



TOWN OF MENDON

SELECT BOARD

20 Main Street, Mendon, MA 01756
Tel: 508-473-2312 Fax: 508-478-8241

Notice of Meeting

November 9, 2022

6:00 PM

REMOTE

Microsoft Teams meeting

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Board Members

Michael Merolli, Chair

Lawney Tinio, Vice-Chair

Alejna Brugos

Brendan Chenelle

Michael Goddard

Meeting

Minutes

At 6 PM a remote meeting was called to order. Ms. St.John-Dupuis read the introduction to the meeting. Mr. Merolli provided the ground rules.. Present: Mike Merolli, Lawney Tinio, Alejna Brugos, Brenden Chenelle, Mike Goddard , Kim Newman and Laura St. John-Dupuis.

Correspondence to the Board- Consider Placement of Signs for St. Gabriel's Christmas Fair

Mr. Tinio made a motion to place of signs advertising St. Gabriel's Christmas Fair to be held on Saturday, Dec. 3rd, 2022 on the islands at the following locations:

- Millville Road and Rt. 16;
- Main St. and Rt. 16
- North Avenue and Northbridge Road

The signs measure 18" X 24" and will be placed three weeks prior to the event and removed on Dec. 4th, 2022. Second by Mr. Goddard. The motion passed unanimously.

Roll call vote: Merolli- aye, Tinio-aye, Brugos- Aye, Chenelle- Aye, Goddard-Aye.

Consider Toys for Tots Mountain Bike Ride

Mr. Tinio made a motion to authorize the New England Mountain Bike Association to hold a "Toys for Tots" mountain bike ride using some trails in the town forest on Sunday November 20, 2022. Second by Ms. Brugos. The motion passed unanimously.

Roll call vote: Merolli- aye, Tinio-aye, Brugos- Aye, Chenelle- Aye, Goddard-Aye

Discuss Recusals on Boards/Committees- See" Discuss Town Counsel as Special Council for ZBA"

Discuss Means-Tested Senior Citizen Property Tax Exemption

Mr. Merolli stated that Representative Brian Murray sent a letter approving the Means-Tested Senior Citizen Property Tax Exemption. Ms. Brugos stated that she was pleased and stated this exemption passed at the May ATM giving Senior Citizens the opportunity to get an additional exemption and will be based upon qualifying for the state circuit breaker exemption.

Mr. Rudden addressed the Board and stated that this exemption is designed to provide tax relief and will be implemented in 2024. This exemption piggy backs on the Sr. Circuit Breaker tax, if a person qualifies for the Circuit Breaker Tax and has lived in the Town of Mendon for 10 Consecutive years they would qualify for this exemption, even in a senior does not make enough money to file an income tax return, they can file a Circuit Breaker schedule. Apply next spring and even The cost would be borne across the tax base, roughly \$50 per year. Every 3 years, the Town will vote to keep the exemption, there will be an article for this at the 2025 Annual Town Meeting. The Select Board has to approve what the percentage the eligible residents would be getting.

Mr. Tinio made a motion to support efforts being made by CMRPC to establish the position of Regional Housing Coordinator. Second by Mr. Goddard. The motion passed unanimously.

Roll call vote: Merolli- aye, Tinio-aye, Brugos- Aye, Chenelle- Aye, Goddard-Aye

Discuss Town Counsel as Special Council for ZBA –

Mr. Chenelle recused himself for this topic. Mr. Merolli stated agenda the agenda topic related to the item under correspondence to the Select Board. Mr. Merolli read an email from Mr. John Nenart regarding recusing oneself and that in a meeting at the Conservation Commission he recused himself and was asked to leave the room and asked about the Town's policy on recusing themselves.

Ms. Cindy Amara, Town Council stated that on November 1st sent her response to Ms. Newman. Ms. Amara stated that Mr. Nenart recused himself prevent any appearance of a conflict (if not an actual conflict) because it is hard to imagine how he could affirmatively vote to support the project before the ZBA and then sit on the ZBA impartially. The law does not require an individual to leave the room once he or she has recused themselves, but it is customary to do so. Also, once a member has recused himself from acting on a matter he may speak on a matter as an individual and not as a board member if he chooses. Ms. Amara did not tell John that he had to leave the room only that he had to physically step down from his seat on the Board. If John left the room after recusing himself that was his decision and he is entitled to do that.

Mr. Goddard asked if the Board wants to clarify a policy. Ms. Amara does not know that the Select Board has the authority to make a policy for all Boards and does not know that it would be acceptable for any or all boards to have a policy about what an individual decides to do in an individual capacity. Mr. Merolli stated that the reason everybody has to complete ethics training periodically is included within ethics training and does not feel another policy is needed. Mr. Goddard stated that Ms. Newman should not respond to this correspondence. Mr. Merolli stated he gave the correspondence to Town Counsel and has responded.

Mr. Merolli asked Ms. Amara about Special Council's role . Ms. Amara stated a developer may hire special engineers or whatever the project requires and the Developer pays for that as it levels the playing field on a project. It is sanctioned through the Commonwealth. The Developer agrees that the Town hires who it wants and the costs are borne by the applicant. Ms. Amara stated that she is a land use expert as well as general counsel.

