

BOARD OF SELECTMEN'S MEETING

December 4, 2023

A meeting of the Board of Selectmen was called to order by Chairman Collins at 7:00 PM, Northbridge Town Hall, 7 Main Street, Whitinsville, MA. Board Members Present: Ampagoomian, Collins, Melia and Paulhus. **Also Present:** Town Manager Adam D. Gaudette.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by those present.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES/None

PUBLIC HEARING/None

APPOINTMENTS: By the Board of Selectmen/Vote to appoint: Kendell Chilton, Economic Development Committee [Member at Large] / Present: Bill Davis, Chairman – Economic Dev. Committee. Mr. Davis stated that Mr. Chilton has applied to become a member of the Economic Development Committee and they would be glad to have him. Mr. Chilton has been a Northbridge resident since 2015, and is looking forward to helping the town in this capacity. Selectman Melia thanked him for stepping forward. He then followed up with a question for Mr. Davis regarding what they are working on. Mr. Davis explained they have been inactive largely due to unfilled positions in membership. His hope is to fill the vacant positions and to begin holding meetings. A motion/Mr. Ampagoomian, seconded/Mr. Melia to appoint Mr. Chilton to the Economic Development Committee as a Member at Large. Vote yes/Ampagoomian, Collins, Melia and Paulhus.

By the Town Manager/Vote to Affirm: Thomas Parente, DPW Highway Superintendent [Eff. 1.1.24] / Present: Jamie Luchini, DPW Director. Mr. Luchini announced that since the retirement of the former DPW Director and his stepping up into that position, it has left the Highway Superintendent position unfilled, so he has been filling in where needed. In April, they hired Mr. Parente as the DPW Secretary and he also stepped up to help cover. Mr. Luchini praised his work, noting that he has gone above and beyond, and he did not think they would get to this point as quickly as they did. Mr. Parente added that he appreciates being here and being given this opportunity. Everything has been working well and he is looking forward to making improvements to tasks and completing projects. A motion/Mr. Ampagoomian, seconded/Mr. Melia to affirm the Town Manager's appointment of Thomas Parente as DPW Highway Superintendent effective 1.1.24. Vote yes/Ampagoomian, Collins, Melia and Paulhus.

RESIGNATIONS: Joan McManus, Council on Aging / Vote to Accept. A motion/Mr. Ampagoomian, seconded/Mr. Melia to accept the resignation of Joan McManus and send a letter of appreciation. Vote yes/Ampagoomian, Collins, Melia and Paulhus.

CITIZENS' COMMENTS/INPUT/None

Chairman Collins announced that they would be moving to Item F. on the agenda.

Linda Zywiec, Town Clerk / Discuss 2024 early voting and vote by mail. Ms. Zywiec explained that last year she came before the board requesting to opt out of vote by mail for the local election based on the votes act that passed in 2022. Within that act vote by mail and early voting are two different items. Vote by mail is permanent for all elections unless the Selectboard opts out. Early voting in person is not permanent unless the Selectboard opts in. Ms. Zywiec explained that in 2024 there will be 4 elections - three of which will require early voting and vote by mail and because of this she feels we should be consistent and do the same for the local election. To do this, two registrars need to request in writing to the Board of Selectmen to hold early voting, which they did. The board shared their thoughts, had mixed feelings, and wanted to think about it further. Selectman Paulhus asked what the numbers have been for early voting. Ms. Zywiec replied that each time has been different, but added when it first began, they had a large turnout for the state elections and once the vote by mail came to be the early voting numbers plummeted. Chairman Collins asked how much the vote by mail costs. Ms. Zywiec replied the State will mail out the post card to choose how you wish to vote and the state pays for ballots. The Town still pays for the postage up front and then gets reimbursed later on. In addition, we would have to pay the election workers. Selectman Paulhus asked what happens when someone elects to get a mail-in ballot, but they don't send it in; are they allowed to still vote in person. Ms.

Zywiec replied yes and explained that when a ballot is received via mail they get checked off the voter list so they are not able to vote in person. Conversely, if they do not send their ballot in their name is not checked off allowing them to vote in person. Selectman Melia asked if the Selectmen opt in then it would allow vote my mail. Ms. Zywiec explained that the vote by mail is automatic by State law, unless you opt out, but she does not recommend it as she feels it would disenfranchise voters who select they would like to vote by mail thinking they would get the local ballot but they would only receive the State ballot. Ms. Zywiec offered the Board to reach out with any questions before the decision to vote.

