



**Board of Selectmen
Minutes
Tuesday, January 26, 2016 at 7:00pm
Hapgood Meeting Room**

The meeting was called to order at 7:00PM by Vice Chair, Ken Swanton in the Hapgood Meeting Room. Selectmen Lucy Wallace, Leo Blair, and Stu Sklar were in attendance as well as Town Administrator Tim Bragan and Executive Assistant Julie Doucet.

Minutes

After one small correction from Stu Sklar the board made the following motions:

On a Wallace/Blair motion, the board voted unanimously to approve the 1/5 minutes, as amended.

On a Wallace/Blair motion, the board voted unanimously to approve the 1/5 executive session minutes, as presented.

Community Preservation Committee (CPC)

Review of requests and recommendations for Annual Town Meeting (ATM)

Committee Chair Didi Chadran and Treasurer John Lee were present.

Chadran explained when evaluating this year's grant applications, the CPC needed to consider its obligation to service the \$1 million bond for the Town Hall historic renovation project which the town voted on in 2012. They received nine applications.

They recommend the following:

- Town Clerk – preservation of records - \$26,100
- Conservation Commission – Invasive Plant Management - \$26,100
- Municipal Affordable Housing Trust – affordable housing - \$26,100

They will transfer \$63,000 for payment of debt on the Town Hall Renovation project and \$300,000 as a direct payment of historic preservation expenses on the project.

Lee offered the idea of next year having applicants submit to the Capital Planning and Investment Committee and CPC simultaneously to avoid missing any funding opportunities.

Town Hall update

Committee members Laura Andrews and Jack Guswa were present. They reported the project is still on schedule with no expected delays. Andrews confirmed change orders thus far have totaled (approved & pending) \$182,000. The overall budget for change orders is \$242,000. She also reported the lift will be installed by the end of this month.

Hildreth House update

Design meetings have been held with LLB Architects and they expect bids to go out in March with completion of the project in the 4th quarter of 2016.

On a Sklar/Blair motion, the board voted unanimously to approve the 8th application for payment in the amount of \$322,602.42.

Swanton asked where the Council on Aging will go during the renovation. Andrews said they are investigating options. The Town Administrator will help with this.

Town Administrator position report

Bragan explained he was tasked with this assignment after the BoS set their goals for the upcoming year. In an effort to neutralize and implement a process that was objective, Bragan recruited individuals within the community who had differing experience and backgrounds in municipal government. He also consulted with Town Counsel and the Attorney General's office to verify there would be no issues with respect to the open meeting law. He asked the Town Moderator to control the discussions. He then turned the discussion over to Robert Eubank.

Eubank began by recognizing the working group members:

Ron Ricci, BoS Chair

Rick Maiore, THCC Chair

Alice Von Loesecke, Finance Committee Chair

Victor Normand, Personnel Board

Janet Vellante, Town Clerk

Marie Sobalvarro, Assistant Town Administrator

Eubank explained their primary goal was to determine how to improve efficiency in Town operations and allow the Selectmen to remain focused on policy-setting.

They researched written materials, and met with speakers recommended by the MMA and two former Town Administrators to get their perspectives. They did an assessment of current responsibilities and operations.

They recommend the following changes:

- Employee appointments below the level of Department Head (and excluding the Fire Department staff) are made by the Town Administrator.
- Responsibility for discipline of Town employees under the Board of Selectmen be delegated to the Town Administrator.
- Authority to approve payroll and vendor warrants be delegated to the Town Administrator.
- The Town Administrator approves operating and capital budgets for departments under the jurisdiction of the Selectmen prior to presenting said budgets to the Board of Selectmen for approval.

They agreed the title of the position does not need to be changed.

Based on the relatively limited scope a Home Rule Special Act is likely the best approach.

The board members had a few questions/comments.

Lucy Wallace wondered with several things happening such as change to Town Clerk position and the Charter Commission petition does it make sense to wait until a direction has been decided. Eubank explained their suggested changes are voted on at the ATM where the Charter piece is only a ballot question not an article. The Charter Commissioners will control the process if that is the direction the town takes. They are entirely two different processes. Blair concurred clarifying this process is more of housekeeping where the Charter Commission is a holistic view of town governance. Bragan explained because the role of the Selectmen is so specific in state law any changes in responsibilities have to go through the legislature. The board will act on the recommendations at their next meeting.

Town Administrator report

Bragan announced the entertainment license request from the Unitarian Church for the Schools Trust Gala. The board will need to act on this at their next meeting.

Bragan distributed the audio/visual proposal from HB Communications. Their president will be present at the next meeting.

Bragan confirmed Town Clerk Janet Vellante has received the required signatures on the Charter petition. The board can act on this at their next meeting.

