



**Board of Selectmen
Minutes
Tuesday, September 19, 2017 at 6:00pm
Town Hall Meeting Room**

The meeting was called to order at 6:00pm by Chair Lucy Wallace in the Town Hall Meeting Room. Selectmen Ken Swanton, Alice von Loesecke, Stu Sklar and Kara McGuire Minar were in attendance as well as Town Administrator Tim Bragan. Executive Assistant Julie Doucet entered at 7:00pm.

Meeting with the Charter Commission

Commission members were invited as a follow up from their recent public hearing to hear any questions or further feedback from the BoS members.

Wallace opened the discussion to the BoS members first to provide their comments.

Minar began by thanking the commission for their efforts. She believes certain boards being elected is vital to their role especially the land use boards such as the Planning Board. She supports keeping the caucus and instituting a recall mechanism.

Von Loesecke thanked the commission for their efforts and is pleased with the document presented. She understands if passed the Charter itself can be changed if portions are found to not work as intended. She is hesitant about the recall section but if the commissioners are confident with the parameters set she can support it. She also spoke about the elected versus appointed committee/boards. She does not believe appointed versus elected changes how members feel about accountability. She is concerned and does not want the Planning Board being appointed instead of elected to be the reason people choose not to vote in favor of the charter. She is in favor of eliminating the caucus.

Swanton spoke about the commission recognizing the great work of the Finance Committee but offering the concept of setting overall town goals that link together long range and master plans with short and long term finances. Swanton is happy with the building maintenance progress being made by the current DPW Director. He is uncertain the direction in the charter to have this under the Building Inspector is a better approach. Swanton suggested reducing the quorum number for annual town meeting if that requirement stays in the charter.

Chair of the commission Paul Cohen asked if the BoS had essential items they want incorporated into the charter document. He admitted after working on this for eighteen months and learning so much it is still difficult to understand how best to move forward.

Wallace admitted she did not initially support the charter because there was no clear sense on what needed to be addressed.

Sklar learned when a town explores drafting a charter there is typically a specific reason why. He believes this process only began because one person did not agree with an article at the annual town meeting to give more power to the Town Administrator and that was the genesis of this. He fully supports the budget process proposed.

Commission members expressed their reservations that some of the smaller items in the charter could single handedly defeat the charter. They also noted the role of the BoS expands to include financial and structural changes. Areas the commission tried to focus on were leadership, expertise and revenue. The commission explained to generate opportunities with respect to planning and development it is imperative all boards/committees are working in the same direction. The commission struggled to balance what is necessary or desired versus the cost implication to taxpayers. The group talked about how the role of the BoS will change in the

proposed budget process allowing for a broader discussion. Commission member Cindy Russo acknowledged support by the BoS will be instrumental in facilitating passage of the charter.

Legislative update

Representative Jen Benson reported she has been assigned to the Joint State Administration and Regulatory Oversight. She provided a progress report on the three bills Harvard has in the house currently. Rep. Benson has been chosen to attend the Bonn Climate Change Conference in November as an official observer. Board members gave their input in a few areas which included prevailing wage laws and other post-employment benefits (OPEB). Bragan and von Loesecke provided input on areas the state could help cities and towns.

Appointments

Capital Planning & Investment Committee (CPIC)

Wallace invited candidates Bill Marinelli and Paul Green to come forward to be interviewed. She explained because CPIC did not provide a specific recommendation the board must interview both candidates to make a decision.

Paul Green views the work of CPIC as advisory. They are a group tasked with doing the research necessary to grade and rank various projects. He acknowledged over the next few months the school's vision for the Hildreth Elementary School will be a main project of discussion. He feels his background as an engineer will make him an asset on the committee. Green also has experience serving on other committees that have been tasked with handling capital projects.

Marinelli has experience as a Selectmen, on the Planning Board and the Bromfield Building Committee. He is interested in financial issues and has proven leadership when he worked on Devens disposition a few years ago. He views appointed positions as more task oriented based on policies set by those we have been elected. Marinelli will approach his work on the CPIC as analytical working to provide information to those who need to make decisions. He will not advocate for any specific project and will steer clear of the political aspects.

Sklar asked why the third candidate Nathan Finch was not also invited to be interviewed. Von Loesecke, who serves on CPIC as BoS rep, explained the new appointee will need to take a leadership role on the committee therefore someone with experience is preferable. Sklar reminded the board about the importance of expanding the volunteer base. He does not understand why all three candidates were not invited. Von Loesecke added the committee did vote to recommend Marinelli for appointment with a 3-1 vote.

The board members had a few questions and then Wallace asked them to vote on who they support for appointment: von Loesecke voted for Marinelli, Sklar abstained, Swanton voted for Marinelli, Minar voted for Green, and Wallace voted for Green. With a 2-2 vote a decision could not be made.

It was decided the third applicant will be invited for an interview at the next meeting.

Municipal Affordable Housing Trust

On a Swanton/von Loesecke motion, the board voted unanimously to appoint Fran Nickerson to the MAHT.

Building Maintenance Program

Swanton explained he has been working with DPW Director Tim Kilhart and Town Administrator Tim Bragan to develop a building maintenance program. Kilhart distributed a building repair chart along with a cost spreadsheet. Swanton commented on the amount of time Kilhart has spent compiling all the data. Kilhart has been reaching out to each town department to create a list of necessary repairs, routine maintenance items and associated costs. He has been able to manage repairs to the HVAC system at the public safety building which has been long overdue.

