think we're not going to have enough.

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Motion made by Mr. DeBarge to use the ARPA funds for Mott MacDonald services in the amount of $77,000 for the high school sports complex project. **Mr. Silva second. All in favor. Motion passed 4-0.**

Mr. Strange: Under new business, there's a related item that would ask you guys to rescind the authorization of that $75,000 that you appropriated for this project using 40R funds. So that $75,000.

Mr. Gennette: Let's take care of that right now. Board to discuss and vote on rescinding authorization to use $75,000 in smart growth funding to pay for engineering services for the LHS sports complex project.

Motion so moved by Mr. Silva. Mr. DeBarge second. All in favor. Motion passed 4-0.

Board to sign and waive the fee for a One Day Wine & Malt Permit for St. John the Baptist School for Purse Bing, to be held on May 5, 2023 at St. John the Baptist Parish Center, 201 Hubbard Street, if approved. **Motion made by Mr. Silva** to sign, the fees have been waived in a previous article. And also, that we sign the St. Elizabeth's Parish Dinner/Dance to be held April 22, 2023 at the St. John the Baptist Pastroal Center, 201 Hubbard Street, Ludlow. That is for both of the listings here, the purse bingo and dinner/dance. **Mr. DeBarge second. All in favor. Motion passed 4-0.**

Board to approve and sign the Selectmen Minutes of November 1, 2022. **Motion made by Mr. DeBarge** to approve and sign the Selectmen Minutes of November 1, 2022 with all members present. **Mr. Silva second. All in favor. Motion passed 4-0.**

Board to approve and sign the Selectmen Minutes of November 15, 2022. **Motion made by Mr. DeBarge** to approve and sign the Selectmen Minutes of November 15, 2022 with all members present. **Mr. Silva second. All in favor. Motion passed 4-0.**

Board to approve and sign the Executive Session Minutes of February 7, 2023. **Motion made by Mr. DeBarge** to approve and sign the Executive Session Minutes of February 7, 2023 with all members present. **Mr. Silva second. All in favor. Motion passed 4-0.**

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Mr. Strange: It's directed and pointed at the DPW/BPW situation for the public's information. The BPW has scheduled an executive session for tomorrow night. The purpose of the meeting is to consider disciplinary action against the new DPW Director. This is the same director that the BPW claimed in a joint meeting with the BPW and Board of Selectmen was one of 6 highly qualified candidates that they rushed to interview and hire without doing any reference checks on him. It's the same DPW Director who had a preexisting relationship with a former BPW member. The new director has been in the saddle for a month. The BPW is again rushing to judgement presumably to get this disciplinary proceeding in before Monday's town election. It's the latest in a long line of examples that we provided recently. The problems haven't gone away, they're not going to go away until the BPW's authority over the DPW goes away. On top of that, there's 2 foreman's in the DPW, one of which was Jamie Tomas, who became the Facilities Director. The other foreman has given his notice and he's going to work for someone else. Related to that, a reminder for everyone that the town election is Monday, March 21. There's 2 questions on the ballot. One question would combine the currently elected Treasurer and elected Collector into one combined Treasurer/Collector position appointed by the Board of Selectmen. It would also combine those departments. In doing so, it would save the town more than $100,000 every year. The other question is the transfer of the BPW's authority to the Board of Selectmen and we would encourage everyone to get out and vote on Monday and to vote yes on both questions.

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Mr. Gennette: We're going to take a 5-minute break until we get our technical problem fixed. OK We're back. One quick clarifying point is the annual town election is on Monday the 27th. That was stated here a minute ago so just to kind of clear that up.

VISITATIONS

6:15 p.m. Daniel "Chip" Phillips, Colliers – to discuss Facilities Condition Assessment.

Mr. Phillips: I want to give an update on the conditions assessment that was done on the municipal buildings to give you a sense of what we found. I know you've seen the preliminary findings, but I just wanted to walk through it publicly and talk about where to go from here. As you know, we went through all 6 municipal buildings, total of around 121,300 gross square feet looking at all the major building components starting with the exterior shell, looking at the roofs, windows, masonry, doors, all of those exterior components. Looking at the interior finishes, the ceilings, carpeting, walls, doors, inside, all of that. Heating, ventilating and air conditioning system and other mechanical components in the buildings. Looked at the electrical system, plumbing. Looked at any code issues that were apparent as well as conformance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. All told, we did identify over 300 projects across the buildings. Some of them are very small, some of them are very large, but we wanted to be comprehensive to make this a document and list of items you can start to address over the next 5-10 years. Feel free to stop with any questions along the way. Through the process we identified about 12.5 million dollars' worth of need. Not every project is equal. We do prioritize those roughly on urgency. We have a time frame there but that's not to say things are going to fail if it's not done right then and there. It's to give you a sense of if you had the money, these are the items you would do first over the next 3 years. That totals about 6.4 million. Priority 2 items are that next range of things that are coming due. That's another 5.4 million. Priority 3 items are items that can continue to be deferred. They're not really needed now but want to have them on the horizon so you're planning for those down the road. That's another $700,000. It is a technical assessment, so we did want to show, based on those priorities,

across the major building components and give you a sense of what those needs are. So, the total need of the HVAC is the highest building component at about 4 million dollars, of which 1.5 million dollars is priority 1. Some of the areas issues with major HVAC systems are this building. The Community Center pool HVAC unit is a priority 1 issue. The golf course HVAC systems, there's not much to them but they're due. Public Safety complex, rooftop unit is a big item across that building as well as the fans. Then there's others down the road. For instance, priority 3, a lot of that is the roof top units on the Community Center, which you're going to want to start thinking about in the next 7-year range.

