



## **Board of Selectmen**

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

**Regular Meeting Minutes – Tuesday, February 4, 2020 at 7:00 p.m.**

**Present: Selectman John E. Carroll, Selectman Keith J. Kruckas, Selectman Tracy R. Opalinski, Selectman Nancy J. Talbot, Town Manager Stuart B. Beckley, Clerk Mary L. Midura**  
**Absent: Selectman Alan G. Whitney**

**Meeting Opened by Vice-Chairman Carroll**

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

Selectman Opalinski thanked citizens and announced she will not run for re-election. She encouraged residents with management and HR skills to run for election. Selectman Opalinski noted important meetings for the East-West Trail, Boston to Springfield, with proposed stop in Palmer. A meeting on February 6 and public meeting on February 12. Selectman Opalinski noted this could change dynamics for the towns and schools in this area. She announced a technology class at QHCC on February 12. Workshop 13 will host a Super Group Tribute to Eagles, Jazz Concert on February 23, and ArtWorks has "Love Story" with reception February 15.

Selectman Kruckas noted the passing of Joe Opat, resident, state employee. Selectman Kruckas stated that March 2019 town meeting vote placed a moratorium on solar with prohibition of any activity. He noted that the Building Inspector, Town Planner and Town Manager were recently walking a property, and he wanted an explanation. He stated this was wasting time and resources and there should be no activity regarding solar. Mr. Beckley explained that part of his and planner and inspector's jobs is always preparing for future economic development, and the moratorium is expiring in June 2020. He noted that no one can file an application for solar projects during the moratorium. Selectman Kruckas stated that paperwork of a site visit must be filed; Mr. Beckley noted that all calendars show the visit. Town Planner Rebekah DeCoursey stated that several people have stopped into her office to talk about potential projects. Selectman Kruckas stated that the bylaws should be worked on. He also questioned the bell project.

### **Consent Agenda**

- **Approval of January 21, 2020 Minutes**

Selectman Talbot made the motion to approve the January 21, 2020 Minutes. Selectman Opalinski seconded the motion. The motion passed on a vote of 4 Yes, 0 No, 1 Absent (Selectman Whitney).

- **Appointment to Council on Aging – Irene Eskett, Term to Expire June 30, 2023**

Selectman Talbot made the motion to approve the appointment of Irene Eskett to the Council on Aging, Term to Expire June 30, 2023. Selectman Opalinski seconded the motion. The motion passed on a vote of 4 Yes, 0 No, 1 Absent (Selectman Whitney).

- **Appointment to Community Development Authority – James Baird, Term to Expire June 30, 2023**

Selectman Talbot made the motion to approve the appointment of James Baird to the Community Development Authority, Term to Expire June 30, 2023. Selectman Kruckas seconded the motion.

**The motion passed on a vote of 4 Yes, 0 No, 1 Absent (Selectman Whitney)**

- **Approval of Warrant for Presidential Primary March 3, 2020**

**Selectman Kruckas made the motion to approve the Warrant for the Presidential Primary of March 3, 2020. Selectman Opalinski seconded the motion. The motion passed on a vote of 4 Yes, 0 No, 1 Absent (Selectman Whitney).**

#### **Scheduled Appearances**

- **7:15 p.m. Public Hearing for Safety Study Recommendations: High, Cottage, Prospect, School, Walnut and Pulaski Streets**

Chief Crevier suggested parking be allowed on one side only, and to push back intersections by 20-40 feet. DPW Interim Director St. George-Sorel noted there is also green space to consider. Chief Crevier noted that parking on one side only creates other problems. Mr. St. George-Sorel stated that the Highway Department would have to know ahead if any line painting should be done. He recommended signs on the south side of High Street. A man who lives at 33 High Street stated that he paved his driveway to allow for his car trailer, and yet others park on the edge or across which makes it extremely difficult for him to exit his driveway. Selectman Opalinski noted standards set by the State. Mr. St. George-Sorel noted that Pulaski Street was spaced and lined with six foot Ada compliance. Resident Kim Mongeau stated that landlords were obligated to provide parking for tenants. Resident Mr. Danitis of 9 High Street noted that emergency vehicles would not clear the street with cars parked as currently done. Selectman Carroll noted that Church Street and School Street were engineered to be narrow to slow traffic, and he was on the CDA to see these projects in the planning stages. Mr. St. George-Sorel noted that if streets have no markings, there is no control on parking. Resident Dan Choquette of High Street noted that when snow is pushed to the corner, there is no ability to see traffic. A woman resident stated that cars are speeding at all times on Pulaski Street. Town Planner DeCoursey stated that the Complete Streets project considers a wider angle onto Pulaski Street to force traffic to slow down. Mr. Beckley noted that Pulaski Street was laid out with intent, and to switch parking to the other side would lose spaces. Mr. St. George-Sorel also noted 3 fire hydrants, trucks turning from the gas station, and stated he is not in favor of speed bumps. Chief Crevier noted the speed counter and police could give more tickets. Resident Liam Grant of Pulaski Street noted other problems on Pulaski Street with walls obstructing view and a need for more safety for pedestrians. Resident Brandy Brusio noted that often drivers will turn left from the gas station. Selectman Carroll noted that DPW, police and fire should come up with plans for individual streets.

**Selectman Opalinski made the motion to table to March 17 with DPW, Fire and Police to return with street plans. Selectman Kruckas seconded the motion. The motion passed on a vote of 4 Yes, 0 No, 1 Absent (Selectman Whitney).**

#### **Old Business**

- **Regional School Discussion Follow-Up**

**Selectman Kruckas made the motion to Table to February 18, 2020. Selectman Talbot seconded the motion. The motion passed on a vote of 4 Yes, 0 No, 1 Absent (Selectman Whitney).**

#### **New Business**

- **Board of Selectmen Budget FY2021**

Mr. Beckley presented the Board of Selectmen budget for FY2021.

