



Board of Selectmen

Date of Meeting: Monday, February 14th, 2022
Time: 6:30 PM – 7:55 PM
Members Present: Chair Matt Mecum; Selectmen Jamie Underwood and Seth Ridinger;
April Steward, Town Administrator; Town Counsel, Stephen Madaus, and
Alison Mack, Administrative Assistant to the Board

The meeting commenced at 6:30 PM.

Financial Warrants were signed.

Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Fire Chief Report to the BoS:

Broke records for the month of January for call volume and COVID tests done.

- Responded to 101 Emergency calls.
- 25 mutual aid calls to Worcester
- A couple multi-unit apartment fires. Temple Street fire was contained, but the electricity needed to be cut so the families needed to be placed somewhere else.
- COVID numbers were quite high town wide in January. Doing about 100 tests plus a day at the station.
 - o As of today, we have 14 active cases in town.
 - o Still offering the COVID tests at the fire department and giving out household at home tests.

Took part of the MVP project with the Town Planner and Town Administrator, along with the Highway Superintendent.

Grants:

- \$213,262 – Pending: Breathing apparatus
- Extended out through January due to some software issues with FEMA
- Awards will be starting mid-April
- Pretty confident we are going to get this grant as our items are out of compliance

- \$10,500 – Equipment Grant – received through Department of Fire Services

Budget:

- Submitted the FY23 budget to the Town Administrator
- New rescue pumper is going to be about \$750,000 and delivery time is about 24 months
- E1 had a 12% increase across the board this year

Looking to transfer funds from the Ambulance Receipts for new tires on both ambulances - \$6,000

Proposal is to add two people and move the full time from 8 hour shifts to 16-hour shifts

- Difficult tasks to retain on call people and COVID hasn't helped. Not just Boylston but seeing this across the country.

Shift Schedule Change:

More protection for the town – main benefit.

With our current weekend and weeknight per diem - \$61,000 budgeted for next year. This will more than absorb an additional staff member.

- Regarding overtime this year, as of payroll today, we have \$14,000+ spent on overtime and only budgeted \$5,0000.
- Certainly not going to cancel out overtime but its certainly going to reduce it
- We aren't a town that does 300 calls a year anymore it's more like 900 and only going to get busier. Having a hard time covering the weekend shifts.

Going to meet with the Finance Committee next Wednesday.

Majority of our EMTS completed their 2-year training.

- It was a 4-day course both in person and online.

Last week all fighter fighters were recertified in SCPA.

- Completed their competency testing without any problems

Chief will be attending a 3-day continuing education conference on March 1st-3rd at the DCU Center.

Heavy on the EMT Classes currently.

Police Chief Report to the BoS:

Balances as of January 29, 2022

Dispatch Payroll

Budgeted: \$272,009.00 (\$12,448.00 – OT)

Paid to Date: \$153,485.53 (\$28,481.76 – OT)

Dispatch Expenses

Budgeted: \$14,974.00

Paid to Date: \$6,757.33

Balance: \$8,216.67

Balance: \$118,523.47

Police Payroll

Budgeted: \$1,215,723 (\$60,000 – OT)

Paid to Date: \$723,669.91 (\$92,462.67 – OT)

Balance: \$492,053.09

Contributing Factors: IOD and Vacancy

Police Expenses

Budgeted: \$178,453.00

Paid to Date: \$132,997.18

Balance: \$45,455.82

Contributing factors:

- 3 ballistic vests that needed to be replaced

Meeting monthly with the Berlin and Clinton Police Chiefs:

