

The Meeting of the Board of Selectmen held on Tuesday, August 22, 2023, began at 5:30 p.m. in the Board of Selectmen's Conference Room.

Members Present: James Gennette, Derek DeBarge, Antonio Goncalves, Matthew Silvak and William Rosenblum

Members Absent: None

First Order of Business: The Pledge of Allegiance

VISITATIONS

5:35 p.m. Matthew Fuller, Technician – Eversource Petition for Pole & Wire Locations.

Mr. Gennette: We have a public hearing at 5:35 for an Eversource pole and wire locations. Can I get somebody to open a public meeting?

Mr. DeBarge: We have to wait.

Mr. Gennette: How short is the Administrator's Report?

Mr. Strange: I didn't do one tonight.

NEW BUSINESS

Board to discuss and possibly vote to accept a FY24 Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) grant entitled "Resilient Stormwater and Urban Heat Island Assessment," for \$135,000.

Mr. Strange: This is an MVP grant and I love the MVP program. They do great projects. This project specifically involves a mapping of our stormwater infrastructure, which we don't currently have. We'll map our catch basins and all the stormwater infrastructure and identify where we have needs. On Stevens Street there is no infrastructure there, for example. The 2nd part is creating a town wide green infrastructure plan. Kind of like the stormwater, identifying areas where swales and rain gardens and things like they, they're called nature-based infrastructure, to mitigate stormwater runoff. The third one is we're engaging with LHS and some LHS students to create a video. It's basically what is an urban heat island effect. I don't think most people know what urban heat island is. We'll be working with LCTV and Lisa Nemeth. The kids produce their own video. They interview town staff; they do on-site videos. We did this in Agawam and it was really cool. Something that everybody was very proud of. That's involved in this grant too.

Mr. Goncalves: We've gotten the grant or we're going to apply for it?

Mr. Strange: We have the grant.

Mr. Gennette: I like that it's a grant.

Mr. Strange: There's a match but it's not that much. You need to accept the grant.

Mr. Goncalves: It's \$40,000 40R, the 2nd line there.

Motion made by Mr. DeBarge to accept the FY24 Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) grant entitled "Resilient Stormwater and Urban Heat Island Assessment," for \$135,000. **Mr. Goncalves second. All in favor. Motion passed 5-0.**

Board to discuss and possibly vote to use \$40,000 in 40R funds to be used for the required cash match for the FY24 MVP grant.

Motion made by Mr. DeBarge to approve the use of \$40,000 in 40R funds to be used for the required cash match for the FY24 MVP grant. **Mr. Rosenblum second.**

Mr. Goncalves: For anybody that's watching, 40R again is money that we've gotten as a result of, for instance, the mills 10 and similar projects in 40R districts where the state gives us a certain

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amount of money for each housing unit we create. We've got that kitty. We're going to have a tremendous amount of money coming in as soon as the clock tower is done and this is perfect for the type of thing that money was intended for.

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All in favor. Motion passed 5-0.

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Motion made by Mr. Rosenblum to open the hearing for the Eversource petition for poles & wire locations at 5:36 p.m. **Mr. DeBarge second. All in favor. Motion passed 5-0.**

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Mr. Fuller: We are petitioning for a brand-new singular pole set on Sewall Street, approximately 65', give or take, behind the last pole that Verizon has in place now. This would be fully owned and set by Eversource. The purpose of this is to provide means for a 3-phase high volt riser and cables to drop into Sewall Street and cross into the intersection into an existing manhole that we have there now that has got plenty of space for that fuse loop cable that would ultimately be used to feed the mill 8 clock tower building. They require a pretty sizable service and this the best way we can think to feed them without the need to overextend an overhead pole line through the intersection into that area to bring them high volt supply right to the pad mount that will ultimately feed that building. Manholes and existing structures that we can make use of. This would represent no new visible equipment in that intersection where the street scape has already been done around the corner of mason buildings that afront the roadway there. I'm happy to entertain any questions that you might have.

Mr. Goncalves: The pole you're setting is the 199IM?

Mr. Fuller: Yes, the one shown in red.

Mr. Goncalves: That's just sitting in front of the parking lot, it's not going to disturb any curb cuts or visibility or any kind?

Mr. Fuller: No, the pole itself will be in the grass area in line with the existing overhead facilities there. The red line drawn from that pole across the roadway would be a road cut on our end. We'd be looking to bury (2) 4" conduits. They'd be concrete encased. One will house our high volt conductor; one will be a spare. In the event a cable fails we don't have to immediately approach it with a dig option. It will be used to start a loop feed over to the mill 8 clock tower.

Mr. Goncalves: I'm sure there's other poles owned by you and not by Verizon in town. Where we have this new cable company coming in and they're looking to string up, do they have the same right to use poles as they do the Verizon poles?

Mr. Fuller: They sure do. Whoever the custodian of the pole is the fiber applicant would simply submit some paperwork to either us or Verizon for permission to attach. We happily accept an attachment for fiber on our poles.

Mr. McMahon: The underground feed at that corner area, would that come into the mill 8 properties underground?

Mr. Fuller: The intent once we drop down from the pole across the street from the mill 8 property is to remain underground the entire way.

Mr. McMahon: Is that the west side of the pizza place? Or across the street?

Mr. Fuller: It's across the street. If you're standing in the intersection and you're looking across the street, you're looking up Sewall Street, the pole line is on the left-hand side, we're looking to set an additional pole along that existing pole line. The conduit is going to drop off of that pole and come down the roadway and it will cross over into, the best way to describe it is an alley way once you get across the corner where the building is all the electrical equipment is going to be tucked inside out of the way within that alley way.

Mr. Gennette: I've got to interrupt you for a second. Because we're in a public hearing you need to identify yourself.

Mr. McMahon: My name is Shane McMahon. I work for Dellbrook JKS, the senior superintendent at mill 8. I just came to get some information. So, you'll come right up the alley way and then

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Mr. Fuller: We'll come right up the alley way and then come back and it will connect to existing facilities that we have. The lower circuit that feeds our customers on that overhead pole will be cut over to this feed and that will separate us from the plaza next door.

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Mr. Gennette: The only question I have is you've probably rate this for this building; are we taking care of all of the infrastructure for the mills that are going to be going up in that area?

Mr. Fuller: We don't have particulars for all of the facilities that are going in there. I have looked into the stock houses; I've looked into the restaurant that is tentatively in the works; but the back 40 we don't have definitive figures from Mass West yet. They've asked us for a meeting. I'm assuming they have something new to bring to the table. We've had some pretty extensive discussion with them that we would need something definitive from them so we can plan what we need to build for infrastructure.

Mr. Gennette: If you've only planned for this one mill building and another infrastructure goes in there, did you leave yourself some room to add to the existing underground?

Mr. Fuller: We can always build off of the infrastructure. We have poles and wires down the other end closer to where that back 40 is being developed. Again, without knowing what they need, it's hard to gauge what we have for space on a lines capacity and how it would be built out. I simply couldn't answer that without knowing what they need for supply from us.

Mr. Gennette: It doesn't sound like we're getting into a lot of construction anyway.

Mr. Fuller: This is tailored for the service for the mill 8 building. They've provided us with the load figures we need. We've had numerous site walks with them to locate facilities to feed their service, vetted out the particulars of the equipment they're installing. This is specifically for them. The circuit itself does have a little bit of capacity for some more services down the road. To what extent they need from us we'd have to crack that egg before we can design anything on our side.

Motion made by Mr. Goncalves to approve the request to locate poles, lines, wire, cables, etc. at Sewall Street for the pole that will be tagged #199/IM for the purpose of feeding mill 8 and that surrounding area. **Mr. DeBarge second. Mr. Rosenblum yes, Mr. Silva yes, Mr. Goncalves yes, Mr. DeBarge yes, Mr. Gennette yes. Motion passed 5-0.**

Motion made by Mr. DeBarge to close the Eversource public hearing at 5:44 p.m. **Mr. Rosenblum second. All in favor. Motion passed 5-0.**

NEW BUSINESS

Board to discuss and possibly vote to accept a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) in the amount of \$1,350,000 to rebuild Marie and Carol Streets, conduct a blight study, and offer housing rehabilitation funding to qualifying households.

Mr. Strange: Huge credit to John O'Leary at PVPC for pushing this through. They did a great job submitting the application. They did work doing some of the prep stuff. The housing rehab budget is \$240,000. The estimate is 8 units of housing occupied by low to moderate income persons within the Town of Ludlow. It can be owner occupied and investor properties. Approximately \$30,000/household for things like new roof, siding, trim board, painting, windows, doors, foundation work, gutters, things of that nature. A really good program. The other piece of it is the Robert Street neighborhood improvement project. This involves completely redoing Marie and Carol Streets. All the sub grade infrastructure, new street, new fire hydrants, the whole thing.

Motion made by Mr. DeBarge to accept a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) in the amount of \$1,350,000 to rebuild Marie and Carol Streets, conduct a blight study, and offer housing rehabilitation funding to qualifying households. **Mr. Silva second. All in favor. Motion passed 5-0.**

Board to discuss and possibly vote on extending Town Hall summer hours.

Mr. Gennette: The new schedule worked out pretty well? You want to keep it going?