**Selectman Carroll made the motion to increase salaries of Board of Selectmen. Selectman Opalinski seconded the motion. The motion passed on a vote of 4 Yes, 0 No, 1 Absent (Selectman Whitney).**

*Selectmen's current annual salaries: Chairman \$2,652, Selectmen \$2,232 each = total \$11,580*

*Proposed annual salaries: Chairman \$3,072, Selectmen \$2,652 each = total \$13,680*

- **Budget Update/Priorities**

Between the Governor's budget increases to local and education aid through his State budget proposal, the general 2.5% increase, and a modest increase of new growth and local receipts, the Town's budget will increase approximately \$650,000 for next fiscal year.

There are known and unknown increases to the Town's fixed costs, particularly increases in salaries and the cost of benefits, as well as other insurances and the cost of supplies. The budget is early in the development process, with departments finishing their requests.

That said, there may be funds available that could be directed to Town priorities. What priorities would the Board like to see funded? Last year (a much better funded year by the State), for example, the Town was able to budget an extra \$100,000 for road improvements.

The Board had asked for my priorities to begin the discussion. I would suggest:

1. Continued local funding for road infrastructure
2. Assure funding is available for the Old Belchertown Road bridge (capital)
3. Continue to support the stability of the School district
4. Budget funds for small building repairs
5. Budget funds to continue to move toward State required levels for the library
6. Funds for property clean-ups

Selectman Talbot questioned property clean-ups; Mr. Beckley noted the cost to board up and take an owner to court. Selectman Kruckas questioned if the Slum & Blight designation gave access to grants; Selectman Opalinski noted that the Slum & Blight designation gives the CDA the ability to take down a building. Mr. Beckley noted that the designation is tied to the block grant, and the AG may grant funds to take down 73 West Main Street. Selectman Opalinski noted that this year's CDBG grant pays for an attorney to pursue in housing court through 2021. Selectman Opalinski questioned demolition of two buildings on Main Street. Selectman Kruckas questioned Old Belchertown Road bridge; Mr. Beckley noted the State must approve the design before Chapter 90 funds. Selectman Opalinski noted an item #7 to be added for a part-time HR, possibly to be shared with another community. Mr. Beckley noted the position could also be shared with the schools.

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

Tom Barnes stated that the flashing stop light at Pleasant Street is a great improvement! Mr. Beckley gave credit to the Police Chief.

Kim Mongeau stated that the Complete Streets meeting was positive and productive. She questioned the water issue; Mr. Beckley noted the deed was completed. Revenues and consumption is down, meeting Thursday with engineers. If the recommendation is higher, USDA has suggested the Town apply for a grant as rates are lower at 1.6%. Selectman Talbot suggested the Board hear from a USDA representative; Mr. Beckley noted allotment from the Federal government.

Resident/MassLive reporter Jim Russell questioned the Slum & Blight designation for more grant funds; Mr. Beckley noted the designation gives the town more uses to receive funds.

### **Town Manager Report**

February 8 – 1 p.m. Eagle Scout ceremony, High School

February 18 – CDBG Public hearing with Board

February 20 – Invitation Curaleaf tour with Cannabis advisory committee

*Personnel:* After discussion with the Board of Assessors, the Town will seek to re-organize the department by advertising for a Principal Assessor.

Main Street reconstruction – The Business and Civic Association organized a mitigation committee which has met twice to date. The Committee is planning questions and responses to issues such as parking, community outreach,

business access during construction, and coordination with the contractor. The contractor, Ludlow Construction, has been awarded the contract and is researching areas for parking, storage and office. The company representative believe there is a push to commence the project in April, although the date of the pre-construction meeting has not been set.

School Building – The town received very favorable bids for the Middle School window and door project. The awarded low bidder's cost was \$1,878,829 which was below the cost estimate of \$2.3 million and well below the original estimate. The School Building Committee decided to reject Alternate #1 for specialized glass in part of the windows, which saves the project \$127,000. Materials will be ordered. The project is anticipated to commence in early June and be completed by mid-September.

Complete Streets – The State ranked the submitted Ware Complete Streets Policy highly and granted approval. The Planning and Community Development Department held a successful forum on possible priorities on January 23. The project engineers will formulate a draft prioritization plan for the Board's consideration.

**Selectman Kruckas made the motion to Adjourn Regular Session at 8:46 p.m. to go into Executive Session for:**

**Executive Session: M.G.L. Chapter 30A, Section 21(a)**

**#1 Discussion of Complaint Regarding Public Employee: Town Manager**

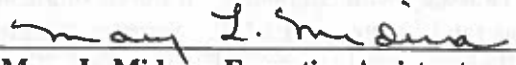
~~#2 To conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with nonunion personnel or to conduct collective bargaining sessions or contract negotiations with nonunion personnel, specifically to consider two (2) grievances under the collective bargaining agreement between IAFF, Local 1851 and the Town of Ware that allege violations of Article XX and Article VIII of the applicable collective bargaining agreement.~~ Tabled to February 18, 2020

**#3 Litigation: Former Fire Chief**

**NOT TO RECONVENE IN OPEN SESSION.**

Selectman Talbot seconded the motion. The motion passed on a roll call vote of 4 Yes, 0 No, 1 Absent (Selectman Whitney).

Selectman Alan G. Whitney	Absent
Selectman John E. Carroll	Yes√
Selectman Keith J. Kruckas	Yes√
Selectman Tracy R. Opalinski	Yes√
Selectman Nancy J. Talbot	Yes√

Attest:   
Mary L. Midura, Executive Assistant  
to Town Manager