



**Board of Selectmen  
Strategic Planning Session Minutes  
Tuesday, May 23, 2017 at 9:00am  
Fellowship Building Community Room**

The meeting was called to order at 9:00AM by Chair, Lucy Wallace in the Fellowship Building Community Room. Selectmen Ken Swanton, Kara McGuire Minar, Stu Sklar and Alice von Loesecke were in attendance. Town Administrator Tim Bragan, Assistant Town Administrator/HR Director Marie Sobalvarro and Executive Assistant Julie Doucet were also present.

#### **Special Town Meeting Warrant**

On a Sklar/Swanton motion, the board voted unanimously to endorse the Special Town Meeting warrant.

#### **Interim Town Clerk appointments**

On a Sklar/Swanton motion, the board voted unanimously to appoint Janet Vellante as Interim Town Clerk and Tim Bragan as Interim Assistant Town Clerk so he can conduct voter registration on Friday, June 2, 2017.

#### **Policies & Procedures**

The board reviewed their policies and made a few edits. They will approve these changes at an upcoming meeting. They discussed creating uniform personal email addresses for posting on the town website. They asked the Town Administrator to have the Police Chief review and update the traffic ordinance section and the Town Clerk to review and update the inspection of public records section. Bragan noted during the personnel study the inspector rates of pay will be reviewed.

#### **Municipal Buildings – DPW, Fire, Hildreth House, Old Library, Town Hall**

Areas to focus on:

- 1) How to address current and future needs.
- 2) Hold meetings with department heads for their input prior to the capital review process.
- 3) Complete old library accessibility committee's mission of developing a proposed solution for special or annual town meeting.
- 4) Work with DPW to implement a maintenance program for all public buildings (except schools) ranging from a comprehensive multi-year plan to addressing day- to-day repairs.

Sklar talked about investigating options with respect to the Transfer Station. How much would it cost for the town to contract with a waste disposal company? Could additional operating hours be offered to allow more convenience for residents?

#### **Retiree health care**

They discussed increasing the percentage paid by retirees for health insurance and how this can save the town money and reduce our OPEB (other post-employment benefits) liability. They will investigate moving teacher retirees out of the Retired Teachers Association (RTA) and into the town's retirement plan. This action will provide more control to the town on percentage amounts and many other towns have already done this. This will require information from other comparable towns on how they made this change, percentage amounts shared between the town and benefit receiver along with projections of the increasing percentage of the budget that retiree health care costs and OPEB will take in the future. Von Loesecke, Swanton and Sobalvarro will work on this.

## **Improve Communication**

- 1) Establish policy for use on Next Door Harvard
- 2) Meet with Cable Committee to discuss increasing meeting coverage
- 3) Office hours for Board of Selectmen once a month
- 4) Open forum for resident input and discussion at beginning of meetings
- 5) All boards meeting in September and January
- 6) Post BoS email addresses on website

## **Budget and program accountability**

- 1) Once a quarter the Town Administrator will provide an update on department budgets.

## **Devens**

The board will establish a path forward including a critical timeline. Public engagement will be an integral part of the process. Minar and Wallace will work on this.

## **Leadership**

- 1) They discussed how the BoS can help boards/committees accomplish their goals.
- 2) They will have more interaction with the Charter Commission as they bring their suggestions forward, especially those that affect the BoS.
- 3) They will work with the Park & Recreation Commission and the School Committee to complete the implementation of a Park & Rec Director position.

## **Complete Streets & Roadway Safety**

They discussed continuing review and feasibility of Ayer Road traffic calming measures. Work with the DPW Director to understand more about the Complete Streets program and how "Share the Road" can be implemented.

Encourage enforcement of speed limits with more police presence.

## **Master Plan**

Recommendations for BoS will be reviewed again and resent to BoS.

The main areas of focus for the coming year will be:

- Devens
- Municipal Facilities and Roadway Safety
- Fiscal Stability

Bragan asked if the board was interested in including any specific recommendations from the DPW and Fire & Ambulance department audit reports. He indicated the combined position for Fire/Ambulance will move forward in Fiscal 18.

They will finalize the Fiscal 18 goals at their second meeting in June.

The meeting adjourned at 12:30pm.