

**IPSWICH SELECT BOARD**  
**Meeting of Monday, February 3, 2020**  
**Ipswich Town Hall | 25 Green Street**

Pursuant to Open Meeting Law M.G.L. Chapter 30A, §§ 18-25, written notice posted by the Town Clerk and delivered to all Board members, a meeting of the Select Board was held on Monday, February 3, 2020 at 7:00 PM in Meeting Room A.

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

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

Abbreviations used: DPW, Department of Public Works; FRIES, Friends of Ipswich Elementary Schools; COA, Council on Aging; IRWA, Ipswich River Watershed Association; ICAM, Ipswich Community Access Media; MAPC, Metropolitan Area Planning Council; OPEB, Other Post-Employment Benefits; Mass CEC, Massachusetts Clean Energy Center; MMWEC, Massachusetts Municipal Wholesale Electric Company

With a quorum present, Mr. Whitmore called the meeting to order at 7:02 PM.

**Welcome/Announcements**

A Resilient Road Design workshop will be held on February 5 from 9:00 AM to 12:00 PM in Meeting Room A. The meeting will be led by the DPW and focus on current proposals to raise the roadways on Jeffreys Neck Road and Argilla Road to help mitigate against climate change-related flooding.

The Council on Aging will host a Salute to Spring event on February 12 from 1:30 PM to 3:00 PM in the basement of Town Hall. Seniors are invited to attend and paint terracotta flowerpots.

The Open Space Committee survey is available online, soliciting feedback from residents about the desires for open space in Ipswich. (To access the survey: [ipswichma.gov](http://ipswichma.gov) → Government → Boards, Committees, Commissions I-Z → Open Space Committee)

The Shellfish Advisory Committee will meet on February 12 at 7:00 PM in Meeting Room A.

**Citizen Queries**

None.

**Boards and Committees**

- a. Rue Sherwood – Reappointment – Design Review Board
- b. Jennifer Hughes – New Appointment – Eight Towns and the Great Marsh Coalition
- c. James McCambridge – New Appointment – Eight Towns and the Great Marsh Coalition
- d. Nancy C. Warner – New Appointment – COA
- e. Anthony Klos – New Appointment – COA
- f. Shirley Berry – New Appointment – COA
- g. Martha Frost – New Appointment – COA

Mr. McCambridge is no longer available to volunteer for Eight Towns and the Great Marsh Coalition.

Ms. Sherwood was not present.

Ms. Hughes was not present.

Nancy Warner (16 Green Street) has lived in town for 40 years. She was a founding member of the FRIES, and is a current volunteer at The Y. Ms. Warner is also a volunteer medical driver for the COA. She looks forward to the opportunity to serve and is glad to see so much interest.

Anthony Klos (12 Oakwood Knoll Road) has served as a caregiver to eight elderly Ipswich residents. He identifies himself as being the first in his family to seek out COA services. He believes that his open-mindedness will be helpful to issues currently faced by the COA.

Ms. Berry was not present.

Martha Frost (95 High Street) has been a social worker for 15 years focusing on elder services. She currently works as a psychotherapist. She has never served on a Board, but would like to participate in addressing elder affairs in Ipswich.

*Vote: Mr. Mootafian moved to appoint Nancy Warner and Shirley Berry as full Board members, and Anthony Klos and Martha Frost as alternates. Dr. Jones seconded. The motion carried unanimously.*

### **State Primary Election Warrant**

Voting for the presidential primary will take place on Tuesday, March 3, 2020 from 7:00 AM to 8:00 PM at the Ipswich Y, 110 County Road.

*Vote: Mr. Mootafian moved to sign the State Primary Election Warrant, and Ms. Alexson seconded. The motion carried unanimously.*

The Select Board signed the warrant.

### **Early Opening Request from Ipswich Sports Bar & Grille, Paul DiMarino**

The Ipswich Sports Bar & Grille is requesting to open at 10:00 AM instead of noon on Sunday, March 15 for a St. Patrick's Day celebration.

