



Board of Selectmen
Minutes
Friday, January 20, 2017 at 9:00am
Town Hall Meeting Room

The meeting was called to order at 9:00am by Chair Ken Swanton in the Town Hall Meeting Room. Selectmen Ron Ricci, Stu Sklar and Lucy Wallace were in attendance as well as Town Administrator Tim Bragan.

Minutes

On a Ricci/Sklar motion, the board voted unanimously to approve minutes of 1/3, as presented.

Recreation Director

Swanton said members on the Park & Recreation Commission were unable to attend the meeting, because the snow had required the Selectmen to move their meeting to a morning. This topic will be discussed at the February 7th meeting.

Town Administrator report

Bragan announced Sergeant John Coates will retire at the end of February. He has been employed in Harvard for twenty nine years. Chief Denmark will handle the process of replacing the Sergeant position.

Bragan reported twenty one applications have been received for the DPW Director position.

Bragan will review submissions with Assistant Town Administrator Marie Sobalvarro and DPW liaison Ron Ricci. He expects to have three candidates for interview by the Board of Selectmen at their first meeting in February. He is working with the current DPW foreman Ron Gilbert to move his position out of the union and create an operations lead position within the union. This addresses some of the management issues highlighted in the management and operations audit done last year.

Bragan said the on-going appellate tax board case between Verizon and the State of Massachusetts may finally be settled. Cities and towns will be responsible to pay amounts owed to Verizon for overpayment. Harvard will owe \$12,644. Bragan is investigating the use of overlay accounts and raise and appropriate to satisfy this payment.

Bragan said the budget process is moving along with all non-monetary articles due by February 3rd. He will have a draft warrant for the board to review at their February 7th meeting.

Housing @ Hildreth Housing Committee

Committee members Rick Maiore and Victor Normand were present to update the board on their progress. They realized after a site walk of the property they would be unable to provide a report to the Selectmen by February 9th as specified in their charge. They have put out a Request for Proposals (RFP) so they can hire an engineering firm to create an engineering plan. This will refine the number of units and how connection with roadways and water/sewer could work. They had been awarded a \$30,000 grant by the Municipal Affordable Housing Trust with the commitment of two affordable units within the project. However, because of restrictions on the use of CPA funds provided to the MAHT, the grant was withdrawn. Therefore, the committee is requesting funds from the Rantoul Trust account so they can bring the site design to a level sufficient for the Planning Board's preliminary site plan approval. Responses from the RFP will be due next week and they are hopeful to have a plan by the end of February early March. They recognize this is too important of a decision to go before the town without all the facts. Maiore said they will prepare for a special town meeting in the fall when they can have a presentation with a potential purchase and sales agreement from

a future developer. This will address any questions/concerns for potential developers and town residents through a public process before presentation at a town meeting.

On a Sklar/Ricci motion, the board voted to allot \$30,000 to the Housing @ Hildreth House Committee via \$10,000 from the senior Rantoul account and \$20,000 from the larger Rantoul account with hope to be paid back from the project. (3-1, Wallace – Nay) Wallace supported the full \$30,000 coming from the larger Rantoul account instead of splitting between the two.

Energy advisory committee – net metering credit purchase agreement

Committee member Eric Broadbent along with John Typabis from Oak Square Partners (Athol solar) and Haskell Werlin from Solar Design Associates (Wendell solar). Broadbent reviewed a chart of anticipated savings the town can realize if it were to enter into a net metering agreement. He said the Energy Advisory Committee had voted a year or two ago to approve the town entering in to a net metering credit purchase agreement. He said entering into such an agreement will offset electric costs for the town. They are recommending the town enter into agreements with both entities. The next step is to draft a letter of intent so a contract can be finalized. Broadbent noted entering into such agreements not only saves the town money but also supports providing energy from clean energy suppliers who contribute to the local economy. He added electricity rates are increasing so this is a perfect time to take this step. They also talked about the uncertainty of these type of agreements being available in the future. On a Ricci/Wallace motion, the board voted unanimously to authorize the Town Administrator to sign letter of intent as appropriate to participate in both projects.

Caucus warrant

On a Wallace/Ricci motion, the board voted unanimously to endorse call to caucus for February 11th at 7pm in the upper town hall.

Devens ballot question

Sklar and Wallace presented a proposal with respect to outreach on the Devens ballot question. They included a schedule which includes a public forum and a town wide mailing. The mailing will include a map and narrative with a background and explanation of why this is important to initiate now. The board members offered some suggested edits and more clarity on this being the first step in a multi-year process with several chances along the way for the town to provide input. Wallace and Sklar will work on frequently asked questions and refine the handout for review at the February 28th meeting.

Status of request for full time to fire and ambulance

Bragan reported a follow up meeting was held with members of the Fire Department and Ambulance Squad. The Fire Chief and Co-Director Jason Cotting are working on one article to create a full time firefighter EMT. The position will report to the Fire Chief.

Ayer Road traffic mitigation plan

Sklar reiterated their goal of providing traffic calming measures on Ayer Road that will reduce speeds. Actions they intent to take are:

- Small warrant articles for four radar speed limit signs.
- Increase traffic enforcement
- Bring request approved by the Conservation Commission for conservation land for roundabout to annual town meeting (multi-year process)

They will require additional funds for further traffic analysis. Montachusett Regional Planning Commission (MRPC) can complete an updated traffic study. Sklar and Ricci have consulted with Police Chief Ed Denmark who recommended incremental steps to calm traffic before doing anything big.

Goals

Swanton will have information related to formalizing the Town Administrator review process for the next meeting.

Selectmen reports

Wallace announced the resignation Barbara Hilton as Harvard's representative on the Central Massachusetts EMS. She said the town should have three representatives.

On a Wallace/Ricci motion, the board voted to send a letter of thanks for serving on Central Mass EMS.

Wallace reported the Council on Aging has closed their survey. CoA member Katie Petrossi has done an initial review:

- 74% respondents intend to stay in town and recognize the importance of a senior center,
- 78% of respondents support phase 2 of the Hildreth House project.
- majority of respondents were ages 60 to 80
- 287 residents responded

Wallace said the Old Library Accessibility Committee has issued a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for design services.

Ron Ricci said the Municipal Affordable Housing Trust (MAHT) has two vacancies and will soon have another one with Greg Schmidt leaving on sabbatical. He said if any volunteers come forward they will need to act fast. Board members will begin actively soliciting candidates.

Swanton asked board members to review his annual town report submission and provide any comments to him as soon as possible.

Swanton reported the Cable Committee will be submitting an article to reduce the size of their committee from seven to five. They are also interested in expanding hours of the part time director.

Swanton reported the Conservation Commission small warrant article for \$200,000 is being reviewed by the Finance Committee. Sklar said the commission members want to attend the next Selectmen's meeting to discuss their article further. Bragan has expressed concern about the change without a prioritization plan in place.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:00am.

Documents referenced:

Energy – net metering agreements dated 1/11/2017 & chart of potential savings dated 1/6/2017

Devens ballot question – 1/11/2017

Ayer Road traffic mitigation plan – 1/11/2017