

The Meeting of the Board of Selectmen held on Tuesday, October 15, 2024, began at 5:30 p.m. in the Board of Selectmen's Conference Room at the Town Hall.

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

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TOWN OF LUDLOW

Members Absent:

First Order of Business: The Pledge of Allegiance

VISITATIONS

5:35 p.m. – Kim Downing – Westover Metropolitan Development Corp Update

Mr. DeBarge: Thank you for coming. For everyone that doesn't know, each Selectman is given a long list of liaison positions they have. One of mine has been WMDC for quite a while, I think since I've been on the Board. I was able to attend meetings before. My schedule has not allowed me to attend them much at all over the past year. I asked Kim to come in because WMDC is a big money maker for us. It's a big deal at Westover. There's a ton of changes going on that can benefit our community.

Ms. Downing: I have some visual aids. These are just a few pictures we've taken recently. I don't know if anyone knows the history, and I won't go into long detail, but a very brief situation where in 1949 the Soviets tested their first nuclear bomb. General Curtis Lemay developed a theory of deterrence based on the belief of being fully prepared for retaliation. And that led to he had some history with Westover and that led to the strategic air command, which sat. What they used to do, our offices now used to be called the mall hall. They had 70 men and they would go on different teams a week at a time and they would go everywhere together. Outside on what they called the Christmas Tree, because it was made where there were runways like a Christmas Tree, they had B52 bombers that were loaded with nuclear weapons. Those, depending on the alert, would be running. These men went everywhere together for a week so they could be in the air within 15-30 minutes. That's how it started. This kept going on until 1973. In 1973 the Air Force pulled out of the base. We didn't need it anymore, and it became the 3rd brigade for the Satellite mission until 1986. After SAT left, the Air Force broke off land and they decided to break up the base because they didn't need it. They went down to a reserve base. They broke off a lot of land and distributed it Ludlow, Granby and Chicopee. From there, the State went in and created a charter, a private enterprise, and it had to be the orderly conversion and redevelopment of land formerly used for certain activities for the base in order to prevent light, economic dislocation and unemployment. And to aid private enterprise to fully utilize opportunities to alleviate unemployment. Consequently, we have the industrial parks and that took many years to set up and build. Those are in Chicopee and Ludlow. We've got 4 big industrial parks. From there they created a Board of Directors and what we are now. After that we were under the direction of the government, Department of Defense and the Air Force to create these industrial parks. From there they did a noise study because at the time they were doing the C5A's, the big carriers. There was quite a few complaints. They did an assessment and widened the range of the C5A noise. Our charge at that time for many years was to purchase land and the homes within that line of abatement and to develop, cover up, buy it, knock down the homes, cover up the land and put up fencing. That finished several years ago.

Mr. Goncalves: There are map overlays for that available where you can see ones you absolutely have to have and the other one could be subject to improvements to the home, more insulation, windows, etc.

Ms. Downing: Exactly. They did buy out and many people moved.

Mr. Gennette: Do some houses outside of that zone still have the ability?

Mr. Goncalves: I think the money is gone.

Ms. Downing: The money is gone. They pretty much completed everything in the last 10 years. We did have nuclear bombs in Stony Brook. They're gone. Everything is gone. It's a nice, healthy area and they've worked very hard to work with environmental and all of the agencies.

Simultaneously, we began developing a civilian airport and refurbishing the hangers, buildings, and runways. There was a cutback in the reserve base on the tower hours. Four to five years ago we started the process of doing landing with lighting and electronically so that as long as we're notified, we don't have a tower ourselves, but someone comes out, flips the switches and the pilots can come in through these lights and they can take off, so we have the ability to do 24-hour flight, 7 days a week, which was a big thing for us. We were kind of tied in with day hours and the tower and Air Force and of course they're cutting back their hours. We were entertained when everything was done by several outside investors who came in and talked to us about developing the airport. We have the longest runway, second only to the space shuttle. It's the longest runway in New England back up for the land space shuttle. That makes us one of the premier, it makes us very desirable. We had a lot of outside investment interest with people for developing things like big Amazon distribution centers and wanting to take over the whole airport. We decided against that and we decided we were going to develop the airport ourselves. In the last year, we've been developing a website, we have an event on Thursday, which you are all invited to for our 50th anniversary that we have the land that we started and this was given to us. We're celebrating making the most of the situation and how wonderful it is. We just finished our 2nd hanger. These hangers are absolutely beautiful. You can eat off the floor. The other hangers that have not been refurbished are still useful. We rent them out with many different things. Not just airplanes. Some of them are not heated. We make income all the time. We decided that we would go forward and try to establish. We have a new website, new flyers, a big media kick off on Thursday letting people know where we are and going forward we're going to do a lot of media. We want to become a destination for people. This past weekend we did the enshrinement. We had 15 planes come in for the Basketball Hall of Fame and several private planes. We do have Atlantic City flights coming in and we have lots of people that utilize the airport.

Mr. Goncalves: You get a lot of action from the colleges?

Ms. Downing: Come school time there's a lot of private planes that come in for people who go to Amherst and UMASS.

Mr. Rosenblum: Get Lost in Ludlow.

Ms. Downing: MGM does not bring in. They go to Bradley and they have their cars. We would love to have them come because it's much shorter. Those are the things we're working on. We have ads in flight magazines and professional periodicals and things of that nature. We're growing this airport. We've done a refurbishment on the pilot's lounge, which is very important because if the pilots want to come here then that makes a difference. They'll tell the owners and they'll say we'd rather go there because they're lovely people. Our fuel is a bit cheaper than most places. We have customs available so we take international flights. In the past many years, when the UN comes in we've had a lot of foreign flights. Some of them didn't have their tower up so they came to us. This brings us to Thursday. This is what we've been working on. We've been doing the terminal, which is what you've got pictures of, we go to conferences and gatherings around the country. We just hired a consulting firm that has a big website advancement and media access for the United States and Europe. We're trying the best we can to make us important, hopefully a destination airport. We have a big parking lot and room for more.

Mr. DeBarge: Do you remember some of the costs associated with the refurbishment of the hangers?

Ms. Downing: We did get grants but you're looking now at 6-7 million dollars. We don't pay that, probably 1/3 of that. We're just finishing up the 2nd hanger and we're waiting for the fire suppression system that we waited for a year on. We're hopefully going forward and getting more grants to go forward in the development. That's our charge and however we can make money and bring tax dollars in we're happy to do it.

Mr. Gennette: What's the fleet size? How many planes?

Ms. Downing: We don't own planes. We're just an airport like Westfield. Those plane are taking rental into our hangers. We're full on the first hanger and a waiting list on the 2nd. We make very good money on storage.

Mr. Gennette: You are doing 24-hour flights?

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Ms. Downing: We can do 24-hour flights. If the pilots call in and somebody wants to land they call the number and we flip the switch and they can come in electronically and they can take off.

Mr. Gennette: Are you seeing a big increase in your bookings for flights?

Ms. Downing: Things have been very tight. Gas and fuel is very expensive. We've found that the competition is very expensive. Bradley just wants commercial so we're hoping to pick up some of those private planes.

Mr. Goncalves: I was up in Northampton not too long ago for a function and they keep adding and the guy that runs it said he can't keep up with the demand. He can't build them fast enough right now. It's becoming easier for people to buy planes. I know several people in this area that have bought private planes in the last 3 years. How does the Town of Ludlow benefit from you renting space for 30 more planes?

Ms. Downing: We're taxed like anything else. We contribute a certain amount. Anything in the industrial park that's in Ludlow is taxed. We manage and maintain that and make sure it's fully housed and looking good.

Mr. Goncalves: I know somebody out there is probably going to think about this. All of a sudden we have a pretty regular fleet of planes flying in and out of there, and it's more noise.

Ms. Downing: Most of these are private planes, smaller planes. They're not the big planes. Even over at the base, the C5A's have been changed to be smaller and quieter. They just put in a great big new hanger for maintenance so their fleets are much smaller and quieter. Not like the old C5A's where you were deaf.

