

Select Board Meeting Minutes

April 7, 2021

Present: The members of the Select Board all participated remotely via using GoToWebinar: Mr. Frank DelVecchio, Chairman; Neil Rhein, Vice-Chair; Mr. Jess Aptowitz, Clerk; Mr. Michael Trowbridge and Mr. Steve Schoonveld. Mr. Barry LaCasse, Assistant Town Manager/Finance Director also participated using the GoToWebinar.

Mr. Kevin Dumas, Town Manager was not present.

1. Call To Order Select Board Meeting - Pledge of Allegiance

Chairman DelVecchio called the meeting to order at 5:30PM. He then asked those present to state the Pledge of Allegiance. He reminded everyone that the meeting was being broadcast live and taped for future broadcast on Mansfield Cable. Chairman DelVecchio read a statement and provided an email address and phone number to those watching directing residents to send their questions in, and they would receive a response within twenty-four hours.

2. COVID Update with Fire Chief Desrosiers and Health Agent

Chief Justin Desrosiers and Health Agent Amy Donovan Palmer were present. Chief Desrosiers starting by stating that 340 people in town including public safety are fully vaccinated. He stated that he was not expecting to get any more doses, but noted that the State program is running well. There is a designated phone number for at home bound elderly and stated that the phone number to call was 833-983-0485 Monday – Friday 9am to 5pm to request an appointment. Ms. Palmer recommended that everyone pre-register online with the State. She encouraged everyone to also take whatever vaccine is available. She stated that everyone needs to continue to be vigilant and wear a mask even at restaurants patrons need to keep a mask on unless you are eating or drinking.

Mr. Schoonveld asked if April 19th was the date that anyone over 16 were eligible, which was confirmed by Ms. Palmer. Mr. Schoonveld then thanked both the Chief and Ms. Palmer for the work they have both done during the pandemic and noted that the youth sports organizers are very grateful for their work in helping them have seasons. Mr. Rhein stated that right now the numbers are coming down, but when looking at the chart of data the numbers are higher than they were a year ago when everyone was concerned and had uncertainty, he urged everyone to not have COVID fatigue and continue to wear masks and social distance. Mr. Trowbridge also thanked the Chief and Ms. Palmer.

3. Town Manager's Report

- Budget/CIP Update
- Local Election – Voting Options
- Town of Norton Draft Intermunicipal Agreement
- Fire Department Hiring
- MBTA Meeting
- Grant Awards

Select Board Questions and Comments on Town Manager's Report

Mr. LaCasse began the update stating that he is still waiting for guidance on the American Rescue Plan Fund and how that money can be used. He stated that FY22 budget is now balanced and available on the Towns website noting that the Town and School are planning to use \$2.6 million of the American Rescue Funds. Mr. LaCasse then updated the Board on the North Main Street fire station sale, online permitting, local election, grants and tax title properties.

Mr. Schoonveld asked when early voting begins and Mr. LaCasse answered that the ballot cannot go to the printer until after April 10th as that is the last day for a candidate to withdraw, but it would be a couple days after that date. Mr. Schoonveld then asked how the road work for the tax title properties was being paid for and Mr. LaCasse answered that it was through the road bond not from the expected proceeds of the sale of the properties. Mr. Schoonveld suggested that it might make sense to replenish that money after the sale of the properties. Mr.

Schoonveld then asked if the health insurance stabilization fund was being used in the budget and Mr. LaCasse answered that \$139,000 was being used and noted that \$258,000 was used last year. Mr. Schoonveld asked Mr. LaCasse to provide justification of using the funds as the increase to the health insurance was only 1.76%. Mr. Aptowitz asked if the online permitting program was in the budget and Mr. LaCasse responded that it was paid for through the CARES ACT and it was believed it was a good use of the funds to provide a way for people to apply for building permit without having to come into Town Hall. Mr. Rhein asked if Mr. LaCasse could provide a high-level overview of how the \$2 million gap was closed and Mr. LaCasse explained.

4. Resident Questions and Comments

Mr. Peter Wiggins was in attendance virtually and stated that everyone needs to be vigilant for a few more weeks. Ms. Sandra Levine commented that she did not have a comment for this portion of the meeting but further on she may. Chairman DelVecchio stated there were resident questions or comments further in the agenda as well as during the public hearing.