Mr. Strange: Yes. I polled the staff here, department heads and their staff. Internally it was overwhelmingly positive. There's some people that said it's a little bit more difficult to adjust to getting in a half hour earlier, which is to be expected. Nobody heard anything from the bus drivers. I've asked you guys if you've heard anything. I know the additional hour at night on Tuesday nights hasn't been an issue. I think staff really enjoys being able to leave at noon. It's nice to have everybody out of the building so people like myself can stay when we can and do work without being interrupted. I think it's working out.

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Mr. DeBarge: Marc, are you proposing another extension or are you looking to do this permanently. We started when?

Mr. Strange: June 1 or so.

Mr. DeBarge: I have not heard one negative thing about it. I like the schedule myself. I guess it's up to you guys if you want to extend it further.

Mr. Gennette: You can change it in the future if you want. It's not like it's set in stone anyway. Why don't we set it permanent for now and if anything changes down the road...

Mr. Rosenblum: In the event you have an election or whatever that would make it be that we need to change it for a period of time. I haven't heard anything negative. I have no problem with it being this way going forward. I think it's good for the staff in general in the town to be able to have half a day on a Friday for a longer weekend. I have no problem with the schedule right now and moving forward the foreseeable future.

Mr. Strange: To your point, when there's elections, the Clerk actually asked this question because they're going to have to have it open until 5:00 or 5:30, which is fine. We'll just coordinate that with them. Their staff can take comp time or however she wants to manage her staff throughout the week because they'll be working more than 35 hours those weeks.

Motion made by Mr. Rosenblum to approve extending town hall summer hours as they are. Mr. DeBarge second. All in favor. Motion passed 5-0.

Board to discuss and possibly vote to accept changes to the Personnel Policy Manual (PPM).

Mr. Strange: This is probably a longer discussion than a couple minutes.

Mr. Rosenblum: We have 2 minutes left until our appointment.

Mr. Goncalves: We can get cranking because those aren't public hearings.

Mr. Gennette: OK we can hold off if you think that's robust.

VISITATIONS

Mr. Gennette: We're going into our charter committee interviews. They are going to be recorded this evening. Tomorrow night we have more interviews. We're not going to be showing the interviews tonight so everybody has a level playing field coming into tomorrow. We are going to record the next session and we will be back afterwards to finish up our work for the night.

5:50 p.m. Charter Committee Interview – Diane Kurtz

Mr. Gennette: Mrs. Kurtz, would you mind coming up and letting us know why you want to do this.

Mrs. Kurtz: My name is Diane Kurtz. I live on Focosi Lane. I've lived there for 8 years. Prior to that I lived in West Springfield for 8 and lived in Ludlow for 8 before that. The reason I want to do it is because I'm retired, I have time and I'm interested in what is going on in our town and I'd like to be part of an improvement.

Mr. Gennette: Our board is going to ask you a couple of questions, we'll give you a closing and we'll let you out.

Mr. Silva: Thank you for signing in and at least we have people that are interested. It's nice to see because we were having a tough time getting people interested in local government and doing some of this for us. The best version of charter committee is one that has a diverse mix of people, experiences, skill sets and knowledge basis. Talk about how your knowledge, skills or experience will bring value to the committee.

Mrs. Kurtz: Having worked in an office with a variety of people for 27 years I think that I have the ability to listen and absorb what other people are saying and make my own decision but not push it on anybody. I also don't know as much as I should know about the town but I'm sure that I'm more than willing to learn to give my best answers to the questions that are at hand in a meeting.

Mr. Silva: What was that office you worked in?

Mrs. Kurtz: I worked at the Wall Street Journal for 27 years.

Mr. DeBarge: Mrs. Kurtz, thank you for your interest in this. I talked to quite a few people through this process and the commitment to this is strong enough, not so much in your time but the commitment to the town so I appreciate your interest and everybody's interest for this. Do you have any, have you ever been involved in any government or public policy initiatives? If so, what?

Mrs. Kurtz: No.

Mr. DeBarge: Nothing about public policy at the Journal or anywhere?

Mrs. Kurtz: No.

Mr. Goncalves: Thanks for your interest. As a formal town committee, the group is going to be subject to open meeting laws. Are you familiar with open meeting laws at all?

Mrs. Kurtz: No, I need to learn them.

Mr. Goncalves: If you got on this committee, would you be interested in service as Chair?

Mrs. Kurtz: I'm not sure. I have a mother in a nursing home right now and I think that the commitment is first there and to take on something that I'm not sure I could devote 100% of my time to is probably not a good idea.

Mr. Goncalves: Thank you. Are they going to have to go through the open meeting tape or anything?

Mr. Strange: No, we'll have people around that can guide.

Mr. Rosenblum: Mrs. Kurtz, thank you very much for your interest. As Mr. DeBarge said, it's very hard to get people just to want to get involved, so we appreciate you coming forward. The charter committee will be meeting with the town's consultant from The Collins Center once a month between the 23 September and 24 September but the committee will likely need to meet more times frequently to work through important issues. I think you kind of explained it but what obstacles do you see that may prevent you from being able to attend multiple meetings per month over the next year.

Mrs. Kurtz: The only obstacle is my mom. She's 97, she's in a nursing home. She comes first and a meeting would come second. I certainly would make every effort I could to do what I'm supposed to be doing.

Mr. Gennette: What other information would you like the board to consider while making their final decision?

Mrs. Kurtz: I'm a resident. I'm interested in what's going on in the town. I want to see the best for our town. My knowledge is not great but I certainly am a candidate that would be willing to learn like I said before, so I could give the correct judgements for what's going on.

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Mr. Gennette: We appreciate your time. Thank you for coming in. We're looking for 03

Mr. Strange: 9 members and 2 alternates. 11 out of 14.

Mr. Rosenblum: We can openly discuss something right now?

Mr. Strange: No.

6:05 p.m. Charter Committee Interview – Jennifer Aldworth

Mr. Gennette: Ms. Aldworth, thank you for coming in. If you wouldn't mind, introduce yourself and let us know why you want to be part of the charter committee. We'll ask you some questions and then closing comments.

Ms. Aldworth: I moved to Ludlow 10 years ago. I accepted the CEO position at the Ludlow Boys and Girls Club 6 months prior to moving here and have enjoyed residing in the town and being involved in the town and volunteering. I'm very interested in the government of our town, having worked in different places, cities, hamlets and select boards, and very interested in seeing what our next step is. Being involved in that and being able to communicate that out to the community and get input. Also, a lot of my volunteer work now resides in Boys and Girls Clubs working with the Mass Alliance of Boys and Girls Clubs, so I'm all over the state with our 40 clubs. I'm very interested in adding something to my plate that is more local to me and serving where I live.

Mr. DeBarge: Ms. Aldworth, I appreciate your interest in this. I'm looking again at your resume and I suddenly feel like I should not be interviewing you at all. I am not qualified to interview you at all. In your resume I think I know the answer but have you ever been involved in any government public policy initiatives and you probably have a thousand examples but we'll take 1.

Ms. Aldworth: Yes, for the past 5 years serving as the executive director of Mass Alliance, we work on statewide policy and advocacy on behalf of our members for Boys and Girls Clubs. In that regard, we work with coalitions on feeding children. For example, now kids have free meals in schools across the state. That's one of the things that we advocated for in my position. We also do some advocating on the federal levels supporting Boys and Girls Club policies. I'm probably in DC once or twice a year for National Day of Advocacy and some other things as well. I'm quite familiar, particularly on the state level with policy and also have been delving in on the federal level with this position as well.

Mr. Goncalves: Thank you again for your interest. This will be a formal town committee and it will be subject to open meeting laws. Are you familiar with open meeting laws?

Ms. Aldworth: I am not.

Mr. Goncalves: Would you be interested in chairing the commission?

Ms. Aldworth: I would consider it. To your point, making sure I'm aware of what the responsibilities are, I would take a look at that first to make sure it's something I would consider.

Mr. Goncalves: The open meeting stuff we'll get you some literature if we get to that point.

Mr. Rosenblum: Thank you for the interest. Obviously you have your hands in a lot of things but it's great to see when people are willing to volunteer their time for something as important as this is going to be. The charter committee will be meeting with the town's consultant, The Collins Center, once a month. That's going to be from September of this year to September of next year approximately. The committee will most likely have to meet other times to work through some important issues. What obstacles do you foresee that may be able to prevent you from being able to attend multiple meetings per month over the next year?

Ms. Aldworth: The only potential obstacle would be if the meetings aren't planned out. I think as far in advance as things can be planned then they can be put on the schedule.

Mr. Silva: Thank you for signing in and helping us out with this venture. The charter committee is one that has a diverse mix of people, experiences, skill sets and knowledge bases. Talk about what your knowledge skills that you've experienced will bring some value to this committee.

Ms. Aldworth: You turned the tables on me, that was going to be one of my questions for you. If you're talking about bringing together a diverse group of people, that has certainly been my experience in Boys and Girls Clubs, working with diverse people whether it's from a town or city, whether it's from different government agencies or state agencies so I'm quite familiar and able to work with diverse populations. I think some of the skills and abilities I would bring is diversity from the fact that I wasn't born and raised in Ludlow so I think I might have some different perspectives and have lived other places. That may be helpful. Having worked with lobbyists in different firms, so I have the understanding of working with firms, such as the one in Boston. I've led a lot of coalitions and meetings, so I have that leadership capability.

Mr. Gennette: What other information would you like the board to consider while making this final decision?

Ms. Aldworth: I can understand you probably have a tough job to make this decision. I know most of you and I'm very confident in your decision-making ability. I would ask you to consider me and my resume and what you know of me if you feel that I can fill any gaps or leadership roles in the next 12- or 18-month process to better the town we live in.

