

The Meeting of the Board of Selectmen held on Tuesday, October 17, 2023, began at 5:30 p.m. in the Board of Selectmen's Conference Room.

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TOWN OF LUDLOW

Members Present: James Gennette, Derek DeBarge, Antonio Goncalves, Manuel Silva, and William Rosenblum

Members Absent: None

First Order of Business: The Pledge of Allegiance

## VISITATIONS

5:30 p.m. – Eric Segundo, Director Veterans Agent – to give updates about Veterans Center and upcoming events.

Mr. Segundo: I wanted to get on the docket because we're at our 6-months at the new Veterans Center. I just wanted to give you an update about what's been going on since we opened. I gave each of you a packet. I also emailed it to Marc in case you want a PDF copy. The biggest bulk of what's happening is the food pantry. When we were at the Town Hall we were servicing 20-30 veterans. This past week we served 117 in 1 day. September's numbers 14-15,000 pounds of food have gone out. 230 families. 1,423 service visits. That's how many people have come through for the entire month of September. October is looking to be up there as well. The good thing is we are registered through the food bank so 99% of the food we're distributing is coming out of the food bank, which lowers the cost to us. A very minimal cost on some items. The other good thing is as of October we are approved for USDA food, which opened up a whole other category of items we're able to provide. As of this morning, we have 329 registered participants with the pantry. We have it broken down to which veteran is from which community we're servicing. The bulk, 149 of them are from Ludlow. The Ludlow VFW donated 2 additional freezers. We have a total of 4 now. That helps with the USDA frozen stuff we're getting. Veterans lunch has been a big hit. We are maxed out in participation so we have to go to a reservation list. You can't walk in anymore because we're maxed out each lunch. In the month of November, because it's Veteran's Day, we are doing 2 seatings. We'll have a lunch from 11:30-12:30 then 12:30-1:30. We are able to accommodate up to 120. Again, it's got to be through reservations because there's no way we'll be able to accommodate walk ins. Another good program we started was the mobile dentist program. Mandy Day, a dental hygienist, comes in and she brings everything except an x-ray machine. She'll do cleanings, an exam, fluoride. All that is being done through donations we're getting to provide these services for free to the veterans. Each month we'll continue to add different calendars. The whole thing about the Veterans Center was having the space for food pantry but also to provide a space for veterans to get out of their homes and have an environment to socialize and interact. Derek has been there many times. He just sees it. There are veterans that don't socialize with anybody until they come to the pantry. Some folks don't even shop. They just want to be there to interact and converse with folks. We decided we're going to open up on a Sunday and have a football game. We purchased a hot dog machine and a popcorn machine and bring your chair. It's another way to get someone out of their house and interact with friends and veterans. The other thing we are negotiating with Aura to have a masseuse to provide massage therapy to veterans. She's going to start coming in a couple hours once a month and we'll schedule appointments so veterans can come in and get a 15-minute massage if they're in some type of physical pain. Out of the box thinking of different services we can provide our veterans. One stop shop. Food, dentist, and other things. The Wreaths Across America education exhibit vehicle. That's coming this Thursday. It's rescheduled. It was supposed to be last Thursday. The only stop in Massachusetts is coming right here to Ludlow. It would be nice to have the public come out. If you all are around it's 11-4. Stop by. It's a mobile RV. It's interactive. It has a movie theater inside to show you how the wreaths are made. What they're made from. That leads to Wreaths Across America on December 16<sup>th</sup>. You have the flyers of all the events from now until the end of the year. The veterans radio show is another thing Ludlow was the first to do. With the support of LCTV we're able to be on the radio once a week on 97.7 FM, 1250 AM. We record a radio show. It airs Saturday mornings but it's also available for download through podcasting. As of this morning we had about 3,500 downloads. We are now being aired on the Indian Orchard station as well on Sunday mornings. We provide the information. We've utilized it to share Ludlow activities. We had the 250<sup>th</sup> on. I also offered them an opportunity to record a 2-minute commercial of any 250<sup>th</sup> upcoming events so we can plug those in through commercials through the show to let people know what's happening in town. I open it for any town departments that want to feature

something or talk about something or want to come on the show for a few minutes to talk about something happening in town. It's a veterans show but it's being sponsored by LCEM and should be Ludlow-centric. Veteran's Day is coming up so I look for the Board to give me permission to hang a banner to advertise the Ludlow Veteran's Day event. It will be at Ludlow High School at 10:00 on Veteran's Day, Saturday morning. Awards will be presented to 2007 veteran of the year. Some veterans, as well as students who write the patriotic essay and businesses who support us throughout the year. One particular one we're going to honor this year as business of the year is Home Depot. Home Depot has come through many times for us, not only with the veterans center and donated the cabinets and freezers but they also recently did a veterans home here in town where they did a lot of work on the home. They brought a crew of over 40 folks. They're a good supporter of our veterans and we want to recognize them on Veteran's Day. The banner and yard signs we need permission from the Board to move forward with that. The big one I'm here for today is our hero's banner. This has been something we've talked about in the past and now that we're settled the veterans center was able to focus some time on it. We want to hang these heroes' banners downtown from Putts Bridge all the way up to Chapin on the black light poles. I have a sample here. This is our first one. It has the veterans' name, where they served and branch of service. It's double sided and it will hang on the black light poles up and down East Street. At some point, if we can get permission from the electric company we can hang them up and down Center Street as well. Many communities have done this, especially in Western Mass, and I think it's time for Ludlow to start honoring them. The cost of the banners themselves is about \$100 and that is sponsored by whoever wants the banner. So, family members can have their veteran or the veteran themselves can do it. Ludlow veterans. Those that were killed in action will have priority over anyone else. If it's a veteran family member that wants to honor their loved one who was killed in action they would be put up before anybody else. We would need a batch of 100 to save costs. The forms will be available in my office once it's approved by the Select Board. Checks should be made out to the Town of Ludlow. We'll figure out a way to deposit them or keep track of the monies. Once we get the 100 we'll order them. A good JPEG with high pixel is always good.

Mr. DeBarge: I'll say this about these banners because this is something we've been wanting to do for quite a few years and our 250<sup>th</sup> celebration is what kicked this into gear, but to be able to honor and look like a community that does as much for its veterans as it does, we do more for our community than most communities or most communities that I know, veterans especially. So, to have these up is something that's kind of par for the course for what we do. I think we should do whatever we can to support this. You're going to have families that are going to come out and get these banners. I personally will be putting one in for my grandfather. It's a great thing. I go to the coffee hour, the lunches, the food pantries. I even got to go pick up a load of food from the Chicopee food bank. I'm not saying this because we take what Eric does for granted but we know what Eric does for the center but what Eric does it's exploding. The volunteers that we have that are there almost on a daily basis and going out to pick up the food and bringing it in to the cabinets, then coming in during the food pantries and standing there and replenishing the food as it's gone, this is done by a very small group of volunteers that are there all the time. When Eric requests on Facebook, he says a load of food is coming, you get 15-20 people that help show up to do that. It's a wonderful thing. It's what Ludlow always does. It's a great thing. You should all come out and see the food pantry on a Friday morning and see what 75-80 people in line look like.

**Motion made by Mr. Goncalves** to approve the banners to be hung from the light poles on East Street as requested by veteran's services. **Mr. Rosenblum second. All in favor. Motion passed 5-0.**

**Motion made by Mr. Goncalves** to approve the advertising banner downtown for the veterans and the yard signs. **Mr. DeBarge second. All in favor. Motion passed 5-0.**

Mr. Segundo: The banners will get replaced as they get worn we'll replace them with the next reserved spot. The old one will go back to whoever sponsored them because they paid for them. But the brackets themselves belong to the Town and there's something in new business to pay for those to keep the cost down on the sponsors as well.

Mr. Gennette: I'm glad you're having so much success.

Mr. Goncalves: Just to be clear, if anybody wants to make a donation they're welcome, even if they don't have a veteran and you'll assign a veteran to that sponsorship.

