

Selectboard Regular Meeting In-person/via Zoom
Monday, July 12, 2021

1. CALL TO ORDER - Chairman Bannon opened the meeting at 6:00pm; those present via zoom: Ed Abrahams, Leigh Davis, Eric Gabriel, Garfield Reed. Town Manager Mark Pruhenski.

S. Bannon stated that three Selectboard members and the Town Manager were gathered in person at Town Hall.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- a. March 8, 2021
- b. April 12, 2021
- c. May 10, 2021

L. Davis made a motion to accept meeting minutes of March 8, April 12 and May 10 2021; E. Abrahams seconded. S. Bannon asked if any discussion – there was none. Roll call vote: E. Abrahams, “aye,” S. Bannon, “aye,” L. Davis, “aye,” E. Gabriel, “abstain,” G. Reed, “abstain.” All in favor, 3-0.

- d. May 12, 2021
- e. May 24, 2021

L. Davis made a motion to accept meeting minutes of the May 12 and 24 2021; 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.

3. SELECTBOARD’S ANNOUNCEMENTS/STATEMENTS

- a. E. Abrahams stated that the Downtown GB Cultural District is co-hosting ArtWeek Berkshires September 16-26 and has a call out to artists and arts/cultural organizations to participate. He stated it would provide great visibility/publicity and those interested including journalists should reach out to him.
- b. L. Davis stated she presented David Grover with an award in appreciation for his 40-years of musical performance at the gazebo. She also noted that she had attended Berkshire Busk performances and they are continuing July-August on Friday and Saturday nights 6-8:30pm.

4. TOWN MANAGER’S REPORT

S. Bannon stated these items would be moved to later in the meeting.

- a. Housatonic Water Works- AECOM Presentation
- b. Veteran’s marker at Housatonic Community Center
- c. Fire Department Updates
- d. Housatonic Neighborhood Meeting-Set Date and location

5. LICENSES AND PERMITS

- a. Pat Hollenbeck/Board of Library Trustees for 9-One Day Beer and Wine Licenses for the Saturday Film Series at 231 Main Street Great Barrington on the first Saturday of every month beginning in September 2021 and ending in May 2022 from 6:00 PM to 10 PM.

L. Davis made a motion to grant 9-One Day Beer and Wine Licenses to Pat Hollenbeck/Board of Library Trustees for the Saturday Film Series at 231 Main Street Great Barrington on the first Saturday of every month beginning in September 2021 and ending in May 2022 from 6:00 PM to 10 PM; E. Abrahams seconded and disclosed he was the President of Friends of the Library and completed a conflict of interest

form, but that there was no financial interest/fund raising involved so he would not recuse. S. Bannon asked if any 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.

b. Sophia Veinoglou/Fairview Hospital’s Monster Dash 5K permission to use Town Roads on Saturday October 30, 2021 from 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM

L. Davis made a motion to grant permission to use Town Roads on Saturday October 30, 2021 from 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM to Sophia Veinoglou for Fairview Hospital’s Monster Dash 5K; E. Abrahams seconded. S. Bannon asked if any discussion – he noted he is an employee of Fairview Hospital, but had no financial interest/gain for this event and would not recuse. Roll call vote: E. Abrahams, “aye,” S. Bannon, “aye,” L. Davis, “aye.” E. Gabriel, “aye,” G. Reed, “aye.” All in favor, 5-0.

c. Howard Jacobs for a driveway permit at 38 Blue Hill Drive to access 40 Blue Hill Drive.

L. Davis made a motion to grant a driveway permit at 38 Blue Hill Drive to access 40 Blue Hill Drive to Howard Jacobs; E. Abrahams seconded, but with a question: He noted that the Fire Department had concerns about the slope of the driveway. Chief Burger stated the driveway was not accessible to emergency vehicles due to the slope.

i. Howard Jacobs stated he would ask Matt Puntin of SK Engineers to join the meeting as he is designing the driveway.

ii. S. Bannon stated the matter would be moved to later in the meeting.

L. Davis withdrew the motion; E. Abrahams withdrew the second.

d. Steven Lee for a driveway permit at 168 Christian Hill Road.

L. Davis made a motion to grant a driveway permit to Steven Lee at 168 Christian Hill Road; E. Abrahams seconded. S. Bannon asked if any 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. Thasia Giles of Jacob’s Pillow Dance Festival for 2-One Day Sunday Entertainment Licenses on August 1, 2021 from 1:00 PM to 5:00 PM and August 8, 2021 from 9:00 AM to 1PM at 334 Main Street (Park and Parking lot).

i. T. Giles stated this is for free 45 minute pop-up performances around the county on a portable stage.

L. Davis made a motion to grant to Thasia Giles of Jacob’s Pillow Dance Festival 2-One Day Sunday Entertainment Licenses on August 1, 2021 from 1:00 PM to 5:00 PM and August 8, 2021 from 9:00 AM to 1PM at 334 Main Street (Park and Parking lot); E. Abrahams seconded. S. Bannon asked if any 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.

