

Tuesday, January 4, 2022
Hanson Board of Selectmen
Selectmen's meeting room, Town Hall
Open Session

Members Present: Matthew Dyer, Kenny Mitchell, James Hickey, Laura FitzGerald-Kemmett, Joseph Weeks
Others Present: Lisa Green, Town Administrator

I CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Dyer called the meeting to order and led the Pledge of Allegiance. He then asked the meeting to join him in a moment of silence to honor the recent passing of Fran Marini.

II PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENTS AND UPCOMING MEETINGS

Mr. Weeks read the public announcements and upcoming meetings.

III NEW BUSINESS

Public Hearing in connection with the application of [business name] for the transfer of all alcohol package goods store liquor license on the premises located at 12 Monponsett Street, Hanson from [business name] to [business name]. Premise consists of a one-story building.

MOTION by Mr. Mitchell, seconded by Joseph Weeks, to open the Public Hearing. ***Voted 5 - 0***

Ms. Green explained that they had received a license for transfer of ownership, and introduced the new owners as they attended the meeting. She further explained that the licensing authority holding a public hearing to approve the transfer was more of a formality as required by the ABCC. She provided the Board information on the new owners demonstrating the lack of violation or any financial trouble for the new owners and emphasized that this is a formality to hold the hearing as they had no cause for concern with the transfer of ownership.

After a question from the Board regarding any potential changes that would be made to the location that the Board should know about, a lawyer representing the new owners clarified that there were no additional plans at the time.

MOTION by Mr. Weeks, seconded by Ms. FitzGerald-Kemmett, to approve the transfer of license and authority as described above. ***Voted 5 - 0***

MOTION by Ms. FitzGerald-Kemmett, seconded by Mr. Mitchell, to approve the pledging of the license and inventory to Rockland Trust. ***Voted 5 - 0***

MOTION by Mr. Mitchell, seconded by Ms. FitzGerald-Kemmett, to close the public hearing. ***Voted 5 - 0***

Discuss renewal of Sprague Energy natural gas contract

Ms. Green explained to the Board that the Town purchases natural gas through a consolidator, Sprague Energy. A representative spoke to the Board on pros and cons to continuing their contract as it was up for renewal.

Mr. [LAST NAME] provided the Board with a brief summary on the company, explaining that they had been helping the Town of Hanson for about 9 years. This company in particular keeps an eye on natural gas and electricity along with many other things for the Town of Hanson. He explained that due to the impact the pandemic has had on economies, massive instability has been created.

The current rate the company is willing to offer the Town is a little over \$0.69 and that is oscillating a little bit based on the current market, but there are no indications that the market will change drastically. They strongly recommend that the Town take advantage of the program for at least another 12 months to 24 months.

He explained that the price would fluctuate most between winter and summer as there is a drastic difference in the amount of natural gas being used by Towns. This company in particular takes these differences into consideration when deciding rates, and this is why they are able to offer a lower fixed rate. They discussed the pros and cons of signing a shorter contract versus a longer contract.

It was finally decided that Mr. [LAST NAME] would compile the figures for a 27-month contract and send the information to Ms. Green, to be distributed to the Board. It was heavily suggested that the Board wanted a 27 month contract in order to complete two full winters in the contract.

MOTION by Ms. FitzGerald-Kemmett, seconded by Mr. Mitchell, to empower Ms. Green to enter into the 27 month contract with Sprague as long as the cost falls below .76/thermal. ***Voted 5 - 0***

Discuss COVID-19 safety measures for Town Buildings

Chairman Dyer explained that with the recent surge of COVID-19 cases and the lack of guidance from the Governor, who has left the decisions up to individual municipalities, the Board wants to do what is best for the safety of the staff in town. Chairman Dyer explained that he would be reopening the COVID-19 safety measures for Town buildings.

Gill Amado, Health Agent for the Town of Hanson, updated the Board of the recent COVID surge in relation to Hanson. He noted that there were 300 cases as of January 4, 2022 and the numbers were rising everyday. More and more people were also going to be tested for COVID with a 12.33% positive rate. Mr. Amado emphasized that the Town Hall specifically was doing well in terms of safety precautions.

The only additional thing suggested by Mr. Amado was that masks be mandated in the Town Hall, but Hanson residents have been following safety precautions anyway so there may not be more to be done in terms of precautions. The Board discussed in length the options to reduce transmission including an appointment-only opening of the Town Hall, mask mandates in public buildings, or meeting virtually for Town meetings.

MOTION by Ms. FitzGerald-Kemmett, seconded by Mr. Mitchell, to impose a mask mandate when working business in a Town-owned building and a hybrid approach to Town meetings effective January 5, 2022 to be revisited at the Selectmen meeting on January 25, 2022. ***Voted 5 - 0***

There was brief discussion on relevant subjects like the upcoming Booster clinic and possible COVID tests for Town Hall.

