



Board of Selectmen

Ware Town Hall, Meeting Room, 126 Main Street

Regular Meeting Minutes – Tuesday, March 16, 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: 784 604 1861

Passcode: 01082

Phone: 929-205-6099

Present: Selectman Alan G. Whitney, Selectman Keith J. Kruckas, Selectman Nancy J. Talbot, Selectman Thomas H. Barnes, Selectman John J. Morrin, Town Manager Stuart B. Beckley, Executive Assistant Mary L. Midura, Fire Chief Chris Gagnon, Building Inspector Anna Marques, Denis Ouimette, Terrance Smith, John Desmond, Mr. Barber (from Warren)

Absent: None

Present via Zoom: Health Director Judy Metcalf, Ware River News Editor Eileen Kennedy, Craig Simmons

Meeting Opened by Chairman Whitney at 7:00 p.m.

Opening Remarks, Announcements, and Agenda review by Chair

Commendation: Laura Jablonski

Chairman Whitney read the commendation with thanks from the Board for Ms. Jablonski's 28 years of service to the Town of Ware.

Selectman Barnes asked about the underpass on Rte. 9; Mr. Beckley noted a meeting on Thursday, March 18 with MA DOT. Chairman Whitney asked about the search for new town counsel; Mr. Beckley noted this is in process. The Board asked Mr. Beckley about the search for a DPW Director; Mr. Beckley noted the salary is an issue. Chairman Whitney asked that this be an item on the April 6, 2021 agenda. Selectman Kruckas asked why the audit of Town Hall was not in the budget; Mr. Beckley explained that the funding would be at town meeting. Selectman Kruckas questioned if there is a policy regarding sale of town property; Mr. Beckley noted property is declared surplus, then most items are sold through Municibid. Selectman Kruckas asked for a full report of all sales of property since Mr. Beckley began to work for the Town of Ware.

Consent Agenda

- Approval of February 16, March 2, and March 8, 2021 meeting minutes

Selectman Morrin made the motion to approve the minutes above. Selectman Talbot seconded the motion. The motion passed on a vote of 4 Yes, 0 No, 1 Abstention (Selectman Kruckas).

Scheduled Appearances

- Judy Metcalf, Health Director

Ms. Metcalf noted the latest Covid number was 9 cases, with 12, 16, and 10 in prior weeks. She hopes to see the numbers drop with spring weather but will most likely advise all to continue to wear masks through summer and fall and avoid crowds. There are variants, with one case of the Brazilian in Massachusetts today. The Governor will announce more sites for vaccination tomorrow, however, supply did not yet increase.

Chairman Whitney asked about vaccines for the town; Ms. Metcalf noted the state controls the distribution. She

noted that Wing Hospital offers a new therapy that is lifesaving for those over 65 who get Covid. Mr. Beckley asked Ms. Metcalf her recommendation for the opening of Town Hall; Ms. Metcalf recommended waiting until at least April 5 as it would give more town employees the chance to get the first vaccine. Mr. Beckley asked Ms. Metcalf's opinion regarding holding town meeting; Ms. Metcalf noted that town meeting is exempt from restrictions as buildings. Selectman Morrin stated that town hall should open next Monday (March 22, 2020). Selectman Barnes noted that Amherst is going to shut-ins; Ms. Metcalf noted the Governor allows this in specific regions. Chairman Whitney noted that the proposed special town meeting is April 10, 2021. Selectman Kruckas noted that residents are upset that town hall is closed. Selectman Talbot noted that the meeting would be held as a drive-in.

Selectman Talbot made the motion to approve April 10, 2021 at 10:00 am for the Special Town Meeting at the Ware High School parking lot. Selectman Kruckas seconded the motion. The motion passed on a vote of 5 Yes, 0 No.