Mr. Gennette: Marc, do we have authority over the Community Center?

Mr. Strange: That's our building.

Mr. Phillips: The next highest area of need is the exterior shell, which also has the highest priority 1 need. The biggest priority 1 exterior shell item is the Community Center roof. We also have roof projects for the clubhouse at the golf course, DPW office area. The salt shed at DPW has had it. Structurally, it looks like it's ready to go. It's a duplicate because we do have some repairs on there, as well as just replacing the whole thing. You're covered either way. Windows in this building are coming due, as well as pointing and masonry repairs at the library, factor into that exterior shell number. Next area is grounds. Most of that is paving. Parking lots, drives, this one is on there. Community Center, DPW, public safety. Those all have paving issues at this point that are due for replacement, repaving. At that point, you are talking about milling it down, repairing the base and repaving it, restriping it, all of that. The next is electrical. A lot of that is priority 2, but the electrical service in this building is included in that. Lighting upgrades here, public safety, DPW are all part of those electrical costs. The interior shell, that's spread out all over. Nothing huge on that. The library carpeting and ceilings are in there. There's some carpeting projects in here, this room for instance. The carpeting is bubbling. It's a lot of small things. There's nothing of real meat on the interior shell numbers. Compared to the other components it's relatively low here in your building. You have done a good job of maintaining the esthetics of your space. A lot of where the needs are is behind the walls. Accessibility. That's conformance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. One of the biggest projects is the elevator here doesn't meet current needs. Frankly, it's also old and tired and probably is going to need to be upgraded anyway. The standards have changed. Locker areas at the entrance to the golf course. We had some ideas. There was talk about redoing a whole ramp into the back and said you could put some parking on the little slope there and a ramp into the golf course side pretty easily with a lot less cost and effort than trying to make an accessible ramp on the back path directly from the parking lot. On the statutory, a lot of that is a focus on the egress issue, fire safety, sprinkling. This building is a project there as one of the larger areas on the safety. Again, relatively low identified need compared to many and even much lower of an urgent need. We try to look at statutory issues the same way you would HVAC components. Not every one has to be done now. Some of them are grandfathered, some of them are relatively minor. We want to make sure we're recognizing that just so if you do any major work you're aware of some of the items that might have to be attended to at that point. Questions?

Mr. Gennette: Not yet.

Mr. Phillips: Looking at each building, the pie on the right is the total dollars. That's not always indicative of condition because buildings are different sizes. We try to equalize that by looking at the identified need per square foot, which is what the bar chart on the left is. That will help show the buildings with your biggest needs. Town hall stands out as the building with the most needs on dollar per square foot. Again, a big driving factor in that is the HVAC system, the elevator. You've got some very large projects in this building. A relatively small building compared to many. That's why that's so high. At the golf course, again, you've got a lot of major projects I've mentioned on a very small square footage, so that impacts that. DPW, a lot of exterior work. Paving. There's a lot of other areas, for instance the square footage we have I don't think includes the salt dome that needs to be replaced. And some of the other sheds, so it bumps up that cost per square foot. The other ones are relatively low. You look at the Community Center, which has the 2nd highest dollar need, but it's the 4th highest in condition. It's a much larger building than the others. On that, I'll open up to questions. Typically, the next steps would be to start to put this into

a plan. That's something I don't want to do in a vacuum. I think it's meeting with Marc and others to lay out priorities to try to place out the projects over the next 10 years and give you an actionable plan that way, that recognizes the total need, recognizes realistic funding. There's no point in putting together a plan that you can't do. That's why it can't be done in a vacuum. We want to sit down and talk and identify what those priorities are over the next 3, 5, 10 years.

Mr. Gennette: Golf. Did you talk to them about the projects going on there? Did they have any expressions about any specific projects?

Mr. Phillips: The people we talked to, there was a lot. It was more of a something pretty significant should be done with that building. We didn't talk to the people playing but a couple of people certainly grabbed our ear. We realize the issues we identified in the report was a combination of what we saw as well as input we got from the maintenance staff there.

Mr. Gennette: The ADA compliance is important. We have to stay ahead of that sort of thing. The only question I had was the roofs you were talking about. It looked like there was a lot of money going towards the roof. How many of those are a flat roof? I'm pretty sure the Community Center is a flat roof. How much more expensive is a pitched vs a flat.