*Vote: Mr. Mootafian moved to approve the early opening, and Ms. Alexson seconded. The motion carried 4-0-1, with Dr. Jones being momentarily absent.*

### **Consent Agenda**

- I. One Day Liquor License Application
  - a. Wine & Malt – Monarch and Rose Foods for Music Nights at 1 North Main Street on 2/13 and 2/24
- II. Street or Sidewalk Blocking Application
  - a. Ipswich Family Y for Partial Street Blocking on 9/26/2020 for Chase the Gorilla Down Argilla 5k Road Race. Requesting blocking on 110 County Road streets and sidewalks along race route.
- III. Over 70 Recreational Shellfish Permit Application
  - a. Frederic Jennings, Jr. 37D Carolina Avenue

*Vote: Mr. Mootafian moved to approve the Consent Agenda, and Ms. Alexson seconded. The motion carried 4-0-1, with Dr. Jones being momentarily absent.*

### **Approval of Minutes**

- a. January 6, 2020
- b. January 21, 2020

*Vote: Ms. Alexson moved to approve the January 6, 2020 and January 21, 2020 minutes. Ms. Mackin added a potential amendment of changing "DEP" to "DER", pending verification. Mr. Mootafian seconded. The motion carried 4-0-1, with Dr. Jones being momentarily absent.*

### **PUBLIC HEARING: Water & Wastewater Rate Hearing (1 of 2)**

"Residents of the Town of Ipswich, please note that the Select Board, as Water and Sewer Commissioners, will hold public hearings on Monday, February 3, 2020 at 7:20 PM and Monday, March 2, 2020 at 7:15 PM, in Meeting Room A of Town Hall, to consider and act on the increase and/or modification of the current water and sewer rates effective for buildings on and after May 1, 2020." – Board of Water & Sewer Commissioners, William D. Whitmore, Chair

*Vote: Ms. Mackin moved to open the Public Hearing, and Ms. Alexson seconded. The motion carried unanimously.*

#### WATER SEASONAL RATE ADJUSTMENT

Vicki Halmen (Water and Wastewater Director) appeared before the Board as Water Commissioners to propose an annual seasonal rate increase. Since 2003, the Board has seasonally voted to increase residential water rates by 1.5 times the base rate from May through September in an effort to reduce summertime water consumption. This year, the rate would increase from \$5.85 per 100 cubic feet to \$16.88 per 100 cubic feet. This averages to \$0.015 per gallon. Prior to the seasonal increase, water usage peaked at 151 million gallons in the summer, and now averages about 39 million gallons.

Ms. Mackin stated that she has heard displeasure from residents that commercial rates do not change in the summertime. She reminded the public that commercial users pay the base rate year-round, with no decrease.

Ms. Alexson stated that without a seasonal rate increase, commercial businesses have no incentive to conserve water.

#### ANALOG METER CHARGE

On November 18, 2019, the Select Board adopted charges for non-compliance with the new Smart Meter system, but hearings had not yet been held to make the charges effective. Smart Meters have been installed across town, and currently one customer refuses to connect to the system. As a result, a policy was adopted to charge \$105 up front, with a recurring monthly charge of \$45 on top of usage-based rates to cover expenses relating to staff having to manually read, process and bill for the meter.

#### WASTEWATER RATE ADJUSTMENT

The proposed 12% increase would go into effect May 1, 2020 and raise the rate from \$9.69 to \$10.85 per 100 cubic feet. The average household of four would pay \$9 more per month.

#### WATER

Ms. Halmen proposed a 13% increase in water rates to fund the FY21 budget. She noted that there will be no CARE fund charge at this time. The FY21 budget has an overall increase of 12%, which includes capital spending of \$1.6 million for vehicles, water system improvements and an asset management plan. She noted that debt service will increase for water main replacement and water supply expansions and upgrades.

