



Select Board Minutes
Tuesday, January 17, 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, Don Ludwig, Charles Oliver - Kara Minar was absent

Town Department attendees:

Assistant Town Administrator Marie Sobalvarro, Executive Assistant Julie Doucet, Police Chief James Babu, Officer Edward Coffin, Town Clerk Lynn Kelly

Additional participants:

Commission on Disabilities Davida Bagatelle & Toni Spacciapoli

Introduction of Police Officer Edward Coffin

Police Chief James Babu introduced Edward Coffin as the newest member of the Harvard Police Department. Chief Babu said Coffin has been a reserve officer for the town since 2014 and has worked part time in neighboring communities. Coffin has taken the necessary steps to earn certification. Coffin thanked Babu for the opportunity. The board members welcomed and congratulated Coffin on his full time employment with the town.

Commission on Disabilities (CoD) update on the town's self-evaluation & transition plan

Assistant Town Administrator Marie Sobalvarro reported the Commission on Disabilities secured funding from capital to have the town's self-evaluation plan completed. CoD members Davida Bagatelle and Toni Spacciapoli were present. Bagatelle spoke about the process to have the plan completed. She said Michael Kennedy and James M. Mazik from the Center for Living & Working prepared the plan and will attend the February 7th meeting of the Select Board to review it in more detail. She asked the board members to review the plan and share any questions they may have with them directly. Spacciapoli explained this is a working document and encouraged town departments to review. She said the consultants will explained the instructions to mobility and provide guidance for the action items. Bagatelle said the full plan has been posted to the town website and an announcement of the plan will run in the Harvard Press.

Town Clerk Election Items

Town Clerk Lynn Kelly came with a few requests in preparation for the 2023 elections.

- 1) Town Caucus or nomination papers; the board decided on nomination papers
- 2) Vote by mail; the board decided to allow vote by mail
- 3) Set hours for the town election; the board decided 8am to 8pm
- 4) Chief Babu will be the appointing authority to assign officers for 2023 elections

Public Communication

James O'Leary, Harvard Youth Baseball/Softball, thanked the Select Board for their efforts on athletic fields in town and for including the HYBSA in their plans. He offered assistance if there is anything the organization can do to help with this endeavor.

Minutes

By a roll call vote, McBee – aye, Ludwig – aye, Oliver – aye, Maiore – aye, the board voted unanimously to approve minutes from 12/20 & 1/3, as presented.

Staff Report/Updates (Attachment A)

Committee/Board resignations

The Select Board recognized the resignations of Chuck Christensen from the Elm Commission and Robert Traver from the Agricultural Advisory Commission. Executive Assistant Julie Doucet will send thank you letters for their service.

Letter to legislators requesting a meeting concerning matters related to Devens

The Select Board members made a slight change to the letter. Chair Rich Maiore will endorse letter.

Special Town Meeting Warrant

The draft warrant contains five articles for the meeting that will be held on Monday, February 13th at 7pm in the Cronin Auditorium. Assistant Town Administrator Marie Sobalvarro indicated article 5 will be removed as the citizen has withdrawn the petition.

Charles Oliver suggested moving article 4 on the CPA up to article 2. The other members agreed. Erin McBee asked if the map of the town center overlay district would require a separate warrant article. She was able to view a previous warrant and determined the map itself was not necessary to include.

By a roll call vote, Oliver – aye, McBee – aye, Ludwig – aye, Maiore – aye, the board voted unanimously to approve and close the Special Town Meeting warrant for February 13, 2023 at 7pm.

Select Board Reports

Charles Oliver reported the Bare Hill Pond Committee Chair Bruce Leicher is concerned about the requested increase for their budget. He noted it is higher due to electricity costs to operate and repair the pump.

Rich Maiore said local developer Lou Russo will attend the February 7th meeting with a development proposal.

Maiore has been invited along with Select Board chairs from Ayer, Shirley and the Devens Committee to meet with MassDevelopments President/CEO Dan Rivera and Meg Deloria.

