



**BOARD OF SELECTMEN**

**TOWN HALL BUILDING  
8 PARK STREET**

**Wednesday, February 16, 2022, 7:00 p.m.**

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
MEETING MINUTES**

**CALL TO ORDER:** On the above date the Board of Selectmen held a meeting at the Town Hall Board of Selectmen Room. The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Chairman Duval. Present from the Board of Selectmen were Chairman Duval, Vice Chair Hoyt, Members Blanchard, Nowak and Rosenberg. Also present were Town Administrator Green, Town Counsel St. John III, Administrative Assistant Dunlap, Brian Rhodes from iBerkshires, Daniel Jin from the Berkshire Eagle and Peter Gentile from NBCTC.

*The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.*

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** The minutes for the *January 26, 2022 and February 2, 2022 meetings* were submitted for approval. *Motion made by Member Blanchard to waive reading and approve the minutes for the January 26, 2022 Meeting as submitted, second by Vice Chair Hoyt. Vote: unanimous. Motion passed. Motion made by Member Blanchard to waive reading and approve the minutes for the February 2, 2022 Meeting as submitted, second by Vice Chair Hoyt. Abstention by Chairman Duval. Voted in favor were Vice Chair Hoyt, Members Blanchard, Nowak and Rosenberg. Motion passed.*

**PUBLIC COMMENT:** No public comment.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**Ratification of Wastewater Treatment Plant Technical Clerk / Operator I:** *Justin Cote.* Chairman Duval read aloud the letter from Wastewater Treatment Plant Superintendent Rumbolt recommending the appointment and ratification of Justin Cote to the position of Wastewater Treatment Plant Technical Clerk / Operator I. *Motion made by Vice Chair Hoyt to ratify the appointment of Justin Cote to the Wastewater Treatment Plant Technical Clerk / Operator I position at the Wastewater D12, Step 1 rate of \$19.04 per hour beginning February 17, 2022, second by Member Blanchard. Vote: unanimous. Motion passed.* It was noted there is one more position to fill to bring the Wastewater Treatment Plant up to full staffing.

**Special Municipal Employee Designation, Government Review Committee Member Position:** *Town Counsel St. John III* advised this position designation takes place so there are not conflicts of interest. If there is a potential for a conflict of interest, a committee member fills out a form for the State Ethics Code, which is filed with the Town Clerk in order to be transparent. *Chairman Duval* advised committee members will be sworn in and he and the Town Administrator will explain this to the committee members at their first meeting. The first meeting will be coordinated by Bernard Lynch of Paradigm Associates. *Motion made by Vice Chair Hoyt to designate the Government Review Committee Member position as a Special Municipal Employee, second by Member Blanchard. Vote: unanimous. Motion passed.*

**Request from Louison House for ARPA Funds.** *Kathy Keeser*, Executive Director of the Louison House, gave some background about Louison House, which space has been outgrown. Services provided include supportive housing for people coming in due to emergencies and housing issues. She provided detail about a fire in 2016 which required a temporary move to North Adams while awaiting state and construction money to fix the two facilities. Upon moving back to Adams in 2020 she noted that federal money has remained the same since the 1990's and there is no ability to grow. The program housed twenty-two people through the winter, which required them to address the increase in need for housing. She noted that funding from Covid-19 money from the state was added into the budget to open motels in the model being used for emergency housing situations. More people are coming in, and there wasn't a way to fund it directly through the state funding channel, so she looked at the use of ARPA funds. She advised that Senator Hinds assisted in acquiring funds from the state, and she asked for local money to go with it from Williamstown, Adams and North Adams. She explained that Williamstown provided \$10,000 and North Adams provided \$50,000. Mass Housing and Service Alliance also provided funding. She advised there is no affordable motel to utilize for this purpose in North Adams but there was one in Adams and a couple in Williamstown. The Adams motel had the low bid and beds were filled by December 25<sup>th</sup>. She noted the need continues to keep beds filled. There are twenty-one people housed in Adams currently, and three in Williamstown. She explained there are more people having emergencies and being shuffled into other places other than motels, and emergency shelters in Pittsfield have restrictions that keep people from going there. Of those currently being housed, four are from Adams, and ten people were served from Adams this winter. *Member Nowak* expressed concern about how this issue came to the Town, and pointed out that concerns were expressed from inspectional services. *Ms. Keeser* advised she had been in contact with Vice Chair Hoyt regarding the situation by email because she didn't think there was any chance of funding. She noted that the Mayor from North Adams was informed and mentioned he talked with Town Administrator Green and Williamstown. She advised she looked at motels that were not in as good condition as the one in Adams, and Williamstown could not meet the \$49 rate of Mt. Royal Inn. She explained people are prioritized based on their housing situation and whether they have anyone to stay with to get by. Those that get evicted and houses condemned are considered an emergency and someone with kids, and families through Emergency Assistance, are put up for shorter periods because they can get help with the state. She pointed out that most of the problems are personality issues such as people not liking each other or rumors. She explained that people are in recovery, and with addiction it can never be a certainty to know if someone is using a substance on the property. She advised it is tricky now that marijuana is legal but people cannot smoke in the rooms. She advised that staff provides oversight on site regularly, and if necessary it may require her to move people out earlier. She recalled one couple went to recovery because of self-endangerment. She noted that the Police have only advised of complaints regarding people knocking on the door in the middle of the night. *Vice Chair Hoyt* clarified the timing of the receipt of the email and notification of the Town Administrator and Board Chair to apprise them of what was being requested. She clarified the timing of the request coinciding with license renewals in progress, and that the motel had been delinquent on requirements in 2020 and 2021. License renewal issues were addressed and the Town Administrator and Board Chair organized a meeting with the inspectional services team, the fire chief and all other related parties prior to the Board acting on the license later in December. It was explained that *Ms. Keeser* was not present when this topic was on the Board of Selectmen agenda so no action was taken. *Ms. Keeser* noted that \$75,000 was expected from state ARPA, and Mass housing and ESG Funds are \$100,000 but it has not come in and there is no contract yet. She explained that she received \$50,000 from North Adams, but the other funding is coming.