Mr. Phillips: Certainly, it depends. An asphalt shingle roof is much less, and it also has a shorter life. You're not going to be able to make that change, per se. It wouldn't be worth doing that. The shingle roof over the office area at DPW is relatively easy. One problem is that roofing costs really have gone up over the last 3 years. Where we used to be able to do a flat roof for $25 per square foot, now you're upwards of 50. It has almost doubled. The cost of roofing. The materials, the insulation, availability. Some of that's coming back but that is a big issue.

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Mr. Gennette: Did you put a priority on flat roofs over pitched roofs because of holding water?

Mr. Phillips: No, we put a priority on condition and where we're starting to see leaks. We don't judge pitched vs flat as much as we said the Community Center roof we're seeing leaks. We're seeing that the surface is delaminating and starting to see some fibers through it so we recognize that that's a roof that should be done in the next 3 years as an example.

Mr. Rosenblum: I would agree with the course was 1957. That's probably the original building. I don't think anything has been done to it. The locker rooms pretty much show it too. I'm sure Ryan's maintenance, I haven't been in it, you see it from the golf course. I'm sure that's a mess too.

Mr. Phillips: They're certainly doing what they can. It's just reaching a point now where it needs attention. The locker rooms are dated, don't meet ADA. There's a lot going on there that it's ready.

Mr. DeBarge: Thank you for the report. I've been waiting for this. I thought it would be worse. I thought the cost would be much higher than 12., what we need for all of these. We discuss HVAC, it's always been HVAC, this building, public safety. Obviously, a concern should be for the health and safety of our employees. As we prioritize that, it's got to be breathing, roofs. I don't know how you even undertake something like this, other than what we've talked about like what we can spend with the ARPA funds that we have. I have this collective breath of whoa I thought it would be a lot more, but I'm still concerned mostly about our HVAC systems. I know we're taking that on, but I didn't think the roofs were that bad either. Definitely things to do, no doubt about that.

Mr. Strange: With respect to the cost estimates, those are just construction costs?

Mr. Phillips: No, we try to factor in project cost.

Mr. Strange: Design?

Mr. Phillips: Yes.

Mr. Strange: My last question is there's going to be a report, right? That we can use as we're looking at what projects we might prioritize in terms of capital.

Mr. Phillips: I usually try to do that final report after the presentation because there's going to be things that come out of this that they want to include. For instance, I do think it makes sense to spend some time laying out a time frame on what's realistic and a funding strategy. Did that with another town where we looked at all the various funding sources and picked what project could go towards what and laid that out and I think it was very effective for them. And did a nice graph to demonstrate that and that would be part of that final report.

Mr. Gennette: I did like that you brought down some of the stuff that could be deferred. Marc, even with some of the capital stuff, we talk about HVAC, some of the smaller items, some of the deferred items, we can plan on some of that capital to be able to take care of those so they're not such a heavy lift down the road. I was amazed at the town hall being in as bad a condition as it is. What would the replacement of an elevator…do you replace it; do you upgrade it?

Mr. Phillips: You try to upgrade it because enlarging the shaft becomes a big problem. Almost $600,000 to replace the elevator with code compliance.

Mr. Gennette: To get it up to code? You're talking almost 4.8 million to spend in Town hall for the next however many years. That's a lot of money of trying to go to do a one level building. I don't know what we would do with this in hindsight if we went that avenue but that's 4.8 million towards…

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Mr. DeBarge: Go up what avenue?

Mr. Gennette: To try to do a different building. This thing is getting old. If we spend 4.8 million over the next 5 years and we come back here and do another assessment and do another 4.8 million.

Mr. Phillips: You're going to spend a lot more than that on a new building. Construction is at least double that. Right now, new construction is coming in $600/square foot. Things have really increased, and I think people are struggling to change that mind frame where 10 years ago it was $250-$300/square foot, now it's double that because of the way the market has gone, the way materials have gone. Procurement has changed so much. No one stores things anymore. This started before COVID. Things have really gotten worse after that.

Mr. Gennette: We certainly wouldn't be in a position of that after our bond rating right now anyway.

Mr. DeBarge: Not to mention, public safety would be ahead of this building anyway, in my opinion. Public safety would need to be replaced before us.

Mr. Gennette: Thank you very much. We appreciate your time. Right before Collier came in and gave us their thing, the Town Administrator gave us his report and we had some discussion about the DPW/BPW. Does anybody have any comments on the Board of Public Works, as far as what's coming up right now?

