

approved 5/17/19

Select Board Minutes**April 30, 2019****Tuesday, 6:30 p.m.****Select Board Conference Room***All meetings of the Select Board are recorded***ATTENDANCE:**

Chairman, Joseph J. Deedy
 Vice-Chairman, Russell S. Fox
 Clerk, Doug Moglin - Absent
 Chief Administrative Officer, Karl J. Stinehart
 Administrative Assistant Appointed, Robin A. Solek

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE:**6:30 p.m. Convene in Open Session****Public Comments:**

Moe Shea, Owner of Red Riding Hood's Basket.

Moe Shea read a letter that she composed regarding the road construction being done by Pierera on Congamond Road and the effect on the local businesses. Please see the attached letter.

Matt Jolie, Owner of the Smoke House also vocalized his concerns and complaints about the construction and the hardship it is creating.

The Select Board is deeply concerned and aware on how this has been difficult on local business owners and residents. They will do everything they can to help rectify the situation and reach out to State officials, along with Economic Development Committee and to help encourage patronage at these establishments.

Payables, Payroll and Minutes:

- The Board acknowledged Payroll Warrant # 1924, dated 4/29/2019, in the amount of \$220,993.60
- **A MOTION** was made by Mr. Fox, seconded by Mr. Deedy (Vote-Unanimous) to approve the Regular Session Minutes of 4/23/19, the Work Session Minutes of 4/24/19 and the Executive Session Minutes of 4/23/2019.

Action Items, Bills, Mail, Correspondence, Vendor and/or Personnel Contracts, Personnel Decisions, Policy Adoptions, Payroll Actions, Old Business, New Business, Etc.-Possible Actions/Votes:

- **A MOTION** was made by Mr. Fox, seconded by Mr. Deedy (Vote-Unanimous) to sign and approve the following except where noted:
- The Select Board received an invitation to attend an informative Opiod Task Force on Wednesday May 15, 2019 at 1:30 to be held in the Administration Building at the Hampden County Sheriff's Department. Chairman, Deedy along with the Police and Fire Chiefs will attend.
- The Board recommended a 10% increase in the Transfer Station fees for FY 20. \$110.00 per year \$55.00 per year for Sr. Citizen. Recyclable expenses have been rising along with other costs that are not controlled at the local level.

- Connor Roy will be a DPW Engineering Division Intern for the summer to help with the Stormwater project. His rate of pay will be at \$15.00 per hour.
- The Select Board approved the DPW Summer Help pay rate will increase to \$12.00 per hour due to minimum wage pay rates.
- The DPW Director has requested the Select Board to place to form on letter head the NOI progress to DEP/EPA. The Select Board would like to invite them in for a meeting. DPW Director will follow through.
- **A MOTION** was made by Mr. Fox, seconded by Mr. Deedy (Vote-Unanimous) to approve a Reserve Fund Transfer in the amount of \$16,000.00 for Legal Services.
- A notification was received from the Planning Board for a zone change recommendation at the ATM.
- A Hemp Growers License notification was received.
- The Select Board approved a \$250.00 per week stipend for the temporary Building Inspector, Bob Sullivan.

Old Business:

- **A MOTION** was made by Mr. Fox, seconded by Mr. Deedy (Vote-Unanimous) to adopt the FY 20 Budget of \$14,297,666.00 as recommended by the Finance Committee.
- The CAO and Select Board had a short discussion of the STM & ATM Warrant Articles.
- A Surplus Property Bid opening will be held on May 1, 2019 @ 10:00 a.m.
- The Select Board would like the Donate Life Flags to be properly taken down and stored for next year.
- A Special Warrant will be executed in the amount of \$1,203.00 for the 250th Float. The funds will be taken from the 250th Budget Line Item.
- Vice-Chairman Fox will be sponsoring the Better Angel's in the Land Use Room on Sunday, May 5, 2019 from 4:00 – 5:30 p.m.
- There will be a more thorough 21E tested at North Pond for underground tanks and gasoline. A Historical 21E was tested and completed. However, additional site visits and environmental tasks are necessary.

New Business:

There was none.

A MOTION was made by Mr. Fox, seconded by Mr. Deedy (Vote-Unanimous) to go into Executive Session at 7:24 p.m. RE: **M.G.L. Chap. 30A, S20 (b), S21 (3) Ch. 214, Section 1B and; CMR 29.03 (1) (b). not reconvene in Open Session.**

Exception #3: X Move to go into Executive Session to discuss strategy with respect to litigation, and that the Chair declare that an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the litigating position of the body, and to:

Move to go into Executive Session to discuss strategy with respect to non-union and collective bargaining, and that the Chair declare that an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the body, and not to reconvene to Open Session.

