



BOARD OF SELECTMEN

**TOWN HALL BUILDING
8 PARK STREET**

Wednesday, June 1, 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 were Vice Chair Hoyt, Members Nowak and Rosenberg. *Member Blanchard was absent. Town Counsel St. John III was absent.* Also present were Town Administrator Green, Administrative Assistant Dunlap, Community Development Director Coughlin, Brian Rhodes from iBerkshires, and Peter Gentile from NBCTC.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: The minutes for the *May 18, 2022 Meeting* were submitted for approval. *Motion made by Vice Chair Hoyt to waive reading and approve the minutes as amended and presented for the May 18, 2022 meeting, second by Member Rosenberg. Vote: unanimous. Motion passed.*

PUBLIC COMMENT – *There were no comments made by the public.*

NEW BUSINESS

Ratification of DPW Skilled Laborer: *Anthony Fiore.* Chairman Duval read a letter from Town Administrator Green requesting ratification of Anthony Fiore to the position of DPW Skilled Laborer. It was noted that there were four applicants and this would bring staffing up to 13. *Motion made by Vice Chair Hoyt to ratify Anthony Fiore to the DPW Skilled Laborer Position at the Step 4 rate of \$18.95 per hour, second by Member Rosenberg. Vote: unanimous. Motion passed.*

Presentation by ComSonics/SHINE Wire: *Greg Shine and John Tayloe.* Town Administrator Green introduced Greg Shine and John Tayloe and mentioned that had recently met with both of them and received a tour of the Shine Wire facility that was sold to ComSonics. *Mr. Shine* gave a history of the family business in Adams, how the business grew, and what Shine Wire was about. He noted the business started 40 years ago and moved from North Adams to Adams, where it continues to grow. He noted the decision to preserve the business, how he liked the culture of ComSonics, based out of Virginia, how they treat people and the employee stock ownership. He advised that the Shine name will remain and work with ComSonics of Massachusetts. He pointed out the commitment to the Town of Adams and the employees sealed the deal. *John Tayloe* of ComSonics explained the work provided creating cable assemblies that are complex around the country. He gave the Board an introduction to the executive team of ComSonics. He advised the business has been in operation for 54 years and is a 100% employee-owned corporation since 1985. He praised Shine Wire and its organic growth opportunities, plus the ability to add value to customers and have a footprint in the Northeast. *Mr. Tayloe* also stated his desire to be involved and active in the community. *Chairman Duval* inquired about the skillset ComSonics is looking for when hiring. *Mr. Tayloe* mentioned that a vocational school degree would be great, but not a requirement nor was a college degree.

ComSonics would be looking for individuals with good hand-eye coordination, mechanical skillset, good work ethic and individuals who are interested in being an owner. *Vice Chair Hoyt* asked about the number of employees company-wide and how many employees are in Adams. *Mr. Tayloe* stated there were 327 employees company-wide and 45 employees in Adams; however they are hiring another 5-10 employees locally. *Vice Chair Hoyt* stated that she has always been impressed with the family culture created at Shine Wire, and happy to see that continue with ComSonics. *Member Nowak* thanked Greg Shine for what he has done in the community and thanked ComSonics for having faith in Town of Adams and stated that it would be important to get acquainted with those in the community. *Member Rosenberg* thanked Mr. Shine and Mr. Tayloe for their presentation as he found it fascinating. He also stated that technical business is a good thing because that is where economy is going. Tours of the facility were offered and Board Members stated their interest in taking tours.