Mr. DeBarge: As I'm listening to Marc's Town Administrator report, and knowing what's going on over there, if you think about it, about 3-3.5 months ago the newly hired director of the Board of Public Works puts in his resignation, Jesse. He then gives us an exit interview specifically numbering pretty serious points of problems with the Board of Public Works and how they run the Department of Public Works. We then move forward with trying to get this question passed. We have a special town meeting; we get it put on the ballot. Within that time the Board tries to rush and hire a new director before the election, so they can get their influence director in in case the election goes in a way that gives the Board of Selectmen authority of the Department of Public Works. They hired that person about 4 weeks ago and now they're having executive session, most likely, from what I understand, and I don't know this for sure, but I've been around doing this for a while, an executive session for the description of what was put in there was most likely to

terminate the director. Within 4 weeks, which I had to corroborate what the vote was of this board, 5-0, to hire this new director and now they're moving on when we are a week out from the election. This reminds me of other political groups that try to rush something in before there's a change and I don't understand why when the main goal for the Board of Public Works, Board of Selectmen, and everyone else, is the prosperity of our community. That doesn't seem like it's going on. It seems like the personality struggles within that board have trickled down to the point where we are running very, very close to not having an operational Department of Public Works in this community. I can't stress that enough. I didn't even know that another foreman had put in his…Listen, people, tell everybody that you talk to. This could come up to a situation that if this doesn't pass and we can't turn this around, which I am very confident we will turn this around, we run the risk of having a Board of Public Works that will not be able to conduct normal daily services. And that, as a first responding department, which make no mistake about it, the Department of Public Works are first responders, that puts us in jeopardy and puts people out in public, you, traveling through Ludlow, living through Ludlow, that puts your safety at risk. I hope you understand how important this is. I hope you understand how badly this has been going on for so long and how badly change needs to be made. Sooner or later, those of you that complain about your trash not getting picked up or the transfer station being closed during inclement weather, which I would love to know what that is, or the state of emergency going after 2 plowable events because we don't have employees and we have to pay 3 times as much for guys to come in and plow, it's going to get worse. I could go on about this all night, but I'll stop there.

Mr. Rosenblum: Again, clarifying because this came up at town meeting, the ballot question says Shall the Town vote to have its Selectmen act as the Board of Public Works? Everyone is under the impression that it's this board that's going to run it. The way the ballot question has to be worded. It's not saying this is how it has to be worded, this is saying this is how it has to go on the ballot, per the State. When someone was saying No this says you guys are running it. Again, it needs to be clear is that we are not running it. We are running it just like we would run police and fire. We are going to have a director that's going to do their job. They're going to run DPW. They do the budgeting, they manage their people, just like police and fire come to us with questions or anything of that nature and I guess at this point it would come to hiring as well. They come to us when they're in need of something, updates, and when it's time for budget season and capital. That's what those departments do. That's what would be happening here. It's not that this Board, Bill Rosenblum, is going to go down there and go up on the dry erase board and say this is what your assignments are today, this crew go here, this crew go there. The question was who on this board is qualified to do that? None of us are. That's why we want to hire someone to put in place that can run it properly. If we do that, maybe we retain employees. Things get done quicker. We're getting to a point, as Mr. DeBarge said, we're not going to have people to be able to do the job. As you said, there's so much that can be said. When you go out and vote for this, think about what can happen down the line, the things such as my sewer is clogged on the street, but no you're paying for it. People calling about trees. They've had trees in line for 3 years. There's a lot of things that need to be done and we need it to be done right. This is a step moving forward to where we all want to be down the road when we start talking about when we're going to get a charter commission together to start thinking about changing our government, this is something that would fall in line with that. Not to say that this is part of it, but this is where we're going.

Mr. Silva: All I have is virtually the same thing. Anyone that is going out to vote and seriously does not think that this is the proper thing to do right now with the issues that this town is having, whether it be trash. They must be living or working somewhere outside of the town and coming into town and not seeing it. How can you not? We beat this over and over again. We don't want to do it but unfortunately, we're just trying to make the community better. That's the simple fact.

Mr. Rosenblum: Also consider this, you have one board member that resigned prior to election day. His name will still be on the ballot, you can still vote for him, most likely is going to get elected back in, apparently is going to resign after the election. You also have one that is not running. At this point, you really have, unless someone writes in, one person gets their name written in 4 times, you're looking at a board of 5 being a board of 3. If someone is not there, you're going to have 2 people on your board. You literally are going to have 3 people on a 5-person board. We can't even fill the board right now.

Mr. Gennette: My issue is kind of going up. My issue is the state is putting out requirements for us to be zero waste by 2050 and there is grants that come along with that and there's things we can be participating in. We have to get automated on our trash. We can get assistance for those things, and we can get those assistance from the state now. We know how to get those grants; we know how to get that help. Everybody on the Board of Public Works, and don't misunderstand the Board of Public Works is not the Department of Public Works. The Department of Public Works is full of plenty of employees that are not losing their jobs or anything. They're still going to be here just because the Board of Public Works is no longer there. The Board of Public Works is attending to a lot of the day-to-day stuff that is supposed to be the job of the director. They're doing the director's job and that's why they can't keep anybody because it's a power struggle between whatever director they hire and the Board of Public Works. With that struggle, we're losing site of money now to be able to do the big projects we need to do, to be able to get the funding that we need to do now because if we don't participate in getting that money now, eventually they're going to require we get it done and you guys are going to pay for it. We're all going to pay for it. My problem isn't as much as they're destroying the DPW is as we're missing the boat on the big picture items now. I don't think we can delay this. I don't think there's a chance to wait. This has to go through. Anyway, the election is coming up, everybody knows it. It's on Monday, get out there, case your ballot. We hope that you're going to vote to eliminate the Board of Public Works so that the Board of Selectmen can start making some headway and getting this job done. Marc, did you have anything to add?

