Board of Selectmen
Minutes
Tuesday, May 2, 2017 at 7:00pm
Town Hall Meeting Room

The meeting was called to order at 7:00pm by Chair Lucy Wallace in the Town Hall Meeting Room. Selectmen Stu Sklar, Alice von Loesecke, Ken Swanton and Kara McGuire Minar were in attendance as well as Town Administrator Tim Bragan and Executive Assistant Julie Doucet.

DPW appointment
Director Tim Kilhart introduced Sam Stacy for appointment to the vacant truck driver laborer position. On a Sklar/Swanton motion, the board voted unanimously to appoint Sam Stacy as truck driver/laborer.

Small Communities Grant Program
Planning Board Chair Erin McBee and Planner Bill Scanlan are interested in hiring a consultant to assist with financial analysis of a draft open space design bylaw. Scanlan indicated the current cluster bylaw is not being utilized; if improved it could allow the town to preserve its rural character while also being a useful option for developers. The consultant will review the draft bylaw and test the formula factors that govern density and dwelling unit types. McBee said this is a reimbursement program. The total cost for the study is $8,000 with $1,600 from the town and $6,400 from the grant. The bylaw must be submitted at town meeting for adoption and whether the town votes in favor of it or not we will be reimbursed. Swanton worked on a similar bylaw in Bolton and suggested they use a consultant with success drafting this type of bylaw. Minar agreed with Swanton and encouraged them to contact Bolton's Planning Board. She also expressed apprehension with the minimal parcel size. Sklar said if the bylaw in Bolton works why not use it here. Lucy noted that MA Audubon has a model open space development bylaw. Bragan will bring the funding request to the Finance Committee for consideration.

Town administrator report
Bragan received notice from Pan-Am they will be doing herbicide spraying along the railroad right of way.

Bragan reported the Finance Director is coordinating dates with the auditors for their review of the audit.

Bragan asked the board to appoint Marie Sobalvarro as alternate representative to the Nashoba Valley Regional Dispatch District. On a Swanton/Sklar motion, the board voted unanimously to appoint Sobalvarro.

Bragan said the Department of Local Services has settled with Verizon. The final amount owed by Harvard is $12,644. This will be paid by the Assessors through the overlay account.

Bragan reminded the board their Strategic Planning Session will be held on Tuesday, May 23rd at the Fellowship Hall from 9:00am to 12:00pm. He asked they provide their topics for discussion by next Friday, May 12th.

Bragan said with the Special Town Meeting set for June 13th the deadline for articles will be due Monday, May 15th. He can have the board sign the warrant at their Strategic Planning Session.

Von Loesecke asked if the DPW Director Tim Kilhart had an update on when National Grid will do clean up from cutting they have done. Kilhart has met with them and expects clean to begin soon. His department is also working to cut and clean up trees the town is responsible for.

Town Hall stripping and paving plan

Bragan gave a brief history of the changing traffic pattern near the Town Hall which included discontinuation and parking issues on Elm Street. He noted during the Town Hall renovation project the Board of Selectmen voted to allow only one way traffic on Elm Street and the back entrance leading up to the Hildreth House was blocked due to the construction trailer being in that parking area. Bragan explained this is when the traffic pattern discussions began. In talking with the Police Chief and Fire Chief the Town Administrator learned their perspectives on the traffic pattern. They advised Elm Street be one way and worked with Sobalvarro to develop a plan having two entrances, one behind Town Hall and one from Elm Street, and having the only means of egress in front of Town Hall. Bragan is confident this is the safest plan and signs will be erected to help direct traffic appropriately. Von Loesecke asked if the number of handicapped spaces could be reduced from four to two. She is concerned with the limited parking this will take away from people who may not be handicapped but are mobility impaired. Sobalvarro has spoken with the church who agreed one space for them and one for Town Hall is sufficient. Swanton asked Police Chief Ed Denmark, who was in the audience, to confirm this is the safest approach. Denmark said from a risk management perspective he prefers addressing potential hazards before a disaster occurs therefore he supports the plan. Swanton encouraged consulting with the Historical Commission on the signs. Bragan has already begun this process. Swanton received a letter from the postmaster expressing frustration over the one way on Elm Street. Bragan will follow up on this. The Fire Chief and DPW Director were present and likewise support the new traffic pattern. Wallace wondered if having a traffic engineer's advice would be helpful before making any permanent decisions. Chief Denmark noted stripping is not permanent or a huge investment. DPW Director Kilhart offered to contact a district engineer who could do a safety survey at no cost. Sklar and von Loesecke were very adamant signs must be installed or the new traffic pattern will not be successful. On a Sklar/von Loesecke motion, the board voted unanimously to adopt proposal with one handicapped space at Town Hall and one at the Unitarian Universalist Church.

Transfer Station rules and regulations

Sobalvarro indicated the only change for the coming year was with the punch card cost structure. Swanton asked if the expiration date on the punch cards could be extended. Bragan said the auditors strongly advise against it. On a Swanton/von Loesecke motion, the board voted unanimously to approve.

Liaisons assignments

Wallace and Bragan presented a draft and a few changes were made:

- Sklar took Dog Officer, Fire and Ambulance Departments.
- Swanton took Department of Public Works
- von Loesecke added JBOS
- Minar took Energy Advisory Committee and under special projects Ayer Road traffic.

Selectmen reports
Sklar participating in judging the Bromfield senior projects. He commented on all the work done by students to the shack at McCurdy track making it a very usable building.

Wallace reported the Council on Aging held their annual volunteer lunch and estimate the value of their volunteers to be $49,000.

Wallace reported the Housing @ Hildreth House Committee is targeting the fall special town meeting. They will be working with the Planning Board on a preliminary site plan. They are working to determine a value of the land. They have also discussed having borings done to better understand the potential of the property.

Wallace asked the board if they supported requesting an increase in the Board of Selectmen's professional services budget. This will allow the board more flexibility over the year when additional funds are necessary. The board members agreed and instructed Bragan to request an additional $20,000 from the Finance Committee. On a von Loesecke/Swanton motion, the board voted unanimously to request the Finance Committee to increase line item for professional service for Board of Selectmen to $20,000.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:50pm.

Documents referenced:
DPW appointment letter – 4.21.2017
Small Communities Grant Program – letter 4.20.2017
Town Hall stripping and paving plan – 3.27.2017
Transfer Station rules & regs – FY2018 4.26.2017
Liaison assignments – draft FY18