**Meeting of the Board of Selectmen January 26, 2021**

**Phone: 669-224-3318**

**Access Code: 220-595-605**

**Executive Session – 6:30 p.m.**

Chairman Patricia Riley called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. in the Donald McKinnon Meeting Room at Veterans Memorial Town Hall located at 558 South Main Street. In addition to Chairman Riley, Selectmen Joseph Pacheco and Richard Schiavo were in attendance, along with Town Administrator Graham Waters and Attorney Joseph Emerson. Selectman Pacheco made a motion, seconded by Selectman Schiavo, to enter into Executive Session in accordance with Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 30A, Section 21, 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. On a roll call vote, Mr. Pacheco, Mr. Schiavo, and Ms. Riley each voted to go into Executive Session.

**7:00 p.m. Regular Meeting – with Remote Public Access**

Chairman Riley called the open meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. in the Donald McKinnon Meeting Room at Town Hall. In addition to Chairman Riley, Selectmen Joseph Pacheco and Richard Schiavo were in attendance. Ms. Riley announced, “Pursuant to Governor Baker’s March 12, 2020 Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L.C.30A, §18, and the Governor’s 2020 Order imposing strict limitations on the number of people who may gather in one place, this meeting of the Raynham Board of Selectmen is being conducted with the Public Body members in person at Veterans Memorial Town Hall and with the general public following the proceedings remotely. Every effort has been made to ensure that the public can adequately access the proceedings as provided for in the Order. For real time access, residents can join the live broadcast on the Raynham Channel, use the “gotomeeting” online feature, and/or call in using their phone. The Town will post a record of this meeting on the Town’s website as soon as we are able. Also in accordance with the Executive Order, other town officials and staff participating in the meeting and in attendance include: Town Administrator Graham Waters.” Ms. Riley added, “This meeting is being recorded and, for the record, we are returning from Executive Session with nothing to report at this time.”

**Pledge of Allegiance -** Ms. Riley led the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Acceptance of the Minutes**

Ms. Riley asked for a motion to accept, as printed, the minutes of the Board of Selectmen’s meeting held on January 19, 2021. Mr. Schiavo made a motion to approve, Mr. Pacheco seconded, and Ms. Riley made it unanimous.

**Department Heads & Committees – attendees online**

1. **Ed Buckley, Highway Superintendent – Monthly Report**

Mr. Buckley called in to join the meeting during the storm and said the roads have all been treated and the Highway Department crews are continuing to maintain the main roads. Ms. Riley told Mr. Buckley that since he is busy with the storm, the Board will postpone his monthly report until a later date.

1. **Matt Tanis, Health Agent - Update**

Mr. Tanis called in to join the meeting and update the Board on the state’s vaccination plan. He explained that Phase One includes all health care workers, including those at long-term care facilities, first responders and those in congregate care facilities. Under Phase Two, priority one includes those people 75 and older and that will begin on Feb. 1st, but it does not mean the vaccine will be widely available for this group right away. Mt. Tanis said he anticipates receiving the vaccine within the next two weeks, but the amount is not known at this time, and local health departments have been advised that they will be capped at 100 doses per week. He said he can’t schedule a clinic until he knows the quantity that he will be receiving; however, once he receives it, he is prepared to move forward with setting up a clinic, and he will post the notice on the Town’s website. Gillette Stadium is also an option at this time. The next priority will be individuals 65 and up and those who have underlying conditions, followed by education workers, grocery clerks, sanitation workers, and the last phase will be in April and open to the general public. Mr. Tanis said he will post all of the information on the website.

**Completion of Old/Continuing Business**

1. **Discussion and action: Raynham Public Safety Building Project:**

Ms. Riley explained that the Public Safety Building Committee met again this afternoon. She said the presentation by Pomroy Associates last week was very informative, but the Board wants to hear more from the committee members and committee members want the chance to discuss the project further with the Board, so further discussion will be scheduled for another time.

1. **Master Plan Update - Bob Iafrate**

Ms. Riley said, “We are also going to postpone this for discussion at a future meeting.”