6. PUBLIC HEARING

a. (Continued) Shackdown Inc. dba 20 Railroad Public House, 20 Railroad Street, Change of Manager on their All Alcoholic Restaurant Liquor License from Ben Downing to Jeffrey Caminiti.

L. Davis made a motion to reopen the Public Hearing; 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.

i. J. Caminiti attended the meeting by phone which was a requirement for approval.

L. Davis made a motion to approve Shackdown Inc. dba 20 Railroad Public House, 20 Railroad Street, for a Change of Manager on their All Alcoholic Restaurant Liquor License from Ben Downing to Jeffrey Caminiti; E. Abrahams seconded. S. Bannon asked if any 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.

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

- a. Housatonic Water Works- AECOM Presentation – M. Pruhenski introduced the AECOM engineering team for a presentation of their report on Housatonic Water Works (HWW) – which was also posted on the Town's website. He also noted that DPC Engineering would present their report at the July 26 meeting. He also reminded the public that HWW is a privately owned public water supplier that is regulated by DPU and DEP not the Town. The Town will provide the DPU/DEP with findings and will advocate for residents. He also noted the HWW charter allows GB to acquire it, but the report/analysis will inform decisions and discussion on how to go forward. He noted there is no easy, quick fix.
 - i. S. Bannon noted there are 66 attendees at the meeting – questions will be limited to specifics about the presentation and there will be later meetings to discuss next steps.

AECOM engineers Doug Grove, Bryan Sadowski, Lindle Willnow and Bill Clunie presented their report providing details on the state of the water system – including water supply, demand, quality and delivery along with treatment plant operations and compliance with regulations. They also provided a summary of recommendations and a capital improvement plan with a cost structure to update the system.

They focused on the Long Pond water supply and current state of the treatment plant. They provided information on the water quality both raw and treated and concluded that based on samples provided, the quality meets current safety standards and is in compliance with service water treatment rules – but they specifically called out high levels of manganese.

Regarding the distribution infrastructure they stated 70% of the pipe is unlined cast iron and mains are small in size. They constructed 4 scenarios based on average and maximum water usage to predict outcomes. They concluded that in most areas of the town DEP regs of 40 psi pressure are met primarily because of the 1 million gallon water tank that was installed. They also tested fire flow at different points in the system and found the system deficient in providing adequate flow to hydrants.

Their recommendations for capital improvements focused on upgrading the treatment and distribution systems. For the treatment plant they recommended constructing a new plant in two phases – the first would add a supplemental process that includes a filter to address the manganese issue. The second phase would be to build a new treatment plant and add a filter/ion exchange process that further removes organics. Regarding the distribution system, they recommended replacing and increasing the size of 2/3 of the piping which would improve fire flow. The entire capital improvement plan would cost approximately \$31m – and could be completed in two 5-year and a 3 -year timeframes.

- S. Bannon thanked AECOM and asked what improvements will make residents feel safe and comfortable about drinking and using water? The response was that the additional filtration process will increase water quality due to manganese, but the distribution system problems also have to be addressed – that is when users will see a difference.
- E. Abrahams thanked AECOM for an easy to read report and clarified information on the storage tanks and capacity of a new filtration process.
- G. Reed asked what improvements would address the dirty water situation after flushing the system? The reply was that it was hard to say, but that newer pipes and the treatment plant would reduce the number of times the system would need flushing.

- L. Davis stated it was good to have an improvement plan, but expressed concerns about finding that 90% of the system does not have adequate fire flow. Chief Burger also expressed concern about the challenges for fire flow. She asked at what point will fire flow be addressed? The response was it is likely after 10 years when the mains are replaced. She also expressed concern about using old data, but it was stated that newer data would not change the analysis/model. There was further discussion about an emergency connection to the GB Fire District as back-up for HWW as well as factors to prioritize the replacement of water mains in order to get cleaner water in a shorter timeframe.
 - Chief Burger stated the main roads are his biggest concern for fire flow and asked if adding a tank would improve the situation. The reply was that a tank in the village would provide proximity for fire fighting, but it requires a pump and would bring up other issues for water quality.
 - E. Gabriel asked for clarification about the quality of the asbestos pipes and confirmation that if HWW was a public company they could use PVC for water mains. He also asked if it was common for a water company not to have an official complaint log which is the case with HWW - the response was that it varies and does not mean they are not taking complaints.
 - E. Abrahams stated that regarding timing for improvements – this assumes there is an entity in place to fund this work which is not the case.
 - Anne O'Dwyer, 26 Kirk Street, asked why is the water sample size so small? The reply was that engineers had access to only a few water samples, but stated that flow data would be the same even with more current data. It was clarified that the manganese analysis was based on a previous report and was found present in the entire distribution system. S. Bannon added that AECOM's role was to analyze and assess existing data - and make recommendations on improvements/costs.
 - Suzanne Fowle asked if asbestos cement pipes were tested for asbestos contamination – the reply was that the EPA standards include asbestos. She asked what new pipe would be made of – the response was Polyethylene, PVC or cement lined pipe. She also inquired how to get earlier data on lead and copper levels and the response was HWW or DEP Consumer Confidence Reports.
 - Trevor Forbes, 325 North Plain Road, confirmed that phase one would draw manganese from the system. He then addressed the Selectboard expressing concern about HWW information/samples and stated he had seen competing assessments of water quality. He asked was the intention to have a truly independent assessment of water quality? S. Bannon replied there is another report next meeting and yes, that is a possibility.
 - S. Bannon thanked AECOM and stated it was a good beginning.
- b. Veteran's marker at Housatonic Community Center – M. Pruhenski thanked Richie Atwood and A&A Memorials for great work cleaning the Veteran's Memorial Marker at the Community Center.
- c. Fire Department Updates – Chief Burger stated that he had a record 39 calls last week which delayed his work on the Selectboard report. S. Bannon stated it could be put on the next or a later agenda.
- d. Housatonic Neighborhood Meeting-Set Date and location – M. Pruhenski asked Selectboard members to look at their calendars to set a date/time for the meeting. They agreed on August 3, but M. Pruhenski noted that a hybrid meeting could not be held at the Housatonic Community Center due to connectivity issues. S. Bannon stated it needs to be discussed since the meeting has to be hybrid.
- e. Added item – M. Pruhenski stated work on the brown/red bridge would be completed in 1-2 weeks.