5. Discussion and Consideration of FY22 Water and Sewer Rates

Mr. Lee Azinheira, DPW Director and Mr. David Fox, Raftelis Financial Consultants were present virtually. Mr. Azinheira stated that the recommended water increase was five percent and a three percent increase for sewer. Mr. Fox then provided a presentation showing rate models and revenue requirements. He explained how they create the financial plan and the importance of having a reasonable reserve fund and how they are trying to smooth rates over time instead of having huge spikes. The five percent increase of water rates will mean an increase of approximately \$4 per quarter for the average customer. Mr. Fox then explained the sewer increase of three percent was about \$1 per month increase for the average customer. Mr. Rhein asked for clarification of the rates and which group residential fell into and Mr. Fox answered the small which is approximately 1,200 cubic feet per quarter. Mr. Rhein commented that five percent seems high, but asked if there could be lower increases as many people are struggling with COVID. Mr. Fox commented that he recommends no less than five percent because it supports the financial plan and the essential capital projects that were approved for Cate Springs well. He added that if there was no increase to water over the next five year there would be a negative balance in retained earnings. Chairman DelVecchio asked if the projection uses conservative numbers approved from Town Meeting or if it has been updated to reflect the SRF zero percent loan. Mr. Fox answered that it has been updated and will change based on what happens in FY24. Mr. Schoonveld asked what number was used for the Cate Springs project estimate and what the FY22 sales are expected to be. Mr. Fox answered that user charges is projected to be \$5.6 million and its expected for that to increase each year. Mr. Schoonveld then asked why rate increases were effective July 1st last year and May 1st this year. Mr. Azinheira then responded that they were late last year, but ideally when they go into effect on May 1st the bill would be billed in July which is the start of the new fiscal year. Mr. Aptowitz asked to see the water cashflow chart and asked what the largest dark color of the bars represented and Mr. Fox stated it was operating expenses. Mr. Aptowitz stated this was not discussed as part of this agenda item, but it was the biggest part of the budget and Mr. Fox noted that it was the greatest portion of the revenue requirements however the largest driver is from the financing of capital improvements. Mr. Aptowitz commented that if a hard look was made at the operating budget there may be a less of an increase needed and believes every department should be looked at. Mr. Fox responded that it was outside of his role and would defer to Mr. Azinheira. Mr. Azinheira explained that there has not been an increase in staff to the water department and they have used technology versus adding additional staff. Mr. Aptowitz then stated that the Board has not voted on the budget yet and Mr. LaCasse answered that the Board has not, but would do that as part of the warrant articles and taking votes to support or not support. Mr. Trowbridge commented that no one likes increases and thought it would be more based on the approval of the PFAS Treatment at Cate Springs and therefore was in favor of the five percent. Mr. Rhein then asked if the rates were the same for residential and commercial customers and Mr. Azinheira answered that they were. Mr. Fox commented that it varies amongst communities throughout the state and that has not been considered for Mansfield.

Motion: To increase the water rates by five percent effective May 1, 2021. (Aptowitz/Trowbridge)

Roll Call Vote:

Rhein – No Trowbridge – Yes Schoonveld – No Aptowitz – No DelVecchio - Yes

Failed 2:3

Motion: To increase the sewer rates by three percent effective May 1, 2021. (Aptowitz/Trowbridge)

Roll Call Vote:

Rhein – Yes Trowbridge – Yes Schoonveld – No Aptowitz – Yes DelVecchio - Yes

Passes 4:1

Skipped to public hearing agenda #8

8. Public Hearing – Consideration of Quorum Reduction for Annual Town Meeting at 6:30PM

In accordance with the provisions of Chapter 92 of the Acts of 2020 of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, notice is hereby given by the Town of Mansfield Select Board of the Board’s intention to consider an adjustment of the Annual Town Meeting quorum requirement and any other town meeting during the pendency of the Governor’s State of Emergency at a public meeting to be held Wednesday, April 7, 2021 at 6:30PM. The Select Board will make its Wednesday, April 7, 2021 meeting live on Mansfield Cable Access and live virtually via GoToWebinar to ensure that interested members of the public can clearly follow and participate in the deliberations of the Select Board on making a quorum adjustment as the deliberations are occurring.

