

IPSWICH SELECT BOARD
Meeting of Tuesday, February 1, 2022

The Select Board participated in this meeting remotely utilizing Zoom in accordance with the Governor's March 12, 2020 Order suspending provisions of Open Meeting Law and to promote public health and social distancing.

Board Members present: Dr. Tammy Jones, Chair; William, Whitmore, Vice Chair; Linda Alexson; Kerry Mackin; Sarah Player

Also present: Anthony Marino, Town Manager; Eileen Page, Recording Secretary

With a quorum present, Dr. Jones called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

Welcome/Announcements

The Council on Aging will sponsor an art show and silent auction from February 1 through February 14 in the Town Hall lobby. Seven (7) paintings will be available for purchase via silent auction, with final bids due by 2 PM on February 14, and one (1) painting will be available via raffle. Raffle tickets can be purchased for \$10 each at the Senior Center.

The Select Board thanked the DPW for their work clearing the streets following the snowstorm.

The Climate Resiliency Committee has partnered with HELPSY to provide free, weekly household textile recycling starting February 11. Residents can visit www.helpsy.co/ipswichma to schedule a pickup time.

The Shellfish Advisory Subcommittee will meet on Tuesday, February 8 at 6:30 PM via Zoom.

The Eastern Essex Veterans District Board of Directors will meet on Wednesday, February 9 at 6:30 PM via Zoom.

Citizen Queries

None.

Board and Committee Appointments/Business

- I. Recognition of Lewis Vlahos, former ZBA member

Mr. Vlahos has served on the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) since 2011.

- II. Evan Orlando – New Appointment – Shellfish Advisory Subcommittee

Mr. Orlando has been a commercial shell-fisher since 2015, and clamming in Ipswich since 2018.

- III. Jeff Poirier – New Appointment, Public Safety Property Re-Use Working Group – School Committee Member
- IV. Linda Alexson – New Appointment, Public Safety Property Re-Use Working Group, Select Board Member
- V. Janice Skelton – New Appointment, Public Safety Property Re-Use Working Group, Finance Committee Member
- VI. Gordon Harris – New Appointment, Public Safety Property Re-Use Working Group, Historical Committee Representative
- VII. Laurie Paskavitz – New Appointment, Public Safety Property Re-Use Working Group, Planning Board Representative
- VIII. Janet Craft – New Appointment, Public Safety Property Re-Use Working Group, Garden Club Representative
- IX. Chris Chapman, Brian Hone, Jen Perry, Adam Randazzo, William Whitmore &
- X. Jackson Heath – New Appointments to the Pedestrian/Cycling Safety Board
- XI. John Stanbury – Reappointment, Agricultural Commission
- XII. Julia O'Leary – Appointment from Associate to Regular Member, ZBA

Ms. O’Leary has been an alternate member of the ZBA since July 2021 and is looking forward to becoming an associate member.

- *Vote: Mr. Whitmore moved to approve all appointments and reappointments. Ms. Alexson seconded. The motion carried unanimously via roll call.*

PUBLIC HEARING: Water and Wastewater Rates (1 of 2)

“Residents of the Town of Ipswich, please note that the Select Board, as Water and Sewer Commissioners, will hold remote Public Hearings on Tuesday, February 1, 2022 at 7:15 PM and on Monday, February 14, 2022 at 7:30 PM to consider and act on the increase and/or modification of the current water and sewer rates effective for billings on and after May 1, 2022.” -Dr. Tammy Jones, Chair, Board of Water & Sewer Commissioners

- *Ms. Alexson moved to open the Public Hearing. Mr. Whitmore seconded. The motion carried unanimously via roll call.*

Vicki Halmen (Water & Wastewater Director) reported on February 14, the Water and Sewer Commissioners will be asked to vote to increase the water base rate from \$12.38 to \$13.62 per 100 ft³ and the residential summer rate from \$7.19 per 100ft³ (winter rate) to \$20.43 per 100ft³. Residential Summer rates apply from May 1 through September 30. The Commissioners will also be asked to increase the wastewater rate from \$11.39 to \$11.96 per 100ft³, and increase the septage rates from \$0.07 to \$0.08 for in-town customers, and from \$0.085 to \$0.09 for out-of-town customers.

