



Board of Selectmen
Ware Town Hall, Meeting Room, 126 Main Street
Regular Meeting Minutes – Tuesday, October 20, 2020 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 at Town Hall: Selectman Alan G. Whitney, Selectman Keith J. Kruckas, Selectman Thomas H. Barnes, Selectman Nancy J. Talbot, Selectman John J. Morrin, Town Manager Stuart B. Beckley, Clerk Mary L. Midura, Town Planner Rebekah Cornell, Fire Chief Chris Gagnon, Police Chief Shawn Crevier

Present via Zoom: Hardwick Selectmen Kenan Young and Julie Quink, Ware Treasurer Erica Brunell, Resident Kim Mongeau, Ware River News Editor Eileen Kennedy

Absent: None

Meeting Opened by Chairman Whitney

Opening Remarks, Announcements, and Agenda review by Chair

Selectman Talbot noted some residents have received a call that tells voters that voting is at Park Street or Park Ave. – this is incorrect. The Town Clerk’s webpage on the Town website has the correct information. Early voting is at the Senior Center until October 30.

Selectman Barnes thanked police and teachers for their work. He thanked Mrs. Talbot for the work on Early Voting. Chairman Whitney agreed. Selectman Talbot noted all Town Clerks in the Commonwealth are doing this same work.

Selectman Kruckas questioned the Main Street Project progress, noting that Ludlow Construction is active in Belchertown but not here. He stated this is unacceptable, affecting businesses that are already struggling. Mr. Beckley noted that Mass DOT identified a sidewalk conduit to be reinstalled by National Grid by November 1. If weather is a factor, asphalt will be placed. Chairman Whitney asked to revisit this on November 10, and if not done, requested a representative from the project be at the meeting.

Selectman Kruckas requested the Building Inspector be present at the November 10 meeting; he has received calls regarding permit delays. He noted there are ongoing projects and he has numerous questions.

Selectman Morrin noted he voted last Saturday. Chairman Whitney and Selectman Morrin suggested there should be “I Voted” stickers for voters.

Consent Agenda

- **Approval of Meeting Minutes of September 22 and October 6, 2020**

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

Scheduled Appearances

- **Ambulance Contract: Fire Chief Gagnon, Hardwick Select Board**

Hardwick Board of Selectmen Kenan Young and Julie Quink joined the meeting via Zoom. Fire Chief Gagnon was present. He noted a memo of August 13, 2020 in which he was tasked by the Board of Selectmen to look at all costs which are itemized for utilization of the ambulance done to daily and hourly cost. In the last year, we have gone to Hardwick 271 times, which is 19.1% of total call volume. Based on the primary vehicle, 85% of runs are for EMS. This memo compiles all operational costs for a total of \$700,407, with Hardwick at 19%. This is contrasted on the second page with Federal government program allowing for \$40.50 per hour, not including 2 staff. The Fire Department billed out \$106,000, total receipts \$90,000. Chief Gagnon noted the importance to cover community, we are not losing money, and his recommendation is to continue the one year contract. He noted the continuing changes in town, such as the new facility on South Street. He noted the department is short one position, with two new hires shortly.

Selectman Kruckas questioned if there is a call to Hardwick, would the Town be billed if Barre or West Brookfield responded first. Chief Gagnon noted that Ware responds to all Hardwick calls.

Selectman Barnes questioned why paramedic ALS is used, as it is more expensive. Chief Gagnon noted that Palmer and Belchertown also use paramedic.

Chairman Whitney questioned what is cost to Hardwick; Chief Gagnon confirmed \$77,000 this year. His priority is Ware, but he noted he will look at this proactively to continue coverage and find solutions.

Selectman Talbot asked about the interview for two positions; Chief Gagnon noted a shift has 2 staff on duty, and with coverage there will still be overtime at times. His staff has been incredibly hit, and one of his goals is to take care of staff.

