



# Town of Bellingham

## BOARD OF SELECTMEN

10 Mechanic Street

Bellingham, Massachusetts 02019

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

October 5, 2020

The Selectboard meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM by Chairman Michael Connor. All members of the Board were participating in the Arcand meeting room with the exception of Mr. Spencer who was participating via Zoom technology. It was determined by Governor Baker's March 12, 2020 Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, and the Governor's March 15, 2020 Order imposing strict limitations on the number of people that may gather in one place that no in-person attendance of Board members or any member of the public would be permitted at this meeting. Therefore, this meeting was accessible to the public via the Zoom online option.

### Larry Sposato – Town Clerk

Mr. Sposato stated Early Voting will take place in the Arcand Meeting room from Saturday October 17<sup>th</sup> to Friday October 30<sup>th</sup>. A total of 14 days and the Presidential Election will take place at the High School on Tuesday November 3<sup>rd</sup> from 7AM to 8PM. Mr. Sposato stated they have been inundated with mail in ballot requests. In comparison the Town Clerk's office did 300 ballots in 2016 and this election they have already done 4000. The cost of running elections has increased substantially. They have received money from the state as well as a grant and they have also been able to use COVID funds but they will need to keep this in mind when doing future budgeting. Mr. Sposato has spoken to State Rep Soter about eliminating the number of precincts or at the very least combining some to cut down on election costs. Mr. Sposato will meet with the Board again in January to discuss this for the May election.

### State Rep Mike Soter

Rep Soter presented before the Board to provide a general update on COVID and budgets at the State level. Rep Soter stressed how important it is for the residents to continue wearing their masks, washing their hands and sanitizing as much as possible. He stated they would be meeting with the Governor to discuss tax revenue and mentioned he was hopeful Chapter 70 and Chapter 90 would be fully funded as promised.

Rep Soter stated he has been working with the residents of Center Street to move their mailboxes to the side of the street where they reside as a result of a longtime resident and active member of the community was struck and killed while checking her mail on the other side of the road. After being denied permission from the United State Postal Service to move their current mailboxes, Rep Soter purchased, delivered and erected new mailboxes and asked the local news to televise it in order to draw attention to the story. Mr. Martinis stated the residents on Maple Street including himself are having the same problem. Rep Soter agreed they should do the same thing on Maple Street. Mr. Soter stated another concern of his that he has been working on is the mandated flu vaccine for Massachusetts students. He is hoping to discuss this with the Governor as well.

Mr. Connor stated the Board appreciates all Rep Soter does for the community and its residents and would like to invite him back every three to four months for updates.

On a Grant/McNulty motion the Board unanimously moved that all previous approvals for expansion of outdoor table service that were granted pursuant to Section 4 of COVID-19 order number 35 of the Governor with an expiration date of November 1, 2020 be extended to and until 60 days after the end of the state of emergency. Under discussion, Mr. Kupfer stated that he and the inspection team have been visiting the local restaurants to ensure heating devices and egresses are all within code.

On a Martinis/Grant motion the Board unanimously voted to approve the CRPCD Capacity Request for Red Mill (Snowflake LLC) for an actual daily flow of about 36,000 gallons per day.

On a Grant/McNulty motion the Board unanimously voted to abate the following charges for the month of August:

Capital Improvement	\$285.00
Sewer	\$329.30
Sewer Service Charge	\$42.60
Trash	\$593.35
Water	\$2,125.58
Water Service Charge	<u>\$19.00</u>
Total August Abatement	<b>\$3,394.33*</b>

\*The Board took out and further discussed two water charges listed on the August Abatements; one charge was in the amount of \$9000 and the other one for \$1,200. They requested further clarification from the DPW before making a decision.

#### Town Administrator Report

Mr. Fraine stated the Fall Town Meeting would take place in the high school auditorium and they would set up an additional room if overflow is needed. The Board discussed having residents reserve a spot for the meeting and having a seating plan prior to the meeting. Mr. Fraine said he will look into this.

There will be a Halloween event on Saturday October 31<sup>st</sup>. Carved pumpkins can be left in the island in front of Town Hall and residents will be able to drive by and look at them. Mrs. Altomonte is working on the event and any suggestions or comments can be directed to her.

Mr. Fraine presented to the Board an abatement request for a resident with an outstanding ambulance bill from 2016. The resident stated he had received multiple invoices from the billing agency for the service he received but assumed his insurance company would take care of it. The billing agency for the Town then turned over the bill to a collection agency who also reached out to the resident. The resident said he would

look into it but never called them back. The outstanding invoice is now on his credit report and he would like the Town to pay and have it removed. Mr. Spencer stated the regulations in collections in Massachusetts is so highly monitored and it is his opinion that the Town not abate. Mrs. Grant agreed with Mr. Spencer as did Mr. Connor. Mr. Connor felt if the resident had been receiving bills for 4 years he should have reached out prior to now. Mr. Martinis stated if he had been receiving bills for 4 years he should have known something wasn't right and just ignoring it doesn't make it go away. He too was in favor of not abating. Mr. Spencer also stated that the Town used a billing agency who in turn turned it over to a collections agency and at this point the original creditor (Town of Bellingham) should not get involved.

Based on the reasons noted above, the Board unanimously voted on a Connor/Martinis motion to take no action on this matter.

The Board will be completely virtual at their next meeting and will not be meeting in the Arcand Meeting Room as it will be set up for Early voting.

On a McNulty/Grant motion, the Board unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting at 8:25 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

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

Hilarie J. Allie  
Administrative Assistant