RE: Ch. 214, Section 1B

A person shall have a right against unreasonable, substantial or serious interference with his privacy. The superior court shall have jurisdiction in equity to enforce such right and in connection therewith to award damages.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robin A. Solek", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Robin A. Solek

Appointed Administrative Assistant

April 29, 2019

Dear Select Board,

I am writing to express my concerns and discontent with the Congamond Road construction project. I have been trying to be optimistic about the project and see that the final product could be great for the town, but my optimism is wearing thin.

I own Red Riding Hood's Basket which is currently a labor of love since my loans are high and the rising cost of minimum wage is causing me financial stress. I am already struggling to compete with automated cashiers and cheap quality food in area restaurants as well as the difference in minimum wage between MA and CT just a few tenths of a mile down the road. I follow the letter of the law and run an upstanding establishment known for quality and customer service. This type of business takes a lot of money and needs repeat customers. My customers are not coming because of the horrible road conditions.

To add insult to injury, I sometimes can't even get in my business's parking lot because work crews park whichever way they want blocking prime parking spots. I have been supportive of the crew and police officers, allowing them to use my restroom facilities whenever they like as a courtesy. Yet, I drive by these same people multiple times a day drinking a coffee from Dunkin Donuts or McDonald's. This not only speaks volumes to my statement about trying to compete with larger chain restaurants, but it also frustrates me that the generosity I am extending is not being returned, especially by those who I know are local to the Southwick community.

I feel as if the town is turning a blind eye on this extremely poorly managed project. I am left to figure out how to juggle all these challenges in the dark. I never know what I will drive up upon, but I now come to expect that it won't be good. I first learned about this project when I applied for a liquor license a few years ago, and I was approached by Randy Brown who informed me that part of my current parking lot was going to become part of the bike trail. The only reason Randy came to see me was this removal of parking spots could have caused an issue with my liquor license, not to tell me about the Congamond Rd project specifically. After this conversation I attended the meeting at the town hall for residents to discuss the proposed sewer project on Congamond Rd and this is where I learned most of what I know about the road project; ironically the sewer project did not get approved. I have never been approached by anyone from the Town of Southwick to tell me about: changes to the timeline (the project didn't start when first expected); which end they were going to dig up first; when the trail will be dug up and if it will be closed to bikers (bikers are one of my largest customer groups weather permitting). The lack of transparency is frustrating. Not knowing what's going on and endless rumors (I could tell you lots of doozies) worsens the situation. I see this frustration also being reflected on social media by area residents.

Besides being a business owner, I am a mother of four, wife, and longtime resident of Southwick. It hurts my business and therefore hurts my family that residents now resent taking Congamond Road.

I understand that road work involves digging up the road, but the condition of the road is unexceptable. Many road work projects lay down temporary road - be it blacktop or gravel. I am afraid to stop my car at times because the erosion from the amount of trees removed and mud might cause my car to get stuck. I don't have the option of avoiding Congamond Rd. and therefore my car is getting battered daily, and soon I will have to pay to fix my suspension.

I feel like I am facing a "David and Goliath" situation trying to keep my small local business afloat and the town is not doing anything for the businesses on Congamond Rd. We have been hung out to dry as a causality of this project.

Instead of just telling you I am upset I would like to propose some ideas of how to change this situation before my debt and the other businesses in my area get in over our heads.

1. Place down temporary blacktop or gravel to help make the unpaved road more manageable for people to drive.
2. Deal with run-off created by the large amount of spring rain and tree removal performed in the fall.
3. Have a way of communicating with the public about the timeline of the project and the progress made, knowing where we are headed could really ease some the the rumors. The information on the town website is vague at best. This information should then be publicized via robo-call, signs, and email.
4. Create "lawn signs" that could go on the trail or side of the road reminding passersby to support small business during construction. These signs could also be used on the trail to inform out of town bikers of the conditions of the bike trail and how they can find out more.
5. Have a town representative check-in with the construction company and hold them accountable. I drive Congamond Rd multiple times a day and rarely see a "Southwick face" at the work site besides one or two police officers.

Thank you for listening and being proactive about this problem,



Moe Shea

Owner of Red Riding Hood's Basket

@thehoodcafe

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