

Select Board Minutes
Tuesday, August 4, 2020
7:00pm

The Select Board Regular Meeting was held virtually in accordance with the Governor's Executive Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L.c.30A. S.20.

Select Board participants:

Chair Alice von Loesecke, Rich Maiore, Kara Minar, Stu Sklar, Member Lucy Wallace was absent

Town Department attendees:

Town Administrator Tim Bragan, Assistant Town Administrator/HR Director Marie Sobalvarro, Executive Assistant Julie Doucet, DPW Director Tim Kilhart, Facilities Manager Jeff Hayes

Additional participants:

Frank Carlson, Joanne Ward

MassWorks grant application

DPW Director Tim Kilhart is preparing a grant application for repairs to Slough Road. If awarded the grant, he intends to pave Slough Rd between Mass Ave and Bolton Rd, install necessary drainage, curbing and a guard rail in the hollow area. He expects to know by October if Harvard will be awarded the grant funding. This paving project will not widen the roadway. By a roll call vote, Maiore – aye, Minar – aye, Sklar – aye, von Loesecke – aye, the board voted unanimously to support the DPW application for the Slough Rd project and appoint Alice as chair to sign the letter for the grant.

Ayer Rd construction project

Kara Minar read correspondence from the Department of Transportation's Arthur Frost stating they are actively reviewing a potential roundabout but are not yet seeing a clear cut case to support it. DPW Director Kilhart has not received confirmation from DOT therefore this topic will be discussed and finalized at the September 1st meeting.

Municipal Buildings Overview

Facilities Manager Jeff Hayes provided a report with a general overview of the most crucial areas to be addressed for each town building. He is aware the old library is currently the biggest concern. Hayes explained the public building account funds annual maintenance contracts with the remaining funds available for preventative maintenance. He will focus efforts on determining the optimal use for those funds. Hayes was able to explain how the old library can be tarped to prevent further water infiltration which will only accelerate the deterioration of this building. He admitted this is not a pretty option but effective. Hayes said the challenge with older buildings like the library is deciding on a systematic approach to maintenance because the more involved projects become the likelihood increases additional issues will be discovered. He will follow up with the fire department to find out if it is possible to utilize the ladder truck instead of paying for a lift when tarping the roof.

Carlson Orchards request to extend hours

Public comment

Chris Green, Oak Hill Rd, suggested the Select Board watch the July 14th Board of Health meeting when Carlson Orchards occupancy for the tap room was discussed related to Covid.

Beth Williams, Granite View Lane, has been to Carlson Orchards quite a bit and has been impressed with the good job they have done to comply with social distancing and avoid overcrowding. She supports their request to extend hours on the patio.

Owner Frank Carlson is requesting a change to their patio hours. He is asking the board to consider their Friday and Saturday hours of after 6:00pm, when they are required to ask patrons to move into the building, be changed to allow the patio to remain open until 8:00pm. They are trying to comply with Covid 19 regulations and with reduced seating in the building there is simply not enough room. Maiore asked if they are aware of any issues thus far with parking or overcrowding. Carlson answered no. He is happy with how things are operating and is confident they can manage when business picks up this fall. Sklar wondered what was discussed at the Board of Health meeting mentioned by neighbor Chris Green. Minar tried to quickly peruse the minutes but did not find anything of great concern. She supports Carlson Orchards request as it makes sense for the health and safety of patrons. Bragan explained this is a temporary change in response to Covid 19 and will be effect until the Governor lifts the state of emergency.

By a roll call vote, Maiore – aye, Minar – aye, Sklar – aye, von Loesecke – aye, the board voted unanimously to approve extension of hours from 6:00pm to 8:00pm on the patio until the state of emergency is lifted by the Governor.

Public Communication

Chris Green, Oak Hill Rd, was unhappy the board did not consider the building occupancy that was discussed with the Board of Health. He understands the desire to help the business but is disappointed neighbor concerns are not more of a priority. Select Board members explained enforcement of social distancing is under the jurisdiction of the Board of Health and not the Select Board. Their business tonight was to address the request before them.

Appointments

War Monument Restoration Committee

By a roll call vote, Minar – aye, Maiore – aye, Sklar – aye, von Loesecke - aye, the board voted unanimously to appoint Robert Cabelus to the War Monument Restoration Committee. Cabelus will serve as the Historical Commission representative.

4th of July Committee

By a roll call vote, Minar – aye, Maiore – aye, Sklar – aye, von Loesecke - aye, the board voted unanimously to appoint Anne Hentz and Chris Connors to the 4th of July Committee. Hentz is a reappointment and Connors is a new member.

Bare Hill Pond Watershed Management Committee

By a roll call vote, Minar – aye, Maiore – aye, Sklar – aye, von Loesecke - aye, the board voted unanimously to appoint Kerry Shirves to the Bare Hill Pond Watershed Management Committee.

Minutes

By a roll call vote, Minar – aye, Maiore – aye, Sklar – aye, von Loesecke - aye, the board voted unanimously to approve minutes of 6/30, 7/7, 7/9, 7/14 as presented. Von Loesecke had a suggested edit to the 6/30 minutes related to the Conservation Commission appointment process but after some debate about the clarification she decided to leave the set as is.

Conservation Commission appointments

Von Loesecke reminded her fellow board members about their direction for the commission to provide a recommendation prior to any reappointments or new appointments being made to the commission. Commission member Joanne Ward attended the meeting to reiterate the commission's desire to have Jim Burns, Janet Waldron and Mark Shaw reappointed. They recommend appointment of Eve Wittenberg to the vacant associate position.

