



Select Board

Ware Town Hall, Meeting Room, 126 Main Street
Regular Meeting Minutes – Tuesday, July 19, 2022 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: 784 604 1861
Passcode: 01082

Phone: 929-205-6099

Present: Chair John J. Morrin, Vice-Chair Caitlin M. McCarthy, Board Clerk Thomas H. Barnes, Board Member Keith J. Kruckas, Board Member Joshua A. Kusnierz, Town Manager Stuart B. Beckley, Executive Assistant Christopher J. Nolan, Building Commissioner Anna Marques, Human Resource Director Justine Caggiano, Transportation Operations Supervisor Michael Dambrosio, Ken Creigle from National Grid, Luke Wright, Kristin Rosenbeck, Dennis Cote, Antonio Porter, Alex Bergeron

Absent: None

Present via Zoom: Stanley Ciukaj from Ware Community Television, Department of Public Works Director Geoffrey McAlmond, Attorney Nicole Costanzo, Esq., Jen Healy from Quaboag Valley Community Development Corporation (QVDC), Sheila Cuddy from QVDC, Cynthia Henshaw from East Quabbin Land Trust

Meeting Opened by Chair Morrin at 7:00 PM.

Opening Remarks, Announcements, and Agenda review by Chair

A moment of silence was held to honor Father Senior Banas.

Clerk Barnes thanked the DPW Director, Highway Director, and Town Manager for the completion of pedestrian accessibility improvements made to the rail underpass on East Street. He also noted that the Disability Awareness Commission had successfully held its first meeting earlier that evening, and they would be meeting with the Parks Commission the following week to discuss accessibility issues at Grenville Park.

Consent Agenda

- Approval of June 21, 2022, June 28, 2022, and July 8, 2022 Meeting Minutes
- Special Event Permit Application: Ware River Valley Domestic Violence Task Force's Domestic Violence Awareness Walk, Saturday, October 22, 2022 from 12:00PM-2:00PM at Veterans Park (Rain Plan: Inside at Town Hall)
- Toll Road Application: Ware Business & Civic Association Fundraiser for Holiday Decorations and Festivities- August 13-14, 2022 from 8:00AM-12:00PM (Rain Date: August 20-21, 2022)

Chair Morrin asked why the WBCA's fundraiser had filed for a Toll Road Permit instead of a Special Event Permit. Mr. Nolan responded that the Town historically had used a different form for its "toll road" events, where money

could be collected by individuals standing in the street for a specific purpose during approved hours. He noted that these events could only take place on weekends between the hours of 8AM and noon, and that they were limited to a small number of streets in downtown Ware.

Chair Morrin asked why the Toll Road permit application did not include any departmental sign-offs.

Mr. Nolan responded that this type of application did not currently require sign-offs, but that the Police and Fire Departments were always notified with the specific details of a toll road event after it was approved by the Board.

Board Member Barnes made the motion to approve the Consent Agenda. Board Member Kruckas seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously (5-0).

Old Business

- **Signing of East Quabbin Land Trust Conservation Restriction**

Board Member McCarthy made the motion to sign the East Quabbin Land Trust Conservation Restriction. Board Member Barnes seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously (5-0).

Scheduled Appearances

- **7:05 PM- Public Hearing for National Grid/Verizon Pole Petition #30567321 (Old Gilbertville Road)**
 - Mr. Ken Creigle appeared before the Board to present the petition by National Grid to install two new JO midspan poles along Old Gilbertville Road about 4,000 feet North of the intersection with Church Street. He noted that the design would allow for the providing of new services along the wires, shorten the currently long wire spans, and raise the height of the wires farther above the road.

Board Member Kruckas made the motion to approve the pole petition as presented. Board Member McCarthy seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously (5-0).