Chairman Collins announced that they would be returning to Item D. on the agenda.

2024 Miscellaneous License Renewals [Common Victualler, Class I, Class II, Class III, Automatic Amusement Devices, Weekday Entertainment, Sunday Entertainment, etc.]/Vote to approve subject to the payment of all monies due the Town. A motion/Mr. Ampagoomian, seconded/Mr. Melia to approve the 2024 Miscellaneous License Renewals [Common Victualler, Class I, Class II, Class III, Automatic Amusement Devices, Weekday Entertainment, Sunday Entertainment, etc.], subject to the payment of all monies due the Town. Vote yes/Ampagoomian, Collins, Melia and Paulhus.

2024 Annual Liquor License Renewals/Vote to approve subject to the payment of all monies due the Town. A motion/Mr. Ampagoomian, seconded/Mr. Melia to approve the 2024 Annual Liquor License Renewals/Vote to approve subject to the payment of all monies due the Town. Vote yes/Ampagoomian, Collins, Melia and Paulhus.

Town Manager Annual Review Process. Town Manager Gaudette explained that his evaluation year is based on a calendar year and he has provided the Board with last year's goals and this year's accomplishments, which can be used for their evaluation. Once completed, it can be turned in to Sharon Susienka and she will put together an overall summary and on December 18, 2023, the evaluation will be discussed under executive session and the Board would then vote on the benefits. Once voted on, the Board would then set the Manager's next year goals at their January 8th meeting.

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT/None

SELECTMEN'S CONCERNS: Selectman Melia asked if staff could inquire with surrounding towns on their licensing fees and compare them to ours because they have not been updated since 2002.

ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDA: Town Manager Gaudette noted that he will add the Early Voting and Vote by Mail to the next agenda for the Board to make a vote.

CORRESPONDENCE/None

EXECUTIVE SESSION/None

A motion/Mr. Ampagoomian, seconded/Mr. Melia to adjourn the public meeting. Vote yes/Ampagoomian, Collins, Melia and Paulhus.

Meeting Adjourned: 7:28 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Thomas Begin, Clerk

/mjc

LIST OF DOCUMENTATION

BOARD OF SELECTMEN'S MEETING - OPEN SESSION

December 4, 2023

- I. APPROVAL OF MINUTES/None**
- II. PUBLIC HEARING/None**
- III. APPOINTMENTS:**
 - A. By the Board of Selectmen/Vote to appoint: Kendell Chilton, Economic Development Committee / Present: Bill Davis, Chairman – Economic Dev. Committee**
 - Copy of talent bank form
 - B. By the Town Manager/Vote to Affirm: Thomas Parente, DPW Superintendent [Eff. 1.1.24] / Present: Jamie Luchini, DPW Director**
 - Copy of memorandum regarding the background information of this appointment
 - Copy of memorandum request the appointment
 - Copy of resume
 - Copy of application
 - C. RESIGNATIONS: Joan McManus, Council on Aging / Vote to Accept**
 - Letter of resignation
- IV. CITIZENS' COMMENTS/INPUT/None**
- V. DECISIONS:**
 - D. 2024 Miscellaneous License Renewals [Common Victualler, Class I, Class II, Class III, Automatic Amusement Devices, Weekday Entertainment, Sunday Entertainment, etc.]/Vote to approve subject to the payment of all monies due the Town**
 - Copy of listing of licenses to be renewed
 - E. 2024 Annual Liquor License Renewals/Vote to approve subject to the payment of all monies due the Town**
 - Copy of listing of licenses to be renewed
- VI. DISCUSSIONS**
 - F. Linda Zywiec, Town Clerk / Discuss 2024 early voting and vote by mail/No documentation**
 - G. Town Manager Annual Review Process**
 - Copy of 2023 goals
 - Copy of evaluation
- VII. TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT/None**
- VIII. SELECTMEN'S CONCERNS/No documentation**
- IX. ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDA/None**
- X. CORRESPONDENCE/None**
- XI. EXECUTIVE SESSION/None**