

TOWN OF IPSWICH  
Select Board Meeting as Electric Light Commissioners  
Monday, May 1, 2023 at 7:00 PM  
Ipswich Town Hall, Meeting Room A  
25 Green St. Ipswich, MA

Pursuant to Open Meeting Law M.G.L. Chapter 30A, §§ 18-25, a written notice posted by the Town Clerk and delivered to all Board members, a meeting of the Select Board was held on Monday, May 1, 2023 at Town Hall, 25 Green Street.

Select Board members present: William Whitmore (Chair), Sarah Player (Vice Chair), Linda Alexson, Kerry Mackin

Also Present: Stephen Crane (Town Manager), Jon Blair (ELD Manager)

### **1. Pledge of Allegiance**

### **2. Welcome/Announcements – W. Whitmore**

- The American Legion Poppy Drive will take place May 19- May 21.
- This year's Memorial Day Commemoration will take place on Monday, May 29, at 10:30am. Everyone will meet at the War Memorial on South Main Street. The ceremony will commence at 11:30am.
- Town Meeting is on Tuesday, May 9, at 7pm at the Performing Arts Center.
- This weekend is the High School production of The Sound of Music. Tickets are available at the door.
- Today marks the day that the seasonal residential water rate goes into effect so please conserve.

### **3. Citizen Queries – W. Whitmore**

- Carol Bousquet, 27 Green Street, and Karen Tyler, Veterans Services Officer, said they are coordinating the Armed Forces Day Healing Waters Picnic and Paddle at the Ipswich River Watershed Association on May 20. All veterans and their families are invited for a day of music, food, and paddling. It's free but registration is required.
- Tim Driscoll, 31 Upper River Road, asked about the new policy for noise violation regarding the Hellenic Center and said it doesn't seem like there are strict enough guidelines. He said he is skeptical that there has been any changes and he thought it would be more detailed for what they plan to do. Tim asked if there is an event in the future, should people call the police or go to the Select Board. Stephen said the Board can discuss this on a future agenda. William said if Tim is having issues with noise then call the police so it can be tracked.
- Torii Bottomley, 60 Central Street, said beach ticketing has been \$30 and it doesn't seem to be a deterrent. She wondered if we could consider moving it from a class A to a Class B ticket, which would make it a \$100 ticket on weekends and holidays. This would enable town residents to enjoy the beach. William said they just discussed this with the chief and he is going to work on it. They have to do multiple public hearings to make those changes but they are looking to do so.
- Gary Champion, 3 Palamino Way, said he saw some media posts about the Strategic Planning Committee. He said there were two working group meetings in early 2020, and the Town Manager made a public report of the committee findings in late October of 2020. But two years and seven months later, Ipswich still has no approved strategic long-term capital planning infrastructure agreement that has been approved, and this is something we need to pay close attention to.

### **4. Boards and Committees – W. Whitmore**

- a. Barry Hopping, New Appointment Trust Fund Commission

- a. Barry said he has applied for a position on the Trust Fund Commission. He was approached by a current member that said they could use some help. Barry was on the School Committee for 21 years.
- Motion to appoint Barry Hopping to the Trust Fund Commission made by Linda, seconded by Sarah

→ *Motion passed unanimously, 4-0*

- b. Vacancy Announcements on Boards, Committees, and Commissions

William noted the following boards, committees, and commissions have upcoming openings:

- a. The Human Rights Commission (1 voting member vacancy and 1 alternate member vacancy)
- b. Action Inc (1 position)
- c. Select Board Rep for Housing Partnership Rep
- d. Agricultural Commission (2 positions and 2 alternates)
- e. Architectural Preservation District Commission
- f. Audit Committee (4 positions)
- g. Council on Aging (2 positions and 2 alternates)
- h. Cultural Council (4 positions)
- i. Design Review Board (3 positions and 1 alternate)
- j. Finance Committee (1 Moderator-appointed position)
- k. GSC member from School Committee is still needed
- l. iCAM (2 positions)
- m. Library Board of Trustees (2 positions)
- n. Registrar of voters
- o. Shellfish Committee
- p. Shade Tree and Beautification Committee
- q. Waste Reduction Advisory Committee
- r. Zoning Board of Appeals

