



Office of the Board of Selectmen  
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Randall V. Becker, Chairman  
Andrew Jolda, Vice-Chairman  
Earl Gabor, Secretary  
Lisa Kontoes  
Thomas Klebart

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
REGULAR SESSION MEETING MINUTES**

**Monday, July 12, 2021 6:00 P.M.**

Selectmen's Meeting Room

Webster Town Hall, 350 Main Street, Webster, MA  
via conference call in accordance with Governor Baker's  
emergency "Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the  
Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A, §20"

**MEETING OPENING:** At 6:03 p.m., Chairman Becker called the meeting to order in the Selectmen's Meeting Room, Webster Town Hall, 350 Main Street, Webster, MA. The following individuals were present: Chairman Becker, Selectman Andrew Jolda, Selectman Lisa Kontoes, Selectman Earl Gabor, Selectman Thomas Klebart, Police Chief Michael Shaw, Fire Chief Brian Hickey, Sergeant Larochelle, Officer Jonathan Brooks, Officer Robert Rockwood, Officer Jacek Ochocki, Town Accountant Timothy Bell, Town Administrator Doug Willardson, and Executive Assistant Courtney Friedland. The Board stood and took the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chairman Becker stated on March 12, 2020, Governor Baker issued an Executive Order modifying certain requirements of the Open Meeting Law, to enable public bodies to carry out their responsibilities while adhering to public health recommendations regarding social distancing as fully stated on the agenda. As further explained on the agenda, the Executive Order relieves public bodies from the requirement in the Open Meeting Law that meetings be conducted in a public place that is open and physically accessible to the public, provided that the public body makes provision to ensure public access to the deliberations of the public body through adequate, alternative means. On June 16, 2021, Governor Baker signed into law An Act Extending Certain COVID-19 Measures Adopted During the State of Emergency. This Act includes an extension, until April 1, 2022, of the remote meeting provisions of his March 12, 2020, Executive Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law.

Chairman Becker announced that no one was in attendance via Zoom.

Chairman Becker stated he would like to take a moment of silence for the passing of longtime Oxford Selectman John Saad. He stated Mr. Saad had dedicated decades of public service and will be greatly missed.

## **Meeting Minutes**

**Motion by Selectman Gabor, seconded by Selectman Kontoes, to approve the meeting minutes of June 14, 2021. Call Vote: Selectman Klebart – yes, Selectman Gabor – yes, Selectman Kontoes - yes, Selectman Jolda – yes, and Selectman Becker – yes.**

### **PRESENTATION OF PROCLAMATIONS – FIRE AT 146 HIGH STREET:**

Chief Hickey and Chief Shaw came forward. Chief Hickey stated the night of the fire the police were first to arrive on scene. He stated the Police recognized there was a woman stranded on the roof of the burning building. He stated the officers went above and beyond to save the woman's life. He stated he would like to recognize the officers for their bravery and express his gratitude for their courage. Chief Shaw stated the Police Department and Fire Department work collaboratively together. He credits the relationship between the two Departments for the quick response. He thanked the Board of Selectmen for their support. Chairman Becker stated the officers went above and beyond the night of the fire and it was an honor to be presenting each of them a Proclamation for their bravery. He stated there is nothing more traumatic than seeing your house burn.

Chairman Becker read the Proclamation:

Tonight, we, the Webster Board of Selectmen, join together with Chief of Police Michael Shaw and Chief of Fire Brian Hickey, along with grateful members of our community, to recognize Sergeant Robert Larochelle, Officer Jonathan Brooks, Officer Robert Rockwood, and Officer Jacek Ochocki swift response and exemplary demonstration of leadership on the evening of May 19, 2021. These Officers were called to the scene of a raging three-alarm house fire at 146 High Street. Remaining calm while quickly assessing the escalating situation, Sergeant Larochelle, Officer Brooks, Officer Rockwood, and Officer Ochocki immediately took control, seeing that there was a woman stranded in distress on the roof of the burning house. They immediately jumped into action and were able to safely rescue the women from the roof, saving her life.

