



Town of Bellingham

BOARD OF SELECTMEN

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Bellingham, Massachusetts 02019

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February 25, 2019

The regular scheduled meeting of the Board of Selectmen was called to order at 7:05 PM by Chairman Spencer with Mrs. McNulty and Mr. Connor in attendance.

Chairman Spencer introduced State Representative Michael Soter and stated Mr. Soter would like to provide a legislative update to the Board and town residents.

Mr. Soter thanked the Board for having him and stated he recently had a District 3 meeting to discuss a proposed project at Exit 18. The project will focus on public safety with an expansion proposal of the overpass bridge as well as some focus on economic development. There will be some environmental impacts but they recognize the need for the expansion. Mr. Soter also commented on the state budget. He cautioned that the Chapter 70 proposal is just in the infant phase and no decisions should be based on what has been proposed. Mr. Soter pointed out he is excited to finally have an office and is in the process of updating his website. There you can find his scheduled office hours as well as available times to have coffee with the state rep which he is excited to offer on a monthly basis.

Chairman Spencer asked what kind of design was proposed at Exit 18. Mr. Soter pointed out that it is still in the developmental stages but we could be sure to see an expansion of the bridge as well as some economic development ideas. Mr. Soter wanted to also publicly announce particularly to Selectmen Michael Connor that he did not co-sponsor the bill being pushed forward to eliminate tackle football.

Kelly Brown – The Green Communities Division

Mrs. Kelly Brown from the Green Communities Division was asked by resident Jan Greene to present to the Board of Selectmen. Mrs. Brown explained her division is the energy hub to all Massachusetts cities and towns not just those designated "Green Communities". She explained the program began in 2010 in an attempt to help Massachusetts communities reduce energy use and costs by implementing clean energy projects throughout the community. The program provides up to \$20M annually in grants and loans to qualifying communities. In order to qualify as a Green Community, communities must meet qualification criteria in 5 categories. A summary of those is attached. Currently 250 municipalities have adopted the Board of Building Regulations and Standards Stretch Code for new construction allowing them to be a Green Community. Mrs. Brown describes the stretch code more of a performance path.

Mr. Spencer asked what costs were associated with meeting these criteria and grant writing. Mrs. Brown explained each Green Community Town is designated a certain percentage to help cover the costs. But further went on to explain that the MAPC will work with the Town on all aspects of becoming a Green Community. Mrs. McNulty asked if they could connect us with local neighbors who are already designated as a

Green Community to help us understand the process and the Town's responsibilities on meeting the criteria and reporting to the division. Mr. Connor asked why any remaining towns would object to going green. Mrs. Brown pointed out the biggest obstacle in the past has been meeting the standards of the stretch code. But as she pointed out and then confirmed with Tim Aicardi, the Town's building inspector, a lot of the criteria of the stretch code is the same criteria as the standard base code we follow now. Mrs. Brown informed the Board that if they are interested there is an informational presentation that focuses primarily on the stretch code that she could present at another time.

Jan Greene, the Bellingham resident who asked Mrs. Kelly Brown to present, stated she is eager to volunteer her time to see that the Town adopts this designation and would be willing to arrange conversations to make that happen. Joyce Notine, another Bellingham resident in attendance asked who she could address her concerns and questions to. Under discussion she was advised to talk to Tim Aicardi about specific building code questions.

Mr. Fraine thanked Mrs. Brown for coming in and told her he would be in touch and advised he would provide the residents with ongoing updates.

Fire Chief – Budget Review

Fire Chief Gentile appeared before the Board to present the Fire Department's budget. He began by thanking the Board for having him and asked if he could read a brief statement to be included in the meeting's minutes. Chairman Spencer allowed him to do so.

Fire Chief: The Bellingham Fire department has become the 4th busiest department in the area behind Franklin, Milford, and the City of Woonsocket. They department's requests for services continue to expand. As the town and its demographics change and the fire department staffing do not, it sets into place an emergency response system designed for failure. Over the years I have presented requests for additional staffing knowing the signs of this flawed design. I said it time again and I will say it again, "Eventually someone is going to get hurt because of a lack of help." At this point we can only hope we do not suffer a catastrophic loss and the inevitable litigation that would follow if we fail to deliver the essential, and expected emergency response services. Thirty years ago you called the fire department for a fire or medical emergency and you waited and you took your chances. Today when the public calls they expect prompt, professional and efficient service. Chief John Eversole said it best "Our department takes 1000 calls every day. Do you know how many of the calls the public expects perfection on? 1000. Nobody calls the fire department and says send me two dumb-ass firemen in a pickup truck. In three minutes they want five brain surgeon decathlon champions to come and solve all their problems". Eversole, J. (2010). The citizens of Bellingham are not different the only question town government has to answer is not if these emergencies are going to occur; it is a given that they will. But rather, the bigger question is; when these emergencies do occur, does the town want to have the manpower available to mitigate these emergencies? The Town has invested

resources into the facilities and equipment to protect the town, we need to continue to invest in our greatest assets – the firefighters who operate these resources and put their lives on the line for the community. In addition, if manpower is not increased we are setting up the fire department for failure and leaving the town exposed to tremendous loss and potential tragedy. We employ two fire captains who handle fire prevention. They are responsible for the inspections of (192) class 3 commercial buildings, (102) class 4 industrial units and all residential construction both new and resale. The Bellingham Fire Department is also expected to protect over \$2,372,628,567 in overall assets in the community. As your Fire Chief I respectfully ask that the Board authorize and fund the fire department to eight full time firefighters per shift. This decision is made based on need. The need will not diminish, it will only increase.