- **Building Commissioner Anna Marques- Discussion on Town Policy Involving Private Sales of Buildings with Extensive Fire Damage**
 - Mr. Beckley noted that Town Attorney Nicole Costanzo was present to take questions from the Board.
 - Ms. Marques stated that she would be explaining updates on this matter since it had last been addressed.
 - Ms. Marques explained that when a structure fire occurs, she is involved in coordination with all involved parties from day one.
 - Property owners are given an order to have the burned structure boarded up and secured within 24 hours after the fire.
 - Ms. Marques stated that she actively works with the owners of these properties to develop strategic plans for moving forward in the aftermath of a fire.
 - If there is significant damage, Ms. Marques can order the structure be deemed unsafe, or the Select Board can vote to declare the building a public nuisance.
 - She explained that if the Town deems the structure unsafe or a nuisance, it ends up being forced to foot the costs of demolition.
 - While the Town did not end up having to pay for the demolition of 114 Main Street in 2020, it was required to prove it had the funding capability for the cost of demolition before placing the lien, and involved the Town Attorney.
 - Board Member Kruckas argued that three years prior, when the Town faced issues with two problem properties on Main Street, the Board was adamant about establishing a practice of placing

liens on said buildings, and that this has not come to fruition. He argued that the same scenario was currently playing out in the building across from Brusco's Liquor Mart, which recently sold after the previous owner collected insurance money for a fire that occurred there last year.

- Board Member Kruckas argued that this policy issue should have been handled three years ago, but that according to the documents provided by Ms. Marques, correspondence with the Town Attorney on this topic did not begin until March of this year.
- Ms. Marques noted that the 2016 Main Street fire which left a chaotic aftermath for the Town to resolve took place before her time working for the Town.
- Board Member Kruckas asked why Ware had not formulated specific guidelines for these buildings, similar to the successful model introduced by Springfield.
 - Ms. Marques answered that Springfield, being a much larger municipality than Ware, has the advantage of a permanent in-house legal team to handle these matters. She added that while the sale of fire-damaged buildings in Town was a problem, she had no authority to stop these sales from happening.
- Board Member Kruckas argued that he had made the same arguments he is making now about a building on Main Street three years ago that formerly housed Otto Florist. He accused Town personnel of failing to address this issue for the past three years.
- Attorney Costanzo stated that the Town has the option of two different legal mechanisms through which it can pursue these property owners.
 - The Select Board can act under MGL Chapter 139 to hold a hearing that could designate the structure as dilapidated, dangerous, or a nuisance.
 - If the owner fails to comply with the Town's orders, the Town can file for an enforcement action with the Court.
 - The Town would have the option to perform the work itself, or issue liens to the owners.
 - Alternatively, the Building Commissioner can act under MGL Chapter 143 and order the structure be demolished, followed by a court order in the case of noncompliance.
 - Attorney Costanzo added that she does not know how the City of Springfield manages to receive same-day court trials for cases involving nuisance buildings.
 - In cases where the problem structure poses an immediate health or safety risk to the public, the Town could request an emergency order from the Court.
 - Through statutory processes, the Town could seek relief from the Courts from paying the costs of demolition.
- Board Member Kruckas argued that the Building Commissioner has failed to make any progress on this issue for years, and decried the fact that she was awarded with an Assistant Building Inspector merely because a member of the Finance Committee argued for such. He also stated that the Town repeatedly hires people who do not fulfill the duties of their positions, and as a result is failing to progress as a community. He argued that Ware is currently not experiencing a boom in either population or new construction, meaning that there is no need for an additional Inspector position in the Building Department, stating that this was a waste of taxpayer dollars.
- Vice-Chair McCarthy thanked Attorney Costanzo for attending, and asked Ms. Marques what happens when a property owner falls out of communication with her office.
 - Ms. Marques responded that the last time a building owner lost all contact with the Town occurred before she was hired, and that she currently maintains contact with the owners of all properties in question.
- Board Member Kruckas argued that the Board was wrongly informed by Ms. Marques at the time of 114 Main Street's demolition that the adjacent building at 92-104 Main Street was in safe condition with the owner working on restorations, which had been disproven by the building's continued blighted state.
 - Ms. Marques denied telling the Board that 92-104 Main Street was in safe condition.
 - Board Member Kruckas encouraged everyone to watch the footage from the meetings when this topic was discussed to disprove Ms. Marques' current statements. He also argued

that even if taxpayer money was not used to demolish 114 Main Street, the Town was forced to allocate grant money for this purpose that could have been used for other purposes.