Mr. Goncalves: On the private side all of a sudden we've got 30-40 flights coming in and out and that flight pattern is over Ludlow. Is there a royalty, fee or anything the Town collects?

Ms. Downing: No. We maintain a landing fee and certain things if we want customs and certain charges. We don't pass on those fees and we should only hope we have 30 a day. That's what we're aiming for. We've only really started this a year ago and getting this off the ground and getting people to know who we are and where we are and our benefits, especially the size of the runway, is really important.

Mr. Goncalves: I was there with Ken Delude when I took a tour. We happened to be there when some middle eastern came in. They had 4 Suburbans in the hangers and they unloaded the planes with clothes and shoes.

Ms. Downing: If you're interested, any time we're happy to give tours. You're all invited for Thursday at 5:00. It's not going to be long. A few speeches and politicians celebrating and having a nice meal and celebrating our 50th. That's in our new hanger. It's quite impressive. I know you look at the pictures but when you're actually in the hanger it's unbelievable, it's massive. They're gigantic planes.

Mr. Gennette: Recently we had the Pond Committee in here and they're trying to clean up Wade Pond, which is an associated property with the golf course and the base. Do you have any influence over what happens with that pond?

Ms. Downing: We have nothing but cooperation from the people that you speak to. They're very happy to go in and help out where it's needed.

Mr. Gennette: How would the Pond Committee get ahold of your Board?

Ms. Downing: They would get a hold of Andy Whitter and explain the situation. If it's anything we are capable of doing, they're very helpful. We have a great staff. It's not a big staff but it's a great staff and they're really helpful.

Mr. Gennette: The Pond Committee is looking for some collaboration on Wade Pond. It's actually the largest body of water in Ludlow. People are using it recreationally. It would be nice to improve it. It's overgrown.

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Ms. Downing: As long as we're allowed to do what we need to do, because we have restrictions. We're not allowed to do recreational enhancements or builds. We have a section that is butting up against a particular housing area and they're utilizing some of our land for bikes and it would be nice if we could just give them some of the land, but we can't. We have heavy restrictions with the Federal government in our charter.

Mr. Gennette: If there's a collaboration to be had that would be great and if not at least we tried.

Ms. Downing: I'll look at the rules and regulations and would be happy to discuss it and would be happy if they were able to help. Hopefully some of you will come on Thursday. We're looking forward to it.

CORRESPONDENCE

311. Michael LaFever, Resident – Requesting to be appointed by the Board as an Unenrolled Poll Worker.

Motion made by Mr. Goncalves to appoint Michael LaFever, resident, as an unenrolled poll worker. Mr. Gennette second. All in favor. Motion passed 5-0.

312. Mary Jo Traghese, Resident – Requesting to be appointed by the Board as a Democratic Poll Worker.

Motion made by Mr. Gennette to appoint Mary Jo Traghese as a democratic poll worker. Mr. Rosenblum second. All in favor. Motion passed 5-0.

313. Liz Whynott, Director of Harm Reduction Programs, Tapestry – Requesting Opioid Recovery and Remediation Funds.

Mr. Goncalves: I think we need to get Ms. Whynott in at a future meeting and see exactly what their program is all about, what they do, what type of involvement in Ludlow they would have. I don't think a letter is good at this point.

Mr. Gennette: I concur.

Mr. DeBarge: I kind of expected someone from the Board of Health or that place to be here for this. I would agree with that.

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Motion made by Mr. Goncalves to invite Tapestry in sometime in the future to discuss what they do and get a better understanding of what their operation is and how it would benefit the Town of Ludlow with their program. Mr. Rosenblum second. All in favor. Motion passed 5-0.

314. Chief Pease – Request to charge off medical expenses and lost wages to Chapter 41, Section 111F for an injury sustained by a Firefighter/Paramedic as a result of an incident that occurred on October 2, 2024.

Motion made by Mr. Rosenblum to approve a request to charge off medical expenses and lost wages to Chapter 41, Section 111F for an injury sustained by a Firefighter/Paramedic as a result of an incident that occurred on October 2, 2024. Mr. Gennette second. All in favor. Motion passed 5-0.

315. Kim Batista – Town Clerk – Schedule for in-person early voting October 19th – November 1, 2024.

Motion made by Mr. Gennette to file. Mr. Silva second. All in favor. Motion passed 5-0.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Board to approve and sign the Executive Session Minutes of October 1, 2024.

Motion made by Mr. Goncalves to approve and sign the minutes from October 1, 2024, with Antonio Goncalves absent. Mr. Gennette second. All in favor. Motion passed 5-0.

Board to ratify and Chairman to sign the employment contract for Police Chief Valadas.

Motion made by Mr. Goncalves to ratify the employment contract and the Chairman sign for Police Chief Valadas. **Mr. Silva second. Motion passed 4-0-1.**

Board to discuss and possibly vote to ratify employment contract extension for Town Administrator.

Mr. DeBarge: We'll move on from that.

Board to discuss and possibly vote to adopt a remote work and flexible work hours policy (tabled from 9/17).

Mr. Gennette: Wasn't there a conversation we needed information about it?

Mr. DeBarge: You were pretty focused on the fact that the policy did not actually have the words work at home. That's been corrected. I liked it from the beginning so I'm just waiting for you, James.

Motion made by Mr. Gennette to adopt the remote work and flexible work hours policy tabled from 9/17. **Mr. Silva second.**

Mr. Goncalves: Can we possibly put something into the effect that it's a probationary period of 6-9 months and if we find it becomes a problem we can take it off the table without having to have a whole lot of trouble or conversation?

Mr. DeBarge: Marc, does the language say that already in the wording? That the Town Administrator has the right to cancel?

Mr. Strange: Are you saying see how the policy impacts operations and then come back in 6-9 months and say?

Mr. Goncalves: No, maybe we could just allow it to not do anything but have the ability to come back in 6-9 months and say this isn't working out. We're having this problem; we're finding departments with nobody here because everyone decides to work from home and there was a miscommunication?

Mr. DeBarge: Like a review?

Mr. Goncalves: Yes.

Mr. DeBarge: You can rescind whatever you approve.

Mr. Strange: If it requires some tweaks we could come back in 6 months.

Mr. DeBarge: We can come back in 6 months for review.

Mr. Goncalves: That would be good.

All in favor. Motion passed 5-0.

NEW BUSINESS

Board to sign (ten) 10 copies of the Call of the Election. Election to be held on November 5, 2024.

Motion made by Mr. Goncalves to sign the (ten) 10 copies of the call of the election to be held November 5, 2024. **Mr. Gennette second. All in favor. Motion passed 5-0.**

Mr. Gennette: I'll talk a little bit about Town Meeting. I obviously was not happy with the way things had gone. Looking back on the things people were talking about, if you step back and look at it, they had some reservations about what we were putting forward and I think if we're doing what we're supposed to do as elected officials and trying to represent the community and oversight

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of the town, maybe it's worth taking a look at the charter and see if we can make some adjustments to see if the Town would send it back to the ballot box. I don't necessarily think they were opposed to the charter change; I think they were opposed to what was presented. They felt it was overreaching in the proposed charter change. That a Town Council member was on the Board of the School Committee and that the boards were elected, not appointed. I think that if we revisit that and maybe we reapproach it we may be able to still at least get the ballot to the voters, which is my ultimate concern. Whether it passes or doesn't pass is up to the residents, but I think the residents need an opportunity to vote. That's part of the reason I'm offering to revisit what the Charter Committee has put together before we dissolve the Charter Committee.

Mr. Rosenblum: In response to that, I think the result of that meeting was that at anytime there was an opportunity where someone made an amendment to one of the other articles. There was more than ample opportunity to make amendments on the floor. I know what you're talking about. The two things was appointed vs elected and also for a Town Council Member to be on School Committee. Even if those amendments were made and approved it still wouldn't pass. Basically, they want to keep Town Meeting. If they could go to Open Town Meeting they probably would. I don't think as everyone likes to say it was a Selectmen's power grab, even though that committee wrote the charter. The Select Board did not write the charter. I was hoping someone would make an amendment. Mr. DeBarge and I were on that committee and some of the items on the charter we didn't agree with. I know where he stands on some things. I know where I stand. Someone made the amendment of appointed vs elected and it probably would have passed and so would have the Town Council member on the School Committee. Would that have changed the outcome? It would have made it closer but it wouldn't have changed it.