Consider IMA with Uxbridge & Millville for Shared Planner Positions

Ms. Newman stated that the Town has been dealing with this grant for a number of years now, the original IMA signed was for 1 position that was going to be shared with 3 communities. Mendon applied for a state grant to hire a full time Jr. Planner to be mentored by a part time Sr. planner. It has taken approximately 6 month to find a Jr. Planner. All three Towns have to update the IMA so that the parameters are the same. There is a range to hire this person along with benefits. Both of the positions will be housed in Uxbridge. The plan is to start in January 2023. Finding the Jr. planner has taken 6 months approx.. All 3 Towns has to update the IMA the parameters are the

Mr. Jack Hunter, Mendon's part-time Planner, one of his first tasks was trying to find a full-time person to take over for him. Unfortunately, nobody could be found with any experience. Our next step was to find a graduate student that wouldn't mind being trained. Human Resources work with Mr. Hunter reviewing applications that were accepted however there were no candidates with experience. Mr. Goddard asked if there is a candidate Ms. Newman stated there is a candidate that all 3 towns have interviewed. She has a background with the Towns Planning software as well as streamlining our bylaws. Mr. Hunter agrees, the candidate does not have Municipal experience, however Mr. Hunter would be happy to help train to train. Ms. Newman we will have this person for 6

hours and that person will be able to attend Planning meetings. Mr. Goddard asked how this person would be involved in the administration piece. Ms. Newman stated this employee would help with ZBA and will be able to cross-trained to perform all the tasks. Mr. Goddard asked Ms. Newman about reimbursement. Ms. Newman stated that the grant was for a total of \$75K and believes that the Town's share would be less than \$23K for two years in services. We will have a bump in a couple of years because we will have both employees, there will be some savings when we have one full-time planner as that person will not have the experience that Mr. Hunter. The salary will be less due to less experience.

Mr. Tinio I move to sign the IMA for Shared Town Planning Service with Mendon, Millville & Uxbridge. Second by Mr. Chenelle. The motion passed unanimously.

Roll call vote: Merolli- aye, Tinio-aye, Brugos- Aye, Chenelle- Aye, Goddard-Aye

Conservation Commission Interviews

The Select Board interviewed 2 Candidates interested in the Conservation Commission open seat: Mr. John D'Amelio and Mr. Bob Sweet and Mr. Tim Aicardi who is up for a 3-year term reappointment.

Ms. Burgos made a motion to appoint Mr. Bob Sweet to the Conservation Commission for a term that will expire June 30, 2024. Second by Mr. Goddard. The motions passed.

Roll Call Vote: Merolli-Aye, Goddard-Aye, Brugos-Aye, Tinio- Nay, Chenelle-Aye

Mr. Tinio made a motion to re-appoint Tim Aicardi to the Conservation Commission for a term that will expire on June 30, 2025. Second by Mr. Goddard. The motion passed unanimously.

Roll call vote: Merolli- aye, Tinio-aye, Brugos- Aye, Chenelle- Aye, Goddard-Aye

Consider Chapter 90 Reimbursement - Blackstone Street

Mr. Tinio made a motion to approve Chapter 90 Reimbursement request in the amount of \$290,554.48 for work on Blackstone Street from Wesley Drive to Pole #38- Pole #38 to Blackstone Town Line. Second by Mr. Chenelle. The motion passed unanimously.

Roll call vote: Merolli- aye, Tinio-aye, Brugos- Aye, Chenelle- Aye, Goddard-Aye

Consider Appointment- Highway Mechanic/Heavy Equipment Operator

Ms. Newman's stated that she would like the Board to make a motion that you recognize his time back. This amount is what the candidate would be receiving and not anything additional but he would be made whole is if he never left. AB asked when he worked here. KN 17 years and left this past May. KN we have a position become vacant. MG. This is not uncommon and just kind of curious if we have done this with other positions or candidates. Are we prepared to set a president. KN we have in the past considered and allowed years of service to credit for full-time service, particular.

Mr. Tinio made a motion to appoint/reinstate form employee Michael Cournoyer to the full-time position of Highway Mechanic/Heavy Equipment Operator at starting rate of pay \$27.24, credit for years of service 16 years, 10 months, 2.5% longevity, five weeks of vacation time, and 1 year probation. Second by Alejna Brugos. The motion passed unanimously.

Roll call vote: Merolli- aye, Tinio-aye, Brugos- Aye, Chenelle- Aye, Goddard-Aye

Discuss Warrant Articles

Ms. Newman stated that free cash has been certified. FinCom met on Wednesday night but were in support in concept with funding sources and amounts. Finance Committee will vote to formally approve. Ms. Newman reviewed the draft Special Town Meeting Article.

Other Topics Not Reasonably Anticipated 48 hours prior to Meeting

Mr. Merolli stated that last week while he spoke to our state rep and state senator and about a \$200K regional fire chief grant and a \$30K grant to look at elected to appointed highway surveyor. Both stated they are in support will and earmark in next year's budget, stating that they recommend all Towns do. Ms. Newman submitted both grants in the last 2 days and spoke to DLS today and feels like this should be successful and should know in a month or so. Mr. Merolli stated that the report from the DLS is do around Thanksgiving.

Adjournment

Mr. Tinio made a motion to adjourn, second by Mr. Goddard. The motion passed unanimously.
Roll call vote: Merolli- aye, Tinio-aye, Brugos- Aye, Chenelle- Aye, Goddard-Aye.

Submitted by- Laura St.John-Dupuis