

Selectboard

Ware Town Hall, Meeting Room, 126 Main Street, Ware, MA 01082
Regular Meeting Minutes – Tuesday, November 15, 2022, 7:00pm.

Present: Selectboard Chairman John J. Morrin, Selectboard Vice-Chair Caitlin McCarthy, Selectboard Clerk Thomas H. Barnes, Selectboard Member Keith J. Kruckas, Selectboard Member Joshua A. Kusnierz, Town Manager Stuart B. Beckley,

Absent: None

Remote Participation: Stanley Ciukaj (Ware Community Television), Ware Rivers News

Public in Attendance: David Burgess, Gerald Fountain, Jr., Devin Peterson, Police Chief S. Crevier, Dan Flynn

Chairman called the meeting to order at 7:00pm and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

OPENING REMARKS, ANNOUNCEMENTS, AND AGENDA REVIEW BY CHAIR

- Board Member T. Barnes wanted to say thank you to everyone and a great job to those who made the Veterans' Parade possible.
- Chair J. Morin wanted to say thank you to the American Legion for the delicious ham and bean dinner.
- Board Member C. McCarthy wanted to say thank you and how wonderful the Hometown Heroes Banners look. Downtown looks great.

CONSENT AGENDA

- Approval of November 01, 2022, minutes
 - Special Permit – Ware Flair, November 25, 2022
 - Approval of One Day Liquor License – Workshop13, December 3 & 4, 2022
- MOTION by Board Member Caitlin McCarthy to approve the minutes, Special Permit and One Day Liquor License for the 2-days as presented. Seconded by Clerk Thomas Barnes. No further discussion. All in Favor 5/0/0.

SCHEDULED APPEARANCES

- 7:05pm Tax Classification Hearing with Board of Assessors
 - David Burgess, Interim Principal Assessor, presented the FY23 Tax Classification Hearing Packet to the Board.
 - Estimated single tax rate for FY23 is \$17.29 per thousand valuations. Decreased of \$2.05 per thousand from FY22.
 - The FY23 rate is only an estimate and may change upon Department of Revenue review.
- MOTION by Board Member Keith Kruckas to accept CIP Shift Factor of 1.0000 for FY23. Seconded by Chair John Morrin. No further discussion. Majority Vote 5/0/0.
- Board Member Keith Kruckas noted valuations increased by 15%, even if tax rate goes down, valuations go up.

- Gerald Fountain requested that the next time the Selectboard discusses an override, the Selectboard would notify the Board of Assessors for opinions, materials, or other factors, asked for better communication.

OLD BUSINESS

- **Whistleblower Line Update**
Town Manager S. Beckley stated nothing new as been presented. The caller is still identified. Chairman J. Morrin requested that the new Executive Assistant work on this as their first task. Vice-Chair C. McCarthy stated it is still too expensive – possible use a “suggestion box”. No further discussion. No action taken.
- **Town Hall Internal Audit Update**
MOTION by Clerk Thomas Barnes to table the topic until next scheduled meeting. Seconded by Board Member Keith Kruckas. No further discussion. All in favor 5/0/0.
- **Update on Completion of Executive Session Minutes for Board Approval**
Town Manager, Stuart Beckley, stated December 6th the minutes should be completed for approval. No further discussion. No action taken.

NEW BUSINESS

- **Request for Change in License Class – Aspen Rod and Gun Club**
 - David Fox, President, requesting to change the license type from a private to public club.
 - Aspen Rod and Gun Club has a full food license.
 - Rents the hall to club and public members but at different rental rates
 - Chairman J. Morrin asked about taxes. D. Fox does not believe the change will affect taxes.
 - Aspen Rod and Gun Club members have voted in favor of the classification change.
 - If Board approves tonight, then the application is sent to ABCC for approval. Then in December the new classified license should be issued reflecting this change.

MOTION by Clerk Thomas Barnes to accept the change in license classification for Aspen Rod & Gun Club from private to public. Seconded by Vice-Chair Caitlin McCarthy. No further discussion. All in Favor 5/0/0.
- **Police Chief – Request for Civil Service List, Police Officer Opening**
 - Police Chief S. Crevier is requesting permission to post employment opportunity for 2 positions due to two officers leaving now and two additional officers in February.
 - Vice-Chair C. McCarthy asked for the reasoning of leave. Chief stated because of pay.

MOTION by Chairman John Morrin to allow the Police Chief to post the two civil service list. Seconded by Vice-Chair Caitlin McCarthy. No further discussion. All in Favor 5/0/0.

 - Police Chief is requesting the Board to allow Town Manager to open Article 8 of the Police Unit Contract, Section C regarding Education Pay, to be paid in two checks December and July.
 - Town Manager Stuart Beckley asked the Board to expand the Chief’s request to include standard pay rate.
 - The rate would be for FY24 Budget.

MOTION by Chairman John Morrin to allow Town Manager to open the contract for discussion of education and pay consideration. Seconded by Clerk Thomas Barnes. No further discussion. All in favor 5/0/0.