Mr. Gennette: I hear and appreciate that Bill, and I feel the same way but I think if we don't pursue it now it will be years before the opportunity comes here again. We would be practicing the same habits that Town Meeting had if we didn't give the opportunity to move forward. It's speculation to say they wouldn't approve it if you didn't put it before them. Maybe they do. If they shoot it down again, they shoot it down again. I don't understand why it would hurt to be able to do that. Whether they pass it at the ballot or not at least it went to the ballot box.

Mr. Rosenblum: There is a way it can go to the ballot without even having to go through that anyway. You could get 400 signatures and put it on the ballot. You could get 400 signatures to say we do want to vote on it. We had 71 people that were there to vote and we have 90 seats. We have 82 elected seats right now and 13% are write in candidates with more than half of them having 1 vote, which means they wrote themselves in. I have a problem with that portion of it. That's why I wanted to see it go to the ballot. The argument is that it was a pure democracy. It's not a pure democracy. Pure democracy is when the electorate makes the decision of laws and policies. Not representatives. That's a representative democracy. The clips will be on Facebook pages later so they can argue that one. I would have loved to have known if precinct members if it's representative did the precinct members go to at least 10% of their precinct, which could be 250-350 people, and if they did do that and a majority of those people said no we don't want this so be it. A comment someone said to me was nothing about what happened at Town Meeting was about the Town's best interest. It was personal grievances.

Mr. DeBarge: I thought it was very telling that the majority of comments were by elected officials and town employees. There wasn't many precinct members that were part of the public a citizen as a precinct member. There were some but the majority against were town employees and elected officials. I think that's very telling.

Mr. Rosenblum: With that, you'd have to go back to the committee and if they wanted to do it would probably be a very large overhaul to what the current proposed charter was. With that Town Meeting spoke and that's our form of government. What will move the Town forward, whatever the form of government is, is honest, open communication, respect and ability to come together. That's the problem. We're a microcosm of the way everything is now. People want to scream on one side and people on the other side bury their heads. It would be great to have 26+ meetings for that Charter Committee, several open forums and sat in many public events with information tables and everyone had the opportunity to come into those meetings. Anyone that had a suggestion on the floor last Monday had the opportunity to come in this room at 6:00 p.m. every other Thursday and sometimes extra Thursdays to say have you thought about this. I guarantee you the 11 people that were sitting in the room would have sat there and entertained it. Brian Bylicki, who has been on it before, has it in the back of his mind, verbatim in his head. Anyone had the opportunity to

come in and make a suggestion but what happened was they held it and said we're going to do it because we don't like you. Moving forward, that's the decision. Whatever form of government we have we have to be open and communicate. If those same people want to come in during any of our meetings, Planning Board is open, Ray Phoenix, any other boards are welcome to come in and sit in a meeting if there's something you don't like or you have a suggestion.

VISITATIONS

6:15 p.m. – Application for Transfer of a Beer & Wine Liquor License from Jai Umiya Ma, Inc. dba Ludlow Shell Convenience Plus, 227 Center Street to Divine Vision, Inc. dba Mobil Convenience Plus, 341 West Street – PUBLIC HEARING

Mr. Levine: This is the more straightforward transaction. We have 2 in a row. Divine Vision, owner of Mobil Convenience Plus on West Street is currently a gas station and a convenience store and it currently does not have a beer & wine license. The application before you is to transfer the beer & wine license from Ludlow Shell Convenience and 227 Center Street and that was a new beer & wine license that was put into place 4-5 years ago. And that is the next transaction. The reason that beer & wine license is going to be transferred is because hopefully a full liquor license will be going to 227 Center Street. As for the 341 West Street, the intention is to not make any changes to the store other than rearranging some shelving, no alterations outside and nothing inside. There's already a cooler so it would just be adding into the current space they have. Mr. Patel is here. He is the manager of record for the store. He has been working at the store for about 5 years. There are generally 2 employees at peak time, a manager and employee, and everyone will be TIPS trained on site. They're there 40 hours a week and this wouldn't change when the license is put into place.

Mr. Silva: Before you go forward, do you have the notices of abutters?

Mr. Levine: The postal service has been very slow on getting me the abutters notices back but I will pull them together. Everything was sent by certified mail.

Resident: I'm the abutter next to the gas station on West Ave and I feel we don't need another liquor store. That corner is very dangerous, people are still taking a left-hand turn on 227 Center Street. I think it will cause more problems and I don't want to be a resident next to someone that sells all liquor. I live at 380 West Ave.

Mr. Goncalves: We're not discussing that one now. We're discussing the transfer of beer & wine near your house at the Mobil Station. You're near the Shell Station. We're discussing removal of the beer & wine from there out to the Mobil Station right now. The next hearing we will be.

Resident: I'm sorry, I misunderstood.

Mr. Silva: The issue is if we don't have those notices properly documented, what we do here could be null and void tomorrow if somebody comes in and says I don't have my notice and we don't have anything that says they did receive it.

Mr. Levine: I have all my proof of sending. They don't have to be received to be proper notice as long as I've sent it. They're post marked, certified mail and there's tracking numbers for each.

Mr. Silva: There's no signatures required?

Mr. Levine: There's signatures required but if this comes back because nobody picked it up the applicant has completed their responsibility by sending it. I have the proof of notices.

Mr. Gennette: Before you vote, I just want to let you know that with my proximity with the ice cream shop that I used to own across the street that I know Humil and I consider him a friend of mine. I know him to be of good character. I've been to the store a lot and I vouge for him but I'll be abstaining from the vote.

Mr. Levine: If I could make one suggestion, that this transfer if it is accepted that it be contingent on the other transfer going through at 227. The intention would not be to move, unless I hear otherwise, to move the other applicant to 227 unless they both go.

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Mr. Silva: We have acknowledgement that the manager is a citizen of the United States.

Motion made by Mr. Goncalves to transfer the beer & wine liquor license from Jai Umiya Ma, Inc. dba Ludlow Shell Convenience Plus, 227 Center Street to Divine Vision, Inc. dba Mobil Convenience Plus, 341 West Street subject to the simultaneous passing of the all-alcohol license transfer from Turnpike Package Store to Jai Umiya Ma, Inc. **Mr. Silva second. Motion passed 4-0-1.**

Motion made by Mr. Goncalves to close the public hearing for the application for the beer & wine from Jai Umiya Ma, Inc., Ludlow Shell Station to Divine Vision, Inc, 341 West Street at 6:25 p.m. **Mr. Gennette second. All in favor. Motion passed 5-0.**

6:25 p.m. Application for a Transfer of an All-Alcohol Liquor License from Turnpike Package Store, 434 Center Street to Jai Umiya Ma, Inc dba Ludlow Shell Convenience Plus, 227 Center Street – PUBLIC HEARING.

Mr. DeBarge: This is still open from the last time.

Mr. Goncalves: No.

Motion made by Mr. Rosenblum to open the public hearing for the application for a transfer of an all-alcohol liquor license from Turnpike Package Store, 434 Center Street to Jai Umiya Ma, Inc dba Ludlow Shell Convenience Plus, 227 Center Street at 6:25 p.m.