Mr. Strange: No.

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UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Board to discuss Level 2 Budget Updates.

Mr. Strange: We put together some updates on the Level 2 budget for FinCom, which is tomorrow night. I'll be attending and be available to them. If you look at the spreadsheet that I handed out, the column all the way to the right describes Level 2 changes. Those are the changes that represent the difference between the Level 1 budget and Level 2 budget. I don't know if you want me to go through all the changes.

Mr. DeBarge: I don't need the changes, I'm just curious as to where we are with the Level 2 with the school problems.

Mr. Gennette: I agree. If you could give us an overall perspective of what we're dealing with.

Mr. Strange: The Governor's budget proposal for local aid was a huge boom. I think we talked about that last time. Not every community saw the increases in aid as Ludlow did. A lot of communities saw a lot bigger increase, but we're thankful for what was in the budget. That was a total of a positive $608,000 or so, which got us to where we are now. As we look at the budget, we're about $540,000 under capacity. In terms of what that means with the schools, if we were to increase the budget, increase the schools from 3 to 4%, that would be $350,000 or so. If we go to 5%, it would be about $680-$690,000. We met with the schools yesterday, Dr. Tiano & Kathy Demetrius. They're doing the same thing we are. They're trying to figure out where their inefficiencies are. I know they found some things that are going to lighten their load a little bit. We have to see what happens with the Treasurer/Collector position vote. That would certainly be helpful in terms of the budget. We also just got bids back for our assessing consultant, which came back much less than what we had budgeted previously. We're doing whatever we can to streamline town services and at least maintain or increase the level of those services. We can speak for the town side. We're proud of what we've put together in terms of the budget. As people retire or leave service, we're looking at ways to consolidate job responsibilities. That's our responsibility. We're about $540,000 under capacity right now total. With the town at 3%, school at 3%.

Mr. Silva: The school is still at 9?

Mr. Strange: Yes. That meeting is Tuesday and they're going to vote. I expressed to Dr. Tiano repeatedly that budgetarily we could probably get to 5% if that's what the boards want but we couldn't do a dime more than that.

Mr. Gennette: Just to follow up on what Manny said, they had a 9% budget increase suggested a while ago and the Governor came through, kicked a bunch of money down, and I saw they had given a bunch of educational increases, and they're still asking for 9%?

Mr. Strange: My understanding is the 9% is a level service budget. If they want level services because of the increase and these out placements and other educational costs, it would be 9%. The devil is in the details.

Mr. Gennette: Do we know how much they got from the state?

Mr. Strange: The Governor's local aid proposal Fiscal 24 compared to Fiscal 23 was $827,000 increase. Not all of that was education related but most of it was. On your Cherry sheets you also have assessments. Our assessments went up by $220,000. In total, if you take the increase in aid and back out the assessment, we increase $608,000 over what our local aid was last year.

Mr. Gennette: That doesn't include the town though?

Mr. Strange: It's both, but most of that is school funding, school reimbursements, Chapter 70 and school choice reimbursement.

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Mr. Gennette: Is it safe to say in rough numbers probably 500?

Mr. Strange: $500,000? Yeah.

Mr. Gennette: What the school would have gotten. The difference. That in itself is 1.5%, even from the level funding they were talking about at 5% that would drop it down to 7.5 without even having to have that conversation. I don't know, we're going to have to see what they come in at. You can't say 9%, get money, then come back in with 9%. I don't understand how that's a thing.

Mr. DeBarge: I want to say what a remarkable job you've done, and our accounting people have done. And a month ago, a little while ago, we were like what the…over the levy on town side, school side, all of that. When we meet with the school department and we discuss being $541,000 over at their 3%, they're needing more…This $541,000 under the levy, think of the things that we could do with that, rather than giving $400-$500,000 of this to make that 4% or 5% for the school. I think this is all related to the poor expenditure of the ESSR 2 funding. Be that as it may, as I've talked to Marc at nauseum about this, we still have to send a budget. I'm interested to see with us at 3% and being able to go to 4 and possibly 5% to help the school department is, still their cuts are going to have to be made and where are those cuts going to be made. I surely hope those cuts aren't going to be made in the classroom with the teachers that are actually standing in front of the students and educating those students because we can't have a loss at our educators who are in front of our students. We can't do that. I hope they have suggestions of other routes than that.

Mr. Silva: I'm all set. Until we get the numbers from the schools and see where we are, this 500 means zero at this point. Until we find out what's happening with them. They could need a million and we're right back over budget.