## **5. Discuss/Vote Request to Name Public Property at 54 County Street “Jenny Slew Park” – W. Whitmore**

William said they can discuss this but can't vote on it tonight because a Public Hearing was not posted on the agenda in error. Stephen said the request was made in February to make the name change and the library staff did research to make sure the park had not previously been named. Because of this, the naming of the park will only take a Public Hearing. The Conservation Commission also discussed this in January and are in support.

Rachel Meyer, 104 High Street, said that this process has been littered with a few incompetences that are unfair to those who are looking forward to this happening. Rachel said she is upset they won't be having the vote tonight for a number of reasons.

Lindsay Randall, 18 North Main Street, said she echoed everything that Rachel said. She said although this is a clerical error, this shows that it is not a top priority matter.

Heather Leonard, 9 Bush Hill Rd, echoed the disappointment and asked for a commitment of the date. William said they can do it at the next meeting, which is May 15. Stephen said he feels badly that a mistake was made but he does not think that it is fair to suggest that there as an ulterior motivation to this not going out. William also apologized and said he was looking forward to the conversations and is looking forward to voting to support this.

## **6. Flags for Heroes Request on the South Green from Ipswich Rotary – W. Whitmore**

William said there have been 100 flags displayed on the South Green for the last two years from June 10 to July 8.

- Motion to approve the request made by Linda, seconded by Sarah

→ Motion passed unanimously, 4-0

## 7. Electric Light Subcommittee Membership Discussion – W. Whitmore

William said the ELD Subcommittee requires 5 people to sit on the board, but currently there are 7. There is also interest from a citizen. Sarah asked the Select Board if we should change the number of members on the ELD Board to reflect the actual membership. Jim Engel said it has been at 7 members for a while. Sarah said it's a very involved group and it's great that there is a new member interested. We don't want to turn people away that are interested.

- Sarah moved to change the ELD Subcommittee membership to 7 members, each with three year terms, to include 2 Select Board Reps and 1 Finance Committee Rep, seconded by Linda

→ Motion passed unanimously 4-0

## 8. Project 2023A – 2 MW/20Yr Seabrook Nuclear Hedge Contract – J. Blair

Jon Blair, ELD Manager, discussed the proposed contract with Seabrook Nuclear Station. It is a 20-year, bilateral agreement for uninterrupted power for the full duration of the agreement. This will also be packaged with Emission Free Certificates. The cost structure starts at \$67/MWh with 2.3% annual escalators. Currently, a standard resident may use 1000KWh/month, at the current retail rate their bill would be about \$180 per month. The power we will get for this will account for about half of that cost. Jon gave a presentation to showcase the reason for the change. This change provides predictability and reliability. The goal is to try to be as green as possible, well diversified, and have cost savings. This change hits those goals. This has not been approved by the ELD subcommittee yet. Linda asked what the current percentage is of nuclear resources, Jon said currently its 26%.

- Motion to approve the MA Municipal Wholesale Electric Company's Special Project 2023A to purchase 2 Mw/20-year Seabrook Nuclear Hedge Contract, made by Sarah, seconded by Linda
- William read the Certificate of Vote.

VOTE: 1. Town of Ipswich, as a member of the Massachusetts Municipal Wholesale Electric Company ("MMWEC"), acting by and through its municipal light department, hereby agrees to participate in MMWEC's Special Project 2023A; and

2. Town of Ipswich, acting by and through its municipal light department, hereby agrees to pay its pro rata share of the monthly costs for carrying out Special Project 2023A pursuant to the scope of work and budget for such Project as developed by MMWEC and received by the manager of the municipal light department ("Manager"); and

3. Manager is hereby authorized and directed to make payments to MMWEC calculated on the basis of the Town of Ipswich's pro rata share of the expenses as set forth in the budget for Special Project 2023A; and

