



Select Board Minutes
Tuesday, March 19, 2024
7:00pm

The Select Board Regular Meeting was held virtually in accordance with Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2023, An Act Making Appropriations for the Fiscal Year 2023 to Provide for Supplementing Certain Existing Appropriations and for Certain Other Activities and Projects, and signed into law on March 29, 2023, this meeting was conducted via remote participation.

Select Board participants:

Rich Maiore, Charles Oliver, Erin McBee, Kara Minar, Don Ludwig

Town Department participants:

Town Administrator Tim Bragan, Assistant Town Administrator Marie Sobalvarro, Executive Assistant Julie Doucet, and Fire Chief Rick Sicard

Additional participants:

Terry Symula

Discuss and decide on Town Administrator recruitment/hiring process

Town Administrator Tim Bragan provided detailed information on how past searches were conducted. Bragan learned through his research the town has not traditionally hired an outside firm. He included the names of five search firms. Rich Maiore started the discussion by asking for the pros and cons to hiring an external firm or having the process handled internally. Members Don Ludwig, Charles Oliver and Erin McBee were inclined to go with an internal process. Their reasoning included the desire to keep the process moving along as the current administration will be officially retired by July 1 and to not incur unnecessary costs. Kara Minar advocated for hiring an outside firm to assure a credible and independent hiring process especially if the current assistant town administrator is a candidate. She asked her colleagues to publish a Request for Proposals (RFP) insisting the process could not be handled at a professional level in house. Erin McBee was not convinced an outside firm is the right approach for Harvard. Charles Oliver expressed interest in having the position advertised as soon as possible. His understanding is an outside firm would simply facilitate the process and not provide any advisory services. He was not convinced an outside firm was necessary. Rich Maiore suggested focusing on the composition of the search committee as the more appropriate next step for the board to take instead of moving forward with an RFP.

Kara Minar made a motion to develop and send out an RFP for the position of Town Administrator. Erin McBee seconded the motion. By a roll call vote, McBee – nay, Minar – nay, Ludwig – nay, Oliver – nay, Minar – aye. The motion did not pass, (1-4).

Don Ludwig made a motion to go forward with town administrator search without use of an outside consultant. Erin McBee seconded the motion. By a roll call vote, McBee – aye, Minar – nay, Ludwig – aye, Oliver – aye, Maiore – aye, the board voted in favor of the motion (4-1).

Search Committee composition

They decided the committee will consist of two Select Board members, a Finance Committee member, a School Committee member, Town Moderator, Town Department Head, and the employee Personnel Board Rep. They discussed requiring non-disclosure agreements to ensure a confidential search process.

Members of the public were not included in the composition however public input will be solicited once two – three finalists have been made public.

They discussed the need for a rubric to assist with defining criteria for evaluation/ranking of candidates.

Rich Maiore recapped the overall goal for the search committee is to follow a hiring process that is transparent, fair and involves input from the public.

They named Police Chief James Babu as the Dept. head, Personnel Board Rep Liz Allard and Kara Minar & Don Ludwig as the Select Board reps. Members will reach out to the others for their commitment to serve.

They discussed a possible timeline of resumes due end of April and interviews in May.

McBee made a motion seconded by Minar to appoint a search committee of two Select Board members, a Finance Committee member as chosen by the Finance Committee, a School Committee member as chosen by the School Committee, Town Moderator, Town Department Head as chosen by the Select Board and the employee Personnel Board Rep. as chosen by the Select Board; Select Board reps. Don Ludwig and Kara Minar. By a roll call vote, McBee –aye, Minar – aye, Ludwig – aye, Oliver – aye, Maiore – aye, the board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

Bromfield House lead paint remediation

Assistant Town Administrator Marie Sobalvarro reported the Invitation to Bid (IFB) for the lead remediation has been published with responses due back by April 10th. Rich Maiore asked what the options are for payment. Terry Symula from the neighborhood group assisting the families said there are earmark funds available from the state. She estimated around \$30,000. Other options may include free cash and/or a reserve fund transfer. Symula will find housing for the occupants while the remediation is being done. Discussion ensued on recent interior and exterior painting done at the property.

Bromfield House lease extension

Erin McBee stated with assent for the Bromfield Trustees the town will need to petition the court to extend the temporary use of the building. By a roll call vote, Minar – aye, McBee – aye, Ludwig – aye, Oliver – aye, Maiore – aye, the board voted unanimously to petition the court to extend the lease until June 30, 2025.

Public Communication

Collen McFadden, Shaker Road, has professional experience with search firms and encouraged the Select Board to reconsider the value of hiring a firm to assist with the town administrator search.

Staff Report/Updates (Attachment A)

Municipal Affordable Housing Trust appointment

By a roll call vote, Minar – aye, McBee – aye, Ludwig – aye, Oliver – aye, Maiore – aye, the board voted unanimously to appoint Bonnie Heudorfer to the Municipal Affordable Housing Trust.

Discuss use of clickers by elected officials at the Annual Town Meeting

Rich Maiore thanked the League of Women Voters for their donation to make this possible. He asked his fellow members if elected officials should vote by hand for accountability and transparency. This will be up to the Moderator.

