

September 13, 2021 Regular Selectboard Meeting via Zoom

1. CALL TO ORDER SELECTBOARD REGULAR MEETING

Chairman Bannon opened the meeting at 6:00pm; those present via zoom: Ed Abrahams, Leigh Davis, Eric Gabriel, Garfield Reed, Town Manager Mark Pruhenski and Director of Public Works, Sean VanDeusen.

2. CONVENE AS SEWER COMMISSIONERS

- a. Night Soil Rates

3. SELECTBOARD'S ANNOUNCEMENTS/STATEMENTS

- a. E. Abrahams announced Downtown Great Barrington Cultural District participation in Art Week Berkshires consisting of 100 events around the county. For more info visit ArtWeekBerkshires.com
- b. E. Abrahams spoke as Selectboard point person for legal cannabis business in GB, to clarify recent reporting mischaracterizing Community Impact fees. Provided assurances that Community Impact funds are well managed and used effectively to target/mitigate negative impacts of the business.
- c. L. Davis reported that the Housing Subcommittee will meet September 20, 2021, at 1:00pm to discuss the housing crisis; draft short-term rental bylaws and review needs assessment. Agenda and zoom link will be posted. G. Reed to attend.

4. TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

- a. Housatonic Water Works – Continuing to schedule series of meetings with various stakeholders to discuss next steps.
- b. Recent Committee Appointments – New appointments to Housatonic Improvement Committee and Community Impact Committee.
- c. Route 71 Grant for Paving – Have received state funding to repair 1.1 mi section of Route 71. State funding for the project is significant savings for the Town.
- d. Public Works Project Updates – S. VanDeusen provided an update on projects: Taconic Avenue retaining wall; Town Hall front steps; Bridge Street/Bentley Avenue sidewalks; Taconic parking lot paving, new lights, charging stations; Rossiter Street repaving; CHP trail on Route 7 wall repair; culvert replacement on Christian Hill Road; Division Street bridge project; sewer line relining at roundabout/St James; boiler replacement at Ramsey Library. Also provided details on situation with Housatonic School roof tarping and windows. Bids higher than expected – need to consider next steps
 - i. L. Davis asked S. VanDeusen to explain why the Town cannot do the work. He replied due to requirements under Massachusetts Procurement Law. L. Davis asked what's Plan B? S. Bannon replied Selectboard will discuss at next meeting.
 - iii. Eileen Mooney asked can we board up windows without tarping the roof? S. VanDeusen will look into whether we can do piecemeal.

- iv. Charlie Williamson asked if the Town is paying for electricity for charging stations. S. Bannon replied yes, that's the plan.
- v. L. Davis asked if there are grants available for charging stations? Sean replied we applied, but didn't receive funds. Discussed cost of charging stations.
- vi. G. Reed commented we should consider charging for use of charging stations. S. Bannon replied we will discuss at next Selectboard meeting.
- vii. Trevor Forbes commented cost of charging a vehicle can be substantial.

5. LICENSES AND PERMITS

- a. S. Bannon noted there are 24 attendees and 6 panelists at this meeting.
- b. Katherine Stookey for a one Day Beer & Wine License for a reception after the memorial service for John Stookey, to be held at Berkshire South Community Center 15 Crissey Road on Saturday September 25 from 3:00PM to 7:00PM.

L. Davis made motion to approve one Day Beer & Wine License for a reception after the memorial service for John Stookey; E. Abrahams seconded. Roll call vote: E. Abrahams, "aye," S. Bannon, "aye," L. Davis, "aye," E. Gabriel, "aye," G. Reed, "aye." All in favor, 5-0.

6. NEW BUSINESS

- a. Hispanic Heritage Month Proclamation

L. Davis made motion for Selectboard approval and read the proclamation. E. Abrahams seconded. Roll call vote: E. Abrahams, "aye," S. Bannon, "aye," L. Davis, "aye," E. Gabriel, "aye," G. Reed, "aye." All in favor, 5-0.

- b. Special Permit application from GB Historic Preservation LLC, c/o Paul Joffe, 198 Main Street. Review and comment to the Planning Board on the application which seeks relief from the sign bylaw regulations that require free standing signs to be not closer than 10 feet to the travelled way. The sign is located at 198 Main Street.
 - i. Chris Rembold provided background and clarified issue – existing sign is noncompliant, and request is for a special permit. Ask is for Selectboard to review and make recommendation to Planning Board.
 - ii. Travis Durr stated that Paul Joffe's position is that the sign was approved with the original building plans.
 - iii. Selectboard discussed enforcement of sign code requirements and special permit considerations. E. Abrahams commented on merits of granting a special permit in this situation. Travis Durr concurred.

L. Davis made motion for a negative recommendation to the Planning Board on special permit application from GB Historic Preservation LLC; G. Reed seconded. Roll call vote: E. Abrahams, "no," S. Bannon, "aye," L. Davis, "aye," E. Gabriel, "aye," G. Reed, "aye." All in favor, 4-1.

7. CITIZEN SPEAK TIME

- a. Erica Mielke commented that children are smelling marijuana outside of Calyx, perhaps there is smoking on the street. Selectboard will look into it.

- b. Charlie Williamson made suggestions about how to improve the flow of traffic in town and manage/assist pedestrian crossings. Also asked about lights on at the firehouse. S. Bannon will talk to S. VanDeusen/M. Pruhenski.
- c. Trevor Forbes shared potential ideas/options for Housatonic Water Works project including the Town negotiating cost of well or water filtration system installation. S. Bannon stated we will consider this option.

8. SELECTBOARD'S TIME

- a. G. Reed suggested looking into meters for the charging stations.
- b. L. Davis thanked meeting attendees for participating.

9. MEDIA TIME

10. EXECUTIVE SESSION –

- a. S. Bannon stated the Selectboard will go to Executive Session pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 30A Section 21(a)(1) for the following purpose: to discuss complaints brought against a public officer, employee, staff member or individual (OML Complaint-E. Mooney).
 - i. L Davis made a motion to go to Executive Session and not to return to open session; E. Abrahams seconded. Roll call vote: E. Abrahams, “aye,” S. Bannon, “aye,” L. Davis, “aye,” E. Gabriel, “aye,” G. Reed, “aye.” All in favor, 5-0.

11. ADJOURNMENT – Chairman Bannon adjourned the meeting by unanimous consent at 6:52pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Stacy Ostrow
Recording Clerk