Presentation by Mohawk Trail Woodlands Partnership: *Hank Art*. This presentation had been tabled at the May 18, 2022 meeting. **Motion by *Member Nowak* to take off the table, second by *Vice Chair Hoyt*.** **Vote: unanimous. Motion passed.** *Member Nowak* introduced *Hank Art*, gave his credentials and background including that he is a Professor Emeritus of Biology at Williams College. *Professor Art* distributed materials to Board members including his talking points, The Mohawk Trail Woodlands Partnership brochure, and the draft of the Woodlands Partnership 10-year plan (2022-2032), plan. *Professor Art* stated that the Woodlands Partnership has an active Board and Standing Committees. The Woodlands Partnership is in the process of updating their 10-year plan and they are meeting with all of the towns to provide an update on goals and recent activities. However, *Professor Art* stated that they would like to hear from the towns and residents about priorities for our communities and how they can advocate for our community and the region on our natural resources and rural economy. A feedback form is available on www.mohawktrailwoodlandspartnership.org. *Professor Art* explained that more than \$1 million in grants have been awarded to benefit Mohawk Trail Woodlands Partnership member towns and the region overall, through Executive Office of Energy & Environmental Affairs (EOEEA) grant programs. So far there have been three rounds of grants with the fourth round in the process. Adams has received two \$20,000 grants and one \$60,000 regional grant. These dollars were used for kiosks for the Greylock Glen Outdoor Center, and exhibit space to focus on climate change. *Professor Art* stated that some key Woodlands Partnership goals and program areas include: 1. Initiate economic development projects with communities, businesses, and others to create new outdoor recreation and forest-based jobs; 2. Take a lead in becoming a climate-resilient region and to help the rest of Massachusetts and New England fight global warming; and, 3. Conserve forest lands and resources with landowners. *Professor Art* also outlined the current priorities of the Woodlands Partnership which are supported by the 6 Standing Committees: 1. Executive Committee, 2. Municipal Financial Sustainability, 3. Natural Resource-based Economic Development, 4. Forest Conservation, 5. Education, Outreach and Research, and 6. Budget & Finance Committee. *Member Nowak* invited those watching this meeting to go to website and review the information. *Member Rosenberg* asked what would look differently in 10 years - would forests be better managed? He also asked how to look at the forest industry within the region with production forests and be better stewards and economics would include not exporting wood to Canada but milled wood locally and local industry thriving. *Professor Art* stated that we are a wood-based economy, we have people still logging but they are not going to local sawmills; and that we used to have vibrant industry and would have an opportunity to bring it back in corporation with other federal and state organizations. He mentioned that UMASS has a laboratory dedicated to looking at manufacturing wood for use in structural elements and have created wood beams stronger than steel. He indicated that more forest management is needed to control invasive exotics that are sapping productive capacity and manage carbon products and would love to see a forest center where people can come to get local wood. *Member Hoyt* thanked *Professor Art* for a great overview giving us a snapshot of what the partnership is and has been doing. She asked *Professor Art* to clarify the deadline for feedback on the 10-year plan; which he stated that the plan would be reviewed

and approved in September or October and more feedback from community was needed to do it right rather than fast, and it would be preferred to have the feedback by August. *Member Hoyt* asked about the partnership with Lever. *Professor Art* provided an overview of the Lever of grants that have been distributed including a campground in Charlemont and other one in Lanesborough manufacturing trailers out of natural wood. *Chairman Duval* stated that the Woodlands Partnership began through BRPC and since then it has taken off. He encouraged comments and stated he was looking forward to seeing a final copy of the 10-year plan. He thanked *Professor Art* for coming in and educating the public. *Member Nowak* wrapped up the discussion by saying forests are in decline.

