



## **Board of Selectmen**

**Ware Town Hall, Meeting Room, 126 Main Street**

**Regular Meeting Minutes – Tuesday, September 21, 2021 at 7:00 p.m.**

**Instructions for call in option: at or before 7:00 p.m., call the phone number below and when prompted enter the Meeting ID number. The platform is Zoom Meetings.**

**Join online: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/7846041861> (the online option will require a download).**

**Meeting ID: 860 9727 2533**

**Passcode: 739300**

**Phone: 929-205-6099**

**Present: Selectman Thomas H. Barnes, Chairman Keith J. Kruckas, Vice-Chairman John J. Morrin Jr., Town Manager Stuart Beckley, Executive Assistant Chris Nolan, Police Chief Shawn Crevier, Patrick St. Pierre, Michael Schlegel, Terrance Smith, Wendy M. Borey, Michelle Loglisci, Terry Smith of the Water Resources Committee**

**Absent: Selectman Caitlin M. McCarthy, Selectman Nancy J. Talbot**

**Present via Zoom: Lisa Jasinski of National Grid**

**Meeting Opened by Chairman Kruckas at 7:00 PM.**

**Opening Remarks, Announcements, and Agenda review by Chair**

Selectman Barnes thanked the Water Department for their hard work toward the development of the latest data from the Water Resources Committee.

Chairman Kruckas wished DPW Director Gibby Sorel good health, as he was recently released from the hospital and is now recovering at home.

### **Consent Agenda**

- **Approval of September 7, 2021, Meeting Minutes**
- **Application for One-Day Liquor License: Workshop 13, Saturday, October 16, 2021**
- **Application for One-Day Liquor License: Workshop 13, Friday, October 22, 2021**
- **Toll Road Application: The Knights of Columbus Present the Annual Tootsie Roll Drive on Main Street, October 9, 2021, from 8AM-Noon**

**Selectman Morrin made the motion to approve the first three items on the Consent Agenda, as the fourth has not yet been received by Town Hall. Selectman Barnes seconded the motion. The motion passed on a vote of 3 Yes, 0 No, 2 Absent (Selectman McCarthy, Selectman Talbot).**

### **Scheduled Appearances**

- **Appointment of Police Officers**

- Chief Crevier brought two new hires for the Police Department before the Board. Patrick St. Pierre and Michael Schlegel will enter training and will fill two openings in the Department; one that is currently vacant, and one that will replace an officer facing a mandatory retirement in April 2022.

**Selectman Barnes made the motion to approve the hiring of these two new officers. Selectman Morrin seconded the motion. The motion passed on a vote of 3 Yes, 0 No, 2 Absent (Selectman McCarthy, Selectman Talbot).**

- Vice-Chairman Morrin thanked Chief Crevier for being so proactive with hiring new officers.
- Chief Crevier expressed appreciation for the Town's approval of new education bonuses for officers with degrees but noted there is still room for improvement. He also noted the Department's trouble with longevity, which despite improving when the eligibility for longevity benefits was lowered from 23 years to 13 years of service, remains troublesome.
- Selectmen Barnes welcomed the two new officers, and all shook hands.
- Chief Crevier also recognized Tod Bertini for his outstanding service to the Department and recommended the Board approve his promotion to Provisional Lieutenant.

**Selectman Barnes made the motion to promote Officer Tod Bertini to Provisional Lieutenant. Selectman Morrin seconded the motion. The motion passed on a vote of 3 Yes, 0 No, 2 Absent.**

- **7:10 PM- Public Hearing: Pole Petition National Grid/Verizon #30363515 Belmont Street**
  - Ms. Jasinski introduced the petition, which will involve one minor relocation of a utility pole, in addition to the minor widening of one resident's driveway.
  - Vice-Chairman Morrin remarked that the Town's Director of Energy had complained to the Board numerous times about National Grid failing to reconnect the streetlights that they remove during pole relocations.
  - Chairman Kruckas agreed with this complaint, noting that the company has a bad habit of leaving removed streetlights on the ground next to the poles, where they sit for months at a time until the Town can reconnect them.
  - Ms. Jasinski responded that National Grid is not authorized to move the streetlights, since they are Town property, unlike the poles they sit on. However, she agreed to bring this complaint up with the company.
  - Ms. Borey, an abutter to the pole petition area, asked why residents in her neighborhood had not been given more info on the details of the relocation, and requested specific information on whose properties would be affected.
  - Ms. Jasinski clarified that the pole petition was the result of a request from a resident at 16 Belmont Street, which is the same property whose driveway is set to be widened. The pole would be moved 13 feet in the direction of North Street.
  - Vice-Chairman Morrin reiterated that in the future, the Town wishes to see better coordination where the return of all equipment to its proper location is handled in a timely manner, and at the expense of the utility companies rather than local taxpayers.