Mr. Gennette: Do you have anything you would like to add? You said that you might have questions.

Ms. Aldworth: I believe before I moved here there was a charter commission. Can you give me some idea on the timeframe of what that was. My understanding is there was a recommendation that went to vote that did not pass, so I don't know if anybody has any historical context.

Mr. Strange: I know that going through this process, there was a document that was produced by the previous charter committee. That was between 2006-2008. I think it went to the ballot in 2008 and it was defeated. I do not know why. Although we still do have the document so I think that will be really helpful to guide the committee forward. I don't know if you guys have any more information than that.

Mr. Goncalves: I remember it was a very close vote. It was probably 150-180 vote difference.

Mr. DeBarge: I actually thought it was a wider margin. I was involved with it as a precinct member and in 2008 I thought it was defeated pretty soundly. It was a mayoral form of government that was chosen. My recollection was it was the council that was a big form of descent. I re-read the report to include 2 letters of descension from 2 of the members that agreed to go forward but didn't like certain points of it. The biggest point was, I think the council and whether council members can be town employees or not. That was a big, big part of it. The 08 charter said the council members, whether by mayor or town manager, well this went by mayor of course, could not be town employees and that was something that people didn't like.

Mr. Gennette: I remember on the ballot for that originally in 2006 they asked if there should be a charter commission created. They also had polling questions that said do you want a mayor or do you want a town manager. In that I think it confused the community because when it came back up again two years later, I think a lot of residents said I thought we just did this. It was kind of an odd situation when it came through. That's my recollection of it. I thought it was an odd place to put the polling at that time.

Ms. Aldworth: What I think will be my final question, what do you feel has brought us to this place now to examine the charter. Why now?

Mr. Rosenblum: We've talked about a thousand times. I've said it for the 4 ½ years I've been on here. It's things that have been kicked down the road so much between 14 boards on one line. I actually talked to Bill Scipelli at the Sheriff's picnic and I believe the mayor of Westfield was

there and he couldn't believe the way our form of government was. The fact is it seems in some instances, one example is the van for Jodi at the Senior Center. It took a year to get that process done then another 6 months to order it, whereas I think that if you have someone at the top with Jodi and a town manager or whoever it is talk and split the money or whatever, it can probably be done within a few weeks and processes will be, things will move quicker. That's my thought and I think my goal is to get to that point where we have a form of government where things move more seamless and someone that's accountable. Because it's them, no it's them, no it's them, no it's them.

Mr. Goncalves: That's really it. We can make major decisions twice a year.

Mr. DeBarge: Our form of government is representative town meeting and that is the most antiquated form of government in history. Not many communities still have that. We're just behind.

Mr. Gennette: We're dealing with city problems with a town and it's being met with resistance.

Ms. Aldworth: I appreciate your service and also your thought of looking to the future and having a vision, so thank you for that.

Mr. Gennette: Thank you for coming in.

6:20 p.m. Charter Committee Interview – Martin Fanning

Mr. Gennette: For the record, we're a little ahead of schedule. Not too bad but I think we're on track. If you wouldn't mind introducing yourself, tell us a little about why you want to be on the charter commission and we'll ask our questions and go from there.

Mr. Fanning: My name is Martin Fanning. I'm a pretty much lifetime Ludlow resident. I'm a homeowner in Ludlow for 30 years on Elizabeth Drive. I just finished a 30-year tour of duty across the street at Ludlow High School. I retired on June 16. That's part of it. I have a little more freedom than I had before. Obviously, I've been interested in government politics for a long time. I taught US History for 35 years in Massachusetts Public Schools. I've taught government on and off at Ludlow High School, for I'm not even sure how many years, probably 8-10. I taught a form of civics at another school for 5 years, so I really have an interest in this. I'd like to see Ludlow's government see a little improvement. I think we have dysfunction between some of our different groups. I think I had a front row seat to that at Whitney Park when we tried to arrange games and practices, dealing with the school department, highway department and recreation department. The same thing back here behind the high school. It's very difficult to get work done. I think the real change happened in those 2 places with the renovation of 2000. That grew and the highway department didn't have the manpower, we didn't have the manpower, and it kind of fell through the cracks. I'd just like to see us work better at it. Being in the front lines on sports. I travel to communities all over the place and I see communities whose facilities that are better than ours. Some were not so much and some have been remedied. In some cases, I think it came down to a more cohesive government. I talked to Mr. Gennette before and I said that I'm even more interested in a mayoral plan but I'm just more interested in making it work better. If that's tweaking our system a little bit, fine, if that's changing it more so that will take a little more doing but I think it's worth looking at.

Mr. Goncalves: Mr. Fanning, welcome and thank you. Are you familiar at all with open meeting laws and how that operates?

Mr. Fanning: A little bit. I'd like to think I'm a little more familiar than the average person because I've taught local government for a long period of time. I can't say that I know it implicitly. I have not been an elected member of anything, so it's my first time. If I'm appointed it's the first time I'm serving the town in something like this but not being elected member having dealt with open meeting and town meeting laws that often.

Mr. Goncalves: You're retired and there's a lot of positions available. Hopefully we'll see you more often.

Mr. DeBarge: He's already on the 250th committee.

Mr. Fanning: I'm on the book committee.

Mr. Goncalves: If you were to become part of this member would you be interested in serving as a chairperson?

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Mr. Fanning: I wouldn't rule it out of hand. I suppose it depends on who's on the committee. I don't know that my experience is necessarily executive experience, it would be more representative experience and research experience. Again, it depends on who's on the committee and are there people that have more executive experience perhaps. I wouldn't rule it out of hand. I don't know that's necessarily my strength. It depends on who's on the committee. I could certainly work with anybody there. It's a thought. I had thought of that. Like I said, when you're in high school all the time you're kind of in your own little franchise in your room but you get executive experience with the kids which is a whole lot different than executive experience with the kids. Like I said, I don't know that I have direct executive experience for that. I can learn on the fly. I'm a quick read. Depends on who's there and what the board would want to do.

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Mr. Rosenblum: Mr. Fanning, thank you for your interest knowing you have a little extra time now.

Mr. Fanning: It gets filled up pretty quick now. I see how fast it gets filled up but that's ok.

Mr. Rosenblum: The committee will be meeting with the town consultants, which is The Collins Center, once a month starting probably September of this year through September of next year approximately; however, there will probably be other times that we'll have to meet outside of that if there's any issues we need to go over or anything. Do you see any obstacles that may prevent you from being able to attend multiple meetings in a month?

Mr. Fanning: I would think not. I have no vacations or long vacations planned just yet. I do plan on my vacations are my time during the week or weekends now because I can do that, but I'm certainly in a place where my time is a little more flexible.

Mr. Silva: Thank you Mr. Fanning for signing on and trying to help us out with this endeavor. The charter committee is one that has a diverse mix of people and experiences, skill sets and knowledge basis. Talk about how your knowledge, skills or experiences will bring value to the committee.

Mr. Fanning: Obviously a lot of people know me from my long years of teaching high school so that's where I'm sure I would get a lot of people talking to me about what's going to happen here if I'm on that committee. I'm good at interviewing skills, I'm good at note taking skills, so I would try to make note what everybody's asking me. I think that we have to have a cohesive group. If a group comes together, and I think we're talking 9 people and 2 Board of Selectmen members, when a final product comes out it has to be consensus, it can't be 9 and 2 or 6 and 5. I think that group has to come together and decide this is what's best for the town of Ludlow even if one person doesn't get what they like on a plan and one person doesn't get what they like on a plan, we've got to come together and make this work. I think that's some of the dysfunction. We've got some fiefdoms that don't want to help out the other fiefdoms and we've got to bring them all together.

Mr. Gennette: What other information would you like the board to consider while making their final decision?

Mr. Fanning: Obviously, there's experience, like executive experience for someone out there. Experience working in government. My experience is more from an educational point of view. I think I bring some research skills and writing skills that is necessary for a committee like this. People need to know they have somebody they can come and talk to on those committees. I think I have a little more knowledge of the forms of government that exist in Massachusetts and exist in the United States that I can put to the table and other people are going to have some more specific things that they want to see happen around the town of Ludlow. We've got to try to blend them into a plan. I do think, whatever the number is 11 or 9, the final product has to be we're all on this one. I don't think a 6 - 5 vote would be very good.

Mr. Gennette: For clarity, this is 9 members with 2 alternates, does that include the Selectmen or no?

Mr. Strange: 9 residents, 2 selectmen and 2 resident alternates.

Mr. Fanning: Those resident alternates are at every meeting but they don't have any vote on what and they would replace somebody if something occurred? This is a team that should represent a lot of different factions in the town of Ludlow but they also have to come together as one group.

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Mr. Gennette: Do you have anything you'd like to add at this time or do you have any questions?

Mr. DeBarge: Did you want me to ask him a question? Marty, you're a high school teacher and a baseball coach, you're definitely qualified to chair or any other position if you deal with that. I'm giving you credit for being a teacher so take it. His baseball practices are incredible. Big note pads like this. You'd be a benefit to this committee should you be selected. My question for you is about government or public policy. Have you ever been involved in government or public policy initiatives?