#### SEPTIC

Ms. Halmen informed the Board that septic dumping rates have not increased since 2014. She conducted a comparison of other communities, and the Water and Wastewater Subcommittee has recommended that the in-town septage be increased by 11%, from \$0.063 per gallon to \$0.07 per gallon. Out of town septage will see an increase of 21%, rising from \$0.07 per gallon to \$0.085 per gallon.

#### WASTEWATER

Long term debt includes \$6 million for rehabilitation at the Water Treatment Plant and for the Town Wharf pumping station. Since 2007, \$8.8 million has been borrowed, mainly for Water Treatment Plan upgrades.

Ms. Alexson noted that the department is trying to even out increase projections over the next five fiscal years, but that last year FY24 was predicted to have a 2% increase, and it now has a 12% increase. Ms. Halmen responded that last year's prediction did not consider the Water Treatment Plan in the asset replacement plan. Ms. Alexson asked if there are any efforts to reduce the budget to help mitigate upcoming debt. Ms. Halmen responded that the department is preparing to address aging mechanical equipment, infrastructure and workforce without much opportunity to offset rising costs. Ms. Alexson asked to see a rate increase comparison from the previous 10-15 years at the next Public Hearing. Ms. Alexson asked for an update on the Net Zero water study. Ms. Halmen stated that the study has been submitted to MAPC, and the department hopes to hear back by early March. Ms. Alexson asked why water rates are increasing by 12% of the overall budget increase is 7%. Ms. Halmen responded that without the 12% increase, upcoming years will not be properly funded. The department is working to build a surplus to avoid borrowing in the future.

Dr. Jones noted that by FY25, rates will have doubled from where they currently sit. She asked if some balance might be seen in FY26 or beyond. Ms. Halmen stated that the rates are expected to rise the further out the department projects.

Ms. Mackin noted that the proposal is usage-based.

Mr. Whitmore asked for clarification regarding the CARE fund, which was previously discussed but has not been factored into the FY21 budget. Ms. Halmen responded that there has been pushback on the implementation of the fund, and so the Subcommittee has decided to proceed with business as usual and continue to work on the fund at a later date. Mr. Whitmore asked that residents keep in mind that water rates will be increasing because historically, Ipswich has not sufficiently invested in infrastructure, and the time has come to make the monetary commitments.

*Vote: Ms. Mackin moved to close the Public Hearing, and Dr. Jones seconded. The motion carried unanimously.*

### **FY21 Budget Review: Utilities**

#### **WATER**

In the FY21 budget, a new full-time, exempt position is proposed that would focus on asset management and replacement. The position would oversee the Water Distribution Foreman.

Ms. Alexson asked what the projected salary was for the position. Ms. Halmen responded that the projected salary is \$103,000.

Dr. Jones asked what kind of training will be required of the position. Ms. Halmen responded that the position will be predominantly licensing-based, including OSHA safety compliance training, a Grade 2 Distribution License, hydraulic system knowledge, and experience with managing staff and project planning.

Ms. Alexson asked what the line item “Permanent Other” pay refers to. Ms. Halmen responded that it is the Water Superintendent’s salary.

#### **WASTEWATER**

Changes to the Wastewater budget include salary increases in accordance with Collective Bargaining Agreements, \$15,000 allocated to OPEB in anticipation of the annual actuary report, increases in IT costs for management and SCADA services, and funds for consultation and testing.

*Vote: Ms. Mackin moved to preliminarily endorse the Water and Wastewater budgets, and Dr. Jones seconded. The motion carried unanimously.*

### **Massachusetts Clean Energy Center**

Mike Johnson (Climate Resiliency Committee Co-Chair) and Bob Fitzgerald (Government Affairs Director, Massachusetts Clean Energy Center) appeared before the Board to discuss the Mass CEC. Mr. Johnson reported that Ipswich anticipates being formally accepted into the Green Communities program within the week, and Mr. Fitzgerald was present to inform the Select Board and community of programs offered to Green Community participants through the Mass CEC.