1. **Discussion and action: B-R Regional Agreement Update**

Ms. Riley said, “Mr. Waters and I have been meeting with a committee to review and update the current agreement, which hasn’t been updated for over 10 years.” She said Bridgewater-Raynham Superintendent Derek Swenson, School Committee Chairman Michael Dolan and the Bridgewater Town Manager and Town Council President serve on the committee. She said a lot of the revisions include bookkeeping items and updating and clarifying language. She added, “I have suggested that in the event that at some point there is a disagreement between the two towns that cannot be resolved in a timely manner, then a mutually agreed upon mediator will be called in to assist.” Mr. Pacheco asked if there will be a provision regarding dissolution with respect to district-owned property. Ms. Riley replied, “Yes, definitely, and any changes in the agreement will have to go to our Town Meeting.”

1. **Status report on Audit RFP**

Mr. Waters said that the Request For Proposals has been drafted and is ready to go and he will have it posted by the end of the week. Mr. Pacheco said, “I’m glad that we are moving towards that because we had our first discussion on this in August and we have yet to start our audit for this year. Potentially we are bringing a new auditor in July 1st and there could be an overlap that could cause more issues.” Mr. Pacheco said he has discussed the issue with Board of Assessors member William Lewis. He continued, “He shares my concern about the financial situation right now and he has offered his assistance if Mr. Waters needs it in developing or fine-tuning the RFP to get this out.”

**New Business**

1. **Discussion and action MassDOT – Route 138 – Approval of Project Hours**

Mr. Waters said that HNTB is the company that will do the paving and, in order to expedite the project, they recommend an extension to 12-hour work shifts in residential areas and two 10-hour shifts in business and commercial areas which might cause noise issues but would reduce the duration of the project. Mr. Pacheco said, “I’m glad to see they are breaking it up in residential and commercial areas, so unless there are any objections, I would motion to approve.” Mr. Schaivo seconded, and Ms. Riley made it unanimous.