An individual who has the skillset to achieve what Sergeant Larochelle, Officer Brooks, Officer Rockwood, Officer Ochocki did that evening is nothing short of remarkable. How fortunate we are, as a community, to have them looking after us and our loved ones. To have the intellect, the composure, the compassion and the leadership skills to enter into such a stressful situation and manage it so effectively that the ultimate outcome is the preservation of a human life is something far beyond performing your duty as a Police Officer. They have forever changed the lives of several people who will never forget you or your bravery. Tonight, we salute you, Sergeant Larochelle Officer Brooks, Officer Rockwood, Officer Ochocki. You are true Hero's.

The Town of Webster is honored to have these brave officers in blue. We thank each of you for your outstanding service and your commitment to our citizens.

### **CHIEF MICHAEL SHAW – BI-ANNUAL UPDATE:**

Chief Shaw stated on January 12, 2021 the Police Department hired Officer Nicholas Caruso as a lateral transfer from the Framingham Police Department. On April 21, 2021 Officer Robert Ela transferred to the Millbury Police Department. On April 26, 2021 David Brooks, Robert Brooks, and Joel Fitzpatrick started the Recruit Officer Training Course at the Boylston Police Academy. On May 16, 2021 Officer Robert Larochelle was promoted to Sergeant.

On January 6, 2021 Officer Ebbeling conducted a motor vehicle stop which resulted in an arrest and the seizing of 60 grams of Heroin and Alzopram. On January 26, 2021 there was a shooting in the parking lot at the

Hartley Street Terrace which resulted in a minor injury. On February 26, 2021 Officer Kaitlyn DiBuono conducted a motor vehicle stop which resulted in the arrest of three people for possession of Crack Cocaine and Heroin. On February 26, 2021 the suspect from 1/26 shooting was arrested in Putnam, Connecticut. On February 24, 2021 Officer Ela stopped a stolen motor vehicle which resulted in a foot chase through swamp, the suspect was apprehended. On March 1, 2021 Joshua Besaw (kidnapping suspect) was sentenced to 20 years in Federal Prison. On March 13, 2021 Officers evacuate residents from 8 Robinson Street after discovering it being on fire. On April 2, 2021 a motorcycle being pursued by Massachusetts State Police crashed on Cudworth Road. Webster Police assist Massachusetts State Police in taking one person into custody. On February 22, 2021 a female reports ex-boyfriend broke into her house while she was there, results in a search and subsequent foot pursuit. Male is apprehended and arrested on outstanding warrants, stalking charges, and a litany of other charges. On May 5, 2021 Officers respond to, and arrest, an individual committing a break-in that was in progress at 291 Main Street. On May 24, 2021 Officer Patrick Trainor conducted an investigation while on patrol which results in arrest and the seizure of 15.8 grams of Heroin.

The Webster Police Department donated \$560 to Veteran’s Inc from Veterans Day Patch sales. They are currently conducting the Autism Patch and Memorial Day Patch fundraisers. On April 24 they participated in Earth Day clean up. On May 8, 2021 they held the 3rd Annual Duck Off Duck Race. On May 19, 2021 the held their 2nd Annual Cruise Night. On June 3, 2021 they participated in a Blood Drive. This year they will be holding the Hoops for Hope and our Junior Police Academy. The following statistics were reviewed:

<b>(Six Months)</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	
<b>Arrests</b>	667	626	
<b>Offense Reports</b>	606	485	
<b>Citations</b>	880	737	
<b>Crashes</b>	140	177	
	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	
<b>Crimes Against the Person</b>	291	260	(-11%)
<b>Crimes Against Property</b>	216	191	(-12%)
<b>Crimes Against Society</b>	63	48	(-24%)
<b>Group “B” Crimes</b>	267	210	(-21%)

Chief Shaw stated all of the categories decreased in 2021. He stated he hopes this is a trend with heading in the right direction. He stated the call volume remains the same but the crimes have gone down. He stated they received the new police boat and it should be on the water very shortly. He stated the fireworks this year were very calm. He said a few missing children were quickly reunited and the event went without any incidences. Chief Shaw stated another issue that caused some concern over the past weekend was the height of the water on the lake. He stated the Police Department/Harbormaster can’t enforce a no wake provision. He stated he would suggest drafting a by-law to present at Town Meeting giving the town authority. Chairman Becker stated he thanked everyone who helped with abiding by the request put out regarding the wakes. He thanked Acting Town Administrator Timothy Bell who worked in drafting the request. Mr. Willardson stated he is working with DCR and is looking at ways to get people notified. Chief Shaw stated there were a couple of overdoses in the past few weeks, but they have been very proactive. He stated the Outreach team, Social Workers, and Community Case Manager are doing a very good job in tracking cases. He stated the partnership with the Sheriff’s Office and Opening the Word Peer Recovery Center has been extremely beneficial. He stated five officers graduated with their Master’s Degrees from Nichols College which was supported by the Fels

Foundation. Chairman Becker thanked Chief Shaw for the update and thanked him for all of the Webster Police Department community efforts.