Appointments

Lorraine Lentini - Council on Aging Board

MOTION by Ms. FitzGerald-Kemmett, seconded by Mr. Weeks, to approve the appointment of Lorraine Lentini to the Council on Aging Board. ***Voted 5 - 0***

Consider and discuss the application of Caroline Mills for the appointment to the Recreation Commission

Ms. Green explained that Ms. Mills application had ended up in the Spam folder by mistake, and so Ms. Green hadn't received the application until recently. Due to the timing, Ms. Mills may not have known that the Board would meet to discuss her application. To maintain consistency, Chairman Dyer deferred the discussion with Ms. Mills about her application until she could be present at the meeting.

Approve Open Session meeting minutes for 10/19/21, 11/2/21, 5/18/21, and 12/7/21

MOTION by Ms. FitzGerald-Kemmett, seconded by Mr. Mitchell, to approve the meeting minutes upon the editing of certain spellings as noted by Ms. FitzGerald-Kemmett. ***Voted 5 - 0***

IV

OLD BUSINESS

Modify/clarify the December 14th vote to authorize the purchase of 485 Winter Street

Chairman Dyer explained that while the Board hadn't necessarily done anything wrong with the vote, there was special language that needed to be used to follow proper procedure.

MOTION by Ms. FitzGerald-Kemmett, seconded by Mr. Mitchell, to ... ***Roll call vote Mr. Weeks aye, Ms. FitzGerald-Kemmett aye, Mr. Mitchell aye, Mr. Hickey aye, Chairman Dyer aye. Voted 5 - 0.***

V

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Ms. Green updated the Board on recent events, as follows:

1. Ms. Green explained that the CARES Act came to an end on December 31, 2021, and the Town was required to submit all final requests by that date. She informed the Board that they had submitted 4 requests totaling the amount of \$388,349 in COVID related expenses. These requests are for both the Town of Hanson, Whitman-Hanson Regional School District, and the South Shore Vocational/Technical School.
2. Ms. Green explained that Green Communities projects are underway starting with weatherization being installed at Camp Kiwanee, the Highway Department, and the library. They are waiting on the LED lights to come in for installation in the Middle School and the Water Department.
3. Their office was very successful in getting all the business license renewals in, getting the licenses printed up, compiling the paperwork and payments. These licenses included Common Victualler, Class 2 Auto-Dealers, Liquor, and Entertainment.
4. Ms. Green gathered data relating to property taxes for surrounding communities and the average single/family tax bills, as well as State averages for the data and other related information. The data reflects that they are well within average for their neighboring communities, and she felt this information would be helpful for the Board to have. She plans on putting this information on the Town website so the community can see the comparison as well.

5. Ms. Green informed the Board that they had been very busy in the Selectmen's office with upcoming contract expirations and the procurement that comes along with this process.
6. They are currently in the process of gathering the budgets from the different Town departments and compiling the information for the Selectboard to review. This information will help them demonstrate their conservative spending to remain in the best interest of the taxpayers.
7. Ms. Green informed the Board that the investigation into the members of the ZBA was still active and currently still collecting related documents.
8. Massachusetts is entering into a new program called One-Stop Shop, and Ms. Green explained that this is a grant program that consolidates a lot of grant programs into one. This particular program will incorporate a lot of economic development programs (Mass Works, Mass Development, etc.). Ms. Green met with someone very knowledgeable on these types of programs and hopes to continue meeting with this woman along with the Town Planner to discuss the utilization of these grant programs.

Several members of the Board asked Ms. Green questions relating to recent business. In the discussion, Ms. Green agreed to follow up on the WHRSD audit with the Whitman Town Administrator, and she also provided an update to the Board on the insurance with the Maquan School building. She explained that the only way to decrease the cost is to increase the deductible, and she believes that as they approach the new fiscal year, they can put out a bid for this insurance.

Finally, Ms. FitzGerald-Kemmett wanted to recognize the work of Charlie Baker at the Maquan School playground and other locations in Hanson.

VI

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Ms. FitzGerald-Kemmett, seconded by Mr. Mitchell, to adjourn into Executive Session in accordance with Mass General Law ch. 30a Section 21a to conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with non-union personnel, or to conduct collective bargaining sessions, or contract negotiations with non-union personnel to wit: Police Chief. ***Roll call vote Mr. Weeks aye, Ms. FitzGerald-Kemmett aye, Chairman Dyer aye, Mr. Mitchell aye, Mr. Hickey aye. Voted 5 - 0.***

Respectfully submitted,

Amanda Guindon
Minutes Clerk