She noted the initial request was to have a budget of \$175,000 but last year she spent \$220,000 because motels cost a lot every month. This year she anticipates being at \$235,000 and she will be spending every dime. She advised she doesn't need as much from Adams, but a smaller amount would meet the Louison House need. The amount of \$2.3 Million in ARPA funds for Adams was reviewed, and the current plan for fund use was for Wastewater Treatment Plant engineering and construction services and water system work for the Greylock Glen. It was noted that the funds are available in two increments, and both contracts encompass the majority of the funding. *Ms. Keeser* advised the need is ongoing due to domestic violence, addiction, and the price of housing causing a delay in people getting into housing. It was pointed out that people are buying property and not keeping them as rentals or not renting right away, which is a factor. People with no rental history and evictions were also noted as causing an impact. She explained the higher need began in November and December due to money concerns, a fire and broken pipes in houses in the area. She advised that the people she is working with cannot compete for housing and new are people moving into the area that are getting the housing over those already here. She explained there are regional and statewide conversations regarding how to find more permanent housing at a level this group can afford. It was pointed out that Adams is the host community and Adams services are being used. *Town Administrator Green* advised that \$2,000 from program income from the Community Development Department budget could be provided for this purpose from the housing façade work that was released and moved back to the budget. *Chairman Duval* recommended that the Board provide this \$2,000 this year. *Ms. Keeser* advised the Town could also do in-kind donations. *Member Rosenberg* inquired what percentage of the parties are employed and it was noted that 30% to 40% are employed, some working part-time jobs. She advised that those on Social Security are not looking for work and those that are working need to increase work and get more training. She advised that the program is adding more time with two staff members going there daily and now they will make sure people have forms for food stamps and meeting with people to get them back to work. *Member Nowak* pointed out the funding is a good-will gesture. *Member Rosenberg* invited *Ms. Keeser* to contact the Town if anything can be done to help with the stability of the people. *Ms. Keeser* advised she is looking into permanent housing ventures and ways to increase longer term housing to provide services to help people succeed in getting housing. ***Motion made by Vice Chair Hoyt to allocate \$2,000 to Louison House from the Program Income line item from the Community Development Budget and to provide in-kind services from the Town of Adams, second by Member Blanchard. Vote: unanimous. Motion passed.***

## **DEPARTMENT REPORTS**

**Town Administrator:** *Town Administrator Green* reported there was a structure fire tonight on Hastings Street, in the Sayles Street area. The Emergency Management Director, Adams Fire District, the Building Commissioner, Cheshire Fire Department, Savoy Fire Department, North Adams Fire Department, the Police Chief, Massachusetts State Police, and he responded to the fire and everyone did a tremendous job. He thanked all of the first responders and praised them for their work particularly as they are volunteers. *Member Nowak* expressed concern about the traffic light still not working correctly going from North to South. It was explained that VHB is working on the traffic engineering design and looking at the traffic pattern. Sommer Electric is replacing the technology in the ground and the timing technology and is working with MassDOT and Maxymillian to incorporate it with the Commercial Street project. *Member Nowak* inquired about the status of the Jordan Street Culvert and it was noted that MEMA and FEMA walked around it but it is still in progress. *Member Nowak* inquired about the Carlow Block update and it was explained that sheet rocking is in progress but there was a delay finding someone to take the job because of other projects in northern Berkshire.