- Ms. Marques stated in regard to the hiring of a Part-Time Inspector that there was currently a large demand for this across the state, with 12 other Towns currently hiring for similar positions. Though Ware is smaller than other communities with this position, she noted that it has a uniquely high number of multi-family housing units for a Town its size, which creates challenges for the Building Department.
- Board Member Kruckas pointed to Ms. Marques' lack of residency in the Town, and argued that she should not be allowed to create new positions that will raise taxes for residents.
- Chair Morrin stated that the Board had continually asked for immediate action from Ms. Marques which had not been completed, and that the Town should emphasize studying Springfield's successful formula for addressing problem structures, emulating it as closely as possible.
- Ms. Marques pointed to some of the relevant accomplishments that had been made for the Town since she began in her position, including the demolition of 114 Main Street, as well as of two units on Parker Street that had been deemed dangerous.
- Chair Morrin argued that Ms. Marques needed to be as aggressive as possible in dealing with the owners of problem properties.
 - Ms. Marques added that she needed to work within the confines of the law, and that she was not a lawyer.
 - Chair Morrin responded that Ms. Marques should have already been knowledgeable on the Town's legal mechanisms for having a building demolished. He requested an update on this discussion at the next Board meeting.
- Board Member Kruckas expressed frustration that the Board was only beginning to address this concern now, rather than including it on the previous agenda.
- Vice-Chair McCarthy noted appreciation that Ms. Marques maintains a strong degree of communication with the owners of all buildings in question.
- Board Member Kruckas argued that the Town's mismanagement of 114 Main Street almost resulted in the loss of a grant for the Main Street construction project.
- Chair Morrin called for creating a flow chart with regimented timing for actions the Town will take with these buildings.
- Attorney Costanzo stated that the Select Board can initiate court action, which can lead to settlements with property owners conditional upon their compliance with the Town's orders. She noted that initiating court action through either Chapter 139 or 143 is costly, but oftentimes the best option, also adding that the court can mandate that no transfers take place in the ownership of the affected property.
- Board Member Kruckas stated that he did not wish to see all buildings in question get demolished if there are better options available to make repairs, but that he is tired of seeing repeated instances where a building burns in a fire, the owner collects insurance money, the owner then sells the building, and the new owner severely neglects it.
- Chair Morrin reiterated his support for studying the system used by Springfield and emulating it as closely as possible.
- Mr. Beckley noted that 114 Main Street had been demolished in 2020 through the Town's implementation of Chapter 139, with legal counsel from Attorney Wojcik.
- Board Member Kruckas argued that he had claimed all along the Town should have demolished 92-104 Main Street at the same time that it demolished 114, but the Board was repeatedly told by the Building Commissioner that the former would be restored by its owner.
- Ms. Marques reassured the Board that the events which took place in 2011 and 2016 were not being replicated.
- Chair Morrin requested that the Board receive a flow chart outlining the Town's options for addressing buildings with fire damage at its next meeting, in addition to initiating the process on the two Main Street buildings currently in question.

- Mr. Beckley clarified that Town Counsel would be asked to design the aforementioned flow chart illustrating the Town's options.