One Stop grant letters

Town Administrator Tim Bragan explained this grant is being utilized for road safety improvements on Stow Road. By a roll call vote, McBee – aye, Minar – aye, Ludwig – aye, Oliver – aye, Maiore – aye, the board voted unanimously to authorize signature for the One Stop Grant.

Out of state travel request for Fire Chief Rick Sicard

Chief Sicard was invited by the Fire Chiefs Association of Ma to attend this year's FDIC International Conference in Indianapolis on April 15-20. He said it is an excellent opportunity for professional development and all expenses are paid. By a roll call vote, McBee – aye, Minar – aye, Ludwig – aye, Oliver – aye, Maiore – aye, the board voted unanimously to the request.

Update Open Space Committee member composition

Rich Maiore reported on an oversight when the committee composition was revised last year. The conservation agent should be included as a non-voting member. By a roll call vote, McBee – aye, Minar – aye, Ludwig – aye, Oliver – aye, Maiore – aye, the board voted unanimously to approve Conservation Agent to the Open Space Committee as amended.

Annual Town Meeting Warrant

The board members decided on which member will speak to which article at the meeting on April 6th. By a roll call vote, McBee – aye, Minar – aye, Ludwig – aye, Oliver – aye, Maiore – aye, the board voted unanimously to approve articles 1-3.

By a roll call vote, McBee – aye, Minar – aye, Ludwig – aye, Oliver – aye, Maiore – aye, the board voted unanimously to approve articles 5 – 26.

they did not vote on the article 4 for the Master Plan update. Members were unsure this was necessary.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00pm.

Documents referenced;

Town Administrator memo – dated 3.18.2024

Town Counsel opinion on Bromfield House petition – dated 3.12.2024

Decree & Order of Geneal Probate/Trust Petion – dated 6.29.2022

Dept Health & Human Services - Lead Paint violation – dated 3.5.2024

Bonnie Heudorfer vol form – dated 2.26.2024

Non-Stop Grant letters – dated 3.19.2024

Chief Sicard request – dated 3.8.2024

OSC updated – dated 3.19.2024

Staff Report, March 19, 2024

Building/Facility/Project Related:

- The clock and bell re-installation in the UU will start tomorrow, and is scheduled to be completed Friday.
- The Invitation to Bid for the Cell Tower will be in the Central Register tomorrow, responses due April 30th.
- The Bromfield House Lead Remediation bid package will be in the Central Register March 27, responses due April 10 and tentative contract award April 15.
- The Devens water project pumpstation bid is out, sub-bid responses due 3/21, GC bids due 3/28. In tandem, the Devens Water Main project is out to bid, responses due April 11. Construction could start by the end of June.
- Still monitoring the laggardly progress of National Grid re. the COA Solar ISA.
- Tighe & Bond's subcontractor completed the geophysical survey for the former landfill, we're now awaiting the start of the waste delineation borings.

FY24 Operations:

- The Charter/Spectrum Cable contract renewal experienced a minor setback as the Charter representative we worked with is no longer working there. Charter/Spectrum has not named a replacement; we've proposed dates in late March and early April and are awaiting a

FY 24/25 Budget Update:

- At last week's Finance Committee Meeting the Finance Director gave the Finance Committee the update on the Reserve Fund for FY 2024. He explained that the current expenses are the Snow and Ice Deficit (~\$111,000), the potential of lead abatement at the Bromfield House (current estimate ~\$70,000-\$100,000), School legal settlement (This is ~\$162,000 with the possibility that the School department could get some funds out of the State Circuit breaker account. Will not know until May.), and up to \$15,000 for executive search. There is currently \$210,000 (the account has reimbursed ½ of the School Department settlement) available in the reserve fund.
- There have been no changes from the Finance Committee or State regarding revenue or expenses and probably won't be until after the Town Meeting when the State's House of Representatives come out with their budget.

Legislature/Beacon Hill: (information from State House News unless otherwise noted)

- February's tax collections saw another decrease of \$36,000,000., thus continuing the month-to-month trend of missing the revenue estimates.
- The Governor proposed another \$250 million more for shelter programs through the end of June. This would be the second infusion of \$250 million, with the last infusion being in

December. The House has approved \$245 million and the Senate has a different take on the bill and wants time limits for stays.

Notices, Reminders, Dates of Note:

- The League of Women Voters will be hosting a hybrid-format candidates' night at the Town Hall on Tuesday, March 26 at 6:30, followed by a discussion of the override at 7:15. Attendees can participate either by coming to the Town Hall or via Zoom; promo notice is attached.
- The Army will be installing a temporary well and a deep monitoring well on Old Mill Road/Blanchard Road in the coming weeks.
- The Town Clerk's website lists important State and Federal election dates, and deadlines here: <https://www.harvard-ma.gov/town-clerk/pages/2024-municipal-and-state-election-schedule> Additionally, there's info on the Annual Town Election to be held on April 9: <https://www.harvard-ma.gov/town-clerk/pages/annual-town-election-april-9-2024>