



Select Board Minutes

Tuesday, September 5, 2023

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, Don Ludwig, Kara Minar, Erin McBee

Town Department participants:

Town Administrator Tim Bragan, Assistant Town Administrator Marie Sobalvarro and Executive Assistant Julie Doucet

Additional participants:

4th of July Chair Chris Chalifoux, Rosemary Ouellet, Mariah (Molly) Sinkewicz, TAC Chair Gabe Medjanis and member Stacia Donahue

Fourth of July Appointments

Chair Chris Chalifoux was present to recommend Rosemary Ouellet and Mariah (Molly) Sinkewicz to the 4th of July Committee. Both residents have been active volunteers and are willing to now serve as appointed board members. By a roll call vote, McBee – aye, Minar – aye, Ludwig – aye, Oliver – aye, Maiore – aye, the board voted unanimously to appoint Rosemary Ouellet and Mariah (Molly) Sinkewicz to the Fourth of July Committee. Chalifoux intends to have the committee convene soon to discuss future funding for the annual events. He is concerned that with the fireworks not being part of the celebration much of their funding source is gone.

Public Communication

Stu Sklar, Scott Road, former Select Board member expressed his disapproval of the boards recent vote to remove the curb extensions from the Ayer Road project. He spent many of his volunteer years on this project and was shocked the current members would vote to remove these. In his opinion it is the wrong way to go.

Minutes

By a roll call vote, McBee – aye, Minar – aye, Ludwig – aye, Oliver – aye, Maiore – aye, the board voted unanimously to approve the minutes from 8/8 & 8/22, as presented.

Staff Report/Updates (Attachment A)

Review and discuss the Transfer Station Committee charge

Rich Maiore shared a draft charge. Don Ludwig suggested adding language that in the long term they will compare continuing with the Transfer Station to other alternatives. The DPW Director will not be a voting member but will provide input when necessary. By a roll call vote, McBee – aye, Minar – aye, Ludwig – aye, Oliver – aye, Maiore – aye, the board voted unanimously to approve the charge as amended.

Discuss Montachusett Regional Transit Authority (MART) shuttle service

Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) members Gabe Medjanis and Stacia Donahue were present to discuss the shuttle service offer received from MART. Medjanis said this service will be funded through the MBTA Community Assessment and is an item specified in the Climate Action Plan. They do not have the final details on when the service would begin. Stacia Donahue explained this will be a drop and ride service with pick up locations at the Town Hall and the Senior Center. There will be no charge for the service. They are planning for a 6-to-12-month trial period to determine the amount of interest for this type of service. Town Administrator Tim Bragan asked if anyone had inquired with the owner of the plaza where Sorrento's is located or 233 Ayer Rd. He has noticed those parking areas are not being utilized to their full capacity and could work well for a park/ride location. The Select Board members encouraged the committee to continue efforts toward a park/ride as they believe that offering is more desirable. By a roll call vote, McBee – aye, Minar – aye, Ludwig – aye, Oliver – aye, Maiore – aye, the board voted unanimously to approve the shuttle service with MART.

Discuss local option room tax article for fall town meeting

Town Administrator Tim Bragan offered this as an option for revenue generation. He explained the program works in the same way the meals tax does. The state administers the program and the town receives any monies generated. He indicated the town can charge up to 6% in a room tax. By a roll call vote, McBee – aye, Minar – aye, Ludwig – aye, Oliver – aye, Maiore – aye, the board voted unanimously to approve the local option room tax at 6%.

Act on entertainment license for the Lions Club Fall Festival

By a roll call vote, McBee – aye, Minar – aye, Ludwig – aye, Oliver – aye, Maiore – aye, the board voted unanimously to approve entertainment license for the Fall Festival on September 16th.

Recognize resignations

By a roll call vote, McBee – aye, Minar – aye, Ludwig – aye, Oliver – aye, Maiore – aye, the board voted unanimously to accept resignations of Rich Marcello and Tim Schmoyer from the Cultural Council & John Mark Walker from Community Preservation Committee.

Select Board FY24 Goals

The board members reviewed their list of goals highlighting the topics accomplished and those in progress. They discussed ideas/methods to increase resident engagement in town governance such as Next Door Harvard, school department outreach options, banners announcing town meetings and encouraging local groups to be present at town meeting such as the girl scouts. They also discussed a volunteer appreciation event.

