

TOWN OF WALES, MA
SELECT BOARD MEETING

Office of the Select Board, 1st Floor
3 Hollow Road, Wales, MA

Meeting of Monday, August 12, 2019
Regular Session

Members Present: James Whalen, Chairman; Michael Valanzola; William Matchett III

Others Present: Pamela Leduc, Executive Secretary

OPEN & PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Chairman called the meeting to order at 5:40 p.m. leading the room in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Moment of Silence - The Chair asked for a moment of silence in honor of the lives of former Selectmen, Jeffrey Bennett, and former Police officer, Joel Morten.

NEW BUSINESS

- Potential violation of Chapter 61 of MGL and alleged failure to disclose legally required information to the Wales Board of Assessors in a timely manner – Sunpin Solar/Cindy Boucher, 40 Sizer Drive.

Attending: Elizabeth and Douglas Dickinson, Leon Givner, Assessors office; attorney for property owner.

Mrs. Dickinson addressed the Board noting the property owner, Ms. Boucher, applied for a Forest land designation under MGL Chapter 61 and agreed to the conditions set forth under the MGL. Part of the wording requires the landowner to notify the Assessors if they may change the land usage. Concerns: The property owner is benefiting from a lease agreement from Sunpin Solar while also benefiting from a substantial property tax benefit from the Town of Wales by designating the land as forest land. Mrs. Dickinson reviewed the timeline notifying the town of the situation that the property owner did not notify the Assessors office of a possible change in land usage as required.

Property Owner's legal counsel: The property owner, through developer Sunpin Solar, has applied for town permits for a solar project, but until the project is approved through all town offices, and the project is set to move forward, the property owner is not required to notify the town regarding change of land usage.

Mrs. Dickinson indicated in the Chapter 61 agreement, the property owner is required to notify the Assessors of any intended change in usage, not just approved projects. The Assessors have not been notified of any circumstances that may cause a change in usage. The Planning Board has not met with the Select Board regarding this matter.

Dickinson's Questions/Concerns:

- Written notification to the Board of Assessors has not happened in accordance with MGL C. 61.
- Did Sunpin Solar file properly with the Town for their project?

Motion:

Mr. Valanzola moved, seconded by Mr. Matchett, to submit the Dickinson's questions (via their letter) to Town Counsel for a response to their concerns.

VOTE: All in Favor

PUBLIC HEARING – FY18 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT

6:05 pm: Performance hearing regarding the ongoing FY2018 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program. Currently, Wales is the lead community along with the Towns of Holland and Brimfield in a FY2018 CDBG that is providing for housing rehabilitation, food pantry assistance and for a senior housing planning study for Holland.

Attendees: Christopher Dunphy, Pioneer Valley Planning Commission; Jean Smith, Director of Wales Community Food Pantry; Mr. Fancy, Town of Holland

Mr. Dunphy reported/discussed:

- Success in the housing rehabilitation program (Portion of grant: \$480,000), with the program supporting 20-24 qualified projects/clients in the three towns. Each project can be up to \$40K per household. Thus far, \$390,000 has been committed for 17 projects. There is a waiting list for future projects.
- Food Pantry Assistance – Wales Community Pantry serves the three towns serving approximately 130 households, over 250 people of which 112 are elderly. Part of the funding was used to purchase a delivery van which has been in use for two months. The van delivers fresh food to shut-in individuals, including elderly, veterans and disabled individuals. Clients are tracked by towns. Jean Smith indicated she has sought additional funding from other sources. She also noted that additional electrical capacity is needed for the pantry to accommodate the freezers (5) and refrigerators (2).
- Holland Senior Housing Planning Study – The town is moving forward with surveys and reviewing possible properties. Over 50% of Holland residents are over age 60. Expanding the Brimfield or Wales facilities was suggested.
- Future CDBG funding application for FY2019 has not yet been approved.
- Types of projects that qualify for CDBG funding.

The Public Hearing closed at 6:32 pm.

NEW BUSINESS (Continued)

- Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC)

Attendees: Christopher Dunphy and Becky Bash, PVPC; and off camera, members of the Planning Board.

Mr. Dunphy introduced Becky Bash of the Land Use & Environmental Team of the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission. The 5-member PVPC team is working on the Town of Wales Master plan. To aid in developing priorities for the future, the team would like to hold a public forum in late September/early October in coordination with the Planning Board to get resident's opinions and input. Combined with the local survey and public forum input, the team is looking to provide a comprehensive Master plan by the end of December. Mr. Valanzola asked for clarification for planning activities involving current town staff: 1) What are all of our collective roles? 2) What subsequent activities are involved for each of the roles? 3) Dates to enable proper planning? Mr. Valanzola felt that the town parties are not adequately informed.