Mr. Gennette: They're the ones that have to figure out what they have going on. We're just approving a budget. This is actually on them. They keep asking for more money and they keep coming back and making us rail them in. It looks bad on the community thinking we're messing them up. Bill, do you have anything?

Mr. Rosenblum: No, I'm good right now. Just waiting to see, we know these numbers can move 1 or 2 more times.

Mr. Strange: They're going to keep moving.

Mr. Rosenblum: Once we sit down and figure out, I mean they're voting on it next week, and we're at that meeting 6:00 at Harris Brook. Things can move. Obviously, it looks great right now. Just want to see the final project. Good work right now. Excellent.

Mr. Gennette: I'd be really interested to see exactly how under budget we were for the town side because all the hard work that's been happening in Town Hall and other departments, to be able to save as much money, the moving, the shaking, the thinking outside the box, trying to really get this down, fix the fundamentals has been happening on the town side and the school is just going to come in and take it. It's really kind of disruptive. On the other side of that, I'm going to tell you that we do need to fix whatever this budget problem is because we can't do this too many years in a row. We can't keep kicking the can. If they can come to the table with legitimate this is what's going on and we can kind of get there, we shouldn't have these problems into the future. We'll have to see where we are, but I agree with you guys. We have a lot of questions that need to be answered still.

Mr. Rosenblum: ARPA and ESSR are kind of making these numbers crazy so once you get out of the ESSR money and see what you actually have to spend then the hard decisions are really going to happen. Mr. Tiano has a budget, and he has to work within whatever is given to him. He doesn't make the decisions for it. That goes to the school committee, goes to the budget committee. If he says this is what I need to operate what are you guys going to give me, that's the school committee that makes that decision about what going to end up coming down. He's just saying where he is. Hopefully, he can get that into some possible realm of being able to fund but at the end of the day I think a lot of this is on the school committee.

Mr. Strange: To answer your question, compared with the level 1 budget to level 2 budget we've cut about $800,000, these are our departmental requests.

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Mr. Gennette: $800,000 on the town side. I hope everybody makes a note of that. That's an incredible change from where we were. Kudos to you and your staff, Marc.

Mr. DeBarge: All 6 of you watching, write that down. $800,000.

Mr. Gennette: All the efforts from the town is going to save the school. I hope it sets a standard for when the school department is looking at their budget and what they have to do. We gotta think outside the box, we gotta figure it out. And I know our teachers are actually underpaid vs other teachers in the area, other than Palmer. From the immediate area, everywhere around, our teachers make less than everybody else except for Palmer.

NEW BUSINESS

Board to discuss Maria's Way Stormwater Retention and Street Lighting.

Mr. Gennette: Any background provided for the community? Marc, you got anything?

Mr. Strange: I'll summarize this the best way I can. The Maria's Way subdivision plan was approved and there was supposed to be a maintenance and operation agreement between the developer and homeowner's association, where the homeowner's association would take care of the streetlights, pay for the streetlights and also maintain the stormwater retention basin. In return, as a security against that, there was a $5,700 deposit that the town still has. Fast forward a couple years and the homeowners do not want to be part of the HOA, do not want to maintain the stormwater basin, don't want to have responsibility for the streetlights. They're basically asking their attorney; the attorney is asking the town to take over the maintenance of the stormwater basin and also pay for the streetlights. This is an agreement between the developer and homeowners, the town is not obligated to take over those responsibilities. That is the long and short of it.

Mr. Silva: I would like to hear from the Planning Board because the Planning Board approved the subdivision and I'm sure was based on this happening. Several years ago, if I'm not mistaken, that's the direction they went in. The electrical and lighting for the town started to get astronomical. In their wisdom, they decided to do some of this stuff and say the developers knew streets should be done this way. So on and so forth. If that's the case, then I think we should hear from them, as well as, and I know we won't probably hear from them, the DPW. Some of it is in their ballpark. Stormwater and all that. They handle all that stuff when there's issues. I'd like to hear from some of their boards to see what their recommendations are. Also, I'd like to see if there are any streets that are in fact having this now and what kind of precedence are we setting. If new subdivisions come in, and there are 3 that I can think of, one's off Chapin Street, another one off Chapin Street, and these are going to be the recommendations. Are we going to have to do this again? We need to really investigate this.

Mr. DeBarge: I was deferring to Manny on this because when I first read this, I was like ok well we approved the street so it should be us that takes over lighting. That's my initial thought not knowing a lot about how any of this works. The question of are there other ones that have this. I don't know of any other cul-de-sacs or developments that are separate like this. I would need more information before I can vote on this. There's one close by where I live in Hundred Acres and there's streets being developed like crazy and there's retention areas all over the place.

Mr. DeBarge: Is that common to do the HOA thing?

Mr. Rosenblum: You're right, the precedent. It's the same thing as saying you're giving the school department 9%, well guess what, you're going to have every other department down the road and say I need 9. In the same sense, if we're not doing this in town now, then we have to look at it closely.

