

State of Rhode Island

County of Washington

In Hopkinton on the sixteenth day of August 2021 A.D. the said meeting was called to order by Town Council President Stephen Moffitt, Jr. at 6:00 P.M. in the Town Hall Meeting Room, 1 Town House Road, Hopkinton, RI 02833.

PRESENT: Stephen Moffitt, Jr., Sharon Davis, Robert Marvel; Scott Bill Hirst, Michael Geary; Town Solicitor Stephen Sypole; Acting Town Manager Brian Rosso; Town Clerk Elizabeth Cook-Martin.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCILOR HIRST AND SECONDED BY COUNCILOR GEARY TO CONVENE OPEN SESSION AND RECESS INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION UNDER: RIGL SEC. 42-46-5(A)(1) TOWN MANAGER INTERVIEWS. ALL PERSONS TO BE INTERVIEWED UNDER SUBSECTION (A)(1) HAVE BEEN DULY NOTIFIED.

POLL VOTE:

IN FAVOR: Moffitt, Davis, Geary, Hirst, Marvel

OPPOSED: None

SO VOTED

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCILOR HIRST AND SECONDED BY COUNCILOR DAVIS TO RECONVENE IN OPEN SESSION.

IN FAVOR: Moffitt, Davis, Geary, Hirst, Marvel

OPPOSED: None

SO VOTED

Council President Moffitt reported that no votes were taken in Executive Session.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCILOR HIRST AND SECONDED BY COUNCILOR DAVIS TO SEAL THE MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE SESSION.

IN FAVOR: Moffitt, Davis, Geary, Hirst, Marvel

OPPOSED: None

SO VOTED

**7:00 P.M.** The meeting was called to order with a moment of silent meditation and a salute to the Flag.

**HEARINGS**

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCILOR DAVIS AND SECONDED BY COUNCILOR HIRST TO SIT AS A LICENSING BOARD.

IN FAVOR: Moffitt, Davis, Geary, Hirst, Marvel

OPPOSED: None

SO VOTED

**SPECIAL EVENT PERMIT**

The Council opened a hearing on an application for a Special Event Permit filed by Steven Minick on behalf of the Ashaway Sportsman Club for the annual Huck Finn Day scheduled for Sunday, September 19, 2021 from 8:00 AM to 3:30 PM (rain date: Sunday, September 26, 2021) to be held at Crandall Field, 188 Main Street, Ashaway, RI 02804. The application was complete; the application included requests for a waiver of the filing fee and the license fee and the application was accompanied by an approved field use request form signed by Recreation Director Mary Sawyer. Steven Minick of Overlook Drive was present. He explained this event is usually held the first Sunday in June. The event is sponsored and paid for by the Ashaway Sportsman Club. They were unable to hold the event last year because of the pandemic. Child participants of groups of 20-25 kids will be allowed to fish in the pond in ten minute increments and prizes will be awarded in various categories. He reported there will be refreshments; a local carnival operation will set up; there will be music played through a sound system and they may have a horse drawn wagon. Councilor Hirst expressed his support. Councilor Geary expressed his thanks to the organization for sponsoring this event. There were no objectors present.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCILOR HIRST AND SECONDED BY COUNCILOR GEARY TO APPROVE THE SPECIAL EVENT PERMIT FILED BY THE ASHAWAY SPORTSMANS CLUB FOR THE ANNUAL HUCK FINN DAY AND GRANT A WAIVER OF THE FEES.

IN FAVOR: Moffitt, Davis, Geary, Hirst, Marvel

OPPOSED: None

SO VOTED

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCILOR HIRST AND SECONDED BY COUNCILOR MARVEL TO ADJOURN AS LICENSING BOARD AND RECONVENE AS COUNCIL.

IN FAVOR: Moffitt, Davis, Geary, Hirst, Marvel

OPPOSED: None

SO VOTED

**CONSENT AGENDA**

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCILOR HIRST AND SECONDED BY COUNCILOR DAVIS TO APPROVE THE CONSENT AGENDA AS FOLLOWS: Approve Town Council Meeting Minutes of August 2, 2021; Accept the following monthly financial/activity report: Town Clerk; Approve refunds resulting from taxpayer overpayments on 2020 MV tax submitted by the Tax Collector; Approve abatements resulting from adjustments to tangible property and duplicate MV billing on 2021 tax roll submitted by the Tax Assessor; Set November 1, 2021 as a hearing date for renewal of Liquor Licenses and Victualling Licenses; Set December 6, 2021 as a hearing date for renewal of Holiday Sales Licenses.

