

**IPSWICH SELECT BOARD**  
**Meeting of Monday, April 20, 2021**

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: Linda Alexson, Chair; Dr. Tammy Jones, Vice Chair; Kerry Mackin; Nishan Mootafian

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

Not present: William Whitmore

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

**Welcome/Announcements**

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The second Service Dog Project hearing has been rescheduled for May 3.

A town wide cleanup, co-sponsored by the Shade Tree Beautification Committee and the Waste Reduction Advisory Committee, is ongoing through the month of April. Residents interested in participating should contact the DPW.

The Public Safety Facility Committee will meet Thursday at 7 PM.

The Planning Board will meet Thursday at 7 PM.

Ms. Alexson thanked Leah Niska (Executive Assistant) and Eileen Page (Recording Secretary) in recognition of Administrative Professionals Day on April 21.

**GIFT ACCEPTANCE – INSTITUTION FOR SAVINGS DONATION FOR SEASONAL PUBLIC DOCK INSTALLATION**

The Institution for Savings has donated \$2,500 to fund a new seasonal dock for non-motorized boat access on Peatfield Street. New England Biolabs will donate an additional \$2,000, resulting in the project being 40% funded by outside sources. The remaining 60% will be funded out of the Harbors budget. The dock will be installed this summer, pending approval by the Conservation Commission.

- *Vote: Dr. Jones moved to accept the donation. Mr. Mootafian seconded. The motion carried unanimously via roll call.*

**Citizen Queries**

Ms. Mackin reminded residents that the Ipswich River has been ranked as one of the most endangered rivers in the country.

**Boards and Committees**

- I. Elliot Posada – New Appointment – Zoning Board of Appeals

Elliot Posada (14 Hickory Lane) appeared before the Board seeking appointment as a full member of the ZBA. Mr. Posada has been a real estate broker since 2007, and worked for the Massachusetts trial courts as an officer for over 20 years. He has familiarity with zoning through his work as a realtor and property owner, and as an officer in housing court at the beginning of his career.

Bob Gambale (ZBA, Chair) noted that being a member of the ZBA involves late night meetings, and site visits that are typically conducted on weekends, as well as becoming well-versed in local zoning bylaws.

Ms. Alexson asked Mr. Gambale for an update on the Essex Pastures development. Mr. Gambale responded that the window for public comments and questions has closed, and the ZBA will meet on Thursday at 7 PM to begin discussing their decisions regarding waivers and conditions of development.

- *Vote: Dr. Jones moved to appoint Elliot Posada as a full member of the Zoning Board of Appeals. Ms. Mackin seconded. The motion carried unanimously via roll call.*

### **PUBLIC HEARING: Electric Rate Hearing (1 of 2)**

“Residents of the Town of Ipswich, please note that the Select Board, as Electric Light Commissioners, will hold remote public hearings on Tuesday, April 20, 2021 at 7:15 PM and Monday, May 3, 2021 at 7:15 PM to consider and act on electric rate changes under the Provisions of Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 164, Section 58 and Bylaws IV and VI for the purpose of adjusting all classes of rates.” – Linda Alexson, Chair, Electric Light Commissioners

- *Vote: Dr. Jones moved to open the Public Hearing. Ms. Mackin seconded. The motion carried unanimously via roll call.*

Jon Blair (Electric Light Manager) reported that the Electric Department (ELD) has had trouble over the past year with customers falling into arrears with their bills due to the pandemic. The ELD has been working with customers to schedule payment plans and refer them to outside assistance such as Action Inc and Catholic Charities, however they also face the challenge of billing customers who have been taking advantage of the nearly 18 month moratorium on shutting off power. The ELD does not charge interest, and power cannot be shut off during the pandemic, so the incentive for customers to pay has disappeared. He noted that such customers are a mix of residential and commercial, but added that when the Town decided to tie liquor license approvals to the condition of being up to date on all utility payments, the department saw a significant increase in timely payment.

