TOWN OF BELCHERTOWN
BOARD OF SELECTMEN’S MEETING MINUTES
MONDAY, NOVEMBER 18, 2019
Selectmen’s Meeting Room, Lawrence Memorial Hall

Present: Ed Boscher, Gail Gramarossa, Jen D. Turner, Brenda Q. Aldrich, Nicholas O’Connor

Call to Order: Chairman Boscher called the meeting to order at 7:15 p.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance.

2) Sign Documents:
   a) Warrant #2021 was signed for $509,110.62 bringing the fiscal year total to $27,845,819.17. He thanked Ms. O’Grady in the Accounting Department for putting this new format together.
   b) Routine documents
   c) Approval of Minutes:

3) Additions to the Agenda:

4) Appearances Before the Board:
   • 7:20 p.m. Public Hearing – To Gauge Community Interest in Change of Name from Board of Selectmen to “Select Board” or Other Appropriate Title: Ms. Turner read the public hearing notice and opened the hearing.

Ms. Gramarossa stated that this is just the first step in a multi-step process to change the name of the Board of Selectmen. Multiple towns throughout the State have gone through this process. Residents may be able to post comments up two or three weeks following tonight’s hearing. Comments should be sent to the Board in writing. A vote will need to take place at town meeting to change the name and then a vote of the legislature is necessary to officially change the name.

This is an issue that she continues to hear about from residents in town. It initially came up when she was running for the Board of Selectmen so she wants to acknowledge that residents continue to ask questions about it.

Mr. Boscher questioned if there is any public comment related to this name change.

Suzanne Bay responded that she didn’t have a comment yet but was interested in who is driving this and is there more interest in changing the name or not. Ms. Gramarossa remarked that she brought it to the Board and even before she was on the board there may have been conversations about changing the name. For her it was primarily hearing about it from residents in the community. It was also going to the Mass Municipal Association meetings across the state and talking to other select board members that considered the name change. She has seen it go both ways where communities have brought it to a vote and agreed to the name change and other communities who voted to keep it the way it is. It is up to each
municipality to do what they want to do. Ms. Bay questioned the number of communities that the board has heard from or seen change the name and what is the reasoning for doing it? Ms. Gramarossa remarked that from what she’s seen it has come up as the boards have diversified in terms of gender as well as the recognition that it may be one of the few terms within a municipality, most of our committees do not have gender language. She understands that the name has a long history and that some individuals want to talk about the history. Many of the communities changing the name are doing so to have more gender inclusive language.

Justine Dymond, a resident of Belchertown and teaches college level writing and literature. She has always advocated that her students use inclusive language. Language that is gender inclusive has become more popular over the last decades. She is one of the residents in the community that has brought this issue forward and supports the name change. If the language is not inclusive, it is cutting off people.

Heidi a resident runs a Girl Scout troop in town. She introduced the idea of politics with her troop. One of the questions they kept asking is why is it selectmen and why can’t they do it? She feels like the term is a barrier to the girls.

Ms. Bay commented that to her the problem isn’t the select board but it’s what you call the individuals; the women who are serving. If you change one term, you have to come up with a term for them.

Cindy Loiselle a Belchertown resident who has also been a writer and an editor. We have moved away from “man” as meant to be inclusive and thinks that can’t be argued any longer. It is not an inclusive term. The preference in editing is to use language that is more inclusive. As a town, she thinks it is time to make that change.

Dave Clegg a Belchertown resident remarked that when the board members ran for their seat they ran as a selectman for the Board of Selectmen and they ran to make the town a better place. He questioned if the board was now saying that Belchertown is not an inclusive town. He thinks that we are spending time on trying to do feel good things but we should be doing things that improve the town and saves the town money, not changing the name. He asked for confirmation that because the word “man” is in selectman we are not inclusive. Members of the audience said yes. Ms. Turner commented that she felt uncomfortable using the word selectman when she ran for the board last year.