Licenses and Permits - continued

- c. Howard Jacobs for a driveway permit at 38 Blue Hill Drive to access 40 Blue Hill Drive.
 - i. H. Jacobs stated Matt Puntin of SK Design engineers was now in attendance.
 - ii. Chief Burger stated that the 1,000' driveway had a 150' section at a grade of 12% which is not accessible for emergency vehicles. M. Puntin stated he could get it to 10% which Chief Burger agreed was acceptable. E. Abrahams stated that in the application the driveway is 24 feet but in the conditions it states it is 22 feet. M. Puntin stated it is 24 feet.

L. Davis made a motion to approve a driveway permit with a maximum grade of 10% and allowing the driveway to stay at 24 feet, along with all other conditions as noted, for Howard Jacobs for 38 Blue Hill Drive to access 40 Blue Hill Drive; E. Abrahams seconded. S. Bannon asked if any 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.

7. NEW BUSINESS

- a. Pedestrian Safety – Sean VanDeusen stated bid documents are being prepared to alter the crosswalks on Main Street which might include an island and pedestrian lights. It would take place late fall, but currently work is focused on painting crosswalks. Police Chief Paul Sorti stated he was working on increased police visibility and a plan to education pedestrians and bicyclists on safety, but at his time he does not have enough staff to cover supplemental shifts.
 - i. L. Davis asked are there plans to have police on bicycles or at crosswalks? Chief Sorti replied yes, but need to have additional staff which he was hoping to hire soon. She also asked is there anything the Town, parking enforcement or volunteers can do to help? Chief Sorti replied he was not sure if training was available or what the requirements are, but he would look into it.
 - ii. E. Gabriel asked about timing for the pedestrian crossing on Main Street at Berkshire Bank. S. VanDeusen said that light was fixed.
- b. Fire Department False Alarm Fee Schedule – Chief Burger stated that as a result of a study of the Fire Department, the False Alarm Fee Schedule should be updated. This has required a bylaw change at Town Meeting and Attorney General approval. The policy recommendation is in the Select Board packet.

L. Davis made a motion to approve the Fire Department False Alarm Fee Schedule; E. Abrahams seconded. S. Bannon asked if any 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.

- c. FY22 Alternate Appointment to Berkshire Regional Planning Commission

L. Davis made a motion to accept Malcolm Fick for a FY22 Alternate Appointment to the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission; E. Abrahams seconded. S. Bannon asked if any 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. MMRHS Use of Additional Excess and Deficiencies – M. Pruhenski stated that in the Selectboard packet there is a year-end projection from Berkshire Hills – there are unspent funds due to COVID that the school can use – funds will also be returned to the Town - \$250,000 to Great Barrington. S. Bannon stated if the Selectboard takes no action the school can go forward. There was no action by the Selectboard in this matter.

8. CITIZEN SPEAK TIME

- a. Anne O'Dwyer, 26 Kirk Street, stated there needs to be a short-term plan for Housatonic re: HWW.

- b. Erica Mielke, 13 East Street, asked what are next steps on the Trust Policy Committee and the Proclamation Against Systemic Racism? S. Bannon said both topics would be discussed at the next meeting.

9. SELECTBOARD'S TIME

- a. E. Gabriel stated that the next HIC meeting is on July 15 at 6:30pm via Zoom and at the Fire Station.
- b. L. Davis stated the CPC meeting would be August 3 at 5:00pm and they will be discussing plans for the coming year.

10. MEDIA TIME

11. ADJOURNMENT - Chairman Bannon adjourned the meeting by unanimous consent at 8:29pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Stacy Ostrow
Recording Clerk