

**City of Beverly  
City Council Regular Meeting  
Public Meeting Minutes  
Monday, March 15, 2021, 7pm**

This meeting was conducted under the ‘Executive Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law G.L. c.30A, §20’, signed on March 12, 2020. This remote meeting was held over Google Meet and live streamed by BevCam. Public access information for the hearings was provided on the meeting agenda.

Paul Guanci, City Council President, called the meeting to order at 7:00pm over Google Meet. City Clerk, Lisa Kent, took the attendance by roll call.

Members Present: Stacy Ames, Dominic Copeland, Kathleen Feldman, Timothy Flaherty, Julie Flowers, Scott Houseman, Todd Rotondo, Estelle Rand, Paul Guanci

Members Absent: None

Houseman led the councilors in the pledge of allegiance.

Guanci made a statement about the meeting being recorded by the City of Beverly and streamed by BevCam on channel 99 and BevCam’s YouTube channel. He confirmed that all members present could hear him and noted the remote meeting format and process due to Covid-19. Guanci read Rule 22 of the Beverly City Council. He introduced a vote to allow items to be taken out of committee and voted on the floor. Kent took a roll call vote and the motion carried (9-0). Guanci read the procedures for virtual public hearings.

**Acceptance of Minutes of Previous Meetings: February 22, 2021 and March 1, 2021**

**February 22, 2021** Legal Affairs/Committee of the Whole Minutes - Houseman motioned to approve. Ames seconded. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion carried (9-0).

**March 1, 2021** Regular City Council Meeting Minutes - Houseman motioned to approve. Flowers seconded. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion carried (9-0).

**Communications, from other City Officers and Boards**

**Order #064**-Council President Guanci-Reappointment-Ms. Amy B. Smith, 29 Lothrop Street, as Council Representative for the Clean Energy Board.

Houseman motioned to approve. Rotondo seconded. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion carried (9-0).

**Order #065**-Finance Director, Bryant Ayles, Results the City received from its recent issuance of municipal bonds.

Bryant Ayles, Finance Director, stated the City received very favorable rates as a result of its public bid for the offering of roughly 38 million dollars in bonds. The bonds were previously authorized for the construction of the police station and the final bonding for the middle school project. The rate the City received was 1.853% for a 30 year offering, which is very favorable and is tied to our strong bond rating.

Houseman motioned to receive and place on file. Feldman seconded. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion carried (9-0).

## **Communications, Applications, and Petitions**

**Order #066**-Livery License Renewal/Name change-American Limousine LLC. d/b/a RMA Worldwide Chauffeured Transportation. 100 Cummings Center (Formerly Tri Star Vehicle Leasing Inc.).

Andrew Tighe from RMA Worldwide noted the changes in the industry over the last year and stated the company has been licensed previously and the name is changing.

Houseman stated he spoke with Mr. Tighe this afternoon and was satisfied with his answers about the corporate filing and other questions.

Houseman motioned to approve. Rotondo seconded. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion carried (9-0).

## **Public Hearings**

**Order #044-7:15PM**-Loan Authorization for \$750,000 to facilitate replacement of the turf field at Beverly High School campus.

Ayles said the hope is to get the work done this summer. The idea is that upon free cash certification, this would return to the Council to request that money be transferred from free cash next year to pay off this loan certification, so that money is not actually borrow for the project.

Michael Cahill, Mayor, stated the turf field was originally built in 2010. The expected life of the turf surface was 8-12 years, and this spring will be 11 years. When the field was originally built, there was a subsurface drainage system built underneath. The goal was that the drainage system would last through several replacements of the surface, and it seems like it is in good condition. It is time for this surface to be replaced. The reality is that in a community this size, there is a need for at least two artificial surfaces to meet the need for the amount of kids and adults using the field. You get more use out of a turf field in New England than a grass field. There are thousands of kids every year who play on the two artificial fields for a number of youth sports and school sports, as well as unscheduled field time when the public uses the turf. This is a sound investment. There are improvements in safety and technology. With City Council approval, a shock pad will be added under the field, and the infill will be better than what was used previously, and the playing surface itself is better.