IN FAVOR: Moffitt, Davis, Geary, Hirst, Marvel

OPPOSED: None

SO VOTED

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**FLAG DONATION**

This matter had been scheduled to discuss and consider the recent donation of Flags by Jason and Meg Tefft, requested by Councilor Sharon Davis. Councilor Davis reported the Teffts' had purchased and donated American Flags to replace the 24 American Flags on Main Street in Hope Valley and had requested that they remain in place through Columbus Day. She wished to express her appreciation to the Tefft family and asked that a letter of thanks be sent from the Town Council. Councilor Hirst felt the Tefft family had been a positive influence for the Town; he noted their contributions had been very helpful to many individuals.

Councilor Geary felt it was a nice gesture; that the Town of Westerly does something similar.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCILOR DAVIS AND SECONDED BY COUNCILOR MARVEL TO SEND A LETTER OF THANKS FROM THE TOWN COUNCIL TO JASON AND MEG TEFFT.

IN FAVOR: Moffitt, Davis, Geary, Hirst, Marvel

OPPOSED: None

SO VOTED

**FLAGS ON 20<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF 911**

This matter had been scheduled to discuss and consider flying American Flags at Half Staff on 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of 911 requested by Councilor Sharon Davis.

Councilor Davis referred to the fact that the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of 911 would occur this September and wanted to make sure the Flags would be lowered to Half Staff.

She noted the Town Clerk had provided the Council with Guidelines for Flying the American Flag at Half Staff. She indicated she was making the assumption that the President will order Flags to be flown at Half Staff on September 11, 2021.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCILOR DAVIS AND SECONDED BY COUNCILOR HIRST TO FLY THE FLAGS AT HALF STAFF ON SEPTEMBER 20, 2021, THE 20<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF 911.

Discussion on the motion: Councilor Hirst noted as September 11, 2021 falls on a Saturday so wanted to know who would be responsible for handling this task. Mr. Rosso follow up and determine who would be available to fly the Flags on Town property at Half Staff.

Vote on the motion:

IN FAVOR: Moffitt, Davis, Geary, Hirst, Marvel

OPPOSED: None

SO VOTED

**AWARD BID RE: HYBRID MEETING SYSTEM**

This matter had been scheduled to discuss, consider and possibly vote to award the contract for a hybrid meeting system to Signet Electronic Systems, Inc., the bid had been received via the RI Master Pricing Agreement (MPA). Acting Town Manager/Finance Director Brian Rosso was present with IT Director Jeffrey Frenette. Mr. Rosso noted there had been some discussions about obtaining a hybrid meeting system and reported that he had placed a call into the RI Cities and Towns speaking with Executive Director Brian Daniels and the RI Pandemic Office, the committee that the state assembled to assist cities and Towns with facilitating the Cares Act Funds and they both assured him it is an allowable expense under the Cares Act Funds. If the Council was interested in installing that system, now is the time to do it. He noted the vendors who do this type of work are being spread thin; every municipality in the State is trying to get these systems in and he felt it was wise to do it now as they are several months out. He felt it best to get the word out and get on the list as it may be some time before a system gets installed. Council President Moffitt asked what the Master Price Agreement was. Mr. Rosso explained it was a State program where they collect bids from multiple vendors and award a bid; all municipalities are able to use that bid that the State approved, so along with the Town's Procurement policy and the approval of our auditors, it is sufficient and allows us to go out and use the MPA, alleviating the Town from having to go through the RFP process because the State has done its due diligence in going out to bid and getting the best price. Mr. Frenette outlined some details. He stated the plan was to continue to use zoom, but all the set up that must be done prior is eliminated, plus the Town can go back to hybrid meeting system. It would involve the installation of three television screens; two for the Council and one for the public, a camera that looks directly at the Council and a camera that looks directly at the podium, sound will go through a system set up in the back room so it will not be set up in the front. It will be significantly easier to use; there will be a pad the system will run through. There will still be someone who needs to control it but it will be significantly easier; a streamlined platform that will include a back-up plan in the event there is no primary internet. Councilor Geary asked the time frame from installing the system to when it goes live. Mr. Frenette indicated the vendor was saying