Chairman Whitney asked about opening town hall; Mr. Beckley noted that monitors would be at the door to log visitors in, masks must be worn, floor spaces would be marked, with additional sanitization and fogging would be twice per week. Ms. Metcalf noted April 5, 2021 would be the better date to re-open. Ms. Midura stated that senior citizens would be monitors and would feel safer if they have had both vaccines. Chairman Whitney noted that town hall employees could cover the monitoring of the door. Resident Terrance Smith questioned why the Board of Selectmen would go against the advice of the Health Director. The Board of Selectmen stated that town hall will open to the public on Monday, March 22, 2021.

Old Business

- **Water Rate Increase Details**

Mr. Beckley noted the listing of funding options using retail sales marijuana revenue and solar funds. Selectman Talbot noted that USDA wants a commitment from the Town. Selectman Morrin noted the tax base use. Chairman Whitney noted the water plant must be built and the town vote is needed. He noted that to dedicate the marijuana and solar revenue to this will offset the rate increase.

Selectman Talbot made the motion that the Board of Selectmen approve and recommend that Town Manager use these funds and water treatment stabilization fund to defray the costs of the Water Treatment Facility. Selectman Barnes seconded the motion. The motion passed on a vote of 4 Yes, 1 No (Selectman Morrin).

- **Update Main Street Buildings**

Building Inspector Anna Marques noted there are different procedures for each building. Selectman Kruckas questioned the progress of 92-104 Main Street; Ms. Marques noted that fines have not been paid. Fines have been issued to the maximum allowed. Selectman Kruckas questioned the overall building permit process, noting complaints by residents of their permits taking more than a month. Ms. Marques noted that some applications are incomplete and must be completed before signoffs. Chairman Whitney asked for a list of any outstanding permits. Ms. Marques noted that she gives out three phone numbers of the office plus her personal cell number, and residents can reach her through Viewpoint and email.

- **Hardwick Ambulance Service**

Acting Fire Chief Chris Gagnon noted that the BMLH closing of the emergency room will affect costs. He stated that Ware is in the best position to provide service to Hardwick. Billable calls are down \$20,000. If Ware opts not to cover Hardwick, or if Hardwick contracts with another town or towns, Ware would still be on the Mutual Aid call list. His recommendation would be to firm up the frontal costs up to \$133,000 and consider the level of services. Selectman Kruckas questioned use of overtime; Chief Gagnon noted there would be 1.5 hours minimum per call and if we provide mutual aid only, there is potential revenue loss. He noted there was Hardwick Rescue Squad in 2018-2019, and that may be considered again. He suggested an effort to find middle ground to maintain services to Hardwick. Chairman Whitney noted this topic for a 6:30 pm Executive Session on April 6, 2021.

Resident John Desmond noted that seconds count to protect people and delays can be devastating.

New Business

- **Approval of Warrant – Annual Town Election of April 12, 2021**

Selectman Talbot made the motion to approve the warrant for Annual Town Election on Monday, April 12, 2021, voting to begin at 7:00 a.m. and end at 8:00 p.m. The motion passed on a vote of 5 Yes, 0 No.

- **Vote by Board of Selectmen to Change Polling Location to 126 Main Street**

Selectman Kruckas made the motion to change the polling location to 126 Main Street for the April 12, 2021 Annual Town Election. Selectman Barnes seconded the motion. The motion passed on a vote of 5 Yes, 0 No.

- **Reappointment: Sheryl Adamczyk, Board of Registrars, Term to Expire March 31, 2024**

Selectman Barnes made the motion to reappoint Sheryl Adamczyk to the Board of Registrars, Term to Expire March 31, 2024. Selectman Morrin seconded the motion. The motion passed on a vote of 5 Yes, 0 No.

- **Water Resources Committee Applications**

- Terrance Smith
- Late file: Catherine Buelow-Cascio

Selectman Talbot made the motion to appoint Terrance Smith, Catherine Buelow-Cascio, Town Manager, DPW manager, Water Department supervisor, and Town Planner to the Water Resources Committee. Selectman Barnes seconded the motion. The motion passed on a vote of 5 Yes, 0 No.