4. Manager is hereby authorized and directed to execute the Participation Acknowledgment, a copy of which has been presented at this meeting and is filed with the permanent records hereof; and

5. Power Purchase Agreement with MMWEC for Special Project 2023A, is hereby approved substantially in the form of the Power Purchase Agreement ("PPA") presented to the Commission at this meeting and made a part of the record of this meeting; and

6. Manager is hereby authorized to execute and deliver the PPA, substantially in the form of the PPA presented to the Commission at this meeting, with such changes and amendments thereto as the Manager, may deem necessary or appropriate, without need of further approval or action from this Commission; and

7. Actions previously taken by the Manager which are consistent with the purpose of this vote are hereby ratified and confirmed; and

8. Manager is hereby authorized to execute any other documents he/she deems necessary or appropriate to carry out the purposes of this vote without need of further approval or action from this Commission.

→ *Motion passed unanimously 4-0*

## **9. Electric Light Department Budget – J. Blair**

Jon Blair, ELD Manager, presented the Electric Light Department Annual Report which contains the operating budget, as well as goals and accomplishments. Jon went over the financial distinctions between the ELD and other departments within town. The department is not pursuing a rate increase this year and there are no increases in FTE's. Project highlights this year include completing the advanced metering infrastructure (AMI) conversion project and formalizing the business relationship with Water and Wastewater Departments. Jon said they presented this budget to the Finance Committee and the ELD subcommittee, which recommended with a vote of 5-1. Jon also went over accomplishments from this past year, including successfully navigating a difficult wholesale power market, providing mutual aid to several public power communities, and further developing "ReSource" decarbonization service and "Reinvest" financing concept to benefit comprehensive energy solutions for customers.

Linda asked about the accomplishments regarding the compensation policy and asked Jon to explain it. Jon said workforce development and retention was one of the biggest challenges this past year. They are losing employees to other towns where employees are performing the same jobs but getting a 20% pay raise. Instead of just adding compensation, Jon thought it would be better to make a policy for it. Linda asked how many of Jon's employees would this apply to, Jon said about 15. Linda also asked if it was a town similar to Ipswich, Jon said it was as close to or similar to Ipswich as you can get.

William asked about how things are looking since we increased rates anticipating an expensive winter, and since it didn't pan out that way how are we resetting things. Jon said there are several tiers of tools that we can access to help smooth the price increase for power. Typically, per month we just absorb the difference. Some months we under collect and some months we over collect. Some of it is just absorbed as a rolling liability. This past winter we dipped into the Rate Stabilization Fund because we anticipated it getting worse, but did not have to dip in as much as we thought. The department plans to pay back the \$300k that was used from the fund shortly.

- Motion to approve the ELD budget made by Linda, seconded by Kerry.

→ *Motion passed unanimously 4-0*

## **10. Electric Light Manager Evaluation, Jon Blair – W. Whitmore**

William said Jon has done a very good job this year. They also got great feedback from the staff. Jon has had great leadership and seems to be well respected. The Board set a goal to have better collaboration to continue to work well together.

## **11. Set Special Town Meeting Dates October 24 & 25, 2023 – W. Whitmore**

William said the Special Town Meeting would be October 24<sup>th</sup> and the 25<sup>th</sup> if needed. Stephen said he checked to make sure the room is available and it is, the Moderator is also available.

- Motion to set the Special Town Meeting date for October 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> made by Sarah, seconded by Linda.

→ *Motion passed unanimously 4-0*

## 12. Consent Agenda

### a. One Day Wine and Malt License Application(s) -

i. Gary Rogers for True North Ale Company for Castle Concerts at 290 Argilla Road on 6/29, 7/6, 7/13, 7/20, 7/27, 8/3, 8/10, 8/17, 8/24, 8/31/2023 Roaring 20's Parties on 8/5 and 8/6/2023, Harrington Circus on 9/24/2023 and Car Climb on 10/15/2023.