- o Chairman John Morrin stated it would be great if the opioid funds could be used for youth programs. An approved list of uses was just released.
 - o Board Member K. Kruckas stated all departments are losing hard workers to surrounding towns due to pay.
 - o Board Member K. Kruckas asked if police details are being paid by taxpayers for private events. Town Manager Stuart Beckley said it varies by event.
 - o Police Chief stated that officers are not going to want to do detail work if they have to wait until May to be paid.
- **Review & Approval of Planning Board Recommendation for Plowing & Sanding of Unaccepted Streets**
Board reviewed the Memorandum dated November 1, 2022, from the Planning Board.
MOTION by Board Member Keith Kruckas to approve the list as presented. Board Member Joshua Kusnierz asked when will Berkshire Bank be contacted to address the overgrowth and other items so the town can accept the road, it seems to be an ongoing issue. Town Manager stated hopefully in May everything will be address and the Town can vote to accept the road at Town Meeting. Seconded by Vice-Chair Caitlin McCarthy. No further discussion. All in Favor 5/0/0.
 - **Consideration of Mileage Rate Increase**
Board reviewed the Memorandum dated November 10, 2022, from Town Manager to increase the mileage rate to \$0.55 per mile.
MOTION by Chairman John Morrin to change the mileage rate to \$0.55 per mile. Seconded by Clerk Thomas Barnes. No further discussion. All in Favor 5/0/0.

WRITTEN CONCERNS OF CITIZENS

- Dan Flynn's announcements:
 - o Ware Small Business and Civic Association monthly meeting – November 16th at Cedarbrook Village.
 - o National Shop Small Town – November 26th
 - o Shop Stroll – December 10th
 - o Ware Christmas and Wreath Festival to benefit the Meeting House – December 10th
 - o Scouting for Girls will be doing gift wrapping to help raise funds for summer camp.
 - o Eagle Scout projects have been completed:
 - Cleared wood and brush
 - Laid a 180ft long pathway at the Hardwick Library
 - o Scouting for Girls is still working on the kiosk project at Gibbs Crossing
 - o Thank you to DPW and Parks for leaf removal and maintaining the roads, the Police and Fire Department. Thank you to Steven Hawk and the support team for the trail construction/maintenance. Thank you to Paula, Scout Master for the girl's troop. Thank you to everyone who made the parade successful.

TOWN MANAGER REPORT

- Saturday, November 19 at 9:00am – Military appreciation breakfast at the Senior Center, the Board is invited to attend.
- Thank you for to Representative Smola, the Green Team and National Grid for setting up the event for Bulky Waste last Sunday – was a great success.
- Two Town Projects:
 - Conservation gave permission to install cribbing under the North Street bridge.
 - Conservation issued an Emergency Order for DPW to remove part of the beaver dam near Doane Road.
- Board Member K. Kruckas asked if the East Street bridge project has started. Town Manager S. Beckley will provide a follow up by next meeting.
- Parks Commission approved the agreement for the playground. Materials and work should begin around May. Will be looking for volunteers to help spread the wood fiber chips when ready.
- Grants Coordinator Jay Mooney and Town Planner R. Watchilla are working diligently for an EPA grant to remediate the contamination at the Monroe Street site.
- State Economic Development Bill does look like it will pass the Governor's signature and in that is additional funding for Brown Fields which could be applied to that site.
 - Chairman John Morrin asked if there are other Brown Fields areas to consider.
 - Town Manager, Stuart Beckley stated yes, the millyard infrastructures should be figured out – water and sewer.
 - Clerk Thomas Barnes asked about the woods next to Marylane Hospital? Town Manager S. Beckley replied it is not town property.
- Wednesday, November 16 at 6:30pm – National Grid will be holding an information session regarding the utility pole installation along Sherman Hill and Coffey Hill Road. Will present two types of poles and discuss the easements.
- For the Community Compact best practice grant, the Town is looking to submit an Economic Development Plan and additional drone training and resources.
- Wood pile at Robbins Road – the list has been updated. Residents need to be aware that the wood is delivered in the dump truck, dropped and it is the owners' responsibility to cut. Contact the DPW if you would like to be added to the list.
- There was a threat tree at Grenville Park and wanted to say thank you to Canadian Tree in helping remove the tree in a timely manner.
- Board Member Keith Kruckas requested an update on the Senior Center Van
 - Town Manager S. Beckley stated the van has been brought back for Ware residents.
 - Call in lead time has been addressed.
 - Board Member K. Kruckas would like the van to be used specifically for Ware Seniors.
- Board Member Keith Kruckas requested an update for solar agreements and tax status.
 - Reviewed with Assessors – it is the right value – it is being taxed on land and panels.
 - Property Attorney declined this was incorrect.
 - If the cost of electricity rises, the value should rise but that is not the case. That is why there are P.I.L.O.T. agreements.
- Board Member Keith Kruckas requested the windows be fixed in Town Hall immediately.
 - There are 25 windows broken

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Vice-Chair Caitlin McCarthy to adjourn at 7:52pm. Seconded by Board Member Keith Kruckas. No Further discussion. All in Favor 5/0/0.

Attest: Nicole L. Croteau
Nicole L. Croteau