Old Business

- Mr. Beckley introduced Mr. Luke Wright, owner of Ware River Power, Inc., to provide answers to questions asked by the Board during the June 21st meeting.
- Mr. Wright stated that he wanted to take the opportunity to explain his business' operation to the Board and answer any questions they may have.
- Mr. Wright explained that the Ware River's flow during most recent summers, including this one, is very low.
 - Board Member Kruckas noted that last year's water levels were abnormally high.
- Mr. Wright added that because of the currently low water levels, the station has not been fully operational since June.
- He explained that his operation consists of two hydroelectric dams on the Ware River licensed by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC); one upstream in Barre, and one farther downstream in Ware, operating since 1995, when the previous owners declared bankruptcy and the dams were a large nuisance.
- Mr. Wright invited all Board members to accompany him on a tour of the facilities if they would like.
- Board Member Kruckas asked for clarification that all electricity produced by the Ware station is exported to other communities.
- Mr. Wright answered that yes, he is only permitted to sell to municipalities, and cannot sell his utility to individuals or businesses, unless there is no power line usage, meaning that powering the on-site mill buildings with electricity produced by the dam is permitted and being actively pursued.
- Vice-Chair McCarthy expressed that Ware's Historic Millyard is important for community preservation, and thanked Mr. Wright for his work at revitalizing this section of the Town.
- Clerk Barnes asked whether Mr. Wright's business also operated in Indian Orchard.
 - Mr. Wright responded that yes, they operated this station, in addition to eleven other plants, and also conducted repairs on hydrants.
 - He also explained that power produced by them here is transmitted to the Town of Reading, which benefits from having a municipal light department.
 - Mr. Wright reiterated that his business sought to clean up the Millyard and help revitalize the local economy.
 - Board members thanked Mr. Wright for his work and for attending their meeting.
- **Discussion on Quaboag Connector Funding, Ridership, Financial Contingency Plan, Proposal for Free Veteran Transportation**
 - Mr. Beckley introduced Jen Healy and Sheila Cuddy from the Quaboag Valley Community Development Corporation, as well as the Town's Transportation Operations Supervisor Michael Dambrosio.
 - Mr. Beckley directed the Board to the presentation he prepared for them on the Connector printed in their packets.
 - Among the documents provided were a series of the Connector's monthly reports, and the latest grant proposal developed by Ms. Healy.
 - Mr. Beckley explained that the Connector is nearly 5 ½ years old, and has grown substantially since it was first launched.
 - Current issues the Connector was facing include a chronic driver shortage and some software challenges, despite the system's scheduling and dispatch technology being overall helpful.
 - The Connector had added two additional towns to its service area in recent years, bringing it to a total of 10 towns served.
 - Mr. Beckley added that transportation was a prominent issue in rural communities across the state.

- The Connector receives funding from the Health Foundation of Central Massachusetts to run the Route 9 shuttle from Belchertown to Spencer, funding from the PVRTA to run the B79 bus route from Amherst to Worcester, and will be receiving funding from Baystate Health to run a shuttle between Baystate Wing Hospital and the Towns of Ware and Warren.
- Regarding ridership, Mr. Beckley provided a breakdown of trip numbers sorted by drop-off and pick-up within each town. This data indicates that Ware accounts for a majority of the system's rides, with the Town acting as a central hub for the area.
- The Connector's current annual budget is slightly over \$400,000, with the COVID-19 pandemic actually helping to get the system more money from state and federal sources. Most funding from the Massachusetts Department of Transportation requires a 50 percent match from the Town, and Mr. Beckley recognized the QVCDC as being instrumental to the Connector's success in this regard.
- Mr. Beckley reiterated that the system is in desperate need of additional drivers.
- Board Member Kruckas asked about the status of the blue Baystate Health van recently seen parked outside of Town Hall.
 - Mr. Beckley responded that this was the vehicle that would soon be used on the Wing Hospital shuttle, and that the Town was simply waiting for the vehicle to finish being titled.
- Board Member Kruckas asked if the new shuttle would lead to an uptick in rides for medical purposes.
 - Mr. Beckley responded that usage statistics may see a minor shift toward medical rides resulting from the new shuttle, and that seniors and people with disabilities were the target demographics.
- Board Member Kruckas asked if the Town had ever been unable to match the funding for any grant that required such, and whether other towns served by the Connector contributed any funding.
 - Mr. Beckley responded that the Town has not had an issue funding the match requirements for any grants received, but this year was tight. Palmer and Monson contribute funds to assist with the Connector's operations.
- Chair Morrin asked why none of the remaining seven Towns in the system contribute to it financially.
 - Board Member Kruckas expressed agreement that they should.
- Mr. Beckley responded that some of the remaining Towns had not been asked to contribute, but that a request could be arranged based on ridership statistics.
- Clerk Barnes reiterated his support for providing free transportation on the Connector for all veterans. He also expressed support for a shuttle to provide rides from Ware to the VA Hospital in Leeds, noting that other Towns had established similar services.
- Chair Morrin asked if Ware could request assistance from other Towns in funding the Connector, noting the comparably high number of riders travelling to or from Warren as an example.
 - Mr. Beckley affirmed that this request could be made.
- Mr. Beckley noted the Board had held a discussion during its last discussion on the Quaboag Connector over whether the fare should be adjusted from its current rate of \$2/ride.
 - Board Member Kruckas expressed that a \$2 fare is very generous for riders given the current price of fuel.
- Chair Morrin re-emphasized that the fare should not be raised until Ware has received as much revenue as possible from other Towns in the system for its operation. He expressed that the Board strongly supports the Quaboag Connector, but would like to ensure it is being run in a fiscally responsible manner.
- Mr. Dambrosio noted that the Connector's software would make it very easy to input into the system which riders are veterans in order to ensure they are not charged for their rides.