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Mr. Levine: I don't think I introduced myself before, I'm Josh Levine of Levine Law in East Longmeadow representing Jai Umiya Ma, Inc. This one is a little...I imagine the 5 of you may have some understanding of what's going on here but for the benefit of anyone else watching I wanted to fill in the gaps and explain the background. Mr. Patel and his company, Jai Umiya Ma, Inc. is the owner of Ludlow Shell Convenience Plus at 227 Center Street and as I mentioned before does have a beer & wine license currently. This hearing is for a transfer of an all-alcohol license from Turnpike Package Store. My client originally applied to move this license to 21 Harding Street, right across the street from the turnpike and in order to do that the Planning Board required a site plan application. At the site plan hearing there was a lot of abutters and were not happy with the idea of having a liquor store there. Mr. Patel wanted to be a good, local neighbor and decided to scrap that idea and withdraw the site plan application and that deal was terminated. The new idea was to bring the Turnpike Package all-alcohol to 227 Center Street and replace the beer & wine license and as we just mentioned move that beer & wine license over to 341 West Street, which is a family held business. A bit of confusion came into play here. When this idea first came up earlier this year I went in front of the Planning Board to discuss this plan and find out if they would have been receptive to it and what we would need to do. Part of what I discussed was at the Center Street location of the Shell there is 3 unused car wash bays. The idea when I met with the Planning Board was let's close up those garages to have more storage. That would require a different license and potentially a site plan. That's what was discussed. Having a site plan review for the alteration, which my client and I understood and that would have been fine. In the interim, and in the interest of time and not spending a lot of money on a site plan that may or may not be approved, in conjunction with this a decision was made to go forward and not alter the premises at all and just have this application and address closing off the bays at a different time. When this application came in there was some discussion whether the Planning Board should weigh in with a site plan but after talking with Town Counsel, Attorney Winner, it was cleared up that it was not necessary at this time because the premises are not being altered. It's understood that if this is approved there's an all-alcohol license that's used on the current footprint and if that ever changes and the garage bays are used for storage and that's closed off that would be a premises change and we'd go back in front of the Planning Board for site plan approval. Back to the present, I have with me Mr. Dinesh Patel who was currently the manager of record at Ludlow Shell Convenience Plus and he'll stay on. He has 20 years' experience as a retail manager and currently manages 5 employees at a liquor store in Chicopee and currently manages 2 different liquor stores in Chicopee and has been working at Shell for the most part since the beer & wine license came in 4-5 years ago. If you stop into that store you'll see Mr. Patel there or his younger brother or another member of the family. There is always someone there working and everyone is TIPS trained and that will continue to be the case.

Mr. Goncalves: Pretty much we're going to replace a shelf that has some cereal with some type of liquor.

Mr. Patel: Correct.

Mr. Goncalves: To me it makes sense. If it's already there the license is on Center Street and it's going to stay on Center Street. I don't see a big problem with it. We're not increasing parking or traffic flow. I think people that are already going there to get milk or bread will pick up a bottle of vodka while they're there.

Resident: I disagree. I have a hard time. It's a dangerous area. I abut on the West Avenue side. It's a very dangerous area from there to the corner and across the street. The whole congested area is a very dangerous place. He's got a very small store inside. You can barely walk around now so I can see where it would be possible to have a liquor license because he doesn't have that much. Plus, there's a table for Keno and a couple small sections. The majority is the beer & wine. I personally don't want to live next to something that's going to sell all liquor. There's enough places. Pop-N-Kork is walking distance, All Town further on Center Street, you have one on Fuller and East Street, over the bridge in Indian Orchard, there's tons of bars, restaurants, there's enough alcohol in that vicinity and I don't think we need another all-alcohol license.

Mr. Goncalves: You're not changing hours?

Mr. Patel: No. 6-10.

Mr. Silva: There's no doubt with any one of us that we find the corner is very cumbersome. One is the parking, not the parking the street flow. We've had to change some of the configurations of the traffic going through. If anyone thinks this is not going to be more traffic I can't see that. All-alcohol has a lot more traffic issues and people coming into the store than the beer & wine. Coupled with Keno and gas it seems like it's going to be a very in and out situation. You're not adding any parking spaces because you don't have them. However, that doesn't say you can't have this purpose being done there. By rights you have a facility that can accommodate because it's commercial property. I'm surprised you're taking an all-alcohol license to a small place like that. You're not generating any more employees, right? Something like this where it came from they probably had 5-6 employees. Just thoughts that I had but it doesn't deter me from saying ok. It's not ok, it's something you're willing to do.

Mr. Levine: The reason to have the all-alcohol is an add on. If somebody is there for something else, it probably will not be a big draw because it is a small store. If there is a traffic issue this is not the venue to handle that. If there is an expansion then Planning Board will take a look at that. The intention is to do that expansion to have some more storage to better utilize that space and at that point parking will be looked at and traffic flow. I know the Planning Board is very thorough. Not to say that will never be addressed, because I think it will be. When you do traffic codes, which we did when looking at across from the pike, the traffic code for retail is retail. There's not a specific traffic code for liquor stores, as far as I'm aware. A retail convenience store will be more than a liquor store so that shouldn't change the coding when it does come down to that.

Mr. Rosenblum: For clarification, there's no need for a site plan right now and you don't need to have Planning approve this? Until you use the other space for storage? I just want that to be clear to everybody. I'm saying it to say it so it's out there. Maybe what we do is get Safety to go over and look at that area where the fence is.

Mr. Goncalves: I believe the fence was a condition of putting that building up originally.

Mr. Patel: I am the owner of the Ludlow Shell. The Center Street gas station at the Y, everybody knows it, has more parking spaces than the Sunoco and the Cumberland Farms. My station has more parking, even delivery trucks, than any other business.

Mr. Goncalves: Your building is probably half the size of those others.

Mr. Patel: It is a 2,000 SF building. If everything is approved we're thinking about moving the Keno tables and putting the aisle across. We do have 2 coolers, one for beer, one for soft drinks so we'll keep that. On the back wall maybe we'll keep the hard liquors.

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Mr. DeBarge: Seems fair to me. I have no problem. I don't think it's going to cause much more at all. To your point ma'am, if they're going to go for a package run they're probably going to be at Pop-N-Kork or Country but going into a store for a pack of gum and maybe grabbing something to take home is what I see. I don't see it will add too much traffic.

Motion made by Mr. Goncalves to approve the transfer of the all-alcohol liquor license from Turnpike Package Street, 434 Center Street to Jai Umiya Ma, Inc dba Ludlow Shell Convenience Plus, 227 Center Street. **Mr. Rosenblum second. Motion passed 4-0-1.**

Motion made by Mr. Goncalves to close the public hearing for the transfer of the all-alcohol liquor license from Turnpike Package Street, 434 Center Street to Jai Umiya Ma, Inc at 6:00 p.m. **Mr. Rosenblum second. All in favor. Motion passed 5-0.**

6:35 p.m. Laura Rooney – Ludlow Cares Coalition – Updates.

Mr. DeBarge: We are here with Ludlow Cares Coalition. We know that it's red ribbon week, so we're going to talk about that, among other things.

Ms. Rooney: We can start with red ribbon week. I'm going to have Diana speak about that. Saturday, having the soccer team I think it's been 14-15 years we've been doing this with the soccer team. Putting the ribbons together. The officers that were there with us that day were spectacular. They hung around, had conversations with the boys about if you're ever in a situation and you're not sure what to do, if you're ever at a party give us a call, we'll ask questions later. We're here for you. They had connections with them. They rode around in the cars with them. They made sure they were safe hanging up the ribbons and having conversations with the team about being role models and examples for the community and for the little kids that look up to them. It was a great conversation and a great morning. The first year we did it was a little awkward because nobody was having those conversations. Now you have guys that are seniors and they've been doing it since they were freshmen so they step up. They're the ones that know just where to go and what to do. They're having the conversation too. It was really good.

Ms. Roy: They were very serious about it. There was no joking around. These guys are athletes and they work hard and they are serious but they were very serious about this. The fact that they are role models for the younger people in the school they may not recognize how much the younger kids look up to them but they do. It's just one piece of what we do with the young people. We have people from the Michael J. Dias House come in and speak to the students in the health classes. We have so many things going on we're not going to go through all of them in the elementary schools, but the message is gently and age-appropriately delivered at every level from pre-school right through high school. We're very pleased with that. This year we're going to add something we haven't had in a while, which is a forum with a major motivational speaker. Tony Hoffman comes from California. He was a pretty well-known BMX racer before he got into trouble with drugs and the law. He was imprisoned. He has a very tough story and Laura and I have listened to him on the phone more than once and he's very inspirational. He ended up deciding he was going to make something of his life. He couldn't go to the Olympics. He had lost all the training and wasn't quite qualified, but he was a coach and one of his athletes made it to the Olympics. So, he did get to the Olympics, which was very exciting. His athlete placed 4th in the category. It was a female BMX racer. He's got a very motivational story so we're excited about having him. He doesn't just talk about his story. He's really giving the message to young people that one choice can change the rest of your life.