The Mass CEC is a quasi-state agency created in 2008 that drives Massachusetts’ clean energy economy. The Mass CEC is a critical player in helping the state to achieve its Net Zero goal by 2050. Since 2008, \$229 million have been awarded in grants to residents, businesses and communities; 5,100 solar loans totaling \$164 million have been awarded; \$1 billion in capital has been leveraged through various investments, and \$20 million has been awarded in grants through the Advance in Commonwealth Energy Storage (ACES) program. Offshore wind power has also recently arrived in Massachusetts, and the Mass CEC has become an early investor.

Residents seeking more information should visit [MassCEC.com](http://MassCEC.com).

Mr. Mootafian asked how many grants have been approved. Mr. Fitzgerald responded that he did not know an exact number, but \$10 million was slated to be given through the ACES program. An RFP was put out, and so many applications were received that the funding was doubled.

Dr. Jones asked what programs are available for smaller towns. Mr. Fitzgerald responded that a feasibility study might be useful for Wind 2 to identify which parts of the tower and base may be reusable for a new turbine and engine.

Mr. Whitmore asked how Ipswich might participate in a purchase agreement for offshore wind energy. Mr. Fitzgerald suggested that the Town start by discussing the prospect with MMWEC.

#### **Ipswich Mills Dam Removal, Feasibility Study Update**

Wayne Castonguay (Ipswich River Watershed Association) appeared before the Board to provide an update on the Ipswich Mills Dam removal feasibility study. IRWA has submitted a letter of intent to invest in the next phase of analysis, and hope to hear by March if Ipswich has been invited to apply for a full grant. IRWA is also working on community outreach efforts that include school presentations, finalizing an ICAM video on the completed study, and a series of public meetings. In the next phase of the feasibility study, IRWA is looking to identify the existence compressible soil beneath the slabs of the EBSCO building, and develop a mitigation plan if such soils exist.

Mr. Whitmore clarified that the grant request was for a follow-up feasibility study, and asked about a timeline. Mr. Castonguay stated that if the grant were awarded, it would take 9-12 months to conduct the study and analyze the results.

Ms. Alexson asked if a dam discussion would be on the agenda again; Mr. Whitmore confirmed that a discussion is scheduled for the February 18 agenda. He encouraged residents to attend and voice their opinions.

Mr. Marino reminded viewers that a public forum on the dam will be held on March 30.

#### **Land Disposition Committee Update**

Ethan Parsons (Director of Planning and Development) appeared before the Board to provide an update on the Land Disposition Committee. He reported that the Town is currently holding seven properties taken through tax title foreclosure.

#### **300 HIGH STREET**

Mr. Marino will discuss 300 High Street at a future meeting.

#### **100 TURNPIKE ROAD**

The property was taken in 2006. The Committee does not see the land as developable, as it is mostly wetland. The Committee recommends that the property be sold at auction or bid.

Ms. Mackin asked if the Conservation Committee had been involved with the property, citing its proximity to wetlands. Mr. Parsons responded that they had not.

#### **90 REAR PARADISE ROAD**

The property is inaccessible by vehicle, and is almost completely under the Conservation Commission's jurisdiction. The Committee does not believe that the land will attract any buyers.

Ms. Mackin noted that the property is near Bull Brook, and suggested that the Historical Commission be consulted as the area is known to hold Paleoindian relics from over 10,000 years ago.

#### **15 VALLEY DRIVE**

The property is nonconforming, and likely entirely unbuildable. Mr. Parsons noted that abutters may be interested in it.

Ms. Mackin suggested that the property be discussed with the Association of Great Neck.

### 98 TOWN FARM ROAD

The property is accessible via gravel road, and is almost entirely wetland. Mr. Parsons noted that the Committee does not believe the map available of the property is entirely accurate, and is thus unable to fully rule out development potential. The Committee recommended that the property be sold at auction or by bid.

### 3 VALLEY STREET

Mr. Parsons reported that Rick Clarke (Director of Public Works) and Frank Ventimiglia (Director of Operations) have expressed interest in using the property for possible future storm water management. They have suggested constructing basins or rain gardens. The property is not developable. The Committee recommends the property be retained.

