



TOWN OF GREAT BARRINGTON MASSACHUSETTS

January 27, 2021 Goal Setting Selectboard Meeting via Zoom

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Bannon opened the meeting at 6:00 pm, those “present” via zoom: Ed Abrahams, Leigh Davis, Bill Cooke, and Town Manager, Mark Pruhenski.

2. SELECTBOARD’S ANNOUNCEMENTS

3. FAIRGROUNDS DISCUSSION

- a. Bill Cooke believes that the Town should consider purchasing the Fairgrounds—if for nothing specifically, but for just a general town park. An appraisal should be done.
- b. S. Bannon stated that next steps would be opening negotiating discussions and discuss with the Parks Committee.
- c. M. Pruhenski mentioned that the Town is looking into a parking lot proposal. M. Pruhenski believes one or the other should be chosen, rather than pursuing both at the same time, as the Sale of Real Estate account currently has a balance of approximately \$675,000.

B. Cooke made a motion to open discussion with the board of directors of the Fairgrounds property; E. Abrahams seconded; Roll Call Vote; E. Abrahams, “aye”; S. Bannon, “aye”; B. Cooke, “aye”; and L. Davis, “aye”; All in Favor, 4-0.

4. GOAL SETTING

- a. High Priority Projects will be discussed. If there is a low-moderate project that should be discussed, a high priority item will be removed from the current list.
- b. Affordable Housing (Market Rate/Working Class – Chris Rembold discussed this project. C. Rembold feels that a lot of time/effort from the Town and the Affordable Housing Trust are invested in this priority.
- c. Ambulance Service Study – Chief Charles Burger discussed this project. The Town is trying to get a Class 5 license for the Fire Department Expedition so that it can act as an Ambulance.
 - i. B. Cooke asked if Southern Berkshire Ambulance will request money from the Town again. Chief Burger said he believes that SBA will be requesting the same

amount of funds that were provided last year. Susan Carmel confirmed that there is a placeholder of \$40,000 in the budget for the SBA.

- ii. S. Bannon and L. Davis would like the SBA to request money from the Town rather than assuming it's guaranteed every year. The Board will also want to review their financial statements from the previous year.
- d. Cook's Garage Property – Chris Rembold discussed the status of Cook's Garage. Phase I and Phase II reporting has been done to test any pollution on that property. The water source on this property should never be used as a drinking source.
- e. COVID-19 State of Emergency – Mark Pruhenski discussed this project. M. Pruhenski stated that a task force (consisting of hospital staff, public safety, police/fire/EMS, public health, school district, and town administration) meets every Tuesday morning at 9 AM. Updated information can be found on the Health Department page of the Town Website.
- f. Housatonic Community Center (Updates/Conference Rooms/Grants) – Sean VanDeusen provided an update to the Board on this project. DOER, Guardian Engineering, and Regional Planning consultant will be meeting in the next couple of weeks for an initial project meeting. The main priority of this meeting will be winterization of the building. More details will be provided after the meeting.
- g. Housatonic Fiber – Chris Rembold provided an update on this project. A contractor will be working with National Grid to determine the cost of running fiber optic cables up Park Street for the village. The costs will help determine whether this is a public project or a private project.
- h. HR Director (Shared Position) – Berkshire Hills Regional School District will not be interesting in sharing an HR director. Mark Pruhenski reached out to other districts, and Sheffield, Monterey, New Marlborough, and West Stockbridge would be interested in this shared position. There is a \$20,000 placeholder in the budget for this position.
- i. Infrastructure (Bridges/Roads/Sidewalks) – Sean VanDeusen provided of current projects out to bid, including Town Hall steps, Taconic Retaining Wall, the Housatonic Fire Station Roof, and the Police Station roof and windows. Division Street Bridge engineering and Christian Hill culvert design is continuing. Triplex Parking Lot (Bridge Street and Bentley Avenue should be going out to bid soon.
 - i. S. Bannon asked if Division Street was included in the Transportation Bill signed by the Governor. M. Pruhenski will investigate that and provide an answer to the Board.
 - ii. L. Davis asked about the Brown Bridge and S. VanDeusen answered that that is a MassDOT project and has an estimated completion date of this summer. L.

Davis also asked about Memorial Field. M. Pruhenski will investigate this matter and report back to the Board.

- iii. C. Rembold presented preliminary discussions regarding possible renovations to the Town Hall campus, including parking, electric charging, displaying monuments, and general accessibility.
 - j. Parking Concerns-RFP – M. Pruhenski explained the possibility of purchasing a lot to construct a parking lot for downtown (roughly 60 parking spots) for residents, shoppers, etc. This would be approximately \$1.2 million project.
 - k. Personnel Policy/Manual – M. Pruhenski stated that a final policy should be provided to the Selectboard for approval at the February 8, 2021 meeting.
 - l. Reid Cleaners Property – C. Rembold stated that the EPA provided a \$500,000 clean-up grant for this project. The EPA would also step-in to remove polluted soil behind the building; therefore, the Town would not have to use funds for the grant on this aspect of the clean-up process. Other grants may also be needed for this project, that has yet to be determined. This project would take about 2-3 years to complete.
 - m. Systemic Racism Proclamation – M. Pruhenski stated that an executive summary and charter (recommending the creation of a committee to address Violations of 2017 Trust Policy) will be provided to the Selectboard at the February 8, 2021 meeting. A committee or expanded charter will be recommended to serve as a working group to review police practices and policies.
 - n. Trip Hazards Main Street – S. VanDeusen said that trip hazards will be addressed this summer. Major trip hazard in front of Wheeler and Taylor will be addressed by the Fall.
 - o. Water Systems Study – DPC and AECOM were hired to create Phase II study and appraisal of Housatonic Water Works. Formal presentations are planned for this spring at regular Selectboard meeting.
 - p. S. Bannon stated that job creation in Great Barrington should be considered a new goal. S. Bannon also stated that the Reid Cleaners project should be renamed to “Brownfield Clean-Up” and include both Reid Cleaners and Hong Kong Buffet/Carpenters Deli.
5. CITIZEN SPEAK TIME
- a. Daniel Bailly stated his concern with the Fairground project.
 - b. Nan Wile asked if rental assistance will be provided for more than 2 weeks. N. Wile also stated her concern with the Town’s lack of remediation of the Reid Cleaners property.
 - c. Larissa Yaple stated that vocational job training should be considered a priority. L. Yaple also thanked Chris for shoveling the sidewalks on Castle Hill.
6. SELECTBOARD’S TIME

- a. 29 participants (20 attendees and 9 panelists) are present at this meeting.
7. MEDIA TIME
8. ADJOURNMENT Chairman Bannon adjourned meeting by unanimous consent at 7:18 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Brooke M. Morehouse
Recording Clerk