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Mr. Gennette: I agree. I don't know enough about it and I think we need more information, so I guess a recommendation to send this down to the Planning Board and DPW. We'll table it for now.

Board to discuss options for Town signs.

Mr. Strange: We've talked about this in the past but the town signs, particularly the one on Sportsmen's Road, is really in tough shape. The history of this is we had gone and worked with Chuck's signs to come up with replacement signs with different coloring, Ludlow maroon and white, different materials, weather resistant materials, but essentially replace in terms of the shape. To replace the signs in kind. The feedback was it might not be decorative enough or we might want to do something a little above and beyond that. We reached out to a designer who gave us a quote for redesigning the signs. It was just south of $10,000. In the interim, there's a grant program through the state that would do the sign design with community input. It's a really good program, but that's going to delay the process for more months. It just seems like with the 250th coming we might want to consider replacing the signs as they are and maybe hiring somebody or seeing if the DPW can beautify the bottom of the signs with some landscaping stones or rocks, some lighting, I'm not sure. That's kind of where we are. We wanted to bring it back up because every time I go by that sign it's an eyesore.

Mr. Gennette: We had a contract for new signs?

Mr. Strange: No, we just had Chucks do a mockup with the vinyl material that's more weather resistant, coloring, the shape of all the signs would be the same. Material would be different, and they'd be different coloring.

Mr. Gennette: Do we have an estimate or ballpark?

Mr. Strange: No. We shared those designs, and the feedback was mixed. Just wanted to bring that back up to you.

Mr. DeBarge: Do you still have those?

Mr. Strange: I'm sure I do.

Mr. Gennette: I would reshare those at least and we may want to see if they'll do an estimate so we can kind of know what kind of numbers we're talking about.

Mr. Rosenblum: I remember when we talked about this months ago, you do some nice vinyl its going to last. And you get hooks, and we can, some towns have 6 different things, and say hey 250th, put it on there, Christmas tree lighting. You can change the signage and everything so that it's I would make them the same everywhere so they're consistent. It would be great. To your point, I would love to go for the grant and have it be taken care of at the same time do we want to wait.

Mr. Strange: There's no guarantee we would get it. That's a really competitive program.

Mr. DeBarge: I don't think this is anything we can wait on. I think we need to spend money on a designer. I think we can do that. I think we can make it not only aesthetically pleasing but also user friendly. Not everybody is going to be happy. We know that. But I'll tell you what everybody will be happy about, whether they agree with the size or how it's used, we'll all agree that a newer sign looks better than the trash that we have out there now. The places I go, the people that come up to me, I could tell you they're probably the 3 top categories that I'm asked about and within that 3 are our signs. I'm pretty vocal about how bad our town looks when we drive in from other communities because of the lack of maintenance that we have on our roadways and our DPW doesn't have staffing in order to do that, but at the same time it's our responsibility for our signage because that's what you're seeing when you come into the community. I think we need to move on this, I think the community will be happy when we move on this, and Marc brings up a great point, the 250th is right around the corner so I think we need to get moving on this. We just cleared $75,000 from 40R so we have the money to move forward with production and sinking these signs in and if the DPW, depending on what happens on Monday, or if they don't want to do some type of decorative ground situation with the sign on Sportsmen's Road, I guarantee you we can find a group that would volunteer to do it.

Mr. Gennette: I agree 100%. I think we have to move on it and the Chapter 40 funds would be a good allocation for that. So, whatever we need to do to push the pedal on that one.

Board to sign the contract with Wireless CCTV, LLC for the delivery of wireless CCTV.

Motion made by Mr. DeBarge to sign the contract with Wireless CCTV, LLC for the delivery of wireless CCTV. **Mr. Silva second. All in favor. Motion passed 4-0.**

CLOSING COMMENTS

Mr. Rosenblum: Election, Monday. Generally, our turnouts are tremendously low, probably if we hit 11%, 10-11% is generally our number. All these races are pretty much uncontested. Obviously, there's ballot questions we discussed at nauseum. You're voting for your town, you're voting for what's best for your town, you're voting for things to be better. You hope they're going to be better is that even though some races aren't contested, go out there and vote and vote on the ballot questions. Just remember that when we put that out there, the BPW to be disbanded, we're not doing that because we're power hungry, or it's for us, it's for you, to make things better in town. My whole thing is I believe that we should have never hired a director until after the election to find out what direction we're going to be in. Please get out and vote. Think about yourselves, think about your neighbors, think about what's going on in the streets around you. Your clogged sewer, anything. The other ballot question is going to help save us some money and it will be good for the town to kind of combine those 2 departments.

