TOWN OF BELCHERTOWN
BOARD OF SELECTMEN’S MEETING MINUTES
MONDAY, NOVEMBER 25, 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 #2022 was signed for $2,117,169.43 bringing the year-to-date total to
      $29,962,988.60.
   b) Routine documents
   c) Approval of Minutes: Ms. Turner moved the Board accept the minutes of the
      November 4, 2019 meeting. Motion seconded by Mr. O’Connor. Motion passes 4-
      yes, 1 – abstain (O’Connor).

3) Additions to the Agenda:
   • Accept Retirement – Captain/EMS Director: Ms. Aldrich presented the details to
     the Board. Captain Craig Bodamer has submitted a letter announcing his
     retirement, effective November 12, 2019. The Board thanked Mr. Bodamer for
     his service to the town and wished him well in his retirement. Ms. Gramarossa
     added that he was very active in getting BOAT off the ground, he was very active
     in training people to use Narcan. He volunteered a lot of his time throughout the
     region.

4) Appearances Before the Board:
   • 7:20 p.m. Belchertown EDIC and MassDevelopment – Carriage Drive:
     Claire O’Neill from MassDevelopment and Bill Terry and Jonathan Spiegel from
     the EDIC were present to discuss Carriage Drive.

     Ms. O’Neill and EDIC members came before the Board to provide an update on
     what they have been working on with Carriage Grove. She provided the Board
     with a copy of a slide to show what has been going on. The Town, MassDevelopment
     and the EDIC entered into an agreement back in 2012 and it was agreed that MassDevelopment
     would be the agent for the redevelopment of the former State School. She gave a report on the history of
     how and when things happened moving the development of the State School grounds forward.

     They are working with Tighe and Bond to put together bid documents and in about
     a month they will be going out to bid to remove the next set of buildings on the
     former State School grounds. Those buildings are the storage warehouse building,
     kitchen, cafeteria and laundry. They are eager to get those buildings down because
     of their proximity to the new road and there have been a number of fires in the
     storage building.
In regards to the infrastructure the Town has put the new roadway in to open up Front Street so they could bring infrastructure into the site. In 2017 there was a $3,000,000 grant to take Carriage Drive out to Jackson Street. There are beautiful new lights and some walking paths along it. They received notification this morning that the striping will go down on the road tomorrow.

Together with the EDIC they applied to the US Economic Development Administration for $550,000 towards the next infrastructure project which is in the industrial area. It will open up about 15 acres of industrial and small business land for development probably up to around 125,000 sq. ft. In addition to EDA money which they received a preliminary approval on but no final approval they are looking to apply to the Site Readiness Program which is funded by the Commonwealth and managed by MassDevelopment. She worked with the town administrator and put together a short draft letter of support and she is hoping that the Board of Selectmen will endorse the letter for the Site Readiness Program.

The development of the sight looks at tax revenue, job creation and keeping community character. The Assisted Living is up and running. They are looking at the start of construction of the Belchertown Community Preschool in the next couple of weeks. The preschool is an approximately $3,000,000 project. ARC Point Brewing has entered into an agreement with the EDIC for a 2.23 acre parcel to build a proposed brewery.

They also have a couple of inquiries for space. There is a distillery company that is interested in a parcel of land on the site but it is in the very early stages. There have also been in discussions recently with the EDIC with the Friends of Belchertown State School for the potential for some sort of cultural museum based recognition of the site and how it played a role in the development education. She has had many meetings with multi-family developers and also specialty housing developers. She thinks that interest will increase now that the road is going to be open and the infrastructure is in place – water and sewer.

There is an area on the master plan for hopefully some type of work / live type space. The reasoning for putting this on the master plan was recognizing that this area has a lot of artisans and people that are interested in working and promoting their business from their home.

The idea is that the master plan will be a mixed use development. Rather than being standalone campus it’s a reintegrated neighborhood.

Mr. Boscher thanked Ms. O’Neill for her continued efforts in developing the site. Ms. O’Neill remarked that working with MassDevelopment they have experience on working on sites like this.

