

Selectboard

Ware Town Hall, Meeting Room, 126 Main Street, Ware, MA 01082
Regular Meeting Minutes – Tuesday, October 18, 2022, 7:00pm.

Present: Selectboard Chairman John J. Morrin, Selectboard Clerk Thomas H. Barnes, Selectboard Member Keith J. Kruckas, Selectboard Member Joshua A. Kusnierz, Town Manager Stuart B. Beckley, Brittni Robidoux

Absent: Selectboard Vice-Chair Caitlin McCarthy

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

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 K. Kruckas wanted to say thank you to Mr. Paul Orzylak at the high school for his support to the sports program, and dedication for the education in youths.

CONSENT AGENDA

- Approval of September 20, 2022, minutes
MOTION by Chairman John Morrin to approve the minutes. Seconded by Clerk Thomas Barnes. No further discussion. All in Favor 4/0/0.

SCHEDULED APPEARANCES

- Approval of Disability Awareness Committee Member
MOTION by Clerk Thomas Barnes to appoint Brittni Robidoux. Seconded by Board Member Keith Kruckas. No further discussion.
All in Favor 4/0/0.
- Town Manager Stuart Beckley noted there are still seats available if anyone would like to join the committee and the open availability will be posted on the electronic messaging boards.

OLD BUSINESS

- **Update on Youth Swim Lessons**
Town Manager Stuart Beckley stated swim lessons can continue if there is a facility available and citizens are willing to pay. Will reach out to surrounding communities for open availability such as Monson and Belchertown. Chairman Morrin noted that since school is in session, word of mouth should spread lessons are still offered. Board Member J. Kusnierz asked if Eagle Hill was available, reply was no, it's not. No further discussion.
- **Update on Registry of Vacant Properties**
Town Manager Stuart Beckley provided an update that BLDG Dept and Deputy Fire Chief have met, created forms and except to implement policy starting January 1st. No further discussion.
- **Policy Update on Payment Plans for Delinquent Taxpayers**
Town Manager Stuart Beckley stated the Treasure will provide a draft of the policy at the next meeting, apologized it was not submitted this meeting.

Clerk Thomas Barnes stated a federal ruling may affect the policy regarding refunding taxpayers, suggested to investigate this ruling. Chairman Morrin stated the amount agreed upon for the payment would allow taxpayers to be caught up in delinquent taxes. No further discussion.

- **Update on Whistleblower Hotline**

Town Manager Stuart Beckley stated there was nothing new to report regarding cost but is reaching out to another company for a quote. Town Manager Stuart Beckley to provide an update at the next regular scheduled meeting. No further discussion.

- **Update on Funding Sources for Quaboag Connector**

Clerk Thomas Barnes stated Chris Nolan should have had the title by last week. Town Manager Stuart Beckley stated the title was indeed received, submitted it to the insurance agency and should not take a long time.

Funding sources were finalized the amount in totals for the Town and letters will be sent for budgeting purposes. For the Town of Ware, it works out to what has been budgeted for the last 2-years. Chairman Morrin asked for a breakdown for the next meeting. No further discussion.

NEW BUSINESS

- **Approval of Warrant for Special Town Meeting, Monday, November 14, 2022, at 6:30pm, Ware High School Auditorium**

Town Manager Stuart Beckley presented a revised document to include Article 14 submitted by DPW for a new dump truck, which will have to go to Capital Planning and then come back for the approval process. Town Manager is seeking approval from the Board tonight of the Warrant so the Constable can proceed with posting as required by Law.

Board Member K. Kruckas asked for clarification on the letter from the Town Clerk's explanation of the matter at hand. If the Clerk's regular work leaves little time to complete normal tasks, then why would they be involved with other Boards/Committees. Votes could affect zoning issues. Believes this could be a conflict. Chairman Morrin agreed this could be a conflict. Board Member K. Kruckas continued to state his overall concern.