Ms. Rooney: I think the book is called From Prison to the Olympics. This is the subtitle.

Ms. Roy: We're excited about him coming. He will be speaking to students at the high school first then students at the middle school and in the evening he'll have a public presentation at Ludlow High on Monday the 28th at 7:00. We're inviting you all. We hope to see you all because we think it's important that everyone in the community is dedicated to spreading that message to the young people and to the parents as to what they can do to help keep our kids safe and our young people. The group we're trying to get at is the ones that have just left high school because it's a really vulnerable age when you become an adult, or you think you're an adult. We're hoping if you know any young people that are out of high school that you encourage them to come. We'll be spreading posters around. We're hoping he sparks a thought in anybody's mind.

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Ms. Rooney: What I liked about Tony Hoffman's message is I think he has a military background. He was injured when he got out of prison and he couldn't compete. He had made the commitment to compete while he was in prison. Then he got out and got injured and he couldn't. That's how he became a coach. It's not a scare tactic story, it's more about you have obstacles in life and you face them. It's the day-to-day things you do. It's building some sort of a routine and getting yourself to a goal you want to achieve. Even though you have setbacks, some can be significant and there's always hope and always a way to come back. It's about having goals, good mental health, finding that adult in your life for those resources that you can talk to when you have difficult times because we all have them. Mental health is on a continuum. You feel differently day-to-day and different things can happen that can impact that. It combines the message of prevention from the alcohol and drug standpoint with our mental health message we've been delivering this whole time along with the resource message and along with talking to people when you're not feeling ok. It's ok to not be ok. Talk to people and find those resources. We've had a lot of traction on Facebook. We've put some ads out. We've got an ad in the Register and the Reminder coming out. Registration will get you a guaranteed seat but you don't have to register. People are asking from other towns if they can come and we're saying of course.

Mr. Silva: You know the Michael J. Dias tournament was moved to that day. So hopefully the dinner and festivities after are done by 7:00.

Ms. Rooney: We had all this arranged beforehand so we're both kind of stuck with it. Hopefully those that are there if they're so inclined to come over can make it. We'll be starting at 7:00 so I hope it's wrapped up by then. We'll put a poster up there. We hope that you guys will be there and bring your families because it should be quite motivational. This is Chris Heron-like. He's friends with Chris Heron. He's going to release a book so he's on the beginning of this journey of bringing his story across the country. We think it will be very good. I want to do a few CARES updates. We came through here in the Spring and talked about our mental health initiative. We're at about 450 people who have been trained in youth mental health in our community. Those that work and live in our community. We got a grant from American Foundation for Suicide Prevention that helped us educate all of the teachers and some of the paraprofessionals at the high school. We had a full PD day. We also did the Hope Stroll by the Riverwalk where we work with Michelle Annechiarico and the ski team. Those posters that were at the Hope Stroll have moved to Vermont that has a Ludlow reference to them. Bringing that to another state. We have been recognized by the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention as an exemplary program through Karen Carreira. She's been nominated to be one of the top 10 volunteers across the country. The work we're doing is nationally recognized, it's Ludlow focused 100%. We have other people that will engage with us. At the same time, every dollar will hit middle schoolers and high schoolers and their parents. Dollar for dollar money well spent staying in Ludlow. Right now, with red ribbon week and all of the programs we have we're going to submit expenses to cover that. Gail Gramarossa is here with us. Gail was one of the original members of CARES. We had a very small grant that she helped us with to start CARES. I've been in touch with her since then. We've asked Gail to come forward to help us with our drug free community grant. We're trying to apply but we just didn't have time. It's a fairly significant, time-consuming thing to apply for this grant. It's \$150,000 a year if we get the grant. It's a lot that goes into it but we will get a lot out of it as a community. It's very unusual to have a coalition apply for the grant at this stage in the game, having made this kind of mark in the community already as just a volunteer group. In order to sustain this and keep the prevention going in our community this is exactly what we need. She's here to explain what she's going to do, answer your questions about the grant and we're going to talk a little bit about the opioid relief funds.

Ms. Gramarossa: I'm recently retired from working full time from the Town of Ware. I'm a public health educator. I just finished 40 years in the field of public health. This particular grant, the drug free communities grant, is one that I have been involved with in a number of communities in Western Mass. If you have not heard of it, it's a relatively good-sized federal grant so the money comes directly from the federal government managed by the Centers for Disease Control and the Office for National Drug Control Policy out of the White House. There are hundreds of these grants all over the country. They have been in place since the mid 80's when Congress created this program. What I like about this program as a health educator myself is that the tag line is local problems require local solutions. There is a model and recipe and research that backs up this program. Evaluation data that shows it's effective on a national and local level but it doesn't have to be a cookie cutter kind of program. What you need to be eligible to think about applying for this grant is you have to have a community coalition and some kind of fiscal agent who is going to deal

with the money. In some communities, that's exactly the same organization. You might have a non-profit organization that is both manager of the coalition of that community as well as the fiscal agent. In Ludlow, what we've been talking about is you are fortunate to have Ludlow CARES. It's been around for a long time, a very robust coalition. That's your community coalition and the school district is willing to be the fiscal agent for the money that is going to flow. This is a 5-year grant. You can apply for a 2nd 5-years. Just recently, the White House is recommending that the time-frame be extended to another 5 years. As Ludlow CARES and the schools are looking at applying in April of next year, you would be in that pipeline that if they make that change you could get up to 15 years' worth of funding. Sometimes questions come up about, we've been in front of the School Committee and were recently at the Board of Health, and we're coming to you tonight and our ask of you is to be supportive of this application. In other communities where I have helped write the grant I found it very helpful to be able to demonstrate that key elected leaders in the community are in favor of this we're able to bring in the grant. The other question that sometimes comes up, and that might tie in with the opioid settlement funds, is that this project was created with the expectation that applicants and recipients get matching funds. Matching funds is broadly defined. It can be actual dollars that a community coalition is getting drug free funding as well as having actual dollars from some other sources, which Laura mentioned with CARES, or all of the time the volunteers and spaces that are used can be considered in kind contributions. Those are the various ways applicants are able to show they are going to meet that requirement for matching funds. That was one of the requirements of the creation of the program in order to demonstrate that community support. It allows you to look at prevention primarily focused on 18 and under, focused on evidence-based programs. This may be the opportunity for CARES to expand what they're already doing and continue the great work they've done but also look at other opportunities and projects and programs. Typically, it also allows a community to hire some staff in order to help keep the coalition and all of this good work going. I have a fact sheet for you. My role would be primarily the grant writer working with Ludlow CARES, working with all of its partners and putting together the application. The good news is we're starting early. The request for proposals won't come out until January and the application is typically due in April. We find out in late August whether or not you have received the funding and the grant would begin on September 30.

Mr. Gennette: The matching funds, where does that normally come from and what is your anticipation of this?

Ms. Gramarossa: Most communities that I worked with on this grant are able to get a combination of some actual dollars. Maybe a local foundation gives them money, like the Dias Foundation or another foundation like the Suicide Prevention Foundation. Coalitions that are fund raising can use the dollars they bring in for fund raisers as matching funds. A good percentage, not the majority of what I've seen under matching funds, is when you put a dollar figure on all of the volunteer time and spaces that are used and businesses that contribute to your efforts, you can put a dollar figure on that. All of the students who went around and put up all of those red ribbons, you can put a dollar figure on that. When CARES is out in the community, when volunteers are at community events you can put a dollar figure on all of that and that readily gets to your matching funds. In the case of communities more recently, we worked with the Town of Monson to help them get a grant. They're relatively new. Belchertown, Northampton, Easthampton, South Hadley, a bunch of communities in our area have been recipients of this grant. Now with the opioid settlement funds available, many communities are also looking at that. The funder and White House have determined that any local settlement funds are eligible to be considered matching funds. I'm chairing a committee in Belchertown where I live that is advising that Select Board on some of the ways their dollars can be spent. I encourage any drug free community's grantee or applicant to look at those opioid funds as another resource or pathway to some of those matching funds.

