

**Selectmen Meeting
Minutes
March 16, 2022**

Selectman Kobus, Selectman Boitoneau and Selectman Perusse, Selectman Devault and Chairman Kerrigan were in attendance. Attendees were Town Administrator Ward and Solicitor Gibbons. Chairman Kerrigan opened the meeting at 7:00PM.

Public Comment

There was none.

Review of Minutes

The board received minutes from February 16, 2022 Selectmen's meeting including Executive Session Collective Bargain Prep for review and approval. Selectman Boitoneau made a motion to approve minutes as presented. Selectman Devault seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

Superintendent of Public Works Chris McGown- High Street Sidewalks

Chairman Kerrigan invited DPW Superintendent McGown forward to discuss the condition of the sidewalks downtown. Mr. McGown was before the board, he agreed there were issues with some of the new sidewalks downtown. It is call spalling. It is prevalent in the area completed first from Duvarney Jewelers all along that side of the street to the Savings bank and up the hill. He explained 2 concrete contractors were used for the project, it appears the area completed by the first contractor is experiencing the issues. He has contacted the contractor and they are aware of the issue. They were off this week but plan to meet Monday and walk the site. He reviewed there are specific mixes of concrete and this project used the Mass DoT specifications. This contains a mixture of Portland cement and slag cement, which is a hydraulic cement that sets up fast. He isn't happy with the mix design. The same mix was used in another project at the other end of High Street and the same issue came up. He explained he will meet next week with the contractor, there is a 5% retainer that has been held for project. They are a good contractor who will stand behind their work. Selectman Devault asked if there is a surface treatment to be used. Mr. McGown explained he had seen some repairs online today, a surface treatment may be what is proposed. Selectman Devault explained he is not a civil engineer but understands spalling to occur after concrete is laid and while drying should retain moisture. Mr. McGown explained it should cure slowly depending on the temperature it is good to keep it wet to lengthen the time it will cure. The issue is all in the first area of work that had been completed last Spring early so it wouldn't have been a curing issue. This is a combination of the concrete mix used by the first subcontractor.

He explained he will return in a few weeks with an update on next steps. Selectman Kobus asked if this is considered a workmanship issue. Mr. McGown explained he doesn't believe so, it is only at the beginning of the project. He understands it is disheartening but will return after he meets with the contractor.

The Last Strand Discussion

Selectman Devault reviewed he is working with a committee to keep the Strand open. The committee consists of former owners, Director of Community & Economic Development, the building owner, Selectman Perusse and community members. He reviewed their charter is to help revitalize the Strand using public funding to assist with renovations. He is aware the business owner has submitted an application to pursue funding to fix the marquee under the sign and faced program. At this time the committee is meeting with potential ownership groups. He wants to support the Strand to help motivate business to the downtown. He hopes to communicate the level of support the town will have to new owners when meeting with them. It is important. He doesn't want to see a long gap in ownership like what has happened in the past. Chairman Kerrigan asked about a feasibility study for the building. Selectman Devault explained this will help new owners as a tremendous tool for the business plan. Chairman Kerrigan explained he commends the effort and is totally in favor of a private owner taking over. He has reservations about the idea of it being run as an arm of the town or by a non-profit. COVID has changed the distribution of movies. He agreed this is a gem in the downtown and looks forward to it getting back open. He is looking forward to the feasibility study results. He thanked the committee and agreed anything the town can do to help support the efforts please make him aware.

Town Hall Use for Clinton Middle School Mock Town Meeting

Chairman Kerrigan explained there is a need for a town hall use committee meeting to review reopening the auditorium for use. He would like to participate along with input from the Board of Health to make sure all are on the same page. There should be protocol in place. Administrator Ward explained the office has received requests. For use including the Eight Grade Class hosting a mock Town Meeting in early June and the After Prom Party committee would like to host a fundraising event in late April. Other inquires have been made as well. It would be good to have some direction on how to answer these inquires. Selectman Devault explained he will schedule a meeting before the next Selectmen's meeting. Selectman Kobus asked if there are any restrictions in place regarding group size, he understands it to be pretty open. Administrator Ward reviewed there may be no state regulations but local restrictions can be set, we don't have any in place at this time. He had spoken with the Board of Health Chair who said it can be addressed but wanted input from the use committee and board. Chairman Kerrigan agreed this is good to get in place he is aware the town meeting and election are coming

up, so he is confident the Board of Health and Use Committee will make it work. Please get a meeting scheduled before the next board meeting.