The annual appointments to the commission was more involved this year due to multiple applicants interested in serving. The Select Board members voiced their opinions on how best to approach balancing boards with members who have institutional knowledge while encouraging participation of new volunteers. They discussed pros and cons to establishing term limits and the differences between committees being appointed versus elected.

Sklar offered a compromise of reappointing two current members and appointing two new members. Maiore noted Shaw and Burns are actually fairly new to the commission themselves. Sklar and von Loesecke agreed supporting new volunteers is important with Minar and Maiore more inclined to support reappointment of those already serving. They all agreed the appointment process could and should be handled in a better manner that supports new volunteers while valuing those with experience. Von Loesecke noted the importance of volunteers who are genuinely interested in a committees overall work instead of focused on a single issue. By a roll call vote, Minar – aye, Maiore – aye, von Loesecke – aye, Sklar - nay, the board voted to appoint John Burns, Mark Shaw, Joanne Waldron and Even Wittenberg as associate to the Conservation Commission.

Park & Recreation Commission

By a roll call vote, Sklar – aye, Minar – aye, Maiore – aye, von Loesecke - aye, the board voted unanimously to appoint Mark Morin to replace Steve Victorson to the Park & Recreation Commission and send a letter of thanks to Victorson.

Town Administrator Report (Appendix A)

By a roll call vote, Sklar – aye, Minar – aye, Maiore – aye, von Loesecke - aye, the board voted unanimously to hold the fall annual town meeting on October 3rd beginning at 12:00pm.

Board of Health clarification on the Transfer Station Committee

Sklar and Maiore recommended this committee continue but with a revised mission to help navigate the future of the Transfer Station. With costs set to rise in the coming year it is apparent a larger question must be resolved, does the town continue to operate the Transfer Station as a user based service, roll it into the tax base or investigate town wide curbside pick-up? Either way the current model is not sustainable therefore a broader feasibility study is imperative. They recommend a committee consisting of five members: one Board of Health member, two Select Board members, the DPW Director and two citizens at large.

PFSA testing well on Ryan Land

Bragan reported the appropriate testing has been ordered by the DPW Director Tim Kilhart.

Fall Annual Town Meeting Warrant

Bragan asked the members to provide him with any articles they wish to include. He will provide them with a preliminary draft at their September 1st meeting.

Select Board Reports

Minar invited resident Scott Winter to join for an update on a situation on Old Mill Rd. Bragan has been in regular contact with Mr. Winter assuring him the town is doing all it can through our legal counsel. All parties are frustrated this process and a resolution is not coming faster however all that can be done is being done and the Covid 19 pandemic has not helped the situation.

Maiores reported the School Committee has voted to begin the school year with a hybrid model although the exact details have not been finalized. They will vote on this next week. His understanding is that teachers will be in the classroom and other teachers teaching remote. When asked about budget implications Maiores was not positive on that. Von Loesecke will reach out to the Superintendent.

Maiores reported the Planning Board will focus on a senior residency bylaw, open space and recreation, Ayer Rd and town center action plan updates.

Von Loesecke reported Michael Barton from the Municipal Affordable Housing Trust may have to step down therefore volunteers are needed.

Von Loesecke reported now that the Finance Committee has the state budget numbers they can work on a recommendation for the fall town meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30pm.

Documents referenced:

MassWorks info & letters – dated 8.4.2020
Municipal Buildings Report – dated 8.4.2020
Carlson Orchards request – dated 7.27.2020
Connors vol form – dated 6.26.2020
Shrives vol form – dated 7.7.2020
Con Com recommendation – dated 7.16.2020
Victorson resignation email – dated 7.29.2020
Morin vol form – dated 7.21.2020
Board of Health memos:
Transfer Station Committee – dated 7.22.2020
PFSA Ryan Field – 7.29.2020

**TOWN ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT
for
TUESDAY, AUGUST 4, 2020**

FY20/21 Issues and Items:

- The Finance Director is closing out the books for FY20 and we expect to have a Free Cash number by October. May not be here in time for the October Town Meeting.
- I need to know the time town meeting will start and when the warrant will close. I am expecting to have the warrant for you at your meeting of the 15th of September to be signed. (See attached memo for timeline).
- The State has passed an additional three month interim budget that will take them through to the end of October. The State expects to know by October how severe the budget will be and what Federal Aid they can expect.
- The Governor and Legislature announced last week that they will be level funding Unrestricted Local Aid and Chapter 70 funding for FY21 (see attachments). The Budget Advisory Group will be meeting Thursday to discuss this and make recommendations to the SB and FinCom. FinCom will be meeting next Wednesday to review and discuss the Budget Advisory Group's recommendation and will have their comments for the SB prior to your next meeting.
- We are resurrecting the fee review that we had started earlier in March, which was sidelined by the pandemic, and need to know if the Board wants to review them as a whole or by department?
- Bromfield House will require a vote at Town Meeting to sell the house or at least to give the SB the authority to deal with and dispose of it. This vote should happen at the October Town Meeting as the building will be vacated prior to or around the time of next year's ATM and this will provide the time necessary to get everything in place before it is vacated.

General Announcements:

- We received word today that Carlson's legislation for the water supply easement was approved by the legislature and awaits the Governor's signature.
- We have been working with Mark Mikitarian regarding flooring at the old Library and we will be getting and installing the same type of rubber flooring that is in the front half of the basement. This will be going in on the floor in front of the bathrooms and on the first floor where water damaged the carpeting earlier this year.
- The Facilities Manager and I walked through and around the Old Library and I asked him what could we do about the water infiltration issue and he suggested tarping it until we can get the funds to do something permanently. (See attached)

Appendix A

- The Police Chief and I are working on the appointments of two new officers. Once everything is finalized and they are on board we will introduce them to the Board and public at a future meeting.