Select Board Minutes
Tuesday, November 1, 2022
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:
Rich Maiore, Erin McBee, Kara Minar, Don Ludwig, Charles Oliver
Town Department attendees:
Town Administrator Tim Bragan, Assistant Town Administrator Marie Sobalvarro, Executive Assistant Julie Doucet, Finance Director Jared Mullane and Director or Planning Frank O'Connor
Additional participants:
Warner Free Lecture Trustees: Alison Thornton, Steve Peisch, Michael Kilian, Sheila Simollardes
Planning Board Chair Richard Cabelus, Personnel Board Chair Victor Normand, Ellen Leicher

Vice Chair Erin McBee called the meeting to order.

Joint appointment to the Warner Free Lecture Trustees
Chair Alison Thornton introduced Michael Kilian for appointment to fill the vacancy on the trust. Trustee Steve Peisch was also present. Kilian spoke briefly about his interest in serving. By a roll call vote, Thornton – aye, Peisch – aye, Simollardes aye, Minar – aye, Oliver – aye, McBee – aye, Ludwig – aye, voted jointly in favor of appointing Michael Kilian to the Warner Free Lecture Trustees.

Chair Rich Maiore entered the meeting.

Finance Director review of FY24 budget documents
Jared Mullane worked on the budget documents with the Finance Committee. He reviewed the budget memo which includes important deadlines and the budget goals. Mullane created a template for the budget narrative to provide guidance and standardize the process. He noted in the specific guidelines for budget development the Finance Committee is asking that outside of COLA and contractual agreements budgets increase no more than 2.5%. Mullane is asking budget narratives stay within the allotted space and if necessary, an additional document can be included.

Meet with the Planning Board to review bylaw proposals
PB Chair Richard Cabelus reported hearings on two proposed warrant articles will be held on Monday, November 7th at 7pm.

- 125-7 Agricultural Use Amendment
- 125-59 Town Center Overlay District

He explained they have been working with the Agricultural Advisory Commission on the agricultural bylaw. The Planning Board drafted a letter to the Select Board requesting additional information and inviting members to attend the hearings on November 7th. After the hearings, the Select Board will regroup to formalize the next steps.

Personnel Board recommendation for Cost-of-Living adjustments
Chair Victor Normand reported the board voted for an increase of 8.2% to include cost of living and merit. He acknowledged it is significantly higher but is reflective of the economy we are in right now. He admitted this type of increase may not be sustainable however it is justified as a good strategy to maintain our work force and attract employees moving forward. He indicated the Personnel Board will meet again to finalize their recommendation on the percentage split between COLA and merit.

Public Communication
Town Administrator provided the staff report/updates (Attachment A)

Report presentation from the Revenue Ideation Committee
Committee Chair Kara Minar thanked her fellow members for their efforts to finalize the report. She highlighted the top priorities the committee focused on. They offered seven main recommendations which included agritourism, solar energy, tax compliance, property sales, real estate transfer tax, hire a grant writer and Ayer Rd commercial district. Minar said these are the primary areas the Revenue Ideation Committee recommends the Select Board pursue or investigate further to increase municipal revenue sources for the Town. The Select Board members were appreciative of the report. Rich Maiore will have this as an agenda item at the next Select Board meeting to discuss in more detail and address any questions.

Minutes
By a roll call vote, Ludwig – aye, McBee – aye, Minar – aye, Oliver – aye, Maiore – aye, the board voted unanimously to approve minutes of 10/4 &10/27, as presented.

Climate Survey Mailing
Town Administrator Tim Bragan has been working with HCIC Chair Ellen Leicher on the survey which will go out with tax bills in December. By a roll call vote, Minar – aye, Oliver – aye, Ludwig – aye, McBee – aye, Maiore – aye, the board voted unanimously to approve mailing of the climate survey.

Conflict of interest filed by CPC member John Lee
Town Administrator Tim Bragan explained the Select Board must act on the filing to allow Lee the ability to act on a request before the Community Preservation Committee that is from the Conservation Trust. Lee is a trustee member therefore a conflict of interest must be filed. Bragan explained there is no direct benefit to Lee. By a roll call vote, Ludwig – aye, McBee – aye, Minar – aye, Oliver – aye, Maiore – aye, the board voted unanimously to approve the conflict of interest.

Tax bill insert to increase awareness for electronic payments
Finance Director Jared Mullane requested inclusion in the tax bills information to promote online payments. By a roll call vote, Minar – aye, McBee – aye, Ludwig – aye, Oliver – aye, Maiore – aye, the board voted unanimously to approve the request.

Appointment of Rich Marcello to the Harvard Climate Initiative Committee
By a roll call vote, Minar – aye, McBee- aye, Ludwig – aye, Oliver – aye, Maiore – aye, the board voted unanimously to appoint Rich Marcello as a full member and move Adam Meir to an associate position.

Select Board Reports
Erin McBee is preparing for the Planning Board hearings on Monday. She thanked Agricultural Advisory Commission Chair Kerri Green for her help in navigating the language.

