

IPSWICH SELECT BOARD
Meeting of Monday, October 4, 2021

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, October 4, 2021 at 7:00 PM in Meeting Room A.

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

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

With a quorum present, Dr. Jones called the meeting to order at 7:01 PM.

Welcome/Announcements

The Ipswich American Legion will hold their annual poppy drive on November 6 and 7 at the Post Office, CVS, Shaw's Marketplace, and the Ipswich Bottle Shop.

COVID-19 vaccinations are available by appointment on Mondays from 1 PM to 4 PM at Our Lady of Hope Church. Pfizer boosters are also available. Appointments can be made at ipswichma.gov.

Longtime Ipswich resident and local journalist Bill Wasserman passed away this week.

The Public Safety Facility Committee will hold public forums on October 5 at 5:30 PM simultaneously at Caroline Avenue and Agawam Village. They will hold a regular Committee meeting on October 12 at 7 PM in Town Hall.

The Ipswich Fire Department will hold an open house on October 9 from 11 AM to 2 PM. The open house will feature free car seat inspections, equipment demonstrations, and a children's obstacle course.

Special Town Meeting will be held on Saturday, October 16 at 9 AM on the football field. A rain date of October 17 has been scheduled. A ballot vote regarding Article 9 will follow on October 26.

Citizen Queries

Phil Goguen (Kingfisher Road) asked when the minutes of "secret meetings" held to discuss options for the removal of Wind 2 would be made public. Dr. Jones clarified that the meetings Mr. Goguen referenced are Executive Sessions, and as with any discussion held in Executive Session, minutes are released when the matter is resolved. Mr. Whitmore added that Executive Sessions function as a briefing for the Board, and that no decisions are made. Mr. Goguen stated his belief that the Town working with a third party to remove Wind 2 would be a "rip off" to residents. Mr. Whitmore stated that the turbine needs to be removed, and by partnering with an outside company, the Town will be able to take advantage of the company removing the turbine at no cost. Mr. Goguen asked how much it would cost for the Town to remove the turbine itself; Mr. Whitmore stated that the Town has been quoted between \$500,000 and \$1 million. Mr. Goguen asked what the cost was to leave the turbine sitting unused; Ms. Mackin stated that there were increased costs associated with having to produce power from other sources. Mr. Goguen stated that at Annual Town Meeting two (2) years ago, residents were told that the school bond would be paid off, resulting in a tax relief of \$2.5 million; Dr. Jones confirmed that the bond was paid off, and residents are no longer being taxed for it.

PUBLIC HEARING: Winter Water Rates Hearing (2 of 2)

"Residents of the Town of Ipswich, please note that the Select Board, as Water Commissioners, will hold public hearings on Monday, September 20, 2021 at 7:15 PM and Monday, October 4, 2021, at 7:15 PM to consider and act on the modification of the current water rates effective for billings on and after October 1, 2021." - Dr. Tammy Jones, Chair, Board of Water Sewer Commissioners

- *Vote: Ms. Alexson moved to open the Public Hearing. Mr. Whitmore seconded. The motion carried unanimously.*

Jim Engel (Chair, Water & Wastewater Subcommittee) and Ray Leczynski (Business Manager) appeared before the Board to propose the winter water rate. The winter rate for 2021 is recommended to be set at \$7.19 per 100ft³ effective October 1, 2021 through April 30, 2022.

Ms. Alexson noted that rates are only adjusted for residential customers. Mr. Engel acknowledged that the lack of adjustment for commercial customers creates inequity, and that the matter would be addressed at an upcoming Subcommittee meeting. Ms. Alexson stated that presenting a winter rate of \$6.78 per 100ft³ and asking for an increase to \$7.19 per 100ft³ to meet revenue targets increases the base rate only for residential ratepayers and was a deceptive practice. The resulting base rate was not previously approved by the Select Board.

Ms. Player asked if approving a revenue surplus collected in the 2021-2022 winter rate would result in lower seasonal rate in summer 2022 to remain revenue neutral. Mr. Engel responded that it would not, as the seasonal rate is set based on the probability of consumption for the upcoming season.

Ms. Alexson pointed out that with the potential to collect \$63,000 in surplus means that the program is not truly revenue-neutral. Mr. Engel agreed, but stated that the program is really revenue-neutral “with some protection” built in, with excess going into a surplus fund.

Mr. Whitmore stated that given the department is \$29 million behind in water infrastructure upgrades, the Board should not be arguing over an excess of 0.3%. Ms. Alexson argued that the issue relates to transparency, and that the Water Department should not look for an additional 6% rate increase mid-season. Mr. Whitmore stated that an excess of 0.3% (or \$63,000) is as close to revenue-neutral as the department can be expected to get, and that the process is not deceptive or unfair. Ms. Alexson again pointed out that program only affects residential customers.

Mr. Engel stated that residential customers never actually pay the base rate; they see the summer rate (1.5x the base rate), and the winter rate, which is unrelated to the base rate, and determined with the goal of meeting revenue goals based on summer sales. Commercial customers pay the true base rate, which he agreed caused an issue of inequity. Ms. Alexson pointed out that because excess funds are put into a surplus account, they are not used for infrastructure repairs referenced by Mr. Whitmore.

Ms. Mackin stated that the excess revenue is rectified over time, and that the Town needs to prioritize reducing unaccounted for water.

Ms. Alexson asked if the Board would then also be moving to raise the commercial rate to \$12.59 per 100ft³. Mr. Engel responded that they could not, as such a vote had not been advertised.