Mr. Dunphy indicated PVPC can pull together the survey data, but felt the public forum is an important part of gathering data on what the public wants to see in the plan, it is not a presentation of what the final plan will be.

A pre-forum town department meeting with PVPC was scheduled for 9/9/19 at the regular Select Board meeting to be held at the Senior Center, with a public forum date scheduled for 9/23/19 at 7:00 p.m. at the school.

- Police Department Appointments

Motion:

Mr. Valanzola moved, seconded by Mr. Matchett, to appoint:

- Jordan D. Ryan to the position of Police Officer effective August 12, 2019 through Nov. 30, 2019.
- Eric M. Kanavos to the position of Police Officer effective August 12, 2019 through Nov. 30, 2019.
- Michelle A. Roy to the position of Police Clerk effective August 12, 2019 through Nov. 30, 2019.

Discussion: The three applicants (listed above) were present for the meeting. Each applicant's strengths, prior experience and desire to work in Wales were discussed. The November end date is to allow time for a new Police Chief (yet to be appointed) to make his/her recommendation for each police employee to continue employment with the town.

VOTE: All in Favor

- Town Accountant Services- Interim

Motion:

Mr. Valanzola moved, seconded by Mr. Matchett, to approve Proposal 1046 from Baystate Municipal Accounting Group in the amount of \$9,632.26 to provide interim Town Accountant services for a period of 3 months (12 weeks), effective August 12, 2019 through November 1, 2019.

Discussion: Mrs. Leduc explained the services that will be provided.

VOTE: All in Favor

Motion:

Mr. Valanzola moved, seconded by Mr. Matchett, to send a letter to Mrs. Bernier (Town Accountant) thanking her for her years of service and wishing her well in her retirement.

VOTE: All in Favor

- PVPC City/Town-Owner Agreement

Motion:

Mr. Valanzola moved, seconded by Mr. Matchett, to approve and authorize the Chair to sign PVPC City/Town-Owner Agreement for 19 Long Hill Road, Holland for FY18.

VOTE: All in Favor

- Union Road – Citizen’s Complaint

Residents of Union Road attended the meeting to discuss Solar project activities which are in violation of the permits issued by the town to the developer. Issues: (1*) Enforcement of the current permit requirements, i.e., fencing materials, grass mowing in timely fashion, solar panel glare – danger and nuisance, shrubs as defined not planted; (2) Enforcement of current by-laws; (3) Working/operational hours (M-F 7:00-3:00); (4) Union Road is a “no parking” road and currently trucks are unloading on the road; and (5) Is the battery storage building in compliance?

*Legal counsel has agreed that the items listed in #1 above are in violation of the project permits.

Select Board Actions:

- Support and direct Building Inspector to enforce the permit requirements.
- Have a discussion with the Police Chief in Executive Session.
- Review by-laws to present at a Special Town Meeting.
- Enforcement of Fee Schedule.

Motion:

Mr. Valanzola moved, seconded by Mr. Matchett, to direct the Executive Secretary to forward the memo from Mike Siddall (Legal Counsel), dated August 12, 2019, highlighting immediate action that needs to be taken by the Building Inspector by direction of the Board of Selectmen. In addition to that letter, readvising the fee schedule to be sure the fee schedule is being enforced. Also, if there is any confusion with this directive, to direct the Executive Secretary to schedule an emergency meeting with the Building Inspector.

VOTE: All in Favor

- Municipal Environmental Certifying Officer

Motion:

Mr. Valanzola moved, seconded by Mr. Matchett, to designate the Select Board Chair as the Municipal Environmental Certifying Officer for the Town of Wales.

VOTE: All in Favor

- Brimfield Ambulance Service Contract

Discussion was in response to the Service Contract sent from the Brimfield Ambulance Commission. Attendance via telephone: Fire Chief John Croke to discuss his written recommendations on adjustments to the contract with the Brimfield Ambulance Service.

Additional Documents: Attorney Siddall's, Legal Counsel, written recommendation with suggested updated wording.

Motion:

Mr. Valanzola moved, seconded by Mr. Matchett, to respond to the Brimfield Ambulance Commission with the suggested changes to the service contract and to have legal counsel the response review prior to sending.