- Working together towards accreditation
 - Some requirements that came from police reform requires the PD to meet certain requirements
 - These requirements are unknown currently.
 - Therefore, many departments are becoming accredited which will ensure they are in compliance
 - Areas we will need to invest funds into to meet accreditation:
 - Central Records Management
 - Secure storage for large items
 - Updates to the evidence room
 - Panic alarms in areas where prisoners have access to
 - Plans for fire evacuation and suppression systems
- West Boylston Police invited Sgt. Thomas to observe a women's self-defense program
 - We believe this program will be very beneficial to our community and Sgt. Thomas has taken lead on this program
 - Boylston PD will work in conjunction with West Boylston, Sterling, Rutland, Holden, and Paxton Police to offer a free program to female residents and employees 18 and older
 - Tonya Peters is the owner of Force Defense and Fitness who will lead the program and officers from the police departments will assist
 - Boylston will host the first class on March 15th from 1800-2000 at the Town House
 - The other departments will host this program for their communities throughout the year
 - If there is a high level of interest, we may host additional programs

January Breakdown:

- 5 Accidents
- 20 Criminal Summons/Arrests
- Conducted 22 Investigations
- Conducted 260 Motor Vehicle Stops
- Dispatch Processed 48 Emergency 911 Calls
- Total Activity was 2,572 calls
- Detective Ryel was active with the drug task force

- Executing various search warrants in our communities and aiding those departments

I have my meeting set up with the finance committee

- Eric and I met to discuss various topics and have been very helpful during this process.
- I am thankful to him and all the other department heads, including the BOS, TA's Office, and HR, who have made themselves available to the PD and allowed me the opportunity to discuss different ideas and provided feedback.
- I met with HR to discuss the promotion process for the vacant sergeant's position
- Sgt. Thomasian has been reassigned to day shift to assume the detective sergeant role

Highway Superintendent Report to the BoS:

- Crew attended Chainsaw safety class hosted by WB
- Central Street patch repair after Woodland Estates
- Patch Cross St, Mill Rd, Central St
- Spent 2 days checking out-falls with Tigh&Bond
- Blow out common water
- Monitor beaver activities (Stiles, Linden)
- Install snow fence on Green and Cross Streets
- Tree Work on South Sewall St and E. Temple
- Equip Maint
- Equip Repair (plows and trucks)
- Had windshields replaced in 3 trucks
- We put in service the snow fighting truck that was approved at last June town meeting
- Was told that we received chapter 90 reimbursement of 200k from the work that was done in 2021 (reimbursement took 5 weeks)
- We had one of our employee out for 10 day do to a positive test result
- We will have a new employee (Walter Regnier from WB) starting Feb 28.
 - Has several years of driving a trash truck.
 - Has CDL License
 - Seems like he is going to be a pretty good fit
- We have plowed the streets and roads 7 times this season
- We have treated the streets and roads 24 day this season to date, several of these days are treating several time during icy events. This does not include this past weekend.
- Snow and Ice Budget line. Asking the Board to extend the snow and budget line.
 - Improved the sand and salt shed for residents. Built a roof over it and trying to keep everything dry.
 - Thought they may be able to use it for yard waste collection
- Have seen a couple other towns working with Council on Aging. The highway department would work with them and go out and provide elderly residents with a snow and sand bucket and drop it off for them so they do not have to worry about bringing it.

Snow and Ice Budget Request from the Highway Superintendent:

Jamie Underwood made a motion to allow the Highway Department to overspend the snow and ice budget, Seth Ridinger seconded. Voted all in favor.

Cemetery 2022

- 0 Full Burials
- 0 Cremations

- Water blow out
- Plow markers

Town Administrators Report to the BOS:

1. *American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA) Final Rule:* I have included in your packet information received on the uses of ARPA funds as put forth by the U.S. Department of Treasury. I have reached out to the departments this money may be eligible for but have not received any requests for earmarks. So far, we have used some of these funds for the purchase of COVID-19 rapid test kits for the community and premium pay for the full-time FF/EMTs who have administered COVID-19 rapid tests at the Fire Department.
2. *Warrant Opening:* The warrant for the annual town meeting will be opened the next time the board meets, which is on Monday, February 28th.
3. *Radio Project:* Sergeant Thomasian has been working hard on the radio project and has informed me that the FCC Frequencies we have been waiting for were granted. Motorola will be working on updating the project quote and will be submitting that information soon.
4. *Boylston Day at Polar Park:* I will be meeting tomorrow with Nathan Lucchino to discuss the “town takeover” for a Boylston Day at Polar Park. Currently, we are penciled in for Sunday, May 15th. More information to come.
 - a. Matt stated that they reached out to the Lions Club as well. More information to come.
5. *COVID-19 Dashboard:* Included in your packet for your information
 - a. Down to 34 cases in the town.