**Selectman Kruckas made the motion to approve Pole Petition #30363515. Selectman Barnes seconded the motion. The motion passed on a vote of 3 Yes, 0 No, 2 Absent (Selectman McCarthy, Selectman Talbot).**

- **7:15 PM- Presentation: Crumbling Foundations by Michelle Loglisci**
  - Ms. Loglisci introduced herself and stated she brought bad news for the local area.
  - Ms. Loglisci explained that pyrrhotite is a naturally occurring mineral found in the ground underneath a large swath of Central Massachusetts and Connecticut, which can break down concrete and ultimately destroy home foundations.
  - Ms. Loglisci described how Connecticut recently passed a law requiring certain home foundations to be tested for pyrrhotite, but Massachusetts has not yet taken legislative action on the matter.
  - Ms. Loglisci stated that Ware has had one home foundation confirmed to have pyrrhotite, which means more are almost certainly imminent.
  - She noted that the process of rehabilitating homes whose foundations have been affected by

pyrrhotite is an outrageously expensive and labor-intensive process which often totals around \$300,000 per home.

- Ms. Loglisci stated that all local homes built from 1983-2015 are at high risk, as this was the era during which many home foundations were poured using pyrrhotite-contaminated concrete from a quarry in Northern Connecticut.
- Ms. Loglisci expressed that it is imperative to advise local homebuyers to have a core test done on their foundation before buying.
- She remarked that the string of crumbling home foundations across Western Mass, Central Mass, and Northern Connecticut from this issue have been financially catastrophic and emotionally traumatic for many families.
- She expressed displeasure with the fact that Massachusetts still has not mandated core testing but noted that the state has agreed to reimburse up to \$400 for homeowners or buyers to have one done.
- She also remarked that insurance companies are finding every loophole possible to not cover these situations, leaving homeowners stuck dealing with the cost themselves.
- Ms. Loglisci stated that she was motivated to speak on this issue after her family's own home fell prey to a collapsing foundation, and the \$263,000 cost to replace it destroyed their retirement plans.
- Now, Ms. Loglisci serves on a committee lobbying state legislators to act on this issue.
- The committee pushes for the state to mandate that all houses built in the affected area from 1983-2015 receive an inspection and core test for pyrrhotite.
- She also noted the need for more regulation of quarries to prevent a situation like this from ever occurring again.
- Ms. Loglisci requested the Board write a letter to the state legislature urging for the Committee's demands to be met, which would make Ware the 13<sup>th</sup> community to vocally support the measures.

**Selectman Barnes made the motion to affirm sending a letter to the state legislature in support of the measures detailed by Ms. Loglisci. Selectman Kruckas seconded the motion. The motion passed on a vote of 3 Yes, 0 No, 2 Absent (Selectman McCarthy, Selectman Talbot).**

### **Old Business**

- **Report from Water Resources Committee**
  - Selectman Barnes recognized the recent release of the Committee's report, and announced the decision to table this discussion to the next Board meeting, after all have had more of a chance to read it. However, he emphasized that clean water is a human right.
  - Vice-Chairman Morrin agreed, stating the demand that clear, clean water be delivered to every tap served by the Town's water system.
  - Mr. Smith from the Committee announced that their meeting minutes are in the process of being posted online for easy public access.
- **Complaint/Commendation Form**
  - Chairman Kruckas thanked HR Director Trish Barnes for her outstanding work at developing this form.
  - Vice-Chairman Morrin remarked that the Town still lacked an anonymous whistleblower line for reporting town employees, which was requested and would need to be answered by a third party.
  - Chairman Kruckas asked how much setting up this third-party line would cost.
  - Vice-Chairman Morrin answered with frustration over the fact that the Town has made no progress on finding the data that would answer this question.
  - Mr. Beckley stated that the Town could feasibly work with Verizon to set up a new phone line, but the search for a third party to answer it is more complicated.
  - Vice-Chairman Morrin complained that he feels the Town Manager's Office is still too involved in the complaint process.
  - Chairman Kruckas suggested that a possible solution could be highlighting that all cases where someone does not wish to involve a person on the listed chain in their complaint, they may go to

any member on the Board of Selectmen instead.

- Vice-Chairman Morrin insisted this does not solve situations where someone on the complaint chain is the subject of a complaint, making the process still feel “sticky.”
- Chairman Kruckas decided that this matter should be settled in a private meeting, so as not to waste anymore of the public’s time.