Mr. Fanning: I've worked at the high school on our handbook and rules and regulations that come out of the high school and that's got to be approved by the school committee, but I've served on a number of committees where we wrote policy. Is that public policy? To an extent it is because it affects kids in the public school. Never on by laws for the town of Ludlow. Definitely a lot of them over there. On the handbook committee we've re-done the sports handbooks over the years and I've been on every committee that did those things. Is that a comparison? It's something. Probably not as much as somebody that's written something for a municipality. I've read them and I've had kids research them, much to their displeasure, but they did anyway. Most of them. When is the timeframe?

Ms. Ribeiro: Probably next year meeting at least once a month, possibly twice, starting in September. Interviews this week. You'd be notified if you've been selected by September. We'd have to talk to people about their availability. We're hoping to have our first meeting in September.

Mr. Fanning: You guys aren't looking for a vote from the town of Ludlow for a couple years probably?

Mr. DeBarge: In March of 25 we hope to have it on the ballot.

Mr. Strange: The charter would go to town meeting next October 24. If approved by town meeting it would have to go to the state. If the state blesses it then it goes on the ballot for March 2025.

Mr. Fanning: Is there a timeframe the state gives us from once they receive it until they give it its blessing? That could be a long time.

Mr. Strange: We asked that question to The Collins Center and they said it should be fine. Jake Oliveira is actually the chair of the committee that would oversee this process so that's helpful.

Mr. Fanning: I've been looking at a few communities, I think I mentioned to you, Easthampton has gone to a mayor plan and they have a mills project. I think they got ahead of us. Is it a mayor plan that did it? I know they've had some school issues over there with a mayor. What made theirs happen sooner? Those are answers I'd like to look at to see how we go through this. I think we talked about Hudson. Hudson, MA has been advertising through MassLive and they're still a Board of Selectmen. Maybe we can do this with a Board of Selectmen with some minor tweaks, I don't know. Those things have to be looked at.

Mr. Rosenblum: As far as Hudson, I was out there a couple weeks ago and they were able to get some kind of grant. They won best redesign of town and they got a grant for it and I'll tell you what, you walk up and down the streets and it's a small, you're meandering through on the streets. They did an unbelievable job. Restaurants everywhere. It's awesome.

Mr. Fanning: I've been through there but not since this started.

Mr. Gennette: I have to admit, when we were on the riverwalk and we talked, I want to admit that I did more listening than talking so I value your opinion.

Mr. Fanning: Derek knows that I don't shut up very often.

Mr. DeBarge: I was actually more amazed that he listened.

6:35 p.m. Charter Committee Interview – Brian Bylicki

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Mr. Gennette: Mr. Bylicki, if you wouldn't mind, take a moment, and introduce yourself and let us know why you're interested in being on the committee and we'll ask you some questions and go from there.

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Mr. Bylicki: My name is Brian Bylicki. I was a 35-year teacher teaching high school. Thirty-four of those years I taught US Government, which included federal, state, and local governments. I've been involved in politics in this town for a long time. I represented the teachers in various different roles. I was also the chairman of the last charter commission Ludlow had in 2006. I'm sure you're familiar with it. I brought copies just in case you're not. The idea is that if you're going to do a charter commission you have to do it right. And you have to do it where we look at the options that are available. That's what I see as the most important thing. As a government nerd, as you look at the structure, when you change one thing what is the impact on all that other stuff. That's what I see. I've been involved with insurance advisory committee for town for 23 years and married to a wonderful woman. I have 2 great kids, 2 stepsons that are great, lived in Ludlow since 1968, which I know makes me not a native. My favorite story from the last charter, the late Al Lariviere, who moved to Ludlow in 1947, and myself went to the Senior Center. We did a presentation on the charter and some beautiful young lady came up to us after and said it would be great if they could send some real Ludlow people to the Senior Center. Al, who is 91 years old and had lived in Ludlow since 1947 and myself, who moved here when I was 8 in 1968, we're not natives, so I understand what we're dealing with and the people in town.

Mr. Rosenblum: First of all, thank you for your interest and I will take a copy of that.

Mr. Bylicki: Sure, I have copies for all of you. Even though my name is at the very top as chair, this is not my charter. This is the 9 people that are on the charter.

Mr. Rosenblum: The committee will be meeting with the town's consultant, The Collins Center. Generally, that will be once a month from most likely September of next year to September of next year. Obviously, that's once a month; however, there might be times that we need to meet another time, maybe 2 times extra during the month to take care of any questions or issues that come up. Do you see anything that may hinder you from being able to do multiple meetings in one month?

Mr. Bylicki: No. Right now, the only thing I require is that I'm working on the 250th book for the 250th committee. That is basically on my time.

Mr. Silva: Thank you for coming back and taking it on again. It wasn't easy to do. Looking at it there's a lot of things and a lot of time spent, so to come back and do it again that's awesome. As you well know the charter committee is one that has a diverse mix of people with experiences, skill set and knowledge. What knowledge and skills do you bring that will be valuable and I know one will be that you've gone through it already.

Mr. Bylicki: Going through it already but working with those other 8 people was a very valuable skill because we had people like Al Lariviere who had been involved in town government since 1948. We had people that had not been involved in town government at all and working with them has been an enlightening and learning experience and that is something that is part of what I am, as a teacher all about learning. And being able to work with people, whether it's The Collins Center and the people there, the people on the committee with the board that is part of what I have to do.

Mr. DeBarge: Mr. Bylicki, I appreciate your interest in this yet again. My question is about whether you've been involved in any government or public policy initiatives, which I already know the answer to because you were the chairman of the charter before. So, I'm going to ask you a specific question. Feel free to answer the question that I ask all the candidates too but I have a specific question for you. I'm pretty well versed in this as I've read it a few times and I was around when it happened. Do you still feel that this is the best choice for the town or do you have an open mind to the other avenues or ideas that may come in with a new charter commission? Different people and a different town?

Mr. Bylicki: Yes, without a doubt. That charter commission was put together after a non-binding referendum for the town that voted 5-1 that they wanted a mayor. We, the People voted 5-1. That's a lot. We've got to look at a mayor as one of our options. I wanted to look at town managers. I wanted to look at a mayor manager system. We talked and we took the time and went through and researched. I made a promise, I'm coming in and even this time I'm coming in with an open mind. What do we need as a town to move forward? What do we need to make our government more efficient and more effective? If it's a mayor and that's what the committee decides that's fine. Again, it's the committee that's going to make these decisions with The Collins Center guiding us. That's a big part of it. The idea that we're going to say we're going in there and I want a mayor. No. There's a lot of things in there I don't agree with, but as a chairman I have to, as you well know right now, there's certain times that you have to say I have to agree with the board and that's what that is. So, I'm wide open to what I think the people need and I think one of the most important things we can do is follow some of the basic procedures of a real charter commission, which is having people come in to talk to us from the town, having public hearings. Real public hearings where we had them at the high school auditorium and people came in and they were able to discuss and talk and ask lots and lots of questions. I think that's very valuable for any committee.

Mr. Goncalves: Thank you very much. I was a product of Leonard Charest. It was one of my favorite classes, believe it or not. And I didn't like many. I know that you're familiar with open meeting, the whole ball of wax. Would you think of serving as Chair again?

Mr. Bylicki: I would think about it. It depends on the make-up of the committee. That's a big factor. To be truthful, I never thought the last time I would even be elected to the committee. There was a group of 8 people that were endorsed in the Register the week before the election. There was a specific group that had pushed for the charter. They had a charter all set to go. When I was elected, Kathy Ouimette came to me and said I want you to be chair, are you willing to do it. I'm like whoa. She goes I think you can do it. I worked with Kathy. She was the recording secretary and it was great. Would I do it again, yes. I realize it's a lot of work and I understand the reading that's involved. I understand the procedures with open meeting. We didn't have the new updated open meeting at that time, but we followed the open meeting procedures as they were prescribed in 2006-2008 and posted everything. That was a big part of it. I understand how that works. I understand the whole idea of ethics. I'm assuming we're going to follow the same standard if we have a charter committee that's not an official commission but we follow the same guidelines.

Mr. Goncalves: We'll be an official public office meeting.

Mr. Bylicki: Four times in the last 40 years the town of Ludlow has tried to change this government. Twice by charter commission, once in the 80's and 2006, both failed. And then 2 other times they proposed a committee like this to look at how to change the government, once around 1990 and once around 2000. The 1990 and 2000 were done in secret. Nobody ever saw it. They went to some departments, not all the departments, to ask questions, they produced a document and it wasn't even released to everybody in town. When I saw it I was appalled. A so-called Blue Ribbon Commission Report. It was all done in secret. Yeah because we didn't want everybody to know what we were doing and it's like No that's not how this is supposed to work. We're supposed to be open. So, understanding the parameters of the open meeting law and understanding what our guidelines have to be, that's a big part. You said September of next year you'd like to start this?

Mr. Rosenblum: No, September of this year.

Mr. Bylicki: Next month? Under a charter there's 2 different forms you can do. One is a short and one is a long. Last time we took the long version, which is about 18 months, and I think we lost some of the steam as one of the issues with it, but we weren't ready. The committee wasn't ready because people had no ideas. We hired an attorney, Michal Curran from Canton, who was one of the authors of the local law that we used for this. The home rule amendment in 1966. He was one of the authors. He was working for the Mass Municipal Society at the time. He came out to Ludlow. We met on Monday nights and he gave me an education on how it's supposed to work and how to educate the committee. I deleted the 400+ emails that he sent to me with readings. He gave us somewhere between 15-20 other communities charters. Everything from Town Manager, Town manager with a representative town meeting, town manager with an open town meeting, mayor

council and just a mayor like Springfield and Easthampton and the other communities in Western Mass. It's an experience to say the least.

