

Select Board Minutes
Tuesday, October 6, 2020
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:

Chair Alice von Loesecke, Rich Maiore, Kara Minar, Stu Sklar, Lucy Wallace, Rich Maiore

Town Department attendees:

Town Administrator Tim Bragan, Assistant Town Administrator/HR Director Marie Sobalvarro, Executive Assistant Julie Doucet, DPW Director Tim Kilhart

Update and next steps for the Ayer Road construction project

DPW Director Tim Kilhart shared the Roundabout Analysis done by TEC Engineers Corp. using the MassDOT SPICE (Safety Performance Intersection Control)/ICE Tool. Kilhart is seeking authorization from the board to submit the results to the state for their consideration. He explained 1,000 cars were added to the traffic volume in anticipation of future development. Kara Minar was surprised by the cost difference between an unsignalized stop-controlled intersection and a roundabout. Stu Sklar is hopeful the tool results indicating a reduction in crashes will support their case for a roundabout. Minar and Sklar are in agreement a roundabout is the best option to calm and slow traffic in this area. Alice von Loesecke asked Kilhart to include a message to the state asking them to review past studies on the roundabout with the SPICE tool results when making their decision.

By a roll call vote, Wallace – aye, Minar – aye, Maiore – aye, Sklar – aye, von Loesecke – aye, the board voted unanimously to submit report form TEC Engineers dated September 23, 2020 along with past studies done on Ayer Road with roundabout to the Department of Transportation (DOT) in Boston DOT for assessment of option they recommend.

Other Post-Employment Benefits (OPEB) Report

Assistant Town Administrator Marie Sobalvarro explained in developing the total OPEB Liability, various assumptions are made regarding future premium rates, mortality, retirement, disability and turnover rates. A comparison of the results of the current and prior measurements is made to determine how closely actual experience relates to expected. She noted the town's total OPEB liability has increased by \$7,000,000 however the recent changes with benefits did help. Sobalvarro explained the majority of the report parameters cannot be influenced as is the same for all communities in the commonwealth. Sobalvarro will conduct a community comparison to learn how other communities are handling their OPEB liability.

Minutes

By a roll call vote, Wallace – aye, Minar – aye, Maiore – aye, Sklar – aye, von Loesecke – aye, the board voted unanimously to approve minutes of 9/15, as presented.

Follow up from October Special Town Meeting

Bragan asked the board to vote to endorse the easement required for Article 1: National Grid easement. He explained the language is identical to the license they approved at a previous meeting. By a roll call vote, Wallace – aye, Minar – aye, Maiore – aye, Sklar – aye, von Loesecke – aye, the board voted unanimously to endorse easement to move National Grid pole out of driveway and onto the Bromfield Trustees property.

Bragan said for the next steps on Article 2: Bromfield House disposition the board will need to establish a charge and membership comprised of representatives from the Select Board, School Committee Bromfield Trustees, Historical Commission, Park & Recreation Commission and a citizen at large. The Assistant Town Administrator and School Superintendent will also serve on this working group.

Bragan said Article 3: Bromfield School Ramp will be moved forward by the School Committee and Article 4: Scada System upgrade will be facilitated by the DPW Director.

Bragan reported Article 5: Emergency Rental Assistance Program submitted by the Community Preservation Committee (CPC) will be a collaborative effort by the Municipal Affordable Housing Trust, Council on Aging Director and the Community and Economic Development Director.

Bragan said with the budget finalized the Finance Director will begin the process of setting the tax rate.

Town Administrator Report

Bragan reported on the following items:

