



Select Board Minutes
Tuesday, October 17, 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:

School Committee members Abby Besse, Shannon Molloy, Suzanne Allen, and Amy Morton

Appointment to the School Committee

The Select Board met with School Committee members Abby Besse, Shannon Molloy, Susie Allen, and Amy Morton to interview and appoint a member to fill the committee's recent vacancy. Resident Liz Joyce submitted her application for consideration. She is employed as a school counselor with years of experience in the education field. School Committee members had the opportunity to ask questions of Joyce as well as the Select Board members. She has served on the School Improvement Council and is familiar with the challenges facing the district. She is eager to help and everyone thanked her for stepping forward. Abby Besse nominated Liz Joyce to fill the vacancy on the School Committee. By a roll call vote, McBee – aye, Minar – aye, Oliver – aye, Maiore – aye, Besse – aye, Molloy – aye, Allen – aye, Morton, the boards voted unanimously to appoint Liz Joyce to the School Committee.

Revisit Personnel Board recommendation on the Cost-of-Living for town non-union employees

Assistant Town Administrator/HR Director Marie Sobalvarro reported the Personnel Board met and decided to take no action regarding their earlier COLA recommendation. Their memo reaffirmed their diligence regarding the decision to use a 12-month CPI-U lookback. They agreed to investigate use of a regional CPI. Personnel Board member Don Ludwig stated the recommendation for 5.48% cost of living adjustment was unanimous. Rich Maiore made a motion to accept the recommendation which was seconded by Erin McBee. Charles Oliver was not convinced the 12-month average was the proper approach to take and questioned why the process previously used was being changed now. He agreed focusing on one point in time may be problematic. Oliver proposed looking ahead instead of back. He was reluctant to act on the cost-of-living adjustment now and suggested the board wait. Sobalvarro reminded the board with the town meeting scheduled for the first Saturday in April this decision requires action sooner. She also noted leaving this unresolved leaves staff feeling unappreciated and works against town recruitment efforts. By a roll call vote, McBee – aye, Minar – aye, Ludwig – nay, Oliver – aye, Maiore – aye, the board voted to follow the Personnel Board recommendation. (4-1)

Public Communication

School Committee Chair Abby Besse advocated for the exploration and investigation into a dental plan for the Harvard Educators as stipulated in their recent contract.

Update on the 4th of July Committee's parade code of conduct

Town Administrator Tim Bragan shared the red line version of the parade code of conduct. The code was reviewed by town counsel after receipt of the letter from the ACLU. He explained the revisions and reported the committee has reviewed them. Bragan said the committee may have additional changes. He confirmed any additional changes will be reviewed by counsel and shared with the Select Board. Kara Minar asked about enforcement of the code. Bragan said the code indicates violations require immediate removal from the parade enforced by the committee members. He agreed the best method for enforcement needs defining.

Rich Maiore exited the meeting at this time. Vice Chair Erin McBee chaired the rest of the meeting.

Minutes

By a roll call vote, Minar – aye, Ludwig – aye, Oliver – aye, McBee – aye, the board voted unanimously to approve minutes of 9/19, as presented.

Act on request for no parking signs on Old Mill Rd

Tim Bragan reported Police Chief Babu submitted a letter requesting no parking signs in specific areas along Old Mill Rd to ensure safety and fluidity of traffic with the new 40B project coming in. The signs will be permanent. By a roll call vote, Ludwig – aye, Oliver – aye, Minar – aye, McBee – aye, the board voted unanimously to approve the Police Chief's recommendation for no parking signs on Old Mill Road.

Board of Health insert with property tax bills

By a roll call vote, Ludwig – aye, Oliver – aye, Minar – aye, McBee – aye, the board voted unanimously to approve an insert in the January tax bill as a reminder of the stable permit application.

Act on Eagle Scout proclamation

By a roll call vote, Ludwig – aye, Oliver – aye, Minar – aye, McBee – aye, the board voted unanimously to approve proclamation for Noah Picariello.

Attorney General response regarding article 24 from the spring town meeting; firearms and explosives

Tim Bragan shared the Office of the Attorney General has partially approved this article. They highlighted text they disapprove of and text to be removed or added. If changes require further action from the town, they will be included for the spring town meeting.

ARPA funds for Harvard Park

By a roll call vote, Ludwig – aye, Oliver – aye, Minar – aye, McBee – aye, the board voted unanimously to approve use of ARPA funds to complete assessment.

Transfer Station Committee appointments

By a roll call vote, Ludwig – aye, Oliver – aye, Minar – aye, McBee – aye, the board voted unanimously to appoint Don Ludwig and Erin McBee to the Transfer Station Committee.

Town Meeting article assignments

Charles Oliver said he would not be able to attend the Town Meeting on Saturday.

Article assignments were made:

Article #		Motion made by
1	DPW Contract	Don Ludwig
2	CPIC: Van to Vans	Kara Minar
3	OSRD	Planning Board
4	Local Option Room	Kara Minar
5	Personnel Board language	Don Ludwig
6	Traffic Control Agent	Erin McBee
7	Fire Emergency Generator	Nate Finch
8	Authority to Negotiate Easements: Ayer Rd	Erin McBee
9	Authority for Easements: Water	Erin McBee

They discussed article five. Tim Bragan explained this is being included to match the bylaw with the Town Charter. Kara Minar had questions about the authority and if it should include both the Town Administrator and the Select Board instead of only the Town Administrator. McBee made a motion to approve articles one through nine for the fall town meeting. Kara Minar had concerns with article three. The motion was amended by Don Ludwig to remove article three. By a roll call vote, Ludwig – aye, Oliver – aye, Minar – aye, McBee – aye, the board voted unanimously to approve all articles besides three. Kara Minar acknowledged the hard work of the Planning Board however expressed concerns on the fundamental changes this bylaw will make. Erin McBee is confident the special permit process offers the proper safeguards. Don Ludwig expects a good discussion at the Town Meeting. By a roll call vote, Ludwig – aye, Oliver – aye, Minar – nay, McBee – aye, the board voted to approve article three. (3-1)

Select Board Reports

Charles Oliver will respond to letters regarding the handling of the CPC appointment. He believes the process was not fairly represented.

Erin McBee reported the Library Trustees are moving along in the permitting process for their outdoor pavilion. She announced the Community Visioning workshop has been posted. She asked others to spread the word. Erin McBee mentioned a member of the Conservation Commission has not yet done the required trainings. Erin McBee announced the increase in the Title V Septic System Tax Credit. Kara Minar suggested including this information with the stable permit insert.

The meeting was adjourned sat 8:30pm.

Documents referenced:

Liz Joyce vol form – dated 9.20.2023

Memo from Chief Babu – dated 9.27.2023

Stable permit insert – dated Sept 2023

Eagle Scout request – dated 9.25.2023