Mr. Gennette: You mentioned the school would manage the money. Can we actually match funds to the school for this program with the opioid settlement funds? There's certain criteria. Is it common that the schools are managing the money for this?

Ms. Gramarossa: Yes, for this particular grant. It's just the fiscal agent. It's really that partnership between the community coalition and the fiscal agent. In other communities the school district has often served as a key partner.

Mr. Gennette: Andy they've been able to match the opioid funds?

Ms. Gramarossa: Mostly with in-kind contributions. When we went in front of the School Committee recently one of their questions was is it an expectation that any dollars out of the School Committee budget have to go towards this grant? No. Health teachers, coaches, the time the fiscal teacher might spend on helping to manage the grant is all considered an in-kind contribution. You put a dollar figure on that and that gets you to your matching funds. There's no direct dollars that have to come out of the school district budget in order to match funds.

Mr. Gennette: Laura, you don't have any problem with them being the fiscal agent, right?

Ms. Rooney: No, we thought a lot about it and what we have discovered is that in order for us to reach students, the relationship with the schools works really well. They have agreed to be the fiscal agent. One of the things the grant requires is sector representatives from different sectors of the community. Police, political, Board of Health, all the different sectors to get everybody together to talk about prevention, recovery and all of these things that fall under the drug free community grant. I look at it as let's take the opioid funds, we asked for a certain amount last spring because it's a small coalition, we're all volunteers. My thought was let's take some of those opioid funds and double it with the drug free community grant. It's not the only way we can get the matching funds but it allows us the freedom to do what we want to do as a coalition. We don't want to be, if we raise additional money, which we have and we will continue to do so, we want to do what we want with that money in a creative way and not have to be restricted and say we can't do that because it doesn't fall under x,y,z but the students really want to do it. Some of our best ideas are from students. They're not necessarily falling under the guidelines of the CDC. It's different and that's how we've been successful. This 12-person group, which would include those that have been working on this problem and are concerned about this problem in Ludlow to be somewhat maybe even advisors. One of you had brought this up before, but advisors to the Board of Selectmen so money can be spent. It's well spent in Ludlow, and not overlapping things. If some groups are doing one thing and another group doing another thing and they both ask you for money you have 2 groups taking from the money doing the same thing, nothing is tracked the way it could be if we were all working together. One of the good things about this grant getting through and getting CARES to this place is I think it can be quite unifying for the community on this topic, get the resources that are working on it together. We've had approval from the School Committee, last week we got approval from the Board of Health so we're getting everybody on board to provide a path or a plan for not only this drug free community grant but how best to spend the opioid funds.

Ms. Gramarossa: One of the major projects that we're hoping to write into this grant, with the global respiratory disease pandemic lots of stuff had to stop in schools, but we are going to be proposing, and it meets one of the requirements of the grant, to get back on a regular track of doing health surveys in the school district with the students, parents, community surveys, in order to gage how things are going. One of the things that may be helpful to you all is as part of those surveys not only will we be looking at all kinds of substances, including opioids, it may give you some insight as to the best ways to spend your opioid dollars so you can tell the State you have looked at what your community needs are. That's what the State is concerned about.

Ms. Roy: It's a chance to track the progress. The goal is to make a difference and to reduce the amount of substance abuse within whatever target age we have. We'll be able to demonstrate that. Or see that it hasn't worked and we can change our tactic.

Ms. Gramarossa: The good news is on a national level, communities that have this grant their rates of substance use are lower than communities that don't have it.

Ms. Rooney: There's a few things we're asking for. The first is every year you declare red ribbon week to be October 23 to 31. So, we ask for a vote to formalize that.

Motion made by Mr. Goncalves to as a Board on behalf of the community declare October 23 – October 31 red ribbon week. Mr. Silva second. All in favor. Motion passed 5-0.

Ms. Rooney: The 2nd request is for the opioid relief funds. To increase the amount that we would like to have ear marked for us on a yearly basis starting this year to \$75,000 annually. If we aren't spending it, we won't spend it. It would be part of this matching program. So, if we get \$150, \$75 would be matched with the funds. Also, before additional dollars are spent, to see if we can get this 12-person committee together to come up with an assessment and action plan on future

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spending of the opioid funds so there's a committee dedicated to this that's looking at the spending of the funds.

Mr. Gennette: Isn't that what we're allocating to Ludlow CARES for? Wouldn't Ludlow CARES pick up that torch?

Ms. Rooney: That's 2 separate things. One is CARES wants to be able to have access to those monies. I can't say to you right now I have a building, a director. We have to do all that through the funds. Let's say we don't get this grant and you want to keep CARES going, at some point we're going to have to have somebody. It's gotten to be quite a big thing and it should be sustainable. The opioid funds could sustain it on their own. They could sustain this group plus working with other organizations. There's never been a lot of money on prevention. It's always on the other end. This is money that's come in that if you ask me I think all of it should be used for prevention. I understand that's not what the guidelines are. Some of it is used for recovery, other education, harm reduction; I get that. My concern is we're not going to move fast enough. There's a big chunk in there and there shouldn't be this feeling like it's got to get spent on whatever. We should have a plan for it. There's no urgency to drain it down. If there was an urgent need in the community and Police were here saying this is happening, we need this. That's not what's happening.

Mr. Goncalves: I don't have a problem with earmarking \$70-\$75,000, which is about twice your original ask. We see and feel on a regular basis what Ludlow CARES does for this community. I think prevention is huge. It's a shame because it's got to be 100 times tougher once somebody has gone over to the other side to get them straight than the effort to keep them straight. I think it's super important. You definitely get the message out for a lot of years and it would be a shame for you to go backwards right now.

Ms. Rooney: The 15 years that Gail references is the 15 years we've been here. There's a lot of things we can't do just because we don't have the resources and wherewithal and I think we can do better. We're great but I think we can do better.

Mr. Silva: Could we do up to \$75,000 instead of just committing this. Let's say one year we don't get anything and now we have programs that need to be done with the other organizations that come in.

Ms. Rooney: That's where I think this 12-person committee would come in. I think we would have those discussions. I don't know who for the last 15 years has been doing prevention work in Ludlow. I know the Board of Health has restructured and they're doing some really good things. If you ask other people who in Town is doing this kind of work I don't know what programs you might be referring to.

Mr. Silva: What I'm trying to say is do we allocate these funds each and every year.

Mr. Strange: That would be my suggestion. Right now, we've had a bunch of deposits so our balance is pretty high and I don't know how sustainable that is. If the Board were to say this is an annual for 10 years I don't know if the money will be there.

Mr. DeBarge: That's a high number for me to vote on annually without any type of oversight. That's an aggressive number for an annual bid. In drug use, there are steps in prevention. Recovery is very important. It's our responsibility with this kind of money to listen to all asks in all aspects of addiction, including recovery, treatment and all of that. I can't, in good conscious, vote for \$75 annually. Because of that, I'd like to have some sustainability, some more there in case we have other departments. I don't know if the number needs to be tweaked or if we need to have a longer discussion or if we need to say on an annual basis.

Mr. Goncalves: Is this first year crucial to getting the ball rolling with the grant. Usually, the government has a tendency of backing off requirements once it starts.

Ms. Rooney: Gail can answer that better than I can. What I would hope is that we're having a collective strategy plan as a community of what to do with this money other than 1 person coming forward at a time and asking. That's a concern I have. That there are entities that do great work and there are great programs. Dave Kornacki has asked to be part of this 12-person committee.