Mr. DeBarge: First off, Mr. Fred Pereira, I've been working for the town since 2000 and every time I was in this building, Fred was here. People around this town know Fred a lot better than I do and he is one of the best. He has always been here to help, and I wish him the best in his

retirement. For the election. Obviously, all the stuff we talked about. The other thing is the races themselves. There's no contested race. I don't include write ins. Whether you know somebody is trying to do a write in campaign because they wouldn't take out papers or for whatever reason that's fine. I don't count those because I've worked the polls long enough to know that most of the write ins are Mickey Mouse, Superman, Moe, Larry & Curley, Mr. Ed. Take it seriously. I actually posted about this on my Selectmen page because there are no contested races, when you do go to vote, let's say you're going to vote on Monday because you know that questions 1 and 2 are very important to not only the prosperity of our town but also to save money, so you're like everybody else is uncontested, I don't need to vote. You do need to color in next to the person's name that you would like to represent you. The School Committee has 2 uncontested with a write in, there's some pretty divided ideologies. Please make your mark. Color that box in next to the person you want to vote for, so we don't have any surprises. I just want to give a little progress on our Vet Center. The framing and walls are up. The electrical I believe is next and we are moving right along. The Vet Center received donations up to around $15,000, 10 from the Veterans of Foreign Wars and another $5,000 from the state veteran's agency. I believe Eric Segundo told me when he was up in Boston, he was able to secure some money there. That money will be used for cabinetry, refrigeration we need there for our food pantry and tables and chairs and all the other stuff. We're hoping to be open by mid-April and we are planning on having a full open house celebration there. That's all I have for tonight.

Mr. Silva: I hope everyone gets out there and votes consciously. To me it really is a no brainer but let everyone decide for themselves. The other thing is, this has somewhat to do with the same problems but pickleball. We decided several months ago, probably going on a year, for Whitney Park to get a pickleball and DPW, when we were having meetings, they were going to actually do something over there because it's a very small thing. You need nets. We have the courts there and they're doing nothing. It's just going into disarray. Pickleball right now, and all over the country, it's just fantastic. It's for all ages, everybody's playing pickleball.

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Mr. DeBarge: That can't be a huge cost to take courts, paint them.

Mr. Rosenblum: It's like 35-$50,000 to redo those courts. That's what they came in with a quote before. You were at the meeting where Recreation said they could fit it into their budget.

Mr. Gennette: They came in with an $80,000 price tag first off. Second off, I was against this because pickleball is relatively loud and where they're putting that is probably in the most congested residential area. The only thing people are going to listen to…again I'm not opposed to pickleball, but I'm opposed to it right there. Have you seen some of the measures people have taken to try to limit people playing pickleball? They've limited the time on the court to specific times. They've put big pads to try to muffle it, done all kinds of things and this is going to be a nightmare if it's there.

Mr. DeBarge: They're just changing the rackets and the ball.

Mr. Silva: I don't see it being any more than tennis, but maybe I'm wrong.

Mr. DeBarge: It's a little louder.

Mr. Rosenblum: We do have one going up at the Boys & Girls Club.

Mr. Gennette: I'm all for it up there.

Mr. Strange: I think we can plan in pickleball courts once Vets Park is leveled.

Mr. Silva: My point is Whitney Park used to be such a nice park with tennis and things going on, now it's just sitting there. A ghost town.

Mr. DeBarge: Which is why we intended as a board to put money into that park. I think pickleball should be there along with everything else.

Mr. Gennette: I agree with redoing the tennis courts, I just don't agree with making half of it pickleball. We can put pickleball anywhere else in town.

Mr. Silva: To put one pickleball on the left as a trial I don't think is that loud but maybe you're right.

Mr. Gennette: I'm trying to be on the side of the residents. When I moved to Ludlow, my first apartment was right across from the tennis courts. It was Joe Ferrara's building, and it was a nightmare then. I know the neighbors from over there and I'm telling you right now as a former resident…When people start complaining I'm gonna go you know what, this wasn't my decision.

Mr. Silva: The other thing I've been getting a lot of questions and concerns is the walk. Now the snow is gone but I recall the DPW was supposed to be taking care of that. We had voted for them to take care of the walk and it didn't happen most of the winter from the notices that I've gotten. Just wondering why and what happened. It was such a beautiful thing. You know where they're walking? The street. They're walking on Riverside Drive. They're not walking on Riverside Drive anymore because most of the time you can't walk on there.

Mr. DeBarge: I was just down there with my dog.

Mr. Silva: It is just something we should probably take a look at for next winter. Once that road gets to be traveled people can't be walking on the road. Get out and vote.

Mr. Gennette: I apologize I didn't mean to go so aggressive against pickleball on you. A quick update on aggregate electric, we are in communications with MassChoice, things are moving forward. A couple people have asked me what's happening with that. Like I said in the town meeting, this isn't going to be a fast process, this is going to be slow. There's a lot of legality to it. We have to work with the state so hang in there. We will get there. I'm going to follow up with the same thing. The Board of Public Works, one member has resigned already, two others aren't going to take papers out. I don't know if they see the writing on the wall but it's time to put your ballot in, time to take care of this and put this to rest. Get out there and vote March 27, Monday.

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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.

Motion made by Mr. Rosenblum to adjourn the meeting at 7:28 p.m. **Mr. DeBarge second. All in favor. Motion passed 4-0.**

Chairman

Ludlow Board of Selectmen