

Town of Bellingham

BOARD OF SELECTMEN

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October 16, 2023

The Selectboard meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM in the Arcand Meeting Room by Chairman Michael Connor. Actively participating in the meeting were the following Board members: Mr. Connor, Mr. Sahin, Mr. Hennessy and Mrs. Odabashian. Also actively participating in the meeting was Interim Town Administrator Beth Cornell-Smith and Administrative Assistant Hilarie Allie. This meeting was accessible to the public either in-person or via the Zoom online option.

Chairman Connor welcomed Town Administrator Denis Fraine who had asked to be put on the agenda to address the Board and to say thank you. Mr. Fraine thanked Mrs. Cornell-Smith and the Board for the all their support and stated he is proud to be a part of this community. Words of appreciation were shared by the Board members as well as members of the audience. Mr. Fraine stated he will be retiring on Friday October 20th. He promised to continue to be a family face around Town Hall.

Mr. Connor stated the Board would not be discussing or voting on the Capital Items as stated on the agenda as final numbers have not been determined.

Appointment of CFO Heidi Chuckran

Mrs. Cornell-Smith stated she is asking the Board to approve her recommendation and appoint Heidi Chuckran as the next CFO. She explained Ms. Chuckran is the sitting Town Accountant in Mattapoisett and will be starting with the Town on Monday November 20th. On a Hennessy/Sahin motion the Board unanimously voted 4-0 to appoint Heidi Chuckran as Bellingham's next CFO.

Age & Dementia Friendly Task Force

Kay Page & Jim Fitzpatrick, cochair of the Age & Dementia Friendly Task Force, presented themselves before the Board to discuss administering a Needs Assessment in the Town of Bellingham. This assessment is one of the requirements needed in obtaining the designation of an Age & Dementia Friendly Town and would allow the Town to be eligible for grants and funding through AARP. The assessment would be administered by UMass Dartmouth and would be performed on the whole Town and would focus on areas of the Town that need improvement whether it be housing, communication, transportation, etc. The data collected could also be used for future grant money. The assessment is performed over a one year period and costs roughly \$30,000-\$40,000. Ms. Dutil, Senior Center Director, stated this is a powerful document that would provide the Town with a lot of useful data. Mr. Connor stated the Board would need more information to include the scope, output and exact cost and then look to fund the assessment.

Senior Tax Work Off – Legislation Update

Mr. Sahan stated that a recent tax legislation increased the amount that allows for seniors to reduce their property tax from \$1500 to \$2000 and stated he would like the Board to vote to make this change. Mr. Connor stated the Town has allocated \$135,000 for the

program and stated if they vote to move the benefit from \$1500 to \$2000 it would limit the number of participants. Mrs. Cornell-Smith stated the program runs from December 1st to November 30th, so she advised the Board not to make any changes until the start of the new program year. Mr. Connor recommended putting this back on an agenda in December and by then we would have a better idea of the number of seniors who participated in the program and how many hit the \$1500 threshold.

John Petrin – Community Paradigm

Mr. Petrin presented before the Board and stated that their company selected 4 finalists and all background checks have been completed. The finalists are as follows: Sean Hendricks, Timothy McInerney, Steven Sette & Ari Sky. He stated the resumes and cover letters will be available to the Board at the end of this meeting and that interviews are scheduled for next Monday night, October 23rd at 4PM. Mr. Petrin explained that he will ask the interview questions, but the Board can jump in at any point. It is his understanding that the Board will not discuss the candidates at the conclusion of that meeting but will do so instead the next afternoon. Mr. Connor confirmed this and stated that due to Open Meeting Laws the Board is unable to discuss the candidates outside of a public meeting.

Appointment

On an Odabashian/Hennessy motion the Board unanimously voted 4-0 to appoint Christine Mansfield as the Deputy Assistant Treasurer Collector effective Thursday October 19, 2023.

Bid Award

On a Sahin/Hennessy motion the Board unanimously voted 4-0 to award the RFQ Grove Street Standpipe Antenna Lease to Cellco Partnership d/b/a Verizon Wireless of Basking Ridge, NJ.

Mr. Connor asked that the Board add an additional meeting in December to discuss the enterprise funds as well as add a meeting the night of Town Meeting in the event there are any items that need to be discussed prior to the meeting.

Community Garden

On an Odabashian/Hennessy motion the Board unanimously voted 4-0 to approve the rate increase for non-compliant members of the Community Garden. The rate schedule is as follows:

Compliant Rate Returnees: Plot Fee \$40 or 2 Plots for \$75; Raised Bed \$10

New Members: Plot Fee \$100 (only 1 plot per season for new members)

Non-Compliant Members: Plot Fee \$125 per plot

Town Administrator Report

Mrs. Cornell-Smith stated the Power Choice letters have gone out and the rates decreased. Mrs. Cornell-Smith stated Mr. Aicardi is working on refurbishing Pearl Street Garage and this will be the new location for the Town Carpenter. Mr. Aicardi stated he outgrew the shop at the Recycle Center and then moved to the North Fire Station, but that shop is now

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being used by the Fire Department. Mr. Aicardi stated for a little bit of money they will be able to get the building up and running.

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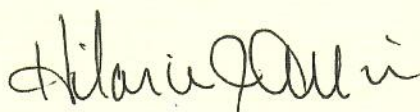
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Mr. Aicardi stated he is currently working on replacing the fire panel and devices in the Town Hall.

Mr. Connor read the request for an executive session pertaining to contract negotiations and all members of the Board were polled by Mrs. Allie and all voted in the affirmative.

On an Odabashian/Hennessy motion, the Board unanimously voted 4-0 to adjourn the meeting at 8:08 PM with no further business to be discussed at the conclusion of the executive session.

Respectfully submitted,

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

Hilarie J. Allie
Administrative Assistant