Pursuant to Governor Baker’s March 12, 2020 Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c.30A, §18, and the Governor’s March 15, 2020 Order imposing strict limitation on the number of people that may gather in one place, this meeting of the Select Board will be conducted via remote participation to the greatest extent possible. Specific information and the general guidelines for remote participation by members of the public and/or parties with a right and/or requirement to attend this meeting can be found at the Town of Mansfield’s website www.mansfieldma.com or register for the Webinar at <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/3788308352970240015>.

Motion: To open the public hearing at 6:52PM. (Aptowitz/Trowbridge)

Roll Call Vote:

Rhein – Yes Trowbridge – Yes Schoonveld – Yes Aptowitz – Yes DelVecchio - Yes

Passes 5:0

Mr. Trowbridge was in favor of doing this because at Fall Town meeting there was a low turnout but the business of the Town was able to continue. Mr. Schoonveld asked if the moderator was present to weigh with his opinion. Mr. Schoonveld stated he was not in favor of a quorum reduction based on the items that are on the warrant including zoning articles. Mr. Rhein said at the last Town Meeting there were over 200 people and now that people are vaccinated he would expect many more to come, however he was in favor of supporting a reduction in case there was not. Chairman DelVecchio agreed and stated that he hopes for robust participation but should plan in case limited numbers show up. Chairman DelVecchio asked the public if they had any comments or questions. Ms. Sandra Levine commented that people need to know where Town Meeting was going to be and if it was under a tent or in the wide open. Mr. Aptowitz explained that it was just like the last annual Town Meeting at the Xfinity Center in the parking lot. Ms. Levine stated that May is rainy season and was concerned and Mr. LaCasse noted that they are looking into renting a tent. Ms. Levine asked why would the Board would consider less people given that now people are vaccinated. Mr. Aptowitz commented that it is more like an insurance policy for just in case the turnout is low and that it is only in place while there is a State of Emergency in place by the Governor. Ms. Levine asked why the Board would want fewer people deciding on the controversial issues. Mr. Schoonveld commented that he wanted to hear from the moderator to see if he would consider adjourning to a future date should there be bad weather and a low turnout for article numbers 18 and above. Ms. Levine then commented that a 100 people could be just the Board and Committee members and that would be a devastating effect and therefore she was not in favor of a quorum reduction.

Motion: To close the public hearing at 7:08PM. (Aptowitz/Schoonveld)

Roll Call Vote:

Rhein – Yes Trowbridge – Yes Schoonveld – Yes Aptowitz – Yes DelVecchio - Yes

Passes 5:0

Motion: To reduce the quorum from 200 registered voters to 100 registered voters for the Annual Town Meeting and any other town meeting during the time period when the Governors Declaration of Emergency is in effect and in consultation and with the approval of the Town Moderator. (Aptowitz/Schoonveld)

Roll Call Vote:

Rhein – Yes Trowbridge – Yes Schoonveld – No Aptowitz – Yes DelVecchio - Yes

Passes 4:1

6. Discussion and Consideration of Town of Mansfield PFAS Treatment Facility Plan for Cate Springs Well located at 99 Maple Street

Mr. Azinheira, Mr. Mike Ahern and Mr. Steve Robbins from Woodard Curran were present virtually for this item. Mr. Azinheira stated that he was asking for approval as a matter of formality. He stated that the Planning Board has approved and recommended the Select Board also approve. Mr. Robbins then provided a brief presentation on the project stating that they are updating the water treatment technology based on the new Massachusetts guidelines that regulates PFAS. He showed the site plan and showed the existing building and placement of the new facility that will be built. The building will be 30 feet by 70 feet long, he added that they did consider an existing building but it was unable to fit the size of the carbon filter tanks. Mr. Rhein asked when they would begin construction. Mr. Azinheira stated this summer, but because of the SRF Funding they need to wait for them to issue an IUP. Mr. Schoonveld asked what the final cost is expected and Mr. Azinheira answered \$4.3 million however he will not know exactly until there are bid prices. Mr. Robbins believed that the Town was in a good position and that dollar figure has a contingency built in, he noted costs have been on the rise, but some of the core equipment has been procured to help speed up the process.

Motion: To approve the PFAS Water Treatment Plant at Cate Springs Well as presented. (Aptowitz/Trowbridge)

Roll Call Vote:

Rhein – Yes Trowbridge – Yes Schoonveld – Yes Aptowitz – Yes DelVecchio - Yes

Passes 5:0

7. Discussion and Consideration of Mansfield Sale of Town Owned Land Policy

Mr. LaCasse stated that this was previously discussed and the only outstanding item was what the vote requirement was at Town Meeting for the disposition of property and Town Counsel had provided an answer and it is a two thirds majority needed.