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We're looking at those that are involved in this in the community. Not necessarily currently active in CARES that can collaborate on what's the strategy on what to do with this money. Then come forward and make recommendations or come forward and helping your assessments. I think anyone that comes in front of you is compelling. Anyone can have a compelling reason to take the funds but to make sure that Ludlow is making the most of the money and here having a matching grant program. Other fundraising money we bring in is almost like free cash and we can do other things that aren't under the grant. What I'm asking is, I understand what you're saying Derek. \$75 is a big ask. I get it. I'd come up with a different number but my concern is that if we want to be in here in 15 years as CARES how are you going to help make that happen. That's going to require funding. You've got 15 years of a grant that we could get, it's matching. You already know how much you're going to get over the next several years. What's the plan. That's what I would hope this 12-person committee can work on.

Mr. Goncalves: Why does it have to be 12?

Ms. Rooney: It's part of the grant. They all make sense. There's a lot of people.

Mr. Rosenblum: Marc, how much do we have and how much are we going to get? My only concern with \$75,000 is that you build something that's great and you have a grant for 15 years but on the back end when our opioid money is gone and the grant is gone, you might have this great entity that now you have to fund it. I liken it to ARPA funding or ESSR funding where you hired people on that money, which isn't the intent of it. What will happen with your 12-person committee is you say you want to build something great and we all want to help, but we don't want to be 15 years down the road this grant is done and all this money is gone you're sitting there looking at \$150,000 without that money. I know you gave out a number before. How much money do we have, how much more are we anticipating and over what span of time?

Mr. Strange: After the Dias distribution we'll be at about \$150,000. The settlements keep changing. They keep adding settlements. We get tranches we're not expecting. It's hard to pin down. They have a schedule they initially gave us with a number at the end of it. I doubt that's going to be the number. It's probably going to be higher. They're going after everybody.

Mr. Rosenblum: I wouldn't be opposed to saying an amount up to based on where we're at. \$75 seems big to me but if the funding is going to be there and we do have other asks.

Ms. Rooney: I want to point out that all the other asks have employees. The Dias Foundation has employees. Tapestry Health has employees. We've all been doing this as volunteers so it's time to change the look of this. \$75,000 is not that much money compared to the budgets of these other organizations, nor is the amount of money we've already invested in the community, privately raised and all of that. We've gone over that. I understand what you're saying. The plan for the money is important. I was here to support the Dias Foundation to get the money. It's not as if we're looking at one solution. Getting people involved in the community that are working on this issue and getting a plan for the money so it's planned and there's a strategy.

Mr. Goncalves: I'm with you, but now be a Ludlow CARES representative and talk to us about x amount of dollars and what does it do.

Ms. Rooney: This year I think we're going to put through another \$40,000 in expenses we've already spent with the mental health first aid, the speaker, red ribbon week, all of that. Our spending ends at the end of red ribbon week and we take some time off. The next year we're given or earmarked \$75,000 to do the prevention for CARES for next year. I get that you can't commit more than 1 year in a row and you're not doing that for others. That's fine. I also would like maybe we consider future, try to get a plan together for spending this money.

Mr. Goncalves: It makes sense from the standpoint of not just taking everybody that walks in and throwing money at them and hope that next year we have enough or not know what the plan is next year for each organization that comes in. In your case you could be starting something that you're going to need a little bit more next year, the year after or forever.

Ms. Rooney: Or DARE may need something. DARE is going to be on this committee. This is all part of putting this together. We're not making the decisions. We would help with a plan or as an advisor.

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Ms. Gramarossa: I hear all of what you're saying. Every community is grappling with this idea of this money and most of it has been building up in the bank because they haven't spent it. In Belchertown we put together an application process. We put together a bit of a plan that says we do want to look at prevention, treatment and recovery. We want to look at the local needs. We've had listening sessions, community forums to hear from the community and when we were recommending something be funded thankfully the Town Accountant is on our committee and she can project out. So, when we look at funding a project can we sustain that for several years and that goes into how we help advise the Select Board because we are concerned about starting something and stopping. These funds are different amounts and as you noted more is probably coming down the pike. Having some thought about a plan makes sense. In Belchertown the Select Board welcomes our advice because they look to this committee based on who's on it as having that expertise.

Mr. Goncalves: I'd like to commit to \$75 right now for at least this first year and maybe we put some type of committee together and try to figure out what we're going to do so we don't have to go through this for the next 15 years.

Mr. Strange: Is the \$75 \$30 plus \$45?

Ms. Rooney: No, the money we've already spent. \$75 is for next year. Starting November 1 through the next year. We already have spent \$35.

Mr. Strange: This year.

Mr. DeBarge: So, we've already agreed to \$30.

Mr. Strange: My question is it \$30 plus \$75 or \$30 plus \$45.

Ms. Rooney: To me it's \$30 plus \$75. So it's going to be for next year. We're going to put through receipts of just expenses. Zero on the volunteer side. We have Karen, who we pay to do classes and Gail who we are paying to do the grant. All of the things we've done in the community, supplies and resources we would be putting through for that. It's going to get up to the \$30 if not a bit over. And then earmark the \$75 for November 1 through next October 31.

Mr. Strange: \$30,000 was in the previous fiscal year and this is for this fiscal year?

Ms. Rooney: Yes.

Mr. Silva: I don't have a problem with this year since we have the funds available and then look at it next year. Most likely, the way it looks we probably will be able to but to commit to it could be a problem.

Ms. Rooney: I'm with you. CARES doesn't want to do things that duplicate what other people are doing. That's why I think this committee is important. To streamline everything, get everybody on the same page. We were really on the same page when we first started. It's evolved and I think we can all give back and work together and make sure we're spending this for our town.

Mr. Gennette: As far as the grant funds that are coming in, are there stipulations like you have to meet the requirement for matching in some way, shape or form? And that's every 5 years, right? The grant is good for 5 years and then it gets re-evaluated and that can happen 3 times.

Ms. Rooney: We haven't gotten it yet. It's all depending on whether or not we get it.

Ms. Gramarossa: Each year you have to demonstrate to them that you have met that requirement for matching funds and you're keeping track of things.

Mr. Gennette: If we agreed to up to \$75,000 for those funds for 5 years to match that grant and once that gets evaluated after the 5 years at least they can get established, they can get this thing together and they can plan for the next 5. If we have to re-evaluate for the grants anyway at that point so the matching funds might not be an issue if they can't get the grant again. Maybe a 5-year term instead of saying an open ended annually maybe we say we also revisit it every 5.

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Mr. DeBarge: I'm comfortable with one motion for one year for one sum.

Motion made by Mr. Goncalves to earmark \$75,000 for the period November 1, 2024 through October 31, 2025 in addition to any other monies that have already been promised or allocated to CARES. **Mr. Gennette second. All in favor. Motion passed 4-0.**

Ms. Rooney: We wanted to ask you to formally make a motion to support our application for the drug free community grant and the creation of the 12-sector community committee to be part of that grant. I don't know if you want to take it a step further on the opioid funds and evaluation but I'd like you to think about that when you're evaluating funds that we're here to help have a strategy.

Motion made by Mr. Goncalves to adopt and approve the commitment and sponsorship and application for the drug free community grant. **Mr. Gennette second. All in favor. Motion passed 5-0.**

Mr. DeBarge: We have to discuss Special Town Meeting results. Bill and James had started that conversation. Do you two want to continue it?

Mr. Goncalves: I was disappointed in general. The idea that there was 70-71 people there and they actually represented their districts, I don't think it was even close. Like Bill said about some people writing themselves in. They had 1 vote and they weren't there to represent anybody except their own interest. Shame on them. If they want to be precinct representatives, make yourself available to some of the people in your precinct that you're representing on something this important and talk to them. I don't think that was the case. The other thing I was disgruntled with was I thought the moderator lost total control of that meeting the last 20-30 minutes. It was a joke, a circus. It's a shame he let it go that far. For those that support the change of government that's a great reason why. Somebody can do what he did that night, which was make a mockery of what is supposed to be order.

Mr. Silva: This is the form we have. What happened happened. There's people on there that have done this for 30-40 years so they put a lot of time into this community. Let's not push them aside. They're probably more right than I am because they've been at this forever. They know what they like. If you don't like what Town Meeting is doing, get out there and become a precinct member.

