

BOARD OF SELECTMEN / SEWER COMMISSIONERS HYBRID MEETING
Wednesday June 8, 2022 – 6:00 PM

PRESENT: Roger Manzolini, Chair; Neal Pilson, Selectman; Al Hanson, Selectman; Danielle Fillio, Town Administrator; Kristine Higgins, Boys & Girls Club; Austin White, EMS Director; Steve Traver, Fire Chief

Roger opened the meeting at 6:00 PM.

Approval of the Minutes of the May 11, 2022 and May 25, 2022 Meetings of the Board: Roger noted that he had not had time to review those minutes and asked to refer them to the next meeting.

Updates from the Town Administrator: Danielle reported that on June 22nd, the bidding results on the old COA Van and the Fire Chief's car will be available, and the Board can award the high bidder for them.

Danielle is ordering six computers for Town Hall, the money for which is already in the budget. Roger noted that his computer and Al's computer were both outdated. Danielle asked that they be brought in and she will ask our Information Technology company to assess them.

Danielle said that the DOR still needs to let the Town know if there will be a need for another Debt Exclusion Vote. She will try to obtain a response tomorrow. Bond information is moving along, and the anticipation is that the bond can be sold by the end of July.

Roger asked Danielle to prepare a written timeline for the entire project to keep residents informed. Neal cautioned that the timeline should be a plan and not a specific timeline that could set project completion dates that might be out of anyone's control and not able to be met.

Boys & Girls Club of the Berkshires – Special Permit Application – Chili and Chowder Festival: It was noted that this is the same event that has taken place successfully for many years. As there were no changes to the plans for the event, which will take place on Friday July 8th from 6:00 – 10:00 PM exclusively on their premises, Neal moved to approve the Special Permit. He was seconded by Roger and the motion was adopted by unanimous consent.

Review the First Draft of the Inter-Municipal Agreement for a Shared Ambulance Service: Austin White, EMS Director, reported that he, Danielle, Mary Ryan, Town Administrator of West Stockbridge, and the Fire Chief met to review the agreement and were satisfied with the content.

Neal asked that the Agreement be reviewed by Town Counsel but had no objection to the substance. Roger suggested that it would be appropriate for the two boards to meet and for the Richmond board members to welcome the new members of the West Stockbridge board who were recently voted in.

Danielle raised the issue of how to move forward with staffing. Originally, Richmond was going to hire both two new full-time employees and West Stockbridge would pay Richmond for the cost of insurance and their salaries. That raised some concern about added costs for retirement benefits,

which resulted in a suggestion to have each town hire one of the two. However, that creates a problem due to the disparity in benefits between the two towns that could result in conflict. The solution is to return to the original plan for Richmond to hire both new employees and have West Stockbridge reimburse Richmond. Any difference in insurance costs would be split. The members of the Board were in favor of that solution but want to check with West Stockbridge to be sure they are comfortable with it as well.

Roger asked if delaying approval of the Agreement would cause any harm. Austin said that they will continue to operate as they have been doing with no impact on their ability to respond to calls.

Al expressed his concern that West Stockbridge be made to feel that they are a full partner in this project. Roger reiterated that it was precisely for that reason that a face-to-face meeting and a formal welcome to the new West Stockbridge Board members is necessary. Roger asked that Danielle provide the Board members with the link to the West Stockbridge Board of Selectmen meeting scheduled for June 21st.

Appointment of Robert Harrison as Zoning Board of Appeals Alternate Member: Neal reported that a recommendation has been received from Bill Martin, Chair of the ZBA, asking the Board to approve Mr. Harrison, who is very qualified and has expressed his interest. Neal moved that the appointment of Robert Harrison as an Alternate Member of the ZBA be approved. He was seconded by Roger.

Al asked that before the appointment is approved, the candidate be asked to come in for an interview at the next meeting. Discussion resulted in agreement by the members that it would be wise to do an interview, which has always been their practice. Neal, therefore, withdrew his motion and Roger approved the withdrawal.

Vote on FY23 Contracts for Berkshire Regional Planning and the Public Health Contract: Danielle reported that this is the same standard contract with Berkshire Regional Planning that has been signed every year, with a slight increase, which has already been budgeted. The Berkshire Public Health contract is with the Public Health Alliance. Neal moved to approve both contracts. He was seconded by Roger and the motion carried by unanimous vote.

Renewal of Town Administrator's Contract: Roger said he was in full support of the contract as modified and moved to approve. Neal seconded and the motion was adopted by unanimous vote.

Selectmen's Matters: Al asked whether any lifeguards had been hired for the town beach. He was advised that there were no applicants despite widespread advertising. There was one person interested in the position of Boat Monitor. Neal noted that a shortage of applicants for many kinds of jobs is widespread. He suggested that the "No Lifeguard – Swim at your own Risk" sign remain posted at the beach. Danielle was able to report that the safety ropes are out for the kids. She mentioned that they will likely have to be replaced next year.

Roger raised the issue of Special Event Permits. Although it is the public's responsibility to know about the requirements for Special Event Permits, and the bylaw is available on the Town's website, Roger read the complete text of the bylaw (Section 9, Chapter 10 Miscellaneous provisions of the General Bylaws). He explained that he felt the need to do that in answer to a question from Jeff Morse about what are the criteria that would require obtaining a Special Permit. There was discussion about various aspects of the Special Permit process.

Roger spoke to the process of notifying abutters during the process for a Special Event Permit. He believed that some of the other Boards that issue such permits have not been as attentive to the need for notification of abutters as he felt they should be, and he plans to speak to the other Board chairs on the matter. Neal pointed out that all agendas are posted publicly, and townspeople should be attentive to what is going on in town.

Public Comment: None

Sewer Matters: Neal asked Roger for an update on the study he was doing on the Boys and Girls Club usage of the sewer system relative to other users to determine what a fair assessment of EDU's would be. Roger will use their data and let them know what assumptions the study is working under and will ask Tom Grizey for his data on water usage so that there will be no conflict over the ultimate results. He noted that not all houses are assigned one EDU – one house has two and another has three while the camp has only one. Neal confirmed with Roger that he is conducting this survey individually, as a Sewer Commissioner, and that when the results are complete there will be a Public Hearing. He was assured that it was Roger's intention to proceed in that way.

There being no further business before the Board, a motion was made to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded and carried by unanimous vote.

Signed:

Roger Manzolini, Chair