anywhere between four to six weeks to get the equipment in and approximately two weeks to install. Councilor Geary confirmed that the present system would continue until the system was fully installed. Mr. Frenette responded yes, and all bugs would be worked out before the system went into full use. Council President Moffitt asked if the monitor would allow someone doing a presentation with maps, etc. to be seen clearly. Mr. Frenette confirmed that the presenter could plug in to the system and everyone from the Council, people in the audience and those viewing on-screen could see the presentation. Councilor Marvel commented that this basically would be a full hybrid model so that people at home can fully participate as well as those present in the meeting room. Mr. Frenette indicated in the affirmative and that someone giving a presentation from an office would be able to show their materials and mark it up on screen if necessary and anyone viewing the meeting could see the presentation with this hybrid system. Mr. Rosso noted the legislature had not amended the Open Meetings Act (OMA) during the last session so the Town Council still need to be present in the meeting room; the key component of this is that we meet what the State Statute requires; that we give a similar or equal experience for the people that are at home as those that are in attendance. Councilor Hirst commented about a potential problem where an elected official wanting to remote in; if that person was in a hospital bed, with a legitimate medical issue or in nursing home or visiting out of state and wanted to participate remotely – he felt it could present a potential problem that could shut them out and could affect boards, commissions and present quorum issues. Councilor Marvel felt this system was technological enough that it would give the ability to do that. Council President Moffitt felt he Councilor Hirst was expressing his concern that under the current law the Council must be in attendance. Councilor Hirst indicated he will work with Mr. Rosso to see if they can possibly come up with a letter or resolution that would address his concerns that the State may consider.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCILOR HIRST AND SECONDED BY COUNCILOR TO MARVEL TO AWARD THE CONTRACT FOR A HYBRID MEETING SYSTEM TO SIGNET ELECTRONIC SYSTEMS, INC.

IN FAVOR: Moffitt, Davis, Geary, Hirst, Marvel

OPPOSED: None

SO VOTED

## **BOARDS & COMMISSION**

### **Planning Board**

Keith Lindelow had submitted his request that he wished to be reappointed to the Planning Board.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCILOR HIRST AND SECONDED BY COUNCILOR DAVIS TO REAPPOINT KEITH LINDELOW TO THE PLANNING BOARD.

IN FAVOR: Moffitt, Davis, Geary, Hirst, Marvel

OPPOSED: None

SO VOTED

## **PUBLIC FORUM**

Robert Gelinis of 17A Main Street - French Village spoke about the situation with the Potter Hill Dam and his concern with its removal. He thanked Councilor Moffitt and Councilor Hirst for attending the Potter Hill Dam Information Committee Meetings. He felt it was time for the Town to make some noise. He stated if the Town of Westerly removed the dam it would impact his well and he wouldn't have any water. He asked if there had been any response to the letter Hopkinton sent to Westerly. Council President Moffitt responded yes and that a meeting would be set up as a first step. Mr. Gelinis had heard the dam was coming down on October 22, 2021. Council President Moffitt stated the dam was not coming down at that time. Mr. Gelinis noted the Town had a very good Police Chief. He noted the need for a streetlight in the vicinity of Lucky House because it was dark and difficult for an elderly person to see; that there were deer that came down in the road from the nearby cemetery; people were hitting the guardrail and mail box and he wants something done. He suggested he might consider selling his house. He commented that Hopkinton was a nice Town; everyone got along, there was no crime and it was quiet. He felt the Town needed to keep the dam for the kayaks, fisherman and wildlife; to repair the fish ladder.

He stated people were scared and concerned there would be no water; you can't live in a house without water. Councilor Davis stated she reached out to Senator Whitehouse and because it is a local problem, was advised to wait further until the Town met with Westerly. Mr. Gelinas had reached out too. He commented that it may be a local problem but they would be using Federal dollars. Councilor Davis stated she will follow up with Senator Whitehouse after the meeting with Westerly.

Joseph Moreau of Old Depot Road commented that the 377-7777 voice system does not include an option for IT Department and wondered if it had to do with a maximum amount of departments limitation; that you had to refer to the website to look up the number. He asked if the Sculco's had paid the outstanding fees owed to the Town and was told they had. Mr. Moreau asked about the locations of Town Flags and whose responsibility it would be to raise and lower the Flags at the schools. He offered to do so and also to lower the Town Flags. He expressed his appreciation to Jason and Meg Tefft for their contribution and was glad it had been added to the agenda. He added that Jason Tefft had donated 30 Flags and three 911 Flags to the Hope Valley Wyoming Fire District. He thanked Councilor Hirst for offering to sponsor an amendment to the PSES Solar Ordinance to include a work schedule.

**ADJOURNMENT**

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCILOR HIRST AND SECONDED BY COUNCILOR DAVIS TO ADJOURN.

SO VOTED

Elizabeth J. Cook-Martin

Town Clerk