Rich Maiore gave an update on the status of playing fields. He reported the wetland delineation should be done before snow flies allowing for a field engineer to do a more in-depth review on how best to accommodate what is desired.

Charles Oliver reported the Commission on Disabilities has had a consultant tour town building for compliance. They expect a written report in December. He said the are considering a future questionnaire and adding a disclaimer to the town website.

Don Ludwig reported capital is currently reviewing requests, the Devens Harvard Jurisdiction Committee held a public meeting to present Harvard's Summary Plan and solicit public comment and the school building committee is seeking quotes for the stone wall to match on the other side.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30pm.

Documents referenced:
Michael Kilian vol form – dated 10.4.2022
Budget memo FY24 – dated 10.19.2022
PB letter on bylaws – dated 10.17.2022 w/supporting material
Current entertainment license conditions (reference only)
COLA material (CPI over time & summary) – dated Oct 2022
RIC report – dated 10.6.2022
Draft climate survey – dated Oct 2022
Lee conflict of interest – dated 10.25.2022
Mullane online payment request – dated 10.12.2022
Rich Marcello vol form – dated Oct 2022

Staff Report
November 1, 2022

1. Ayer Road Study and Water Grant Updates:

   a. The second phase of the Ayer Road Study project, filed through Planning Board, has been funded by the State at $250,000.
   b. The Devens Water Connection Design, filed by Tim Kilhart, was also funded by the State at $75,000.

2. Staffing Updates:

   a. Interviews are occurring this week for both the Administrative Assistant (Land Use Boards & Building Department), and Assistant Town Clerk positions, as Catherine took the new Finance Assistant Position; in both cases we plan to have a hire in place by mid-November.

   b. BlueCross will be meeting with Town administration today (11/1) to review Harvard's Q1 claims, and provide information on Harvard's projected FY24 health insurance premiums.

   c. We are seeking comments and/or suggestions from the public regarding the cable license renewal with Charter Communications; feedback regarding the cable operator's performance under the existing license and the cable-related needs and interests of the community should be directed to asktheTA@harvard-ma.gov.

   d. Julie Doucet attended and successfully completed the first section of the State's procurement class program as she readies to pass on building department work to the new person later this month. Julie will begin helping out with procurement related items during this same timeframe.

3. Local Board/Department/Budget Happenings:

   a. The Assessors are wrapping up our Quinquennial (5 Year) Revaluation of property values and the public disclosure period will be available between today and the 8th of November. Contact the Assessor during this time to ask questions, review, discuss and request changes in proposed values. assessingdept@harvard-ma.gov (See attached)

   b. The Capital Planning and Investment Committee is reviewing the applications with departments. They have given the School Department (who have not yest submitted their formal requests) a hard deadline of November 15, 2022. The Committee is looking to make their recommendation to FinCom and the SB by the end of the year or possibly the first meeting in January (not sure yet).

c. FinCom budget document is out as you reviewed earlier with Jared. FinCom is looking at changing the document by possibly giving departments a set dollar amount (not including COLA or contractual increases) to stay within. Budgets will be due by December 1st.

d. Paving on Ayer Road is complete from Route 2 to the Ayer Town line and the lining is does as well. We have received a number of compliments since it has been completed. The State will still be doing crack sealing on Still River Road and Ayer Road where it is needed in the coming weeks. Many thanks to Tim Kilhart for his efforts to get the State to do and fund these projects.

4. Police Department Updates: (September/October)

a. Officers completed the Driver Training Simulator through MIIA. This was excellent training which reinforced some important concepts in regards to emergency vehicle operations. In the future the Chief will also schedule officers to attend hands-on emergency vehicle operations course.

b. The Department continues its ongoing training and professional development. Sergeant Callahan attended his third and final FBI LEEDA (FBI Law Enforcement Executive Development Association) training and will receive his trilogy award. Sergeant Dirienzo and Det.Fortunato will also be attending these classes over the next six months. Funding for these classes is paid for by the Municipal Police Training Committee. These classes usually cost approximately $1000 for each level.

c. The Police started their annual in-service training this month and we will be completing training within the next few months. Due to new changes under MPTC and POST standards, officers are not only required now to attend in-service, firearms, defensive tactics, CPR/First Responder and Firearms Proficiency, but now each officer must attend a minimum 8 hours of specialized training every year. All officers are registered for and received a spot for their annual in-service training at the Boylston Police Academy. This will be the first year of in-person training since 2020 which means officers will be away for a week of the training. We continue to have other specialized training for officers from leadership training to firearms and other instructor certifications. We are training once a week jointly with FD for our drone UAV deployments and monthly for the CEMLEC Drone Team.

d. Radar trailer titles are in and both trailers are now registered. We are working on having them marked up and deployed very soon. Radar sign conversions are scheduled for pole installations and transfers by October 20th for the Bolton Road and Still River Road Signs. Mass DOT released the funding on 9/25/22 for the additional purchase of the four new smaller radar signs. The Chief is working with two vendors on acquiring those radars. Radar trailers

are getting marked up on Thursday 10/27 and will be ready to be deployed within the next week. Still waiting for some items from the manufacturer so we can permanently mount the older radar signs.