Ray Leczynski (Utilities Business Manager) added that residential customers will eventually be forced to pay their outstanding bills due to liens being placed on their properties, but renters could avoid paying if they moved, and businesses that close will never have to pay their arrears either. He stated that there is about \$140,000 overdue to the ELD as of April 2021, versus the average of \$2,000 that goes uncollected in a normal year.

Mr. Blair added that any resident struggling to pay their electric bill should reach out to the department to work out a solution, and that the department would be willing to accept as little as \$10 a week as a payment plan.

Ms. Alexson asked if new developments coming online, such as Mile Lane and Linebrook Road, might make a significant contribution to revenue. Mr. Blair responded that there are a few homes from Phase 1 of the Linebrook Road development that are active customers, but overall, with 6,200 residential customers, an additional dozen or so accounts does not have a big impact on the annual revenue figure.

Mr. Blair asked the Electric Light Commissioners to consider increasing the electric rate by \$0.01 per kilowatt hour. The current residential rate is \$0.155 per kilowatt hour. The proposed increase would bring the rate to \$0.165 per kilowatt hour.

Dr. Jones asked when the last increase was implemented. Mr. Blair responded that the rate has been increased annually over the last four years.

There were no public comments.

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

### **FY22 Electric Department Budget Review**

In reviewing the organizational chart of the Electric department, Ms. Alexson asked if any of the four clerical positions are shared with Water/Wastewater. Mr. Blair responded that the salaries are allocated based on customer count and have a purposeful overlap of primary and secondary duties to ensure adequate office coverage. Ms. Alexson asked if payroll for the department could be done at Town Hall. Mr. Blair responded that Utilities

spearheaded the conversion from paper to electronic timekeeping, and plans to eventually transition the payroll clerk position into something more beneficial to the department, such as focusing on inventory or asset documentation.

**PUBLIC HEARING: Application for the Transfer of a License, Change of Manager, Pledge of Inventory, Pledge of Collateral for Off-Premise Wine & Malt – A & Y Patel, D/B/A DJ’s Variety, 42 Washington Street**

“Residents of the Town of Ipswich, please note that the Select Board will conduct a remote Public Hearing on Tuesday, April 20, 2021 at 8 PM to hear testimony on an application for a transfer of license, change of manager and pledge of license and inventory for A & Y Patel Inc, d/b/a DJ’s Variety, 42 Washington Street.” Linda Alexson, Select Board Chair

- *Vote: Ms. Mackin moved to open the Public Hearing. Dr. Jones seconded. The motion carried unanimously via roll call.*

John Mooradian Esq. appeared before the Board representing Nil Patel (788 Wheeler Street, Quincy), who will be purchasing DJ’s Variety. There are no plans to change the physical structure of the store. Mr. Patel is TIPS certified, has experience with alcohol sales, and will employ 2-3 staff members. The hours of the store are currently 6 AM to 9 PM, but will be changed to 5 AM to 10 PM in the summertime. Alcohol sales will remain the same, from 8 AM to 10 PM, in accordance with the license.

There were no public comments.

- *Vote: Mr. Mootafian moved to close the Public Hearing. Dr. Jones seconded. The motion carried unanimously via roll call.*
- *Vote: Mr. Mootafian moved to approve the transfer of the license. Dr. Jones seconded. The motion carried unanimously via roll call.*

**Discuss Rotary Request for Flags for Heroes Project**

The Ipswich/Rowley Rotary Club is requesting to install 100 10’ flag poles, which would each fly a 3’x5’ American flag on the South Green. Residents and businesses can sponsor a flag in memory or appreciation of a veteran, first responder, or pandemic worker for \$50 per year. A placard will designate the individual being honored, and a card will be sent to the person or their family thanking them for their service. A ceremony will be held each year dedicating the flags. The event has been a successful fundraiser for the Arlington Rotary Club for many years.

- *Vote: Ms. Mackin moved to approve the request. Dr. Jones seconded. The motion carried unanimously via roll call.*

**Temporary Sunday Opening of Recreational Flat for Recreational Permit Holders Until September 30, 2021**

Police Chief Paul Nikas reported that the Shellfish Advisory Board voted to recommend that Richard’s Ground be opened on Sunday to recreational clambers from May 1, 2021 through and including September 30, 2021.

