



**Pursuant to Chapter 20 of the Acts of 2021, An Act Relative to Extending Certain COVID-19 Measures Adopted during the State of Emergency and signed into law on June 16, 2021, this meeting was conducted via remote participation.**

**Select Board members present:**

Stu Sklar, Alice von Loesecke, Kara Minar, Erin McBee, Rich Maiore

**Town Department attendees:**

Town Administrator Tim Bragan and Executive Assistant Julie Doucet

**Additional participants:**

CoA Chair Guy Oliva, Margaret Murphy, Lucy Wallace

**Council on Aging appointment**

CoA Chair Guy Oliva introduced Margaret Murphy for appointment. Murphy took a few moments to speak about her background and interest in volunteering on the CoA. By a roll call vote, Minar – aye, McBee – aye, Maiore – aye, von Loesecke – aye, Sklar – aye, the board voted unanimously to appoint Margaret Murphy to the Council on Aging.

**Discuss home rule petition to address traffic concerns related to speeding**

Stu Sklar invited members of the public to speak on this topic.

Peter Dorward, 78 Still River Rd, fully supports speed reduction efforts. He has noticed an increase in cut through traffic which creates safety issues. He highlighted roadways in town that the Select Board may want to reconsider; Madigan Lane, stretch from Prospect Hill Rd to Willow Rd and Still River from West Bare Hill Rd to the town center.

Davida Bagatelle, 62 West Bare Hill Rd, noted in the late 90s speed was problematic and was noticed immediately then. She recalls 25mph for many years but at some point, it was noticed the signs were not valid and were taken down. She agrees with Dorward that more cars use Harvard roadways as a cut through. She noticed Bolton Rd was not included and suggested it be added.

Jen Fraser, 60 Ayer Rd, is happy the Select Board is taking action on the issue of speed in town. She noted excessive speeds especially on Still River Rd, Mass Ave and Bolton Rd. She also proposed 35mph on the stretch from Route 2 to the Ayer town line.

Board members Kara Minar and Erin McBee worked together to gather information on Chapter 90 section 17c in an effort to better understand how the statute works. If the town accepts this section in at a town meeting, in the interests of public safety and without further authority, we can establish a speed limit of 25 miles per hour on any roadway inside a thickly settled or business district in the city or town on any way that is not a state highway. The limitation there is with the inside a thickly settled or business district.

Bragan explained Chapter 90 section 18 allows the town to submit a home rule petition for a special law to set speed limits. This would allow the town to set specific speeds on specific roadways. He indicated a hearing is held where the Select Board as the legislative body can vote to set the speeds, then the legislation is submitted to the Department of Transportation for their review. We could consider using this regulation to amend speed limits on select roads where 25 mph is not desired or is not covered by a town wide limit (b/c not thickly settled). Bragan suggested the board consider taking a dual track. This will provide the advantage of expediting the process.

By a roll call vote, McBee – aye, Minar – aye, Maiore - aye, von Loesecke – aye, Sklar – aye, the board voted unanimously to move forward to accept provisions of General Laws Chapter 90 Section 17c.

By a roll call vote, McBee – aye, Minar – aye, Maiore – aye, von Loesecke – aye, Sklar – aye, the board voted unanimously to move forward with home rule petition on warrant for speed limit changes in Harvard as listed amended to add Bolton Rd to 30mph.

### **Request for letter of support for the Forest Legacy Program**

Nashua River Watershed Association president Lucy Wallace also serves on the Nashua, Squannacook, and Nissitissit Rivers Wild and Scenic Stewardship Council. She explained the Forest Legacy Program will provide forest service funding to preserve forest lands. By a roll call vote, Minar – aye, McBee – aye, Maiore – aye, von Loesecke – aye, Sklar -aye, the board voted unanimously to authorize the chair to sign letter in support of the Forest Legacy Program.

### **Public Communication**

Marisa Carucci Khurana, Warren Ave, asked a few questions on behalf of local group Arm & Arm. She also serves in the school department as the equity/diversity coordinator.

1. What has happened in the process so far and what the timeframe is for the search and ultimate hiring?
2. Who is involved in the search/screening process? Who comprises your search/hiring committee?
3. How will the hiring committee measure a candidate's commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion and cultural sensitivity as discussed in the Town's Diversity Statement?
4. Given the level of importance this position holds, will you be seeking any public comment or allowing any type of involvement by the public?