Mr. Gennette: What other information would you like the board to consider while making their final decision?

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Mr. Bylicki: For me, just understand I am open. I don't have one government that I think it should be. I think we need to hear what people want along the lines of last time we invited every board in Ludlow to come talk to us. Board of Selectmen, Board of Health, everybody to come talk to us and give us an idea. What do you need? What's the next step? How does Ludlow move forward? This is a great government for 1929 when the legislature told us this is our government. With some modifications from 1929 this is what we have. The idea that we're now a, if you want to look at it from one standpoint, a 70 million dollar plus community of 21,000 people approximately, is this the most effective and efficient way to deliver services. Government, and I'm going to use this as I do with my students all the time, government is not a business and should not be run like a business. A business is their job to do one thing, make a profit and make money. A town, a city government, a county government, our responsibility with that is to make sure we can deliver the services efficiently and effectively to those 21,000 people in Ludlow. Whatever government this committee comes up with, that's the most important thing. How can we have a government that is efficient and effective that gets grants, that is able to work within the departments. The whole battle between the DPW and Board of Selectmen, that's nothing new, that goes back years. That goes back to when there was tree wardens and cemetery officials. It's been a constant. How do we make something more effective and efficient and make the government responsible to those 21,000 people. Government has a job to deliver those services from preschool and education to cemeteries, veteran's services, senior services, plowing the roads, paving the roads, that's government responsibility. I see this is as part of my way of helping and giving back to a town that's been so good to me over the years. I did it once and I put my name in so I'm going to do it again and work with whoever's on the committee if I'm one of the ones chosen to get an efficient and effective government for the town of Ludlow.

Mr. Gennette: I think that's the end of our questions. Do you have any questions for us or anything you'd like to add?

Mr. Bylicki: You've added the biggest part. Are we going to follow the basic standards of a charter commission? I did not want to participate in anything that was going to be behind the screen. I wanted to make sure that it's open, that if any of you want to come to a meeting and you have a question or comment that's great, public hearings great. I don't want to have the Blue-Ribbon Commission that did things behind the screen and all of a sudden came out. That was one of my biggest things. The other thing I can promise you is that whatever government comes out I promise I won't run for mayor, I won't run for the Board of Selectmen. I promise that whatever comes out I am not that kind of politician. I've done a lot of other things with committees over the years but I don't want to be a member of the Board of Selectmen, I don't want to be a mayor. Last time I was told that's the only reason I did this was because I wanted to be the mayor. I love being a teacher. I look at this as an extension of being a teacher and that's what I would like to do.

Mr. Gennette: Thank you for your time. We appreciate you coming in and we'll take everything into consideration.

Mr. Bylicki: Is there a timeline for when you're going to notify people?

Mr. Gennette: We have the rest of the interviews today, interviews tomorrow and we're in a debate whether or not we're going to make a decision tomorrow night or not. Preferably we're going to make a decision tomorrow night so we can start letting people know.

Mr. Goncalves: Worst case 2 weeks.

Mr. Bylicki: I was just curious to find out scheduling and you have certain timelines.

Mr. Rosenblum: What we should do if it's possible just because of the speed we're going through this is to have people in maybe 15 minutes ahead of time. Say if you're in at 6 be here at 5:45.

Mr. DeBarge: We usually do though.

Mr. Rosenblum: I know if I ever went into an interview I made sure I showed up 10 minutes early.

Mr. Strange: Me too, but we can reach out to the candidates for tomorrow.

6:50 p.m. Charter Committee Interview – Christopher Pelletier

Mr. Gennette: Mr. Pelletier, pleasure to see you again. We'll give you a minute to introduce yourself, let us know why you want to be on the charter committee, we'll ask you some questions and we'll go from there.

Mr. Pelletier: Good evening everyone. My name is Christopher Pelletier. I am a resident of Ludlow and a business owner in Ludlow. I have been a resident of Ludlow since 2017 so I'm kind of a new transplant. I moved from Chicopee where I spent most of my life so I'm pretty familiar with Ludlow. As of a few years ago I worked for LCTV and actually sat over there for quite a few of the meetings if you remember. I moved on from that and currently am operating a counseling and wellness center for first responders on Moody Street. That's where I spend most of my days. I have a son in high school. He's going to be a senior this year. The reason why I would like to be on the committee is to participate in the future of the town. I'm established here. I've established a business and a home. My child is growing up here so I think I have a vested interest in how the town develops and I'd like to participate in that.

Mr. Silva: Thank you for having the interest in signing on and this is quite an endeavor we're going through. The charter committee is going to be one with diverse people, experience, skill sets and knowledge basis. Talk about your knowledge and skills or experiences that will bring value to the committee.

Mr. Pelletier: My training is technical. I have a really broad background in technology. I also have a business degree. I believe the things that make a town function well require, now a days, technology but also a high level of organization. That's something I would bring to the committee. I'm very organized. I again have a technical background. I haven't necessarily participated in too much civic activity but spending time working for LCTV I got to see the inner workings of Ludlow pretty well. That experience enlightened me and gives me a little bit of an edge as far as understanding the dynamics of the town and the different departments and committees and how they work together, or work against each other. I think I would be able to bring that aspect to the table. I also have an English degree and I'm pretty proficient at writing communication. That's something that a committee like this would probably benefit from.

Mr. DeBarge: Chris, good to see you again. I'm used to seeing you over there instead of right here. I have a policy question for you. Have you been involved in any government or public policy initiatives before and if so what?

Mr. Pelletier: No, I have not been involved in any policy initiatives. I was never really one to engage in civic activity but I felt like over the last few years my life has kind of changed and my position has changed and I feel like now is the time to start engaging in that. Not at a civic level, but I worked at Elms College for 12 years and I was involved in a lot of policy initiatives there, like departmental policy initiatives, the IT department specifically, developing programs, developing policies like rules and regulations, things for computer deployment. Although it's not civic, per se, the organization and the committee meetings that we had I can see being of a similar function. You're trying to get an output that's efficient and addresses the problems at hand. That's kind of how I can see my contribution.

Mr. DeBarge: I appreciate what you do for the first responders in the mental health capacity.

Mr. Goncalves: Thank you Chris, nice to see you. Being behind the camera you had to see what the rules and regs and open meeting laws and this committee will be subject to all the open meeting laws and rules and regs so if you're not familiar you'd need to get familiar with that. Is there any chance you'd think of becoming chairman of this committee?

Mr. Pelletier: I haven't really thought about it but I would not be against it. I think I have the time and the capacity to contribute in that way. I would not be averse to that.

Mr. Rosenblum: Chris, thank you for your interest. As we've always said, it's tough to get people that are willing to volunteer their time for the town but thank you for that. Basically, the committee will be meeting with The Collins Center, who's helping administer this, once a month. The anticipation is from September of this year to September of next year. That's hopefully the timeline. There probably will be times when we have to meet maybe one or two other times during the month. Would you have any issues with meeting multiple times during the month?

Mr. Pelletier: No, I don't have any issues with that at all. I like to be in the office when I need to be there but most of the meetings run after 6:00 from my experience. I'm not sure what the time frame of the meeting is but I can certainly make myself available, coordinate, as long as I have enough notice. A week or two to know when the meetings are. I don't have a problem meeting multiple times in a month if that's what's required.

Mr. Gennette: What other information would you like the board to consider while making their final decision?

Mr. Pelletier: I'd sort of like to trail off of what you said and what Mr. Goncalves said about the participation in the town. I feel like there has been less participation globally in the Town of Ludlow than there could be. I'm kind of being that change. I want to participate because we have low voter turnout, we have small town meetings, not a lot of participation. I kind of wanted to get involved in that but I got too busy with the business over the last year and a half to get involved with town meeting. I feel like this is a great opportunity. When I heard the robo call I was like wow, here's a chance to participate in something that I can be the person participating in the citizenship of Ludlow. Participate as a citizen of Ludlow. That's the angle I'm looking at it from.

Mr. Gennette: Is there any questions that you have for us? Do you have any comments you'd like to make before we close?

Mr. Pelletier: Mr. Rosenblum mentioned it was once a month meeting, possibly one more time. I was wondering about the frequency. We're working with The Collins Institute? So, I have that information now. I don't really think anything at this point. If something comes up I can always email the board or town manager.

Mr. Gennette: Excellent. Thank you very much for coming in. We appreciate it and we'll take it into consideration. Our next one is at 7:05. Why don't we take five?

7:05 p.m. Charter Committee Interview – Linda Collette

Mr. Gennette: Mrs. Collette, it's a pleasure to see you again. We're going to give you an opportunity to introduce yourself and let us know why you want to be on the charter committee.