Michael Collins, Commissioner of Public Services and Engineering, stated that you can tell it is time to replace the field when you walk out on it. The artificial turf is curled up, and when it was first delivered it was standing up straight. Because of the condition of the individual blades themselves, a safe playing surface can't be supported for much longer. Two styles of tests have been done, one that is common to the U.S. and one that is common to the professional leagues in Europe, and both say it is currently safe to play on, but it is really at the end of its life. The way that kids get out and get their exercise now is very much through organized sports, so this becomes a really critical part of what is provided in terms of recreation and physical fitness for children. If we wanted to replicate this in natural grass, we would be required to re-sod that field a couple of times a season completely if you had that level of play on it. In New England, given the miserable weather we typically have, this is a critical asset and it is absolutely time now to replace it.

Bruce Doig, Director of Parks and Recreation, stated the field has gotten a lot of use and it is definitely time. Other turf fields in the area have the same life span. Doig asked for the Council's support to help get it back to a safe, long-lasting surface to benefit our kids on our fields.

Rotondo stated he is in support of this and asked if \$750,000 is enough and if there would be a need to go into free cash for a cost over \$750,000.

Ayles stated the budget was developed from a couple different pieces of input, including looking at the middle school project, which cost at the time about \$640,000-\$650,000. At this point, it seems the project is sufficiently funded.

Flaherty stated they went through this recently with the YMCA and he understands the safety aspect here and supports the project. He asked for a long-term plan for the whole facility and noted the area includes the track and would like to see a proactive approach to see what can be done to protect the field so it can last longer and be a better situation for everybody.

Flowers asked for herself and for the benefit of the public why the school side of the budget does not absorb the cost, and if it is because the schools do not have a capital project line item in their budget.

Cahill stated this is officially property of the Parks and Recreation Department, in part because when it was built years ago, it was through a grant that went out to recreation departments. Capital needs of the school are typically addressed through the city budget, since there is not a capital line in the school budget. It fits under the overall umbrella of city resources to be used.

Flowers asked if there were options of finding other funding sources that would defray the cost.

Ayles confirmed that if other grants or funding was found, that would lower the cost.

Flowers asked if there are outside users who are charged a fee for use of the fields and if there is a possibility of establishing a fund that could be fed by the user fees of the turf field for replacement.

Cahill stated there is such heavy demand from our own school and youth programs that there isn't a lot of time available for paid use.

Doig also noted that there is not much rental time available. Residential youth organizations don't pay for usage, and adult organizations would pay different fees based on the amount of residents participating. The policy has been revised to increase the fees, but the fees are still low compared to other communities. There is not a lot of free time on the field to rent. Even the recreation department does not run a lot of programs there because there is not time available.

Ayles spoke to the idea of a fund and said we could research the specifics more. However, generally we aren't able to legally set aside funds through the general fund for specific purposes that will happen in the future because it would effectively circumvent the appropriation process, which is the responsibility of the city council, so by doing that you would be tying the hands of a future council potentially with general fund revenues, and the law generally doesn't allow that. There are some exceptions on the school side. The money they take in for field rentals could be put into a revolving fund that is statutorily authorized separately that they can then use to fund costs associated with what generated the revenues.

Flowers stated that she feels like, knowing the field is at the end of its playable life, she would not want to ask student athletes to continue using it if it becomes unsafe.

Ames stated she believes it is time to fix this field. It is about process and understanding who the stakeholders are and figuring out where the funds to repair this field come from. Ames asked if the administration will continue to look for grants to cover some of the costs.

Cahill spoke to the broader question of fundraising and noted that the timing is a challenge with Covid and the fact that the field needs to be done now. There are some significant larger cost items that could be the subject of fundraising campaigns. For example, the Carriage House at Lynch Park is going to need close to 5 million dollars; there is a comparable chunk that will need to go into the Golf and Tennis clubhouse; and there is still hope for a stadium at the high school, which last time the numbers were looked at was 5-7 million dollars. These are not things that are going to happen overnight, nor are they things that we are in a place economically to launch into any efforts. When you look at all of the benefits that this asset provides, it holds up that any way you could look at the money, we need to do it. Cahill said that he appreciates the questions and hopes that type of enthusiasm might go to one of these larger projects.