e. There is a new co-clinician and she started with us on 9/29. Kristin Normandin received her Master's Degree in Social Work from Boston University in 2020 where she received the Dean's Award for Leadership in Social Work and also graduated from Fitchburg State College with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Human Services. She graduated Summa Cum Laude from FSU. She was carefully selected through an arduous process before she made it to the final interview in front of both police chiefs and Det.Fortunato. She already has attended our first school district crisis meeting on 10/19 and we discussed many action items with the schools, including an MOU, joint response and developing a new action response plan for both schools. Co-clinician response is a great asset and we continue to grow and implement Kristin in many different areas. (See attached monthly report)

f. The Chief received another grant from the Executive Office of Public Safety for $20,000 which will be used for traffic enforcement and purchasing new handheld radars and Lidars. This grant will take effect in November and it will go until Labor Day of next year.

g. October was a busy month for the Police Department. They responded to approximately 525 calls of service with numerous incidents, arrests, and summonses and 7 motor vehicle crashes.

h. The Harvard Police Department had their first annual "Coffee with the PD" event at the General Store. The Chief thank everyone that was able to attend and hope to expand it more every year.

i. The Chief is working with the Executive Office of Public Safety to acquire an Automated Fingerprint Identification System which is now required. Chapter 6A Section 18 ¾ (12)(ii) now requires criminal justice agencies to use, "a unique state identification number assigned to each person who enters the criminal justice system". The only existing unique statewide identification number is the state identification number, a unique ten-character alphanumerical identifier supported by fingerprints of an individual printed using the Automated Fingerprint/Biometric identification System. Therefore, all law enforcement agencies are required to fingerprint all arrests, both felonies and misdemeanors and must follow the protocols issued by the State Police. This policy requires that fingerprints be submitted to SIS electronically on a Live Scan Device.

j. Final authorization of the grant for electronic citation systems was issued by the state and we are awaiting installation of all electronic printers in our cruises at no cost to the town.

5. State Updates: (State House News Service)

a. The State Auditor came out with her report on unfunded mandates which add to the financial pressures experienced by municipalities. The report flags gaps in State Aid for school transportation, education, veteran's benefits, and other services within cities and towns. (See attached)

b. Closing out of FY2022 has not yet happened as the legislature has delayed action on the $1.6 billion supplemental budget. This will delay the State Comptroller from officially closing out the books again this year. The legislature has had two months to reconcile their differences and still the final close out is hanging in the balance. (See attached)

c. State refunds of the ~$3 billion surplus will start going out today. According to the State spokesperson, taxpayers will receive a check or direct deposit equal to approximately 14% of what a taxpayer owed in 2021. (See attached)

d. Learning loss due to covid is significant statewide given the recent test results. The Education Commissioner announced last Tuesday that his department will be taking a more supportive role to accelerate student leaning, building a diverse and culturally responsive workforce, cultivating safe and healthy learning environments, and aligning DESE supports to a shared academic vision of deeper learning. (See attached)

e. The State still has ~$2 billion left in Federal Education funds remaining. Funds are predominantly from ESSER grants for which spending must be completed by December 31, 2024.

f. Lottery sales skid continued through September. September sales were down $40.3 million over 2021. If this trend continues it does not bode well for future local aid from the State for Schools and Cities and Towns. (See attached)

g. The State DPU approved various Company requests to upgrade their electric grids. National Grid was the largest with over $300 million in upgrades to help manage the influx of clean energy suppliers. This approval comes at the same time some people want to slow the growth of large industrial solar projects citing the fact that over 4,000 acres of forest land, open space, and farmland have been cleared to build ground-mounted solar systems in Massachusetts. Another potential impact on the State's green energy initiatives is the fact that the developers of the State offshore wind projects have asked for a pause in the review of contracts for more than a month

amid price increases, supply shortages, and interest rate hikes. (See attached)

6. Building Related:

   a. The copper finials were installed last week at the Old Library, and the roof project -- give or take one further visit by the architectural/engineering firm, Gale Associates, to confirm that all of the punch list items will be complete by the end of next week! Our thanks again to the abutting residents who have graciously tolerated the noise and disruption.

   b. The COA @ 16 Lancaster County remains on track -- one may have noticed the new trim color, and the newly-paved (and ADA-accessible) entrance, although the bulk of the renovation is interior improvements and fit-out.

7. Cell Tower Update:

   a. A draft of the Cell Tower request for bids was received Monday; the Select Board will need to determine base rent, escalators, and ideal lease duration at an upcoming executive session.

8. Notice and Reminders:

   a. Early voting continues this week and will end on (see attached schedule for full listing of early voting dates and times.

   b. HUU Updates :

      i. On November 5th at the Fellowship Hall Central Mass Pastel Society, and
      ii. December 3 and 10 there is rehearsal for the Christmas Pageant in the sanctuary.