Ms. Aldrich questioned when Carriage Drive is going to open. She was told that it is very close to opening. Steve Williams informed the Board that the railroad will be doing some construction work on the tracks on Jackson Street and that area will be closed December 6th through December 9th. After the line stripping is complete he will be doing a final inspection of the roadway which is one of the last steps.
Ms. O’Neill commented that they would like to directly engage with Chief Bock and Chief Pronovost just to make sure they don’t have any concerns ahead of the street opening. Jonathan Spiegel remarked that one of the things they wanted to do was to make sure the road is safe for everyone. The EDIC voted to open the road pending the approval of the head of DPW and the police chief. The road will be open December 1st or after as that is when their insurance coverage begins as it will not be a town road yet.

Ms. Gramarossa questioned what the expectation is for what type of vehicles will travel on that road. Mr. Spiegel comment that they are not sure but that there will be a change in the traffic patterns. Mr. Williams commented that the expectation was that the cut through traffic using Jackson Street and Howard Street would go through the State School Campus. There are provisions for tractor trailer traffic but he doesn’t expect tractor trailer traffic on the lower portion of Jackson Street. Carriage Drive will support any tractor trailer deliveries to various businesses on the campus. He has worked very hard to get the Main and Maple Street project moving forward. It is currently out to bid with the bid opening in December. Mr. Spiegel added that the DPW will be plowing Carriage Drive as if it were a town street because it will operate as if it is a town road. He added that Mr. Williams has worked very closely with the EDIC and he has helped make good decisions.

Mr. Terry remarked that no-one mentioned the green fence. It is to keep interested people away from the buildings. It will be a challenge to keep people out as cars will be driving past these buildings. They spend between $200 - $300 a month to re-board and re-secure the buildings as they are continuously under attack. Ms. O’Neill also remarked that trail signs are being placed along the sidewalk. They are asking people to stay on the sidewalks, to not park on Carriage Drive and to pick up after your dog.

Ms. Gramarossa has heard that other communities have worked with the cable access channel and done a video tour of new roads. She feels that sometimes people need a visual of the changes. Board members thought it was a great idea.

Ms. O’Neill has a letter drafted indicating the Board’s support for the industrial structure project. Mr. O’Connor moved the Board endorse the letter of support. Motion seconded by Ms. Turner. Motion passes 5 – 0.

5) Discussion/Action Items:

a. Review Planning Board Special Permit Application – Non-Medical Marijuana Establishment (Retail), Evergreen Strategies, LLC, 20 George Hannum Road: Ms. Turner presented the details to the Board. The Planning Board has asked that the Board review the special permit application for Evergreen Strategies, LLC, a non-medical marijuana establishment at 20 George Hannum Street. The Board entered into a Host Agreement with Evergreen a few months ago. This is the next step in applying for a license from the State. She received a phone call from the dentist who is an abutter to this property commenting that he was never notified but Colvest is the property owner and they were notified – the dentist was not notified as he is a renter of the property. He also contacted the town administrator about not being notified of the community forum meeting regarding this property. Mr.
Brougham told him it was also advertised in the paper as a public hearing notice and the dentist commented that he didn’t have time to read the paper. Mr. Brougham assured him he would have a hand delivered notice for the special permit hearing. Mr. O’Connor remarked that the town’s responsibility is to the landlord not the tenant. The town administrator will hand deliver a notice of the special permit hearing to the dentist.

The Board needs to take no action and remanded the application back to the Planning Board for their review.

b. Appointment of Associate Member to Zoning Board of Appeals: Per the recommendation of the Zoning Board of Appeals, Ms. Turner moved the Board appoint Dino Brunetti to the Zoning Board of Appeals as an Associate Member, term to expire June 30, 2020. Motion seconded by Ms. Gramarossa. Motion passes 5 – 0.

c. Authorized Signatory – Skate Park: Mr. O’Connor presented the details to the Board. A fallout of the disbanding of the Skate Park is that there is no signatory now for their gift account which is used to pay bills and the sani-can. Mr. O’Connor moved the Board authorize the town administrator as the signatory to endorse invoices. Motion seconded by Ms. Turner. Motion passes 5 – 0.