Ames stated her thinking is that there are some stakeholders already in this field that gave money a decade ago to build this field, and she asked if they had been contacted because this is their field already. Also there are other organizations that have supported this field, and there are enterprise funds. Mr. Perry just last year was urging towards doing it this way. Ames stated she can appreciate him changing his mind, but she has a good friend who is a para in the high school and has worked there for 20 years, and when she told her friend about this, she said that is insulting because she doesn't earn much money with a B.A. dealing with kids with challenges all day and has been in school since August. Ames stated she knew as a former football and wrestling mom how hard they worked to raise money for those programs and that was all fine. Ames said respectfully all she is suggesting is that perhaps we owe it to the people in our community to spend our dollars and put our heart into these projects equally.

Ayles said a year or year and a half ago when the enterprise fund was certified at about \$340,000 the council, at the request of the mayor, transferred about \$150,000 from the enterprise fund balance to support ongoing operations, so at the end of FY20 the balance was certified at about \$188,000. What that fund usually helps do is leverage grant opportunities, in many cases for larger projects. We will look to the recreational enterprise fund to cover a 10% or 20% match on a much larger project, so we can basically get more bang for our buck out of the fund. We don't want to draw that balance too low so that we wouldn't be able to access it in the future for some additional recreational purposes. Camp Paradise is a perfect example; that fund helped to make that purchase possible. That is kind of why we did not look to that fund in this particular case. As for the second piece around fundraising and the grants, for the initial turf replacement about 10 years ago, the City was in a very different financial place at that point in time. When the talks began, about FY08 timeframe, the City had no stabilization fund balance and certified a free cash balance of negative 3 million dollars, so they didn't have any money. Going forward, FY09 through FY11, a three year fiscal period, the operating budget only grew by .4% cumulative over three years because the state aid was getting cut drastically on the tail end of a recession, so the City really had no option. If it wanted this field, it had to look elsewhere. The City is in a different situation now because of the decisions this council has made, this administration has made, around being financially prudent with the resources that we have. The resources that we

have are taxpayer dollars, and this asset will be a taxpayer asset that they can use for the life of the property, so we really see it as the most appropriate use of resources in that regard.

Ames stated that helped, not sure enough, but this conversation was appreciated.

Guanci opened the hearing to members of the public. No members of the public were present to speak on the item.

Gerry Perry, City Council Budget Analyst, highlighted the reports and memo he sent to the Council. He noted he had two reservations about the project a year ago; one was financial and the other was if the field was actually needed. He stated that with regards to the finances, he had been concerned with the amount of free cash being used this year because he is always cautious with the fund balance. Perry noted that Councilor Rotondo had asked why we couldn't do the same thing that we did with the ladder truck, which was to do a loan order expecting that we would be able to pay for the project from free cash. He stated that he supports it as long as the council understands that they will come back later on to ask for a free cash transfer. Perry stated the second issue was the condition of the field, but he was pleased with the tests that were done about 16 months ago that showed the time has come to replace it. Perry expressed his support for the proposal as submitted. He commented that legally the enterprise funds can be used for this, however given the drop witnessed this year, he thinks the prudent and wise approach is to use free cash down the road. From a budgetary approach, this is the right choice.

Cahill noted the fields are still safe for those playing on them right now and asked Commissioner Collins to go over how it is being maintained.

Collins stated the lines are sheared then glued and sewn in, and that starts to break down. The numbers, lines, and sidelines start to peel up, so Public Services has been trying to glue those back down and sew or glue any tears in the field. The current field takes a lot of grooming and replacement of rubber. The new field and the middle school field gain a lot of impact protection from the cushion below it. It won't degrade as quickly and in the same manner as the current type of field. It's a much better system and will be more consistent in its performance. It plays a little faster too, so the players like it a little bit better too. The field is literally falling apart at the seams, in addition to the fact that the individual strands of turf have crumpled over, and it requires more maintenance on our part to keep the rubber and sand distributed appropriately across the field.

Guanci closed the public hearing.

Houseman moved to approve. Rotondo seconded. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion carried (8-1, Ames opposed).

