



**Select Board  
Minutes  
Tuesday, January 8, 2019 at 7:00pm  
Town Hall Meeting Room, Harvard, MA**

The meeting was called to order at 7:00pm by Chair Lucy Wallace in the Town Hall Meeting Room. Select Board members Alice von Loesecke, Rich Maiore and Kara Minar were in attendance as well as Assistant Town Administrator Marie Sobalvarro and Executive Assistant Julie Doucet. Town Administrator Tim Bragan and board member Stu Sklar was absent.

**Appointments**

*Agricultural Advisory Commission*

Chair Kerri Green introduced Robert Duzan for appointment to the commission.

On a von Loesecke/Maiore motion, the board voted unanimously to appoint Duzan to the Agricultural Advisory Commission. In addition, they voted unanimously to appoint current member Peter Basile to alternate position and current alternate Laura McGovern to full member.

*Conservation Commission*

Chair Don Ritchie introduced Derek Beard for appointment to the commission. Beard is new to town and excited to volunteer his time. On a Maiore/von Loesecke motion, the board voted unanimously to appoint Derick Beard to the Conservation Commission.

**Cable Committee budget review**

Committee Chair Bill Johnson and Station Manager Anya Zulawnik came to present their budget. Johnson explained most of their funding comes from Charter Communication PEG access grant funds and the school department contributes \$20,000. This year they are requesting combining the 10 hour a week contractor position with the 19 hour a week part time employee position. This change would not only address retention of a highly skilled employee but also succession planning for a town function that demands continuity of service. They realize the Charter funds cannot support the added benefits and OPEB (other post-employment benefits) costs therefore this request would require an increase to the omnibus budget. The committee continues to work with the school department in an effort to narrow the gap where funding of the program is concerned. Johnson has spoken with Town Administrator Tim Bragan about updating the agreement with Charter Communications. The Board was generally supportive of the combining the two PT positions to a single position (29 hrs/week).

**Select Board, Legal, Public Buildings, Inspectors, Veterans Agent budget review**

Sobalvarro said with the adoption of the new Personnel Classification and Compensation system changes are reflected in paygrades for FY20 as well as the contractual increase for the Town Administrator. Additionally stipends for the Animal Control Officer and Veterans Agent were increased. The personnel budget also includes an increase in the amount of hours compensated for the Assistant Town Administrator position. Sobalvarro explained the position is technically full time based on the workload and responsibilities therefore the increase in budgeted hours from 35 to 40.

She explained notable changes in the expense budget include the increase of the purchase of services account to \$20,000 from the \$15,000 last year and the increase in Building/Liability Insurance. Our insurance carrier did a revaluation of the town buildings which resulted in this increase.

Sobalvarro indicated the town audit will go out to bid this year so she expects that cost to increase slightly.

She expects the town to will start benefiting from energy improvements made over the years.

Board member Minar had questions about the amount paid to the Building Inspector offering comparison to another community. However, board members noted the recent personnel study did include that particular community in its comparisons, rather focusing on smaller towns more comparable to Harvard. She expressed her reluctance about increasing the hours compensated for the Assistant Town Administrator. In looking at the priority reductions, should they be necessary, Wallace and von Loesecke had differing perspectives with von Loesecke agreeing to the proposed \$5,000 decrease in the purchase of service account and Wallace advocating to keep it at \$20,000.

Finance Committee member Bruce Nickerson asked if the benefits budget reflected the rehire of custodial staff at the school. Sobalvarro answered yes for fiscal 20 and she is tracking costs for fiscal 19. In addition, he requested the budget display the total amount of funds allotted to the school department with respect to benefits, personnel and building liability. He is interested in understanding exactly how much of the budget is going to the school department. Sobalvarro indicated the benefits budgets will be reviewed at the February 5<sup>th</sup> meeting. Finance Committee member John Seeley asked for clarity on the town department audits and wondered about funds already spent in the public buildings account.