Cliff McCarthy a resident of Belchertown who is the volunteer archivist of the Stone House Museum. He works in the history museum at the quadrangle and the past president of the Pioneer Valley History Network. He believes that the name should be changed to reflect today’s reality. He urged the board to allow this to go to town meeting so the residents can vote on the change.
Gretchen Duhaime a resident of Belchertown is the parent of a non-binary child and fully supports the name change. She questioned what the standard nomenclature is for board and its members that other towns have adopted.

Ms. Aldrich remarked that her daughter is the chairman of the South Hadley Select Board and she goes by member of the select board. Ms. Gramarossa remarked that from what she’s seen of the 90 towns that have made the change Select Board seems to be simplest and it seems to retain part of the term (select).

Mr. Boscher’s final comment was that in today’s day and age it is a big decision and the board does not get to decide. It will go to town meeting. The Board will leave this open for 30 days to allow residents time to submit their written comments. She would be comfortable making a motion to allow a 30 days period for residents to submit their comments and at a subsequent meeting the Board will take a vote.

Mr. O’Connor remarked that continuing the comments for 30 days would put it to the Boards meeting of the 21st. He recommended the Board continue this hearing until the 21st to allow time for written comments.

Mr. Brougham remarked that this is not the first time that the name change has been brought to the Board’s attention. Never in the history of the Board of Selectmen have there been three women on the board. Prior attempts have not gained a lot of traction and now is probably the right time to have this discussion.

Mr. O’Connor realized he was looking at the wrong month and corrected his date to December 23rd. Ms. Gramarossa preferred the Board discuss this again at the December 16th meeting as she will most likely not be in town on the 23rd.

Ms. Bay commented that it seemed like the most important thing that was said is that it is already discouraging young girls / women to participate. She questioned if the selectmen could add the power of their voice to call for a community conversation to let the newspaper know what’s going on so it can be explained to the community. Mr. Boscher remarked that this is just the first of what will be other public hearings.

Ms. Aldrich remarked that we are not raising a group of girls that are afraid to run and uses her daughter as an example. She feels we have strong women in her generation that are pushing our girls to be strong. She doesn’t want to feel that girls are afraid to run because they see “man” at the end of the word. She agrees we should look at changing the name but she doesn’t want people to think girls are afraid to run because of the word. We need to set examples for our girls. Members of the audience disagreed with her commenting that some girls are discouraged from running for office when they see the word “man” at the end of the word.

Dave Clegg asked the board to get a cost analysis as this process moves forward. Mr. Boscher commented that something will be put together.
Ms. Gramarossa moved the Board continue the hearing until December 16th and in the interim from tonight until that night there is a written comment period so people can submit their thoughts. Mr. O'Connor added that on the 16th the Board will continue the public hearing so there will be an opportunity for in-person comments. Mr. O'Connor seconded the motion. Motion passes 5 – 0.

- 7:50 p.m. Neil Lozier, Chairman and Members, BOAT – Drug Free Communities Grant: Neil Lozier, Chairman of BOAT, as well as members Jill Panto and Kevin Pacunas were present for this appearance. Mr. Lozier thanked the Board for allowing them to come in. At their last BOAT meeting they agreed to change their name to Belchertown Overcoming Addiction Together. They discussed a drugs free community grant and he remarked that Ms. Gramarossa is very well versed on this grant.

He discussed the grant remarking that it is a five year grant. It goes to the prevention and reduction of drug use/substance use in youths. The targeted areas tend to be middle school and high school age children. The grant is up to $125,000 a year and is a match funded grant. Belchertown would have to develop a coalition which includes twelve different areas of interest including schools, law enforcement, media and other services like that. They are asking that the Board consider this idea and see if they are supportive.

Mr. Boscher commented that the committee has done tremendous work over the last couple of years and why wouldn’t the board support it. Board members were in agreement. Mr. O’Connor remarked it is a match grant so $125,000 needs to be kicked in from the town’s side if the grant is awarded but that can be done with services in kind and hours of officials so it’s not necessarily cash. It was confirmed that it was a five year grant with the potential of a renewal of one time. There is the possibility that there would be staff or something that we want to continue in perpetuity once the grant is no longer available. He would fully support moving forward with applying for this grant.