## **Reports of Committees**

### **Committee on Legal Affairs**

**Order #048**-Appointment-Constable-Mr. Lev Sokolowski, 23 Woodrow Ave, Newton, MA

Lev Sokolowski stated he is currently a security guard whose hours have been cut. He has a few colleagues who are constables, and he is interested in the civil process and learning more about that.

Feldman asked if he will work with a specific agency.

Sokolowski stated he would work with Massachusetts Constables with Chief Brian Abelli.

Houseman expressed his support for the appointment.

Houseman moved to approve. Feldman seconded. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion carried (9-0).

### **Communications from His Honor the Mayor**

**Order #067**-Appointment –Beverly Democratic City Committee representative on the Board of Registrars-Mr. Robert Pierce.

Lisa Kent, City Clerk, gave an overview of the role of the Registrars, noting that nomination papers require three signatures of registrars and currently we are down to two.

Cahill stated he met Mr. Pierce and his wife years ago and he is very happy to see that he has been put forward for this position because Mr. Pierce is a person of utmost integrity.

Guanci thanked Mr. Knight for his service.

Pierce experienced technical difficulties with the virtual meeting, and the item was held to see if he could get back in the virtual meeting with audio.

**Order #054**-Donation-\$1,000 from Nancy P. Hewson, for Children's and Large prints books to benefit the Farms branch of the Beverly Public Library.

Flowers motioned to approve. Rotondo seconded. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion carried (9-0).

**Order #055**-Grant-\$21,630 from the MassDEP Electric Vehicle Incentive Program for Workplace Charging –to install five electric vehicle charging stations located at Beverly High School (4) and Ayers Ryal Side Elementary School (1).

Catherine Barrett, Grant Director, stated she wrote and submitted this grant on behalf of the City. Electric vehicles are increasing significantly in demand, and we will need the infrastructure for people to charge them. This grant is given out where there is a built-in workforce. The high school and Ayers have a significant amount of employees, so the grant was submitted for those two locations to start. This was presented to the School Committee as well, and the goal is to have EV charging stations at all of the schools and a couple of the parks.

Cahill stated the challenge is to build and not to overbuild. Two vehicles can be charged at one station. This is an ongoing effort. The next grant is paired with this grant. Together they pay most of the cost, and the cost to the City is very modest.

Houseman motioned to approve. Flowers seconded. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion carried (9-0).

**Order #056**-Grant-\$112,050 from National Grid Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure Program to install five electric vehicle charging stations located at Beverly High School (4) and Ayers Ryal Side Elementary School (1).

Barrett stated this is a complimentary grant to the previous grant and will cover about 95% of the costs of installing the charging stations.

Copeland asked if looking for grants is primarily the strategy for these stations at this time.

Cahill said at present we are looking to see if these programs will be extended, and hopefully these types of incentives will be. Thus far, this seems to be a good model.

Copeland asked if the one in the Walgreens parking lot is private or city-owned.

Barrett said it is privately owned.

Copeland asked if there is an idea of the projected potential revenue stream.

Cahill stated that at the outset we are not looking for these to be real money makers. We want to make sure that the EV owner, not the City, is paying the cost of the electricity to charge the battery, so we will look at rates and set them to cover the associated fees at a minimum so there is no cost to the City. It remains to be seen whether it will generate revenue for the City as well.

Rotondo asked about the upfront cost to the City and if the same model would be used to maintain these.

Barrett stated the City will own these stations and be responsible for the maintenance and the tracking of the data. That is also done at the EV stations at the middle school and municipal lots. The City tracks that data through ChargePoint. All of the EV stations purchased to date on behalf of the City are from ChargePoint, so that streamlines the process to track data and usage and set the rates. Installation work is being done by the Public Services, so the cost will be very nominal.

Houseman asked for elaboration on the program of the two grants together.

Barrett said these are two separate grant programs that were applied for in tandem. If you apply in tandem to the EVIP state program and are awarded, you get more money from National Grid, so it is very advantageous to apply to both programs to get as much of the funding of the project covered. The grants were awarded about three weeks apart. The goal was to maximize funding.

Cahill stated the City received \$133,680 between the two grants for this project, and there is about \$8,500 in cost to the City, but he wasn't sure how much of that \$8,500 will be saved with the local install.