**DALE VIGER – APPOINTMENT TO THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE:** Mr. Willardson stated there are currently two openings on the Economic development Committee.

**Motion by Selectman Klebart, seconded by Selectman Jolda, to appoint Dale Viger to the Economic Development Committee. Call Vote: Selectman Klebart – yes, Selectman Gabor – yes, Selectman Kontoes - yes, Selectman Jolda – yes, and Selectman Becker – yes.**

**CAROLE MARCHAND – APPOINTMENT OF THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE:**

**Motion by Selectman Gabor, seconded by Selectman Jolda, to appoint Carole Marchand to the Economic Development Committee. Call Vote: Selectman Klebart – yes, Selectman Gabor – yes, Selectman Kontoes - yes, Selectman Jolda – yes, and Selectman Becker – yes.**

**CLASS II LICENSE HOLDER DISCUSSION:**

Mr. Willardson stated he spoke with other communities and Shrewsbury stated they tried to set a limit on Class II Licenses and they were sued and lost. He stated Town Council advised that communities can't put a restriction on how many Class II Licenses can be approved. The town can put together a matrix of conditions which will be researched.

**DISCHARGE THE AFFORDABLE HOUSING RENTAL RESTRICTION ON 40 UNION STREET 7 33 MECHANIC STREET:**

Selectman Gabor asked if the town is losing these properties as affordable housing. Mr. Willardson stated essentially, through the discharge they are lifting that restriction. It was requested that a list of Affordable Housing properties be sent to the Board.

**Motion by Selectman Jolda, seconded by Selectman Kontoes, to discharge the Affordable Housing Rental Restriction for the property located at 40 Union Street and 33 Mechanic Street, Webster, MA. Call Vote: Selectman Klebart – yes, Selectman Gabor – yes, Selectman Kontoes - yes, Selectman Jolda – yes, and Selectman Becker – yes.**

**CABLE CONTRACT UPDATE/DISCUSSION:** Chairman Becker stated at the last meeting the Board discussed about appointing a member to sit on the Cable Advisory Committee through the contract negotiations. Selectman Klebart stated he would volunteer to sit on the Committee as the Board's representative.

**Motion by Selectman Jolda, seconded by Selectman Kontoes, to appoint Selectman Thomas Klebart to the Cable Advisory Committee as the Board of Selectmen's appointment. Call Vote: Selectman Klebart – yes, Selectman Gabor – yes, Selectman Kontoes - yes, Selectman Jolda – yes, and Selectman Becker – yes.**

Mr. Willardson stated the current Cable Contract expires in 2023. He stated the town has two options. We can renew at the same conditions or we can go through the process of negotiations. Chairman Becker stated the town should be looking at other carriers to come in to town. Selectman Jolda also noted that the current contract does not even mention internet service.

## **TOWN ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT:**

### **ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

- Wednesday night concerts in the park
- Police Cruise Night June 30<sup>th</sup> 4:00 to 8:00 PM
- August 22<sup>nd</sup> Splash and Dash at Memorial Beach

#### 1. Public Health and Safety

- a. Coronavirus
  - i. 5 cases total over the last three weeks
- b. Recreation
  - i. Awesome fireworks display
    1. Thanks to Carole Marchand, DPW, Fire and Police
  - ii. Successful touch-a-truck day

#### 2. Financially Responsible

- a. Received \$168,444 green communities grant –
  - i. \$69,420 for the Middle School LED lighting project
  - ii. \$32,456 for the Fire Station HQ LED lighting
  - iii. \$3,840 for the Sewage Treatment Plan Weatherization project
  - iv. \$9,477 for the Fire Station #2 Weatherization project
  - v. \$16,809 for the Fire Station HQ Weatherization project
  - vi. \$29,942 for the Middle School Weatherization project
  - vii. \$6,500 for Administrative assistance
- b. Received \$186,000.00 grant for continuing the East Main Sidewalks
- c. Working with a potential marijuana delivery business