- **ARPA Funding Recommendation: Wastewater Treatment Plant Screen**
 - Mr. Beckley directed the Board to a memo provided by DPW Director Geoff McAlmond on this matter.
 - Mr. McAlmond noted that the design phase of the WWTP screen project was now 60% complete, and that the latest update confirmed the total cost of construction would be substantially more than initially projected.
 - Board Member Kruckas asked how much of the ARPA money remained unallocated.
 - Mr. Beckley explained that the Town received \$2.9 million, of which the Board has currently authorized about \$640,000. If the Board were to approve Mr. McAlmond's \$1.9 million request for the WWTP construction project, it would leave about \$300,000-\$400,000 unallocated.
 - Chair Morrin asked if there was still the possibility of obtaining grant funding for the WWTP project.
 - Mr. Beckley responded that the project could be eligible for funding from the State Revolving Fund (SRF), but this would force the Town to wait at least another year before beginning implementation. Mr. McAlmond recommended funding the project with ARPA money in order to expeditiously resolve the currently dire issues at the plant.
 - Chair Morrin argued that the Town could save \$800,000-\$900,000 by paying for this project with the SRF.
 - Board Member Kruckas countered that an amount much greater than this could be lost if the sewer fails due to the issues at the plant.
 - Chair Morrin noted that the current equipment had been repaired recently.
 - Mr. Beckley stated that the only reason the current setup has worked up to this point is because the Town is extremely lucky to have Mr. David Comeau as the WWTP's Chief Operator.
 - Mr. McAlmond stated that the plant's operators currently needed to clean out the plant's pumps 1-2 times per week in order to avoid major clogs from rags, wipes, masks, and other items that should not be flushed. The plant is at risk of overflowing into the Ware River, resulting in steep fines from the Department of Environmental Protection. He argued that approving the allocation of ARPA funds for the project would grant the Town a margin of safety from this scenario.

Board Member Kruckas made the motion to approve allocating \$1.9 million of ARPA funds to the construction of an influent screen at the Wastewater Treatment Plant, citing the need to prevent catastrophe. Board Member McCarthy seconded the motion.

- Chair Morrin requested discussion before bringing the motion to a vote.
- Clerk Barnes asked for confirmation that the Town would not be able to pay for this project with the Sewer Enterprise Fund.
 - Board Member Kruckas responded that the Enterprise Fund was "upside down" and could not be counted on.
- Mr. Beckley explained that after SRF allocations next year, there would possibly be enough in the Enterprise Fund to cover the cost of the project, but there were still too many uncertain variables to guarantee this.
- Clerk Barnes asked about a recent list that had been released from the Massachusetts Municipal Association concerning grants.
 - Mr. Beckley responded that the list in question concerned brownfield mitigation grants, and while these could be helpful for the Town in other capacities, they would not be of use for the WWTP construction project.
- Chair Morrin expressed the opinion that the Board was about to "flush" \$800,000 that could be saved.

The motion passed on a vote of 4 Yes, 1 No (Board Member Morrin).