Mr. Segundo: Absolutely. If they want to sponsor a veteran we'll take the donation. I'm glad you mentioned that because the other big thing we've been doing for many years, and now with the veterans' center, is turkey. So, we're getting ready to do the turkey for veterans again this year. In the past we've done between 150-200. With the veterans center now we're looking at 300. If there's anyone listening who wants to make a donation towards the cost of the turkey's, we provide a turkey, we get the pies from Tabletop in Worcester and we give them a bag of food for a whole Thanksgiving meal and we take care of our veterans that way. You can call 707-5058.

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Mr. Silva: Great job, without a doubt. I was just reading through the newsletter and I did find something that you might want to bring up. Property tax exemption the veterans have. Unfortunately, you need a 10% exemption at least in the letter to be able to qualify for that. It's unfortunate that's the case. It should be anyone. But you do need that letter each year.

Mr. Segundo: There's legislation right now in the State House that would allow to go off the date of disability, not the date of the letter because most folks are waiting 6-8 months or a year to get the rating from the VA and the VA says we're going to give you this disability as of last year. Now that's going to be the new effective date.

Mr. Silva: The other thing you might want to see if you can work on is you get the letter and you get the disability and some of them are getting paid 100%. Those that get the letter as 100% disability it's a much better exemption. The 10% only gets \$500. It helps but somehow those letters should come in as the actual disability.

Mr. Segundo: You have the 100% service connected and those that are 80% but are being paid at 100% because they're unemployable. The VA acknowledges them as 100 and property tax acknowledges them at 100 as well.

Mr. Silva: The letter has to say 100% disabled. There's a little niche on there that the Assessors cannot grant unless it says that.

Mr. Segundo: I read some legislation as well to correct the verbiage on that because it depends on the Assessor. There's Assessors that are accepting them as 100% and some that are...there's legislation in place for that as well.

5:45 p.m. – Laura Rooney, Ludlow CARES Coalition to discuss the Opioid Settlement  
\*Board to declare Red Ribbon Week as October 23<sup>rd</sup> – 31<sup>st</sup>

Ms. Rooney: We've got a great group of people here. A lot of times we come into these meetings and it may just be 1-2 of us but we thought we'd come today with a group of us for a couple reasons. So, you can see there's a lot of people involved in CARES. There always has been. Many of you have been involved in CARES in the past. 12 years later we're still a strong group and have expanded significantly in terms of the involvement of our youth, especially in the high school. The first thing we wanted to cover was the opioid relief funds. I sent a letter to Chairman Gennette regarding CARES request and need for those funds. I don't think we need to read the whole letter but getting the gist of the letter is important. And that is CARES has been on the prevention side of the opioid epidemic but as well as other things that put our youth at risk. Back in 2011-2012 when no one was talking about the opioid epidemic that was happening across the country a bunch of people stepped forward and sounded the alarm at their own risk, in some cases, because it wasn't a popular message, and both the Ludlow CARES Coalition and we have the Michael J. Dias Foundation, Grace Dias is here, Maureen Rooney and Isabel Martins, began that education and prevention on the CARES side, Michael J. Dias focusing on recovery efforts, providing those that needed assistance a place to go. One of the biggest impacts a small community like ours could have on the opioid epidemic was for community members to start the work. That's what we've been doing for the last 12 years. The reason we find it so imperative to get this conversation going on these opioid relief funds is, we've had conversations about the funds coming in and the understanding that there's some administration that had to be done in terms of setting up the account. For the last couple of years those funds have been coming in. At the same time, CARES has continued to fundraise and take money from individuals and businesses to continue our work. That is largely about substance abuse. Now, as we've learned, we're also hitting on the mental health front. While we just finished another round of fundraising and successfully raised \$20,000 for the work we want to do next year we really feel conflicted about continuing those asks knowing that the Town has received such a substantial amount of money to do basically the work that we

do. In addition to that, a lot of us have been doing this for 10-12 years and one of the things we want to work on is our sustainability for the Ludlow CARES Coalition and how we keep this group alive in Ludlow. If we don't have to focus on fundraising we can focus more attention on that. We had started doing that in the spring, but in the spring we met Karen Carreira and I want her to talk a little bit about the youth mental health first aid program that she introduced to Ludlow CARES Coalition at a meeting that she happened to walk into. Once you're part of CARES you're in it for the rest. She's been involved in CARES heavily since that meeting and we've made some significant progress that's outlined in that letter. I think it's important that all of you understand from Karen what this youth mental health first aid is.

Ms. Carreira: I'm Karen Carreira. I'm not on the board of Ludlow CARES. I am a member of the group. I come to this work as a clinician for my whole career and as a loss survivor. I lost my 15-year-old son, Nathan, to suicide in 2018 and since then have shifted things around so that I focus on prevention work and I focus on people who are finding some help and continuing their journey towards wellness. In 2022, the State of Massachusetts lost 2,357 confirmed deaths to opioids. There are 626 confirmed suicide deaths in the State of Massachusetts in 2022. Those numbers are approximately 3% higher than the previous year. We know that we still have a lot of work to do. The crisis continues and entities like Ludlow CARES and their prevention focused work helps to move folks towards wellness. We also know there is a clear intersection between mental health, substance misuse and suicide. Its research shows us. That intersection really is where we find the programming of mental health first aid and in particular youth mental health first aid. Mental health first aid is a nationally recognized program, research based, evidence based, and it gives learners who are participating in the program a broad brush of overview of conditions that are common in mental health conditions that people generally struggle with, signs and symptoms of how to recognize them and what to look for, risk factors and warning signs of what to be attuned to, heighten your awareness and dial in your observation skills so you can recognize those things earlier so we can work upstream rather than downstream in a crisis situation. A mental health first aid, we've trained 46 in our town at this point and we're on a green light path, full speed ahead to train all of our teachers and administrators in the Ludlow Public Schools at the end of March this year, which is precedent setting for a town to take that huge of a leap and have the entire school district trained in mental health first aid. It's really an exciting thing. Connecting this work and having a sustainability plan to keep this going is where my investment comes in. So, they don't have an experience like my family had and we can help kids who are struggling before they make decisions they can't reverse. I also want to give you one last thought. If you're wondering what is mental health first aid and is it endorsed across Massachusetts, McLean's Hospital which is one of the top psychiatric facilities in the nation, definitely in Massachusetts, I took a webinar with them last week on K-12 youth mental health, and the psychiatrists that were providing that webinar, going through different things, the signs and symptoms, talking a lot about what I just shared with you, but one of the questions from the audience was what can we do. What can we do as community members, what can we do as parents? The only thing psychiatrists said was mental health first aid. Endorse the program. Said if you do nothing but mental health first aid, you have taken leaps and bounds to a prevention prepared community. I was very happy to know that Ludlow CARES is on the same path and critically aligned with the top programs and psychiatrists in the state for our youth and humans in wellness towards wellness. Funding is needed. This work is critical. Thank you for your time and for listening.

Ms. Rooney: Karen came to us in a meeting and we so appreciate her expertise. As you can see, she is someone who has had a lot of experience both personally and professionally in this area. It reminds me a lot of Grace Dias. Using the experience to move the needle to help people so they don't experience the same thing. What I wanted to add to that is it's about the opioids, alcohol, other drugs and all those other things. In addition to that, it's about engaging our youth. We have really come so far in the last couple of years. Initially, it was my kids on the board and children of parents that were board members. We still have that. We have a letter from Estelle Gomulka's son here. We have new members of our CARES board that aren't affiliated with CARES members. What we have now called LHS CARES and they've invited CARES to be part of that organization. There is over 50 Ludlow High School students signed up to be part of CARES. That's precedent setting. They are energized. They are interested and they're not afraid to be in the forefront. These kids have had Red Ribbon Week and all the things that CARES has done year after year since preschool. They've seen these ribbons hung up all over town for 12 years. This didn't happen in 2016 or 2017. This has been a long road with extremely dedicated individuals. Jack and Lexi, I want you to share your thoughts on CARES and thoughts that Teddy has. We did have some CARES members that couldn't be here tonight but I'm asking you to share your thoughts on that.