- *Vote: Mr. Whitmore moved to close the Public Hearing. Ms. Mackin seconded. The motion carried unanimously.*
- *Vote: Ms. Mackin move to approve the rate structure as presented. Ms. Player seconded. The motion carried 4-1, with Ms. Alexson opposed.*

Town of Ipswich Re-Precinct Changes

Amy Akell (Town Clerk) appeared before the Board to present precinct changes based on the 2020 federal census. Precincts are analyzed and adjusted accordingly every ten (10) years to ensure that each precinct population is within 5% of the others. Changes go into effect on December 31, 2021, and will affect about 550 residents, not all of whom are registered voters.

Greater Cape Ann Chamber of Commerce Introduction

Ken Riehl (CEO) and Olivia Perez-O’Dess (Community Relations Director) of the Cape Ann Chamber of Commerce introduced themselves to the Board. The Ipswich Chamber of Commerce was previously a volunteer-run organization, and has now merged with the Cape Ann Chamber of Commerce (CACC). The CACC represents Gloucester, Essex, Manchester-By-the-Sea, Rockport, and now Ipswich. The organization turns 100-years-old in 2022, and has about 1,000 members. 80% of those members are small businesses with 10 employees or less. The

CACC is a registered 501(c)6, supporting local business through promotional materials, collaboration with municipalities, and hosting events such as the Schooner Festival, Waterfront Festival, Essex Clam Festival, and Manchester's Festival by the Sea. The CACC will work closely with Kerrie Bates (Director of ReCreation & Culture) to support Ipswich's community events, and meet with the high school Guidance Department to support school needs, support the DECA program, and facilitate scholarship opportunities.

Consent Agenda

- I. One Day Wine and Malt License Applications
 - a. Bea Tiberii of Monarch and Rose Foods Inc. for Music Event at 1 N. Main Street on October 30, 2021
 - b. Rob Barossi of The Trustees of Reservations for Guided Hikes and Craft Beer at Appleton Farms on October 16, 23, 30, and 31, 2021
 - c. Beth Donhauser of Essex County Brewing Co. for Pizza Picnics at Appleton Farms on October 9, 7, 9, 13, 21, and 28, 2021
 - d. Paul Joseph Gentile of Gentile Brewing Co. for Oktoberfest at Appleton Farms on October 9, 2021
 - e. Robert Hughes of Notch Brewing for Craft Beer and Pizza at Appleton Farms on October 9, 16, 23, and 30, 2021
- II. One Day All Alcohol Liquor License Application
 - a. Andrew Skillman of Ipswich Masonic Temple for a Wedding at Ipswich Masonic Temple on October 23, 2021

➤ *Vote: Ms. Mackin moved to approve the Consent Agenda. Ms. Alexson seconded. The motion carried unanimously.*

Approval of Minutes

- I. April 13, 2021 – Bean Counting
- II. August 17, 2021 – Tri Board
- III. August 23, 2021
- IV. September 7, 2021

The April 13, 2021 minutes were set aside pending a clarification of a dollar amount referenced in the School budget.

➤ *Vote: Ms. Alexson moved to approve the August 17, 2021, August 23, 2021, and September 7, 2021 minutes. Ms. Player seconded. The motion carried unanimously via roll call.*

Town Manager Report

COMMUNITY EVENTS

Mr. Marino thanked the staff and volunteers involved in Ipswich Illuminated this past weekend.

NEW ENGLAND BIOLABS

New England Biolabs is finalizing their new campus addition, and will be working with the Planning Board to expand their daycare capacity.

COVID-19

Pfizer boosters for COVID-19 are available Mondays from 1 PM to 4 PM at Our Lady of Hope Church. Appointments can be made online at ipswichma.gov. Walk-ins are also welcome.

SPECIAL TOWN MEETING

Mr. Marino, Michael Dougherty (Finance Committee Chair) and Tom Murphy (Town Moderator) filmed the Town Moderator's Forum last week, which will air on ICAM.

The Finance Committee book is complete. Hard copies will be mailed to households next week, and a PDF is available on the Town website. Residents are encouraged to bring their copies to Town Meeting.

HELLENIC CENTER

Mr. Marino met with John Galanis (Hellenic Center Board) and abutters of the Hellenic Center regarding noise complaints. Mr. Marino will be attending a Board meeting on October 21 to continue the discussion, and the Hellenic Center will need to appear before the Select Board when requesting their entertainment license for 2022.

MOVIE PRODUCTION

South Main Street will be open but with detours down County Street on October 5. On October 6 and 7, the street will be fully closed from 7 AM until 5:30 PM. Production is expected to be breaking down next week.

Select Board Member Subcommittee Update

CYCLE SAFE TASK FORCE

Mr. Whitmore reported that members of the Cycle Safe Task Force recently met with Sheila Taylor (Council on Aging Director) to discuss the accessibility needs of Ipswich seniors, and have reached out to the Department of Transportation (DOT) to discuss what projects might impact Ipswich roads in the near future.

PUBLIC SAFETY BUILDINGS RE-USE COMMITTEE

Residents interested in joining the Public Safety Buildings Re-Use Committee should contact Mr. Marino.

PUBLIC SAFETY FACILITIES COMMITTEE

The Public Safety Facility Committee will hold public forums on October 5 at 5:30 PM simultaneously at Caroline Avenue and Agawam Village. Their next regular Committee meeting will be October 12 at 7 PM in Town Hall.

New Business

83 HIGH STREET

Ms. Alexson reported that the Select Board received an e-mail, and she has received complaints about construction at 83 High Street and the building owner repeatedly blocking sidewalks without a permit.

Mr. Marino stated that he has told the owner that they must apply for a permit, and in the meantime, the issue will be enforced by the Building Inspector and Police Department.

Old Business

None.

Miscellaneous and Correspondence

None.

- *Vote: Ms. Alexson moved to adjourn. Ms. Player seconded. The motion carried unanimously.*

The Select Board adjourned at 8:26 PM.

*Respectfully submitted by Eileen G. Page
10.06.2021*