VOTE: All in Favor

- IT

Motion:

Mr. Valanzola moved, seconded by Mr. Matchett, to approve the Computer Usage and Electronic Communications Policy as presented.

VOTE: All in Favor

- Minutes

Motion:

Mr. Matchett moved, seconded by Mr. Whalen, to approve the following Regular Session minutes:

- March 5, 2019
- March 18, 2019

VOTE: In Favor – Matchett, Whalen Abstained: Valanzola

Motion:

Mr. Matchett moved, seconded by Mr. Whalen, to approve the following Regular Session minutes:

- June 10, 2019

VOTE: In Favor – Matchett, Whalen Abstained: Valanzola

Motion:

Mr. Matchett moved, seconded by Mr. Whalen, to approve the following Regular Session minutes:

- July 15, 2019

VOTE: In Favor – Matchett, Whalen Abstained: Valanzola

Motion:

Mr. Valanzola moved, seconded by Mr. Matchett, to approve the following Regular Session minutes:

- June 3, 2019

VOTE: All in Favor

- Uptime Network Technologies

Motion:

Mr. Matchett moved, seconded by Mr. Whalen, to approve portions of Estimate #1473 from Uptime Network Technologies, dated July 30, 2019, to include components only, Inc. up to the amount listed in said quote and to authorize the Executive Secretary to seek other quotes for the hardware.

VOTE: In Favor – Matchett, Whalen Abstained: Valanzola

- Hazard Trees – Union Road

Mr. Whalen reported that National Grid (NG) is conducting tree work along Union Road. NG have some resident's consent forms to do the tree work, but some trees has been determined to be hazardous as well as some trees are on town owned land. Mr. Whalen has asked the Tree Warden to mark the hazardous trees. Action: The Board asked that the Tree Warden and Highway Commissioner be invited to a meeting to discuss the matter.

- Change in Meeting Schedule - The Board will meet on September 5th at 5:00 at the Senior Center, cancel the scheduled September 9th meeting.

- USA Waste & Recycling, Inc. Service Agreement

The Board reviewed Legal Counsel's suggested amendments to the USA Waste & Recycling, Inc. Service Agreement.

Motion:

Mr. Valanzola moved, seconded by Mr. Matchett, to direct Attorney Siddall to write to USA Waste & Recycling, Inc. to advise them of the desire to add the provisions into the service agreement contract as detailed by legal counsel.

VOTE: All in Favor

- Meeting Schedule – Keep the schedule as an agenda item for upcoming meetings.

OLD BUSINESS

- Police Chief Recruitment - Mrs. Leduc indicated she is working to get all consent forms and background checks, etc., from the three applicants.

Action: Add to September 5th agenda.

- IT Update (Email addresses) & Software Training

Motion:

Mr. Valanzola moved, seconded by Mr. Matchett, to set their email format for the Board as: "Selectmen <Insert Last Name>@TownofWales.net".

VOTE: All in Favor

Motion:

Mr. Matchett moved, seconded by Mr. Valanzola, to approve Financial Software Training (1 day) for Executive Secretary, Assessors, Treasurer and Tax Collector.

VOTE: All in Favor

- Transfer Station Service Agreement

Mr. Silva is recommending that the Town not take hazardous household waste, other than what is currently allowed as listed on the bulk items listing.

Motion:

Mr. Valanzola moved, seconded by Mr. Matchett, to not accept hazardous household waste at the Town's Transfer Station, other than those items currently listed on the bulk items listing on the brochure and website.

VOTE: All in favor

- Transfer Station Cashier - Only one resume was received. Ms. Leduc suggested that the education/accounting background requirement for the position be removed which would result in more interest in the job. The Board agreed with the recommendation.

- Future Agenda Item - Mr. Valanzola asked for an agenda item to be added to a future meeting: *David Worth Award*.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Motion:

Mr. Valanzola moved, seconded by Mr. Matchett, to move into Executive Session at 8:56 p.m., as provided under MGL C 30A § 21A (4), to discuss the deployment of or strategy regarding security personnel with the intent to reconvene in open session for the purpose of adjournment.

A roll call vote was taken.

YES – Matchett, Valanzola, Whalen

ADJOURNMENT

Motion:

Mr. Valanzola moved, seconded by Mr. Matchett, to adjourn the meeting at 9:24 pm.

VOTE: All in Favor

Minutes transcribed by Pat Gauthier via a DVD recording.

WBS:pag