Lexi: Unfortunately, Teddy Gomulka who's a senior, couldn't be here. We've both been a part of CARES since our freshman year of high school and we joined the advisory board during the summer going into our sophomore year. He couldn't be here so he wrote a letter telling why he believes CARES should have these funds. He said he can clearly remember hearing and seeing all the CARES volunteers at open houses during our elementary years and as a youth in this town he sees more and more how important it is to inspire and educate the youth on the extreme dangers of opioid use, how being proactive about educating before a child or adult attempts substance use, which can often lead to opioid addiction and/or overdose. CARES strives to help before the problem occurs.

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Jack: To finish up what Teddy said, he said that Ludlow CARES is a fast-growing organization with one of its main focuses on the well-being of our youth. The brunt of the opioid crisis is trickling into small towns and cities. I ask that you consider offering opioid relief funding for Ludlow CARES Coalition in order to help them continue to fight against illegal drugs and misuse of opioids. CARES Coalition undoubtedly makes a difference in our community and gets in front of our youth and their families providing pertinent information in a multitude of events year after year such as Red Ribbon Week, Walk to Remember and more. In addition, they sponsor speakers to come to our schools and speak on these topics. All of the events that CARES runs assist in keeping everyone aware of drugs. CARES Coalition promotes an open conversation between parents, children, teachers and students and they are crucial to keeping substance abuse at bay. I'm a proud resident of this town and truly hope that Ludlow stays safe and free from opioids. As a student I know the voice of Ludlow CARES Coalition is heard throughout my school and the community. Every year more and more students show up at CARES Coalition hoping to make a difference. Again, please consider funding CARES Coalition for opioid relief funding. They are in the forefront and in the mainstream of our community. On a personal level, I agree with Teddy. I think the initiative CARES has taken to educate and provide resources to the students within the school is really impactful and made a big difference.

Lexi: From our freshman year to now we've definitely seen a big difference in the kids who care, especially after CARES funded a speaker coming to our school last year. It definitely opened the eyes of the kids to really pay attention to the things around them and we've had many students unfortunately use substances and some have lost their lives to it and we've seen that firsthand. We've definitely realized more over the years and CARES has helped us in understanding more.

Ms. Rooney: Again, I know that there's not a process yet in terms of applying for these funds, but what we're hoping, given that we're all volunteers, is that it's made as easy as possible to fund this. That we're not now spending a lot of time trying to figure out how to fund CARES given all that we have done over the course of 12 years. In this room, probably \$8,000/year is spent by the individuals that are here to fund CARES. A lot of the monies that are donated are by board members and by a lot of other people that come together and give money to make this happen. We use our own equipment; we use our own printers. That's why you don't have copies because this is my color ink. We use our own stuff. Dollar per impact, the amount it would have cost this town to do what we've done over the last 12 years, I can't even imagine. We are asking to carefully consider how you can help CARES get that back so we don't have to continue doing that. That's the first part of our conversation. With that, does anyone have any questions about the letter. Cindy, I was going to ask you to read your statement. Cindy has been on Ludlow CARES Coalition since the beginning, works at Tapestry Health in their harm reduction program, and has been one of our advisors on how to approach some of these things. I've asked Cindy to say a few words.

Ms. Miller: I'm going to be a little redundant. Ludlow CARES has, over the last decade, been in the forefront of drug education in Ludlow. We were concerned before most of this community was willing to admit there was a problem. Providing local and nationally known speakers to the schools and communities to the establishment and support of Red Ribbon Week here in Ludlow, we have been active in supporting people, especially youth, to make informed decisions about the risks of using drugs. In addition, in conjunction with the Dias Foundation, our annual Walk to Remember, that recognizes people's pain of losing someone to the disease and also to support people who are in recovery. In my work at Tapestry, we see the outcomes of drug use in people from every walk of life. Poor, rich, employed, unemployed, young, old and all gender identities who are dealing with the issues of addiction. Drugs on the streets today are not the drugs of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Today, the addition of additives in the opioid supply have made it cheaper for the dealers and more deadly for the users. The supply of heroin does not even have heroin for the most part in the bags that we analyze at work. Fentanyl and Xylazine are often the main drugs. Fentanyl is a deadly synthetic

opioid that is 50-100 times more potent than morphine. Fentanyl also takes a great deal more Narcan to bring people around than with just heroin in the past. Xylazine, which is in very high content in Western Massachusetts, is a non-opioid tranquilizer that is not approved for use in humans. It being added to the drug supply has made it much more threatening because people cannot be revived with Narcan. It's not an opioid so it doesn't respond to Narcan. When you mix that with Fentanyl that's already more potent and the Xylazine on top of it, it makes the drug supply more deadly than it's ever been in the past. Xylazine is also creating horrific wounds in people at their injection sites. The wounds we are seeing now are horrific. Please recognize the Ludlow CARES Coalition for the work they've been doing for so long. We all volunteer and depend on the generous support of the community for funding. Any funding that the Selectmen now have access to would allow the CARES Coalition to be able to increase the reach and impact of the community on drug use and other public health issues our teens and community face today. Please consider CARES in your distribution of the opioid relief funds.

Ms. Rooney: That's someone who's on the very front lines of this addiction as well. Finally, in terms of the funding and impact of care, I've asked Chief Valadas of the Police Department, who has been a huge partner of CARES and asked him to say a few words.

Chief Valades: Thank you for having me here. Ms. Dias and CARES have been excellent partners. What we do is very reactive. When the crisis first started it was a matter of plugging little holes. We didn't have Narcan available so we dealt with a lot of deaths and overdoses. Hearing mental first aid and these programs have been so instrumental to us. We are like conduits. We take in and treat them like patients and we try to get them help. So much of what we do is reactive. Mr. Strange and I met with Director Matusik and Chief Pease about the funding about a year ago. I can't think the intent of the funding was for interdiction, and that's what we do. Is there an avenue for funding through the Police Department? As much as I would like funding, of course. These are worthwhile organizations. I think Laura's organization, CARES itself, would be an excellent use of a proactive program that helps people in need of any age. I can't think of anything that's very localized, that is very appropriate for this type of funding than these 2 organizations. That's my 2 cents. Thank you.

Ms. Rooney: Does anyone have any questions?

Mr. Silva: I don't have any questions. I think it's a wonderful organization. I've been involved years ago with my daughters; my wife and I can't see a better way to spend this money. The question I have is more for us and for Marc. Are we going to receive the same amount every year or is it going to fluctuate? I know you got \$30,000 every year. Is that going to be possible? We don't know. As far as when we do have the money I don't see a better organization between you, some for the Police Department with Narcan, some for any organization that needs this funding to combat this disease.

Mr. Rooney: The level of funding is \$157,000. Right now, \$157,000 has been received. We've raised \$45,000 since the money has been received. We're asking for \$30,000 for the length of time that the funding is received. My understanding is there's going to be about \$600,000 received over the course of so many years and we're asking for half of it. CARES doesn't spend money just to spend money. Maxine Mazur is our treasurer. If you're not careful with a dollar she's coming to get you. She does not tolerate any additional spending that is not worthwhile. We're happy to hear other ideas, happy to continue to work with the community, continue to work with the police. We work with almost every agency in Town. We're happy to continue that work and to share funds where they need to be shared. There's just some core work that we do every year, year in and year out, and as we move forward to sustain CARES and to have younger members come in and want to take charge of the management. I know you say Laura, but this isn't my coalition. This is everyone's coalition. Everybody takes different events. They work hard. I know I'm out there and you see me but that's the reason I'm bringing all these people in. Because it's not mine or Bill's anymore. It's the community's. We're so fortunate that everyone embraced this and embraced this message and was willing to have these conversations. It's everybody that took the risk to do it. I think the money is there. We're not asking for it all up front, but we're doing a hard ask and we've never asked for any money.