Bragan reported Marie Sobalvarro was attending the Board of Health meeting for the carpet variance at Town Hall. They are requesting the carpet be extended into the Town Administrator and Land Use office areas.

Bragan recognized DPW Director Rich Nota's recent achievement as Road Scholar through the Baystate Roads Program.

Bragan expects LLB architects to have a report about the accessibility for the old library by next week. If Vertex is unable to give an estimate for the meeting they will discuss this at the Feb. 23rd meeting.

Bragan gave the members a draft list of monetary warrant articles.

Public communication

Worth Robbins, 115 Mass Avenue, wanted to make certain the board was aware the petition for the Charter Commission was submitted to the Town Clerk and understand the next steps. He said 692 signatures were certified on January 19th which is 15% of registered voters from the last election. He believes the BoS have a duty to put this question on the town election ballot. Based on state law timeframes the BoS must act on this by Feb. 12th. The options before the BoS are to take action on this at this year's election or next. Robbins said the Charter Commission is not the only way to proceed. His understanding is a special act can be used to create the commission or a special committee to do the same work. He favors the Charter Commission approach which is a prescribed process which includes a set amount of public hearings.

Swanton invited Robbins to join their discussion on this at the next meeting.

Hiring committee for Finance Director

On a Wallace/Sklar motion, the board voted unanimously to create a sub-committee for hiring of a new Finance Director consisting of the Town Administrator, School Superintendent, BoS member, Finance Committee member, School Committee member and a staff member. Current Finance Director Lorraine Leonard will serve as a special advisor.

Wallace nominated Stu Sklar to serve. On a Wallace/Blair motion, the board voted unanimously to nominate Stu Sklar.

Personnel policies

Equal Opportunity Employment Policy & Employment of Relatives

Sklar reported HR Director Marie Sobalvarro has been working on these with labor counsel and the Personnel Board. Public hearings were held and two or three revisions were made.

On a Wallace/Sklar motion, the board voted unanimously to adopt the Equal Opportunity Policy.

Blair raised questions on the Employment of Relatives. He requested the Personnel Board consider alternate language for bullet 1 with respect to relatives working in the same department. No action was taken on this policy.

Used Auto Licenses

On a Wallace/Sklar motion, the board voted unanimously to approve licenses for Harvard Outdoor Power Equipment and Mill Road Tire & Auto.

Old Library Accessibility Committee

This item was deferred until the next meeting when Ron Ricci can be present with the understanding action must be taken at the next meeting. Wallace desired acting now but the board decided to wait until the next meeting.

Resignations

On a Blair/Sklar motion, the board recognized and thanked them for their prior participation. (Historical Commission: Scott Roy & Wendy Cote-Magan)

Municipal Affordable Housing Trust term extensions

Blair asked to wait on these as well. Wallace was reluctant considering the recent proposals the trust received on 166 Littleton Road. As trust member, Blair did not think waiting would delay review of proposals. After some debate, it was decided to wait although Wallace was not in favor of this. Wallace expressed her concern over the many resignations recently. She suggested the BoS address this at their annual strategic planning session in June.

Fire/Ambulance operations study

Bragan distributed a proposal for analysis of the fire and ambulance service operations from the UMASS Boston Collins Center for Public Management. He reported the Collins Center is close to completing their analysis of the Department of Public Works. Blair suggested the board not act on this proposal until they have seen the analysis of the DPW. All agreed.

Bragan asked if the board approves this proposal will they want to include the optional survey for an additional \$2,500.00. The board members do what to include the optional survey.

Selectmen reports

Stu Sklar reported the Cable Committee has hired Program Director Anya Zulawnik as a contractor. They are very excited and expect exciting things to come.

Sklar expects the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Cable Committee, School Committee and Board of Selectmen to be ready for a vote at the next meeting.

Sklar said the parking lot paving project at Bromfield has been approved by the Planning Board, Bare Hill Pond Watershed Committee and the Conservation Commission. He will ask the BoS to vote on this at their Feb. 23rd meeting.

Lucy Wallace announced the Devens Open Space and Recreation Committee needs a representative from Harvard. She asked for this to be advertised on the town website.

Sklar added notification from the state on the k-wing project is expected tomorrow.

Ken Swanton reported the Capital Planning and Investment Committee voted unanimously to support the School Committee's request to do an architectural study on the Bromfield House addition and 1st floor accessibility.

Swanton suggested the BoS discuss their topics next week for the All Boards meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:45pm.

Documents referenced:

CPC summary – dated 1.21.2016

Town Hall & Hildreth update – dated 1.21.2016

Town Administrator position report – dated 1.26.2016

Personnel Policies

(Equal Opportunity & Employment of Family Members) - dated 1.15.2016

Resignation letters – Roy dated 1.11.2016 & Magan dated 1.13.2016

Fire/Ambulance study proposal – dated 1.14.2016