Presentation by Berkshire Regional Planning Commission; Berkshire Benchmarks: *Mark Maloy.* *Chairman Duval* introduced *Mark Maloy*, GIS, Data and IT Manager for Berkshire Regional Planning Commission (BRPC). *Mr. Maloy* briefly went over what Berkshire Benchmarks is about and distributed the Berkshire Benchmarks State of the County Report 2022 to each Board member. Berkshire Benchmarks was started a dozen years ago to present data on the region; at which time around 300 regional indicators were created which are important for the communities to watch. Over the course of two years, over 100 stakeholders in Berkshire County have worked to identify indicators to track how our region is performing across eight sectors: Economy, Education, Environment, Government, Health, Housing, Social Environment, and Transportation. These indicators highlight the region's successes and challenges. *Mr. Maloy* briefly went through this information, but encouraged the Board members to review the full report and to review the data on the newly revamped website, BerkshireBenchmarks.org. The following information was shared during the presentation: increase in median income \$62,165 however still not able to compete with other parts of the Commonwealth; decrease in unemployment post-pandemic; academic proficiency declined with Berkshire County performing below the state averages with 8th grade math showing a significant decline; air quality is good and we have a healthier environment; in the last 6 years, respiratory issues have dropped and we are seeing an improvement; acres of protected land continues to go up in Berkshire County; increasing reliance on property taxes for municipalities; State revenue decreased from 27% to 20%; worsening mental health; opioid related overdose deaths from 4 to 56; decreasing housing affordability - surplus in low income and shortage in middle income now shortage in all; decrease in poverty, however poverty rates are going back up some in the last year or two due to the pandemic; increasing family distress; restraining orders up from 956 to 1160; disparities by race and ethnicity; stability of young adult population by age; young and middle aged adults stable. A lot of work to do on the challenges and *Mr. Maloy* stated that there are key organizations working to address the issues, but municipalities need to be aware of these challenges and successes. *Chairman Duval* asked if each individual community has its own data. *Mr. Maloy* mentioned that on the www.Berkshirebenchmarks.org page, the information is also pulled together for each municipality to look at the various sectors and how their municipality is doing in each. He also mentioned that within the data library section there is a community profile to get data just on Adams. *Member Rosenberg* stated that it was a lot of data and that there is difficulty on aggregate level as communities are so different but he will look at Adams specifically on the website. *Vice Chair Hoyt* commented that she was on the Berkshirebenchmarks.org website and said that the data was well put together. *Member Rosenberg* suggested a future workshop on just the Adams data and what the implications are with the town.

Review and approve of FY23 Transfer Station Fees. *Town Administrator Jay Green* stated that the Transfer Station is getting close to paying for itself but we are not there yet, as we are about \$10,000 shy from breaking even on the transfer station expenses, if all variables remain the same each year. These variables include the number of permits sold, number of pulls, weight collected materials, etc. However, he and Town staff are recommending that the fees for FY23 remain unchanged from FY22. This would leave the fees at \$75 for an annual permit, replacement permit at \$10 and bag tags \$1.20 each. *Town Administrator Green* further stated that the transfer station is funded through the budget and a revolving

the Committee will hone in on the topics, and once completed they will come to report to the Board of Selectmen.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND GOOD OF THE ORDER – *Chairman Duval* stated that the Longest Day is June 21, 2022 and will once again be sponsored by Council on Aging in Adams who will be hosting events throughout the day. Events will include yoga, exercise classes, live music, lunch, crafts and more. He asked people to wear purple and have ribbons to provide support. *Member Nowak* asked that someone contact the owner of the parcel across street from Town Hall. He said he knew the owner. He also asked that someone reach out to the owner of the Armory to have them take care of the property. He cited that both properties are unkempt and unsightly and they need to step forward. *Member Nowak* also stated that it is Ms. Deb Dunlap's last meeting and thanked her for her work with the Town. Each Board member also thanked *Ms. Dunlap* and congratulated her on her new job. *Vice Chair Hoyt* thanked the American Legion Post 160 for their coordination of the Memorial Day Parade and Ceremony and thanked participants; especially the veterans, the emergency responders and the youth who decorated bicycles. *Vice Chair Hoyt* congratulated the graduates of the Class of 2022 with three graduations this week; McCann to graduate June 2, Hoosac Valley to graduate June 3 and BART graduating on June 4. *Vice Chair Hoyt* congratulated Hoosac Valley's Softball Team who won the Western Mass championship earlier in the week. *Vice Chair Hoyt* thanked and congratulated the owners of the Firehouse Café; the Board held a ribbon cutting the week prior and they officially opened this week.

ADJOURNMENT: *Motion made by Vice Chair Hoyt to adjourn, second by Member Rosenberg. Vote: unanimous. Motion passed. The meeting adjourned at 8:44 p.m.*

Respectfully Submitted,

Deborah J. Dunlap, Recording Secretary

John Duval, Chair

Joseph Nowak
Joseph Nowak, Member

Christine Hoyt

Christine Hoyt, Vice Chair

Howard Rosenberg
Howard Rosenberg, Member