- Testing at the Ryan Land well for PFAS has come back. The results are 0.640ppt and the Federal regulations are 70 ppt and the new State regulation are 20 ppt. The well is under the requirements.
- The Bromfield Trust Easement has been acted upon for the pole easement for the Bromfield driveway. With the passage of Article #1 of the October 3, 2020 STM the Select Board has to vote to approve the easement and sign it.
- The Capital Planning and Investment Committee started their FY22 process back in August and applications were due by October 1st. Two of these items need to be discussed and decisions made regarding official submission and they include the Old library Roof and the Hildreth House Phase 2.
- The financial update has the State revenue for September being down 1.4% which equals \$46 million less than last year. House Speaker DeLeo came out and estimated that the State has a \$4 billion to \$6 billion deficit caused by the pandemic. The Lottery is seeing some rebounding but not in all of its programs. There is greater indication that the State will not have a completed FY21 budget by the end of October.
- Bragan is putting together a group of people to work on the pole easement on Pond Road and the easement for the path on the inside of the Pond Road stone wall. Since Ms. Minar is the library Liaison she will be on this group as will a Library Rep, School rep, DPW Director, Bromfield Trust rep, and a Historical rep.
- Annual licensing is coming up and the Board needs to think about and discuss if they will be discounting any of the fees due to businesses not being able to use them or having limited use due to the pandemic.
- ABCC distributed an Advisory for Phase III, Step 2 communities.
- We received a 61A request for a portion of the Stone Land on South Shaker Road. This will be coming to the Board in November or sooner if possible.
- The Emergency Management Group is working on Halloween issues and is not seeing many positive options that won't draw large crowds to the event(s). Our traditional town center Halloween will not be able to happen due to the large crowds. Bob O'Shea has come up with ideas and they are being vetted and the HFA is planning some events and they are being reviewed by the BOH.
- Free Cash has been certified: \$1,465,588.

Resignation

The board recognized the resignation of Laura Bridges from the Commission on Disabilities

Review of budget calendar and finalize All Boards meeting date

The board decided on May 15th, 2021 for Annual Town Meeting and Wednesday, October 14th for the fall All Boards meeting. Departments/committees/boards and commissions will have an opportunity to review their priorities for the coming year with an emphasis on how they align with the Master Plan.

Presidential election warrant

By a roll call vote, Wallace – aye, Sklar – aye, Minar – aye, Maiore – aye, von Loesecke – aye, the board voted unanimously to endorse warrant for November 3, 2020 state and federal elections.

Review of fall goals

The board reviewed items scheduled for the fall and discussed when they should appear on an agenda.

- October 20th items: email proposals, town-wide fee review, policy on free cash, next steps on housing. Minar requested a follow up on the concerns voiced by residents in the Still River Village.
- November meetings: Transfer Station, appointment policy, tax title report, vacant/abandon property concerns, noise ordinance

Discuss Capital Planning & Investment Committee (CPIC) request for the old library roof

Lucy Wallace spoke to von Loesecke about initiating the CPIC process after speaking with members of Fivesparks. The Mass Cultural Council's Cultural Facilities Fund may be another funding source available to make the necessary repairs of the old library building given the current tenant. Requests require a match, in this case the town would be allocating funds to the potential project as well. Wallace submitted the CPIC request as a placeholder to make the deadline. She is aware the Select Board must vote on the submission. The board members agreed regardless of the ultimate use of this building a tight exterior envelope is necessary and the application should go forward.

Select Board Reports

Sklar reported the War Monument Restoration Committee has begun work on the World War II, Korean and Vietnam War memorial on the common. A veteran Recognition Application is available for residents interested in being included. Sklar said the new Commission on Disabilities would like to attend a Select Board meeting in November.

Kara Minar said the Park & Recreation Commission has a desire to meet with stakeholders on issues related to field maintenance. She reported the Energy Advisory Committee is asking the environmental assessment form be completed for the Ayer Rd construction project. Minar reported on the proposed closure of the Still River Post Office. She said residents in the area are hopeful there may be an opportunity for another location.

Lucy Wallace asked if the board is interested in meeting with the Climate Resiliency Working Group to hear about their action plan and the regional impact study. They decided on a meeting in November. She reported the Harvard Devens Jurisdiction Committee is also prepared to give an update to the board. They decided on the first meeting in December.

Alice von Loesecke reported the Capital Planning & Investment Committee has begun their question and answer process. She reported the school building project is currently on time and on budget.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:20pm.

Documents referenced:

SPICE Tool analysis – dated 9.23.2020
OPEB report – dated September 2020
Bridges resignation letter – dated 9.20.2020
Budget Calendar for FY22
Presidential warrant – dated 11.3.2020
Select Board – FY21 goals
CPIC old library roof request – dated 9.30.2020