The developer for the Memorial School has been in touch with the Town and is still moving forward and working on the plan. *Member Nowak* expressed concern that there are signs in the building advising people to wear masks but not everyone is wearing them. It was explained this advisory is for visitors. It was noted this is a complicated situation to manage for people's comfort level. If the Board advises to do so it will be taken down.

**Town Counsel:** *Town Counsel St. John III* advised that since his last report he completed the Appeals Court brief for the Board of Assessors concerning the Pompei tax abatement appeal. He reviewed the proposed Town Administrator's contract, reviewed and signed contracts for Community Development, reviewed and commented on the agenda. He reviewed and responded to a Public Records request, and reviewed and responded to a question concerning the right of a person to campaign at a public location such as the Transfer Station.

**SUBCOMMITTEE AND LIAISON REPORTS:** *Member Rosenberg* reported he attended the Board of Health meeting last week and strongly suggested they implement something for people to start considering their health and strengthening immune systems. The Board of Health requested suggestions, which will be provided. *Chairman Duval* advised that at an upcoming workshop Berkshire Regional Planning Commission Director Matuszco will be asked to attend. *Member Nowak* advised he attended the Conservation Commission meeting for the Hoosac Valley Coal and Grain wetlands site. Work needs to be done in the parking area to alleviate puddling from rain. He noted that one Conservation Commission Member advised on banking in the wetland to save it for another project to replicate wetlands in another area. He reported there was an Executive Meeting of the Mohawk Trail Woodland Partnership. At the next meeting legislation and a draft written five years ago is being updated and it will be brought to the public in March for presentation to each host community for comments from community members and town officials.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS AND GOOD OF THE ORDER:** *Vice Chair Hoyt* announced a Ribbon Cutting for Mendel's Stained Glass Art Studio, and the business is now open. Two more ribbon cuttings will be held on Wednesday at Miss Adams Diner, and Thursday is at Mama's Place on Commercial Street.

## **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

#2.) To conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with nonunion personnel or to conduct collective bargaining sessions or contract negotiations with nonunion personnel;

- **Town Administrator Contract**

*At 7:56 p.m. Motion made by Member Blanchard to enter into Executive Session for Reason #2 as read aloud, second by Vice Chair Hoyt. Roll Call Vote in Favor: Chairman Duval, Vice Chair Hoyt, Members Blanchard, Nowak and Rosenberg. Motion passed.*

*At 8:25 p.m. Motion made by Member Blanchard to exit the Executive Session, second by Vice Chair Hoyt. Roll Call Vote in Favor: Chairman Duval, Vice Chair Hoyt, Members Blanchard, Nowak and Rosenberg. Motion passed.*

*Back in regular session at 8:25 p.m.*

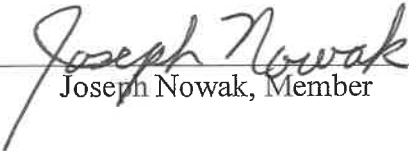
**Approval of Town Administrator Contract.** It was outlined that the Town Administrator decided to stay with the Town and his contract will go from March 25, 2022 through March 24, 2025. Highlights of the contract were reviewed. It was explained that the Town of Adams is fortunate to have Town Administrator Green continue, the Town has made great strides and employee morale is very high.

*Town Administrator Green* noted it has been a challenging three years but rewarding and he looks forward to another three years. He expressed gratitude for support and positivity received from staff and the town. *Board Members* praised his experience and how he continues to move this community forward. He was thanked for his loyalty, for staying on and for showing people that Adams is here to support them, to grow and meet its potential. *Chairman Duval* outlined upcoming projects, including the groundbreaking in the spring at the Greylock Glen, the Commercial Street construction completion, Cumberland Farms coming in, the Ashuwillticook Trail extending to Hodges Cross Road and the Howland Avenue Reconstruction which is forthcoming. He advised there are several other projects in the background ready to be pushed forward as well. ***Motion made by Vice Chair Hoyt to approve the employment agreement for Jay R. Green for the term March 25, 2022 until March 24, 2025 to include all updates reviewed, second by Member Blanchard. Vote: unanimous. Motion passed.***

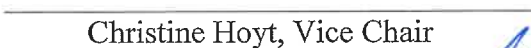
***ADJOURNMENT: Motion made by Member Blanchard to adjourn, second by Vice Chair Hoyt. Vote: unanimous. Motion passed. The meeting adjourned at 8:34 p.m.***


*Respectfully Submitted,*

Deborah J. Dunlap, Recording Secretary

  
Joseph Nowak, Member

  
Howard Rosenberg, Member

  
Christine Hoyt, Vice Chair

  
Richard Blanchard, Member

  
John Duval, Chairman