### b. One Day All Alcohol License Application(s) –

i. Renee Pelletier for Appleton Farms Trustees of Reservations for Retreat/Business Meeting, MassDevelopment at 219 County Road on 5/17/2023.

- Motion to approve the consent agenda made by Linda, seconded by Sarah.

→ *Motion passed unanimously, 4-0*

## 13. Approval of Minutes

- Motion to approve minutes from March 21, 2023 and April 10, 2023 made by Sarah, seconded by Linda

→ *Motion passed unanimously, 4-0*

- Motion to approve minutes from April 18, 2023 made by Linda, seconded by Kerry

→ *Motion passed unanimously, 3-0, Sarah abstained*

## 14. Town Manager Report – S. Crane

Stephen said he received a letter notifying him of a change to the outdoor entertainment policy at the Hellenic Center. He got feedback from stakeholders and heard that they would prefer this to be done a different way. One question that arose was that perhaps this is more of a localized issue vs. a town issue. The Hellenic Center said they could be more mindful of the noise they are putting out into the neighborhood. Their letter summarizes that they will end music Sunday-Thursday before 10:30pm and outdoor events by 11pm. They will make efforts to minimize bass and will make sure music vendors understand expectations.

Stephen also said there was a training for boards and directors on open meeting law. Linda asked about their suggestion for new business and old business. Stephen said the most impotent thing is that the agenda is known ahead of time. They are not suggesting to not have old and new business, but to just be judicious about it. Linda also said there has been a change in the language for citizens queries and that it should instead be called citizens comments. She asked if we should make that change. Stephen said there is no requirement for citizens comments so some towns may just take the agenda item off. It opens the Board up to a lot of possible criticism with no questions.

Stephen also said the Town Calendar is being finalized and is on schedule. The Ipswich fire department assisted with a large fire in Rowley, and there is a tree being planted at Winthrop in memory of Linda Grimes.

Tim Driscoll, 31 Upper River Road, said in regards to the Hellenic Center's proposal, they need to have a further review of the complaints and the suggested guidelines.

Brandon Boyd, Upper River Road, said the Board has not heard the discussion regarding the outdoor entertainment policy and he would like them to have all of the information before deciding.

## 15. Select Board Sub Committee Updates – W. Whitmore

- Linda said the Property Re-use group met last week. They reviewed and approved Gordon Harris' report for Town Meeting. They also worked on the recommendation for the new potential site for the community gardens but decided to hold off until the wetlands are flagged. The group also wanted to ask the Select Board for instructions as to their continued role after the community gardens relocation issue has finished. Currently they are on pause. Should they continue to explore possibilities for the future or should they pause. They are meeting again on May 23. Stephen asked if there is an objection to pausing, Linda said a few people were upset that the work they have done in the past year is coming to a halt.
- The 3A Task Force was awarded a \$40k grant by MAPC for the first phase for technical assistance. Andrea Bates and Lindsay Randall worked on the grant. MAPC also committed to additional funds for the third phase as well.

## 16. New Business

- William said they will check back with the police chief about the beach parking tickets. There would be two hearings needed to make this change. Linda suggested they speak to him about it at the next meeting, they could potentially have those hearings in June. William said he doesn't know how long they have to be posted. Stephen also said the second fine is much higher than \$30.

## 17. Old Business

- none

## 18. Miscellaneous and Correspondence – W. Whitmore

- none

## 19. Executive Session

- Motion to close tonight's public meeting and enter into executive session to consider the purchase, exchange, taking, lease, or value of real property if such discussion may have a detrimental effect on the negotiating position of the governmental body relating to 18 Hammatt Street; and to conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with non-union personnel relating to collective bargaining with Local 310 AFL-CIO, and not to return to open session made by Linda, seconded by Sarah.

→ *Motion passed unanimously by roll call vote, 4-0*

### a. Approval of Minutes – April 10, 2023

- Motion to approve the Executive Session 4/10/23 minutes made by Sarah, seconded by Linda.

→ *Motion passed unanimously, 4-0*

Respectfully Submitted By  
Alyson von der Esch  
5-8-2023