The Chief explained he has reduced his budget by \$50,000 to reflect Mr. Fraine's initial review. But continued on to say his department can't keep operating with the lack of manpower. He explained every time a call comes in for an ambulance he must send out an engine to allow for all available personnel to participate at a medical scene. He has two ambulances but only has the staffing for one engine. He explained that his department is constantly depending on Medway for calls to North Bellingham. Mr. Connor asked about how many times a month the town asked Medway for back up. Chief estimated about 20 times in the last two months. Chief credited his department for doing more with less. He explained he did a manpower study to prove that additional staff is needed. Chairman Spencer acknowledged the fact that the Board is working on a plan for staffing but they have to work within the constraints that they have and unfortunately additional staffing it is not going to happen during this year's budget process. The Town has two years of debt structure to clear off and unless the residents want an override then the decision has to be made to continue the service as it is. Deputy Fire Chief Mark Poirier explained there is a Safe Grant to help with adequate staffing and explained the Town could receive money for additional manpower needed by way of the grant but some financial responsibility would still fall on the town. Mr. Fraine stated that realistically we wouldn't have enough money to contribute our portion of the grant but acknowledged the need for additional staffing. Chairman Spencer advised the Deputy Chief to get started on writing the grant but not to waste too much of his time on it. The Board will vote at the upcoming Budget Workshop to ultimately transmit the FY20 Fire Department budget to the Finance Committee.

On a McNulty/Connor motion the Board unanimously voted to accept the Order of Taking to complete the layout and acceptance of Cooks Lane as a public way.

On a McNulty/Connor motion the Board unanimously voted to award Contract 2019-TM, 2019 Annual Bid for Traffic Marking to the low bidder Hi-Way Safety Systems, Inc. of Rockland, MA in the amount of \$54,884.00.

On a Connor/McNulty motion the Board unanimously voted to award Contract 2019-TSMR, 2019 Annual Bid for Traffic Signal Maintenance and Repairs to the low bidder Pine Ridge Technologies, Inc. of Wakefield, MA in the amount of \$19,080.

On a McNulty/Connor motion the Board unanimously voted to award Contract 2019-FTA, Water & Sewer Facilities Repair Technical Assistance to the low bidder Williamson Electrical Co., Inc. of Chelsea, MA in the amount of \$43,580.

On a Connor/McNulty motion the Board unanimously voted to authorize emergency spending for Snow and Ice.

Mr. Don DiMartino presented the Board a draft of the Residential Irrigation Backflow Device Testing Policy and Procedure. Currently there is no policy set in place. Residents with irrigation systems must have their devices test on an annual basis which is a requirement of the Massachusetts Drinking Water Regulations as well as the Bellingham Water Use Regulations. Most units are outdoors and are easily accessible to test but there are a handful of them inside that require appointments and some are behind locked fences. Adopting a policy will allow the DPW to enforce that this test is completed each year. The Board is in favor of adopting a policy but agreed with the recommendation of Mr. DiMartino that a Public Hearing should take place in order to introduce a new policy.

On a McNulty/Connor motion, the Board unanimously voted to approve the following abatements for the months of October, November & December: municipal water, \$5,105.11; municipal sewer, \$2,599.35; residential water, \$33,433.46; residential sewer, \$5,402.97; residential trash, \$2,066.31. Under discussion, Mr. Connor questioned the large abatement request for NECC. Mr. Fraine explained this is one of the accounts the corrections were being caught up to speed.

On a McNulty/Connor motion, the Board unanimously voted to approve the following January abatements: Capital Improvement Charge, \$52.50; Residential Sewer, \$61.05; Residential Trash, \$144.06; Residential Water, \$11,753.14. The DPW sent these abatements to the Board in a different format. The Board agreed this new format was easier to read but requested a few minor adjustments to the spreadsheet.

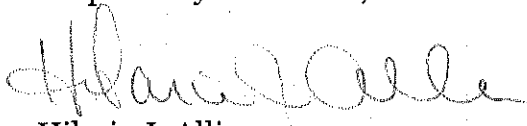
The Board was asked to reconsider a vote where no action was taken at the January 28, 2019 Board of Selectmen Meeting. Safety Officer Lee Rolls submitted a detailed explanation as to why he felt the Board should reconsider allowing the installation of a street light at the end of the cul-de-sac at 34 Susan Lane. On a McNulty/Spencer motion, the Board unanimously voted to approve the placement of a street light on the last pole as you are entering the cul-de-sac at 34 Susan Lane. Under discussion, Mr. Connor voiced his opposition but voted in favor regardless stating he appreciated Mr. Roll's further explanation.

Mr. Fraine asked the Board if they would like to discuss the issue of the extra recycling containers at the same Public Hearing that Mr. DiMartino plans to have regarding the Residential Irrigation Backflow Device Testing Policy and Procedure. The Board agreed that the upcoming hearing would be a good time discuss the issue.

Mr. Fraine stated that he along with the COA Director Josie Dutil and two Board members would be interviewing potential architects for the expansion of the Senior Center. He also stated that Saturday March 2nd is the Annual Budget Review meeting being conducted by the Board of Selectmen for various departments and anyone was welcome to attend.

On a McNulty/Connor motion, the Board unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting at 9:04 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Hilarie J. Allie", written in dark ink.

Hilarie J. Allie
Administrative Assistant