The RFP for the grant is not out yet. It will potentially come out in January but it depends on when the federal government has it ready. They believe it will be due sometime in March and then it will be a September start if we are awarded the grant.

Mr. Lozier remarked that one of the things with this grant is evaluating the effectiveness of it. He provided some statistics to the Board and its effectiveness.

Ms. Aldrich questioned how this program compares to DARE and if they still even have it in the school system. She was told that DARE has been removed from the school system. It has been replaced with Life Skills.

Ms. Gramarossa added that because this grant is federally funded they want to look at supporting what they would consider evidence based and research based programs. The old DARE is not in that category although there is a new version which Belchertown is not using. The Like Skills which the town is using and this might be the opportunity to expand it to more grades than currently.
Mr. O'Connor thanked BOAT and SOAAR and similar groups in the area for their work. We probably have nine of the twelve aspects that we would need for this grant.

The Board thanked the group for coming in to discuss the grant opportunity.

5) Discussion/Action Items:
   a. Appointment of At-Large Member to CP Committee: Ms. Gramarossa presented the details to the Board. The Committee is recommending the appointment of Lindsey Peterson. Ms. Gramarossa knows her from some of her other work in the region. Ms. Gramarossa moved the Board appoint Lindsey Peterson as the At-Large Member to the CP Committee, term to expire June 30, 2022. Motion seconded by Ms. Aldrich. Motion passes 5 – 0.
   b. Appointment of Veterans’ Agent: Mr. Boscher reminded everyone that two very well qualified candidates were interviewed last week for this position. The Board of Selectmen chose Charly Lawrence as the new Veterans’ Agent. The vote was taken following the interviews on Friday, November 15, 2019.
   c. Disband Veterans’ Agent Search Committee: Mr. Boscher remarked that since the position has been filled the committee could be disbanded. He thanked the committee for their work. Mr. O’Connor moved the Board disband the Veterans’ Agent Search Committee. Motion seconded by Ms. Turner. Motion passes 5 – 0. The Board members thanked the committee members for the time and work they put into the process of searching for a new Veterans’ Agent.

Mr. Boscher thanked Mr. Brougham and the office for the veterans outreach program that they put together. Items were delivered to the homes of veterans in town.

   d. Reassignment of Employee Within Department of Public Works: Mr. Boscher stated that Steve Williams, Director of Public Works, is requesting to reassign John Panzetti from the heavy equipment operator II position back to the heavy equipment operator I position, effective immediately. Mr. O’Connor moved the Board approve the request. Motion seconded by Ms. Gramarossa. The motion passes 5 – 0.

Mr. O’Connor moved to appoint Christopher Johnson to fill the position of heavy equipment operator II, effective immediately. Motion seconded by Ms. Gramarossa. Motion passes 5 – 0.

   e. Endorse Franklin Regional Council of Government (FRCOG) Agreement to Participate and Permission to Contract on the Town’s Behalf: Mr. Boscher asked Mr. Brougham to present the details to the Board. He explained that for many years the department of public works and several other departments participated in the procurement offered by the Hampshire Council of Governments. Some of those programs have been transferred to the FRCOG and the town has been asked if we would be interested in participating in their program. DPW would like to in particular for winter salt and things that we typically participated in with the HCOG. There is a memorandum of agreement for the Board’s endorsement that would allow us to participate. The town does not use all of their programs or opportunities only those that are beneficial to the town.
Mr. O’Connor asked for clarification that by endorsing this there is no obligation to the town to be a part of the FRCOG. He was we would not be under obligation to join them.

Ms. Gramarossa recused herself from the discussion as part of her day job involves a consultant team with who the FRCOG is a member.