Kilhart suggests the board consider creating a capital replacement account to be used for projects that come up and use the current account for routine maintenance. He plans to continue his work by deciding what projects should be categorized as capital and which are not. Bragan confirmed to complete the work at the public safety building a reserve fund transfer will be requested. All charges to the public building accounts will go through either the DPW or Town Administrator's office. Through the community compact program, Bragan will investigate software to assist with this program.

Minutes

On a Sklar/Minar motion, the board voted unanimously to approve the 9/5 minutes, as amended.

Public Communication

Diane Temple, former elementary school teacher and president of Harvard Teachers Association retired close to ten years ago. She understands the board voted to remove the retired teachers from the GICRMT in an effort to save money for the town but she does not believe they realize some retirees are unable to qualify for Medicare. She wanted to make sure the board was aware of this. She indicated there are retirees who have been retired many years but did not qualify for Medicare. She said this is a serious issue to consider and she was in Boston today to testify on behalf of state and municipal employees with respect to fair and affordable health care. She feels the decision made by the BoS is a broken promise to retirees and is hopeful efforts to talk about this more can be considered.

Don Blood, spoke to clarify what Temple had said as he attended the same hearing she did in Boston. He is a retiree who is not eligible for Medicare. He indicated you must have at least 35 quarters worked in order to be eligible. He spoke about the indemnity plans and how important they are for him and his wife allowing them to see certain specialists. The indemnity plans being offered through Minuteman Nashoba are much higher in cost. The bottom line is they will not be able to afford them.

Julia Chadwick, noted the indemnity plans are a 50 – 50% split compared to the 25% for other plans.

Town Administrator

Bragan confirmed all letters being sent to the BoS with respect to the retired teachers insurance are being forwarded directly to the board.

Bragan asked if the BoS members want to belong to the Worcester County Selectmen's Association. Sklar and Minar volunteered to participate on behalf of the board. On a Wallace/Swanton motion, the board voted unanimously to nominate Sklar as member and Minar as alternate.

Bragan announced Special Town Meeting articles are due by Thursday, October 12 so that the warrant can be signed at the BoS meeting on October 17th.

Bragan said the Historical Commission is working to clarify their district maps with respect to the proposed location of the new elementary school and Bromfield House and whether or not they are within the district.

Bragan is working with the Department of Revenue on a capital improvement plan and he is working with a company, Dude Solutions, to assist with the building maintenance plan.

Update on old library accessibility project

Wallace reported the Cultural Collaborative had a great showing at their open house and the building has been transformed by their efforts.

Wallace reported the estimator had to revise the costs for the old library accessibility project to include the owner's contingency. She indicated that OLAC is looking into several grant opportunities to reduce the cost to the town.

Community Preservation Committee (CPC) has shown support for the project. Committee member Wendy Magan continues to work with the Architectural Access Board (AAB) to get our exposure down to zero on the variances. Wallace is working with Planner Bill Scanlan on an application to the Mass Office of Disability for grant funds.

2019 budget parameters

Bragan described the new budget process and timeline. He recognizes the timeline is aggressive and will need to meet with board members to discuss their goals along with financial expectations. He will draft a budget document for review at the next meeting.

Bragan gave an update on the states revenue picture and noted Governor Baker is working to find ways to fund and stabilize health insurance rates. He noted the nursing home crisis and issues with Medicare and Medicaid are areas he will be watching. He expects the new growth numbers soon. He will provide regular updates throughout the process.

Selectmen reports

Sklar distributed a document about the Concord senior means-tested property tax exemption. He wants to target this for the spring town meeting.

Sklar said the War Monument Restoration Committee is still in need of donations.

Von Loesecke asked if one of her fellow members could attend the school building committee meet this week in her absence. Sklar volunteered.

Swanton said at some point the board needs to do a better job communicating their decision as to why they voted to remove the retired teachers from the GICRMT. He is unhappy with how the decision was reported on in the local newspaper. He offered to work on a draft to help explain the many misconceptions out there.

Minar reported the state does not want the town to focus on only one source for the HEAT Smart grant program. She will contact the Building Inspector to attain the additional permitting requirements and information for wood-based heat sources that could be included in the HEAT Smart program.

Minar is working with Planning Board Chair Erin McBee to determine more opportunities for the complete streets program.

Wallace said the Council on Aging is working on two applications for the Capital Planning & Investment Committee. They will seek funds for another architectural look at phase two and the construction of phase 2.

Wallace reported at the housing at Hildreth House held a bidders conference and proposals are due on October 4th. The goal is to bring a recommended developer to the board before the November Special Town Meeting.

Wallace reported that she and Minar are also working with Planning Board Chair Erin McBee and Planner Bill Scanlan reviewing the Devens portion of the Master Plan in order to develop an outline of factors to consider in addressing the Devens matter. Scanlan has also reached out to the consultant who assisted with the Master Plan for guidance.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:45pm.

Documents referenced:

Volunteer forms – Green dated 8.15.2017 and Marinelli dated 8.22.2017

Building Maintenance program – 9.13.2017 memo, repair chart FY17 and Building cost FY18

Fiscal 2019 budget memo – dated 10.4.2017