### 161 TOPSFIELD ROAD

The property is almost 29 acres. The Committee believes it is developable, as it was the former site of a proposed 40B that was left to go into foreclosure. There is a garage on the property that the DPW is scheduled to remove. The Committee would like the Town to consider utilizing the property for affordable housing or open space. Mr. Parsons reported that he would like to see the Town contract a Civil Engineer to reconfirm the survey boundaries, retest soils, and draft conceptual designs. He noted that the Affordable Housing Trust is actively looking for affordable housing sites, and may be interested in contributing Trust Fund money to an affordable housing project.

Dr. Jones expressed her support of the Town utilizing the land for an affordable housing project, and Ms. Alexson agreed.

Mr. Whitmore asked Mr. Parsons to draft a proposal with costs that the Board could review and use to base a motion.

Ms. Mackin stated that she would like the Conservation Commission to follow up on the other sites on the inventory to confirm that they are undevelopable.

Carl Gardener (9 Woods Lane) advocated for a thorough examination of the property, and encouraged that Board to have a Highest and Best Use Analysis made of the site for residential purposes. He urged the Board to consider using the property to develop a neighborhood of affordable single-family homes. He suggested that the Town conceptualize the design and contract a non-profit developer to construct the development.

### **Extension of Application Deadline for Commercial Shellfish Permits to March 2, 2020**

Ms. Alexson informed the Board that the application period for commercial shellfishing permits typically runs from December 1 up to and including March 1. Because March 1 is on a Sunday in 2020, the Shellfish Advisory Committee is asking the Select Board to consider extending the deadline until Monday, March 2.

*Vote: Ms. Alexson moved to extend the Commercial Shellfish Permit application period to March 2, 2020, and Mr. Mootafian seconded. The motion carried unanimously.*

### **Town Manager Report**

Ms. Alexson has proposed warrant articles to be considered for Annual Town Meeting. Mr. Marino will prepare the articles and send them to the Board for review, and to be added as an agenda item for discussion at the next Select Board meeting.

Mr. Marino met with the Ipswich Cultural Council, who has set the 11<sup>th</sup> annual Ipswich Illuminations for October 23 and 24, 2020.

Mr. Marino, Ms. Alexson, Dr. Jones and Ms. Mackin all attended the Massachusetts Municipal Association Conference last weekend.

Robin Nolan (Chief Assessor) has given notice that she will be retiring. Genevieve Picard (Assistant Library Director) has retired, and her position has been advertised. Interviews will begin soon.

The Finance Committee will begin their budget hearings on Tuesday, February 4, and plan to meet every Tuesday and Thursday throughout February, excluding February Vacation week. Bean Counting is scheduled for April 4.

Mr. Mootafian asked if any citizens petitions have come forward yet; Mr. Marino responded that they have not, but the Government Study Committee is expected to return with an updated article regarding waterways.

The Board decided to reschedule their next meeting from February 18 to February 24.

Mr. Whitmore asked Mr. Marino to get in contact with Kerrie Bates (ReCreation and Culture Director) to see if Ipswich Illuminations will conflict with the annual downtown trick or treating held by Ipswich businesses, traditionally on the Saturday before Halloween.

**Old Business**

None.

**New Business**

Mr. Whitmore had previously suggested that the Board consider a second polling location, beginning with the 2020 presidential election, to help mitigate parking issues at The Y. Mr. Mootafian and Ms. Alexson did not believe parking to be much of an issue at The Y on election day. Dr. Jones expressed concern at the cost of setting up two polling stations. Mr. Marino noted that early voting will take place for two weeks leading up to the election, and should help mitigate any traffic and parking issues.

**Miscellaneous and Correspondence**

None.

*Vote: Dr. Jones moved to adjourn, and Ms. Alexson seconded. The motion carried unanimously.*

The Select Board adjourned at 10:06 PM.

*Respectfully submitted by Eileen G. Page  
02.04.2020*