Ms. Alexson asked if all of the communities used for rate comparisons were also municipal water companies; Ms. Halmen responded that she was not sure if they were all enterprise funded. Ms. Alexson asked if there were any long-term debt projects that might be removed from the debt schedule in the upcoming year; Ms. Halmen responded that an estimated \$10,000 will be paid off from Wastewater Treatment Plant improvements, and about \$25,000 being paid off in the next year or so. Ray Leczynski (Business Manager) was present and stated that about \$85,000 total would be removed from the debt schedule over the next five (5) years. Ms. Alexson asked if federal or state funding was available for infrastructure projects; Ms. Halmen responded that the first round of federal infrastructure was put into the State Revolving Fund (SRF), which typically has higher interest rates than private borrowing. Ms. Alexson asked if the revenue target set at the last water rate hearing, which raised the residential winter rate by 6%, was met; Ms. Halmen responded that she would not know until the end of FY22, but would bring preliminary projections to the second hearing on February 14.

Marni Clippinger (242 Argilla Road) expressed concern over the significant increase in both the winter base rate and residential summer rate. She also added that spending nearly as much on debt service as on capital improvement projects is not sustainable. Ms. Clippinger asked what the summer rate was for 2021; Ms. Halmen responded that it was \$18.57 per 100ft³. She also added that Ipswich’s capital projects are unique in that most of its infrastructure is past its useful life, and a replacement is a priority. She also reported that Ipswich has been participating in Senator Bruce Tarr’s North Shore Drought Task Force to discuss regional solutions.

- *Vote: Mr. Whitmore moved to close the Public Hearing. Ms. Mackin seconded. The motion carried unanimously via roll call.*

FY23 Budget Review: Water and Wastewater

WATER

Ms. Halmen presented the proposed FY23 budget to the Select Board. She noted that the Water Department’s budget is appropriated at Town Meeting, and cannot be spent beyond the approved appropriations. In the event that the department falls short on revenue targets, they will pull from their surplus. The Water department does not receive any state funding, and without the surplus available to fill revenue gaps, the General Fund would be impacted. The Water department currently services 4,800 customers.

The FY23 Water budget proposes adding a full-time, FLSA exempt Water Resources Manager to focus on water supply protection and the reduction of customer water use. The position will also be responsible for overseeing

water quality analysis and program development. The position is budgeted for an \$80,000 salary plus benefits, and will be funded between several departments: 40% Water, 25% WUMP, 20% Wastewater, and 15% Electric.

Ms. Alexson questioned whether the WUMP could be used for salary; Ms. Halmen responded that salary expenses are indeed one of its slated uses. She stated that since its adoption in October 2020, the WUMP has accumulated about \$100,000. Ms. Alexson asked how assignments under the Water Resources Manager would be completed if the position was not approved; Ms. Halmen responded that most of the duties are functions that the department receives criticism for underperforming, as they do not currently have the staff or resources to properly address them.

WASTEWATER

Similar to the Water budget, the Wastewater department's budget is appropriated at Town Meeting, and cannot be spent beyond the approved appropriations. In the event that the department falls short on revenue targets, they will pull from their surplus. The Wastewater department does not receive any state funding, and without the surplus available to fill revenue gaps, the General Fund would be impacted. currently services about 2,200 customers.

A requisition for a \$6 million bond will be brought before Annual Town Meeting to be used for Wastewater Treatment Facility upgrades.

Ipswich Bay Yacht Club License Renewals, Common Victualler, Weekday Entertainment, and Sunday Entertainment

- *Vote: Mr. Whitmore moved to approve the license renewals. Ms. Alexson seconded. The motion carried unanimously via roll call.*

Discuss/Vote Recycled Product Purchasing Policy

Marlene Faria Connelly (Waste Reduction Manager) reported that in 2020, the recycling program received \$18,700 in funding; in 2021, it received \$19,800 in funding. To be considered for 2022 funding, the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) is requiring a formal adopted policy.

Ms. Alexson asked how the policy would be monitored and enforced; Ms. Faria Connelly responded that within the Town, departments self-monitor, and residentially, the department works closely with the Waste Reduction Advisory Committee and school Green Teams to create programs encouraging waste reduction.

Ms. Mackin asked if Ipswich had considered implementing mandatory composting. Ms. Faria Connelly responded that the Town has considered it, but it would be anticipated to cost about \$500,000 per year. In lieu of Town-wide composting, the DPW manages a private pay program that costs \$95 per year, per household. The DPW supplements \$17 per household, and provides free composting carts and supplies. Currently, almost 800 households participate. The program has seen a 650 household increase over the last eight (8) years.

