Select Board Minutes
Tuesday, March 16, 2021
6:30pm

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

Town Department attendees:
Town Administrator Tim Bragan, Assistant Town Administrator/HR Director Marie Sobalvarro and Executive Assistant Julie Doucet

Additional participants:
Energy Advisory Committee Chair Brian Smith, Ellen Leicher, Sharon Cronin, Kristen Cullen, Tyler Ellis

Energy Advisory Committee: update on the Energy Stretch Code & electric car charging stations
Committee member Ellen Leicher explained the request for support letters on the energy stretch code came out back in December. She said legislation on climate resolution is moving forward therefore the letters are not necessary at this time. Committee Chair Brian Smith noted the stretch code has not been updated since instituted in 2010.

Brain Smith has been working with Chris Collins President of Energy Conservation Inc. to attain grant funding for electric car charging stations and infrastructure. The MassEVIP Public Access Charging Program provides incentives for property owners or managers with publicly accessible parking to acquire and install Level 1 and Level 2 EV charging stations. Smith reviewed five potential locations: new HES school, Bromfield back parking lot, Harvard General Store, behind the Town Hall and the library. They discussed pros and cons to each site. Smith will be meeting with the School Committee and Library Trustees for their feedback as well. Smith has learned they are unable to utilize green community funds for the additional costs not covered within the grant. They would need to figure that piece out as well. The contract term with Charge Point is for five years.

Discuss Finance Committee recommendations
Alice von Loesecke asked the board members for their input on the Finance Committee budget recommendations from the last meeting. She noted the outstanding variables are the DPW and Harvard Teachers Association (HTA) contracts and finalization of the state budget. Lucy Wallace stated her position that the proposed small articles and additions to the budget are necessities. She is comfortable supporting their recommendations and her fellow board members agreed.
By a roll call vote, Wallace – aye, Maiore – aye, Minar – aye, Sklar – aye, von Loesecke – aye, the board voted to accept recommendations presented on March 2nd.

Public Communication
Bonnie Chandler, Prospect Hill Rd, vehemently objects to her taxes being used and the town forcing on its employees any sort of diversity and inclusion policies and training. They are calling it "anti-racism"

these days but it is essentially reverse racism. The way it is being done is destroying our constitutional freedom of speech. Our town employees' opinions should be their own, and they should be private. All this "training" does is fuel class hatred and divisiveness. The politically correct partisans are no longer satisfied with virtue-signaling and moral shaming; now they have to run encounter sessions where they force everyone to pretend to hate themselves and mouth insincere, pious platitudes under the threat of being accused of racism. The participants know that if they don't go along, they will get punished. The news has been full of people who have been fired from their jobs or failed in school for not going along. First of all, I don't believe there is much racism left in America. The whole racial climate has completely changed over my lifetime alone, and changed even more over our history. There is always opportunity for improvement, but I believe there isn't much – certainly much less than the rest of the world. We will never completely get rid of it, because there is no field of human endeavor where there aren't at least a few bad apples. We certainly won't get rid of them by forcing everyone else to feel bad about themselves. We're more likely to boost their influence by enfeebling their opposition from overdoing the brainwashing. Furthermore, these policies have the opposite effect from what is intended: You are chasing away the people you should want to keep and rewarding the ones you don't want, because the strong, honest people are the ones who will object to forced political education, and you don't want the ones who lie just to get along. Also, constantly telling whole classes of people they are doomed to fail, will always be victimized, and need to rely on special help harms the poor, destroys their futures, and fuels class hatred. It takes away ambition, hope, and the energy to educate themselves, all of which would have given them just as much opportunity to create value in our society as anyone else.
I think reverse racism training and policy, no matter what euphemism you call it by -- "inclusion," "diversity," or whatever – is a terrible idea, and all of my fellow citizens with whom I have talked about this agree with me.