Mrs. Collette: I'm Linda Collette. Born and raised here in town. I currently serve on the Library Board of Trustees chairwoman. I've done that for about 3 years and I have 3 more. You gentlemen appointed me as the town's chairwoman for our 250th celebration committee. So, I'm busy doing that, planning all kinds of things like that. I am familiar with the open meeting laws, preparing and posting agendas and things like that. I've worked as an administrative assistant to a vice president while I was at Mass Mutual. I supported about 125 people in my department. Organizational skills, leadership, planning and processes and things like that. My interest in this charter commission is there is a need for change. I hear it in the position as a library trustee. I hear more about it. I hear more about people coming to me and getting more involved in the town and things like that. Not so much in a political sense but in a town sense. I see that there's a need for change and times change, we change. We live in an everchanging world where our community changes and has changed significantly in the past. I think as our community grows and changes the issues and needs that we face and the way we deal with them change too. I think we as a charter commission and townspeople, we need to be prepared to face these changes so that our town can really prosper and grow. Face all the changes and flourish like we should. I think we need to consider the issues that are facing our town today, not only for our town today but how we're going to proceed and better our town for the next 15-20 years. I think we need to have a long-range goal in mind. I think there's an opportunity for improvement. There always is in any way that we do things and I think I would enjoy working with a group of people that are interested in changing that and making things better and are passionate about it like I am. Just to create a better way to conduct business in our town and to flourish and prosper. I also think we need to establish a process for our citizens to be

educated about things. If there's changes in things like that that we need to do, I think it's our job to educate people and let them be informed of all the pros and cons and how it needs to proceed in our town. Creating public interest, generating public participation and involvement because knowledge is power about that stuff so if we let people know about things and how to change it and how to educate them and the issues that we face, we can develop procedures and plans that address them and move forward.

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Mr. DeBarge: Hello Linda, how are you?

Mrs. Collette: Well Derek how are you?

Mr. DeBarge: I'm good thank you. It's pretty apparent that most of us know a lot of the people that have applied for this and let me say I appreciate your interest in this. Linda and I are obviously on the 250th committee together and I know the hours and commitment you put in there and this is no light task either. The question I have for you is about public policy and initiatives, either public policy or government initiatives, if you have ever been involved in any. I know you have through the board of trustees because you write policy for the library. But for those 8 that are going to watch this, could you maybe explain your experience with government or public policy?

Mrs. Collette: As you said, with the board of trustees we always are developing and changing policies and procedures as times change. So, we have developed procedures for the employees and staff, public and patrons, meeting rooms and things of that nature with the library. As far as with the 250th, I really don't do policies and procedures for that. It's just a lot of planning and getting people involved with that.

Mr. Goncalves: Thank you for your interest. I'm not sure when you're going to find time. You wouldn't have any interest in serving as chair of this, would you?

Mrs. Collette: I don't. That's only because of the lack of timeframe a chair would take.

Mr. Goncalves: I think the rest of it, as far as open meeting, and everything else, you'd be good on that and could probably help educate everybody else on the committee.

Mr. Rosenblum: Thank you for your interest. Obviously you've done a lot and are doing a lot for the town. The charter committee will meet with The Collins Center as a consultant once a month; however, there may be times when we have to meet more than once a month. Would you see anything that may prevent you from meeting multiple times in a month?

Mrs. Collette: That was my question about how often this group would be meeting. Once or twice a month is not an issue. I realize there may be times that it could be even more than that and I would just be as flexible as I could.

Mr. Rosenblum: I've been mentioning it. We'd be looking at September next month for about a year. So, it would be from September 23 to roughly 24 September.

Mr. Silva: Thank you again. There's an awful lot you do and this is quite an endeavor you're taking on. It's an important endeavor. You've touched on some of this but the committee is going to be a very diverse mix of people with experiences, skill sets and knowledge. Talk about the knowledge and skills or experiences that you will be bringing for value on this committee.

Mrs. Collette: As I previously stated, I had been an administrative assistant for a vice president for a company and I had a lot of experience with the diverse group of people that we had in Phoenix, AZ as well as in Springfield. Getting all the things done that need to get done with different groups of people, projects, moving them forward, seeing them from fruition to completion.

Mr. Gennette: What other information would you like the board to consider when making their final decision?

Mrs. Collette: I think I covered most of it. I think most of you know me. I've worked with all of you in some capacity. If you have any other questions about that just let me know.

Mr. Gennette: Do you have any questions for us?

Mrs. Collette: My question was the one Bill answered about the true time commitment.

Mr. Gennette: Thank you so much for your time. We appreciate it. Always a pleasure to see you and we'll let you know.

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7:20 p.m. Charter Committee Interview – Dana Cormier

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Mr. Strange: This just happened today. Mr. Cormier is on the Board of Registrars and I think yesterday afternoon Kim, the Town Clerk, notified us that there might be a conflict with him being on the Board of Registrars and serving on the committee, which didn't make sense to me but we sent it to our attorney and our attorney in fact said that there is a conflict. So, Mr. Cormier came in and wanted to talk about it. I recommended that he still come and interview and that if he gets chosen he can make a decision but he really enjoys being a registrar so he decided to not come in and interview. He came in but he's not staying. It's too bad because he seems like a really good candidate.

Mr. Gennette: Mr. Cormier is not coming in for the interview. At this point we're going to come out of the recording and go back into our regular. We're going to take a break here for a minute while we make the switch to live. We are back. We've had our interviews recorded. They will be posted tomorrow with the other interviews that we have scheduled for tomorrow night but we're getting back to our regular scheduled business.

Board to discuss and possibly vote to accept changes to the Personnel Policy Manual (PPM).

Mrs. Ribeiro: Good evening everybody. You should have in front of you a list of the changes. I did send in a copy of the PPM with the changes that were highlighted but I also put them in list form just so it's easier for purposes of going through the manual. Some of these changes have been long coming that we've been working on and some of them are recent. The first couple are pretty simple. They're just updates to the American with Disabilities Act and it's updating the contact information for EOC and the MCAD for individuals. Those numbers had changed and the contact information needed to be changed because we're handing that out and that's not the right information. Email addresses were added. That was the first change for Americans with Disabilities and the anti-harassment policy, including the sexual harassment policy. I don't know if anybody has questions about that. It's pretty straightforward. The next change is in the holiday section. We paid all employees for Juneteenth this year, not all employees, but we did pay non-union employees and we had to add it obviously to the policy. Now all union employees, we just finished the last contract with police that did not have it in there. Every union contract and non-union now will have it in their policy. So, we had to add the June 19th holiday. Also, in collective bargaining agreement with the administrative union, the LATOSS unit, they recently had a half day of New Years Eve added into their contract. It would be the same as Christmas Eve. If New Year's Eve falls on a regularly scheduled workday then they would get that day off as a half day, just like we've done with Christmas Eve. That was added into the contract so especially here in town hall you've got mostly admin people and non-union people, so we added that in just to make it consistent. Any questions on that language? I did add the language in the PPM. It's just mirroring the Christmas one. The vacation. The addition to that, these are things that have come up not major, but the vacation policy, the language that's added you'll see highlighted, this is for part time employees, the language that's in there right now says part time employees who routinely work a minimum of 20 hours per week are eligible to accrue paid vacation time as follows. I've been asked, it's come up a few times, is this after 6 months because all full-time employees have to wait 6 months to get their vacation. It was never clearly written with the part timers. It doesn't come up a lot but that was language kind of same again to be consistent with the full time. Questions on that?

Mr. Gennette: No, we're good.

Mrs. Ribeiro: Moving along to the next update would be for sick leave benefits. This section is pretty long and there was 2 additions. Most union contracts have an incentive day program in them. When the town revised and took the Personnel Policy bylaws out of the town meeting members as a vote and put it under the Board of Selectmen's purview and the Personnel Policy Manual in 2017 there was no incentive day option for non-union employees. When meeting with department heads and going through that process that was one thing that came up. All of the union employees are eligible to earn an incentive day but the non-union weren't. This actually has to do with earning

an incentive day, it's just in that sick leave area. The policy reads now, if an employee has accrued 75 days of sick leave, which is quite a bit of sick leave, or more and does not use any sick day for 6 consecutive months of active employment, they will be credited one additional personal day. That's how it reads now. Questions have come up since 2017 how long do they have to use that day. Again, you're not thinking of everything when you're writing policy so the earned day to that would be the earned day must be used within 90 days of receiving, which is consistent with the union contracts. It's just easier from an administrative standpoint for payroll and department heads. Under the sick leave benefits under report of illness we'd like to add if more than 3 unused sick days are used in a month the employee will forfeit sick leave accruals for that month. Again, that's standard language in all the union contracts. The key here is that they're unexcused. If you're calling in sick, whether it's one day, 3 consecutive days, 3 days, there's no excuse, there's no doctor's note, it's not FMLA, it's not approved leave, then that person would not accrue their allotted sick time for that month, whether it's 8 hours, 10 hours, whatever the case may be. That would be adding it under the report of illness section. Questions on that?

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Mr. Gennette: No.

Mrs. Ribeiro: Sick leave bank. I'm actually going to hand out a new copy of the sick leave bank because there was some language that was added to the bottom of it. Everything is the same that you have in front of you except for the very last paragraph. The very last paragraph just talks about the sick leave bank committee. There needed to be some clarification as far as who is on the committee and the committee's functionality. We have always operated under this. This was a policy that we got approved at the Board of Selectmen when we approved the sick leave bank policy. It should have been added in the original sick leave policy that I sent to you. It's important because even when Lisa Halpin came in to work in HR and she started the sick leave bank and administering it, she's like well who is the committee. There was nothing in the policy in the PPM that stated who the committee was and what their approval process was and explained that. It was in the approved policy originally. It was amended after meeting with a couple of the union bodies. They felt like they wanted a union rep to be part of the process if it was a union employee. So, we added that and explained who is part of the sick leave bank committee. So that's all the changes that I sent you, but everything else was the same. Questions on that?