Mr. O’Connor moved the Board endorse the Franklin Regional Council of Government Agreement, as he has no concerns provided we are not on the hook for any liability with the FRCOG. Motion seconded by Ms. Aldrich. Motion passes 4 – yes – 1 – abstain (Gramarossa).

f. Endorse Green Communities Competitive Grant Contract Form – BHS Boiler Replacement: Ms. Gramarossa presented the details to the Board. This is a grant from the Green Communities that the school department has been awarded to help pay for a boiler at the high school in the amount of $79,460. Ms. Gramarossa moved the Board endorse the Green Communities Competitive Grant Contract Form. Motion seconded by Mr. O’Connor. Motion passes 5 – 0.

g. Accept Resignation – Home Delivered Meals Driver: Ms. Gramarossa presented the details to the Board. Patricia Nellis has resigned from her position as a Home Delivered Meals Driver, effective immediately. The Board acknowledged the resignation of Ms. Nellis.

h. Appointment of Home Delivered Meals Driver: Ms. Gramarossa remarked that this appointment could be tabled as the person who was to be appointed has withdrawn so there is not an appointment for this position.

i. Right of First Refusal – Soja, Map 241, Lot 18/Parcel B, George Hannum Street: Ms. Turner presented the details. The property owner is looking to split his property and sell a portion of it.

Mr. Brougham remarked that the property is slightly over one acre of approximately 16 acres. The property owners are carving this lot out for development. Both the conservation commission and the planning board have recommended that the town not exercise its right of first refusal. He did not see the paperwork when it originally came in and statutorily there is supposed to be a purchase and sale agreement but this right of first refusal does not have one. He remarked the board can ignore it as he doesn’t see the town buying this lot and building on it or we can notify the sellers that the town will act on it when we have the purchase and sale agreement. He has no concerns about the town not exercising its right of first refusal.

Mr. O’Connor moved the town not exercise their right of first refusal. Motion seconded by Ms. Turner. Motion passes 5 – 0.

j. Letter from Joe Maggi, Property Owner of 442 State Street Property – Regarding Parking for CARZ - Class II License: Ms. Turner presented the details to the Board. Joe Maggi, the property owner at 442 State Street supporting the parking of four used cars in the front of the property for CARZ. A picture was provided for the Board to see how it would look with the cars parked in the front.
Mr. Brougham provided the Board with the history of the Class II Dealer’s license for CARZ and the parking situation for the building in this location. There have been no complaints about this dealer.

Ms. Turner moved the Board amend the Class II Dealer’s License for the parking for CARZ allowing four vehicles to be parked in the front of the building. Motion seconded by Ms. Aldrich. Motion passes 5 – 0.

k. Discussion – Town Common Lighting Committee: Ms. Turner reminded the Board of the brief discussion they have about the Town Common Lighting Committee and how it is down to just one member. The intent was to dissolve the committee as the membership has declined and maybe have it now fall under the department of public works with coordination with the Winter Night Light Committee or some other fund raising organization. She believed that Mr. Williams was on board with some of it as he is already in close coordination with the Winter Night Light Committee.

Mr. O’Connor reminded the Board that several members of the TLC had come before the Board to extend their prevue because it wasn’t just winter lights but also town lights – it is separate from holiday lighting but now there is no-one there to advance it. Ms. Turner commented that the vacancies have been advertised but no-one is applying to be on the committee.

Ms. Turner commented that Gretchen Duhaime from the Cultural Council was present for the discussion; however they are not looking to be the lighting committee. They have added additional snowflakes to the town common as they want to have it all lit up. Upgrading the electric wouldn’t fall under the cultural council.

Mr. Boscher questioned what the board wants to do about the town common lighting committee. Mr. Boscher recommended disbanding the committee and having the cultural council work with the department of public works directly if there are problems with the electricity on the common.

Mr. O’Connor moved to disband the Town Common Lighting Committee. Motion seconded by Ms. Turner. Motion passes 5 – 0.

l. Discussion – 55 Main Street: Ms. Aldrich presented the details to the Board. There has been a lot of discussion around 55 Main Street as a cannabis facility. There are concerns about this location for a cannabis facility. One concern is that it is across the street from the town common and whether the common is considered a playground. A cannabis facility must be 500 ft. away from playgrounds, parks, churches, and schools.