Mr. DeBarge: I've been pretty vocal on my thoughts on this. I'd like to see CARES get 75-80% of the money. Without getting into everything that's been said, I think anybody knows, that lives in this town, outside of this town, knows the long arm of the CARES Coalition and what better

place to put funding than in a place that's been doing it a lot longer than the 5 of us. As everyone knows, bureaucracy has to get into the game. What we have to do is we have to have some type of approval system to send to Town Meeting and then Town Meeting will approve that. We have Town Meeting twice a year. This is the part of the government I can't stand because it's too slow. My understanding is with the money we have now, if it was the Board of Selectmen that made a decision and not a separate committee of community at large or members of the board or department heads or anything like that then we would settle on it and then we would have to wait until May. Other than that, a committee which I am anti-committee but in a situation like this if the community wanted to be involved as to the say I think it prolongs the system. I'm more in the belief of keeping it simple. Agreeing on if the police department needs more money for Narcan to distribute then there's a percentage. The senior center, I know the Board of Health is interested in funding for doing what they want to do. I think percentages can easily be worked out with no matter what we get one year you just deal with the percentage and you're not dealing with actual numbers. That's the way I would do it. I think it's a simpler way and I would make CARES 75-80%.

Mr. Goncalves: It's good to see you guys all here. It's fantastic. You know that when I found out about this money I called you that night and I was excited that this was going to become available because I know you guys kill yourselves with fundraising. I've been on enough committees and out there asking and I know what it's like. Go to the same people year after year. It's not easy. You end up spending more time doing that than your mission is of educating people. The Board of Health isn't here unfortunately, I would have loved to hear their take on this but you guys have been doing this. It doesn't make sense to me to try to create a department within town with any of that money or re-train people or re-direct them because time is lives here. The sooner you guys can get that message out to people the better shot you have of saving somebody that's on the edge. To take that and try to recreate a program that you guys already have in place, I'm with Derek in whatever we can give you I'd love to see it go to you guys sooner rather than later.

Ms. Rooney: Because we did do the fundraising, we can wait until next Town Meeting but we don't want to wait to voice the need and to let you know what we're doing and to let you know that we have a plan and we're ready to have impact at a next level quicker than most organizations that are just volunteer organizations can because we listen with really open minds to do the best we can. Any other questions? Because I'm going to move onto Red Ribbon Week.

Ms. Rooney: I'm Maureen Rooney. I'm here to represent the Michael J. Dias Foundation. We certainly over the years too, our story is very similar, we started 12 years ago. We raise all the money as Tony and Manny know at our golf tournament yesterday. We take no State money. The reason we don't take any State money is because the State will dictate how we are to run our programs. That's not going to happen. Our budget is huge. We have 3 full-time employees. What's more important are the guys we're helping, residents in our house. Manny and Tony heard one of them speak last night, Patrick. A success story. Many of our guys have come from this community and some of our guys have died from this community. We will be submitting a letter. Laura, more efficient than her sister-in-law, has her letter in, but we'll be getting our letter in too. We certainly want to collaborate with whomever to keep us in mind also.

Ms. Rooney: We invited the Dias Foundation to be here. The one advantage they have is they can apply for these funds from other communities as well. I agree that there should be some payback to the Dias Foundation as well and I agree that other communities should be looking at what the Dias Foundation and those houses have done for the communities, in terms of being on the recovery side. CARES hits every student in this community. Every parent is getting information from CARES. For those of you that remember Chris Herren, let's not talk about the worst day, let's talk about the first day. That's what we do. Grace and I had a conversation a long time ago that outlined why it was important for us to split this because they weren't going to do what they were going to do and have the prevention side and us do what we were going to do. By doing that and staying partners all this time, the impact has been really good. We haven't had State money, we haven't had all this red tape so we're just asking the easiest way to continue down this path.

Mr. Rosenblum: We all know this is the perfect avenue for this funding and I'm fine with what you wrote down with the frequency and the amount. I'm fine with that. If we do, I like that percentage a little bit better because down the road you might need more or someone else, such as the Dias Foundation or the Police with Narcan but there might be another organization or other avenue that it still goes to where the goal is. When everyone came in I was trying to figure out if

your husband, the attorney, schooled you or you schooled him in preparedness because when you come in you're always prepared like this. That's what we appreciate. We know the organization is great and I'm 100% behind it. I think the way you spelled it out in the funding is perfect right now.

Ms. Rooney: In my other life I used to do something like this, so it was a 2023 BOY, but he's a great guy.

#### TOWN OF LUDLOW

Mr. Goncalves: When we talked about the process we've got to go through to take advantage of this, we're in the middle of a charter commission to try to change the efficiency of the government. That's really important. You can see the hiccups and problems we're having getting anything done. In the old days I guess you could wait 6 months but the world moves a little bit quicker today and our form of government is antiquated for stuff like this where we would like to be able to move in 60 days not 6 months but our hands are tied.

Ms. Rooney: I understand that and the length of time and the red tape and the RFP's and all of those things. The collective experience on boards in our CARES group is significant. We've got people who've been through the grant process. We know that. We're here a year in advance, as far as I'm concerned. We have just finished our fundraising and we do not want to go back to our donors and say there's \$157,000 sitting in a bank account and we can't get it. I don't think I could do that. I think March or May, whenever your Town Meeting is, is plenty of time. We would like to get it before then to do this mental health training that we're doing because we want to include various members of the Board of Selectmen and Marc and some other people who are interested in it. We're going after funding to make that happen. That is a critical thing because once that happens then we can do teen mental health first aid to engage the teens and peer to peer help, which is the next step. The plan is there. Youth mental health first aid talks about opioids, talks about Narcan, talks about what to do in an overdose. We've all been talking about mental health and when Karen walked in we realized what was here we realized maybe we can do something about it instead of just saying I'm worried about it. The theme for Red Ribbon Week this year is be kind to your mind. You see in the posters. It's up here on the high school, it's on the fence outside. Peter is here to talk about the first activity that takes place, which is putting the red ribbons around town.

Mr. Leonczyk: Most of you know who I am but I've been a member of CARES for a long time. I want to echo what we all said. I think it's amazing the amount of support we're hearing on your end. Red Ribbon Week is one of those grass roots initiatives that we connect directly with our youth and try to spread that message around town by actually hanging ribbons. It's been a long tradition partnering with the boys soccer team and Gregg Kolodziey, so on this Sunday we'll be with the boys soccer team hanging the ribbons around town. I get really excited about it because that is an opportunity to speak directly to these young men. They're student athletes, they're role models. Red Ribbon Week is all about drug prevention but things continue to get scarier out there and more severe and more risky for these youth. That will kick off Red Ribbon Week. You'll see more ribbons than you've ever seen before. This is another project that we use our fundraising to support through all schools. We provide all the material, the banners, we have to pay for all that stuff. Sandy is going to talk a little bit about the actual events in the school but it's another project, another part of our fundraising that speaks and connects directly with some of our youth in town.

Ms. Auclair: As you know, the schools also have their own agenda for Red Ribbon Week. Most importantly, Monday is wear a red shirt to commemorate the week. Like Peter said, we fund most of this stuff. The schools have asked for bulbs again for the elementary schools so the schools can plant those bulbs for the spring. They also have asked for sunglasses. They'll have sunglasses that have Ludlow CARES on one side and be kind to your mind on the other. They have different activities for each school. It's all coordinated around recognizing what Red Ribbon Week is all about.

