



**Board of Selectmen
Minutes
Tuesday, January 9, 2018 at 7:00pm
Town Hall Meeting Room**

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

Minutes

On a Swanton/Minar motion the board voted unanimously to approve regular and executive session minutes from 12/19, as presented.

Library Trustee changes

On a Sklar/Swanton motion, the board voted unanimously to accept resignation of Chris Frechette from the Library Trustees and send a letter of thanks for his service. Trustee Chair Gail Coolidge and Library Director Mary Wilson introduced Chris Candon to replace Frechette. Candon has been a resident for ten years and his family are frequent users of the library. By a roll call vote, Coolidge – Aye, Green – Aye, Minar – Aye, Swanton – Aye, Sklar – Aye, Wallace – Aye, they voted unanimously to appoint Chris Candon to the Library Trustees.

Old Library Accessibility Committee (OLAC)

Architect

Wallace reported the two architectural firms who submitted proposals were Abacus Architects and Beacon Architectural Associates. Both firms were interviewed and ranked by the OLAC. OLAC unanimously voted to recommend Abacus with Beacon as their second choice. Wallace said the next step will be negotiation of a contract which will be handled by Procurement Officer Marie Sobalvarro. On a Swanton/Sklar motion, the board voted unanimously to approve recommendation of OLAC for Abacus Architects as first choice for negotiation and Beacon as a second choice.

Letter of recommendation

Wallace drafted a letter of recommendation for inclusion with the grant request to the Massachusetts Cultural Facilities Fund. This grant could cover a significant portion of the cost of the project. On a Swanton/Sklar motion, the board voted unanimously to authorize the Chair to sign letter as part of the grant process.

Senior Tax Relief Plan

Sklar worked with Finance Committee alternate member Jennifer Finch to provide additional information for the board on senior tax remediation. Sklar strongly supports establishing a plan to alleviate some of the tax burden from deserving seniors. Concord, Sudbury, Hamilton and Sudbury are other communities that have adopted a senior tax relief program. Bragan confirmed a tax relief plan requires approval at a town meeting but does not require a ballot

question. Basically, Sklar explained the concept is to limit the property tax burden for qualifying seniors. An application would be required and include specific parameters such as age, years lived in Harvard and asset limitations. In addition, all applicants would be required to qualify for the state's circuit breaker program. The program is funded by a surcharge paid by the other taxpayers. Minar expressed concerns about verifying information in the application and confidentiality of paperwork once it is submitted. She also wondered if tasking the Assessing department with this is feasible. Swanton understands the concept but also has similar concerns as Minar. He questioned how you fairly determine who needs the tax relief. He and others mentioned that an asset limit be included. Minar and Swanton voiced their reluctance now is the right time for such a program considering the tax increase residents will be affected by if the new school project is approved. Sklar and Finch disagree believing now is the perfect time. Wallace supports the concept but agrees parameters need more tweaking. Minar offered an idea of trying to create a charity for tax relief all residents could benefit from. Sklar was adamant if the Board of Selectmen do not vote favorably on the proposal a citizens petition will be prepared allowing all town residents to have a say at the annual town meeting. Swanton said this is a significant change which deserves a good amount time and attention before being presented at the annual town meeting. Sklar pointed out this topic has come up several times in the past. Sklar and Finch will continue their work on the plan. The board will revisit the topic at the next meeting.

Public Communication

Beth Williams, Council on Aging Chair, invited Sklar and Finch to attend the next CoA board meeting to discuss the plan.

Town Administrator Report

Bragan reported the Finance Committee received all the budgets on the 29th of December and their first meeting is tomorrow night. Finance Committee Chair Don Ludwig will be in communication with the BoS through the process.

Bragan reported the state budget is appearing more promising. He instructed the board members to revisit the cuts discussed and prioritize them.

Bragan asked the board to vote to set the caucus date. On a Sklar/Minar motion, the board voted unanimously to set the town caucus date of March 24th at 5pm.

Bragan said all money articles for the annual town meeting are due by January 15th. He plans to maintain the same schedule as in the past for printing of the Finance Committee booklet even though the annual town meeting will not be held until May 5th. All non-monetary articles are due by February 1st.

Bragan told the board they received a pole petition from National Grid & Verizon. A pole petition hearing will be held at their meeting on January 23rd.

Bragan reported the town was recognized by the Central Mass Municipal Recycling Council for our 80% participation in outstanding waste reduction programs.

Bragan recognized the Department of Public Work employees for their outstanding response to the blizzard on January 4th.

Bragan reported an issue with the sewer line freezing at Town Hall required him to close the building at 3pm on Monday. The problem is being resolved preventing this from happening again.

Bragan reported due to the new tax laws a normally quiet time of year was not this year. The town collected close to 1.9 million dollars in one week. He thanked the Finance Department for their efforts during this unexpected and extremely busy time.

Punch card cost increase

DPW Director Tim Kilhart sent a letter requesting the BoS consider increasing the cost for disposal for televisions and computer monitors. In his letter he explained the cost for disposal of these items has increased. On a Sklar/Swanton motion, the board voted unanimously to increase the cost for disposal of televisions and computer monitors from \$20 to \$30 effective immediately.

Selectmen reports

Sklar reported the War Monument Restoration Committee is working with the Historic Commission. A hearing is being held to consider changing the flag pole base from cement to granite. He reported the commission members are supportive of the request. They will seek quotes for the restoration and ask to award a contractor at the next BoS meeting. The committee plans to unveil the new flag pole on Memorial Day.

Swanton said DPW Director Tim Kilhart will be at the next meeting to review building maintenance plans for the coming year. He also noted Irene Congdon from the state's SMART (save money and reduce trash) program will be there to give a presentation and answer questions.

Minar is working with the Energy Advisory Committee on the HeatSmart pilot program. They need to finalize the contract allowing release of funds to the town. She also plans to meet with Sobalvarro to begin work to attain a broker for community aggregation. She will provide updates at the February 6th meeting.

Wallace reported the Housing @ Hildreth House Committee will meet on Thursday morning.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30pm.

Documents referenced:

Library Trustee changes – Frechette resignation letter dated 1.2.2018

Candon vol form dated 1.3.2018

OLAC – letter of support dated 1.6.2018

Senor Tax Relief – home rule draft dated 1.4.2018 & other supporting info dated 1.5.2018

Punch card rate change – letter from DPW Director dated 1.3.2018