Ms. Turner commented that the Board had also disbanded the Town Common Lighting Committee and they also have funds that they raised. Mr. O’Connor moved the Board authorize the town administrator as the signatory for the former Town Common Lighting Gift Account and any expenses paid out of that account. Motion seconded by Ms. Turner. Motion passes 5 – 0.

d. Miscellaneous Matters: None.

6) **Town Administrator’s Report:**

- He and Judy Metcalf spent a morning at the Hampshire Housing Court along with various agencies and the Tenant’s Association of Sportshaven. They are continuing to move forward. There were no major developments today. There will be a public hearing on December 2nd during the Board of Selectmen’s meeting which is mandatory for the CDBG reserve fund grant application. The Tenant’s Association continues to work to clean the park up. There is tremendous progress after 25 years of inactivity.

Mr. Boscher commented that 25 years is a long time to work on a project and it must be exciting to see some daylight. Mr. Brougham commented it is frustrating as there was a judgement by the court prior to his employment the town and the attorney general and DEP never enforced it. Mr. O’Connor thanked the people at town meeting last year for forgiving the taxes at Sportshaven because nothing would have moved forward without the town doing that.

Mr. Brougham remarked that there is work remaining on forgiving the tax arrears which has been brought up several times by Judge Fields. He hasn’t pushed the issue because he doesn’t want to forgive the taxes and have everything fall through the cracks.
• This week is a short work week. Town offices will be closing at noon on Wednesday for the Thanksgiving Holiday.

7) **Review of Weekly Mail:** Mr. Boscher commented the Board received letters in the mail supporting the name change of the Board. There appears to be overwhelming support to change the name. He reminded everyone that town meeting will decide the outcome. Ms. Gramarossa reminded everyone the Board is accepting comments up to December 16th.

8) **Individual Board Members' Reports:**

**Ms. Aldrich:** The Springfield Symphony Youth Orchestra came into town and performed at the high school.

**Ms. Gramarossa:**
• She wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving.
• She acknowledged the Stop & Shop shoppers who continue to keep supporting the Belchertown CAN (community aide network). She acknowledged that one of the founders of CAN (Sue Knapp) passed away last week.
• Reminded everyone that the Winter Night Light event is coming up.
• There will be a volunteer table at the Artisan Fair during the Winter Night Light event.

**Ms. Turner:**
• This Saturday is the Winter Night Light event and it will be amazing. The organizers of the event are doing a tremendous job and she thanked all of them.
• She thanked the town administrator and the recreation director as the cultural council has secured storage space.
• She attended the ZBA meeting and the EDIC meeting.
• She had a question about Allen Street as a resident contacted her to see if there was any further update. Mr. Brougham remarked that massDOT had sent a couple of different actions to the town. The town will request the traffic activated warning device from massDOT.

**Mr. Boscher:**
• He spent the week enjoying the final two games of the Belchertown Boys High School Soccer season. They won the State Title again in a game that went into overtime. It is a tremendous accomplishment for the team. Their goal keeper hadn’t played goal since 8th grade and began playing in goal the 7th game of the season. He congratulated the entire team.
• Senator Lesser has invited the boys soccer team to the State House to recognize them.

9) **Questions from the Press:** Steve Hill from *The Sentinel* questioned what time the Winter Night Light event starts. He was told the Artisan Fair is noon to 5:00 p.m., the festivities begin at 5:00 p.m. with the lights being turned on at 5:30 p.m. He was also told the Board of Selectmen will judge the gingerbread houses. The office staff will post that the Board will be judging the contest.
10) **Adjournment:** Meeting adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

Minutes submitted by Gary L. Brougham, Town Administrator

Board approved/endorsed:  

Board of Selectmen - Town of Belchertown

Endorsed by a majority:

Ed Boscher, Chairman
Gail Gramarossa

Brenda Q. Aldrich
Jen D. Turner

Nicholas O’Connor