Mr. Bovat: Ben Bovat, vice president of Ludlow CARES Coalition. I'm here to talk about the walk to remember. Coordinating closely with the Michael J. Dias Foundation. We're putting on a candlelight vigil. It's an opportunity to remember those who have lost their lives to substance use disorder. Karen mentioned recently the statistic of over 2,300 people that lost their lives to overdose in 2022. It's important to remember that each one of those is somebody who had a family, somebody who had a life, somebody who had friends. It's not only an opportunity to remember those folks, it's also a show of support for those who are still in recovery. Not only would I love to see the entire community of Ludlow at this event because I have no doubts whatsoever we all know somebody, either in our immediate family or friends circle or somebody outside of that



immediate circle, that has lost their lives or is currently suffering or in recovery or hoping to get into recovery. Not only is this for those people who have lost someone or are in recovery, it's also a show of support. It's getting rid of that stigma that's associated with raising your hand and saying I have a problem and I need some help. When I got into recovery and I went through a few halfway houses 15 years ago, I lost some friends and I lost some family and I didn't have anybody to mourn for them and now I do. I want the opportunity to never have to do that again and never have to see anybody do that again. I invite all of you. It would be fantastic. I know how busy your schedules are but if any of you are able to make the event October 29<sup>th</sup>, it's a Sunday evening. There's no Patriot's game. We plan around that. If you gentleman could be there that goes a long way towards showing the openness of the community helping to further reduce that stigma and let people know it's ok to come into the light of recovery and not have to die in the dark. The last thing I'll say is one of the great things about CARES is it's a bridge between those formal institutions that provide support and the public. We have more than 40 volunteers that come and help support this event. We have more volunteers that help throughout the year at other events. We have the students in our schools that have their own CARES Coalition and come to other events as well. I know there's a lot of different ways to get support out there but there's also the public who may not have that understanding of what's available or what the problems that we face are. CARES is a great way for people to be involved in their community, learn about those public institutions, learn about what some of the struggles are and really get everybody on the same page for support.

Ms. Rooney: While we're not a resource, we're not necessarily that medical resource or place for someone to go. I personally receive phone calls. I know many members receive phone calls. We'll often go to Maureen Rooney and say we need these resources. I agree with what Ben said is that it's an avenue and they may contact us and we're not 9-1-1 but we are a place where they can get information. The trust we built by doing that, doing all these activities, and also doing fun activities has been really important for our community. The activities that are happening at the schools has become almost automatic. They now send in their schedule of what they want to do each day and ask us for the product to supplement their activities. The schools have totally embraced this where before we had to kind of chase that down. The Boys & Girls Club, which you just happen to be here, they have also been participating in Red Ribbon Week and we also bring things to theirs. They also have a whole agenda of items that they're going to do. They even check and say we want to make sure we're doing something similar so people don't have to change their clothes or we want to do something totally different. They're really thinking about how to hammer this message home. That's Red Ribbon Week. I didn't bring you any swag. Usually, I bring you some Red Ribbon Week swag but we're asking for money so no swag. If you go to Walk to Remember there's some swag there. Does anybody have any questions about Red Ribbon Week? The last thing I want to say is we were contacted by the basketball coach at the high school and this year Ludlow High School is going to join Belchertown High School boys basketball team. Three seniors of the varsity basketball team are organizing a pre-season tournament to increase awareness, provide resources and raise funds for mental health and suicide prevention. This year, through the help of Karen and her connections, the Ludlow boys basketball team is going to join them and they asked us to supply them with shirts and the entry fee. Estelle Gomulka designed this and so they'll be wearing these shirts. There's 10 members of the team. We did it with LHS CARES, not our regular logo because we're involving LHS CARES. They're going to develop their own logo and their agenda is going to be different than CARES but supporting of each other. The date of that is November 18<sup>th</sup>. Karen is a speaker at that. He's very excited. He got to know CARES better because he is one of our new youth mental health crisis first aid responders and is one of the advocates that has spoken to the administration at the schools to say that all teachers should have this program.

Ms. Carreira: It's an example of the ripple effect. Last year I worked with Belchertown and they have had its share of suicide deaths, opioid overdoses, and accidents in their high schools and the 3 basketball captains started this as a fundraiser for AFSP last year. I spoke and got involved and I called Mr. Brillo and asked if we are involved in that. He said he didn't know about it and I said so now you do. Through that interaction, the Town of Ludlow is now going to be represented at this event in November and it just goes from there. We've got partnerships with neighboring towns. It really is a feel good in a time and place where the world is so hard and you don't know where you can make a difference. These little things are showing us that we make a difference to somebody every single day by engaging and being involved.

Ms. Rooney: For those that are interested, Samsa has a great website, the talk they hear you campaign. Talking to your kids about alcohol and other drugs and conversation goals. It's something we're going to share in the schools. With the red ribbons it's a reminder to have conversations that if the whole community is talking about it it's really important. And letting know that parents, caregivers, and adults in children's lives, when you begin having these conversations then they'll go to you. Avoiding them is not what we want to do. Having them is what we want to do and they will go to you with their questions instead of someone else.

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Mr. Silva: From the inception, when you started you had some programs that I thought were very good. You mentioned Chris Herren. Is there anything coming up that you're possibly thinking about bringing some more of those back? I thought they were pretty good and impactful.

Ms. Rooney: COVID derailed any of our in-person programming. Last year we had Laura Stack, who is a national figure on the marijuana use and high THC and what that's doing to young people. That presentation was done for the whole high school. We find that captive audience is we're able to grab all of them. A lot of the presentations we're doing at the schools. We can do more community presentations if people are interested. We've been doing some presentations online via Zoom on mental health. Sometimes we get good attendance, sometimes not great attendance. We want to make sure that if we're going to do something big, if we want to do something, first of all we need the money. Chris Herren, he's somebody that costs \$10,000 to come in and talk to your community. We can do things like that but that's half our budget. Those prices have gone up. To sponsor CARES is the same amount at every level. It has been since 2012. We need more money and funding to do that. When we do have speakers, we're focusing on bringing them into the middle school and high school, where they can have an impact and messaging the kids directly. Kids don't want to get lectures. We're talking with LHS CARES about what do you want and they want speakers to come back in from the Dias Foundation. In November, we've already spoken with Adam, who is the director of the Dias Foundation, to come back in and talk to the students. They want to hear those stories of recovery. Fortunately, that doesn't cost us a lot of money. We buy them gift cards and things like that for doing it. Those are the stories they want to hear. They want to hear the real deal. They want their friends to hear the real deal. That's what they want. We do that in the schools. We can do that in the community but we've found that if we're going to do something that's going to engage the community we need a pretty big recognizable name and heavy hitter and that costs a lot of money.

Mr. Gennette: I don't know of any group that could get into a school and have children participate and be a part of a program like this like CARES has. It's really a testament that CARES has the boots on the ground in the community as far as early preventative addressing issues related to opioid. I'm all about it. There is other things. Marc, I think in the Town Meeting not only was there the stabilization account created but we created a committee that needs to be created. Is that accurate?

Mr. Strange: Town Meeting did not create the committee but it's kind of, as the Chief had mentioned we loosely put together a group before then, but that still needs to be fully hashed out.

Mr. Gennette: Ludlow CARES is obviously on our mind to participate in that. Michael J. Dias is a part of that as well. The Police Chief and Board of Health and everybody is involved. I love the idea that the community is coming together to work this out. Hopefully we can do that sooner than later so we don't spend a lot of time trying to chase who's going to get what and where. I think if we put the best minds on this together I think we can make some headway. Thanks everybody for coming in. We really appreciate it.

Ms. Rooney: I can't speak for everybody but I'd like to be a part of the next meeting. We don't want to wait and hear from other people. We want to be at the table so that we can have a discussion about what it takes to do these things. Not after the policy has been done. We think we deserve that at this point. I know you can't vote on this. I know you can't tell us we have the money but any ongoing conversations we want to be part of it. We don't want to wait to hear it from somebody else.

Mr. Gennette: We have to create this committee and we know that you've heard the support here tonight. I don't think that CARES is going to be left out of the conversation.

Ms. Rooney: We want to be part of the next meeting. I'm available any day. This is a priority for me. I will put other things aside to be here. We want to be involved as any town. I know we're not a town department. I understand that, but we want to be involved as a town department.