#### **Harvard Devens Jurisdiction Committee update**

Chair Victor Normand and member Lucy Wallace are currently reaching out to departments and committee/board chairs. They have also drafted a letter to MassDevelopment requesting entering into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) which would set out terms and conditions for retaining services of a consulting firm to plan for Harvard's resumption of jurisdiction of its historic lands on Devens. Normand reported MassDevelopment has been sending a representative regularly to their meetings which has been good. Wallace and Normand will be attending Board of Selectmen meetings next week in Ayer and Shirley to share the letter with them. Normand acknowledges this will be a complicated process beginning with the conceptual step then transition and finally implementation. Everyone agreed keeping the lines of communication open with all stake holders is essential to a successful outcome. Rich Maiore was curious what questions are being asked of town departments. He is interested in how taking back jurisdiction of Devens will affect the small rural feel of Harvard and what affect it will have on the current bylaws. Kara Minar offered some minor edits to the letter as drafted.

#### **Assistant Town administrator report**

Sobalvarro reported all small money warrant articles are due by Monday, January 14<sup>th</sup> with all remaining articles due by Friday, March 1<sup>st</sup>.

Sobalvarro shared a draft omnibus budget. She asked the board members for their feedback and any suggestions that will assist them in their decision making moving forward. She expects actuals for FY18 soon.

Sobalvarro confirmed MassDOT complete Streets grant was awarded on January 4<sup>th</sup> for \$370,000. This will focus on Mass Ave/Still River/Ayer/Old Littleton intersection. DPW Director Tim Kilhart believes this will increase our chances for a Safe Routes to School grant.

Sobalvarro reported House Bill 4947, allowing the appointment of a non-resident or firm as the sole assessor, was signed by the Governor. In addition, H4984, establishing a cap on property taxed for means-tested seniors, has been passed and is expected be signed by the Governor shortly. The Elderly & Disabled Taxation Aid Committee Chair has been notified.

Sobalvarro said a draft of the municipal facility condition assessment was circulated by Dude Solutions with an in-depth maintenance tracking software; this assessment and software were made available via our Community Compact facilities grant.

Sobalvarro has begun work with Axsess Group, our Energy Broker, to obtain pricing information for our natural gas supply. The expectation is that the pricing within the next 2 months would be favorable.

Sobalvarro reported the Elderly & Disabled Taxation Aid fund has a balance of \$1578.71

### **Resignation**

On a von Loesecke/Maiore motion, the board voted unanimously to reluctantly accept resignation of Wyona Lynch – McWhite from the Park & Recreation Commission and send a letter of thanks.

### **Board of Registrars**

Town Clerk Marlene Kenney requested an appointment to the Board of Registrars. On a Minar/von Loesecke motion, the board voted unanimously to appoint Rosemary Theriault to the Board of Registrars as a republican.

### **Old Library Accessibility Sub-Committee (OLAC) appointment**

Wallace asked to have Ken Swanton reappointed to the OLAC. She is pleased he is willing to assist in tackling the budget for this project. On a von Loesecke/Minar motion, the board voted unanimously to reappoint Ken Swanton to OLAC.

### **Select Board Reports**

Maiore is working with the Transfer Station Committee on their outreach efforts for the SMART program. He is also meeting with Agricultural Advisory Commission.

Von Loesecke met with DPW Director Tim Kilhart and Community & Economic Development Director Chris Ryan to understand the next steps for joining Minuteman Advisory Group on Interlocal Coordination (MAJIC).

Minar reported the MVP committee is helping set up an agricultural workshop.

Wallace reported the Housing @ Hildreth House Committee has begun meeting regularly to reconfigure their proposal to limit it to the Hildreth property. She admitted a spring annual town meeting will be too soon to seek approval to surplus the land so they are aiming for the fall special town meeting

The meeting was adjourned at 8:42pm.

### **Documents referenced:**

Duzan vol form – dated 11.19.2018

Beard vol form – dated 12.10.2018

Cable FY20 budget submission

Select Board, Legal, Public Buildings, Inspectors, Veterans Agent FY20 budget submission

Harvard Devens Jurisdiction Committee letter – dated 1.8.2019

Lynch-McWhite resignation letter – dated 12.31.2018

Town Clerk appointment request letter – dated 12.31.2018