- *Vote: Mr. Mootafian moved to approve the temporary Sunday opening of the recreational clam flat. Dr. Jones seconded. The motion carried unanimously via roll call.*

**Provisional Commercial Clamming Permit Applications and One Student Commercial Permit Application**

- I. Alec Jepson, 102 County Road
- II. Joseph Gauthier, 12 Island Park Road
- III. Benjamin Mastrangelo, 13 Pleasant Street
- IV. Mark Fischer, 39 Turnpike Road
- V. Hayden Fowler, 1 Hodgkins Drive, Student Commercial Permit

- *Vote: Dr. Jones moved to approve the provisional and student commercial clamming permits. Mr. Mootafian seconded. The motion carried unanimously.*

**Review of Select Board Goals**

The Select Board previously updated their goals for 2018-2021. Mr. Marino proposed revisiting the goals and modifying the SWOT Analysis at a June meeting, after Town Meeting, Town Elections, and the Board's annual reorganization.

### **Consent Agenda**

- I. Partial Sidewalk Blocking Application, Frank Pasciuto, 20-24 Central Street store front work
  - *Vote: Dr. Jones moved to approve the application. Ms. Mackin seconded. The motion carried unanimously via roll call.*

Ms. Alexson asked for an update on crosswalk painting in the downtown area. Mr. Marino responded that once some patches are filled in on Market Street, the crosswalks will be painted in time for summer.

### **Approval of Minutes**

- I. March 8, 2021
- II. March 15, 2021
- III. March 22, 2021
- IV. March 29, 2021
- V. April 5, 2021

Ms. Mackin asked that in the March 8 minutes, the word "eludes" be changed to "alludes" on page 4, paragraph 3.

- *Vote: Mr. Mootafian moved to approve the minutes for March 8, 15, 29, and April 5. Dr. Jones seconded. The motion carried unanimously via roll call.*
- *Vote: Mr. Mootafian moved to approve the minutes for March 22. Dr. Jones seconded. The motion carried 3-0, with Ms. Mackin abstaining.*

### **Discuss Sending Follow-Up Letter to ZBA Regarding Essex Pastures 40B Project**

Ms. Alexson reported that Select Board heard tonight that the public hearing has closed, and the ZBA is no longer receiving public comment regarding the Essex Pastures development.

### **Town Manager Report**

Town Meeting will be held on Saturday, May 15 at 9:00 AM under a tent behind the Middle/High School. Parking lot voting will not be available, but electronic voting will be utilized.

The Town was awarded a \$157,000 grant through Streetscapes, which will be used to construct a shade structure at the Riverwalk and provide sidewalk upgrades downtown.

Mr. Marino will meet with Senator Bruce Tarr's office tomorrow regarding the status of an application to form a regional COVID-19 vaccination site.

The Town received a AAA rating, which will allow for lower interest rates on bonds in the coming year.

A blood drive will be held on May 4 at Town Hall. Donors can sign up online through the American Red Cross.

Outdoor seating for downtown restaurants is now open. Restaurants are currently coordinating with students to get murals painted on the cement barricades that designate dining areas.

The Town has changed labor counsel from KP Law to Feeley & Brown. The change will save the Town on an hourly rate by \$100.

### **New Business**

Ms. Alexson informed the Board that Wenham has left the Eastern Essex Veterans District. While there will be no change in the Town's assessment for FY22, they should expect an increase for subsequent fiscal years.

**Old Business**

Dr. Jones informed the Board that she toured the Service Dog Project property with the organization's principals and two board members in anticipation of a second hearing in May.

**Miscellaneous and Correspondence**

- I. Banner List
- II. Employee Changes

Ms. Alexson asked if all of the employee changes are replacements. Mr. Marino responded that they are.

The next Select Board meeting will be held on May 3.

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

The Select Board adjourned at 8:40 PM.

*Respectfully submitted by Eileen G. Page  
04.20.2021*