**Motion made by Mr. Rosenblum to declare October 23-31<sup>st</sup> Red Ribbon Week second. All in favor. Motion passed 5-0.**

Mr. Gennette: While we're here guys, as far as this committee goes, what's your thoughts on the organization of this? How would you guys like to proceed? I know Derek doesn't want one at all.

Mr. Silva: Me either. There's no need for one. If we have half a dozen organizations we're going to distribute the funds to why are we going to have a committee decide.

Mr. DeBarge: I think because CARES is as large as they are and do the things they do I think CARES can be a place that a smaller group could go to with the funding we give them and say listen can you help us out with this instead of these little... Departments can come to us and we can say you can use the money for what the total amount should be, turn that into a percentage, divvy it out and let it go. Whatever this board decides to do before May Town Meeting, if the board decides to get a committee going I'm going to tell you from experience you better start right now so you can get something set to go or we get an article going before May Town Meeting. I think we're fully capable of being able to listen to department heads through Marc or in here or whatever. I think this board is fully capable of that to keep the slowness of the process out of it.

Mr. Goncalves: I agree. I think that a committee is going to muddy the waters. I definitely want to make sure that we get everybody in that's got an interest. The Board of Health, the Chief, the other Chief. Get some info from them and see what they're thinking and maybe at that point we can weigh everything. Maybe what we need to do this year is going to be different than next year. Maybe they need a kick start and it's going to take a year for Police or Fire to put something together so it would be good to talk to everybody.

Mr. Strange: Are you thinking of inviting specific departments in? Health, Chiefs, CARES, Dias? I don't know if there's other organizations.

Mr. Goncalves: We've heard from these 2 and I think we have a pretty good idea what they want to do. I'd be more concerned with the town departments. That we hear them so that they tell us what's on their mind. So, we can't be accused afterward of ignoring them and going outside.

Mr. Rosenblum: It's the process of the budget process. Go to the departments and what's your ask. Just like we do with the budget. What's your ask? You vet it.

Mr. Strange: Maybe Senior Center and Vets.

Mr. DeBarge: They could send a letter in. I could talk to them both.

Mr. Strange: I'll send a message to all the departments letting them know.

Mr. Gennette: As far as the Town Meeting vote, formulating a committee that was approved, how does that play into this?

Mr. Strange: Town Meeting didn't approve the committee.

Mr. Silva: Didn't we just accept the money.

Mr. Goncalves: We created the enterprise fund to accept the money.

Mr. Gennette: I agree. We'll go from there. We're going to jump ahead. I'm going to call on the Boys and Girls Club. In the event calendar on October 27<sup>th</sup>, we have the Rag Shag Parade at the Ludlow Boys and Girls Club from 6-8:30.

Ms. Lambeau: My name is Jodie Lambeau. I'm the Director of Programs at the Ludlow Boys & Girls Club and we're looking to continue our annual event that has occurred for well over 25 years. I've been in contact with folks around town, Chief Valadas, our Sheriff's Department and we're

all set. We will start here at Town Hall. The costume parade is welcoming to the whole community. The Police Department will need to shut down Chapin Street and Sportsmen's Road to Claudia's Way all the way to the club. It's about .8 miles and usually takes us 20 minutes from start to finish then they reopen the roads. The police presence and fire department presence is there for crowd control and traffic control throughout the entirety of the event. We expect anywhere between 500-700 people. Last year we saw about 500 youth and you include their family and friends.

Mr. Irizarry: I'm Josue Irizarry, the CEO.

**Motion made by Mr. Silva** to allow the Director of Programs of the Ludlow Community Center requesting permission to have the Rag Shag Parade & Trunk or Treat on Friday October 27<sup>th</sup> beginning at 6:00 p.m. at Town Hall. **Mr. Rosenblum second. All in favor. Motion passed 5-0.**

Mr. DeBarge: We can still donate candy at the club for that, correct? You have boxes right in the lobby?

Ms. Lambeau: You can go right to the membership desk. There was a call from the 250<sup>th</sup> Committee to bring 250 bags in and I have about 220 sitting in my office right now.

Mr. Irizarry: We do have a request for the banner.

Mr. Gennette: Christina Jardine, Director of Donor Relations & Events – Ludlow Boys & Girls Club – requesting permission from the Board to hang to banners (72" x 120") across from the Police Station and one at the bridge going into Indian Orchard promoting their upcoming auction event and to thank their event sponsors from mid-October through mid-November.

**So moved by Mr. Silva. Mr. Goncalves second. All in favor. Motion passed 5-0.**

Ms. Lambeau: Do you need to approve design and do we speak with DPW for hanging of the banner?

Mr. Rosenblum: Yes.

Ms. Lambeau: We will reach out. Thank you so much.

Mr. Gennette: Octavia Anderson, Animal Control Officer – requesting to use the conference room(s) on a Saturday or Sunday either the last weekend of November or first weekend in December for a Pet Santa Photo Fundraiser.

Ms. Anderson: Our non-profit group, which is called Ludlow Animal Pals/Friends of Ludlow Animal Control, we had now our second year at the Iron Duke Brewing this weekend, a Halloween Costume Party for pets, which was fun. Because we now are a legitimate 501 now we're looking to do other events to let the word out. A non-profit was formed because we desperately need a shelter in this town and the town budget just doesn't cover what I tend to bring in. That's one of the main reasons this non-profit ended up being formed and now we have all our people in place. I thought that would be a really good way. The conference room would work really well because we have an easy in and easy out. We just need to find a Santa. We'll do all the decorating and it will be a fun event. The money will go...right now we have it under the umbrella of Ludlow Animal Pals one group of people are raising money solely for the shelter and that is in the very beginning stages of thought. The other side of it are the Friends of Ludlow Animal Control. Money goes towards dogs like Ralph, which I have right now in the shelter which was over \$500 because somebody let his nails grow into his paw. Because he was abandoned, he chewed on his paw until almost the bones were showing and he couldn't do that anymore so he started to chew on himself because he was so stressed. He's doing so much better. Happy and no longer growling at me. It goes for things like that.

Mr. Gennette: There's no conflict of anything like that?

Ms. Anderson: No, I've already signed all the forms.

**Motion made by Mr. Goncalves** to allow the Animal Control and/or the non-profit organization Friends of the Ludlow Animal Control to use the conference room a Saturday or Sunda either the

last weekend of November or first week of December to have a Pet Santa Photo Fundraiser. **Mr. Rosenblum second. All in favor. Motion passed 5-0.**

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## CORRESPONDENCE

TOWN OF LUDLOW

132. Beverly Dudley, Resident, requesting to be on the Disability Commission.

**Motion made by Mr. Silva** to approve Ms. Beverly Dudley's request to be on the Disability Commission. **Mr. Goncalves second.**

Mr. Goncalves: Are you still on that, James?

Mr. Gennette: I am. I do not know this person but we are losing members on the Disability Commission and there are plenty of openings.

**All in favor. Motion passed 5-0.**

135. Shawn Paxton – notifying the Board of his resignation from the Conservation Commission effective October 19, 2023.

**Motion made by Mr. DeBarge** to accept the resignation of Shawn Paxton from the Conservation Commission effective October 19, 2023, and Thank You for your service. **Mr. Goncalves second. All in favor. Motion passed 5-0.**

136. Penny Lebel – notifying the Board of her retirement as office assistant with the Conservation Commission, as well as her volunteer positions on the Safety Committee, Emergency Preparedness Committee, Dog Park Committee and Open Space Committee effective October 27, 2023.

Mr. Gennette: As an amendment, it looks like she's going to hang on the Conservation Committee for a little while until they get a replacement for her.

**Motion made by Mr. Rosenblum** to accept the retirement of Penny Lebel as office assistant with the Conservation Commission as well as her volunteer positions on the Safety Committee, Emergency Preparedness Committee, Dog Park Committee and Open Space Committee effective October 27, 2023, and to thank her for all of her service to the Town of Ludlow. **Mr. DeBarge second. All in favor. Motion passed 5-0.**

Mr. Gennette: Thank you, Penny, for all your years of service.