- **Discussion on Rail Trail, Information Kiosks, Maintenance**
 - Mr. Beckley explained that the Town owns and maintains the southern section of Ware's portion of the Mass Central Rail Trail. This section consists of the trail between Gibbs Crossing and Robbins Road, and it was recently paved with generous financial support from the Urban Foundation. Furthermore, drainage issues near its intersection with Mountainview Road were recently resolved by the DPW.
 - Mr. Beckley continued that two kiosks were being constructed to be placed on either end of the Town-owned section of trail, and that the Parks Department recently refurbished the one that will be placed at Robbins Road. The help of Town staff and volunteers would be needed to build the second kiosk.
 - Board Member Kruckas asked about the possibility of enlisting the help of Pathfinder Regional Vocational Technical High School for this project.
 - Clerk Barnes and Board Member Kusnierz expressed that Pathfinder already had too many projects in the works.
 - Mr. Beckley noted that the East Quabbin Land Trust was finishing construction on the section of rail trail between Church Street and the Covered Bridge, and a ribbon-cutting could be expected in September.
 - Chair Morrin asked who maintains the section of trail north of Robbins Road.
 - Mr. Beckley responded that the Trust handles the entire northern segment.
 - Clerk Barnes asked if maintaining the rail trail was financially self-sustaining for the Town.
 - Mr. Beckley responded that a Friends of the Rail Trail group would be beneficial to establish for the purpose of handling maintenance and accepting donations on behalf of the Town.

New Business

- **Approval of Reappointment: Lynn Nenni, Finance Committee**

Board Member McCarthy made the motion to reappoint Lynn Nenni to the Finance Committee. Board Member Kusnierz seconded the motion. The vote was not completed.

- Board Member Kruckas stated that he had some questions for Ms. Nenni before approving her reappointment, and requested that this item be tabled until after the Board had a chance to discuss them with her at its next meeting. Chair Morrin expressed agreement.

Board Member Barnes made the motion to table the reappointment to its August 16, 2022 Meeting. Board Member Kruckas seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously (5-0).

- **Approval of Town Manager Job Description**
 - Ms. Caggiano appeared before the Board and asked if members had any questions on the Town Manager job description provided to them.
 - Board Member Kruckas questioned the legality of re-writing the Town Manager job description without amending the Town Charter.
 - Ms. Caggiano responded that yes, the new job description was consistent with the Town Charter, and that making adjustments to the job description was considered a best practice.
 - Board Member Kruckas asked how it would be legal to make changes to this job description without going through the process to adjust the Charter accordingly.
 - Chair Morrin expressed agreement with this concern, noting that he felt this was a change that should rightfully go to Town Meeting for approval.
 - Ms. Caggiano responded that if the Board wished for this decision to go to voters at Town

- Meeting, it could be revisited next year at the May 2023 Annual Town Meeting.
- Board Member Kruckas reiterated that the Board had no legal right to make any changes to what is laid out in the Charter.
 - Vice-Chair McCarthy asked if Town Counsel could be contacted to answer this question.
 - Board Member Kusnierz expressed agreement with contacting Town Counsel.
 - Ms. Caggiano responded that she would contact the Town Attorney the following day with the question.
 - Board Member Kruckas argued that while the Town Manager job description is in need of an update, the Board must make sure it is following the full legal process.
 - Chair Morrin thanked Ms. Caggiano for work of putting together the new description.

Board Member McCarthy made the motion to table the discussion on the Town Manager job description until after hearing back from Town Counsel. Board Member Barnes seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously (5-0).

- **Appointment of Election Workers**

Board Member Morrin made the motion to appoint all election officials listed on the supplemental sheet provided by the Town Clerk. Board Member Kruckas seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously (5-0).

Comments and Concerns of Citizens

- Board Member Kruckas expressed condolences to the family of Mr. Joseph Knight, a member of the Planning Board who tragically passed away on July 9th after a long battle with cancer.
- Mr. Beckley added that the Board would soon be receiving a memo from the Planning Board with details on filling his vacant seat.

Town Manager Report

Mr. Beckley noted that National Night Out would be held on Tuesday, August 2nd. Vice-Chair McCarthy added that she would be in attendance representing the Youth Committee, and they would be holding volunteer sign-ups.