Houseman motioned to approve. Flowers seconded. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion carried (9-0).

**Order # 057**-Grant-\$17,772.73 from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health for the fire and police departments to purchase naloxone and related supplies to respond to opioid crisis related calls.

Barrett stated she works closely with Sgt. Mark Panjwani. This grant was being given out piecemeal on a monthly basis, but the state decided to give the rest for the year all at once.

John LeLacheur, Police Chief, noted this helps with training and replacing supply because Narcan expires.

Houseman motioned to approve. Rotondo seconded. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion carried (9-0).

**Order #058-Grant**-\$5,950 from Massachusetts Councils on Aging to fund food insecurity program distribution twice a month at the Beverly Senior Center.

Barrett stated this and the next grant were submitted by the Director of the Senior Center, MaryAnn Holak, and these grants will benefit our senior citizens.

MaryAnn Holak, Director of the Senior Center, said her staff has worked through the pandemic to reach out to as many people as they could. These grants both need to be spent by June 30, so they are not long term programs but fill a gap. This one will provide take-out restaurant meals to seniors. The next grant will be a program of weekly walks on Beverly trails. Seniors say they don't walk on the trails on their own because they aren't familiar with them. A couple members of the Open Space and Recreation Committee have volunteered to lead some of the walks, and the information will be sent to the Council as well if they would like to join.

Feldman commended MaryAnn and her staff for their hard work during the pandemic, especially with the most vulnerable and isolated.

Houseman motioned to approve. Flowers seconded. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion carried (9-0).

**Order #059-Grant**-\$1,878 from the Mass Council on Aging which will fund a 13 week "Walk in the Woods" program to improve mental health, exercise and reduction of social isolation during the pandemic for our senior citizens.

Barrett thanked MaryAnn and the staff for their help.

Feldman motioned to approve. Rotondo seconded. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion carried (9-0).

**Order #067 (Continued)**-Appointment –Beverly Democratic City Committee representative on the Board of Registrars-Mr. Robert Pierce.

Pierce stated he and his wife have been Beverly residents for the past 19 years. He is a retired federal civil service manager with more than 20 years of military and civilian service, serving in the Army for three years of that time. Since retiring, he has had continued involvement in civil services. He is a member of the Coast Guard Auxiliary. He served as flotilla commander of the Beverly flotilla for a couple of years. Currently, he is the president of the Massachusetts Federation of the National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association. Pierce stated he is a big believer in civic engagement and public participation. This position with the Board of Registrars would be a way to continue to make a contribution to the community. He thanked the Council for their consideration.

Referred to Committee on Public Services.

**Order #060**-Proposed order declaring that the rooftop and parking lot of the new Police Station at 175 Elliott Street are available for leasing and installation of solar panel arrays and associated power purchasing agreements.

Cahill stated this has been talked about for some time to build the closest thing possible to a net zero or carbon neutral building. The geothermal heating and cooling system is a big part of that

and the rooftop and parking lot canopy solar is a way to try to help create renewables and get closer to carbon neutral.

Ames asked for an idea on the revenue effect one way or another generally for the City.

Cahill stated that there is potential for revenue. The desire is to generate our own electricity and power our own operations on site, unfortunately the state program incentives seems to lead in front of the grid, so it is likely the clean energy would be exported to the grid and electricity would be brought in from the grid, but we would be doing our part in providing more long term renewable energy to the region.

Copeland asked and Cahill confirmed that the City would be leasing the space, and whoever is doing the project will be recouping the money for the solar.

Rotondo motioned to approve. Rand seconded. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion carried (9-0).

**Order #061**-Reappointments- Veterans Advisory Committee, Mr. Charles Rehal, Mr. Paul Weinberg and Ms. Susan Moran.

Referred to Committee on Public Services.

**Order #062**-Reappointments-Waste Reduction Committee-Mr. John Swain and Ms. Sandy Burgess.

Referred to Committee on Public Services.

**Order #063**-Reappointments-Beverly Historic District Commission-Ms. Caroline Baird Mason and Ms. Wendy Pearl.

Referred to Committee on Legal Affairs.

Rotondo motioned to adjourn. Flowers seconded. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion carried (9-0). The meeting adjourned at 8:56pm.