She asked the town administrator to talk a little bit about the information he found regarding the town common and the property being donated to the town. Mr. Brougham provided the information to the board. The Methodist Church is about 560 ft. from the cannabis store. The proposed store is in the historic district and in a very busy area of town. There are many family events held on the town common. The cannabis company has not moved forward with a cohesive plan. In his opinion the common is a park / playground. He provided the Board with
information dating back to 1791 regarding the property being donated to the town. He suggested the Board should be pro-active and recognize the common as a park and let them know their location is non-compliant. Board members were in agreement that the common is a park.

Ms. Aldrich believes this should go to town meeting to make this a by-law so that a future board can’t just change the vote of the current Board of Selectmen. Mr. O’Connor remarked that the following comments would come up – McCarthy’s is across the street from the common as is the package store on Park Street. Ms. Aldrich remarked that both of those businesses are grandfathered in.

Board members agreed that the common meets the definition of a park. Ms. Gramarossa also thought it would be a good idea to bring the use of the common to the Planning Board so that it could be brought to town meeting making it a by-law that the common is a park. Mr. O’Connor skipped down to discussion item p as it is related.

Mr. Boscher questioned the town administrator on how the Board would recognize the common as a park. He was told that if the Board is in agreement and moves to recognize the common as a park that’s part of the process. Mr. Brougham has been in contract with the realtor for 55 Main Street as well as the attorney for the American Cannabis Company as well as one of the business owners in Alabama. He has addressed concerns with them regarding the location. He is happy to notify all parties involved notifying them that it is not a compliant location.

Mr. Boscher moved the Board recognize the common as a park. Motion seconded by Mr. O’Connor. Motion passes 5 – 0.

m. Parks and Recreation Committee Request – Ice Skating Rink: Mr. O’Connor presented the details to the Board. The Chairman of the Recreation Committee sent a letter endorsing an ice skating rink in town. There had been an ice skating rink in the past on the town common at the McCarthy’s end. A request has started up again and the recreation committee wants to take it up again. Mr. O’Connor thinks it’s a great idea. He understands we haven’t had one in a very long time but believes it’s because of the change in the weather pattern. It has to be maintained to a certain extent. He feels there is a big enough group of interested people in town that would facilitate doing it through volunteer work. He believes that a combination of the DPW and the Fire Department have a lot to do with maintaining a skating rink. He feels it would be a completely volunteer effort not taking a lot of resources from the town other than the initial fill. He thinks the high school varsity team could come out and do some scrimmages on a weekend.

Mr. Brougham remarked that it is not that easy to have a skating rink. There needs to be an area of containment. The town used to plow an area when we had more snow. Over a period of nights the volunteer firefighters would go out and fog the snow banks and the ground to create an ice barrier to contain the water. After that was done they would begin to fill the area. It’s a process as the common is not level. It needs to be filled over a series of days so there is uniform freezing. We no longer have the dependency on the volunteer firefighters, there is a collective bargaining agreement with the full time firefighters and they will be asked to be
paid for their time in creating a skating rink, there are different water use restrictions in place now. The water district can no longer just dump tens of thousands of gallons of water on the ground as the district has to account for almost every gallon of water that is pumped. A meter would have to be put on the hydrant and anytime there was activity all that water would have to be accounted for. The freezing and thawing cycles that we experience have been the biggest problem. Other concerns include people wanting lighting on the skating rink, the insurance company is concerned about people playing hockey, there’s always pushing and shoving with the bigger kids pushing the smaller kids out of the way. It becomes a logistical mess. He explained that the town had tried creating a skating rink on the basketball court at Chestnut Hill Community School and that didn’t work either.

Mr. Brougham will inquire with the fire department and water department to see if there will be enough support for a skating rink. We will need snow to create the containment. Mr. O’Connor questioned what happens if there is enough interest in town to create the containment that doesn’t rely on the snow – 2 x 4’s, impervious plastic. Ms. Turner commented that so many people do it in their backyard. Mr. O’Connor feels the containment issue can be eliminated through volunteer services and people donating. The town would be on the hook for the water. He looked into the insurance and it is no different than Jessica’s Boundless Playground or the Skate Park. If there is not enough interest from volunteers than we could drop the idea.

