Select Board Minutes
Tuesday, January 19, 2021
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:
Alice von Loesecke, Stu Sklar, Lucy Wallace, Rich Maiore Kara Minar was absent.

Town Department attendees:
Assistant Town Administrator/HR Director Marie Sobalvarro and Executive Assistant Julie Doucet

Cell Tower on town land - Request for Proposals (RFP)
Assistant Town Administrator Marie Sobalvarro provided the board with a draft RFP for lease of land for installation and operation of wireless communications equipment. She asked for their specific input on the criteria section. She also asked if any members might have interest in assisting her on how the criteria should be evaluated. The members agreed the primary goal for this RFP is to increase coverage in the south/southeast portion of town. They discussed preparing a second request for a full assessment of overall coverage in Harvard. Sobalvarro reported Town Administration Tim Bragan has inquiries into town counsel on lease terms and pricing. Sobalvarro will incorporate changes based on feedback this evening, will have a final review and prepare advertisement. In addition, they will reach out to Isotrope LLC. (specialize in communications technology) for guidance on how to attain technical expertise with mapping.

Public Communication
Alice von Loesecke, Select Board, was approached by Arm & Arm asking the Select Board to help promote equality and acceptance in light of recent events. They seek collaboration from the Select Board on a statement of beliefs for Harvard.

Paul Green, Energy Advisory Committee (HEAC) member, reported the HEAC has voted to endorse letter of support for the new net zero stretch code. The committee is asking the Select Board to support as well. Green will follow up with Select Board member Kara Minar to share the details on this with the board.

Maureen Reitman, 72 Mass Ave, offered to assist Marie Sobalvarro with the cell tower RFP process. She is an abutter interested in preserving the natural condition. She noted public safety should not be an issue as the town invested to make sure first responders have what they need.

Emily Ferguson, Glenview Drive, asked when her request to the Select Board would be discussed. Alice von Loesecke apologized as this item was not on the agenda. They will add her request to the next agenda.

Assistant Town Administrator Report
Marie Sobalvarro reported on the following items:

- Another Basic Service mailing, for electrical aggregation, was sent out this past Friday, 1/15, as a consumer notification letter and opt-out card will be sent to anyone in Harvard who is on Basic Service but hasn't already been mailed to (e.g. residents who are new in town, residents who have ended a third party contract and switched back to Basic Service, etc). The mailing informs residents about the

Town's Program, shows them the savings over Basic Service and allows them a 30-day opt-out period before being automatically enrolled.

- The Solar panels atop HES have to be declared surplus in order for them to be able to be properly disposed.
  By a roll call vote, Wallace -aye, Maiore – aye, Sklar – aye, von Loesecke – aye, to declare solar panels as surplus.
- Finance Committee is meeting with the Finance Dept. (7 pm), Fire (7:15 pm) and Police (7:45 pm) Departments tomorrow night to review their budgets. All questions and department responses have been distributed.
- The State has come up with a consensus revenue number this past Friday. The next step is the governor's budget, which will provide us with our first preliminary budget numbers for FY22 State budget.
- Town Hall has moved back to Team A and Team B scheduling due to the heightened numbers of the COVID-19 virus in the State. On this topic, one of the staff is currently quarantining and will be tested in a couple of days. This is why we put this in place and it will continue until the end of the month.
- Town Report notice went out weeks ago and Julie has set next Monday, January 25, 2021 as the deadline for getting reports to her.

Minutes

By a roll call vote, Wallace – aye, Sklar – aye, Maiore – aye, von Loesecke – aye, the board voted unanimously to approve 12/15 minutes, as amended.
By a roll call vote, Wallace – aye, Maiore – aye, von Loesecke – aye, Sklar – abstain, the board voted to approve minutes 1/5, as presented. Sklar abstained as he was not present at the 1/5 meeting.

Review and discuss revisions to appointment policy

Executive Assistant Julie Doucet distributed a marked-up version of the current policy she and board member Kara Minar worked on. The board members created an operational goal for FY21 to revise their current policy to clarify the reappointment process, begin earlier in the year, set clear deadlines, decide upon specific criteria blending institutional knowledge while encouraging new volunteers and more Select Board liaison involvement in the process. The board members made some revisions and set some specific dates. Doucet will incorporate changes for final approval at the next meeting.

Discuss OPEB/Free cash policy during financial crisis

Marie Sobalvarro is working with the Finance Director to confirm the stabilization fund balance. The town's current policy requires free cash be moved to the stabilization fund which must be 5% of the omnibus budget. A town bylaw requires the 5% minimum. The board is currently awaiting the Governor's budget with the local aid figures. They discussed the possibly of additional aid to cities/towns from the federal government. Sobalvarro indicated expenses submitted for reimbursement through the Cares Act have been extended through then end of 2021 however response on expense submittals from FEMA has not yet occurred. Alice von Loesecke cautioned utilizing one time funds to balance budgets. Sobalvarro expects unemployment expenses to increase if layoffs occur and health insurance costs to increase as well. The board agreed to delay drafting a policy at this time.

Budget Review Policy

Sobalvarro asked the board to provide guidance on how they intend to approach budget requests this year. The board was in agreement instead of a broad-brush approach they favor viewing elements on a priority basis. Sobalvarro reminded the members to begin thinking about this as they review budget questions/answers.

Review FY21 goals and action items – additional space needs for the Council on Aging (CoA)
Alice von Loesecke noted included in their FY21 goals is the additional space needs for the CoA. CoA Liaison Lucy Wallace said the CoA is still in need of space but have decided to push their capital request out another year. They are mindful of the growing population and the reality all needs cannot be met within the Hildreth House alone. The pandemic has made extending services more difficult with no physical gathering however delivery of meals, Zoom exercise classes, morning coffees as well as bridge games have been well attended. They are committed to expansion. CoA Chair Beth Williams is hopeful with the vaccine coming use of the porch in the better weather months will help. She reported an increase in outreach for those who are not technology savvy and fear many may slip through the cracks.

Select Board Reports
Alice von Loesecke reminded everyone to take the Visual Preference Survey online. She mentioned the Board of Health (BoH) is considering a potential vaccination clinic in Harvard. She has done some research noting how lengthy and involved the requirements are. It was decided to invite the BoH to the next meeting to discuss further.

Rich Maiore reported the Bromfield House Committee has a survey out asking for ideas. He expects to come with a recommendation in late February. He said the Planning Board continues work on their senior housing plan and have spoken with the Hazel family about a possible restaurant on their property near route 2. In addition, they are concerned with costs for the Ayer Road Study and are investing in more efficient ideas.

Stu Sklar reported about an idea he heard from the town moderator about trying to combine Transfer Station services with the town of Boxborough. Marie Sobalvarro has reached out to Boxborough about regionalizing possibilities. She reported municipal solid waste bids are due this week.

Lucy Wallace reported the grant to the MCC grant was submitted. They have revised the budget bringing cost down. She said the Harvard Devens Jurisdiction Committee is meeting to review the MOU and are planning an update for February.

By a roll call vote, Wallace –aye, Maiore – aye, Sklar – aye, von Loesecke – aye, the board voted unanimously to enter into executive session at 9:15pm as per MGL 30A Sec. 21.3 to discuss strategy with respect to litigation and collective bargaining as an open meeting will have a detrimental effect on both the litigation and bargaining position of the Town. The Board will reconvene into open session only to adjourn.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:40pm.

Documents referenced:
Draft RFP – dated 1.19.2021
Draft Appointment Policy – dated 1.19.2021
FY21 goals