Article 8 Discussion: Board Member J. Kusnierz asked for clarification on Article. Town Manager Stuart Beckley stated this was left over from April / May – Board Member J. Kusnierz asked why can't it be the Town Manager? Continued to give an example of himself (J. Kusnierz) serving as a Tree Warden and a Selectboard Member. Chairman Morrin stated it was an elected position. Town Manager Stuart Beckley stated it was a State Law. Board Member J. Kusnierz asked to change it to make for Town Manager to appoint. Chairman Morrin stated it would have to start the process all over. Board Member J. Kusnierz asked for Article 8 be removed until the spring town meeting. Discussion between Chairman Morrin and Board Member J. Kusnierz continued having a monetary interest. Board Member J. Kusnierz requested again to postpone Article 8 or an appointment from Town Manager. Board Member K. Kruckas stated this should be a town employee that holds the position who is present daily. Town Manager Stuart Beckley stated the purpose of this Article is to move it from an elected to appointed position. No further discussion. **MOTION** by Board Member Keith Kruckas to approve the Warrant as presented. Seconded by Board Member Joshua Kusnierz. No further discussion. All in Favor 4/0/0. (Board signed the Warrant.)

- **Discussion of Executive Assistant Vacancy, Next Steps**
 - Chairman John Morrin wishes Christopher Nolan the best of luck at his new position.
 - Town Manager Stuart Beckley stated the position has been advertised and once applications are received, the interviewing process will begin.
 - Chairman J. Morrin asked for all applications to be held and reviewed.

- **Discussion on Pathfinder School Committee**
 - Town Manager said a letter will be submitted soon and due to the population count in the Town of Ware, a second person will be appointed.
 - Vacancy will be posted once letter is received from Pathfinder.

- **Discussion of Funding of New Weights and Measures Fee**
 - State conducts the Weights and Measures and proposing a higher fee.
 - Town has the authority to raise the fees to match the States fee.

MOTION by Chairman John Morrin to authorize Town Manager Stuart Beckley and Town Treasurer to raise the Town's rates to match the States. Seconded by Board Member Thomas Barnes. No further discussion. All in Favor 4/0/0.

WRITTEN CONCERNS OF CITIZENS

- None

TOWN MANAGER REPORT

- Saturday, October 22, 2022, starting at 1:00pm located at Veterans Park is the Domestic Violence Task Force Awareness Walk. Board Member Caitlin McCarthy will be speaking. Encourages everyone to attend.
- November 6, 2022, from 10:00am to 1:00pm will be the next bulky waste collection at the Ware High School. A postcard will be mailed to citizens.
- North Street Bridge Update
 - 2 step process: shore it up, and then once design plans are completed, request bids in fall.
 - Road will be closed – one-way during repair.
- Halloween
 - Police and Parks are finalizing details for traffic flow
 - Drive-thru at Grenville Park, Friday, October 28th 6:00pm to 8:00pm
 - Trick-or-Treat, Saturday, October 29th 5:00pm to 8:00pm.
- Attorney General Notice
 - Town Meeting Article regarding changing the House Authority from elected to appointed felt it went against State Law and declined the change for the Town's Charter.
 - Chairman J. Morrin asked if it should be presented at Town Meeting. It would be the same process but different language change.
 - Board Member K. Kruckas asked if there was a response about the law change on the Fire Chief position. Yes, the Governor signed it, it is an appointment position now.
 - Board Member K. Kruckas asked about how fees are set by Department Heads. Town Manager Stuart Beckley will provide an update at the next meeting.

- Quarry Street Update
 - Almost complete the First Phase of the design – measuring culverts.
 - Second phase is the design.
 - Funds for the repair are to be determined
- Congratulated Rob Watchilla and Jay Mooney for being awarded a grant.
- Chairman J. Morrin asked about business banners. Town Manager presented a photo of the banner to be installed next month.
- Board Member K. Kruckas expressed concerns over the cost of electricity and oil rising and the recent tax bill on the rise, very concerned for the elderly and financial hardship citizens may have - is there programs for citizens to apply for? Is there an easier way to post such information?
- Board Member K. Kruckas thanked people for those who do donate food but felt people may take advantage of such donations and hope people would reconsider taking the opportunity away from others who truly need it.
- Board Member K. Kruckas asked if oil for the schools was/is bought from the same suppliers as the past. Town Manager stated the town did the state bid and the school does a regional bid.
 - Board Member K. Kruckas asked why did the town not bid with the school rate?
Response: if we are not part of it originally, then we cannot come in late.
- Clerk T. Barnes asked if there was a settlement on opioids. Town Manager stated over 20-years amounts to approx. \$430,000, with this year will be \$80,000.00. But there are very specific guidelines to the funds.
- Distributing wood list still available? Currently in two locations: DPW gate and Robbins Road.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Board Member Joshua Kusnierz to adjourn at 7:47pm. Seconded by Board Member Keith Kruckas. No Further discussion. All in Favor 4/0/0.

Attest: Nicole L. Croteau
Nicole L. Croteau