Clerk Barnes asked if there had been any lifeguard sign-ups in order to begin youth swim lessons. Vice-Chair McCarthy noted that some applications had been received, but none had yet been contacted.

Mr. Beckley updated the Board on grants, noting that Parks Director John Piechota and Grants Coordinator Jay Mooney had put tremendous work into grant applications for improvements at Memorial Field, which could result in up to \$120,000 for the Town. Improvements are needed for the basketball court at this site, which is currently in disrepair, in addition to accessibility improvements.

The Town had successfully received a grant for drainage improvements at Grenville Park, which were in progress, and the Parks Commission would be addressing concerns surrounding a large stone wall at the Park by placing a fence at the top of it.

Unfortunately, the Town's grant application to replace the second Old Poor Farm Road culvert was not accepted, and the project engineer would be following up with the State to discuss shortcomings.

The Town, through the Planning Department, had expressed interest in a federally-funded UMass pilot program involving the construction of a solar field to reduce energy costs for local families. An eligible site could be the formerly-proposed location for a solar field at Banas Farm. Board Member Kruckas asked if the electricity generated from the field could also help reduce energy costs for the Town itself. Mr. Beckley responded that it could, and that the Wastewater Treatment Plant would be an excellent candidate for receiving power from a nearby

renewable source. Board Member Kruckas responded that this would be very beneficial, as the WWTP was the Town's largest energy user.

Mr. Beckley noted that the Assessors Office was researching the issue of crumbling foundations, and how other Towns have chosen to address it. Clerk Barnes asked how many homes in Ware were affected by this issue. Mr. Beckley responded that only one was known, but it was expected that there were several others. Board Member Kruckas noted having recently heard that the previously-known quarry in Connecticut was no longer the only known supplier of defective concrete responsible for the problem, but another contaminated quarry in the Oakham area had recently been discovered as well.

Mr. Beckley noted that the Town's IT Director would be meeting with the IT Department from Country Bank the following day at 73-75 Main Street to discuss the technological components of potential transfers of any Town operations to the new building. He noted that Country Bank was also interested in gifting some of its surplus furniture already present in the building to the Town.

Mr. Beckley encouraged all to visit Grenville Park and see the newly completed pickleball courts. A ribbon-cutting would be held for these at National Night Out, along with a demonstration of how to play. Chair Morrin recognized the new nets on the Park's athletic fields to also be an excellent asset. Mr. Beckley also noted that the ADA and Parks Commissions would be meeting the following week to discuss accessibility issues at the park.

Chair Morrin noted a concern that the whistleblower phone line, intended by the Board to be fully anonymous, was actually providing the names and phone numbers of callers to the staff who monitored it. Mr. Nolan stated that he had spoken with Verizon Customer Support at length about this issue, and been told that there was no way to make all calls received by the line anonymous in nature. Instead, Mr. Nolan explained that if callers wanted to ensure they remained anonymous when leaving a tip, they could simply dial *67 before entering the line's number. Clerk Barnes noted that software existed which could unmask numbers that were concealed in this fashion. Mr. Nolan ensured the Board that the Town did not possess this software, and had no way of tracking the information of callers who left anonymous tips on the line after concealing their own phone number by dialing *67.

Chair Morrin asked for an update on the delinquent tax payment policy, which had been tabled at the previous meeting. Mr. Beckley responded that the Treasurer had not been available that evening, but that this would be presented at the Board's next meeting.

Board Member Kruckas noted that there was notable public skepticism regarding the Town's acquisition of 73 Main Street through a donation from Country Bank, and many taxpayers were concerned that the new building would be a significant burden to the Town. Board Member Kruckas argued that the Town should be more transparent and communicative of its plans for this building to the public. Chair Morrin expressed agreement that any potential uses for the building should be required to save the Town money, rather than being a burden.

Adjournment

Board Member McCarthy made the motion at 8:23 p.m. to Adjourn the Regular Meeting. Board Member Kruckas seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously (5-0).

Attest:



Christopher J. Nolan
Executive Assistant to Town Manager