Motion: To approve the Town of Mansfield Sale of Town-Owned Property Policy & Procedure. (Aptowitz/Trowbridge)

Roll Call Vote:

Rhein – Yes Trowbridge – Yes Schoonveld – Yes Aptowitz – Yes DelVecchio - Yes

Passes 5:0

9. Downtown Committee Update by Select Board Vice-Chair Rhein

Mr. Rhein presented an update from the Downtown Committee and highlighted the improvements that have been made to Downtown recently including lighting, trails, parking regulations, 105 new parking spaces, Fulton pond updates, Harry Chase Place and the success of the First Fall Festival. The Select Board members made some comments and shared sentiments of being proud of the Downtown today. Mr. Schoonveld also recommended a tax incentive to help businesses get some of the Downtown retail space filled.

10. Discussion and Consideration of 2021 Annual Town Meeting Warrant Articles

This item was passed over.

11. Consideration of 2021 Commercial Parking Lot Application for MMAS at 888 South Main Street and Consideration to waive the permit fee of \$200

Motion: To approve the 2021 Commercial Parking Lot for MMAS located at 888 South Main Street and waive the \$200 permit fee. (Aptowitz/Trowbridge)

Roll Call Vote:

Rhein – Yes Trowbridge – Yes Schoonveld – Yes Aptowitz – Yes DelVecchio - Yes

Passes 5:0

12. Consideration of 2021 Entertainment License/Special Events Application and Commercial Parking Lot Application for Xfinity Center located at 885 South Main Street

Motion: To approve the 2021 Xfinity Entertainment and 2021 Commercial Parking Lot Licenses and require that each special event be routed individually through Public Safety and Board of Health to ensure that all State and Town requirements are met and edits to change 2020 to 2021. (Aptowitz/Trowbridge)

Mr. LaCasse noted the motion including language that was needed from Public Safety and Board of Health. Mr. Schoonveld asked if there were any changes from last year. Mr. LaCasse did not believe there were. Mr. Schoonveld noted that the date needed to be updated from 2020 to 2021 and the motion was updated. The Board also discussed the difference from a concert and a special event.

Roll Call Vote:

Rhein – Yes Trowbridge – Yes Schoonveld – Yes Aptowitz – Yes DelVecchio - Yes

Passes 5:0

13. Resident Questions and Comments

Ms. Levine asked if the Board would be putting future advertisements in the Sun Chronicle. She thought it was great that the Board did that because there were thousands that subscribe and it would be helpful especially before Town Meeting. Mr. Trowbridge suggested sending the agenda to the Sun Chronicle. Mr. Schoonveld agreed that residents needed to be educated prior to Town Meeting.

14. Review and Approve Consent Agenda

All items on the Consent Agenda may be adopted with a single motion. Any member of the Select Board may request that an item be withdrawn from the Consent Agenda for separate consideration in which case that item will be voted on separately from the remainder of the Consent Agenda. All licenses have been routed through Town Hall Departments and any conditions have been noted below.

a) **Vote To Approve Warrants:**

- Town Vendor Warrant No. 21040T in the amount of \$1,636,733.71
- Electric Vendor Warrant No. 21040E in the amount of \$73,375.68

Motion: To approve the consent agenda. (Aptowitz/Trowbridge)

Roll Call Vote:

Rhein – Yes Trowbridge – Yes Schoonveld – Yes Aptowitz – Yes DelVecchio - Yes

Passes 5:0

15. Consideration and Approval of Town Payroll Warrants:

- **Town Payroll/Town Medicaid Payroll 21038PT in the amount of \$ 372,410.84**

Motion: To approve Town Payroll/Town Medicaid Payroll 21038PT in the amount of \$ 372,410.84. (Aptowitz/Trowbridge)

Roll Call Vote:

Rhein – Yes Trowbridge – Yes Schoonveld – No Aptowitz – Yes DelVecchio - Yes

Passes 4:1

- **Town Deductions Vendor Payroll 21038TV in the amount of \$117,367.48**

Motion: To approve Town Deductions Vendor Payroll 21038TV in the amount of \$117,367.48. (Aptowitz/Trowbridge)