138. Chris Bloom, Chocorua Realty Investments, LLC – suggesting to the Board that the Building Department needs multiple Building Inspectors.

Mr. Silva: No discussion. So noted. We do our best. We do have an inspector and assistant. Before we get there we need a lot of proof that it's going to warrant the expense.

Ms. Ward: I wasn't prepared to argue this at the moment. I do agree with you that some justification for numbers and applications that we receive and process needs to be gathered and submitted. I'm in the process of doing that through public records requests in other communities and I'll be gathering information with some help that was offered to me, from various different communities to find out essentially how many applications they're processing and receiving and how many individuals they have within their departments and get kind of a baseline figure average of permits and applications per employee. In the department now I have myself as a full-time employee. I have a part-time individual who is only able to work 14 ½ hours, which is 3 half days and a 4<sup>th</sup> day for a couple of hours. Although it has helped to some extent there's still quite a few of the same problems I've had especially coming into the busy season with the rush for new houses and rush to get foundations into the ground and the mills coming online for their construction project with hundreds of inspections that are happening there.

Mr. Goncalves: On the mills, all controlled construction, what exactly do you need to do there?

Ms. Ward: Construction control does not necessarily mean it will preclude the need for actual inspections. It may be a misconception.

Mr. Goncalves: I really don't know. When you have that you're hiring an architect or professional engineer so it's either the system is rigged for a bunch of money to be spent or there's redundancy.

Ms. Ward: I'm not sure I'd frame it quite that way. With a building project, a building that is over 7,300 cubic feet the need for construction control is mandated by the state. What that means is there must be oversight from an architect or engineer through construction control.

Mr. Goncalves: They don't sign off on certain parts of the inspections you would normally have to do. I've been thinking it for a long time. You think construction control you have to get a PE or architect on it. It kind of takes us off the hook and you've got somebody else taking responsibility.

Ms. Ward: It doesn't take us off the hook completely. We still have to do our framing inspections, we still have to do our insulation inspections, we still have to do the basic inspections that are necessary. It doesn't cover any plumbing or electrical. It also doesn't completely take our liability away to make sure the project is done correctly. Even though an architect or engineer may be brought on with construction control it doesn't mean necessarily they will submit reports or in my experience there have been many that have not shown up. They sign the form, stamp their stamp, do the final form at the end and that's all we hear of them.

Mr. Goncalves: The state law will allow us to maybe put more burden on controlled construction to the third-party professional to loosen up our time on those things.

Ms. Ward: The answer to the question is I don't know how much we can put on a architect or engineer to take the burden off of a building department's required inspection obligation. I can find that out as part of my research.

Mr. Goncalves: If you have a PE or architect that's going to be signing and taking some kind of professional responsibility, why have them if you have to do everything they're going to do once the drawings are completed if you're still double checking all the work.

Ms. Ward: I understand your question. What an architect or engineer is taking construction control, a lot of times how I use them is to prevent me from having to have to go through a plan set with a fine-tooth comb and look through all of the code requirements that are needed. That's why the state has mandated construction control is necessary in big buildings like that. For instance, the mill project, the plan set, half page set, it's that thick. I could never go through that plan set.

Mr. Goncalves: That's why I'm saying is it possible that you do the mandate on that side, they have insurance, they've got everything in place or some kind of a bond and let the professionals that drew all that take some responsibility, or all of the responsibility and get us off the hook.

Ms. Ward: There is still a number of inspections that are required. I will specifically look into what I can pass off on a construction control individual and what I can't. The only thing so far that I've been able to really identify is fire stopping at the mills.

Mr. Goncalves: You still have to do a lot of the ADA and safety stuff.

Ms. Ward: Absolutely. Fire alarm, sprinkler, I have to witness all of those tests as well with the fire department. Foundation inspections, footing inspections, rebar inspections, there's a lot of them. Especially on a commercial project. But that's only commercial. Construction control is something that not even applies to a residential building.

Mr. Goncalves: When you said the mills, if there's a way we can get you away from that responsibility rather than consume you down there.

Ms. Ward: I appreciate that. One thing I do have to say as far as mills, I will try and combine my inspections there. If I have 3-4 floors I will make sure they are ready for a big chunk. I don't go in there for 1-2 inspections and I won't allow the electrical and plumbing inspectors to either. We're trying to be as efficient as we can with those inspections. We still have to pay the electrical and plumbing contractors because they are contractors. They're not employees of the town. We still have to pay them separately for each inspection per unit, which it gets hefty. We're talking probably 2-3 of each kind of inspection, and I have the mills have made it difficult in a certain area because I have to do a couple of framing inspections and a couple of insulation inspections for

each unit. I combine them but the way they're doing things I have to do those inspections twice where normally I would only do them once. It's a complicated subject but I will look into what I can legally push onto them. What other questions can I answer? I still have a hard time staying within the 30 days for permit application processing. That drives me batty and I'm sure it doesn't make you folks happy either.

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Mr. Goncalves: I don't know about them, but I get a million phone calls from Ward to say it's in one ear and out the other but I know your hands are tied.

Ms. Ward: They are. I'm doing the best I can.

Mr. Goncalves: How about Joe? How's it working out with him?

Ms. Ward: Again, he can work 14 ½ hours so it's tough. He's taken on and I've given him a lot more inspections to do and he's taken on a lot more but he's only 1 person too and I know he's behind. He's starting to really fall behind as far as the permits that have been assigned to him. He's taken some burden off of me but when we enter the busy season like we are now, I also have the liquor license inspections coming up and I have to do those for the Fire Department. That's not something... I'm obligated to. Then the schools. There are a lot of the annual inspections that have unfortunately fallen through the cracks that I can't get done at all because I just don't have time. I have to prioritize. The permits and inspections for ongoing construction projects have to come first and foremost. And obviously public safety ahead of everything else. This is a big community and it's growing and I strongly believe that this community is growing a little bit faster than our infrastructure has been able to keep up. I'll prove that with numbers.

Mr. Goncalves: That will be good to have some comparisons. Like us with previous years and us against other communities.

Ms. Ward: Absolutely. I can't go back for long periods of time, some of the records don't even exist in our community.

Mr. Goncalves: I remember 2011-2012 when we got hit with the microburst there was computer spreadsheets that were spit from the Building Department and Justin put everything into that system. I'll go back and I think we spent a million dollars on a program for the Building Department permits, and Justin had the ability to produce reports on command. I remember looking at sheets that there was 400 roof permits.

Ms. Ward: I can pull up those.

Mr. Goncalves: Everything had been put into the system for all the permits that were pulled. That was 2011, 2012, 2013, when we got hit with the microburst.

Ms. Ward: I can pull up permit reports but that system only goes back to 2015. From there back, that's a spotty situation.

Mr. Goncalves: Let's make sure we have whatever we need so next time we don't have to send her back for more numbers.

Ms. Ward: That's fair. How far back do you want to go? I was planning on going back 3 years.

Mr. Goncalves: I need more than 3 years.

Mr. Rosenblum: We had asked a couple years ago for these numbers and we never got them. If we go maybe 5 to see what has happened and where we are. I think that's fair.

Mr. Gennette: Hopefully Chris Bloom is satisfied with the discussion.

Ms. Ward: It wasn't my idea. Another inspector is definitely my idea.

## **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

Board to approve and sign Selectmen Meeting Minutes of October 2, 2023.

**Motion made by Mr. Goncalves** to approve and sign Selectmen Meeting Minutes of October 2, 2023, with all members present. **Mr. Rosenblum second. All in favor. Motion passed 5-0.**

Board to approve and sign Selectmen Meeting Minutes of October 3, 2023.

**Motion made by Mr. Goncalves** to approve and sign Selectmen Meeting Minutes of October 3, 2023, with all members present. **Mr. Rosenblum second. All in favor. Motion passed 5-0.**

Board to approve and sign Executive Session Minutes of October 3, 2023.