The Board announced there is one opening on the Water Resources Committee, preferably someone representing the business/restaurant community. The Water Resources Committee shall give monthly reports to the Board of Selectmen.

- **Hospital Discussion Committee Applications**

- Terrance Smith
- Craig Simmons
- Denis Ouimette
- Howard G. Trietsch M.D.
- Late file: Elena Palladino
- Late file: Catherine Buelow-Cascio

Selectman Kruckas made the motion to appoint Terrance Smith, Craig Simmons, Denis Ouimette, Howard Trietsch, M.D., Elena Palladino, Catherine Buelow-Cascio, and Selectman Talbot to the Hospital Discussion Committee. Selectman Whitney seconded the motion. The motion passed on a vote of 5 Yes, 0 No.

Selectman Talbot noted the Hospital Discussion Committee will be facilitator and factfinder with research, analysis and give a monthly report to the Board. The Committee shall work with Baystate officials. The Board asked Mr. Beckley if he contacted other medical entities. Mr. Beckley noted that he did contact eight other entities, and three have answered to date.

- **Discuss Use of Marijuana Revenue**

This was discussed above under the Water Rate Increase Details topic.

- **Discuss Special Town Meeting articles – easement, trusts of Mary Lane Hospital**

Mr. Beckley will make corrections and present to the Board of Selectmen for approval at a posted zoom meeting on Tuesday, March 23, 2021 at 5:00 p.m.

- **Town Hall Re-Opening Plan**

Discussed above under Special Appearances.

- **Town Meeting Date**

Discussed above under Special Appearances.

Comments and Concerns of Citizens

Resident John Desmond noted that the new water plant is not a panacea to the water issues, but this needs to be fully explained at town meeting, including attendance by the consultant.

A man who did not identify himself brought out water samples and suggested that all residents replace water tanks and filter systems. *(on the sign in sheet, the man's signature was unreadable, and the address was in Warren, MA)*

Town Manager Report

The Pathfinder Vocational Technical School presented its recommended budget at a hearing on Wednesday. Details are attached. With a decline of 25 students from last year, Ware's assessment will be lower in FY2022 by \$118,000. In addition to the budget, attendees also congratulated Dr. Paist on his retirement after 48 years of tremendous service to the region and school.

With Representative Smola's assistance, a contact at MassDOT Rail was established for the East Street rail bridge and underpass. The Town has reached out with a request to discuss bridge repair and an accessible route through the underpass.

Congratulations to Laura Jablonski on her pending retirement after 28 years of exemplary town service.

The Town awaits clarification of the use of funds from the federal government appropriation related to COVID relief. Depending on allowed uses there will be significant opportunity for the Town to assist residents and businesses while still providing necessary safety equipment for employees.

The FY2022 budget summary is attached. The Finance Committee is beginning review meetings this week.

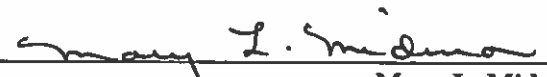
The Insurance Advisory Committee is meeting on Tuesday to learn about and discuss options for health insurance for FY2022.

Projects. The Town received bids for the demolition of 13 & 15 Parker Street with the low bidder being just under \$50,000. The bid documents for the brick repair to the Town Hall are available and generating a lot of interest. Bids are due on April 2. MassDOT has scheduled a meeting to discuss the re-start of the Main Street construction project. Of key interest will be the demolition timing of 114 Main Street. The street lighting project is moving forward with designs being finalized. If there are adequate funds, the lights in front of the millyard will be replaced with lights matching Main Street.

Adjournment

Selectman Kruckas made the motion at 9:05 p.m. to Adjourn the Regular Meeting. Selectman Talbot seconded the motion. The motion passed on a vote of 5 Yes, 0 No.

Attest: _____



Mary L. Midura

Executive Assistant to Town Manager