Mr. Gennette: No.

Mrs. Ribeiro: Bereavement leave. Again, this is another thing that has come up and since we implemented the policy (PPM) in 2017, there was no language about son-in-law or daughter-in-law. Clearly I think all of you would agree that if you have a son-in-law or daughter-in-law that passes that you would like time off for bereavement leave. We had nothing in there. We did add that to the eligibility for 3 days of time. Again, that mirrors a lot of the union contracts. The leave of absence policy. The language that is getting changed there, right now the leave of absence policy says that any leave of absences must be in writing and approved by either the department head or the appointing authority. This has been an issue in the past with leave of absences being approved without prior knowledge and not knowing the reasons. The language was added that the town administrator would approve the written request. In addition to that the request must include the purpose for the leave, the reason, and also accepting employment elsewhere is not a qualified reason for unpaid leave under this policy and may result in termination of employment from the town. The purpose of the leave of absence in the Personnel Policy Manual is not for somebody to say ok I'm going to try another endeavor, try another profession, same profession different place, if I give my notice to the Board of Selectmen say I'm going to go try working in the town of Newton but if it doesn't work out I'd like to exercise my leave of absence rights and come back. That's not what the leave of absence clause is for. The leave of absence clause is undue hardships, something out of your control, maybe it's medical related, maybe it's personal. Who knows what it could be. That's what this leave of absence clause is really for. It's for that reason. Not somebody to tack it on to the end of their employment or use it in a way that it shouldn't be used. That's why that language is being added there.

Mr. DeBarge: Our past practice with police and fire has been that if they want to go to state, if they want to go to another academy we have given 60 days, which is usually the allowable for whether you're going to stay in the academy or not. Does this change that?

Mrs. Ribeiro: Yes.

Mr. DeBarge: It does change that. So, if someone wants to go to the academy, the state police academy or something else they would need to either take their own time or they couldn't do it.

Mrs. Ribeiro: Right. They'd have to take their own time.

Mr. DeBarge: Ok. I'm not sure I agree with that part but I understand where you're coming from.

Mrs. Ribeiro: We're holding a position in case it doesn't work out. Again, we don't want to lose good employees. I'm not saying we want to lose good employees but if we're going to do that for a police officer or fire fighter to go to the state police academy, whatever it is, why shouldn't we let another employee, if it's a promotion to another town or another company do it? It's the same difference. If somebody is going to school, they have training, maybe they're not going to make the training. You're holding that position open for a 60-day time frame.

Mr. DeBarge: I get what you're saying.

Mrs. Ribeiro: There might be another way to address police and fire.

Mr. DeBarge: I don't know communities that don't allow this, not that other communities should be a test for what we do of course, but it's been a tradition that I'm aware of that's been going for a long time. I don't know about just stopping it completely.

Mr. Goncalves: This language allows Marc to make the decision.

Mr. Strange: Correct me if I'm wrong. Right now, the policy is approval can either come from either the department head or Board of Selectmen.

Mrs. Ribeiro: Right now.

Mr. DeBarge: Each request that's come through any academy has always come to the Board of Selectmen as far as I'm aware of. I guess that's what I'm asking. This would completely stop that?

Mrs. Ribeiro: To Mr. Goncalves' point, it would be up to Marc. This is saying that accepting employment elsewhere is not a qualified reason for unpaid leave and may result in termination. If the town administrator wants to accept it and say Ok we're going to approve this leave of absence knowing that you're going to the state police, or whatever the case may be, then it can be approved.

Mr. Goncalves: May result in termination.

Mr. Rosenblum: Instead of saying shall.

Mr. Strange: If the board just wants to be the one making the decision it doesn't have to be me, the town administrator, now the department head just automatically...

Mrs. Ribeiro: I think that those come to you because you're the appointed authority for police and fire. I'm not aware of any, since I've been with the town, I'm not aware of this happening in any other department besides police. Only police. That's why I'm saying, maybe there's another way to deal with that. Again, if you're having an employee from another department and Jodi decides I'm going to be a regional senior center director, would we be approving that? I'm sure we would say to her if things don't work out...but again, you're putting filling that position on hold for 60 days. That's a long time for somebody to go try out something new if it doesn't work out. If it's only one department that there's been a past history of allowing that, then maybe there's something we can address with that one department separately, and not in this policy.

Mr. DeBarge: I'm not saying I have the answer to it, I'm just asking questions. I just wanted to know.

Mr. Rosenblum: It's kind of like grandfathering it in. It's a practice that's been used apparently for a decent amount of time within the police and possibly fire and it's not being used.

Mr. Strange: The problem is when you have somebody go out on a leave of absence for 60 days. We're in civil service so we have to wait. Oftentimes that leave of absence will occur during a

critical testing or whatever. If we miss the test and we lose that person to the state police or wherever then we're down a person for that long. That increases overtime and a domino effect.

Mrs. Ribeiro: The last one is replacing the current policy in the PPM is called break time for nursing mothers. We've actually had the pregnancy workers fairness act out since SEP 8, 2019. We've handed it out to new employees. There was a small update in June of this year that became effective. The language included pregnancy-related conditions as well so it was a minor change. We have the policy and we're just inserting it into the PPM once it's approved in place of the break time for nursing mothers. There is going to be a couple more policies coming in front of you within the next couple weeks but they're not completely done at this point.

Mr. Gennette: Do these have to get put on a warrant? These are going to go into play right away?

Motion made by Mr. Rosenblum to approve the amendments to the personnel policy manual as stated by the Human Resources Director. **Mr. Silva second. All in favor. Motion passed 5-0.**

Board to discuss and possibly vote to accept changes to the non-union classification plan.

Mrs. Ribeiro: To clarify, it's union and non-union. There's changes to both. Do you have a preference in which ones we discuss first? We'll start with the Hubbard Memorial Library. It's the quickest one. It's a small minor change. I think transparency is the best. I think acknowledging and informing you is the best. It's a minor change with hours. With the new classification plan that the board approved as of January 1, 2023, the non-union management classification plan the hours are not listed on it anymore so this is more of an internal change on the job description. Nonetheless, the board of trustees, as you'll see as indicated in Mrs. Collette's email voted to change the hours of all the exempt employees at the Hubbard Memorial Library from 40 hours a week to 37 ½. There's never been any clarification, or consistency, on hours from what some of the exempt employees worked. Some worked 35. Not worked. What their work week is based on. Some are 35, some are 37 ½ and some are 40. There was an issue that came up at the library last year about them working through a paid lunch break. Somebody was injured on the job and it became apparent that they're getting paid for 40 hours a week but they're not taking unpaid lunch breaks. They're getting paid based on an 8-hour day when obviously they're taking a lunch break. Obviously that is not common practice in any other department, in any other business, municipality, state, usually it's a half an hour unpaid lunch break. Marc and I spoke to the trustees and we said this needs to change. This is an issue. They went from working from 40 to 42 ½ to make up for that unpaid lunch break and we just hired a new reference librarian and when we hired that position we brought that person in at 37 ½ hours, because the 42 ½ hours was getting very difficult scheduling wise for the director because of the late hours, because of the Saturday. It was becoming a burden on the director and the employees. In order to make it consistent and fair, the trustees voted to reduce the hours for the exempt employees to base their week on 37 ½ instead of 40. This means that they will technically get paid for 37 ½ but they'll take a half an hour unpaid lunch break, totaling their time to 40 vs 42 ½. It's honestly just a little bit of a burden administratively. Schedule-wise, they've been so used to doing the 40 hours with the paid lunch break. It's a small minor change but I think it's one that will appease them and it doesn't have to change the scheduling or the hours or anything like that. There's no change to pay it's just the hours.

Mr. Goncalves: Do we need to vote on this? Should we do it one at a time?

Mr. Rosenblum: I would do it one at a time because you might not agree with the next one.

Motion made by Mr. Goncalves to approve the revised hours as submitted from the Hubbard Memorial Library in a memo date August 17th. **Mr. Rosenblum second. All in favor. Motion passed 5-0.**

Mrs. Ribeiro: Moving along to the treasurer/collector office. Obviously we all know there's been a large change in the treasurer/collector department with Elsa Barros being newly appointed treasurer/collector and merging of staffs now merged into one office, one location to make it easier for residents and Elsa to be more efficient in getting work done and residents coming in. With that being said there's a lot of cross training going on within all of the members of the staff in that department. Elsa has been instilling new practices. I'm not sure how familiar you are with a lot of them. She stated some of them, electronic invoicing. She has now a scanner to scan the bills. She's

automated a lot of processes in the office. They're changing. Added responsibilities, change in duties. She wants everybody in the office to be cross trained on the treasurer side and collector side. Her goal is that if she's out she has people that can step in and take over as the assistant treasurer/collector and move seamlessly. In order to do that you need everybody in the office cross-trained. Right now, there is 2 different levels of pay in her office. You've got 2 individuals at the LATOSS administrative assistant LATOSS 4 pay, then you've got 2 at the lower level at the senior clerk at a LATOSS 3 paygrade. It's very difficult to have buy in from an employee and cross train employees and have them work on the same page, same efficiency, be productive and want to improve operations when they're getting paid less than somebody sitting next to them doing a lot of the same things. I won't say that some of the 4's are not doing more but with this change it will allow Elsa to have everybody be able to operate and do the same work the same level of responsibility. That's where this request comes from.