Approval of meeting minutes 12/06/2021, 12/20/2021, 01/03/2022, 01/18/2022:

Seth Ridinger voted to approve the meeting minutes of 12/06/2021, 12/20/2021, 01/03/2022, 01/18/2022 as presented, Jamie Underwood seconded. Voted all in favor.

Finance Committee: Budget Discussion:

Finance Committee has not put in any COLAs into their budget so far. Eric asked if there was anything in the Board of Selectmen’s budget that they would like to discuss.

Board of Selectmen Budget:

- 2 Items:
 - o Law Books: up \$1,500 dollars
 - o Aprils Education Line: For her to continue to finish her education it would be and increase of \$4,300.
- HR Administrator: April did not put any money down for him because she wasn't sure of the COLA increase.
 - o April and the Town Planner are contracted. Everyone else is blank due to the COLA information.
- Workers Comp is going up
 - o Workers Comp and General Insurance: Do not have those numbers
 - Will give those numbers once received from MIIA
- Numbers for Health Insurance: Tara is coming in on Wednesday to go over them. She does not currently have them.

Generally, costs are going up:

- Fuel costs are going up for Town Buildings
- Had to keep our fax lines copper
- ½ department is still on copper and half is Voice over IP. Just a matter of time before we have to be fully voice over IP.

Veteran:

- New Veteran in town.
- Let last number drop from last year since we did not have someone making a claim
- This year's number is accurate.

Free Cash articles:

- Steve Mero: Highway Dept
 - o Roadside mower - unsure of actual price.
- Fire Chief: Fire Department – no free cash articles
 - o Transfer from Ambulance Receipts. Will have enough for tires.
- Library: Is going to hold off on free cash articles.
 - o Wanted to hold off on the roof this year; labor and material cost has gone up tremendously.
- Police Department: Frequencies for equipment upgrades – frequencies were already purchased but the actual equipment is between \$800,000 and \$1,000,000.
 - o Trying to make sure that the equipment they receive is going to stay compliant
 - o Need to get the actual quote from Motorola and see if they can do a 3–5-year lease
 - o Looking to get this as an article for this year's warrant

Police Department:

- Building Projects: Looking to speak with Bob Bourassa to identify projects.

Town Hall mini splits:

- A lot of them are on their way out and will need to be replaced. Around \$2,000 each.

Council on Aging: Looking to discuss a senior center.

- Matt stated that he thinks the discussion should be either to build a stand-alone senior center or an overall public safety building as well as a senior center at the same time. Should look at it and in the near future we know we are going to have to do repairs on the fire station and continue to do repairs on the Police Station. Seth mentioned that we have already discussed having a non-binding referendum question on the ballot to see gauge what the residents think.

Eric stated that it is going to be a high increase this year from what they can tell so far. He added that the new appraisal company the town is working with (RRG) has found us a bunch of money and they are happy about that.

Matt stated that town services have not kept up with the growth of the town. Seeing these jumps are inevitable. We keep bringing people in and building houses, inevitably the services must grow to. Its unfortunate and hopefully some of this commercial development offset that, but he isn't making any promises. Three buildings are going in: Kraft has 2 going in and there is one other one. Matt stated that it's not a dollar-to-dollar impact.

Library:

Came to the BoS last meeting and presented us with a lot of information.

Town is in the process of implementing a step program. We would like to see it implemented on January 1st, 2023. The COLA increase would kick in July 2022 and then the steps would occur on the 1st of January of each year. Discussion continued concerning the step process and the classification schedule. Matt stated that we are on the low end of the scales in all spectrums, it doesn't help our case. April stated that there is a cost to hiring someone and to get them up and running; there is a cost on not being able to retain them. Matt stated that we have quite a bit of work to do before we come to the Finance Committee.