Roll Call Vote:

Rhein – Yes Trowbridge – Yes Schoonveld – Yes Aptowitz – Yes DelVecchio - Yes

Passes 5:0

- **Town Payroll/Town Medicaid Payroll 21039PT in the amount of \$397,772.73**

Motion: To approve Payroll/Town Medicaid Payroll 21039PT in the amount of \$397,772.73. (Aptowitz/Trowbridge)

Roll Call Vote:

Rhein – Yes Trowbridge – Yes Schoonveld – No Aptowitz – Yes DelVecchio - Yes

Passes 4:1

- **Town Deductions Vendor Payroll 21039TV in the amount of \$128,763.41**

Motion: To approve Deductions Vendor Payroll 21039TV in the amount of \$128,763.41. (Aptowitz/Trowbridge)

Roll Call Vote:

Rhein – Yes Trowbridge – Yes Schoonveld – Yes Aptowitz – Yes DelVecchio - Yes

Passes 5:0

- **School Payroll/School Medicaid Payroll 21039PS in the amount of \$1,713,809.86**

Motion: To approve School Payroll/School Medicaid Payroll 21039PS in the amount of \$1,713,809.86.

(Aptowitz/Trowbridge)

Roll Call Vote:

Rhein – Yes Trowbridge – Abstain Schoonveld – Yes Aptowitz – Yes DelVecchio - Yes

Passes 4:0:1

- **School Deductions Vendor Payroll 21039SV in the amount of \$409,659.43**

Motion: To approve School Deductions Vendor Payroll 21039SV in the amount of \$409,659.43. (Aptowitz/Trowbridge)

Roll Call Vote:

Rhein – Yes Trowbridge – Yes Schoonveld – Yes Aptowitz – Yes DelVecchio - Yes

Passes 5:0

- **Town Payroll/Town Medicaid Payroll 21040PT in the amount of \$391,484.05**

Motion: To approve Town Payroll/Town Medicaid Payroll 21040PT in the amount of \$391,484.05.

(Aptowitz/Trowbridge)

Roll Call Vote:

Rhein – Yes Trowbridge – Yes Schoonveld – No Aptowitz – Yes DelVecchio - Yes

Passes 4:1

- **Town Deductions Vendor Payroll 21040TV in the amount of \$124,113.25**

Motion: To approve Town Deductions Vendor Payroll 21040TV in the amount of \$124,113.25. (Aptowitz/Trowbridge)

Roll Call Vote:

Rhein – Yes Trowbridge – Yes Schoonveld – Yes Aptowitz – Yes DelVecchio - Yes

Passes 5:0

16. Correspondence

- **Letter from Southeastern Regional School District**
- **Notification from Verizon Fios**
- **Letter from Beta Group, Inc**
- **Notice of Yearly Operational Plan**
- **Letter from Lisa Morley of Scouts BSA Troop 51**

Mr. Aptowitz read a summary of the above correspondence. Mr. Aptowitz asked for more information from Southeastern Regional and wanted a comparison from last year to this year and how many students were going there. Chairman DelVecchio asked for Mr. LaCasse to invite Southeastern Regional to the April 21st meeting.

17. Select Board Member's Comments and Questions

Mr. Aptowitz had no comments or questions.

Mr. Schoonveld wished his wife a happy birthday.

Mr. Trowbridge congratulated Chief Sellon for his article that was published in the April magazine from International Chiefs Association.

Mr. Rhein asked for the status of new movie theater that was planned for Mansfield Crossing.

Chairman DelVecchio stated that the agenda was very full and thanked Mr. LaCasse for filling in for Mr. Dumas.

18. Any items not anticipated by the Chair 48 hours prior to this meeting

There were no items.

19. Adjourn

Motion: To adjourn the April 7, 2021 Select Board Meeting at 8:19PM. (Aptowitz/Schoonveld)

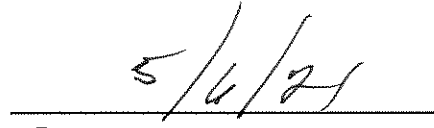
Roll Call Vote:

Rhein – Yes Trowbridge – Yes Schoonveld – Yes Aptowitz – Yes DelVecchio - Yes

Passes 5:0



Signature



Date

Minutes prepared by Carrie Champagne