Selectman Talbot noted that rates are set by region, and asked if the Chief is confident with rates as they currently are. Chief Gagnon noted his review is 95% complete, but he believes overall rates from 2017 need to be updated as the contract not changed, 8-9% non-contracted is about \$21,000.

Selectman Kruckas questioned retroactive for year of \$77,000, Hardwick get prices from Town of Ware to June 2021, with \$133,000 up front going forward.

Chairman Whitney questioned if there were an increase to staff since Hardwick was added? Chief Gagnon stated there has been no increase, but we do need to increase staff. For example, the South Street facility is now at 25% capacity.

Selectman Young of Board of Selectmen of Hardwick reiterated that cost this year will remain @ \$77,000, through June 2021.

Mr. Beckley asked the Board if the Chief should revisit; Chairman Whitney confirmed Chief should revisit in 90 days, with updated and yearly costs. Mr. Beckley noted that if Hardwick makes another deal, these costs do not go away from the Town budget, even if there is loss of receipts.

Selectman Kruckas noted that the Town should focus on residents first.

Hardwick Selectman Julie Quink noted that both towns have benefitted, and Hardwick made cuts to the town budget for public safety, police, fire, highway personnel.

Chairman Whitney requested updated costs in 120 days. Hardwick Selectman Julie Quink noted the 90 day out in contract.

Selectman Kruckas made the motion to continue the Hardwick Ambulance Agreement at \$77,000 for FY21, increased to \$133,000 for FY22, with contract language to remain the same. Selectman Barnes seconded the motion. The motion passed on a vote of 5 Yes, 0 No.

Selectman Kruckas questioned why the person in the back of the room (Town Planner Rebekah Cornell) was again knitting at the meeting. He stated it was distracting and he has had complaints from citizens. Ms. Cornell stated this was a personal attack that should be discussed in Executive Session. Selectman Kruckas replied, "You can go out in the hallway." Chairman Whitney stated this was not the way the Board would approach this, and it will be taken up in Executive Session.

Old Business

- **Approval of School COVID bills**

Selectman Morrin requested an explanation of how the decision was made, why did the School Committee not ask for a vote by the Board of Selectmen. He questioned bills from a company out of country. He stated the school committee needs to spend tax dollars wisely.

Selectman Talbot made the motion to Table to November 10, 2020. Selectman Morrin seconded the motion. The motion passed on a vote of 5 Yes, 0 No.

- **Project Manager for Water Treatment Facility, Forum Follow Up**

Selectman Barnes made the motion to appoint Andrew Lalashius as the Project Manager contact for Water Treatment Facility. Selectman Talbot seconded the motion. The motion passed on a vote of 5 Yes, 0 No.

The Board requested that Mr. Lalashius attend the November 10 meeting and the November 12 Public Forum.

- **Solar Projects Update**

Chairman Whitney requested the letter from Health Director Judy Metcalf regarding Forefront Solar to be added to the November 10, 2020 agenda. He also requested the list be updated monthly with changes in red or bold.

New Business

- **Request to Lower Speed Limit on Beaver Lake Road to 20 MPH, Create Safety Zone**

Police Chief Crevier was present. Mrs. Elaine Murphy, Beaver Lake Road resident, joined the meeting via Zoom. Chief Crevier noted MGL Chapter 90, Section 18B allows creation of a Safety Zone and reduction to 20 MPH. Mrs. Murphy questioned what steps are to be taken to make the street a one-way. Chairman Whitney stated that time should be given at the new speed limit, and if no improvement is noted, to have a public hearing regarding the request to make the street one-way. The Board will send an invite in Spring 2021 to review. Mrs. Murphy requested this not go into the summer season, as that is the busiest time at that beach.

Selectman Barnes made the motion to approve the Police Request to Lower Speed Limit on Beaver Lake Road to 20 MPH and to Create a Safety Zone. Selectman Morrin seconded the motion. The motion passed on a vote of 5 Yes, 0 No.

Selectman Barnes noted speeding vehicles on Greenwich Plains Road to Route 9.

