

Selectboard and Housing Authority Joint Meeting and Selectboard Regular Meeting via Zoom  
Monday, August 8, 2022

1. CALL TO ORDER SELECTBOARD AND HOUSING AUTHORITY JOINT MEETING.

- a. Roll Call - Chairman Bannon called to order the Selectboard and Housing Authority Joint Meeting at 6:00pm. Roll call: Ed Abrahams, "aye," Steve Bannon, "aye," Leigh Davis, "aye," Eric Gabriel, "aye," Garfield Reed, "aye."

Roll Call Housing Authority: John Grogan, "aye," Eileen Mooney, "aye," Phil Orenstein, "aye."

Additional attendees: Town Manager Mark Pruhenski

2. NEW BUSINESS

- a. Vote to appoint Tom Blauvelt to the Housing Authority

L. Davis made a motion to nominate Tom Blauvelt to the Housing Authority; E. Abrahams seconded. S. Bannon asked if any discussion – there was none. Roll call vote Selectboard: Ed Abrahams, "aye," S. Bannon, "aye," L. Davis, "aye," E. Gabriel, "aye," G. Reed, "aye." Roll call vote Housing Authority: J. Grogan, "aye," E. Mooney, "aye," P. Orenstein, "aye." All in favor: 8-0.

3. CITIZEN SPEAK TIME - none

4. MEDIA TIME - none

5. ADJOURNMENT – E. Mooney made a motion to adjourn the Housing Authority portion of the meeting; P. Orenstein seconded. The meeting was adjourned by unanimous consent at 6:07pm.

6. CALL TO ORDER SELECTBOARD REGULAR MEETING

- a. Roll Call – all members in attendance

7. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – there were none.

8. SELECTBOARD'S ANNOUNCEMENTS/STATEMENTS

- a. G. Reed reported there was good feedback on Great Barrington Day, but he is continuing to survey merchants that participated. He thanked the Selectboard/Town for financial support.
- b. L. Davis stated she is working on an initiative for shuttle service between Great Barrington and the Wassiac train station and will ask for it to be added to a Selectboard agenda. She also stated there will be a Joint Selectboard-Planning Board Housing Subcommittee meeting tomorrow at 1:00pm at which there will be a reorg/appointment of chair/vice chair, setting priorities for FY23 and a presentation on the North Plain development by Bill Cooke and Caroline Valli.
- c. S. Bannon stated re: the Town Manager's report on Housatonic Water Works - there has been some inaccurate reporting - it is a standing agenda item for updates. There is no plan for the Selectboard to discuss it at this time as it is still meeting in executive session.

9. TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

- a. Housatonic Water Works – M. Pruhenski stated due to recent higher than normal temperatures, the

Town is hearing of more water issues. He asked residents to contact the DEP as they can require site-specific testing. He added there are three new documents on the Town website under Selectboard, Housatonic Water Works hub – a letter to customers regarding improvement plans for the coming year; a letter of enforcement from the DEP; and a letter from the DEP approving the pilot study to reduce manganese to continue through four seasons.

- i. The Selectboard agreed to schedule the next strategy session for August 22 following its regular meeting.
- b. Division Street Bridge – M. Pruhenski stated the deck and trusses have been removed and a modular bridge will arrive in a few weeks - he will have an opening date soon.

## 10. LICENSES AND PERMITS

- a. Great Barrington Land Conservancy, c/o Janice Kabel and Jane Angelini, for the Run for the Hills 5k / 10k Run & Walk, seeking permission to use Town Roads on Sunday, October 16, 2022
    - i. J. Angelini stated this is the 12<sup>th</sup> annual Run for the Hills - it continues to be well-received by the community and is held in partnership with the Kilpatrick Center. She thanked the Selectboard for its ongoing support.
- L. Davis made a motion to grant to the Great Barrington Land Conservancy for the Run for the Hills 5k /10k Run & Walk, permission to use Town Roads on Sunday, October 16, 2022; E. Abrahams seconded. S. Bannon asked if any discussion – G. Reed confirmed the run starts on Alford Road and finishes at Simon’s Rock. Roll call vote: E. Abrahams, “aye,” S. Bannon, “aye,” L. Davis, “aye,” E. Gabriel, “aye,” G. Reed, “aye.” All in favor 5-0.
- b. Daniel Shankin of Friends of Grove Street Park for a temporary Sunday Entertainment License for Sunday August 14, 2022 from 11 AM to 6 PM at the Park behind Town Hall, 334 Main Street.
    - i. D. Shankin stated this is a fundraiser - and day of music, storytelling and yoga.
- L. Davis made a motion to grant a temporary Sunday Entertainment License to Friends of Grove Street Park for Sunday August 14, 2022 from 11 AM to 6 PM at the Park behind Town Hall; E. Abrahams seconded. S. Bannon asked if any discussion – S. Bannon confirmed the event would end at 5:30pm and that funds raised would go to the Town for upkeep of Grove Street Park. It was stated approximately 200 people would attend. Roll call vote: E. Abrahams, “aye,” S. Bannon, “aye,” L. Davis, “aye,” E. Gabriel, “aye,” G. Reed, “aye.” All in favor 5-0.

