

Selectboard Meeting Minutes for July 27, 2020

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*****ALL VOTES ARE ROLL CALL*****

6:00 PM - OPEN MEETING

1. CALL TO ORDER: Chairman Bannon opened the meeting at 6:00 pm, those “present” via zoom: L. Davis; Kate Burke; Bill Cooke; E. Abrahams; and Town Manager, M. Pruhenski.
2. SELECTBOARD’S ANNOUNCEMENTS/STATEMENTS:
 - A. General Comments by the Board. No one had comments tonight.
3. TOWN MANAGER’S REPORT:
 - A. Department updates:
 - The water stations are opening, as bottle filling stations.
 - There are two in Great Barrington and one in Housatonic.
 - The plastic bag ban will be back in place tomorrow: Tuesday, July 28th, 2020.
 - The Board and committee vacancies are on the home page of the website, and advertised on Facebook.
 - B. Project Updates:
 - GB Labs update
 - Housatonic Water Works update
 - Bridges Division -Brown Bridge
 - C. Interns Individual Bios (under J. Grochmal supervision):
 - George Prichard – Chemistry teacher from Riverdale Country School; GB Labs resident; Graduate of Bard College; built website.
 - Meryl Phair – Journalism student from Mount Holyoke College; went to Monument Mountain Regional High School; created the podcast and labs media content; used to write bios.
 - Tate Coleman – GB Labs resident; working on Regional Transportation traffic study; permit reviews and continuing education at Bard College.
 - Cathy Zang – Computer Science student at Bard College; launching the GB Labs Pandemic Poetry for the lab.
 - Joseph Grochmal – Director of GB Labs; graduate of Monument Mountain and Harvard.

D. Other information:

- GB Labs Safe stickers – a short form for business owners to show a high standard of cleanliness to prevent Covid-19 spreading.
- GB Labs Pandemic Poetry – to document the feelings of the pandemic through civic engagement; to enjoy summer at the Great 8, hiking and visiting the park, taking pictures and tagging GB Labs on Instagram/social media.
- Run 91.01 – August 10/fundraising event for VIM and NAACP – GoFundMe page and recording with Go Pro for marketing purposes.
- Renga – (Japanese poetry) Pandemic poetry as a way to be creative.

5. Housatonic Water Works Co. – Executive summary about resident concerns regarding water quality.

- Great Barrington Fire District – quasi-municipal entity with taxing authority managed by Prudential Committee and professional staff. It has 40 miles of water mains, 316 hydrants and serves 4,000 customers with 1,643 connections. Rates are regulated by the Department of Public Utilities (DPU) and the water quality is regulated by the Department of Environment Protection (DEP).
- Housatonic Waterworks, Inc. (HWW) – private utility company that consists of 17 miles of mains/pipes, 55 hydrants, serves about 14,000 customers and businesses through 865 connections.
- Customers complain about brown (roily) water were mentioned and the Housatonic Water, Inc. hired a DPC-Engineer to conduct a study of the water systems in town. The report was submitted in October of 2018. Town has been working with local legislators, DEP, DPU, representatives of both water companies, and the engineers to find a long-term solution to the problem. During FY21 budget process, funding were included for Phase 2 Study, and HWW appraisal.
- Local legislators, town representatives of water companies, convened to evaluate these options:
 - i. Town purchase HWW
 - ii. Town encourage merger
 - iii. Town enter into a public/private partnership with one or both
 - iv. Both companies could stay as is (status quo)
- Phase 2 and appraisal will cost approximately \$50,000 (engineer funds approved as of July 15, 2020).
- Recommendation from staff is for Selectboard proceed with Phase 2 Study and appraisal, and continue to work with HWW; DEP to work on corrosion control, flushing and better outreach.
- Representative S. Pignatelli reached out to say he made an amendment to House Bill #4879, seeking \$50,000 in funding for feasibility study of the meager of the water systems, which is titled: An Act enabling partnership of Growth. The Town Manager thanked him.
- M. Loubert, Division Street of Housatonic, stated that the water complaints came in earlier than 2018. HWW did not follow the schedule.