**Selectman Barnes made the motion to table this discussion until after the private meeting has been held. Selectman Morrin seconded the motion. The motion passed on a vote of 3 Yes, 0 No, 2 Absent (Selectman McCarthy, Selectman Talbot).**

#### **New Business**

- **Set Public Hearing Date, National Grid/Verizon pole location (Old Gilbertville Road), October 5 at 7:10 PM**

**Selectman Morrin motioned to approve setting the pole petition public hearing date for October 5, 2021 at 7:10 PM. Selectman Barnes seconded the motion. The motion passed on a vote of 3 Yes, 0 No, 2 Absent (Selectman McCarthy, Selectman Talbot).**

- **Approval of Correction to Liquor License: Stevens Strong LLC**
  - Mr. Beckley explained that the Building Inspector had assigned unit numbers A-F to the plaza at 164 West Street, and that despite their new store being in Unit D, the Stevens’ original lease and liquor license were both approved for 164B West Street.
  - Chairman Kruckas responded that he was grateful this one instance was a relatively easy fix but complained that mistakes like these not being noticed before approval of the initial license reflect poorly on Town management and end up costing taxpayer money to correct.

**Selectman Morrin made the motion to approve the correction to an address error in the Liquor License for Stevens Strong LLC. Selectman Barnes seconded the motion. The motion passed on a vote of 3 Yes, 0 No, 2 Absent (Selectman McCarthy, Selectman Talbot).**

#### **Comments and Concerns of Citizens**

- **Slum/Blight Clearance**
  - Chairman Kruckas noted that a letter from a resident concerned about this topic had been received by all Board members after the previous meeting.
  - Selectman Barnes thanked the Assessor’s Office for its excellent work with the ongoing maps project and stated that this issue will be discussed in a future meeting.
- **East Street Underpass**
  - Selectman Barnes noted the lack of progress on this construction project, and asked Mr. Beckley if completion before the first snowfall was still the expected deadline.
  - Mr. Beckley answered that the timeline for this project is still highly uncertain.
  - Vice-Chairman Morrin expressed doubt that the Town would see this project completed before the arrival of winter weather.
- **Mary Lane Committee**
  - Mr. Beckley noted the ongoing development of a survey that will be sent to residents which asks about their healthcare needs, in addition to what they would like to see done with the hospital facility after it closes.
  - Chairman Kruckas expressed the desire to see a comments/concerns section added to the survey with an input box for residents to provide thoughts.
  - Mr. Beckley described the proposal to keep the building operating as a medical facility in some capacity.
  - Selectman Barnes noted that if it is converted into an urgent care center or satellite office for a larger hospital, it should be low-income friendly, unlike many existing centers that turn away


uninsured patients.

### **Town Manager Report**

- The Town will be hosting Bulky Waste Disposal Day on Saturday, October 2 from 10AM-2PM at Robbins Road.
- The Parks Department continues to work with Selectman McCarthy and town residents to consider the options of either constructing a new pool or repairing the existing Reed Pool.
- As part of the Green Communities Program, Guardian Energy and National Grid are collaborating to develop two grants for improving the LED lighting at the elementary and high schools, while the Town's Green Communities Application will cover the cost of this project for the middle school.
- This program is also considering some minor improvements for the Parks Department, the Library, and the Wastewater Treatment Plant.
- The Town is also researching the possibility of obtaining grants for electric vehicle charging stations.
- The first two options the Town had considered for off-site swim lessons to replace those formerly given at the Reed Pool were not successful. Now, the Town is considering the YMCA in Wilbraham as a possible host.
- Unfortunately, much of the Town's proposed CARES spending was rejected by the state for not being related enough to public health. Now, focus has shifted to the possibility of it funding touchless restroom fixtures and hydration stations at Town Hall.
  - Chairman Kruckas interjected that more diligence should have been used to determine what the state would approve earlier in the process, which would have left more time to plan and make improvements to all town buildings, rather than just Town Hall.
- With the recent rise in COVID cases, the Senior Center has re-implemented its mask mandate, and switched all meals to grab-and-go.
  - Selectman Barnes inquired about the possibility of the Senior Center coordinating meal delivery for the seniors who lack transportation.
  - Mr. Beckley responded that he would discuss this proposal with the Director.
- The new Amherst-Worcester bus route, operated by the Quaboag Connector, will be running its first trip on Thursday, September 23. It will run Thursday through Monday, and it services one stop in each of the nine communities through which it travels.
- Working with a consultant for the Board of Assessors has been a success, and the Town is considering the recommendations that were made in the process, which includes providing greater tax exemptions for seniors.
- Brick laying on Town Hall is expected to begin soon and is currently awaiting samples in development between the architect and the Massachusetts Historical Commission.
- Selectman Barnes asked if it would be possible to preemptively schedule Executive Sessions for every two meetings. Chairman Kruckas answered that this was not allowed, as there need to be specific reasons listed to justify holding any given Executive Session, and there is also the problem of uncertainty regarding how many Selectmen will be in attendance at each meeting.

### **Adjournment**

**Selectman Kruckas made the motion at 8:13 p.m. to Adjourn the Regular Meeting. Selectman Morrin seconded the motion. The motion passed on a vote of 3 Yes, 0 No, 2 Absent (Selectman McCarthy, Selectman Talbot).**

Attest:   
**Christopher J. Nolan**  
**Executive Assistant to Town Manager**