Administrative Business

There was none.

Old & New Business

Fiscal Year 2023 Budget

Chairman Kerrigan explained the hearings will continue on Tuesday, March 22, 2022 at 6:00PM. Selectman Boisoneau asked if there was interest in meeting on Saturdays at 10AM. Chairman Kerrigan stated he will check with the Finance Committee.

Annual Town Meeting Warrant Article Schedule

Chairman Kerrigan explained Annual Town Meeting is scheduled for the first Monday in June, the protocol is to set the warrant schedule. Administrator Ward explained typically it is opened for about one month, he explained if opened today it can be closed at the second meeting in April on the 20th. This would be a little over one month and time to get articles in and work on articles that require funding sources. Chairman Kerrigan explained this has to be done and posted 45 days out. Administrator Ward explained no, the information is helpful to get while finalizing the budget, the timeline for the warrant is to be published 7 days prior to the Annual Town Meeting, there is no 45 day deadline. Selectman Kobus asked about prior fiscal year warrant articles. He anticipated reviewing an audit of information with the budget subcommittee, at the last Finance Committee meeting he didn't see anything regarding this information from departments. Administrator Ward explained he is working on it, he is waiting on information from the DPW, and they are still getting everything together, it will be prepared for the next budget meeting with the Finance Committee. Selectman Boisoneau made a motion to open the Town Meeting Warrant accepting article requests with a deadline of April 20, 2022. Selectman Devault seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

Clinton Armory Study Consultant Update

Chairman Kerrigan invited Community & Economic Development Director Phil Duffy before the board to update the status on the request to perform a feasibility study of the Armory made in December 2020. He explained he has had conversations with a consultant, he has been informed there is a possibility of a deliverable by June 1, 2022. The proposal amount is in the amount of \$29,500, but with a subcontractor to review the environmental part it will be between \$35,000 and \$39,000. With 4 weeks to deliver by June 1, 2022. Selectman Kobus asked if there was any way the state may extend the deadline to June 30, 2022. Administrator Ward reviewed the state wants to know which path the town wants to go down, there was an extension for the 6 months explaining they

will work with the town. He will contact the state to see if it is ok. Selectman Kobus asked for Administrator Ward to reach out regarding an extension based on the facility assessment to be completed. Administrator Ward agreed explaining the board will know if it is worth pursuing, are the repairs going to be reasonable. Selectman Kobus made a motion to approve the contract for a feasibility study to be conducted at the former armory building, pending the discussion with the state regarding the timeline and the Feasibility Assessment is approved for up to \$40,000. Selectman Boisoneau seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

CEMA Message Board

Chairman Kerrigan explained recently he had been contacted by the Senior Director to use the message board, when attempting to use it had been discovered there is a dead battery. So CEMA is working on replacing the battery, but long term he would like to invest in a permanent one. ARPA funds may cover this expense, it can be used to get information out to the public. He would also consider the purchase of some temporary ones as well. He explained a central location will have to be found to install the permanent one. He asked what the board was thinking, should we use the one we have and additional signs to get the word out. Selectman Kobus agreed this is a great idea, the existing one should be used. Chairman Kerrigan agreed it is useful and pending on the funding we could try to display more around town. He explained he will report the estimates for repairs to the Town Administrator.

Human Resource Manager Search Update

Chairman Kerrigan asked Town Administrator Ward to update the board on the process. Administrator Ward indicated the position had been advertised and approximately 53 resumes have been received. This is a joint appointment with the Superintendent of Schools. He has indicated two members of the School Committee are interested in serving on a search committee, are there members interested from the Selectmen in serving on a search committee. The search committee would be made up of 2 Selectmen, 2 School Committee members a member from the Personnel Board and the Treasurer. He and Dr. Meyer also participate. He hopes to start the review process next week. Selectman Kobus stated he was interested in serving. Selectman Devault explained he is interested depending on the search committee for the Assistant Town Administrator, he would primarily want to serve on that and secondary would serve on the Human Resource Manager search. Selectman Perusse stated she will serve. Administrator Ward explained he will confirm if two members are needed or just one and a back-up. Selectman Perusse explained she will serve as the back-up she will leave it up to Administrator Ward and Superintendent Dr. Meyers.