Maiore reported the Conservation and Park & Recreation Commissions discussed hiring an environment engineer to assist with the athletic field assessment.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30pm unanimous.

Documents referenced:

ADA self-evaluation & transition plan – dated Dec 2022

Town Clerk material – dated June 2022

Resignation letters: Christensen dated 12.23.2022 & Traver dated 1.4.2023

Draft letter to legislators – dated Dec 2022

Draft STM warrant – dated 1.17.2023

Staff Report January 17, 2023

Legislative Updates:

- Our speed limit home rule (formerly H4739) was re-filed by Rep. Sena's office on 1/5/23. Recent legislation (H5103, signed by Baker) was offered as a possible alternative, although it is limited to allowing municipalities to request modifications of speed limits on state-controlled roads (and mandating a 4' passing distance for passing pedestrians/mobility assist users/horses, construction workers, etc.).
- The FY24 consensus revenue hearing will be held at 11 a.m. on 1/24, live-streamed at <https://malegislature.gov/Events/SpecialEvents> The relevance for us is that it will provide insight re. Unrestricted General Government Aid (UGGA). [Former Governor Baker committed to increasing UGGA at the same rate as a consensus projection for the growth of state tax collections (6.5% above YTD benchmark as of 1/5); our FY22 to FY23 increase was +87K.]
- Tim and I had our virtual quarterly meeting with Congresswoman Trahan's office, and are investigating the Rural Business Development Grant (USDA grant) also open to municipalities, and whether this could be used to offset the costs of securing right-of-way and easements for the Ayer Road project.
- No news from Senator Harrington's office re. the Bromfield 100k earmark; we continue to monitor this.

Building/Facility Related:

- The new COA project is at 76% completion as of the end of December, although the acquisition of electrical control systems for the HVAC may be delayed until later this Spring. An updated schedule reflecting materials availability will be out later this week; the PBC is meeting to discuss this tomorrow.
- DEP has replied that there are no grants for landfill monitoring (*preliminary* *annual* monitoring costs are ~28.1k, estimate of probable costs for the system (less monitoring) is ~129k). The last news is that it is likely DEP will start actively following up during Q1 of 2023; we are planning to hold a call with MaryJude Pigsley next week.

Operations:

- DOER announced its approval of \$27,143 (Bromfield library weatherization, and Police: hybrid cruiser) via the Green Communities competitive grant application.

Personnel:

- Next round interviews for the Park & Recreation Director will be on 1/23 with representatives from Park & Rec and Town admin.

- Recording Secretary (and back-up) has been selected; recruiting for Administrative Assistant (Land Use/Building Department), and Truck Driver/Laborer is ongoing.
- Negotiations with the DPW for FY24→ will be starting on 1/24.

Notices, Reminders, Dates of Note:

- The Cable Access Committee will hold a public ascertainment proceeding next Wednesday, 1/25 @ 7:00 p.m. on Zoom. The purpose of the meeting is to identify the future cable-related community needs and interests, and review the performance of the cable operator under its current Cable License.
- The Finance Committee's upcoming Wednesday 7:00 p.m. budget schedule is: 1/18: Police, 1/25: Park & Rec, 2/1: Climate, 2/8: School.
- The Personnel Board is meeting this Thursday (1/19) morning to discuss merit for FY24, and entertain a request from HCTV for adjustments to the compensation stipend schedule (i.e., employees not in a Personnel grade).
- Annual Town Report submissions are due to Julie by Monday 1/23/23. The Select Board needs to determine the Citizen of Note, as well.
- Final date for financial warrant articles is Monday, 2/6.
- David Giannotti from the State Ethics Commission will be providing a training on 3/14/23 at Volunteers Hall; please remind your liaison Committees, and RSVP to lkelly@harvard-ma.gov

Thank you to resident Nancy Cronin who noticed the town common flag was looking shabby and in need of some TLC. She took it upon herself -- which she has done in the past -- to repair it until a new one comes in.

UU Upcoming Events Announcement:

[Read aloud, per agreement between former SB and Elm Street residents.]