- **Approval of CARES Funds, Round 2, Requests**

Mr. Beckley presented the chart with details of the CARES Funds requests.

Selectman Kruckas made the motion to approve the CARES Funds, Round 2 Requests. Selectman Barnes seconded the motion. The motion passed on a vote of 5 Yes, 0 No.

- **Open Special Town Meeting Warrant**

Selectman Talbot made the motion to Open the Special Town Meeting Warrant, to Close at noon on November 5, 2020. Selectman Morrin seconded the motion. The motion passed on a vote of 5 Yes, 0 No.

- **Proposed Zoning Amendments**

Selectman Talbot made the motion to Send the Proposed Zoning Amendments to the Planning Board for Process. Selectman Barnes seconded the motion. The motion passed on a vote of 5 Yes, 0 No.

Comments and Concerns of Citizens

Kim Mongeau questioned the ambulance contract and extra pay; Mr. Beckley noted stipend is built into base as part of agreement. Ms. Mongeau also noted animals in the road on Church Street, requested Board contact Land Trust regarding this.

Selectman Kruckas questioned the status of old Otto's building, noted race track complaints, suggested letter to race track. Mr. Beckley noted that Palmer Town Manager will send an update, and our town attorney will give opinion. Selectman Kruckas asked about cleanup of Aspen Street property; Mr. Beckley noted neighborhood cleanup.

Selectman Barnes questioned progress of Old Belchertown Road bridge; Mr. Beckley noted this should be completed by November 1, 2020.

Town Manager Report

Upcoming meetings:

November 12. Town Hall, USDA Water Treatment Plant public forum 2

Main Street. There is a meeting on Tuesday morning for updates from MassDOT and National Grid. Will be able to present an update at the meeting.

Water flushing should be complete early in the fourth week of October. Zone 6 (of 7) work commences on Monday, October 19.

Attached is a list of policies being reviewed, edited, and created by Human Resource Coordinator Trish Barnes. The highlighted policies are those that are existing and being updated first.

The State has certified the Town's Free Cash (available funds) for the General and Enterprise Funds. The email notice and the accompanying summaries are attached. The negative value for the Sewer Enterprise fund will need to be addressed at Town Meeting. Strong calculations to the Town's financial team – Treasurer, Tax Collector, Town Accountant and Town Clerk – for their efforts toward efficient spending and revenue generation.

The latest Cherry Sheet reflecting the Governor's revised budget is attached. This reflects anticipated level funding of State aid and The State budget still has to go through the House and Senate and a joint budget committee before final approval. The State budget timing may affect the ability to hold Town Meeting and set a tax rate.

The number of complaints being received regarding the Palmer Motor Sports track noise is on the rise this fall. The Town of Palmer is aware, but I will be checking on the status of the lawsuit and adherence to COVID restrictions with Palmer officials.

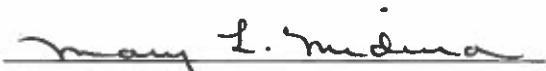
The Fire Chief held interviews for two open firefighter positions. Two candidates were chosen from the civil service list and are undergoing preliminary qualification requirements.

Adjournment

Executive Session: M.G.L. Chapter 30A, Section 21 (a) #2 Conduct Strategy Sessions for Negotiations with Non-Union Personnel

Selectman Talbot made the motion at 8:33 p.m. to Adjourn the Regular Meeting to go into Executive Session: M.G.L. Chapter 30A, Section 21(a) #2 Conduct Strategy Sessions for Negotiations with Non-Union Personnel, NOT TO RECONVENE IN OPEN SESSION. Selectman Barnes seconded the motion. The motion passed on a roll call vote of 5 Yes, 0 No.

Selectman Alan G. Whitney	Yes√
Selectman Keith J. Kruckas	Yes√
Selectman Thomas H. Barnes	Yes√
Selectman Nancy J. Talbot	Yes√
Selectman John J. Morrin	Yes√

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