Seth stated that it's important to understand where this came from: 1) to make sure there is a higher level of professionalism in Town offices and accountability and 2.) provides a lot more guidance; it will bring uniformity to that process.

Longevity:

- \$6,750
- Some people retired and then some people bumped up, so it evened itself out

Insurance Advisory Committee:

- We are lower than everyone else around us regarding the health insurance split. We are currently at 63/37 and are looking to get to 70/30 or 75/25.
- The Boards response was that it seems reasonable based on what everyone else is doing but need to sit with Finance Committee to make sure it is feasible.
- FinCom asked what surrounding towns have for plans currently. Jamie stated that we have never gone out to bid and we need to see what else is out there.

- Howard was apart of the IAC meeting and can share the documents that Cheri put together with Finance Committee that will answer a lot of the questions.

Town Counsel: Litigation Expense:

- This has been bumped up. We have a lot of things going on right now.

Matt stated that he assumes we will see many requests from departments like the library and looking to increase wages. He is nervous to do a piece meal, and the library is not the only one that have brought it up to us. April and Jeff are working on a longer-term plan which is great, but we must do something in the short too.

Schools:

- Typically, the schools do not come to the Board of Selectmen. Finance Committee is meeting with hem on Wednesday. One thing that Matt has a concern about is with the state changing the trade school “rules” where Boylston is going to be lucky to get 1-2 kids into Assabet. That has the potential to drastically affect our transportation costs. If they really want to go to trade school, we have the responsibility to get them there. It’s going to a lottery system and the member towns get their kids and everyone else goes through a lottery process.

Garbage Pick-up:

- Non-binding question

Parks and Rec:

- Variety of things need to be fixed.
- There are some needs there.
- Not sure if they are going to ask for anything in free cash but they might.

Discussion on Pine Hill Drive:

This discussion will be moved to another meeting.

Discussion on COVID numbers, test kits/mask distribution and mask mandate:

- Matt stated that he believes the Board of Health will need to drop the mask mandate for the school to officially drop their mask.
- The Town Hall has youth masks still available and a few test kits.
- Matt thanked everyone for their help on passing out test kits to residents.
- Seth asked about the ARPA funds and water pumping could be a great use to upgrade some of the water infrastructure. We keep having these questions about testing wells and we need

to be very cognizant of looming water infrastructure and water quality issues that these ARPA funds could help mitigate or correct.

- April stated that she did reach out to the Water District and they did respond.

Vote to approve the new milage rate for 2022 of 58.5 cents per mile:

Jamie Underwood made a motion to approve the new milage rate for 2022 of 58.5 cents per mile, Seth Ridinger seconded. Voted all in favor.

Selectmen's Miscellaneous: (topics submitted by individual Board members)

Moving our meetings back to Town Hall:

- Have one more meeting here at the Town House and then move back to the Town Hall.

Eric Hoffses thanked April and Ali for their help while they do not have a Coordinator.

At 7:55 PM, Seth Ridinger made a motion to adjourn, Jamie Underwood seconded. Voted all in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Alison Mack, Assistant to the Board of Selectmen

Meeting Materials

Agenda	On File in The Board of Selectmen's Office
Town Administrator's Report	On File in The Board of Selectmen's Office
Police Chiefs Report to the BoS	On File in The Board of Selectmen's Office
Fire Chiefs Report to the BoS	On File in The Board of Selectmen's Office
Highway Superintendents Report to the BoS	On File in The Board of Selectmen's Office
2022 Standard Mileage Rate	On File in The Board of Selectmen's Office
12.06.2021 Draft Meeting Minutes	On File in The Board of Selectmen's Office
12.20.2021 Draft Meeting Minutes	On File in The Board of Selectmen's Office
01.03.2022 Draft Meeting Minutes	On File in The Board of Selectmen's Office
01.18.2022 Draft Meeting Minutes	On File in The Board of Selectmen's Office