Dan Daly, 15 Littleton Rd, commented on the athletic field maintenance meeting held earlier in the day. He made a point to thank the Select Board for their leadership and collaboration with the DPW to try and resolve issues. He was curious about the notion the DPW employees required more specifics on grounds keeping. What have they been doing? He thought maybe a liaison to the DPW could help. In addition, Daly noticed the recent article in the Harvard Press about DPW union negotiations and the departments need for more staff. He asked for clarity on the budget process to better understand how town departments receive the staff they require to fulfill their job duties.

Pam Marston, 47 Madigan Lane, asked the board to reconsider free or reduced transfer station stickers for seniors.

### **Discuss next steps in the Police Chief hiring process**

Tim Bragan announced the application deadline is Friday, September 17<sup>th</sup>. Fourteen resumes have been submitted thus far. The board decided on an initial screening group to have a first pass review of the applications and will decide on a specific number of candidates to be interviewed. They will utilize a rating matrix (rubric) to determine which applicants meet the necessary requirements and experience. They will decide on the next steps at their meeting on October 5<sup>th</sup>.

By a roll call vote, Minar – aye, Maiore – aye, McBee – aye, von Loesecke – aye, Sklar – aye, the board voted unanimously the initial screening group for selection of the new Police Chief will be the Town Administrator Tim Bragan, HR Director Marie Sobalvarro, Select Board Chair Stu Sklar, Select Board member Rich Maiore and former Chief Ed Denmark.

## **Staff Report/Updates**

Attachment A

### **All Boards meeting on September 21**

Stu Sklar will meet with the School and Finance Committee Chairs prior to the meeting to discuss the format.

### **Discuss fall planning amid Covid pandemic**

Tim Bragan explained questions are coming in already about Halloween and other fall events. It was decided when the letter from the public safety department is sent to residents in the town center it should include asking them their thoughts on the event for this year. Alice von Loesecke even suggested maybe we suggest masks be worn. The Select Board members seemed open to the traditional event this year but will seek guidance from the Board of Health and residents in the area before any decisions are made.

### **Discuss firefighter grant for aerial truck**

Fire Chief Rick Sicard has applied for this grant the past three years. He is extremely pleased Harvard has been awarded this \$750,000 grant. He explained this grant is for the lease or purchase of a brand-new pumper/aerial truck. Payment does not start until the truck is delivered however the town will have to match the funds and vote on this at the town meeting in October. The board members thanked Chief Sicard for his efforts to offer the town this opportunity.

### **Special Town Election ballot question**

The board members discussed a ballot question this fall to gain additional feedback from town residents on the appropriate next steps for the Bromfield House. Stu Sklar suggested this as a way to survey those residents who actually vote. Rich Maiore was a bit skeptical without a more concrete plan for the land. Kara Minar said clarity on how proceeds from this property can be used is still not clear and would be helpful. Alice von Loesecke recommended two specific questions to avoid confusion.

By a roll call vote, von Loesecke – aye, Minar – aye, McBee – aye, Maiore – aye, Sklar – aye, the board voted unanimously on ballot question: shall town sell only the structure at 39 Mass Ave and retain land for future use.

By a roll call vote, von Loesecke – aye, Maiore – aye, McBee – aye, Minar – aye, Sklar – aye, the board voted unanimously on ballot question: shall town sell both structure and land to a buyer to be used as a resident.

### **Discuss possible revision to the Town Charter**

Stu Sklar reported the School Committee is requesting their elected terms begin on July 1 instead of right after the town election. They are requesting this change to have the elected positions better align with school department operations. Town Administrator Tim Bragan will seek guidance from Town Counsel on the process to make such a change. The board decided to not consider this for all elected positions at this time.

### **Select Board Reports/Review of Goals**

Kara Minar reported on the athletic field meeting and the issues Park & Recreation continues to have with maintenance. S

Alice von Loesecke has spoken with the Finance Director to attain information related to the structural deficit. She also reported the Bare Hill Pond Watershed Management Committee is exploring innovative ways to deal with the blue green algae bloom

Erin McBee reported the Conservation Commission and Planning Board continue bylaw review

Briefly, Stu Sklar reviewed the FY22 goals, noting the items that have been acted on. Bragan will share additional guidance with the board members on guidelines for use of ARPA funds.

By a roll call vote, Minar –aye, Maiore – aye, McBee – aye, von Loesecke – aye, Sklar – aye, the board voted unanimously to enter into executive session at 9:45pm as per MGL 30A Sec. 21.2 to conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with non-union personnel and to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining or litigating position of the public body. The Board will reconvene into open session only to adjourn.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:00pm.

#### **Documents referenced:**

Murphy vol form – dated 6.18.2021

Speed limit memo/data – dated 9.14.2021

Forest legacy info – dated 2021