

Select Board
January 25, 2024

Robert Czekanski, Chair
Stanley Wysocki
Brian Boyle

Via Zoom

Don Lowe, Town Administrator

Ms. Czekanski called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

DPW ARPA UPDATE

DPW Director Randy Heglin appeared before the board to report on the building capital budget with a report on the amount being funded from ARPA. Mr. Heglin referred to the Tighe and Bond building assessment and the very aggressive five-year plan that came from that assessment. The criteria from the federal government for spending the ARPA funds has been a moving target. Mr. Heglin referred to the list submitted to the Board's packet. Mr. Heglin reviewed each project on the FY24 work list to determine which jobs were wants and which were needs. Several projects were deferred from FY24 which frees up ARPA funds that were previously earmarked for those projects.

Fire Department Update

Chief Jeffrey Legendre appeared before the Board with an update on fire department apparatus and department needs and the ambulance billing practices. The first piece of apparatus is scheduled to be delivered in the last week of January. The other two pieces are scheduled for delivery in March or April of 2024. Mr. Wysocki questioned the timeline on the apparatus voted on at ATM 2023. Chief Legendre explained that due to the displeasure with the cost increase and timeline of the first fire truck the department changed course and decided to add 1000 gallons to the tanker and to acquire a second smaller truck that would better serve the geographics of the Town. By moving from Seagrave to Felts Brothers, the department was able to get two vehicles within the budget approved at Town Meeting for a single vehicle.

Chief Legendre reported that the department is collecting 72% of ambulance billing. Chief Legendre reported that we are on par with other communities. The department could look at increasing the rates. The Chief recommended staying within the market to avoid a decrease in call volume.

There are currently 238 accounts that are past due since 2018. The department transports an average of 500 patients a year. Mr. Wysocki was interested in options for increasing the collection rate for the department. Chief Legendre reported that going to a collection agency would recover an estimate of \$18K of the outstanding balances. Mr. Wysocki was distressed that residents are asking for services yet are not paying for those services. Chief Legendre shared the frustrations, but explained that the residents are getting the best service and that the department is obligated to provide transport regardless of past payment history under Mass General Law.

On a motion made by Boyle and seconded by Wysocki, the Board voted unanimously by roll call to increase the fee for to \$350. (Wysocki-yes, Boyle-yes, Czekanski-yes)

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR SEARCH UPDATE

Mr. John Petrin reported that the screening committee met for the first time on the 23rd of January. Dates of March 27th and March 28th were selected for the next meeting to review applications. Mr. Wysocki questioned the number used for free cash in the position statement. As the position statement was already published, the Board chose not to update the number. Mr. Petrin reported that he has already been getting interest on the position after attending the Massachusetts Municipal Association (MMA) meeting.

POLICE CHIEF APPOINTMENT

Lt. Luke Hamburger reintroduced himself to the Board. The Lieutenant is a graduate of Nashoba Regional High school and UMASS Amherst and is a resident of Lunenburg. Lt. Hamburger reviewed the numerous projects, programs and events that he has been involved with in his years with the department.

Lt. Hamburger shared his vision for the future of the department by harnessing the skills in the department citing hiring and traffic among the challenges for the department and the community. Ltd. provided his views on community policing in a small town like Bolton. Lt. Hamburger listed a few items on his wish list including a full-time patrol officer or patrol car. Lt. Hamburger vision includes community policing at its core.

On a motion made by Wysocki and seconded by Boyle, the Board voted unanimously by roll call to appoint Lt. Hamburger as the next Chief of Police effective July 1, 2024. (Wysocki-yes, Boyle-yes, Czekanski-yes)

TOWN ADMINISTRATORS REPORT

MVP Update

Mr. Lowe reported that a firm, Ryan Associates, has been hired to work on the design of Derby field.

Gift Policy

The Board reviewed the draft policy. Mr. Czekanski asked for clarification on tangible items. Mr. Lowe explained that the goods are tangible items and that the policy would not apply to services.

Cannabis Update

Mr. Lowe explained that the regulations will be changing at the state level. Communities will no longer be able to collect a community impact fee starting March 1, 2024. Mr. Lowe referenced a *Telegram & Gazette* article from January 18th, 2024 regarding the community of Uxbridge needing to repay over \$1M in a settlement to repay the community impact fees collected.

Budget Update

Mr. Lowe voiced concern about the tight budget year and stated that employee benefits and education will be the stressors on the very tight budget this year.

SELECT BOARD BUSINESS

Budget Warrant Subcommittee Update

Mr. Boyle updated the Board on the school committee's recent meeting and provided links to the NRSD

Budget Workshop Presentation: https://core-docs.s3.us-east-1.amazonaws.com/documents/asset/uploaded_file/3447/NRSD/3902442/FY25_NRSD_Budget_Workshop_Presentation_1_17_24.pdf

and the NRSD FY25 Budget Timeline:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/16BMpQgWvc9O83S2n_NMsQyrdPBCVP1slaRoRiPF0Lns/edit

The next update to the school committee is scheduled for February 7th with a follow-up meeting on February 28th, 2024. The increase in the FY25 school budget for Bolton currently sits at 7.3%. Mr. Wysocki commented that the number far exceeds what we can raise within proposition 2 ½.

Public Service Announcements

Mr. Lowe thanked and acknowledged U.S. Olympian and Bolton resident Matt Savoie for his performance once again this year at the opening of the ice rink on the common and asked the public to refrain from throwing snowballs on the ice as it makes it difficult to keep the ice in useable condition. Mr. Lowe thanked the volunteers and the Parks and Recreation Commission for maintaining the ice. Mr. Boyle added that the set u

Accepted on February 15, 2024

p of the rink was a lot of work and recognized the efforts of the Conservation Commission in getting that set up.

Future Agenda Items

Mr. Czekanski asked for a review of open warrant articles and projects at the next meeting.

Gift Acceptance

On a motion made by Boyle and seconded by Wysocki, the Board voted unanimously by roll call to accept the gifts to the Town from July 1st, 2023 – December 31s, 2023 in the amount of \$3,570. (Wysocki-yes, Boyle-yes, Czekanski-yes)

Bills/Payroll Warrant

On a motion made by Boyle and seconded by Wysocki, the Board voted unanimously by roll call to approve warrants W24-13 & W24-13A. (Wysocki-yes, Boyle-yes, Czekanski-yes)

Minutes

On a motion made by Boyle and seconded by Wysocki, the Board voted unanimously by roll call to approve minutes of November 16th, 2023 as amended. (Wysocki-yes, Boyle-yes, Czekanski-yes)

On a motion made by Boyle and seconded by Wysocki, the Board voted unanimously by roll call to approve minutes of December 14, 2023. (Wysocki-yes, Boyle-yes, Czekanski-yes)

On a motion made by Boyle and seconded by Wysocki, the Board voted unanimously by roll call to adjourn at 8:40 pm. (Wysocki-yes, Boyle-yes, Czekanski-yes)

Respectfully submitted by J. Jacobsen.