1. **Discussion: Budget Update to the Board of Selectmen**

Interim Town Accountant Chris Laviolette and Treasurer/Collector Mike King called in to join the meeting. Mr. Laviolette said, “What you have before you is the budget vs. actual on revenue through December 31st, and, by comparison, the same for last year, FY2020, through December 31, 2019.” He pointed out, “The charges for services for solid waste removal and general fees revenue are trending to exceed budget by the end of the fiscal year based on current status. Also, your real estate and personal property taxes are over 50% for what’s been budgeted so far for the fiscal year considering that through next December you would only bill for the first two quarters of the next fiscal year. So, you can expect to collect approximately 97% of your personal property taxes by the end of the fiscal year. The one caveat would be the motor vehicle excise tax. The budgeted figure is considerably less than what the actual was for all of the last fiscal year. You won’t see any benefit until February or March when the next bills go out. That revenue is your largest source of local receipts and is really a tell-tale sign of the overall economy. If the collections are good, then it generally means the economy is good and hopefully we can see some relief in the near future relative to the pandemic.” Mr. King said, “In terms of the revenue, there are a couple of highlights. The first two bills for the real estate taxes for August and November had a collection rate of 97% and last year we had a collection rate of 96%, so we are trending better than FY20. Also, the motor vehicle excise tax, our biggest commitment of the year, is going to be 14,631 bills, but we are mailing out 230 fewer bills than in 2020. However, 2021 is still approximately 400 more than 2019, so we have seen a drop in cars on the road, but we are trending higher than we did two years ago in 2019. Another revenue source that I’m watching now is the meals, hotel and motel tax. It’s a little tough to track because of the pandemic. The reason for that is that the State has extended the deadline three times for businesses to file and make payments on those taxes. The deadline is now May 20, 2021, and that is going to be for those payments that would have been due March 20, 2020 and April 30, 2021. That’s a year’s worth of payments, so it’s hard to know what to expect. Hopefully, this money will get to us before the end of the year to be part of FY21. Also, for penalties and interest, we have already hit the projected budget amount of $150,000. This is due to the grace period that was enacted at the end of FY20 due to the pandemic. We weren’t able to send out any late notices until July 1st of this fiscal year, so those will be deferred to FY21. The $35,000 that is received from the Solar Array will be due on May 1st. The last item in terms of revenue that is listed under miscellaneous recurring will be the first payment for the B-R buyout for $70,000.” Mr. Pacheco said, “Some of the numbers are more optimistic, but at the end of the day, if you look at year to date actual, we are still $952,000 short. What is recognized is that not all of the expenditures have been recorded yet, October November and December still haven’t been posted. To me, being almost $1m down is not a good figure to be looking at.” Mr. Laviolette pointed out, “You are actually to the good, $900,000. Your current actual is through December 31st of this year, and that is about $900,000 more than the same time period a year ago.” Mr. Pacheco said, “I was going back and forth between the revenue and expenditures. You’re correct. I appreciate your clarifying that for me.” Mr. Laviolette said, “What you are seeing for expenses through December 31st of this year does not include payroll, which is why there is a gap between what prior year expenditures were as of the same date last year. Right now, it takes a journal entry to record payroll into the accounting system, something that I was not familiar with when I started this project. We have been working diligently with the Accounts Payable Clerk to post payroll warrants, and she has done a very good job on that from August through September. Then, after a discussion with Mike King, we thought it would be prudent to post the current payroll warrant so at least we are not lagging behind on posting to the general ledger. Once payrolls are all posted, I think you will see a comparable expenditure amount as of Dec. 31st. Relative to the Culture and Recreation category, which is the Library and the Park & Recreation Department, you will see that the budget has already been spent in excess of 70%, but it’s a bit misleading as you have already paid out what you have owed to the Library before Dec. 31st, and I believe it’s in excess of $400,000. The other number that you should be aware of is employee benefits. Included in the year to date so far is the one-time payout of $2m to the Bristol County Retirement Systems and that happens right on July 1st. So, even though it looks like you have spent three quarters of your budget, most of the expenditures relate to a bill that came due right on July 1st.” Mr. King explained, “The Library is $425,000 and that is paid in two installments, the first in July and the second that was paid out by Dec. 31st, so it does skew the recreation account. In terms of retirement payment, that was $2.3m that was paid out in July. In terms of debt service, the $159,000 is the Town Hall. The sewer debt service is going to be in the sewer debt fund.” Mr. Schiavo asked, “In expenses, which are less than last year, does that take us literally to this period of time because we are 60% through the fiscal year?” Mr. Laviolette said, “You’re looking at a 6-month figure there. For your current year actuals, that’s everything that was recorded and spent through December 31st. So, even though we are seven months into the fiscal year, you’re only looking at six months of actual data. However, the caveat to that is that you’re not looking at all of the payroll expenses for that same six-month period. You’re looking at approximately three months of what’s been paid out for salaries for the fiscal year, and it’s just a function of getting some bookkeeping done for October, November and December for payroll warrants.” Mr. Schiavo said, “We are looking good through Dec. 31st, but if we actually have current data, it would not be as positive as what we are looking at through Dec. 31st. Is that a fair statement?” Mr. Laviolette said, “Your payroll is very predictable, and everyone is very good providing for contractual raises in the beginning of the fiscal year, so the expectation is that you should spend exactly half of your salaries by Dec. 31st. However, on the non-payroll side, some expenses relative to the retire system you have already incurred, which is a major expense, so that sort of skews what Dec. 31st looks like. My expectation is that your actual, if we had those three months, would be at 50% and that is where I would expect you to be. I don’t know if your Department Heads were issued a spending freeze, but we have a freeze on discretionary spending in the Town of Dighton.” Mr. Pacheco asked, “Do you have any idea when we can start the audit?” Mr. Laviolette said the auditor expects to start the second week of March this year and he will have a set of draft financial statements for the bond-rating agencies due in March and a final audit report in no later than 70 days. Mr. Laviolette added, “We are progressing as quickly as possible and we’re trying to have payroll warrants caught up and have actual current data at the six-month mark and the nine-month mark. I would like to give the Board an update at the end of March and give you real nine-month data at the end of March.” Mr. King added, “I want to discuss the debt exclusion data as it relates to the Public Safety Building. For FY21, the debt exclusion accounts for $1.21 of the FY21 tax rate of $14.69, and the average dwelling paid about $500 attributed to debt exclusions. The Town of Raynham pays for the Middle School and the two elementary schools’ debt in its entirety, but pays a prorated share on the High School debt, currently at 40.03% and that is based on district enrollment. The total excluded debt is just below $3m for FY21 and over the next several years will decrease to approximately $1.9m in FY25. Most notably is the decrease from FY22 to FY23 when the debt service for the Raynham Middle School is paid off, and FY24 to FY25 when the debt service for the Sewer is paid off. Between now and FY25, there will be approximately $1m paid off to debt service, which is just about the time the Town will proceed with the Public Safety Building.”

