

Selectboard Regular Meeting via Zoom  
Monday, March 28, 2022

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.

S, Bannon stated there would be no Short-Term Rental Bylaw discussion at this meeting and it is not on the agenda – it will be discussed at the March 30 meeting and on April 4 there will be a listening session for public comments.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- a. March 7, 2022

L. Davis made a motion to accept meeting minutes of March 7, 2022; E. Abrahams seconded. S. Bannon asked if any discussion – L. Davis stated in the minutes under Previous Business, Short-Term Rental Bylaw, item number 8, it should reflect that Steve Bannon will work with Leigh Davis. 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

4. TOWN MANAGER’S REPORT

- a. Housatonic Water Works – M. Pruhenski noted Housatonic Water Works is required to respond to the DEP by April 4. He also suggested scheduling an Executive Session with legal counsel to discuss strategy. M. Pruhenski to identify dates for the executive session.
  - b. Update on Paving Projects – M. Pruhenski provided an update on the many Town paving projects resuming from last fall and starting this spring. He specifically noted work on the roundabout at routes 7 and 23; Division Street Bridge; and four sets of mobile solar speed signs to be placed in certain key areas. He also noted there is not yet a timeline for roundabout work and that the speed signs work well to remind drivers of slower speeds and they can provide useful data.

S, Bannon noted there are 6 panelists and 18 attendees at the meeting.

5. LICENSES AND PERMITS

- a. Seasonal Club All Alcoholic Liquor License Renewal for Wyantenuck Country Club

L. Davis made a motion to approve an All Alcoholic Liquor License Renewal for Wyantenuck Country Club; E. Abrahams seconded. S. Bannon asked for 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. PREVIOUS BUSINESS

- a. Housatonic School RFP – Update on marketing and site visits; Vote extend deadline for proposals from April 27th to June 10<sup>th</sup>. - M. Pruhenski updated the Selectboard on extensive marketing/ outreach to promote the RFP and noted there have been 22 requests for the RFP to-date. He asked the Selectboard to extend the deadline for proposals to June 10 to give developers ample time to confirm plans, designs, financing, etc.

L. Davis made a motion to grant an extension for the Housatonic School RFP from April 17 to June 10; E. Abrahams seconded. S. Bannon asked for 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

Approved 4/11/22

a. Appointment to the Conservation Commission

L. Davis made a motion to grant an appointment to the Conservation Commission to Thomas Ferris; E. Abrahams seconded. S. Bannon asked for 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. BHRSD – Borrowing Authorization for a Feasibility and Schematic Design Study for the Monument Mountain Regional High School

- i. Peter Dillon, Superintendent, Berkshire Hills Regional School District, provided an overview/update on the Monument Mountain Regional High School project. Highlights included - a new formula for capital projects assessments that modifies Great Barrington’s portion to 54.03%; new initiatives to expand vocational programs; the retirement of debt for the elementary and middle schools; and eligibility for Massachusetts School Building Authority funding for the High School project.
- ii. P. Dillon presented a request for the Selectboard and Finance Committee to recommend and put on the Town Meeting warrant the authorization to borrow funds for the feasibility and schematic design study for Monument Mountain High School for \$1.5m. He outlined the options for the school: new building construction; renovation and addition; and renovation. He noted next steps would include appointing a building committee and dialogue with the community. He noted MSBA funds should be available once the study is completed. He also stated the Regional School District Planning Board is still considering consolidation/collaboration for the two high schools – and noted there is excellent information on its website.
- iii. L. Davis asked for a timeline for a vote – P. Dillon stated spring or fall for 2023 at the earliest and he confirmed that in the event of a merger, legislative action would be needed on any disposition of the existing schools.
- iv. G. Reed commented moving forward with additional vocational programs is great and supported the prospect of consolidation of the High Schools.
- v. S. Bannon agreed, vocational/technical education programs are important to the community and noted that in addition, the new/renovated High School and the potential for consolidation of the schools are all significant initiatives.

L. Davis made a motion to recommend and put on the Town Meeting warrant a borrowing authorization for a feasibility and schematic design study for the Monument Mountain Regional High School; E. Abrahams seconded. S. Bannon asked for 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.

c. CARE GB – Climate Action, Resilience, and Equity – climate justice / cultural competency training for the Selectboard and trust building with the community, in partnership with Multicultural BRIDGE as part of the Town’s Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) action grant initiatives.

Gwendolyn VanSant and Stephanie Wright engaged the Selectboard in a dialogue on cultural competencies, diversity and equity within the context of Town matters. They provided tools, analysis and perspective relevant to decision-making/prioritization of Town programs, partnerships, budget, etc.– and shared approaches to building trust in the community. They also shared top concerns around climate change/resilience -related inequities and highlighted community input on transportation, housing, open spaces/parks, and food access/sovereignty concerns. They encouraged community forums to continue conversations and community engagement.

9. SELECTBOARD'S TIME

10. MEDIA TIME

11. ADJOURNMENT - Chairman Bannon adjourned the meeting by unanimous consent at 7:20pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Stacy Ostrow  
Recording Clerk