STAFF UPDATE and REPORT

Covid-19 Vaccination Update:
The Harvard Board of Health in working with Acton Pharmacy was able to get the residents at Foxglove vaccinated last week and Bowers Brook worked with Ayer Family Pharmacy and was able to get their population vaccinated too. Both had excess vaccines and worked with the COA and our Director to make sure the vaccine was not wasted. This allowed Debbie and her team to get more senior Harvard residents vaccinated. Debbie and her staff have done a wonderful job advocating for and making sure that when opportunities arise that she and her staff are ready to provide a list of seniors (oldest to youngest) to those with available vaccines and to also utilize the Hildreth House as a vaccination site when necessary. Kudos to the BOH and the COA Director and her staff.

There has been no response yet from the Governor or DPH to the letter Nashoba Health Communities sent regarding the lack of vaccines in this area of the State.

Town Clerk Marlene Kenney has been successfully certified by the Town Clerks Association and this is remarkable given the issues and hurdles Marlene has faced with numerous elections and virus implications. We are very fortunate to have Marlene as our Clerk and she deserves our congratulations.

The State has extended Vote-By-Mail through June.

We have received applications for the transfer of the Grapevine liquor license (Malt and Wine) and for a new license (All Alcohol) for the Grapevine location. We will be having a hearing on both requests in the near future.

The American Rescue Plan allows among other things to make necessary investments in water, sewer, or broadband infrastructure. We will be checking in with the former broadband group at the point where there is a clearer understanding of funding which will be distributed (based on census pop!) to Harvard.

The IAC will be meeting later this month at a time TBD, in deference to the group's concerns that the process to evaluate a different insurer felt rushed last fall. At this time, we are *not* doing a claims sweep to see if we are still a viable/attractive match to MIIA.

Effective 7/1/21, we will be implementing a one-month waiting period for health insurance enrollment for all new-hires (e.g., enrollment effective dates can be no fewer than 30 days following date of hire).

Our Procurement Officer, Marie Sobalvarro, has recouped $50.4k from sale of surplus equipment (2.9k from HES Solar, 47.5k from tanker truck) and currently has a MSW compactor box ($1 at present) on gov.deals

DPW Director Tim Kilhart has been successful in getting the State to agree to use the excess grant funds from the Slough Road project to repave the other portion of Slough and possibly Woodchuck and Oak Hill as well. The funds have to be used on roads that are contiguous to the original project.

Budget Update: There have been no changes to the budget since the last meeting.
On the State level there was an uptick in tax collections in February.

Town Hall will open to limited capacity on March 22, and will be open completely on April 5th. These will continue to utilize social distancing, face masks, and hand sanitizer. The potential issues we see are what happens with the variants and thus the number of infected individuals and the fact that with individuals being vaccinated having problems with individuals not wanting to wear masks or socially distance. The key for me is that the staff and public stay safe. We have not had a Covid positive person at Town Hall and this is due to our diligence and safety measures. Unlike some of my counterparts, who will wait until their staff can get vaccinated to open Town Hall, I believe we can do this safely.

The Planning Board has been working on changes to the General Bylaw for Scenic Roads and I was not aware of this until last week and would argue that in keeping with the Board's policy for spring and fall town meetings that it would have to wait until the fall, but this is the Board's decision if it will keep with your policy or allow this to move forward. The board members agreed this item will be on the fall town meeting warrant.

A draft of the ATM warrant will be distributed to the Board on March 29th. Any questions or concerns can be directed to Tim Bragan. The Board will formally review and approve the document on April 6th so the warrant booklet can be printed in preparation for the annual town meeting. The board members decided to not mail the booklet to every household this year. A postcard will be sent in its place with pertinent information about the town meeting with the booklet posted on the town website. Hard copies will be available at the town meeting or can be mailed prior if requested.

Minutes
By a roll call vote, Wallace – aye, Maiore – aye, Minar – aye, Sklar – aye, von Loesecke – aye, the board voted unanimously to regular and executive session minutes of 3/2, as presented.