Ms. Turner had a question about the letter the Board received from the Recreation Committee. She wanted confirmation that the Recreation Committee was looking for the Board’s approval to reach out to other organizations. Mr. O’Connor remarked that it was his understanding from the letter that they would take charge in getting volunteers together to get the ice skating rink up and running. She didn’t know what the cultural council would have to do with the ice skating rink. Mr. O’Connor remarked it would go well with the Winter Night Light event in the future. Board members were in agreement that it is worth exploring to see if there are enough volunteers interested in getting this off the ground.

n. Pride Gas Station Bus Stop: Mr. O’Connor had a question about the Pride Gas Station bus stop. He heard a rumor that he was asked to follow up on. He heard that the bus stop may not be happening now. Mr. Brougham commented that the last time it was discussed it was his understanding that the bus stop would be made possible after Pride installed their sidewalks to complement their store. He questioned the DPW director last week about the bus stop and was told it would not be made possible until after the Maple Street / State Street project is complete. Board members were concerned as this won’t happen for another two or so years. He believes it’s because some of the additional sidewalks that need to be installed are beyond the Pride Park area. He will request further information from the director of public works.

o. Town Website: Mr. O’Connor updated the Board on the website. Kevin Hannon, IT Director has reached out to him. He has not had the time over the last couple of months to line a meeting with the vendors of the website that are rebuilding it. He doesn’t have a lot of feedback to give them as to building out the site. He isn’t comfortable articulating that to the vendors as he hasn’t gotten feedback from the
departments in town. He also has a host of technical issues that he is working with running the town’s computer system. Mr. O’Connor is going to reach out to the vendor directly and run with this. He will keep Mr. Hannon in the loop but he wants to have conversation with the vendor as to what they can do, what can’t they do, what will it look like and what the price will be to do everything. He wants in place well in advance of town meeting.

p. Cannabis By-Law Update: Mr. O’Connor remarked that the Board has been talking about amending the original cannabis by-law which was to tie it as closely to the liquor licenses. The town is allowed three full liquor licenses and then a variety of beer and wine licenses. The by-law was meant to follow the three full licenses not to include the number of beer and wine licenses. He feels the by-law should go back to the planning board to have them amend the by-law to only allow three retail cannabis licenses. It will need to go back to town meeting for a vote and at that time we could include the town common in the by-law. The amendment would apply to the retail cannabis stores and not cannabis cultivation.

q. Cultural Council Storage Space: Ms. Turner commented that Mr. Brougham had shown her some storage space in the town hall building for the cultural council. All of their stuff has expanded from what she had when she was on the cultural council. The area is not big enough to fit the totes that they have to store. Mr. Brougham remarked that there is an area at the recreation department that they can use. Ms. Turner was under the impression from the recreation director that the space was not useable. Mr. Brougham feels they should at least go look at that space to see for themselves whether it can be used or not. Ms. Turner feels this location is much more accessible. She knows there are other offices in the basement of town hall that she wasn’t shown. The treasurer-collector has a space where they store a lot of financial information. Ms. Turner commented that we could do a digitization with the updated website and open up a lot of storage space. She thinks we should look at condensing some of the paperwork that’s in the storage areas. Mr. Boscher feels that is a separate issue and we should just be looking for storage space right now. Mr. O’Connor recommended setting up a time with the recreation director to check out possible storage space in his area.

r. Discussion – Conflict of Interest: Mr. Boscher remarked that he wants the Board to have a high level conversation about conflicts of interest. This topic came up at a recent finance committee meeting where they spoke of conflicts of interest in general. As a result of that there are a lot of opinions on what people perceive as a conflict of interest. He looked at the State Ethics website regarding conflict of interest and it comes down to a financial interest for you or your immediate family members. He asked for comments from Board members.

Ms. Gramarossa has tended to take a very broad view of what is considered a conflict of interest. She feels people need to be as transparent as they can even when there can be the appearance. She gave an example where she doesn’t have a distinct financial interest but she feels it is helpful for any board or committee to be as open as possible where you might have linkages to things even if it’s not a conflict. She tends to be very transparent if there is even a hint or the appearance of a potential conflict of interest.