## 11. NEW BUSINESS

- a. Parking Ticket Processing – Chief Storti and Alicia Dulin
  - i. Chief Sorti presented providing background on the current outdated parking ticket process and a request to implement a new, more automated system – via a service provided by Plymouth, MA for communities in the state. This more efficient system would manage the process once a ticket is issued including collection/follow up and communication with RMV, as needed. When funds are collected, a \$2.00 fee per ticket is deducted from the amount collected – and if a ticket is unpaid after the statutory requirement, they issue a follow up letter at the cost of \$1.10 per letter. Total \$3.10 is the most they can receive per ticket. Each month they send the payments collected to Great Barrington. He also recommended purchasing a handheld device to facilitate issuing tickets which is compatible with laptops in the cars – the cost is \$1,152 per device, but it is deducted from fees collected. There is an additional \$22.00/month for automatic data up/downloads.

- ii. Chief Sorti also presented on the fee structure for tickets, excluding handicapped parking violations, which is currently \$20.00 – and noted most municipalities charge \$50.00. He stated there has not been an increase in a long time - and suggested raising it to \$25.00
- iii. S. Bannon stated this is a two-part request – a motion to recommend using the service

including electronic equipment/data downloading and parking ticket fees.

- iv. The Selectboard clarified/discussed with Chief Sorti the inefficiencies of the current process and how the new system would streamline for better, more efficient handling. Increased ticket fees were also discussed considering a small vs a larger increase.

L. Davis made a motion to utilize this service and transition to using an electronic hand-held device for issuing violations in the field. The service complies with all the statutory requirements for parking violations and the collection of fines; E. Abrahams seconded. S. Bannon asked if any additional discussion – there was none. Roll call vote: E. Abrahams, “aye,” S. Bannon, “aye,” L. Davis, “aye,” E. Gabriel, “aye,” G. Reed, “aye.” All in favor 5-0.

- v. S. Bannon confirmed with M. Pruhenski there was no statutory reason governing decisions on fees that he was aware of, but the topic was not expected to be discussed at the meeting. It was agreed to add it to the agenda for the next meeting so it can be researched/summarized and there is public notice for comments.

b. Outdoor Dining on Railroad Street- Request for earlier closure of certain parking stalls

- i. M. Pruhenski stated at the April 11 meeting the Selectboard approved closing Railroad Street Friday and Saturday, 6:00-10:00pm, Memorial Day through Labor Day. Efforts were made to find timing that would work for both merchants and restaurants – but there have been concerns about early setup occurring - and one restaurant is requesting the Selectboard consider table set up before 6:00pm.
- ii. Michael Marcus, owner of Bizen, stated outdoor dining has been very successful – but restaurants have different needs than the stores. He explained the logistical challenges for staff to set up tables at 6:00pm - and stated other restaurants have the same issue. He requested that two parking spots be blocked in front of the restaurant for staging tables.
- iii. S. Bannon asked for comments from other restaurant/store owners.
- iv. Paula Friedman, Bernay Fine Art, located at the corner of Main and Railroad Streets, stated recently there have been warnings from Berkshire Busk about street closure starting at 4:30pm, police flashing lights starting at 5:30 and tables/chairs set up before 6:00pm. She noted her business is being impacted by this and that 6:00pm was the agreed upon time. She also stated other store owners have similar concerns.
- v. M. Marcus stated there had been a prior conversation about allowing staging of tables, but it was clarified that was before high season – now parking is more in demand.
- vi. Chief Sorti stated his main concern is pedestrian and diner safety and noted until barricades are placed, there is traffic flow - he preferred there was no set up before the street is closed. He noted street closure takes a lot of planning.
- vii. G. Reed noted M. Marcus is the only one who has come forward with this request and suggested it stay as is for the merchants.
- viii. E. Gabriel pointed out there are only three weekends left of the season and this should be tabled until next year with additional input. There was agreement on getting feedback from restaurants, merchants and Berkshire Busk.
- iv. S. Bannon expressed concerns about the mix of tables/chairs and cars parking. He noted the Selectboard is the final decision-maker on this matter.

c. Assignment of police officers at polling locations

- i. Jenn Messina stated the Votes Act was signed by Governor Baker regarding the assignment of police officers to polling locations – which had been done in the past working with Chief Sorti, but now requires a Selectboard vote giving Chief Sorti permission to assign officers for every election.