Proclamation
A proclamation was prepared for presentation to resident Tony Shaw for his 40 years of service on the

Fire Dept. By a roll call vote, Wallace – aye, Minar – aye, Sklar – aye, Maiore – aye von Loesecke – aye, the board voted unanimously endorse proclamation for Tony Shaw in recognition of his years of service to be presented to him on April 7th.

Inter-Municipal Agreement(IMA) for a regional housing consultant
By a roll call vote, Wallace – aye, Minar – aye, Maiore – aye, Sklar – aye, von Loesecke – aye, the board voted unanimously to approve and sign the IMA.

Discuss need for a temporary Moderator for the May 15th Annual Town Meeting
Moderator Bill Barton is unable to attend on May 15th. The board members considered other dates however no other dates work therefore a temporary Moderator will be necessary.

Town wide clean-up
By a roll call vote, Wallace – aye, Minar – aye, Maiore – aye, Sklar – aye, von Loesecke – aye , the board voted unanimously to approve the town wide clean-up for April 29th – May 2nd.

Senior Tested Exemption
Stu Sklar received a request from the Assessing Department to consider moving the deadline dates.
By a roll call vote, Sklar– aye, Wallace – aye, Maiore – aye, Minar – aye, von Loesecke – aye, the board voted unanimously to move the deadline from May 1st to September 1st.

Review and discuss Town Diversity Statement
Alice von Loesecke explained this did not come before the board because of any issues in Harvard. She was approached by the local community group Arm & Arm whose mission is to promote and uphold a safe, inclusive social climate that values diversity and fosters respect for one another. Rich Maiore offered to draft a statement for consideration. Von Loesecke invited Arm & Arm members Sharon Cronin and Ellen Leicher to join in the discussion.

Sharon Cronin encouraged the board to keep their statement clear and strong so it is not open to misinterpretation. She indicated the main objective of the statement is to make it a living thing not just a statement but something more actionable. Arm & Arm offer their help and want to contribute in any way they can.

HR Director Marie Sobalvarro suggested the statement be expanded to include not only employees of the town but those volunteers appointed by the Select Board.

Kara Minar and Lucy Wallace find value in an overall statement for the town that sets expectations. The board members will review statements agreed upon by the Library Trustees and the School Committee. They will revisit this item at an upcoming meeting.

Review draft charge for Revenue Ideation Committee
Rich Maiore drafted the charge utilizing examples from other communities facing similar challenges. Maiore said the committee will identify how to diversify the towns' revenue sources. They can prioritize recommendations for new sources of revenue, offer considerations and estimated revenue projection for each option, potential timing and recommended next steps/action items. Some possibilities outlined in the charge are sale of town land, sale of surplus buildings and equipment, leasing of town property for use of solar or wind power, leasing of cell towers on town land and secure corporate sponsorship of

Town assets such as ballfields/trails. He described this committee's work as short term acknowledging a longer term strategy is imminent. Maiore will finalize the charge for action at the next meeting.

Select Board Reports
Lucy Wallace reported the Harvard Devens Jurisdiction Committee is seeking advice/guidance from our Rep. and Senator.

Stu Sklar said the Civic Cup organized by the League of Women voters virtually was a great success.

Kara Minar reported the Fields sub-committee will begin meeting on a more regular basis.

Alice von Loesecke has met with the Finance and School Committee Chairs to begin discussions on long term financial solutions regarding the towns budget.

Presentation from Commonwealth Fusion Systems (CFS)
Head of Public Affairs and Communications Kristen Cullen and Senior Advisor Tyler Ellis from CFS gave a presentation on their track to bring clean fusion energy technology to the planet. CFS is collaborating with MIT to design and build fusion power systems that will provide clean fusion energy to combat climate change. They will be building a campus in Devens, MA that will be home to the birthplace of commercial fusion energy and include manufacturing facilities, a research facility, and CFS corporate offices. Cullen and Ellis explained why Devens was chosen and the company's overall vision for the future.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30pm.

Documents referenced:
Charge point info & charging station maps – dated March 2021
IMA – dated July 2020
Town-wide clean up request – dated 3.32021
Revenue Ideation Committee Charge – dated 3.3.2021