- Town Fire/EMT departments moving forward; Town Administrator is vetting options for consideration by the board.
- Playing fields is ongoing; needs assessment almost completed for preliminary review.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30pm.

Documents referenced:

Sinkewicz vol from – dated 8.31.2023

Ouellet vol form -dated 7.10.2023

MART request letter – dated 6.21.2023

Resignation letters: Marcello – dated 8.10.2023

Schmoyer – dated 8.24.2023

Walker – dated 8.23.2023

MART response letter – dated 7.18.2023

DLS MGL Ch 64G – dated April 2023

Ent Lic. request – dated 7.6.2023

Staff Report, September 19, 2023

Building/Facility/Project Related:

- Proposals for Cell Tower are due at the end of this month.
- Permanent Building Committee voted to move forward with the full project for the DPW.
- Tighe and Bond filed the initial documents with DEP for the landfill project and now DEP has a number of months to review it.
- Tim Kilhart and Tighe and Bond are working on the filing for the State Revolving Fund (SRF) loan for the Water Project Connecting to Devens which is due this month.
- Solect Energy has provided a draft system purchase and installation agreement for the 62.4kW array on the COA roof, with details being finalized.
- We attended a National Grid webinar outlining their specific mid- and long-range plans for the Commonwealth (and the Ayer-Clinton study area). The complete report is available here: <https://www.mass.gov/doc/gmacesmp-draftnational-grid/download>

Appointments:

- Deadline for applications for vacant School Committee seat is next Tuesday the 10th of October. We have received two applications so far. Hopefully we can coordinate with the School Committee a date to hold interviews and make the appointment.

FY24 Operations:

- The Police Chief is happy to have Tim Shaeffer back and he is the new School Resource Officer. The Chief is also happy to announce the new School Zone speed signs are up in Still River and he finally received his 4th hybrid vehicle for the department.
- The DPW continues to work on fields when it is not raining or fields aren't soggy. There is great concern about the field in front of Bromfield this coming weekend as rain is being forecasted for Friday, Saturday, and Sunday and the Flea Market is also planned for the same time. The concern is having vehicles driving on a wet field and damaging it (ruts, defoliation, pooling of water) and making it non-playable for the sports teams that utilize it.
- COA is enjoying having more people show up for programs and the new facility seems to be more inviting and people are responding.
- We continue to work on the Fire and Ambulance merger and have brought back the Collins Center to assist with the financial review. Marie was successful in

getting a Community Compact Grant from the State to fund the Collins Center's work. We are working with them on a timeframe and once that is set we will inform the SB and Fire Chief.

- Community Choice Power Supply Program serviced by Dynegy Energy have secured rates \$0.14841 per kWh for 100% renewable (default) and \$0.14692 for optional basic. These rates are fixed for 24 months.
- Drop and Ride to Littleton train station will start on the 6th of November.

FY25:

- Departments are continuing to work on their budget submissions and we are working on our budgets as well. We are planning on submitting for a Grant Writer as discussed at the Strategic Planning Session and need input on whether the SB wants full-time or part-time position and if the wages will be defined or if they will be paid as a percentage of the grants they get or a combination of both?
- Is there anything else that the SB would like us to submit?

Notices, Reminders, Dates of Note:

- The next regional household hazardous waste days at Devens are October 4 and 7, 9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.
- Covid continues to resurface locally, and we continue to follow the CDC protocols. The FDA extension dates for the ihealth rapid tests (the tests most commonly received from the Federal government) can be looked-up here via the lot number: <https://ihealthlabs.com/pages/news#expiration>
- The COA is having another open house at the Senior Center tomorrow, Wednesday, October 4, from 1-3pm at 16 Lancaster County Road. Senator Eldridge and Representative Sena will be in attendance.
- There will be a flu clinic is at the new COA Senior Center on Tuesday, October 10 from 9-11am, 16 Lancaster County Road. This is the high dose quadrivalent vaccine clinic for those over the age of 65 or with any secondary health concerns. The Pepperell Family Pharmacy will be giving the shots and you need to bring your insurance card to cover the cost. Call the COA or email them to set up an appointment.
- The SHINE (Serving the Health Information Needs of Elders) Counselor will be at the COA on Tuesday 10/24 at 10:30 a.m. to answer questions during Medicare Open Enrollment season.