Assistant Town Administrator Search Consultant

Chairman Kerrigan shared recently he noticed the surrounding towns of Sterling, West Boylston and Lancaster all used a consultant for help with the Town Administrators search. This is an important position and he wanted to put this out there to see if the board is interested in this. It would remove the board from the process allowing the consultant to do the recruiting and take the place of the search committee. He opened it up to the board for discussion. Selectman Devault explained he can see where the he is coming from, but he doesn't know. He feels just the opposite, this is such an important position he wants to make sure the board has a voice in it. He would support both working together, the board and a consultant. He understands ultimately it is the Administrators decision if a search firm is used. He is not in favor to have consultant totally replace the search committee. Selectman Kobus explained he served on the search committee to hire the School Superintendent. A consultant was used for recruitment along with a search committee. The consultant provided guidance, making it an efficient and effective process. Selectman Devault explained he would be in favor of that. Chairman Kerrigan asked if the committee was just involved when finalist were selected. Selectman Kobus stated the consultant advertised and organized the candidates and then handed off information to the search committee. From there the committee widdled it down, and if there were any questions the consultant provided feedback. Selectman Boisoneau asked if the position had been advertised. Chairman Kerrigan explained no. Selectman Perusse explained the consultant can be asked to do whatever we are comfortable with, they can do the first pass of candidates and separate the strong candidates not eliminating anyone. Selectman Kobus stated you are right the consultant did rank the candidates and then submitted to search committee. Selectman Devault stated he doesn't want to see the process slow down the search, he does not want to go back and forth with consultant for two months. This should be hammered quickly and agree doesn't want to see the process drag along. Chairman Kerrigan explained he would speak personally this is a small town and understands, we have, and he has been working on this position for a long time, the majority of his time on this board. He wants to make sure, this person it is gonna be in a difficult position no matter what because we are changing the structure of town government by not a small degree. He wants to make sure this person comes in without any baggage or with as small baggage as possible. He thinking taking people who frankly are close to this like we all are, back a step, doing us more of a service going forward. From there we can say we brought in a professional, they looked at these resumes they gave us the best candidates based on what other towns have used, what's serving other towns better. Then Michael can make a decision or we can make a decision from there, trying to protect this position, I know already, there are people who are gonna have it out, for this position from day one. So my interest is in bullet proofing it as much as possible, to say this person was picked by this criteria, we worked

very hard on this job description. This person was picked for this reason only and not because of something that may serve to discredit them later. Selectman Kobus stated with all due respect, I think people are gonna have an issue with whatever direction you go. If the focus becomes hiring the best qualified candidate who fits the needs of our town, then if that process is tried thru and true no none will have any issue being able to answer to that. He doesn't want to get over sensitive with how this is coming, hopefully, move forward and Michael is able to appoint who he feels is best, and that's it. Selectman Perusse explained yeah, the only other comment I have spoken from speaking with people outside of the town, Town Administrators or Assistant Administrators they explained positions like this do not open up very often, umm, we had 53 resumes for the HR position, I expect there will be a lot of resumes coming in for this position, in fact if the case. I agree with both sentiments of it, to have an objective person going through and saying alright but we have a say in it. But if we are transparent about the process there we really should not be concerned. Selectman Devault explained that's his concern, he is saying we really shouldn't rely too much on a consultant now we have removed ourselves from one of the most important decisions we are probably gonna be making over the next however many years. He is in favor of using a consultant in the search as another data point in the search just uncomfortable with handing over the keys to the car to some outside agency. Chairman Kerrigan asked how the board wants to move forward. Selectman Devault stated put it on the agenda for the next meeting and in the meantime discuss further. Selectman Kobus asked if the board can explore and initialize discussion with consultant come back with information at the next meeting to review and discuss. Selectman Devault explained we can do both at the same time, he doesn't want the search for this consultant to slow down this search, we got approval for this position prior to town meeting last year, you know that's where we finally got the approval for it and it has been a long, bumpy road, I like to stay focused on crossing the finish line. He does not want that to hold up the search. Selectman Kobus explained put it on the next agenda. Chairman Kerrigan asked if this would have be put out to bid. Administrator Ward explained probably wouldn't reach that threshold explaining under best business practice, \$10,000 you need three quotes over that you would have to go to bid if over \$50,000. Chairman Kerrigan explained the area communities have used this type of consultant so maybe Administrator Ward can reach out to them and they will give us a number and we can see how to proceed from there. He explained it struck him they are all using the same place, not sure if because they are good or cheap or what. Selectman Devault shared if a lot of municipalities are using them they must have a decent track record. Selectman Perusse asked for a timeline for like where are we now, in terms of the Personnel Board with the salary. Selectman Devault explained the job description is all set and they are reviewing salary, he asked of Administrator Ward has heard anything on that. Administrator Ward explained they are meeting Monday. Selectman Devault explained the expectation from that meeting is to set pay scale for position. Chairman