#### 3. Economic Development

- a. Outdoor dining extended through 2021
- b. Completed and closed out Urban Agenda grant and Regional PILOT grant to support entrepreneurs that opened businesses after the beginning of the pandemic.
- c. Economic Development Committee met today

#### 4. Maintain Infrastructure

- a. Lake Parkway/Klebart Ave. Finishing final punch list items (driveway aprons)
- b. South Main. NGrid to finished gas lines on East Main and South Main; now doing repairs on side streets. Road milled today; will be paved by the end of the week (rain dependent).
- c. Town Hall roof. Project started. Pricing out additional repairs
- d. Hill Street closed indefinitely. Repairs are the responsibility of Dudley; they are looking at the possibility of federal infrastructure funds or MassDOT grant funding. Chairman Becker stated he is concerned about the access to the Treatment Plan. He asked if the town could do something because it creates such a hardship for the town. Selectman Klebart stated he is worried about the winter and the truck having to use the alternative route. Selectman Jolda suggested the town reach out to the Army Corp or Engineers to possibly help with a temporary bridge. Chairman Becker request a copy of the full report on the bridge. Mr. Willardson stated it might be beneficial to have a letter from the Board.

**Motion by Selectman Jolda, seconded by Selectman Klebart, to authorize Chairman Becker to sign a letter on behalf of the Board of Selectmen expressing their concerns on the closure of the bridge on Hill Street. Call Vote: Selectman Klebart – yes, Selectman Gabor – yes, Selectman Kontoes - yes, Selectman Jolda – yes, and Selectman Becker – yes.**

e. Water Main Improvements. Caracas has installed 12” DI water main on Whitcomb Street from East Main to Clark Street (STA 8+25). On Thursday Caracas placed temporary trench patch on Whitcomb Street in anticipation of the rain. This week they will start with the valves & tee at Clark Street and continue stalling 12” DI down Whitcomb Street. They are expecting hydrants to be delivered so they will have another crew to begin installing hydrants.

5. Effective Delivery of Services/Operations

- a. Hired Tom Cutler as our Water and Sewer Superintendent. He will start July 26<sup>th</sup>.
- b. Hiring two grant funded regional public health employees.
- c. Jenn Sullivan, Health Director, has accepted a new position with the Town of Westborough. The Board thanked Mrs. Sullivan for her exceptional work, especially through the pandemic.
- d. High Lake level. Gates are open to maximum allowed without causing issues downstream. Requested residents and lake users to drive wakeless. Asking the state to enforce/allow us to enforce. Mr. Bell stated the town can look into legislation to get the authorization to enforce the no wake restriction. Selectman Kontoes stated it was posted on Facebook and emails were sent out, but wondered if there was a way to communicate the no wake directly to boaters on the water. Mr. Willardson stated the town can do a Code Red alert. He stated most of the people that are on the lake live in the area. Mr. Bell stated there is definitely concerns about shorelines being eroded.

6. Transparent, Open and Friendly Government

- a. Remote public meetings have been extended

Selectman Jolda stated there is a lot of paving going on around town. He wanted to see if the Board could get a copy of the paving schedule.

**Motion by Selectman Jolda, seconded by Selectman Kontoes, to approve the Town Administrator’s Report. Call Vote: Selectman Klebart – yes, Selectman Gabor – yes, Selectman Kontoes - yes, Selectman Jolda – yes, and Selectman Becker – yes.**

**ADJOURNMENT:**

**Motion by Selectman Jolda, seconded by Selectman Kontoes, to adjourn at 7:19 p.m.**

**Call Vote: Selectman Klebart – yes, Selectman Gabor – yes, Selectman Kontoes - yes, Selectman Jolda – yes, and Selectman Becker – yes.**

**Respectfully Submitted,**

**Courtney Friedland, Executive Secretary to the Board of Selectmen**

**Next Meeting:** August 9, 2021, Board of Selectmen's Meeting 6:00 p.m. Webster Town Hall, 350 Main Street, Webster, MA 01570