1. **Proclamations – Tim Grabarz and Yvonne Quinlan**

Mr. Schiavo read a proclamation for Mr. Grabarz, and stated, “Whereas Tim Grabarz dedicated his time and knowledge in assisting the employees of the Town of Raynham in protecting their data and keeping up with the fast-pace of endless changes in the IT world, and whereas Tim would make himself available 24/7/365 to protect what is the Town’s and because he was the unseen face of the Town, and in consideration of all of Mr. Grabarz’s contributions over the years, and also with the transition that we are going through now, I offer this proclamation to Mr. Grabarz, and the Raynham Board of Selectmen proclaim Tuesday, January 26, 2021, as Timothy Grabarz Day in the Town of Raynham.” Mr. Schiavo made a motion to approve the proclamation, Mr. Pacheco seconded, and Ms. Riley made it unanimous.

Ms. Riley then read a proclamation for Yonne Quinlan and stated, “Whereas Yvonne Quinlan started working at the Senior Center in 2007, and whereas Yvonne’s story in Raynham goes back to her childhood, where she grew up off South Street in Raynham, and whereas over the years, she worked at many different places, including Morton Hospital for many years, before coming to the Raynham Senior Center, and whereas, her commitment to the community included serving on the Raynham Cuuncil On Aging Board, as President of the Raynham Lions Club, and also President of St. Ann’s Sociable Seniors, and whereas she helped oversee the expansion of programming at the Raynham Senior Center over the last ten years and was the recognizable presence behind the counter, the person visitors would see as soon as they entered the main lobby, and whereas she was indispensable to the operations at the Raynham Senior Center, a good friend to many and a hard worker for all, therefore, we the Raynham Board of Selectmen do hereby proclaim Tuesday, January 26, 2021, as Yvonne Quinlan Day in the Town of Raynham.” Mr. Schiavo made a motion to approve the proclamation, Mr. Pacheco seconded, and Ms. Riley made it unanimous.

**Town Administrator’s Report**

In his report, Mr. Waters stated, “The Finance Committee has distributed its FY22 budget guidance letter and departments have been instructed to hold spending levels to a 0% increase, level-funded with FY21. The budgets are due back to the Finance Committee on Feb. 7th, which is a Sunday, so they can get them in over the weekend.”

Mr. Waters also stated, “The Town Moderator is assembling a search committee for the HR position, and the advertisement for the position will be up by the end of the week.”

For upcoming meetings, Mr. Waters reported, “The next regularly scheduled Board of Selectmen’s meeting will be held on Tuesday, February 2, 2021 at 7:00 p.m. in the Don McKinnon Meeting Room in Town Hall, 558 South Main Street, Raynham, Massachusetts. The public will be able to participate via the GoToMeeting platform or by watching the RayCAM channel on Verizon, Comcast, or a recording posted later on YouTube.”

Mr. Schiavo said, “On the discussion of the Public Safety Building next week, I have prepared some comments that I would like to give to the Board.”

**Correspondence**

A Tag Day request was received from Teen Challenge of Massachusetts, based in Brockton. for several days. Mr. Pacheco made a motion to approve the specific dates as requested, Mr. Schiavo seconded, and Ms. Riley made it unanimous.

**Performance of Administrative Duties**

Mr. Pacheco motioned to approve the Town of Raynham Payroll and Invoice Warrants dated January 26, 2021, as submitted, Mr. Schiavo seconded, and Ms. Riley made it unanimous.

Mr. Schiavo then made a motion to approve the Police Department Payroll and Invoice Warrants dated January 26, 2021, as submitted, Ms. Riley seconded the motion and Mr. Pacheco abstained. Miss Riley asked for a roll call vote: Mr. Schiavo said, “I”. Mr. Pacheco abstained, and Ms. Riley said, “I”. It was so voted.

Mr. Pacheco then made a motion to return to Executive Session in accordance with M.G.L.C.30A, Section 21, for the purpose of discussing 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 and to return to open session only to adjourn with no further business to be conducted. Mr. Schiavo seconded. On a roll call vote, Mr. Pacheco, Mr. Schiavo, and Ms. Riley each voted “I” to enter into Executive Session.

**Adjournment**

At 8:00 p.m., the Board returned to open session. Mr. Schiavo then made a motion to adjourn, Mr. Pacheco seconded, and Ms. Riley made it unanimous.

Respectfully Submitted,

Janet Murphy, Recording Secretary