Kerrigan asked what the board wants to do reach out to consultant. Selectman Devault explained yes, my suggestions is to move along as they normally would but if we want to reach out to consultant for a quote, and see how they could help the search. Selectman Kobus explained realistically we cannot move forward until our next meeting, the Personnel Board sets the scale. Selectman Devault stated and asked for Administrator Ward to correct him if he is wrong, he could advertise if they wanted to and say pay yet to be determined, or we can just wait until they set the salary and put it on there. Chairman Kerrigan agreed. Selectman Boisonneau made a motion for the board to have Town Administrator Ward inquire with a consultant as soon as possible. Selectman Devault seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

Town Hall Use Request: Cheer Leader Practice extension

Selectman Kobus stated he had been speaking by the Athletic Director, Mr. Smith regarding use of the auditorium for the Cheer Practice so that now we are back in the Chamber, would the auditorium be available to them on Wednesdays say up until 6:30, whereas right now they are doing every other Wednesday. Administrator Ward explained yes they were trying to accommodate the set up for the meetings, so as of right now there is nothing scheduled in the auditorium until town meeting so yup, that would be fine. Selectman Kobus explained he will follow up with Mr. Smith and have him reach out to you. Administrator Ward explained that would be good if they can refresh the dates and times to make sure the doors are available. Please have them share schedule if they are changing days.

Dropbox System used for Meeting Agenda information

Selectman Kobus noted an issue with the drop box not having the updated information needed. He recently tried to download the agenda to refresh so all the information is available for the meeting and his concern is it is still the old agenda. He isn't confident in the agenda being the updated agenda based upon his use. Administrator Ward explained he apologized that was his fault, he established that on Friday and added to the meeting agenda Monday and is having a busy week and hadn't been able to update. Selectman Kobus explained, oh that's alright, he just didn't know if it had been updated and his wasn't working, he was still getting an old version. Chairman Kerrigan explained nine times out of ten we get things settled by Friday but we do not have to post until Monday afternoon, so if there are late breaking things we try to give the flexibility with adding something on. We like to get things out for the weekend for review, so if you see things like that please let me know, often times it is a Chair error or otherwise. Thanks for the review.

Committee Reports

Cable Committee

Chairman Kerrigan explained he is trying to get a meeting booked, there was a conflict this week with the new members, so we will try for next week.

Budget Hearings

Chairman Kerrigan noted a joint meeting is scheduled for Tuesday with the Finance Committee for departmental budget reviews.

Chairman Kerrigan asked for other committee reports, there were no other.

In Person Meeting Schedules

Selectman Devault noted just one thing, more so a request, hopefully the end of COVID, if you are a board that is meeting with the community it should be in person. Out of convenience some subcommittees still meet by zoom. But if a board is meeting with members of the community, it is time to meet in person. The board members agreed. He explained he is a subject matter expert in being paranoid about COVID and is back to meeting, so he feels things are back to normal and zoom is only necessary if board members meeting. When meeting with community members it should be scheduled, it in person, for engagement.

Chairman Kerrigan explained the next meeting is scheduled for April 6, 2022.

Selectman Boisoneau made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:01PM. Selectman Devault seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

Meeting Adjourned,

Joyce A. Corbosiero

Executive Assistant to the Clinton Board of Selectmen/Town Administrator