**Motion made by Mr. Goncalves** to approve and sign Executive Session Minutes of October 3, 2023, with all members present. **Mr. Rosenblum second. All in favor. Motion passed 5-0.**

## NEW BUSINESS

Board to discuss and possibly vote to reclassify the DPW Mechanic from a PWM3 to a PMW4.

Mr. Rosenblum: I do have that they do have the money in their budget already, so if the money's there and it's not going to increase their budget at all, they're saving in the neighborhood of \$20,000 right now with the PW1 and PW2. I see no reason why we can't approve this.

Mr. Silva: I think in the DPW we need to upgrade these positions anyway because they're having issues and trouble. The mechanic has been an issue for 5 years and we've got to have somebody in place that's getting paid what they're worth so I don't see a problem with it.

Mr. DeBarge: In order to get somebody qualified to work on the machines we have to pay them. And we have to make sure we do that. We spend far too much money farming our vehicles out everywhere for the simple cost of oil changes. I'd love to see the expansion of our DPW with full-time mechanics, a full-time electrician to be able to go out to our buildings and all of that. That is the vision we all have.

**Motion made by Mr. Rosenblum** to reclassify the DPW Mechanic from a PWM3 to a PWM4. **Mr. Goncalves second. All in favor. Motion passed 5-0.**

Board to discuss a sound ordinance due to resident complaints regarding dumpsters being emptied at 5:30 a.m.

Mr. Gennette: There's more than just dumpsters being emptied at 5:30 a.m. It just happens to be most of what I'm hearing about. We're getting stuff down from the mills on construction at 5:30 a.m. There's been a bunch of different things. The gentleman from the mills did say maybe a sound ordinance is in place. I was going to bring it in because we know the mills were a construction thing. We reached out to Mr. Daley and he was going to take care of the noise issue down there and he had no problem trying to accommodate that resident. There was more conversations that came in, particularly about dumpsters in residential communities that are getting emptied at 5:30 a.m. I wanted to put this on the agenda to see if you guys wanted an interest or taste or appetite for creating a sound ordinance for the next Town Meeting.

Mr. Silva: We have a zoning ordinance already at 6-7 in the morning. Construction is 7 a.m. I believe. I feel that if we can find out who's violating just send them an ordinance letter.

Mr. Goncalves: We had somebody on East Street, across the street from my office, that was complaining about a dumpster being emptied at 4:00-4:30 in the morning. We did address it. It could have been pre you coming on board. We did address it and we took a vote on what time the earliest dumpsters could start to take trash out. I think we just need to look at that.

Mr. Gennette: If there's already something in place can we at least let the dumpster companies know?

Mr. Goncalves: I think it might have been 7:00 but we took a formal vote on that.

Mr. Silva: It was a 7:00 work order and a 6:00 starting their machinery.



Mr. Strange: Do you have any idea when that was?

Mr. DeBarge: I have no recollection of that at all.

Mr. Silva: I think it was a zoning bylaw.

Mr. Strange: If it was a zoning bylaw that would have had to gone to Town Meeting.

Mr. Goncalves: It wasn't a zoning bylaw. It was here. It was a violation that somebody was complaining and it was on East Street. We took it upon ourselves to make a motion and vote and send a letter out to this person.

Mr. DeBarge: What was the person doing?

Mr. Goncalves: They were emptying the dumpster on East Street across the street from my office in that plaza.

Mr. DeBarge: I don't remember a formal vote. The contractor 7:00 a.m. time has been in place since I was a cop.

Mr. Strange: Manny, you're saying there's an existing bylaw that talks about...

Mr. DeBarge: Construction I'm aware of at 7:00 a.m.

Mr. Goncalves: I think the dumpster should be the same thing as construction. It's the same type of noise. They come early. I have a picture of one at 5:13.

Mr. Gennette: At HealthSouth they're out there at 5:30 and that's Republic.

Board to discuss and possibly vote to appropriate \$3,600 in 40R funds to purchase brackets for military service banners.

**Motion made by Mr. Rosenblum** to appropriate \$3,600 in 40R funds to purchase brackets for military service banners. **Mr. Goncalves second.**

Mr. DeBarge: Just so you can't say that you didn't hear this, this \$3,600 was factored in on 60 banners because we needed to get started somewhere. The possibility of the cost going up with 100 banners, which is what we're thinking. That may lower the cost for the total number.

Mr. Strange: So, \$60/bracket. Do you want to do \$6,000? There's \$140,000 in that account.

**Mr. Rosenblum amend motion** to up to \$6,000 **Mr. Goncalves second. All in favor. Motion passed 5-0.**

## **BOARD UPDATES/MISC**

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.

### **Event Calendar:**

October 23<sup>rd</sup> – 31<sup>st</sup> Ludlow CARES Coalition Red Ribbon Week

October 27<sup>th</sup> – Rag Shag Parade at the Ludlow Boys & Girls Club 6-8:30 p.m.

October 28<sup>th</sup> – 250<sup>th</sup> & Jimmy Mazz Ludlow Legends Night 6 p.m. – 10 p.m. at Ludlow Country Club

October 29<sup>th</sup> – Ludlow CARES Coalition's a Walk to Remember at the Ludlow Boys & Girls Club at 6 p.m.

## **CLOSING COMMENTS**

Mr. DeBarge: I'm going to start with Celebrate Ludlow. I was there most of the day working with the 250<sup>th</sup> Committee booth. It's the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of the move from July to October and from the Fish & Game down to the gazebo. I like the fall atmosphere to it. A lot of other people did too. Laurie

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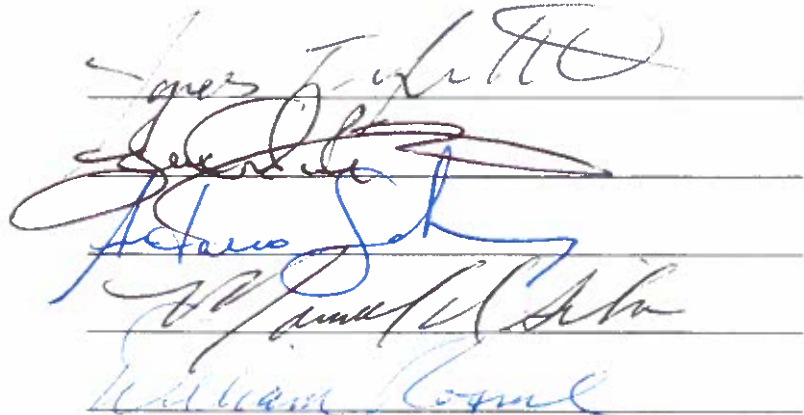
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Smith, the committee chair, and the entire committee of Celebrate Ludlow, another fantastic job. I know how stressful it gets with every committee and every group wanting to know every piece of information and I know how difficult it can be. We wouldn't be a great community without the volunteers we have for these committees. Fantastic job Laurie and everyone on the Celebrate Ludlow Committee. I had a great time. We're not going to meet on Halloween night, right?

Mr. Strange: No.

Mr. DeBarge: Since we're not meeting before Halloween I hope to see more kids out this year. I hope everybody takes heed on the road and slows down and stays off the roads during trick or treating time if you can and if you are on the road keep your head on a swivel. I'd like to see a lot more involved. The numbers by our Rag Shag, I'm going to miss it this year, are mesmerizing. If you have not gone and seen it go see it. It's incredible.

**Motion made by Mr. Rosenblum** to leave regular session at 7:26 p.m. not to return to and enter into Executive Session in order to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining or litigating position of the public body and the chair so declares. **Mr. Goncalves second. Roll call. Mr. Silva yes, Mr. Rosenblum yes, Mr. DeBarge yes, Mr. Goncalves yes, Mr. Gennette yes. Motion passed 5-0.**

  
Chairman  
Ludlow Board of Selectmen

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