L. Davis made a motion to approve a sufficient number of police officers, but not less than 1, at the polling locations at every election therein to preserve order and to protect the election officers and supervisors from any interference with their duties and to aid in enforcing the laws relations to elections, as required by Section 72 of MGL Chapter 54 which was changed in Section 13 of Chapter 92 of the Acts of 2022. Further, move to designate the Police Chief or a police department designee the authority to assign specific police officers according to scheduling and availability. The Town Clerk will advise the Police Chief on the location and time the offices are needed for every election; E. Abrahams seconded. S. Bannon asked if any additional discussion – there was none. Roll call vote: E. Abrahams, “aye,” S. Bannon, “aye,” L. Davis, “aye,” E. Gabriel, “aye,” G. Reed, “aye.” All in favor 5-0.

d. Vote to appoint election officers for FY23

L. Davis made a motion to vote to place election officers for FY23 as per the list provided; E. Abrahams seconded. S. Bannon asked if any additional discussion – there was none. Roll call vote: E. Abrahams, “aye,” S. Bannon, “aye,” L. Davis, “aye,” E. Gabriel, “aye,” G. Reed, “aye.” All in favor 5-0.

e. Vote to appoint Joseph Method to the Affordable Housing Trust

L. Davis made a motion to appoint Joseph Method to the Affordable Housing Trust; E. Abrahams seconded. S. Bannon asked if any additional discussion – there was none. Roll call vote: E. Abrahams, “aye,” S. Bannon, “aye,” L. Davis, “aye,” E. Gabriel, “aye,” G. Reed, “aye.” All in favor 5-0.

S. Bannon stated there ate 6 panelists and 27 participants at the meeting.

f. DuBois sculpture first look presentation

- i. E. Abrahams recused as an abutter to the Library.
- ii. M. Pruhenski stated there is a program summary in the packet – and introduced Bobby Houston, Julie Michaels, Ari Zorn and Lauren Clark as project leaders/presenters.
- iii. The presenters stated the project encompasses improvements to the Mason Library stairs and plaza and the creation/placement of a W.E.B. Du Bois statue as its centerpiece. Funds are being raised for the project as a gift to the Town. The Library board is supportive and groups such as the Legacy Committee and Clinton Church/Freedom Center are providing input. They stated there will be a call for sculptors locally and likely nationally, with special efforts to connect with Black artists – and there will be public input on the designs. The Selectboard was asked to provide feedback on the plan.
- iv. L. Davis expressed concerns about removing grass to install concrete and overbuilding the site – it was stated the center would be lawn and the surrounding concrete/marble would be minimal/simple.
- v. Beth Carlson stated it would be valuable to have someone knowledgeable about Black history/personal history through stories told today involved in the design/decision-making process.
- vi. The presenters stated the goal is to raise \$325,000 and they are halfway – the next step is to get a better architectural drawing and then public feedback.

## 12. CITIZEN SPEAK TIME

- a. Michelle Loubert, 70 Division Street, stated the letter to customers from Housatonic Water Works included that improvements would come at a cost - “customers who currently pay the minimum \$44.73 a month can now expect to pay an additional \$45 per month, this will increase their annual charge from \$537 to \$1,020.” She noted people who cannot use the water for laundry or bathing will now pay double for it. She also asked that driveways on Division Street be kept clear if traffic backs up at the Division Street Bridge and that traffic speed should be monitored.

- b. Denise Forbes, 325 North Plain Road, stated concerns about Housatonic Water Works doubling rates for improvements that should have been done over the years. She confirmed she should submit plans to the Town Manager's office for a permit to march from Town Hall to Housatonic Water Works. She also expressed concerns about the kind/weight of trucks allowed over the new Division Street Bridge.
- c. Trevor Forbes, 325 North Plain Road, asked the Selectboard to consider Housatonic Water Works may not be operating in an appropriate way as most water companies have to allocate funds to upgrade/maintain the system. He noted they are essentially asking customers to invest in/be responsible for putting in the new system – to get clean water which they should have already. He also suggested a weight limit and monitoring/policing of trucks on the Division Street Bridge.

13. SELECTBOARD'S TIME

- a. L. Davis stated there are questions about the Housatonic Water Works rate increase – and although it is being discussed by the Selectboard in executive session, she suggested inviting Jim Mercer to a public Selectboard meeting to ask him about the fixes/improvements and related costs including the manganese pilot and subsequent phases.
- b. S. Bannon stated when he said reporting has been less than accurate, he was not referring to Eileen Mooney's newsletter nor the Berkshire Eagle.

14. MEDIA TIME - none

15. ADJOURNMENT - Chairman Bannon adjourned the meeting by unanimous consent at 7:30pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Stacy Ostrow, Recording Clerk