- Citizens:
 - i. Eileen Mooney – asked if anyone from the water companies were there?
 - ii. Mark Colombo, Park Street – worked at Fire Department stated a few points:
 1. Water quality is an issue but water quantity is a bigger problem. The amount of water for a fire approximately is 150-250 gallons per minute. The concern of the flow of water for a fire they require 3-4 hoses. It is in the flow.
 2. The Great Barrington Fire District can work appropriately, whereas the HWW flow is not adequate to the fire hydrants. The fire hydrants hasn't been updated since G. Cleveland administration.
 - iii. Denise Forbes, Housatonic – moved here in 2010 and said the water quality is substandard.
 - iv. Terri Caphlan, Housatonic – owner of B&B says the water quality is poor. The sheets have been ruined and purchase a water filter; concerned about the guests ratings.
 - v. Suzanne Fowle, 40 Kirk St. – moved here in 2003 and mentioned the brown water and the water turned off without warning.
 - vi. Trevor Forbes, North Plain Rd. Housatonic – complemented E. Abrahams about newspaper article. He doesn't have much to add, but affronts him that a private owner isn't taking care of their business is appalling.
 - vii. Dr. Ruby Chang, 1 Roger Rd. Great Barrington – wants information about DEP interactions with the town. She said there is a concern over town resident's health and the amount of contaminants in the water. She wants an independent water testing, once the person's health is affected, it can't take that back. We know how important it is to have clean water. Where is the data?
 - viii. M. Pruhenski has water test results of multiples sites in Housatonic from May & June 2020, from the DEP, they can be posted on the website.
 - ix. Maura Perry, North Plain Housatonic – would like a community liaison for transparency and communications.
 - x. Heather Berberi, Housatonic – any suggestions for the residents moving forward?
 - xi. L. Davis, state aid will be helpful. M. Pruhenski said that the Phase 2 Study is lo look at the feasibility of the choices available.
- 6. E. Abrahams made motion to accept the recommendation of the staff proceed, with the Phase 2 Study and the appraisal of Housatonic Water Works; B. Cooke seconded; Roll Call Vote; L. Davis, "aye"; K. Burke, "aye"; B. Cooke, "aye"; E. Abrahams, "aye"; and S. Bannon, "aye"; All in Favor, 5-0.
- 7. Bridges (Division and Brown Bridge) - M. Pruhenski gave update on the Brown Bridge has been delayed. It is a DOT project. Will take longer than hoped, signage has gone up.

The repairs consists of steel work, coat of paint, will cost approximately \$2 million dollars. It is a state bridge, will have two lanes of traffic across it. The Division Street Bridge, engineers are working on emergency repair plans, about 60% completion. Once plans are reviewed by DOT and approved by the Board, could go out to bid in the fall 2020, work in winter 2020/2021 and finished by summer of 2021. Other good news, DOT has notified Town that may be eligible for a transportation grant for \$12 million dollars in transportation improvement bill, to use state funds, not Town funds. Michelle Loubert brought up her concern of the weight limit on the bridge, has sent a video tape to DOT.

4. Licenses or Permits:

- A. Jeff Caminiti/Public House Inc./20 Railroad Public House for Temporary Weekday Entertainment License from 7/18/20-10/15/20 from 4:00 pm – 9:00 pm on Patio Entrance of Triplex Theater. (Discussion/Vote)
E. Abrahams made motion to approve the temporary Weekday Entertainment License from 7/18/20- 10/15/20, from 4pm. - 9pm. at entrance of Triplex Theatre, B. Cooke seconded; Roll Call Vote; L. Davis, “aye”; K. Burke,”aye”; B. Cooke,”aye”; E. Abrahams,”aye”; and S. Bannon, “aye”; All in Favor, 5-0.
- B. Janis Martinson/Mahaiwe Performing Arts Center, Inc. for Temporary Sunday Outdoor Entertainment License for September 6, 2020 from 8:00 pm – 11:59 pm at Parking Lot Daniel Arts Center, Bard College at Simon’s Rock, Alford Road. (Discussion/Vote) E. Abrahams made motion for Temporary Sunday Outdoor Entertainment License for September 6, 2020; from 8pm. - 11:59pm., B. Cooke seconded; Roll Call Vote; L. Davis, “aye”; K.Burke,”aye”; B. Cooke, “aye”; E. Abrahams, “aye”; and S. Bannon, “aye”; All in Favor, 5-0.
- C. Janis Martinson/Mahaiwe Performing Arts Center, Inc. for Temporary Weekday Outdoor Entertainment License for August 12, 13, 14, 15, 19, 20 21, 22, 26, 27, 28, 29, September 3, 4, 5, 10, 11, 12, 2020 from 8:00 pm – 11:59 pm at Parking Lot, Daniel Arts Center, Bard College at Simon’s Rock, Alford Road. (Discussion/Vote) E. Abrahams made a motion to approve the Temporary Weekday Outdoor Entertainment License for: August 12, 13, 14, 15, 19, 20, 21, 22, 26, 27, 28, 29; September 3, 4, 5, 10, 11, 12, 2020, from 8 pm. - 11:59 pm, B. Cooke seconded; Roll Call Vote; L. Davis, “aye”; K. Burke, “aye”; B. Cooke,”aye”; E. Abrahams, “aye”; and S. Bannon, “aye”; All in Favor, 5-0.

