



Board of Selectmen

Ware Town Hall, Meeting Room, 126 Main Street

Regular Meeting Minutes – Wednesday, September 2, 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

Phone: 929-205-6099

Present: Selectman Alan Whitney, Selectman Keith Kruckas, Selectman Nancy Talbot, Selectman Thomas Barnes, Selectman John Morrin, Town Manager Stuart Beckley, Clerk Mary Midura, Town Planner Rebekah DeCoursey, Building Inspector Anna Marques, Charles Lask

Via Zoom: Carol Zins, Tracy Opalinski, Mark Andrews, Rick Egan, Mike Balicki, Shelley Regin

Absent: None

Meeting Opened by Chairman Whitney

Opening Remarks, Announcements, and Agenda review by Chair

Consent Agenda

- **Approval of June 23, July 7, July 21, August 6 and August 18, 2020 Minutes**

Chairman Whitney stated these would be tabled due to questions.

Selectman Talbot made the motion to Table to September 15, 2020. Selectman Morrin seconded the motion. The motion passed on a vote of 5 Yes, 0 No.

New Business

- **Approval of Disclosures by Police Chief Crevier**

Chairman Whitney noted this would be sent to the town attorney for review and would be on the agenda of the September 15, 2020 meeting.

Town Manager Report

Mr. Beckley stated he used the word “threatening” in the July 21 meeting, and wished to retract as he used the wrong word, and apologized to the Board. Selectman Kruckas noted his appreciation.

Mr. Beckley noted the Governor has new guidelines regarding early childcare programs and “the Town” being responsible for this care to be ready. The new guidelines are being drafted and may be released soon. Chairman Whitney noted the Board should wait for the guidelines from the State.

Events: State Primary, September 1, High School
Ambulance Committee, September 2

Old Belchertown Road bridge: The construction schedule is attached.

73 West Main Street. The request for proposals (RFP) is posted. Proposals are due on October 2 for the sale of the property.

Rail Trail. The Town is also receiving quotes for the installation of hard pack and grading/drainage improvements for the trail from Gibbs Crossing to Robbins Road.

Catch basins. The DPW is hiring a company with a vacuum truck to clean catch basins in areas that have been prone to street flooding, such as Pulaski Street. This material is hazardous and must go to a disposal site.

Grants. The Town submitted a MassWorks grant for the pedestrian scale streetlights (30) on Main Street. The Town is working on the Shared streets and spaces grants described at the last meeting for parking and outdoor improvements on Pleasant Street and Veterans Parking. Additionally, the Town is looking at creating a vacant storefronts district which will provide resources for businesses. The Town was awarded a Green Communities grant of \$198,000. This will provide lighting improvements at Town Hall, DPW, and the Middle School, a new boiler at the DPW, replacement of steam traps at Town Hall, and various weatherization improvements at Town Hall, the elementary school, DPW and the Waste Water Treatment Plant.

COVID CARES funds. The Town is looking to coordinate neighborhood trash and bulky item drop-offs in order to assist residents who may be unable to pay the cost the trash removal. With the assistance of Aspen Rod and Gun, we hope to accomplish the first event in the Aspen/Vigeant/Dale area in September.

Middle School Windows. The project is going well and remains under budget. Materials for the lower windows that open will not be received by the time school opens. Windows are being created in the plywood (contractors' expense) to allow for fresh air. Windows will be replaced on second shift or weekends. The SMK boiler project was completed in the Spring.

Animal Control Shelter. The bid project produced over a dozen bids for the proposed Regional Animal Shelter to be located on land in Warren. The bid prices were too high. With adjustments to the design, the project was brought within the appropriated budget limits, however all four towns remained concerned with the loss of features (kennels, runs, interior space) with still a high price and small contingency. The Towns of Palmer and Monson, therefore, have begun to explore the rehabilitation of a former shelter in Monson. This opens two options for Ware. If possible, work with Monson and Palmer on that facility, or work with Warren on a facility. We have contacted the modular building company that constructed the facility on Greenwich Plains Road. Selectman Kruckas noted the service would be more appropriate here in town. Mr. Beckley noted the service would be for a year, currently using Palmer.

Selectman Talbot questioned the Mass Water Resources grant with October due date. Mr. Beckley noted this is a loan, not a grant, and depends on what the USDA says at the September 15, 2020 meeting. Selectman Barnes questioned what the WWTP would receive from the grant; Mr. Beckley noted the WWTP had all motors replaced at the last grant, weatherization for future.

Scheduled Appearances

- **7:15 p.m. Business Community Discussion**

Chairman Whitney noted this discussion extends from the last meeting in which the idea of creating a downtown business committee to address parking as a main concern. The Committee would recommend ideas to the Board.

Charles Lask, owner of Nat Falk, noted the idea to reverse Bank Street with proper signage would be a huge help. He noted most signs are faded. Mr. Beckley noted that Ludlow Construction could make signs within a week.