Mr. Goncalves: My guess is the people that voted in favor of the charter change are the ones that were there 30-40 years and realized the value and how old our form of government was and it was time for change.

Mr. Silva: Understood. They voted and that's it. If we don't like it, that's the way they voted and that's what we have to abide by. What I don't like is there was some kind of a poll out there and the question was does the public think the Selectmen have the best interest of the community. What kind of question is that. Do you really think any one of us sitting up here doesn't have the best interest?

Mr. DeBarge: Consider the source.

Mr. Silva: There was a vote and I saw a lot of names on there.

Mr. Rosenblum: There were town employees on that list.

Mr. Silva: When I saw the vote the answer was no. I don't go on that, I don't really listen at all. If you put anything out there that you have questions for me you're not going to get it. This was shown to me by somebody at a luncheon. To think we don't have the best interest, how could you even think that? What are we spending our time here for?

Mr. DeBarge: I said it was very telling that the majority of the speakers were either elected officials or Town employees. The room was set up for it to fail, in my opinion. It's the Whitney Park thing that really bothered me for a number of reasons. I do read some of the forums and one time I commented on a comment on one of the forums. This comment was how disgusting the parks in Ludlow were. I commented on so many people saying Ludlow needs to do better. Look what they did in Springfield. Our town is terrible, it looks bad. I said I hope all of you that are commenting

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here go to Town Meeting in October and express your opinion when we go out for bond for the Whitney Park reclamation project. Not one person was there for that. The public that were at Town Meeting were there for the battery storage facility and didn't even bother to read the article because they didn't understand what the articles were for. Nobody else was there for Whitney Park. When you get on the forums and you complain it's easy to do. A lot of people do it who don't do it in person, they do it behind their keyboard. Most telling, our Police Chief spoke out against Whitney Park because he thinks his budget isn't big enough. Our School Committee Chair spoke out against Whitney Park reclamation project because she believes the schools need a bigger budget. I watched the votes. I know who voted against it. I'm very surprised at how many town employees voted against the Whitney Park project. I'm more surprised at how many spoke out against the Whitney Park project. I don't know how we're going to be able to do summer camp. The equipment there is poor, staffing is poor. It's apparent to us that the staff cannot watch the employees there, nor the kids effectively. Decisions are going to need to be made. Unfortunately, they can't be made to hire a person for a new park because the park was voted down. I thought the park would have passed until we had department heads and chairs of our committees get up and speak out against it. When our former Town Accountant got up and asked very pertinent questions. We used free cash last year to balance the budget. This is a \$350,000 added bill to the operating budget. How are you going to pay for it? Fair question. Marc answered that perfectly about how the bond would come online in 2027 along with a lot of new money from things we're doing in 2027. I'm very disappointed. Marc's email to the State handed back that \$500,000 grant was I'm embarrassed to inform you that we have to return the grant and I agree with that. We had another chair of a committee, the Planning Board, who spoke more times than he should have and also called out the DPW. Called me out for something that was ridiculous. Called out the DPW after the Board of Selectmen took over when the Board of Public Works was dissolved and said when I drive down the street I still see weeds. I hope every DPW worker that has been busting their hump, catching up with trees and doing the work because the director is doing a great job, Jim is doing a great job, they're all doing a great job. Morale is back up. Everything has been going much better. I think it's interesting that the chair of the Planning Board mentions weeds on the streets talking about the Department of Public Works. We obviously need to do better with our communication, myself included. As far as the charter goes, had I known all the other chairs, department heads wanted official invitations, because we invited people to come to our meetings all the time. Just not written or in person, except for a few. Everybody had the opportunity to come to the charter committee meetings. Everybody had the opportunity to read the material and everybody had the opportunity to contact any one of the members to ask questions. All I saw was selfishness. I don't want to be out of Town Meeting. I like coming here. It's the purest form of democracy, which it is not. That is your ballot initiative in the election 14+ thousand people were taken out of that decision. Mr. Gennette said he's been receiving plenty of calls. I've had some people ask me why they don't get a chance to vote on it. Where we go from here, I don't know. I'm very disappointed in the park, especially by the ones that spoke out against it. We will have meetings in the future to let everybody know how everybody's budgets are and what they get.

Mr. Silva: As far as the parks go, I'm disappointed as well. I thought about should we reduce the amount that we are looking for, because that is a significant number. That's million dollars to put on our tax roll.

Mr. DeBarge: That was going into the operating budget.

Mr. Silva: It's money that we're spending. People look at the dollars. We could have maybe reduced it and still kept that \$500,000. If we got a grant, I'm not understanding why we have to give it back. Why can't we use that \$500,000?

Mr. Goncalves: You need to come up with \$500 to get the \$500. If you can tell us where to get the \$500 maybe we can ask for it back.

Mr. Silva: I wasn't in favor of the charter. I like hometown. I was going to vote to put it through to the ballot. The reason I did not vote is because it was overwhelming that it was not passing.

Mr. Rosenblum: We could have had a vote in 10 minutes.

Mr. Silva: If it was close I would have voted to put it on the ballot.

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Mr. Gennette: I agree with everything you guys are saying. I'm very displeased with the way everything went down and people are reaching out to say they're very angry they didn't get an opportunity to vote. Like you, I'm a representative of the community. We're supposed to be listening to the precinct members and their cares and concerns. If I take out all of my hurt feelings and being disgruntled out of it, what does the community want from me? They want me to get this to the ballot box somehow. I hope that the precinct members are listening because that's what the residents want. I don't want to squash this because it will never come back again because we're jaded by how it went down. We have an opportunity to mold what we already have, put it before the precinct members and see if they'll pass that to the ballot box. I think they're feeling the same pain that I'm feeling about how this did not go through. Whether it gets shut down at the ballot box is beyond the point. The fact of the matter is residents want an opportunity to vote on this. You are all upset about how this meeting went down and it's proof this form of government doesn't work. Even if we discussed the park in a Town Council meeting and said we need to redesign this, we could come back 2-4 weeks later and we could still go after it once we honed down in on the project. With a Town Meeting coming in twice a year we have no opportunity to save that \$500,000 seed money. We may have been able to work that if the community was in here. It doesn't work. I'm against this. I think we're too big and it's cumbersome. I'm willing to try to meet the precinct members and the residents on common ground to try to get this resolved because it needs to happen. At minimum, the residents need to be able to vote.

Mr. Rosenblum: It's communication. My whole thing was go to the ballot. If it gets shot down it gets shot down. You let 15,060 people make a decision. And I know they're going to say that's not how it's built but something this big needs to go to everybody. It needs to be communication. Everybody had an opportunity to come in. Wasn't there a mailing that went out for Town Meeting members?


Mr. Strange: For a public meeting, yes.

Mr. Rosenblum: I asked people and they said they got it. If other people didn't get it, I don't know why. There was a mailing that went out specific to Town Meeting members to come. Come in and communicate. If you have a problem, come in the next meeting and say I watched your last meeting, what about this. I want to thank the 11 people on that committee for putting in over a year of their time and 26+ meetings, open forums, public events. We didn't take that time out and write a charter as the Selectmen's charter. It was made by 11 community people. Even though I and Derek are Selectmen, we all sat in that meeting and talked about transparency. It was on tv. Some people said I would have never gone on that committee because there was 2 Selectmen on there and I said with your credentials I would have wanted you on it. Even though you might not see eye to eye with me, I want to know your point of view. You're either here or here and you've got to meet here. There's no communication. People need to communicate and stop fighting and screaming and these stupid forums. Rag Shag, October 25th. Begins at 5:00 p.m. at Town Hall.

Mr. DeBarge: They also need candy donations.

Motion made by Mr. Rosenblum to close regular session meeting at 7:45 p.m. and to enter into Executive Session and not to return to conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with nonunion personnel or to conduct collective bargaining sessions or contract negotiations with nonunion personnel – Town Administrator. **Mr. Goncalves second. All in favor. Motion passed 5-0.**

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Chairperson