5. New Business:

- A. SB – Appointment of Citizen at Large to the Economic Development Committee. (Discussion/Vote) E. Abrahams made motion to appoint Robert Holcomb as Citizen at Large to Economic Development Committee, B. Cooke seconded; Roll Call Vote; L. Davis, “aye”; K. Burke, “aye”; B. Cooke, “aye”; E. Abrahams, “aye”; and S. Bannon, “aye”; All in Favor, 5-0.
- B. SB – Appointment(s) to the Historic District Commission. (Discussion/Vote) Regular member and Alternate member E. Abrahams made motion to appoint Fred Clark, to Regular Member of the Historic District Commission, B. Cooke seconded; Roll Call Vote; L. Davis, “aye”; K. Burke, “aye”; B. Cooke, “aye”; E. Abrahams, “aye”; and S. Bannon, “aye”; All in Favor, 5-0. E. Abrahams made motion to appoint Bill Nappo, has Alternative Member of the Historic

- District Commission, B. Cooke, seconded; Roll Call Vote; L. Davis, “aye”; K. Burke, “aye”; B. Cooke, “aye”; E. Abrahams, “aye”; and S. Bannon, “aye”; All in Favor, 5-0.
- C. SB – Economic Development Committee – Next Steps. (Discussion) August 3, 2020.
- D. SB - Discussion re: Community Preservation Act (CPA) Funding Priorities. L. Davis gave update of Committee; which is working on Annual Plan. The next meeting is on Tuesday, September 8, 2020; at 5:00 pm., L. Davis would like the Selectboard to make any feedback on the priorities of the CPA. The deadline for step one is Friday, October 2, 2020; and Step 2 is November 6, 2020. * B. Cooke brought up Affordable Housing monies for rehabilitation of homes.
- E. SB–Quarterly Tax Payments vs. Semi-Annual Tax Payments. (Discussion/Vote) M. Pruhenski talked of the quarterly Tax Payments to ease citizen’s tax bills payment responsibilities. S. Carmel, downside is more mailings, though have the part time person who can help with this burden. Will help with cash flow, into town budget. S. McHugh, little more work, feels the “right” thing to do for Town people. E. Abrahams made motion to endorse the idea of quarterly real estate tax payments and to put on recommendation to put on the Warrant for September 15, 2020; B. Cooke seconded; Roll Call Vote; L. Davis, “aye”; K. Burke, “aye”; B. Cooke, “aye”; E. Abrahams, “aye”; and S. Bannon, “aye”; All in Favor, 5-0.
- F. SB – W.E.B. Dubois Legacy Committee – Updates (Discussion/Vote) Gwen VanSant, Vice Chair, spoke of the updates of the re - naming of the Middle School and the statue. School re-naming was a community choice, went to West Stockbridge, Stockbridge, and Great Barrington Town meetings and all towns were favorable. G. VanSant will go to Berkshire Hills School Committee Meeting, to make presentation of re- naming of Middle School. Wants the endorsement of Selectboard to move forward with the re- naming of School and Legacy Committee engage with this effort.
- G. Abrahams made motion to endorse the Legacy Committee to participate in the re- naming of the Middle School and to make presentation at School Committee, B. Cooke seconded; Roll Call Vote; L. Davis, “aye”; K. Burke, “aye”; B. Cooke, “aye”, E. Abrahams, “aye”; and S. Bannon, “aye”; All in Favor, 5-0.
- She read an article about statutes of adding Black Members of United States, in Public spaces, to be more inclusive. E. Abrahams made motion to endorse, participation, and engagement to the Legacy Committee, about the statute, B. Cooke seconded; Roll Call Vote; L. Davis, “aye”; K. Burke, “aye”; B. Cooke, “aye”, E. Abrahams, “aye”; and S. Bannon, “aye”; All in Favor, 5-0.

6. Citizen Speak Time:

Citizen Speak Time is an opportunity for the Selectboard to listen to residents. Topics of particular concern or importance may be placed on a future agenda for discussion. This time is reserved for town residents only unless otherwise permitted by the chair, and speakers are limited to 3 minutes each.

- Elizabeth Rockefeller-Park Street, Housatonic, not new problem, over 47 years. One of the Mercer’s unexpectedly came to her home, said she “is a liar” and the pictures are “fabricated” that were sent to Selectboard,; water has been dirty for 27 days this month, can’t use. The rates are increased.

- Susan Fowle, Housatonic, was lead in water. There is no safe level of lead! Mr. Mercer has lied.
- Michelle Loubert, Housatonic, wanted to know about the Artesian Well at Cooke's Garage, Great Barrington owns Garage. Pool trucks use to come out of there. K. Burke stated to close to the train tracks.
B. Cooke, said DEP, too close to train tracks. M. Pruhenski said the secured building is not being used for anything right now.
- Denise Forbes, can we drill own well? M. Pruhenski said need a Permit from Town. She brought up about Fulcrum had been taking water from HWW....
- Chris Mathison, Long Pond Road, has well. Has filter system. When is date of bridge repair? M. Pruhenski, said work will be in the fall, finished in summer 2021.
- Oliver Kaldwell, 218 High Land Street, Housatonic, 1977 Clean Water Act, said zero discharge pollution in public water; HWW has failed miserably. Post contaminates on website, will it include the secondary contaminates in the water? Can water be test monthly? How long Phase 2 will be.

7. Selectboard's Time: L. Davis thankful that will be on the next meeting (about water), citizens need an action plan. K. Burke, is it a good idea to connect Town council about what actions Selectboard can take. B. Cooke, the sooner the better to take over the HWW the better.

8. Media Time:

9. ADJOURNMENT: Chairman adjourned meeting by unanimous consent at 7:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jamie M. Minacci

Recording secretary