- *Vote: Mr. Whitmore moved to adopt the policy. Ms. Alexson seconded. The motion carried unanimously via roll call.*

Select Board Vote Ipswich Public Schools Special Municipal Employee List

The Ipswich Public Schools requested that the Select Board approve a list of Special Municipal Employees, defined as employees who are not paid, *or* hold a part-time position that allows them to work at another job during normal working hours, *or* are not paid by the Town for more than 800 working hours (approximately 20 weeks full-time) during the preceding 365 days.

These positions include lunch aides, food service employees, Extended Day Program staff, paraprofessionals, teachers, secretaries, administrative assistants, coaches, substitute, School Committee members, and School Council members.

- *Vote: Ms. Player moved to approve the Special Municipal Employee List. Mr. Whitmore seconded. The motion carried unanimously via roll call.*

Discuss Moratorium on New Developments/Buildings

Ms. Alexson presented a proposal for a temporary building moratorium on construction of multi-family developments consisting of 3 or more units, unless a project offers at least 25% of proposed units to qualify as affordable and be added to the Subsidized Housing Inventory List. Such a moratorium would allow a 2-year pause to study the impact of rapid expansion on water supply, schools, infrastructure, and character of the Town, develop a master plan, and consider what we would like the Town to look like in the next 10-20 years.

Dr. Jones stated that the proposal is well-rounded.

Ms. Player asked if the draft had been reviewed by Ethan Parsons (Planning Director.) Mr. Marino responded that if the Board voted to move forward with the article, it would go to Mr. Parsons for review and feedback.

Mr. Whitmore stated that he was in support of the article and believes it is worth sending to the Planning Board for review.

- *Vote: Ms. Player moved to refer the article to the Planning Board for further review. Mr. Whitmore seconded. The motion carried unanimously via roll call.*

Consent Agenda

- I. One Day Wine and Malt License Application
 - a. Trina Schell of Castle Hill on the Crane Estate for fundraising events at Castle Hill on February 11, 12, 18 and 19, 2022.
- II. One Day All Alcohol License Application
 - a. Andrew Skillman of Ipswich Masonic Temple for a bridal shower on February 19, 2022.

- *Vote: Ms. Alexson moved to approve the Consent Agenda. Mr. Whitmore seconded. The motion carried unanimously via roll call.*

Approval of Minutes

- I. November 16, 2021
- II. December 6, 2021
- III. December 20, 2021

- *Vote: Ms. Alexson moved to approve the minutes. Mr. Whitmore seconded. The motion carried unanimously via roll call.*

Town Manager Report

PUBLIC SAFETY BUILDING

CHA has been presented with an offer for the Owner's Project Manager. They have extensive experience in public safety facilities. Once a proposal has been received, a Request for Qualifications will be put out to seek a designer.

FY23 BUDGET

The Finance Committee will meet on Tuesday and Thursday nights for the next three (3) weeks to conduct budget hearings. They will begin hearing School budget presentations during the second week of March.'

OUTDOOR ENTERTAINMENT LICENSE POLICY

Mr. Marino has consulted the outdoor entertainment policies of surrounding communities and will have a draft for presentation on February 14.

Select Board Member Subcommittee Update

AUDIT COMMITTEE

The annual audit was approved and endorsed by the Committee. The Town has accomplished a clean audit with no findings of concern thanks to the work of the Finance department.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING BOARD

The Affordable Housing Trust Fund Board met on January 13. The First-Time Homebuyers policy is under review to see how more citizen participation can be encouraged.

New Business

None.

Old Business

PEABODY STREET

Mr. Marino reported that in discussions between Chief Nikas, residents of Peabody Street, and abutting business owners, it was discovered that a parcel of land at the end of the street may be Town-owned, and could be turned into a hammerhead turnaround.

DOWNTOWN PARKING LIMITS

Discussions are underway regarding setting a uniform time limit for parking downtown that allows visitors to have a meal and shop while keeping traffic moving. *No Idling* signs will also be added.

Miscellaneous and Correspondence

Mr. Marino reported that Sarah Johnson (Finance Director) has decided to retire. Brian Connelly will serve as the Interim Finance Director.

- *Vote: Ms. Mackin moved to adjourn. Ms. Alexson seconded. The motion carried unanimously via roll call.*

The Select Board adjourned at 9:39 PM.

*Respectfully submitted by Eileen G. Page
02.10.22*