



# **Town of Bellingham**

## **BOARD OF SELECTMEN**

10 Mechanic Street

Bellingham, Massachusetts 02019

Tel: 508-657-2800 \* 508-966-4425

October 18, 2021

The Selectboard meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM by Chairwoman Cindy McNulty. All Board members, with the exception of Mr. Spencer, were in attendance and participating in the Arcand Meeting Room. Mr. Spencer was participating via the Zoom online option. Also actively participating in the meeting was Town Administrator Denis Fraine and Administrative Assistant Hilarie Allie. This meeting was accessible to the public either in-person or via the Zoom online option.

### Suzanne Walton – Grove Street Digital Speed Limit Sign Request

Mrs. Suzanne Walton presented before the Board with a formal request for a digital speed limit sign to be placed on Grove Street. Mrs. Walton stated she has been working with Officer Lee Rolls the past 9 months regarding her concerns of the speeding traffic. She stated she realized this was a big ask but explained the thickly settled signs and the children at play signs recently installed by the DPW have not helped. Mrs. McNulty thanked her for coming in and noted she has valid concerns. Mrs. McNulty asked to hear from Officer Rolls who agreed with Mrs. Walton that the traffic on Grove Street is a concern due to all the business on the Milford side. He agreed a digital speed limit sign would be the best option. Mr. Connor suggested they try using the portable digital sign that is currently in front of the middle school. It is battery operated and rechargeable. Mr. Spencer agreed to relocate that sign first to see if it makes an impact on the current situation. If it does he suggested when it comes time to mitigate with the proposed warehouse on Depot Street and/or with Lobisser that they ask for help with a more permanent sign. Mr. Fraine stated he would talk to Officer Houston about moving the portable sign for a temporary period.

### Depot Street – Purchase of Property

Mr. Fraine stated that during a recent Executive Session the Selectboard approved the purchase of a facility at 215 Depot Street for \$2.7M. Town Council is close to drafting the Purchase & Sale and the Board has approved Chairwoman McNulty to sign. Next steps would then be approval at Town Meeting. Mr. Fraine stated the Town was fortunate to find this property which consists of 13,000 square feet of garage space with an additional 10,000 feet of buildable office space. Mr. Tim Aicardi, Building Commissioner, stated that the space is already plumbed, has sewer, power and will be able to hook up to water from the street. They have hired an independent inspection and the report will be ready before Town Meeting. Mr. Don DiMartino, Director of the DPW, stated this will solve the problem of storing their vehicles during the winter and the lack of office space. Eventually Depot Street will house the operations of the entire DPW and the Blackstone location will be used for the salt & ice shed and seasonal storage of vehicles. Mr. Fraine stated they were at a crisis point with the current state of the DPW facility and this will solve their problems. Mrs. Grant asked what the total cost will be with the purchase and build out of the new offices and Mr. Fraine stated they will be budgeting \$5M but will have more detailed costs soon.

Mr. Spencer stated that he was part of the committee back in 2009/2010 that was looking at building a new facility and the cost back then was roughly \$8-10M.

On a Grant/Martinis motion the Board unanimously voted 5-0 to approve the September abatements in the amount of \$1,770.57. Under discussion Mr. Spencer gave kudos once again to Barbara Sooklal at the DPW for doing a great job with these.

On a Connor/Grant motion the Board unanimously voted 5-0 to re-appoint Darrell Crow to the Cultural Council for a 3 year term.

On a Spencer/Grant motion the Board unanimously voted 5-0 to approve the September 20<sup>th</sup> minutes as submitted.

#### Senior Tax Work Off Program

Mr. Fraine stated that Cheryl Hanley in the assessor's office had done a great job gathering information about Senior Tax Work Off Programs in the immediate area and found that we have one of the most thriving programs which is not surprising as Bellingham was the 2<sup>nd</sup> community in the state to adopt such a program back in the mid 90's. It did show that we have of the highest participation of members but the lowest per hour rate. The program renews again December 1<sup>st</sup> and Mr. Fraine suggested the Board take a look at the hourly rate. Currently the Town does not cap the number of participants but does cap the appropriation at \$125,000 for residents and another \$25,000 for veterans. The Board discussed raising the hourly rate to \$13.50 which is the State minimum wage and discussed a budget cap of \$150,000. No motion was taken to allow Mr. Fraine time to crunch numbers with Mrs. MacKinnon, CFO. The Board will take a vote at the November 1<sup>st</sup> meeting.

Mr. Connor stated he was disappointed with the paving job that was recently done on his street. He stated the vendor was making false claims to the residents and Mr. Connor expressed his concerns with this. Mr. Fraine stated he would look into this for him.

#### Town Administrator's Report

Mr. Fraine stated he recently learned about an issue with tractor trailer trucks parked on Depot Street in front of Best Buy. Apparently the trucks have been stacking and waiting early in the morning for the facility to open causing a backup on Depot Street. Officer Rolls has spoken to them and Mr. Aicardi spoke to the facility manager and they are aware of the issue and are working to fix it. The Town will put up signs and begin to tow if the problem continues.

DCR plans to advertise the bid in November to complete the SNETT from Fox Run to Harpin and the project will take a year to complete. The parking at Harpin will be part of the next phase of the project. Mr. Connor stated he could foresee a problem with this and continued street parking on Harpin and Mr. Fraine suggested getting initial funding at the Fall Town meeting for the environmental assessment to demolish the old Primera school and then go to the Annual Spring Town Meeting with a proposal to take it down.

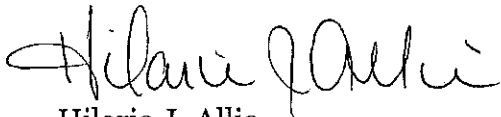
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Mr. Martinis suggested the Town look into installing a disc golf course behind the middle school. Mr. Connor stated he would look into what space would be available from a sports complex review that is being done and suggested it could be a possible Eagle Scout project.

On a Grant/Connor motion, the Board unanimously voted 5-0 to adjourn the meeting at 8:00 PM

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Hilarie J. Allie". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Hilarie" being more prominent than the last name "Allie".

Hilarie J. Allie  
Administrative Assistant