Mr. Silva: Wouldn't it be prudent to have an assistant treasurer and assistant collector as a lot of communities that's what they actually have. That way you'd eliminate some of this we're talking about.

Mrs. Ribeiro: Informally in her office she does have that. Informally we had that in the accounting office. Informally we have it in the clerk's office. That's another thing Marc and I have talked about as well. Taking those assistants and making some changes as well to the title and pay. That's a bigger project but yes I agree. Informally she does have that. The LATOSS 4 in her office, Georgina, she is technically the assistant treasurer, informally, not on paper, but when Elsa leaves, on the treasurer side, not the collector side, she can take over and I think do most of what Elsa does.

Mr. Silva: That's the other thing. If Elsa is out, wouldn't the assistant be actually able to sign? Because just a regular employee I don't think...

Mrs. Ribeiro: We're not there yet. To make it formally and technically an assistant treasurer/collector that's the direction we've talked about with assistants in all the departments.

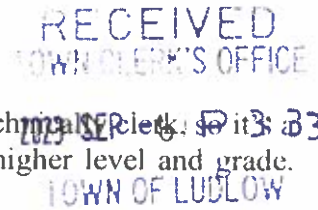
Motion made by Mr. Goncalves to approve the change for the two employees from a level III to a LATOSS level IV, those two positions currently occupied by Magdalena Piascik and Almira Regadas or whoever occupies them in the future. **Mr. Rosenblum second. All in favor. Motion passed 5-0.**

Mrs. Ribeiro: The last one for request for change in classification is the clerk's office. Right now, it's currently the town clerk, there's an administrative assistant LATOSS IV, informally the assistant town clerk, and I'm not sure if Chris can sign in Kim's absence. I don't think she can. This change here that we're requesting is in the bigger picture of what we were just talking about for the assistant town clerk to formally become the assistant town clerk and be able to sign and take over if Kim wasn't here. This change will allow the LATOSS IV position to have the senior clerk do more work and take on more responsibility. Right now, it's the town clerk, a LATOSS IV administrative assistant/informally assistant clerk and you've got a clerk at a LATOSS II level. We don't have a lot of LATOSS II employees left. Unfortunately, we don't really have a grid and we don't have a specific LATOSS II needs this amount of education and qualifications to be a II. When these positions were created it was before my time and we don't have a grid. I think we are outgrowing that system and it makes sense to move this individual up to senior clerk level as a LATOSS III. Pure salary based. We've made adjustments along the way this year, a lot of them to the non-union, salary adjustments to the union contracts every year, but these clerks, the II's, they're lower-level paid positions and they can be hard to fill because of that reason. In addition to that it makes sense with the succession planning that we want to do in the clerk's office, so this position can start doing some of the LATOSS IV work as well. Taking on some of the responsibilities that individual does. As you can see, unfortunately the town clerk, Kim Batista, couldn't be here this evening but she did put an email to the board explaining the changes and the additional responsibilities she has added to this position and making it a III. You'll also see a draft job description that you have in front of you. We have updated the job description so we're anticipating and hoping that this will be approved tonight so once it is approved, if it is approved tonight, we can go ahead and get that position posted because right now it's also vacant. That's another reason we're making the change. It's vacated and obviously a good time to make changes. I certainly think it makes sense, especially since the succession.

Mr. DeBarge: I couldn't agree with you more.

Mr. Gennette: We're moving from a union to a non-union position?

Mrs. Ribeiro: No, this is a LATOSS II. The title on the classification is technical clerk. It is a LATOSS II. It would be reclassified to a senior clerk LATOSS III. A higher level and grade. Higher pay and a little bit more responsibility.



Motion made by Mr. Goncalves to approve the changes as outlined from a LATOSS II in the clerk's office to now become a senior clerk, LATOSS III position. **Mr. DeBarge second. All in favor. Motion passed 5-0.**

Mrs. Ribeiro: The effective dates we're going to use this evening?

Mr. Goncalves: Tomorrow morning.

Mrs. Ribeiro: Thank you. Again. I have a few more coming down the road, reclassifications, but I didn't have all the information from all of the departments tonight so we will keep working on this. A work in progress.

Board to discuss and possibly vote to release the town's lien on 355 East Street – Polish American Citizens Club.

Mr. Goncalves: What exactly is this lien?

Mr. Strange: This was apparently from the last East Street revitalization project where there was a façade improvement project that the businesses got state funds to improve their signage and in order to accept the money they had to put a lien on their property which would be released once they improved their signage. This all came from John at the Polish Club. Go Net Speed wants to site some of the fiber network equipment on his property. In order to do that he needed this lien released. We sent it to our attorney's. They did a search at the registry of deeds, located it, and then came up with this release.

Mr. Goncalves: Most of East Street had this thing put on it. I know my office did also.

Motion made by Mr. Goncalves to grant the lien release for the Polish American Club for the \$27,600 for 355 East Street, Ludlow, MA. **Mr. DeBarge second. All in favor. Motion passed 5-0.**

BOARD UPDATES/MISC.

Mr. Rosenblum: Open Space committee met last night. We've made some additional adds to what our objectives and the actions to achieve those objectives. We're actually going to have a booth at Festa on Friday. It opens at 5:00 so we will have a booth there that's informational but if you have an opportunity you can stop by and fill out the questionnaire there, possibly a QR code and I believe there may be a prize or 2. We will have information on open space and the ideas we have and obviously take in any suggestions, concerns, or ideas.

Chairman to approve and sign all bills, warrants and abatements. A record of all warrants is in the Selectmen's office for perusal until provided to the Town Accountant's office.

CLOSING COMMENTS

Mr. Silva: I'm all set today.

Mr. Rosenblum: I'm good. I think the board update worked.

Mr. DeBarge: The Ludlow 250th golf tournament September 9th at Westover Country Club. The committee needs golfers and hole sponsors. Please, grab a team and if you want to sponsor a hole if you know any businesses that want to sponsor a hole you can contact anyone on the committee or me and we'll get you a sponsorship form. The only other thing I have is I met with Jamie, our DPW director and I met with the crew chief of the house of corrections crew that is going to help

us out with the town. You should see some clean up crews tomorrow, Thursday and Friday and maybe even more leading up to Festa next week. They'll be around Center Street East Street cleaning up so help us do more and do your part and help clean up in front of your business or your home.

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TOWN OF LUDLOW

Mr. Goncalves: Not to be a dead horse but the 250th committee, that golf tournament is coming up September 9th at Westover. They really need golfers out there. There's a commitment to the golf course and the numbers are a little weak on the amount of teams that are out there so please if you're not doing anything that Saturday it's a great cause. Come on out. You can get a hold of anybody on the committee, Derek, me. We'll get you a brochure and sign-up sheet, no problem at all. Festa is coming up August 31st, a week from Thursday through Monday. Annual community market September 30th and October 1st - 3rd. Celebrate Ludlow October 14th. We have a gem in this town that I don't think we talk about enough or gets enough exposure. I hadn't been there in a little while but I went to Lupa Zoo a couple weeks ago and that place has transformed incredibly from what it was 10 years ago when I started taking my kids there, the younger ones, to what it is now. What a beautiful day. The Lupas are very gracious. We've got a gem in our own backyard. I don't think enough people go and really appreciate what we have there. Summer is still here if you get a chance go out there and support the zoo. I think if you haven't been there in a while you'll be truly amazed and you'll enjoy the day.

Mr. Gennette: Marc, as far as the Zoning Board of Appeals putting out a robo call for them, we were talking about that, can we add these events to that robo call?

Mr. Strange: Sure.

Mr. Gennette: There was a collapse over at red bridge, one of the buildings over there earlier today. It was in the news. Everyone might want to be aware there might be some traffic issues coming up that area.

Mr. Goncalves: I went through there twice today. It's clear.

Mr. Gennette: There's a lot of debris there. Just a reminder that we have more interviews tomorrow. Those ones will be live and we will post the recording at roughly the same time, so look for those.

Motion made by Mr. Goncalves to adjourn the meeting at 7:53 p.m.

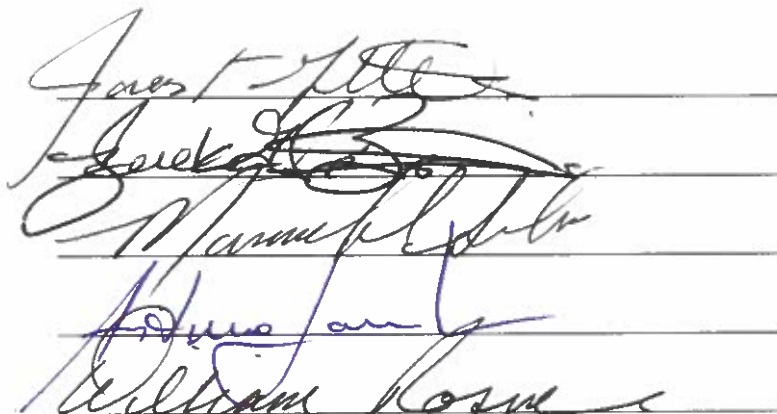
Mr. Gennette: You look like you have something you want to say.

Mr. Silva: I don't know about live.

Mr. Gennette: We'll be live tomorrow.

Mr. Silva: Why would we be live? Someone sitting at home going on last night get all the questions. Anyway, go ahead.

Mr. Rosenblum second. All in favor. Motion passed 5-0.



Ludlow Board of Selectmen
Chairman