Mr. Boscher remarked that having a conflict of interest does not mean that you have done anything wrong or anything good it’s more or less a state of being. The
conflict is either there or it’s not. Violations of the conflict of interest are a different story.

Mr. O’Connor also had a couple of comments regarding conflict of interest. He also tends to take a large view of conflict of interest and not necessarily just financial implications. He gave an example of a possible conflict of interest. He feels the bigger conflict is a state of being. It’s not an action, or a verb. If you act on a conflict that is a whole different issue. The appearance of a conflict of interest is as bad as a conflict of interest. There are allowances in the law for conflict of interest where you can declare a conflict.

s. Miscellaneous Matters: None.

6) Town Administrator’s Report: In the Board’s incoming mail folder is a letter from the Department of Housing and Community Development inviting the Town of Belchertown to submit an application to DHCD for reserve funding to rebuild a good part of infrastructure at Sportshaven Mobile Park. Jim Mazik from the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission is working on the application. He explained the requirements for applying for the grant. The current tenants association is doing great things at the park.

Our current veterans’ agent, Ray Janke, has again amended his retirement date. Mr. Boscher questioned the reason for amending the date again. He was told the new veterans’ agent doesn’t start until December 2nd and the month end closeout needs to still be done. Ideally there should be some overlap between his retirement and the start of the new veterans’ agent. Mr. O’Connor agreed that Mr. Janke is doing a favor to the town. Mr. Brougham requested the Board members acknowledge the change of retirement date to December 31, 2019. Mr. Boscher acknowledged the change of retirement date.

7) Review of Weekly Mail: No discussion held.

8) Individual Board Members’ Reports:
Ms. Aldrich: She questioned the town administrator if Carriage Drive and Jackson Street would be open soon. He responded that the paving date was scheduled for today. Next Monday at the Selectmen’s meeting Claire O’Neill from Mass Development and Bill Terry from the EDIC will make the official announcement of the opening of Carriage Drive.

Ms. Gramarossa: She received a reminder of a survey that the new superintendent is doing and asked that people fill it out.

A representative from the Attorney General’s Office is coming to Northampton to hold a discussion around cannabis. She will be discussing home delivery and social cafes. She is a great resource around cannabis municipal law.

Mr. O’Connor: He had a meeting on disc golf again today. The Recreation Committee had to return the balance of the CP money they received as the location of the disc golf has been moved. They will be applying for a new CP grant for the new application. The vendor for the disc golf will be walking the course on Saturday to see where it
needs to be cleared. He went into greater detail as to who needs to do what to move the project forward.

The Belchertown Orioles Athletic Association went dormant for a while as did the Friends of the Rec, Skate Park Committee does fund raising, the Sting Rays does significant fund raising but only one has a 501c3. He is working through the Recreation Committee to have a conversation with BOAA to see if all these committees can be aligned. Each area would still be fund raising for their group.

There was a great meeting on Friday where the Board hired a new veterans’ agent.

Ms. Turner: The Winter Night Light committee would like the Board of Selectmen to judge their gingerbread contest. She has an email that she will forward to Board members regarding the judging rules and such. It is on November 30th.

Ms. Turner, Ms. Gramarossa and Ms. Aldrich will be at the Artisan Fair at the volunteer fair table.

The cultural council has been doing a tremendous job of gaining some notoriety in the community and is excited about it.

Mr. Boscher: The Board has been working very hard and thanked the board members.

The highlight of last week was watching the boys’ soccer team win the Western Mass Finals. The State Semi-finals are tomorrow night.

9) **Questions from the Press:** Steve Hill from *The Sentinel* questioned if anyone had the new veterans’ agent resume. Mr. Boscher gave him the information about the new veterans’ agent.

10) **Adjournment:** Meeting adjourned at 9:10 p.m.

Minutes submitted by Gary L. Brougham, Town Administrator

Board approved/endorsed: **December 10, 2019**

Board of Selectmen - Town of Belchertown

Endorsed by a majority:

Ed Boscher, Chairman

Gail Gramarossa

Brenda Q. Aldrich

Jen D. Turner

Nicholas O’Connor