Carol Zins questioned the need for a new committee as there is already the Ware Civic and Business Association and the Construction Mitigation Committee which have gathered ideas already. Chairman Whitney noted this new Committee would report directly to the Board, specifically regarding parking. Ms. Zins noted the Construction Mitigation Committee came up with all parking areas, but with no money for signs, and unable to meet recently due to Covid-19. She noted the Community Development Authority (CDA) has done that report. Chairman Whitney noted the Board has never seen that report. He noted two businessmen came to the last meeting with ideas, and the intention is to create this Committee and get this done in a month.

Selectman Kruckas noted the business owners are paying taxes and struggling, and this Board wants to hear directly from the businesses. He noted a potential grant for facades was mentioned at a recent meeting. Chairman Whitney noted this was to start brainstorming some ideas. Selectman Morrin noted the Committee will need to find funding to put ideas into action. Selectman Kruckas noted several new businesses coming to Main Street and he noted that economic development means jobs to make the town thrive as in the past.

Tracy Opalinski, from WCBA and owner of a family business, spoke of a parking survey done by Karen Cullen (former Town Planner) which, according to State guidelines must take into account all public and private lots, technically shows enough parking. Ms. Opalinski noted this report related to movement on Main Street, but people want closer parking to Main Street. She noted this survey should be in the Planning Department.

Chairman Whitney noted the parking is not where people will use it. Selectman Morrin noted the study may indicate one thing, but the business owners know the reality.

Ms. Opalinski stated the idea came to the WCBA to take a right on Main Street, and this was brought to the Town Manager. MassDOT has noted this would be allowed during the construction period.

Mark Andrews noted that downtown parking is not a problem just during construction, but all the time. He noted his four buildings with 100 employees, and liked the reverse Bank Street and signage idea. He asked that Town remove "Town Employees Only" signs.

Rick Egan, North Brookfield Savings Bank, noted a parking perception that consumers don't stop in town as parking does not appear to be sufficient.

Dennis Craig, Hanna Devines, stated the need for parking is critical to attract business. He noted employees who must stay late at night do not feel secure to walk up to the Pleasant Street lot. Selectman Kruckas noted the need to free up parking in Veterans' Park. Mr. Beckley noted that employees may park at the Speedway during construction if there are parking issues. Chairman Whitney stated this is why the committee is needed to review this for a solution.

Mike Balicki spoke of his lot (next to Nat Falk) and noted potential but engineering review indicates it would be very expensive. Selectman Kruckas asked Mr. Beckley if grants would help; Mr. Beckley noted grants may help if job creation could be tied into the project.

Shelley Regin, Country Bank for Savings, stated that the Main Office is closed due to Covid-19, therefore the lot behind the bank and area over the garage would be available. The Bank offers to pay for signage and this would offer approximately 35 parking spaces. She noted that lighting may also be considered. Board members thanked Ms. Regin.

Tracy Opalinski stated that the Town could have purchased the blue building near Town Hall for more employee parking, and noted that Otto Florist, Talk of the Town, a psychologist and dentist have all stated their clients have difficulty finding parking. She noted spaces given to the Police Department without input from the businesses. She stated the Town needs to be more user-friendly. Chairman Whitney noted cities and towns that have parking maps. Selectman Kruckas stated the building next door to Veterans' Park could provide parking.

Mr. Lask stated that the possible façade grant would be very useful to his and other businesses. Mr. Beckley noted that PVPC is looking into this for the next grant. Rebekah DeCoursey stated that the façade grant may provide up to \$10,000. Selectman Barnes noted this was done in Palmer.

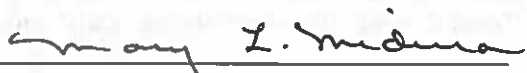
Chairman Whitney noted the makeup of the new Committee. Selectman Morrin stated the need for someone who can find grants. Selectman Kruckas suggested the Town Planner. Chairman Whitney noted there should be 5 – 8 business owners. He announced that anyone interested in serving on this Committee should send a letter or email to Mr. Beckley. The Committee will be named at the September 15, 2020 meeting.

Rebekah DeCoursey informed the Board that a map with parking is online on the Planning webpage. Selectman Kruckas noted the great job done by Palmer Paving on town roads. Selectman Barnes noted the great job done by DPW and National Grid after the storm damage. Mr. Lask noted the great job done by the Parks Department at Grenville Park; Selectman Barnes noted that a great job was done at Aspen Grove cemetery. Selectman Kruckas and Chairman Whitney praised the work of police and fire departments.

Old Business - none

Comments and Concerns of Citizens - none

Selectman Kruckas made the motion to Adjourn the Regular Meeting at 7:59 p.m. 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
Minutes Completed 9/3/2020